

Musicians share a special bond. I started piano lessons at the age of four, and I still like to practice every day. I have lots of non-musician friends, but when I meet other musicians, I can tell we immediately share an experience that other people don't have. When I meet anyone new, a question I sometimes feel welling inside me is, "Is it in you?" Is the power and intimacy of music inside you? Does it take over part of your identity too? Are we members of the same tribe?

As a young man Stephen was hoping that the woman he married would be a musician because she would understand why musicians give themselves to music. Stephen got more than he prayed for—he found a musician, someone who shared his faith and values, a beautiful woman inside and out, and if that weren't enough, he also got a dentist. I mean, keyboard players like me don't use our mouths to make music, but sax players do.

Saint Paul probably did not play music. He surely would have written about it if he did. But in the passage we heard today from his Letter to the Colossians, he so writes about the power of music that you know Paul could sing. In fact, in Acts of the Apostles, when he and Silas were arrested in Philippi, around midnight the other prisoners could hear the two of them praying and singing hymns to God. Paul knew some tunes well enough that he could sing from memory in the dark. Who knows? Maybe the two of them even harmonized.

In Colossians, Paul urged his readers to sing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God." One gift the early Christians shared in common was music. It formed a bond among them. This is how they would "teach and admonish one another," through the faith they expressed in song. Although music dwelled deep within them, Paul urged them to keep something else at the center of their identities: the Word of God. He writes, "Let the word of God dwell in you richly." Early Christians, upon meeting new people, could find the question welling up within them: "Is it in you?" Is the power and intimacy of the Word of God inside you? Does it take over part of your identity too? Are we members of the same tribe? Just as musicians give themselves over to music, so believers give themselves over to Christ.

And, in marriage, the partners give themselves over to each other. When you're in love, the other person dwells deep within you, becoming a part of your own identity. They occupy a lot of brain space and start to guide how you think, what you say, and how you act. A person in love willingly yields to the other. That self-gift reaches its apex in marriage, where two people say, "Not only do I give myself to you, but I do it for life. That's how much you mean to me." The endurance of the relationship shows the power and intimacy of its love.

Stephen and Olivia, we rejoice with you today that you have found that love within you. Because you both also share faith, it will not surprise you to hear that Christ has the same love for you. You are in him, you dwell deep within him and form part of his identity, the mystery that we call the Body of Christ. Throughout your marriage, you will find yourselves naturally doing what Paul asked the Colossians to do: sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.