

What do the Pacific coast and rural Missouri have in common? Depending on how you look at it, practically nothing or everything that matters in the world. Both places can produce talented human beings with an ability to develop their gifts and a desire to apply them for the benefit of others. They can produce someone who provides a sense of security to attorneys as they exercise important work for individuals and agencies. They can produce someone who specializes in emergency physical care, providing hope and comfort when a surprising event on a normal day turns the world upside down. Both places can also produce people who fall in love and who want not just to enjoy their partner's company but to sacrifice for their partner's good. The Pacific coast and rural Missouri can produce people like Jamie and Patrick, who can find each other and fulfill their dreams, but only with the help of an app. Their engagement took place in a rose garden, another place that produces much beauty if it was carefully planted and attentively nourished.

St. Mark tells us Jesus preached about the produce of a different garden, the one that God planted in Eden, and where he made human beings male and female so that the two shall become one. Even as a single man, Jesus understood the dynamics of family life—probably by witnessing the commitment of his own parents. Drawing on that personal experience and on his knowledge of the sacred scriptures, Jesus declared, “what God has joined together, no human being must separate.” Love between two persons is true when they proclaim it in public and when their commitment lasts forever. God joins that love together.

Patrick and Jamie, you have been seeing each other for—what, five years now?—so your journey to this wedding has covered many miles and many days. Through it you have explored the pathways of love and responded favorably to all its demands. Those demands will grow as you interact with us now as a married couple, and, God willing, as parents who nurture the children you plant in the garden of life.

The readings you chose for us to hear on this day speak of the eternity of love—how God planted it in the hearts of our first parents from their first day in the garden. These readings also speak of the responsibilities of love. People willingly sacrifice for someone else when they have true love. And the readings acclaim long-lasting love. One proof of its existence is the longevity of a couple's commitment. Each year in this cathedral Bishop Johnston celebrates a special Mass for couples celebrating their fiftieth wedding anniversary in our diocese. We learn of about 100 couples each year, and to see most of them gathered here at one time testifies to the reality of love and its endurance.

As your careers are helping people work through times of great stress, dealing with the thorns on the rose bushes of life, so you are preparing yourselves for the same. As you provide guidance for others, so Christ provides guidance for you. He is your insurance; he is your physician; he is your app. He strengthens you through all that may cause you discomfort. He has given you already the gift you prize the most, the gift of love, and his commitment to you lasts forever.