

SERMON 846

Saturday, April 12, 2014

The Marriage of Austin and Jessie Pugh

THE BLESSINGS OF LIFE

Sonnet CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

-- William Shakespeare

*Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ. Amen.*

It is a wonderful day for Jessie and Austin's wedding, for a celebration and a time to enjoy the blessings of life. We are

gathered together in the joy of God's Creation, surrounded by flowering dogwoods and the first green leaves of spring, by blooming azaleas, and blue sky, and a host of family members and friends. The heavy rains of a few days ago have washed everything clean and fresh. The sun is shining, and it looks like winter is finally over.

Such a day is a reminder of the manifold blessings that we know in life—family, loving relationships, shared memories, cherished stories, children, husbands and wives, grandparents and grandchildren, and that possibility of reconciliation and peace that is always present whenever and wherever the Sacraments of the Church are celebrated.

There is more, and of course there is always more when we consider the handiwork of God, and the grace of Jesus Christ working in our lives, and the power of the Holy Spirit to teach us and to change us.

This is a day to celebrate the love that Jessie and Austin have for each other, a love that is strong and fierce, proud and tender and gentle and filling to overflowing. It is romance, to be sure, but there is more—a friendship which will endure and deepen over the years. A commitment that carries them

through the storms and sorrows of life, and celebrates beauty and goodness, wisdom and understanding, blessing and grace.

This is a day to thank Almighty God for the gift of Mary Ellen. The American poet Carl Sandburg said that, “the birth of a child is God’s opinion that the world should go on.” Mary Ellen is a gift to her parents, of course, but she has become a gift to all of you. Her life, her joy and wonder, are much like a Sacrament—she is an outward and visible sign of God’s inward and spiritual grace.

It is an extraordinary thing to be able to understand life in this way, as sign and Sacrament. Such a way of living begins with the realization that your life—and each person’s life—is of infinite importance to God. And just as important, to understand that God takes seriously what we do with our one wild and precious life. And that God, in the Person, in the humility and power of his Son, yearns to make us his own, and desires this sacred relationship and this life of blessing for each of us.

This is a day of blessing, a day of great joy, and of shared hopes and dreams for the future. Jessie and Austin, hold fast to each other, to your family and friends. Hold fast to your

hopes and dreams. Build your life on the strong foundation of Christ, and be filled with thanksgiving. **AMEN.**

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