

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Dec 3rd 2015**

Memorial of Saint Francis Xavier, Priest

“Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.” Matthew 7:24

One week ago, on the day before Thanksgiving in the U.S., I had the supreme honor and joy of proposing to my girlfriend Sarah. In the main sanctuary of our St. Cecilia’s Cathedral in Omaha, I asked her to spend the rest of our lives getting each other to Heaven.

The beginning of our engagement is the perfect opportunity to begin our discussions about how we will build our marriage. Thankfully, today’s Gospel offers a beautiful reminder of where to start. Jesus’ words clearly describe the importance of choosing how to prioritize various aspects of life.

I notice these differences when I face big life choices. Lately, I’ve had several of these. Should I choose the contract that would give me the biggest paycheck or the one that lets me spend more time with my future bride? Is it more important to pursue the woman who brings me closest to God or to forego the commitment and sacrifice of marriage in favor of the “freedom” of bachelorhood? These questions abound in all of our lives and challenge us to declare which ideologies matter most.

Jesus extends a simple, yet direct, comparison of the end result if we choose to build our lives on him versus on worldly whims. He makes it very obvious that these foundational decisions surface when the storms of life hit. I just finished a few very demanding months of residency where my life was not well balanced in the least and I spent my time and energy in the hospital. Naturally, months like that pose a significant challenge to my relationship with Sarah. Without our nightly prayer time, frequent Mass visits, and great chats with priests in Reconciliation, our relationship would have suffered dramatically. Instead, we came out the other side engaged.

I had this in mind when I was down on one knee and reminded Sarah that my last name is French for “Peter” and that just as Jesus promised that on this “Rock” he would build his Church, so too on this new last name I want to build our family. Sarah and I strive to make our faith the foundation of our marriage. Without God, we would be nowhere near as strong or developed as we are.

Are there areas of life where we are making a worldly pursuit or a transient pleasure the foundation of our work? In what ways can we make preparation for Heaven, the becoming of a saint, and serving the Lord the guiding force of our lives?

Sarah forever changed my life by saying ‘yes’! Now it’s up to us to base our pending marriage on getting each other to Heaven. Please pray for us as we do so.

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