

**Gabriel proposed to Megan in front of the Cathedral of St. Louis during a family visit to New Orleans. I probably told you both that I was born in New Orleans, so that municipality holds a special place in my heart. It is the city of jazz and great food. It is also well known for Mardi Gras, technically the celebration on a single day before Lent begins, but now a whole season unto itself, with several weeks of parades, parties, and *laissez-les-bons-temps-rouler*: “Let the good times roll.”**

**Many of us have gone through a period of our lives when we let the good times roll—only to find out that Fat Tuesday leads to Ash Wednesday, which opens a time of sacrifice and renewal. Gabriel and Megan have experienced this as well. They enjoyed the blessings of life in their youth, and they now appreciate more deeply the demands life places on adults. Carefree days have become days when care matters.**

**One of the best reflections on this balance between happiness and sacrifice is found in Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, where the Apostle speaks about the nature of love. In this famous passage, our second reading today, he states, “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”**

**You can hear the voice of experience. Paul surely bore all things—accepting inconveniences for the sake of the people he loved, and recognizing the people who bore all things for him. He believed all things about those who loved him because love leads to trust, even when others may doubt. Paul hoped all things because of the love of Christ that permeated his soul. He endured all things because love lifted his eyes beyond any suffering and toward its purpose.**

**Gabriel and Megan have discovered this as well in their love for each other: “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” And they have discovered the same in their love of Christ and of the church. They understand that to stay connected in relationship means not only enjoying the pleasant company of the person you love, but sacrificing yourself for the person you love. This is what Jesus himself did. He developed meaningful friendships and sacrificed for his disciples—for those of his own time and for us long into the future.**

**Today’s date worked out as a good day for Gabriel and Megan to celebrate their wedding, and, as it happens, it will have a special meaning for Christians. Megan and Gabriel, your wedding anniversary will always take place during Lent. The dates for Ash Wednesday and Easter move around every year, but March 14 always falls during Lent. Every year. You will have a built-in reminder that love gains strength when it includes sacrifice. You will be aware of Fat Tuesday and Ash Wednesday, of Lent and Easter. A complete human life includes both suffering and joy. Your lives will increase in meaning because you see it all through the eyes of love.**