A wedding day is the first day of a new life for a bride and a groom, but also for the people who come in contact with them. These two will no longer be just Carlos or Ashley, but Ashley and Carlos. We will see them with new eyes.

Fittingly, then, Carlos and Ashley asked that we hear as the first reading on their wedding day part of the bible's account of the very first days of new life, the creation of the world. In this version of creation from the Book of Genesis, God had already created the man but realized the job was incomplete. The man was lonely. God tried creating animals in the field and birds in the sky to be the companions that the man desired.

That didn't work, but today is an especially appropriate day to think about the relationship between humans and animals because this wedding is taking place on an important anniversary: Exactly 800 years ago today, on October 3, 1226, St. Francis of Assisi left this world and entered eternal life. As a young man, Francis converted from dreams of wealth to the acceptance of poverty. Francis revered all that God had created, but he found that animals and birds made great companions, as God had hoped, according to the Book of Genesis.

Good for Francis, but the first man needed something more. God loved what he had created, so he fashioned for the man a nobler companion. The man fell asleep and awakened to a surprise. God had taken a rib from the man's side and built it into a woman, bone of the man's bones, flesh of his flesh. The man saw companionship with new eyes, and, for the two of them, the rest of the world seemed to disappear.

Before God created all those living beings, he made something else: water. That water also teemed with life.

Ashley and Carlos discovered the life-giving power of water one day some years ago when, before they knew each other, they both arrived at a place they each knew: an apartment complex swimming pool. Neither of them expected anything out of the ordinary would happen that day. It was as if God had cast a deep sleep upon them both. But approaching the water, the source of life, they awoke to a surprise. They saw companionship with new eyes, and the rest of the world seemed to disappear. They introduced themselves, talked, and said goodbye. Then later they said hello again, and they've been talking to each other ever since. God loves to create new things, especially when we are not expecting it.

Carlos and Ashley, you have not only awakened from slumber in your love for each other, you have reawakened within yourselves a love for God. Through the sacraments of the Church you are rediscovering the God who made you and invites you now to partake in the wonderful mystery of his own creation. You also remain awake to wherever God is leading you. You dream of a future when, through your work, you will do your part to make this world a happier place and a healthier place.

As you begin each new day, may you rise from slumber to see surprise. May God open your eyes to the beauty of the world. Through your family, your work, and your prayer, may God use you to assist him in creating a new world.