

Drew Simkins & Kennedy Whitaker

Drew was once a little Jewish boy who never dreamed about marrying a Catholic girl, and Kennedy was once a little Catholic girl who never dreamed about marrying a Jewish boy. But here we are, gaping in wonder: at the hand of God moving in unexpected ways, and at two individuals opening their hearts and their lives to a union they believe God has called them to enter. We are all privileged to be part of this, not only because of our love for Kennedy and Drew, but because of our own faith and trust in God.

When Kennedy and Drew turned their attention to the scripture readings they wanted us to hear today, they found passages that speak not only to their faith but also to nature. The Song of Songs, which supplied the first reading, is the only book of the bible that never mentions God by name, yet Jews and Catholics have seen the hand of God in the very human emotions depicted on every page. This book rejoices in the bliss of love between one man and one woman, inviting the reader to ask questions such as, “Why is there love? Where does love come from? How is it that two people experience mutual love—not just one’s infatuation with the other, but both of them finding fulfillment in their partner?” The Song of Songs presumes that somehow stitched into the fabric of human life is this supernatural gift that God implanted within human beings. God is love. God loves us. And God lets us love.

St. Paul wrote most eloquently about love. You don’t have to be a believer to nod your head at his descriptions: “Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude.... It bears all things.... Love never fails.”

We all love in different measures and in different ways. Sometimes our love is fickle, as may be our tastes in music, clothing, and pastimes. But one kind of love never fails: marriage, where the partners sacrifice and take joy in each other for many years. Jesus spoke of this when he said, “the two shall become one flesh”—something that even nonbelievers experience. But he added belief onto that very human experience: “Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.” The love God bestows is a love that endures.

Today we celebrate unity. Drew and Kennedy, you’ve both discovered the world’s profoundly beautiful unity by exploring the world’s purported differences. You set an example our society desperately needs: a long, steady gaze into the eyes of someone who is different to find out they’re not that different at all. This gift of love that you hold is the gift that will bring great unity to our society if we practice it not only with one special person but with all people, even those with whom we think we disagree.

Today we remember your ancestors who shared these values with you, and in the presence of your family and friends you declare your readiness to share those values with the next generation.

You never dreamed you’d be here. May God continue to grant the dreams you never knew you had.