

At daily Mass during Easter Time we follow the chapters of Acts of the Apostles to watch how a small group of disciples gradually spread the faith all around the Mediterranean, overcoming obstacles of every kind and strengthening their commitment. Their personal conviction, even in the presence of opposition, drew them stronger into community with one another and mission to the world.

This powerful international theme from long ago still plays out in simpler ways within the confines of homes. Today we're witnessing the commitment of two people who found something to believe in, and their personal conviction has drawn them closer to each other in community and mission. Taylor and Maria have been members of our parish for several years, even before they started dating. They each made a commitment to Sunday Mass even when other people they knew wondered, "Why bother?" They see marriage as the key to family life, which does not require an expensive show to get started. They have welcomed today a small but influential group of family and friends in whom they find support and who share these values. They've asked for a simple but meaningful beginning of their married life inside this cathedral that has nourished their faith during these critical years when they are completing their education and contributing to society through their work. In fact, today is not only Maria's wedding day—it's her graduation day.

The daily Mass reading from Acts today is one you just don't hear at weddings: Saint Paul has gone to Corinth, where he stays a full year and half building up the community, to whom he later wrote two of the greatest epistles in the New Testament. He went there even though the Lord warned him in a vision he would meet opposition, and the only way out was to keep delivering the message that would get him into trouble. Then some of his own Jewish brothers and sisters put him on trial hoping to silence him; the judge refused to interfere in what he regarded as a religious dispute, not a civil one. Frustrated, the plaintiffs turn on their own synagogue leader and beat him before they leave the court. Paul, meanwhile, kept doing what the Lord had asked him to do, finally leaving in the company of two Christian leaders, Priscilla and Aquila, for Cenchreae, where he shaved his head to express his religious devotion. As I say, not exactly a reading for weddings. However, Paul's personal commitment, even in the presence of opposition, drew him stronger into community with other believers and his mission to the world.

Taylor and Maria, we pray that you never have to face such open opposition to your beliefs and values, but it happens to all of us in smaller ways. Like Saint Paul, you are laying the proper foundation that will fortify you for the years ahead. The joy that accompanies your wedding day will flourish throughout your lives as you deepen your commitment, strengthen the bond of your unity, and partake in the mission of love, God-willing, with your children. Your love for each other will strengthen your union and make the world a better place. Joy comes at a cost, but challenges improve joy. May the Holy Spirit, who sent the first disciples as one on mission into the world to tell others about Christ, fill your hearts this day. Then your love will always be the source of good news.