

Brian Blowe & Ceci Haberdash

When Brian and Ceci told me they both work in insurance, Brian made an interesting remark: “Not many people intend to go into insurance but end up taking jobs there.” Things work out, often with a lot of joy, but not always the way people expected they would. Many engaged couples can say something similar. Some of them fall in love at first sight, but others need time to figure out if this is the right person for them. Ceci is a great example. Many women think over the pluses and minuses of starting a relationship; they may consult a friend or family member to talk things out. I guess Brian was a more difficult puzzle to solve than most, because Ceci went through her discernment not by sitting at home and texting a friend but taking a nine-day trip to the base level of Mt. Everest in the country of Nepal and keeping a journal. Happily, this discernment brought joyful results.

On this week after Easter, the Church invites us to reflect on another discernment—that of the apostle Thomas. To paraphrase Brian’s assessment of insurance, at the beginning of the gospels, the apostles did not intend to go into discipleship with Jesus, but they ended up there. Jesus visited his local mountain to pray and reflect, and then he chose them.

Right after the resurrection, he appeared to the apostles, and Thomas famously was not in the room where it happened. He had doubts about the testimony all the other apostles gave him. Nine days after the crucifixion, Jesus appeared to him to remove those doubts. Thomas became one of the strongest witnesses to the resurrection, and according to a longstanding tradition, he brought the faith to India, just south of Nepal. The risen Jesus was anxious to give Thomas a job.

Ceci and Brian enter this marriage with a blend of discernment and faith. True discernment requires an ability to look at both sides of a question thoroughly before deciding, and faith brings an additional element to make prudent choices. We all need these skills for decisions we make every day. When deciding the big items—whom to marry or whom to believe—the stakes are much higher, and giving those decisions generous time is like—well, like buying insurance. It protects against risks.

My brothers and sisters, from far and wide you have each helped this couple arrive at this day, and they have relied on you, as well as on the prayer and preparation of this local parish community here at the cathedral. Whether you are like Thomas, who doubted the testimony of his closest friends, or like Jesus, who regularly chose solitude to listen to what’s inside, we believe Christ desires to give us all a job—sometimes on a path we never intended to take.

Brian and Ceci, we join you in prayer today that Christ will always guide your decisions to come, and that you will ever find in your spouse a partner on the road of discernment, a road that leads to increasing joy.