

## Matthew Denmark & Shannon Grammel

It's almost an accident that we're here today. Shannon and Matthew met seemingly by chance. But they recognized something in that first encounter, stayed in touch, and against great geographical odds, managed to grow their friendship, pursue their dreams, put trust in the future, and at last come together today in this cathedral. Some people who wait a long time to meet the right person feel that their world is in chaos, and they nearly despair. But you never know what the next day will bring.

Our world at times seems mired in chaos, but moments like this wedding give all of us hope. The world is a place where people of strong, shared values can at last find each other, come together, and improve our society. Matthew's career path has demonstrated his love for our country and the importance of justice. Shannon shares similar values in her career, as she strives to bring a fair solution to people with unique legal problems. Now they are joining their lives and praying for a family of their own where they can continue to spread goodness in our society, doing their small but important part to change the chaos of life into peace and goodness.

St. Paul had similar dreams for the chaos he perceived in the Church at Philippi. Christianity was born in Asia, and Philippi was the first city to receive the gospel in what would become contemporary Europe. Near the end of his letter to the Philippians, Paul stirs up the local community by inviting them to rejoice in the Lord always. The Philippians faced the same challenges as everyone else—times of hardship, injustice, and even warfare. But Paul urged them in the midst of these trials to rejoice. His advice seems almost impossible to heed: "Have no anxiety at all." At all? Like even when the world we trusted changes? Well, yes. Paul isn't naive. He knows we need divine help, so he advises further, "by prayer and petition... make your requests known to God." We generally feel comfortable doing that, but Paul additionally says to do it "with thanksgiving." We are to be grateful for what we have when we ask God for something more. This will lead to inner peace.

At times we let our minds wander to places of despair and dwell there longer than necessary. Paul gives different advice about where to park our brains: "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

Matthew and Shannon, you have shown us the way. You have thought about the excellence in the world, the realm of possibility, and the results that come from a clear-eyed vision of the future even when others may have thought their own happiness seemed impossible. That vision will help you throughout your married life.

Christ joins you in this celebration today, and he will accompany you every day. With trust in him, love for each other, and love for other people, you will find peace amid chaos. Beginning with your own family, and giving thanks to God, you will help him bring peace to the world.