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NEW ORLEANS

Spiritual problems versus worldly solutions

This Lenten season has been very fruitful for me.

One of the opportunities I have taken advantage of is Matthew Kelly's "Best Lent Ever" video series.

Just two weeks ago, I was watching the video when Kelly asked this question: "Are you trying to solve spiritual problems with worldly solutions?"

I thought about the question in the context of marriage, and it appears that's exactly where we find ourselves.

It has been interesting for me to be involved with marriage preparation and marriage counseling – and dealing with many of the same issues over and over. Each couple coming in for marriage preparation or relationship help comes in thinking there is "a technique" I will offer to solve their issues.



Deacon Dave FARINELLI
GUEST COLUMN

Sometimes my frustration deals with offering some technique to improve a relationship only to have the couple, for whatever reason, not use it. Now we have two problems: One problem that the couple brought to the first session; and, second, the couple's failure to utilize the possible solution.

I attribute this chaos to the fact the clients/couple have not placed *order* in their lives. By this, I mean focusing on the foremost relationship: first, with God; second, with each other. If we do not have a strong relationship with God, if we aren't in the habit of speaking and listening to

God regarding our lives, then we are settling for the worldly solutions through the friends and neighbors we confide in.

I have heard over and over again how difficult it is to love God when we can't love our neighbor. This is especially true when our neighbor is our spouse. Routinely, I have spoken with people concerning marital issues, all the while they are going to church and receiving sacraments but refusing to speak to one another.

It's amazing how the power of rationalization works within us.

The solution to all this is both simple and complicated. Our first priority is to come clean in our relationship with God and invest our total selves into a deep relationship with the Trinity – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

“Our first priority is to come clean in our relationship with God and invest our total selves into a deep relationship with the Trinity – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

– Deacon David Farinelli

It might start with going to confession, looking at our lives for those elements which keep us separated from God and taking them out of our lives. Then, we are totally free to reestablish our relationship with our spouse.

We each begin Lent with the admonition to turn from sin and be faithful to the Gospel. The Gospel has the best "techniques" ever to build and deepen any relationship.

So, ask yourself: Have you been approaching your is-

ues in relationships with worldly solutions or utilizing the graces afforded through the spiritual resources of the Trinity? It may be time to try something new.

If you would like to explore that angle with someone, contact Catholic Counseling Service to assist you. You can reach us at 861-6245.

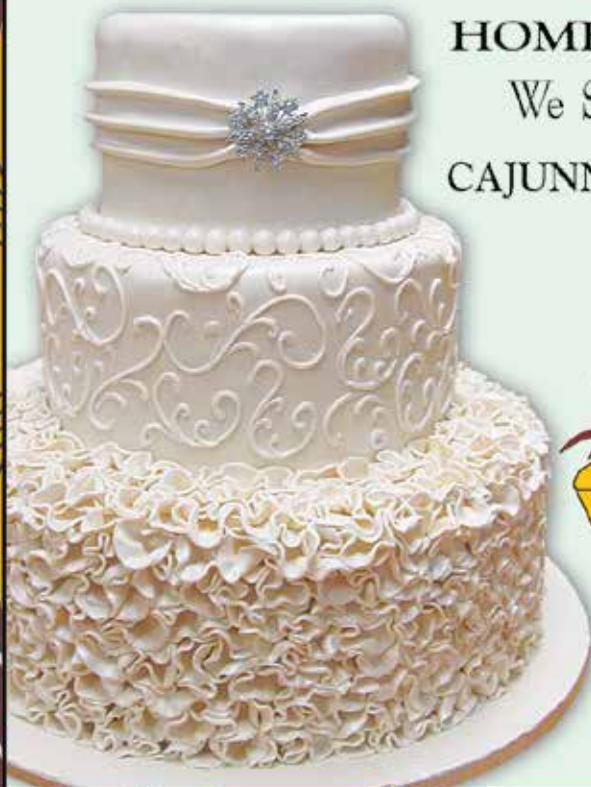
Deacon David Farinelli is clinical supervisor and counselor with Catholic Counseling Service. He can be reached at dpkc333@yahoo.com.

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Checklist for preparing for your Catholic wedding

Approximately 1,400 couples are married each year in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Planning the perfect wedding is a job that calls for prayer and preparation. The archdiocese requires a 6- to 8-month engagement period for couples to reflect prayerfully on their relationship and their readiness for marriage.



"You are beautiful in every way, my friend, there is no flaw in you!"
— Song of Songs 4:7

HERE IS A CHECKLIST FOR YOUR CATHOLIC WEDDING:

6-12 months

- Immediately after making the decision to marry, you should visit your parish priest to make arrangements for pre-marriage counseling.
- Discuss with the priest or deacon any special circumstances that might affect your marriage.
- Complete a premarital inventory, a series of written questions responded to by the couple separately. The priest or deacon will analyze the results, which will help assess your readiness for marriage.
- The priest or deacon will discuss the premarital inven-

tory with you and review the strengths and weaknesses of your communication process. Presuming you are ready to go forward, you can begin making your liturgical wedding plans.

- With the guidance of your priest or deacon, decide on a marriage preparation program. The priest or deacon will discuss with you the most appropriate program, depending upon your circumstances.

- The Office of Marriage and Family Life website has complete information on steps to take when preparing to be married in the Catholic Church. For more information, go to <http://nolacatholic.org/getting-married-1>.

The Office of Marriage and Family Life can be reached at

(504) 861-6243.

- Discuss the wedding budget and style of wedding with both sets of parents. The priest or deacon will inform you of parish guidelines and any costs or offerings involved.

- Plan the reception: reserve all services needed.

- Decide on attendants.

- Using index cards or a computer spreadsheet, draw up your invitation list and have your fiance draw up his. Keep the cards in alphabetical order for ease in writing thank-you notes.

- Select your wedding dress, veil and accessories. Allow three months for delivery.

- Select attendants' dresses and shoes.

- Select a photographer.

- Select a florist.

- Plan your music, selecting organist and singer.

- Reserve limousines.

- Arrange rehearsal and rehearsal dinner, if you plan to have one. Tell the wedding party.

- Begin plans for your future home together.

3 months

- Order invitations.

- Order personal stationery and note paper.

- Complete plans for your honeymoon.

- Have both mothers choose their gowns.

- Plan accommodations for out-of-town guests.

- Plan bridesmaids' luncheon.

2 months

- Finish addressing the wedding invitations.

- Decide upon gifts for your attendants.

- Select the wedding ring, if you have not already done so.

- Prepare newspaper announcement.

- Visit your doctor.

1 month

- Depending on the timing and completion of your marriage preparation program, this final phase could range anywhere from one to three months before the wedding.

In the final phase, the priest or deacon will discuss what you have learned and experienced during the marriage preparation program and your understanding of the sacrament in light of the formal preparation. He will discuss your responsibilities as future parents and as spouses and complete all documentary requirements.

- The reception of the sacraments of reconciliation and Holy Eucharist as fitting preparation for the sacrament of Matrimony will be addressed.

- Finalize wedding liturgy and plan wedding rehearsal.

- Get the marriage license.

- Make transportation plans for the wedding party.

- Have the final fitting of your bridal gown.

- Order your wedding cake and the package of groom's cake for guests to take home and dream on.

- Mail your invitations.

2 weeks

- Record each gift as received.

- Check on attire for everyone in the wedding party.

- Plan how to handle traffic and parking for guests.

- Arrange for name changes on Social Security, driver's license, auto insurance, etc.

1 week

- Have final consultations with caterer, photographer, florist, musician, etc.

- Give bridesmaids' luncheon.

- Keep up with gift acknowledgments.

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Marriage Preparation in the Archdiocese of New Orleans at a Glance

Congratulations! The Catholic Church joyfully anticipates the opportunity to celebrate this life-changing sacrament with you. St. Paul tells us the Sacrament of Matrimony is the image of Christ's love for his Church.

FIRST STEPS TO THE ALTAR

The Archdiocese of New Orleans recognizes the vital role the parish community plays in the life of each couple both before and after their wedding. It is God who joins man and woman in marriage and sustains them in love, and it is in the parish community that we encounter him most fully. Your first step is to contact your parish priest or deacon at least 6 to 8 months before the wedding to work out a plan to prepare for your marriage in the Church. Your parish priest or deacon will know which resources are available to you and will recommend the best possible marriage preparation, given your particular circumstances. If you are working with a priest or deacon from outside the archdiocese, he can email or call the Office of Marriage and Family Life at (504) 861-6243 for information and guidance.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PARTICULAR LAW FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

For a copy of the Marriage Preparation Particular Law for the Archdiocese of New Orleans and the Marriage Prep Program Dates for 2019, go to www.nolacatholic.org/documents.

ARE YOU MARRIED AND WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A MENTOR COUPLE?

Contact your parish, and then either call the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life at (504) 861-6243 to discuss options or register online for training in the In Home Marriage Prep program by going to <https://nolacatholicfla.regfox.com/in-home-marriage-prep>

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

NORTHWEST SYMPTO-THERMAL

Uses a combination of basal body temperature and observations of physical changes to chart progress through the woman's fertility cycle. This information can be used effectively to either achieve or postpone a pregnancy. Classes are conducted in a group setting and consist of four, three-hour evenings spread over the course of two months. Available on both the southshore and the northshore. Registration is through the Office of Marriage and Family Life, (504) 861-6243.

CREIGHTON FERTILITY CARE SYSTEM

Uses observation of physical symptoms to both chart progress through the woman's fertility cycle and provide a wealth of information regarding the woman's health to a certified practitioner. This information can also be used by medical personnel trained in NaPro Technology, a cutting-edge healthcare system that works to maintain or restore a woman's natural reproductive system. One-on-one classes with a practitioner; introductory presentation followed by monthly meetings until autonomy is achieved. Register: Hope Fertility Care Center: <https://www.hopewomansclinic.com/fertility/creighton-model/>

FAMILY OF THE AMERICAS

A method that is both simple and affordable, yet still very effective. It uses observation of physical symptoms to chart progress through the woman's fertility cycle. This method is said to be ideal for a woman discontinuing the use of artificial contraception. It is now available through the Hope Fertility Care Center, and one-on-one classes consist of an introduction and monthly follow-up meetings until autonomy is achieved. To schedule an appointment or to learn more, email cnei@womansnewlife.com.

COUPLE TO COUPLE LEAGUE

There are two instructor couples in the area for this Sympto-Thermal method, and they are both on the southshore. Classes are three, pre-scheduled evening sessions done specifically couple-to-couple (imagine that!). Live and self-paced online courses are also available. Registration is online by going to <https://ccli.org/learn-nfp-from-ccl/main-course-descriptions/class-comparison-chart/>

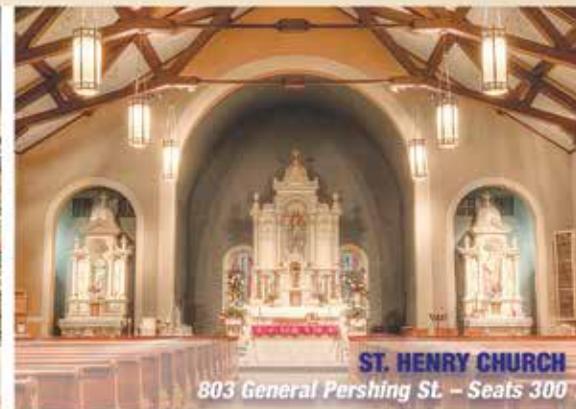
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Can our brains handle the focus required of marriage?

The vocation of marriage promises great things: unity, companionship, adventure, beauty, deep intimacy, joy, gratitude. But, are our brains prepared to handle it these days?

It's a relatively new development to watch sports and be made to feel like we are on the field with the players, as if we are actually in the game. We also now have constant access to more intensity and drama than we could ever consume in a lifetime through apps like Netflix.

These dynamics have a more powerful effect on our brains than we tend to be



David
DAWSON JR.
GUEST COLUMN

aware. We are naturally wired with desires for things such as adventure, beauty and progress, but these desires are very quickly trained to find their fulfillment in the types of intense experiences available to us now, all day, every day, via electronic screens.

One of our most foundational desires is for intimacy and unity, which obviously

makes us very susceptible to losing ourselves in social media where we find an endless stream of what's going on in the lives of thousands of people we care about. And, thousands of people can read and respond to the inner workings of our minds and hearts.

This makes it very difficult for our brains to focus on just one person, even if they're standing in front of us. That person is probably demanding more of us than we want to give right now, anyway, and they probably aren't giving us the affirmation we feel like we need, either.

It only takes a quick assessment of a couple of things to see how much our brains have been affected by these dynamics. First, what tends to be the content of most of my conversations in a typical day? What about at the dinner table or at family gatherings? If I'm honest with myself, this will give me a sense for how I understand the "meat" of my life, what I feel like is really "happening" for me.

A 'screen' can divide us

How much of my life is actually "lived" in a world that really has nothing to do with me but is produced for me on a screen? How much of the content of my thought revolves around people I have never met (like athletes or politicians) or who don't



*"The love of husband and wife is the force that welds society together."
- St. John Chrysostom*

actually exist (like characters in a TV series)?

Second, how do I feel when I'm just sitting with my spouse or my kids? Am I restless, stressed, unfulfilled? Usually, we don't realize that our brains are actually dying to get back to what they've been trained to believe is "really important." We usually blame that stress on just being super busy or on things not being the way they should be somehow or (most of all) on just being "so tired."

But, maybe we feel this way because our to-do list keeps getting repopulated by the notifications on our phones. Or, maybe we've learned to define rest as losing ourselves

in someone else's story in a way that demands nothing from me.

How can I expect to delight in the unique beauty of my spouse when I'm aware that I can be endlessly captivated by what I find on the phone in my back pocket? How can I expect to take necessary risks when I can be made to feel like a football star, a super soldier or a brilliant politician without having to get up from the couch? How can I not feel too busy for the people in my house when thousands of people are ready to affirm my every thought online?

Our brains will require some serious TLC if we want to get them back to functioning the way they should. Research is beginning to show that it takes about a month of backing way off on screen usage to provide the brain with the sort of reset needed for us to begin to see what we've been missing. After this, it may take a little longer to grow in the patience, wonder and gratitude necessary to enjoy the great things that marriage promises, but it is definitely worth the effort.

David Dawson Jr. is director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. He can be reached at ddawson@arch-no.org.

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Go first and ‘be reconciled with your (spouse)’

One summer, a young deacon preparing for the priesthood helped us at Mass. I remember standing outside of church after his first homily and watching the congratulations pour out and his face beaming with joy. Then along came a dour-looking parishioner who blurted out, “I could not disagree with you more on what you said. You sure missed the point.”

His chin suddenly dropped to his chest and his cheerfulness darkened. As we walked back to the rectory, all he could remember was that negative comment.

My homiletics teacher taught us, “Do not let that woman pass, but gently inquire why she was disturbed. Often it is not us that disturbs a person but something in what we said triggered off a bad memory we had nothing



Father Eugene HEMRICK
THE HUMAN SIDE

to do with.”

Here, the virtue of understanding implores us to look more deeply into an incident like the above; to seek the roots of the problem so as to be on the same wavelength with another and to work toward reconciliation.

There is a passage in the Gospels in which Christ counsels us to drop everything when there is a dispute with another and to go to him or her and work toward reconciliation.

“If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift

there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt 5:23-24).

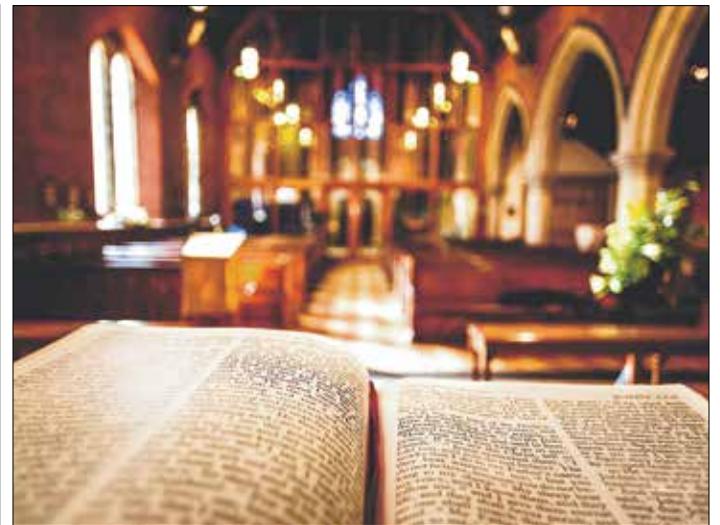
One way to read the Bible is through the eyes of reconciliation in which God is forever reconciling his people. After Peter had denied Christ, we have that beautiful scene in which Christ asks Peter, “Do you love me?” – an example of heartfelt reconciliation, empathy and sympathy par excellence.

Today, dialogue is needed to renew the church and create greater unity.

Prudence prompts us to put ourselves into the world of another and see it from his or her side.

Often this mollifies a dispute by unveiling why people do what they do or say what they say.

Reconciliation is at the heart of mended marriages,



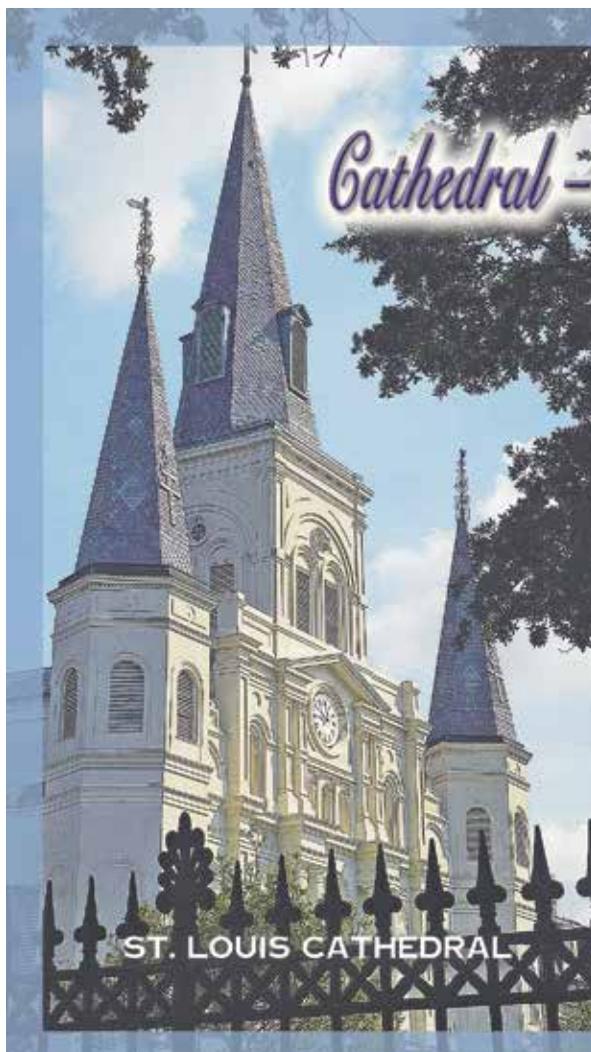
“Everyone say to himself: ‘When was the last time I went to confession? And if it has been a long time, don’t lose another day! Go, the priest will be good.’ – Pope Francis

family feuds, the avoidance of wars, wholesome treaties and returning to God. When it is missing, so are peace, joy, forgiveness and love.

At times, reconciliation is a bitter pill to swallow. When it

is the route taken, the results often lead to us say, “Why didn’t I do this earlier?”

Father Hemrick is a regular columnist for Catholic News Service, a service of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

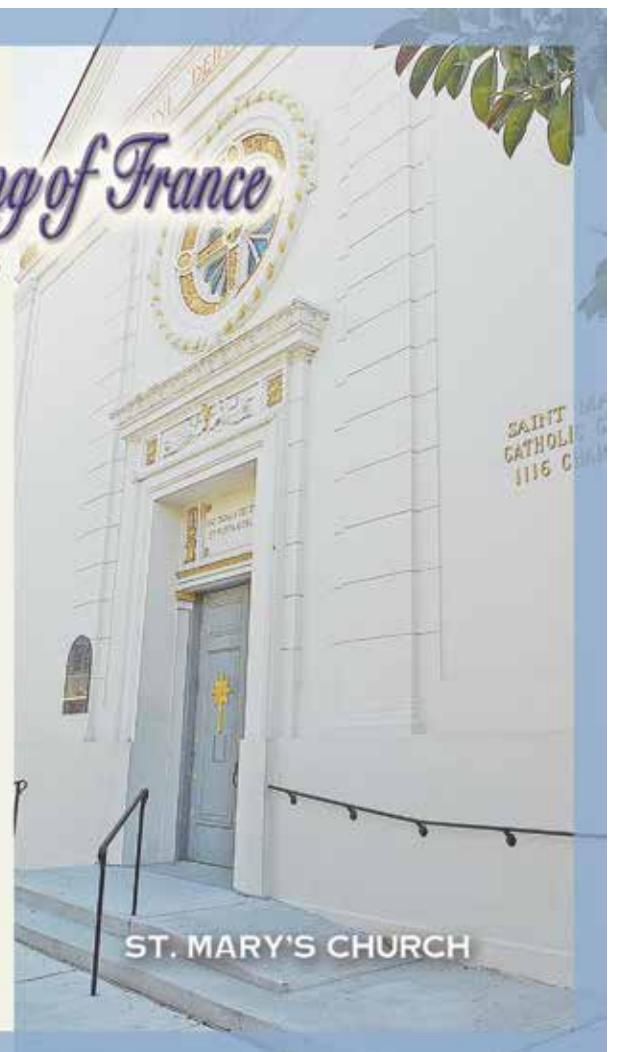


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A question worth asking: 'I do' or not to 'I do'

It's not easy to "take the plunge" into marriage these days. It seems many couples who might have contemplated marriage in another time are today caught on the horns of a terrible dilemma.

On the one hand, the bitter, painful and widespread experience of divorce has resulted in a "common sense" that the lifelong commitment to marriage is no guarantee of happiness. On the other hand, divorce often seems to be the only reasonable solution to the chances that even a good relationship



Chris
O'NEILL
GUEST COLUMN

will eventually turn bad.

The experience of unhealthy, intimate relationships has perhaps become even more widespread than divorce. Sticking with it "in good times and in bad" can seem to be naive and foolish advice.

The modern response to this conundrum is the "hook-

up" culture, which is facilitated by the dynamics of social interaction through the internet combined with modern advancement in pharmaceuticals, which give the impression of mitigating any and all risks.

According to this thinking, we can get what we think we need without the risk of dealing with the other person's "baggage." I can be as happy as I can reasonably expect to be – or at least get my basic needs met – without all of the risk associated with getting tangled up each other's business.

This logic of the hookup culture is built on the assumption that there is a fundamental instability in intimate relationships, and this has a major effect on our expectations of stability in relationships. The relatively stable but fundamentally uncommitted relationship I might find myself in is perceived as already more than I deserve or could hope for.

Marriage, on the other hand, is for the lucky or for the exceptionally good: It is an unrealistic, even dangerous, ideal, something we ordinary people who have issues and baggage don't have realistic capacity for.

Raise our expectations

This is an incredibly pessimistic view of human relationships. This is not an authentic view of the human

“Our hearts both yearn for, and have the capacity for, genuine intimacy with one another, which is not just sex. It is an intimacy that takes lots and lots of time and no small amount of effort.”

– Chris O'Neill

capacity for love and commitment. Our hearts both yearn for, and have the capacity for, genuine intimacy with one another, which is not just sex. It is an intimacy that takes lots and lots of time and no small amount of effort. It cannot be achieved in one night or in one swipe of the smart phone. But, it is an intimacy that carefully unpacks the baggage and heals the wounds and bears abundant fruit for the life of the world.

It is not a riskless endeavor. It is not painless to entrust ourselves wholly into the hands of another and to accept and embrace responsibility for them "all the days of my life," but this kind of relationship can therefore endure setbacks and failures along the way. It is a serious commitment that should take careful and sober discernment, but it is a risk we are made to take and a risk that

brings about new realities within us that cannot come about in any other way.

Like the seed that falls to the ground and sprouts, we have capacities that we do not even know about until we break out of ourselves and begin to truly love another, not just partially, but with all we've got until death do us part.

Our world needs our marriages and our families. It needs, more than ever, men and women who are learning every day, step by step, how to love and care for one another with growing sincerity and prudence and maturity. It needs the children of these men and women; children who have been loved and know how to love an imperfect and broken world, because they've grown up with that kind of love and seen it played out between Mom and Dad.

In the end it is what God has made us for. For most of us, it is our vocation, our calling from God to build his kingdom here in the real world, even (especially) for us broken and unworthy ones.

Do not be tempted by the fears of this world that say that genuine love is not possible or it is only for the lucky or the "good." We have the capacity for something far better if we only have the courage to seek it.

Chris O'Neill is associate director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. He can be reached at coneill@arch-no.org.



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Blessing of an Engaged Couple includes Scripture

Q I have heard that the “rite of betrothal” is becoming popular in certain young Catholic circles.

What does this rite entail? Was it more common prior to the Second Vatican Council? Would you recommend that an engaged



Father **DOYLE**
QUESTION CORNER

couple seek out this rite? (Washington)

A The rite of betrothal was a little-known but long-standing service of prayer in which a couple had their engagement formally blessed by a priest.

The 1906 edition of “The Catholic Encyclopedia”

notes that the ritual was more common in other countries than in the United States. An English version is still available, as an addition to Father Philip Weller’s translation of the 1962 Roman Ritual (although the rite did not form part of that

ritual itself.)

There is no prohibition against using that rite today, although it has largely been replaced in the contemporary church by the Blessing of an Engaged Couple from the church’s “Book of Blessings,” published in 1989.

That newer rite celebrates in prayer a newly engaged couple and asks the Lord to guide them as they prepare for marriage; it can be celebrated by a priest, deacon or lay minister (sometimes by a parent of the future bride or groom).

It includes scriptural readings – frequently from the 13th chapter of Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians (“Love is patient, love is kind”).

The engagement rings may be blessed during the ceremony, and the celebrant prays:

“Lord God, the source of all love, the wise plan of your providence has brought these young people together.

“As they prepare themselves for the sacrament of marriage and pray for your grace, grant that, strengthened by your blessing, they may grow in respect for one another and cherish each other with a sincere love.”

I would recommend that a couple use this newer blessing.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Drive, Albany, New York 12203. He is a contributing writer for Catholic News Service, a service of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. www.catholicnews-service.com.

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A bride in a white gown is seen from behind, looking out a window. The scene is lit with warm, golden light from the window, creating a romantic atmosphere. The bride's hair is styled in a long, wavy fashion. The window has a wooden frame and a white curtain is visible on the left side.

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Engagement: One very long Advent, but worth it

Much like Advent, engagement is supposed to be a time of joyful anticipation and preparation. “Supposed to” is the operative phrase. Most of the time, being engaged feels like what Advent felt like growing up: a long wait for something amazing that seems like it never ends.

Waiting is funny. At first, it goes by fast. Think about the holidays when you were a child. Before you could blink, it would be Thanksgiving, and Christmas was so close you could practically taste it. But once the First Sunday



John
GROSSO
and Nicole M.
PERONE
GUEST COLUMN

of Advent came around, time seemed to slow down. Every day drags on. Advent felt like an eternity, as though Christmas was a lifetime away.

Well, it turns out, that’s pretty much what being engaged is like. We got engaged Jan. 27, 2018, and we spent the first month or so afterwards in a blissful haze

of excitement, joy and a bit of impatience.

Only six days after the proposal, Nicole showed up at John’s parents’ house with a binder and an eager smile: “Now we get to plan the liturgy! Which eucharistic prayer should we use?”

In all seriousness, time has slowed to a crippling, agonizingly slow pace. Some days, it feels like we are living in a permanent state of Advent, and though our excitement is through the roof, our patience is wearing thin. We just want to be married already!

Our relationship has been punctuated both by that kind of excited impatience and the need to be patient and prayerful in periods of waiting.

A great example of this would be a conversation that we will have at least once a day: Nicole will bring up something that she believes demands immediate attention, and without fail, John will respond, “Do we have to talk about this now?” – to which Nicole will respond emphatically: “Yes, we do!”

While impatience can be a cross that both of us bear, we have learned along the way to call each other to more consistent patience and to use the waiting seasons of our lives for deeper growth – no season more so than that of our engagement.

Everyone has warned us

While impatience can be a cross that both of us bear, we have learned along the way to call each other to more consistent patience and to use the waiting seasons of our lives for deeper growth.

– John Grosso and Nicole M. Perone

that this time will fly by, and it does, especially when competing with work obligations, attending or serving in double-digits numbers of weddings, a lengthy trip to Rome and other unforeseen obstacles to leisurely wedding planning.

We often need to be reminded to stop, take a breath and enjoy the moment of being engaged (and maybe the bride needs that reminder more often than the groom ...).

It is providential, then, that our engagement falls during Advent – perhaps the church’s most well-known period of preparation and anticipation. As we wrapped presents and hummed Christmas tunes and lit our Advent wreaths, it was easy to forget that we were preparing for something bigger: our God breaking through and into our humanity, choosing to come among us as a helpless child.

Just so with engagement: It

is easy to be caught up in the Instagram content and pithy hashtag and forget what it is that we are being prepared for – that is, a divine in-breaking of a different kind.

The sacrament of matrimony breaks through our individual selves and binds us to another person, from the depths of our being, throughout every facet of our lives. This Advent reminded us of the advent of our next chapter, beginning in two weeks, April 27.

Whenever someone would say “I can’t wait” for something, John’s late grandmother would always say: “Don’t wish your life away.” She was right.

As much as we are eagerly anticipating April 27, it is important to take this time and appreciate it for what it is. The joy of Christmas did not come without the anticipation of Advent, and the same is true for our engagement.

Waiting cannot be wished away, no matter how hard we try, and try we have! Instead, just as we embraced what the period of waiting in Advent did for our souls, we must embrace what this period of premarital waiting is doing for our hearts: offering a time to prepare and get everything ready, including ourselves, before the big day.

John Grosso is director of digital media for the Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and a communications consultant. Nicole M. Perone is archdiocesan director of adult faith formation for the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut. They are engaged to be married on April 27, 2019.



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Recovering intimacy in a lonely, anything goes world

In the early 1990s, the famed mystery author P.D. James published "The Children of Men." Set in the year 2021, it describes a dystopian world where the human race had become incapable of reproducing itself.

The scientific reason for this sudden and total collapse in the birthrate was unknown, but the story's narrator concludes: "Pornography and sexual violence on film, on television, in books, in life, had increased and become more explicit, but less and less in the West we made love and bred children."

James wrote this book well before the rise of the internet, but like all good science fiction, she had a glimpse of a possible future world. It wasn't pretty.

Not quite three decades later, and James' dystopia seems to be arriving right on schedule. Sex, love and marriage all are showing troubling



Greg ERLANDSON
DIRECTOR
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SERVICE

signs of decline, according to a recent article in The Atlantic magazine.

Titled "The Sex Recession," the author, Kate Julian, actually ends up reporting on an even more worrisome decline in intimacy. It's not just in the United States, and it's not just among millennials.

The author at first takes a rather head-scratching tone: Why aren't these young people having more sex the way they are supposed to in our enlightened age? But the research she quotes shows that rates of sex are declining for all age groups and in many Western countries.

Despite the increasing graphic presentations of

popular media, despite the multibillion dollar and increasingly perverted pornography industry, physical and psychological intimacy are on the skids. People are hooking up less, dating less, having sex less, enjoying it less.

The report tells us dating and hookup apps and ubiquitous smartphone screens aren't making things better. What they are doing is degrading the ability to simply approach another person and have a conversation or suggest a date.

In fact, teens who report going on dates are decreasing. College classes now instruct students on the lost art of dating. Even at Catholic universities, kids are looking for how-to instructions on negotiating this suddenly strange terrain.

That license has led to lassitude is not likely to shock the church, which has two millennia of wisdom when it

"(As) Pope Paul predicted, the unitive aspect that is lifelong intimacy is eroding."
— Greg Erlandson

comes to human nature and sex. Sexual love is meant to be expressed in the context of marriage, the church teaches. It is meant to be at once total, faithful, exclusive and fecund.

In his much-abused encyclical "Humanae Vitae," Pope Paul VI talked about the "inseparable connection" in marital love between the "unitive" and "procreative."

For the past century of birth control, the battleground has been about the procreative aspect. Now the other shoe is dropping.

The "inseparable connection" has been severed. Society has become increasingly efficient at separating concep-

tion from sex, and as Pope Paul predicted, the unitive aspect that is lifelong intimacy is eroding.

The collapse of intimacy that The Atlantic describes may be an opportunity for the church to recast its message. Rather than "Thou shalt not" as its battle cry, the church can offer a genuinely positive vision of "the joy of love," a holistic understanding of sex and intimacy for a society increasingly despairing about both.

Greg Erlandson is director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service. He can be reached at gerlandson@catholicnews.com.



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‘The Science of Trust’: How to resolve disputes fairly

FOR YOUR MARRIAGE.ORG

During my year studying interpersonal communications, I was introduced to the work of one of the top researchers in marriage and relationship health, Dr. John M. Gottman.

Throughout my post-college years, I have kept up with his research. He is most famous for developing a formula that accurately predicts divorce after observing a couple interact with one another for only five minutes!

Here I will describe Dr. Gottman’s findings through his research on successful, happy couples, as written in his book, “The Science of Trust.”

1. Matches in conflict style

Most people fall into one of three conflict styles: validators, avoiders and volatiles. If the ratio of positivity to negativity in conflicts was 5:1, the relationships were functional. However, mismatches in conflict style will increase risk of divorce. The mismatches usually mean one person wants the other to change, but that person is avoiding change. The researchers did not find any volatiles and avoiders matched. They speculate it’s because they don’t get past the courtship phase!

2. Dialogue with perpetual issues

Gottman discovered that only 31% of couples’ disagreements were resolvable! This means the majority of conflicts were about perpetual problems, which was attributed to personality differences (even among similar temperaments). While active listening seems like a good idea in theory, it almost never is practiced or works in real-life settings, because if there is any negativity at all, the listener finds that hard to ignore and will usually react to it.

One of the biggest indicators for a successful relation-

ship is having a “soft” start-up. This usually puts the pressure on women, since we are the ones who bring up issues in the relationship 80% of the time. The positive responses in these conflicts were from couples in relationships who used the gentler start-up. So

remember to keep your sense of humor, and be sensitive to your beloved! Dialogue is necessary to avoid “gridlock” in conflicts, and remember, God created us uniquely, so rejoice in that!

3. Present issues as situational joint problems

Instead of blaming your spouse for your feelings of irritability and disappointment in the relationship, express how you feel, but then identify your needs. Be gentle in this conversation. Focus on what he or she is doing right, and acknowledge that first.

Remember, you’re not perfect either, so don’t expect gratitude for your complaints.

4. Successful repair attempts

No one is perfect. After years of spending time with someone, you’re going to get on their nerves from time to

See **TRUST** page 18 ▶



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‘Just Wait’: A letter from a newlywed couple

By Valerie Repetski
www.valerierepetski.com

Dear The Dating, The Engaged, The Married,

Valerie: “Just wait. It’ll get worse when you’re married.”
“Just wait until you’ve been married for a year...”

“Just wait until the seven year itch...”

“Just wait until you’ve been married as long as we have...”

The “just wait until...” scale seems to be sliding further and further away no matter how long you’ve been married. My husband, Rocco, and I have been married for a little over a year and a half and are determined to tell anyone who will listen just how amazing marriage is! Marriage is a gift from God!

Rocco: I can’t count how many times I’ve heard “Oh, you’re engaged? Congratulations, but just wait for marriage...” or “Oh, you’re newlyweds? Congratulations, but just wait until after the ‘honeymoon’ phase...” These are messages delivered with a sense of impending doom. At work or elsewhere, these “just waits” are often accompanied by comments about “the old ball and chain,” snide remarks about spouses, and all kinds of dubious marriage advice.

Valerie: I guess we are never quite married long enough

to be considered to know what married life is like, but we would disagree. At no point do Rocco and I think we know everything about marriage. We are learning more and more about one another and about married life every day. But to those who are engaged, to those who are dating, to those who believe their vocation is to one day get married, to those who have already spoken those vows, take heart: Marriage is an amazing, life changing, ridiculously fun adventure!

Rocco: I’m on a mission: God created me to love Val and sacrifice my life for her. He created her to be my perfect match and for those whom God calls to the vocation of marriage, He’s created a perfect match for you as well. Forget anything you’ve heard from people who’ve become disillusioned and instead “just wait” for the joy, the excitement, the laughter, and the sheer fun of what’s to come!

➤ **Just wait ...** until you come home and your husband, who has just come home from work, has the fire going in the fireplace, Christmas lights plugged in and hot chocolate set out for you.

➤ **Just wait ...** until you come home to a house full of balloons and a gigantic card on your birthday and you realize how hard your wife worked to see your joy and



Photo | COURTESY VALERIE REPETSKI

Valerie and Rocco Repetski are in a Catholic pop/rock band, The Restless in Virginia, that is on a mission to share the love and hope of the Gospel. Valerie is also a worship leader in Washington, D.C., and music director for campus ministry at George Washington University. Rocco is an engineer and does youth ministry with the Youth Apostles.

that she’s been planning this moment for a long time.

➤ **Just wait ...** until the first snow since you’ve been married and your husband goes outside and creates a huge heart in the road to show you from the upstairs window.

➤ **Just wait ...** until she hatches a plan to feed the homeless and you remember how much you love her generosity and compassion.

➤ **Just wait ...** until you find the love note he hid around the house for you to find during the day.

➤ **Just wait ...** until you get to open your lunch bag to read the love note she wrote you that morning.

➤ **Just wait ...** until your husband comes home from work and the first thing he does is run, literally run, to find you, lift you up in an embrace, spin you around, and give you a “hello” kiss.

➤ **Just wait ...** until you see your wife waving from the window as you come home from work, with a huge smile on her face, so happy to see you, and she surprises you with a scrumptious meal, a clean house, and plans for the future: fruit of a grueling day while you were at work, and all out of love.

➤ **Just wait ...** until your husband pulls a dozen beautiful red roses from behind

his back, in the middle of the week, for no other reason than he loves you and knows you love surprises.

➤ **Just wait ...** until when you serve food for the two of you and she insists you have the warmer dinner, the choicest portion of meat and the bigger cookie, just because she loves to see you smile.

➤ **Just wait ...** until he changes his routine and brings his laptop over to work with you on the couch because he knows you enjoy his presence.

➤ **Just wait ...** until you two really realize for the first time that you are not just “her” family, not just “your” family, but your own family.

➤ **Just wait ...** until your husband tells you every day that you’re his most beautiful bride, and he’s the luckiest guy in the world.

➤ **Just wait ...** until she giggles every time you surprise her with kisses on her cheek.

➤ **Just wait ...** until your husband asks to hold a friend’s baby for the first time, and he instantly melts, and you are reminded for the billionth time how good of a dad he will be one day.

➤ **Just wait ...** until you see your wife cradling a friend’s infant in her arms, and she instantly knows everything to do to calm him, and you are reminded for the billionth time how good of a mom she will be one day.

➤ **Just wait ...** because you have so much joy ahead of you...

Valerie Repetski is a worship leader in the Washington, D.C., area and is the music director for campus ministry at George Washington University. (www.valerierepetski.com) Rocco is an engineer and does youth ministry with Youth Apostles, a community of Catholic men (www.youthapostles.org). Valerie and Rocco also do ministry with their Catholic rock band, The Restless. (www.therestless.net) This article appeared on <http://valerierepetski.com/blog/> and is used with permission.



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Forty days and a wedding: A small town rallies

It has been a hard winter in my part of the Midwest. Frigid temperatures, higher than normal snowfall, blustery Plains winds.

One Saturday, a blizzard closed the interstate highway for miles as trucks jackknifed and visibility shrunk. The snow attacked us in icy horizontal shards, the city asked everyone to stay home and an eerie urban silence enveloped neighborhoods.

"Wouldn't it be awful if you had planned your wedding for today?" I asked.

Of course, some people had.

In the Omaha World Herald March 2, Marjie Ducey chronicles the heartening story of a young couple in a small Nebraska town whose wedding was sidetracked by this whiteout blizzard.

Even their "fun bus," which was supposed to transport the bridal party from their little Lutheran church to a city reception venue 40 miles away, was canceled.

The community rallied. The fire station, four blocks from the church, contained a party room, and people began to decorate. A woman who didn't know the couple baked cakes. The fire department provided an ambulance to take people from the church to the fire station. Someone knew a nearby disc jockey. Liquor cabinets opened all over town.

I grew up in a small town, so it didn't surprise me that 550 people had been invited to the wedding. It's come one, come all. Less than half that number made it, but it was still quite a party.

It takes a village

A few people spent the night on pews in the church, and helpers plowed trails for those who needed them.

I was so happy to read this story that I cried. Because right now, my weary heart – and probably yours – can use some good news.

Consider the news we've digested in just a couple of weeks. Cardinal George Pell of Australia, convicted of child



Effie CALDAROLA
GUEST COLUMN

sexual abuse. Testimony by our president's longtime lawyer reminded us that we've become inured to phrases like "payment to a porn star."

A rapper is accused of sexually abusing underage girls, a titan of business allegedly sent photos of his private parts, an NFL team owner faces charges that he solicited sex in a "massage" parlor where women may have been trafficked, and an MLB team owner is filmed in what resembles a physical altercation with his wife.

Amid this sordidness, we move into Lent.

The 40 days of Lent mirror the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert before he began his ministry. There, the devil tried to tempt Jesus, lonely and hungry, with power, with pride, with the ability to control things for his own benefit. Jesus resisted.

Throughout his ministry, these are the temptations against which Jesus railed. He chose the weak over the powerful, he disdained the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who placed rules above people. He elevated women, defending them against stone



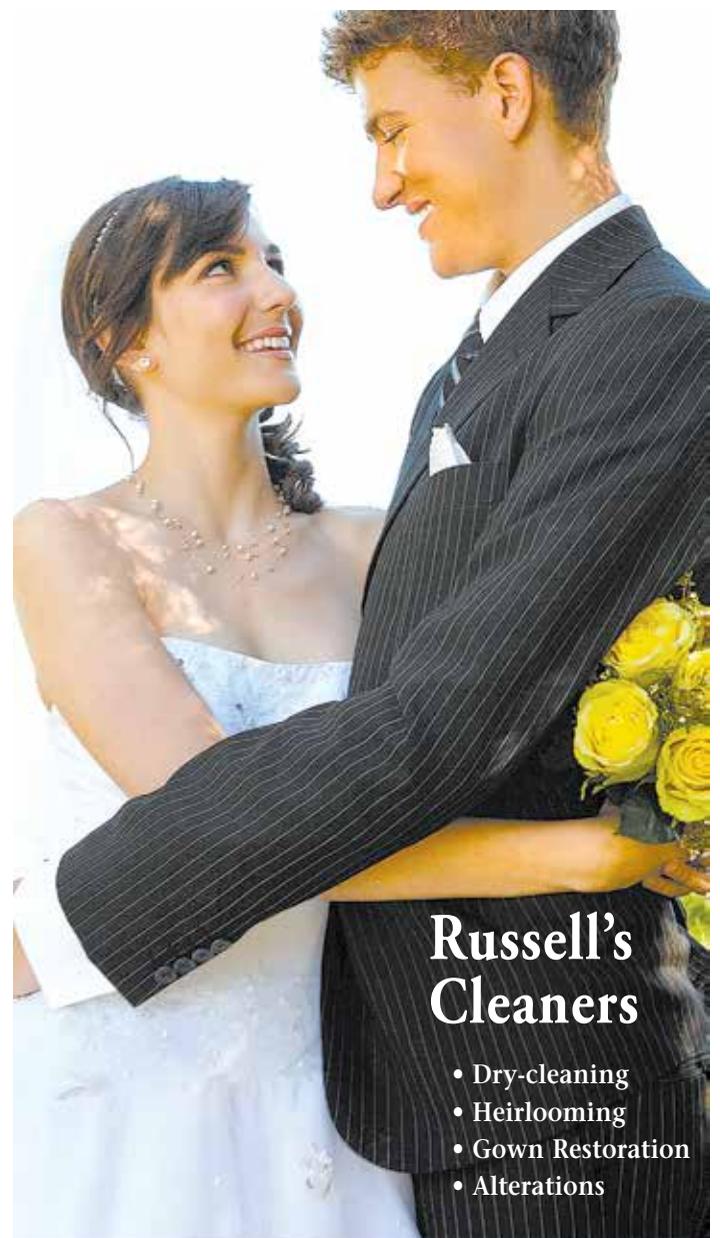
"Let us not grow tired of doing good, for in due time we shall reap our harvest, if we do not give up. So then, while we have the opportunity, let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of the faith." – Galatians 6:9-10

throwers and welcoming the tears lavished on his feet. He constantly cautioned against greed and wealth.

Jesus lived a life in contradiction to the powerful – of his own time and ours. Maybe it's time to go to the desert for Lent, and ask Jesus how to proceed. Maybe we should spend more time with Jesus, asking how the way forward might be found in community.

It's good to remember that Jesus began his ministry in community, at a wedding, and his presence in that community heralded good wine appearing seemingly out of nowhere. A little bit like it did at a wedding in rural Nebraska.

Effie Caldarella is a columnist with Catholic News Service.



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A love letter to my beloved: From my heart to yours

Dear Beloved,

I am writing this letter as a token of my love for you, as a keepsake for you to treasure, and as a reminder of my commitment to us and to our life together. I want you to know that I love you, ALL OF YOU, and I always will. I am committed to our marriage until death do us part. At times, in moments of deep frustration, I may have questioned otherwise, but that was my immature way of seeking love from you when I should have been looking for God, not you, to fill the void in my temporarily wandering heart. Beloved, I know I have hurt you countless times with my words and actions and for all them – I sincerely and humbly ask for your forgiveness. Since God made my heart to fit with yours in our sacrament of marriage, I long for you even when my heart is broken, even when I feel so hurt by your actions or lack thereof that my heart feels frozen – I still long for you. I have pondered this many times, and I have come to realize that it is what God truly desires – this longing. It keeps bringing me back to my knees in prayer to pray for us.

Two become one, and when that oneness feels broken, I have two choices: 1. Run from the pain and bury myself in work, pleasure, distractions or 2. Lean into the pain and allow myself to feel it, creating a longing in my heart for God to bring healing to the brokenness so our marriage can continue to be made holy the way God intends.

Sadly, I think many couples choose option No. 1. On the outside they are still married, but the connection internally is lost. This is when the temptations of the world can move in at an alarming rate, because we all long for love. When authentic love is not being exchanged with your spouse, it is only a

FOR YOUR MARRIAGE.ORG

matter of time before you begin to look for “love in all the wrong places.” Eventually the marriage completely crumbles or spouses just live together for the sake of convenience. My beloved, I keep choosing No. 2 because I love God and I truly love you! I see such goodness in you, and I also see the potential for greatness! I want more than anything to have a holy marriage and family life. I AM WILLING TO FIGHT FOR IT.

Sometimes I feel like our love for one another gets buried amidst the daily stresses of life. Trying to balance everything: prayer, family time, our time, work, caring for the children, exercise and other commitments is so challenging! There is no one else I would rather balance life with though, than you! We are a team, and you are the best partner I could ask for. God blessed me abundantly with you! When our love starts to get buried, please know, with God's grace, I will fight to uncover it and allow God to breathe life back into it. He gave us the gift of each other and our life together is a daily unwrapping of his present to both of us.

I know at times trust between us has been tested; good, heartfelt communication has been challenging; promises we made have been broken and overall new baggage has been formed. We are human and our sinful nature is in constant need of God's mercy. OUR MARRIAGE is in constant need of his

mercy. The amazing thing is that God's love and mercy makes all things new! My beloved, I want you to know that with this love letter, I today renew my commitment to loving God first so I can more wholly love you with his love pouring forth from my heart into yours. God's love can heal our baggage, old and new.

As we both grow closer to God, we are able to see ourselves more clearly – all of our strengths and weaknesses. We both have faults that challenge each other, but our marriage grows in holiness when we actively seek God at our weakest points and beg him to be there so we can freely love one another the way he wants and freely receive love from one another the way that he desires. I know God has such a special and unique plan for our marriage, and it is exciting to watch that unfold!

Thank you for all of the sacrifices you have made and continue to make for us. I am always reminded when I see you working so hard that sacrifice means “to make holy.” Your daily sacrifices for me and for our family do not go unnoticed. In fact, in a mystical way, it is deeply attractive because I see Christ working through you in a powerful way as you serve our marriage and family.

Truly, our life together is beautiful. It has been shaped and formed through all that God has allowed us to experience together as a couple. It is us – in good and in bad, in sickness and in health, in rich and in poor – beauty woven throughout it all – that makes this journey amazing! I look forward to all that lies ahead. Please know that my heart is yours forever in God's love.

Your Spouse in Christ,

– Kathleen

TRUST

► From PAGE 15

time, and vice versa. This is actually a good thing! It helps us identify our areas of weakness beyond the shadow of a doubt, and remain humble through seeking correction.

Your goal in a relationship is not to avoid these conflict situations or punish yourself when they happen, but rather

to process the damage done and make repair. This point of repair is so crucial. Saying sorry alone is never enough.

Work with your spouse in identifying those areas where you strayed, apologize for those specifics and ask what you can do to make it up to them.

I teach my daughters that for every offense they commit to one another, they must actively seek three to five good

things to do in reparation for them. Repairs also help maintain the positive balance in the relationship.

5. Remaining physiologically calm during conflict

Once adrenaline is flooding our bodies, we are rendered incapable of empathetic conversation. Learn techniques and skills to self-soothe. When you sense your temper rising, either take a break, or

interject with some humor. Reach out to hold each other's hands. Stop the negativity in its tracks.

These skills will not only help you in your marriage, but they will help you as a parent when you teach your children positive methods of self-soothing.

6. Accept influence from your spouse

Resist the pattern of turning down every request your husband or wife makes. Accepting influence means looking at your beloved's point of view and allowing their way, as long as it's not immoral. This means stretching your comfort zone.

So if your significant other asks for you to wake up early on a Saturday morning to pray in front of abortion clinic, for example, try it, instead of making excuses or backing down.

7. Building friendship, intimacy and positivity affects systems

This is where couples who practice Natural Family Planning have an advantage. There is already that regular built-in daily evaluation of how you're

going to spend your time together, and how you will show your love for one another. The issue isn't whether you do love each other, but rather which way are you going to express it today?

This just means keeping up the courtship all throughout marriage. Learn to love each other well. Keep a greater ratio of positivity to negativity. Start those habits now, and you'll have a seamless transition into marriage.

My husband, Alex, and I can attribute much of our success in marriage to prayer, regularly receiving the sacraments and following these points in our relationship.

After reading these points, maybe you'll find an area that needs improvement in your own relationship. If you recognize these habits in your own relationship, congrats! Keep up the good work; you're on the road to happily ever after.

Article originally published by CatholicMatch Institute, which provides resources to help single Catholics develop a strong foundation for marriage through advocacy, programs, and scholarships. Used with permission.



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Wedding information available through individual churches

The following information is the most recent available information for church weddings at various parishes in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Contact the parishes to schedule wedding dates and for policies. The churches in the following list are among the ones that have celebrated the most weddings in recent years. It is not a comprehensive list. (504) area code is assumed unless otherwise listed.

St. Louis Cathedral, 615 Pere Antoine Alley, New Orleans, 503-0351, <http://www.stlouiscathedral.org/matrimony>. Wedding fee includes the church, cantor, organist, wedding director and security. Weddings scheduled Monday through Friday at 3 p.m. or 7 p.m. and Saturdays at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m. or 7 p.m.

All Saints, 1441 Teche St., New Orleans, allsaintschurchnola.org: Weddings may be scheduled Monday through Friday by request. Times also available on Saturdays before 1 p.m. or Saturday evenings at 7 p.m. Call Miranda at 361-8835.

Annunciation, 517 Avenue B, Bogalusa, (985) 732-4280. Please call the church office for details.

Ascension of Our Lord, 1900 Greenwood Dr., LaPlace, (985) 652-2615, E-Mail: aolparishoffice@gmail.com; Website: www.aolparish.org. Check for details. Organist fee additional.

Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, 3037 Dauphine St., New Orleans, 943-5566; www.seeloschurchno.org (under Sacraments and Service tab): Contact church to reserve. Wedding times Friday evenings (except first Fridays) or Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and from 6 to 8 p.m. (None scheduled from 2-6 p.m.) Other dates and times considered upon request.

Blessed Sacrament-St. Joan of Arc Parish (St. Joan of Arc Church), 8321 Burthe St., New Orleans, 866-7330: Call the parish office for details. Reserve church prior to booking reception venue. Additional fees for musicians.

Blessed Trinity, 4230 S. Broad St., New Orleans, 822-3394. Call the church office for details.

Divine Mercy Church,

4337 Sal Lentini Pkwy., Kenner, 466-5016, www.divinemercyparish.org. Weddings Friday evenings outside of Lent and Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Contact the parish office about other days. Some smaller-scale weddings Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. Visit website or call for more information.

Good Shepherd Parish: See St. Stephen Church, St. Henry Church and Our Lady of Good Counsel Church.

Holy Family Church, 1220 14th Ave., Franklinton, (985) 839-4040: Weddings Fridays from 4-7 p.m.; Saturdays 10 a.m.-1 p.m., and 7 p.m. Reserve church before booking reception venue. No charge for use of church by registered parishioners. Musicians contracted separately.

Holy Guardian Angels Mission, 1701 Bridge City Ave., Bridge City, 341-9522: Wedding times Fridays at 6:30 or 7 p.m.; Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and from 6 to 7 p.m. Other dates and times considered upon request. Additional fees for musicians.

Holy Name of Jesus, 6367 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, (Mail: 6220 LaSalle Pl., New Orleans, LA 70118), 865-7430, ext. 202; weddings@hnjchurch.org. Wedding times are Fridays at 7:30 p.m.; Saturdays at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 6 p.m. or 8 p.m. Contact wedding coordinator. Additional fees for the wedding coordinator, music coordinator and organist.

Holy Name of Mary, 400 Verret St., New Orleans, (in Historic Algiers Point), Mailing address: 500 Eliza Street, New Orleans; 362-5511; <http://www.holynamemarynola.org>. Church wedding coordinator Laurie Mary Hayes Coniglio. Please call or email hnmmary@nocoxmail.com for wedding

guidelines including music, directions and fees.

Immaculate Conception, 4401 7th St., Marrero, 341-9516: Weddings may be scheduled on Friday evenings at 7 p.m. or Saturdays before or at 1 p.m.; or at or after 6 p.m. Check for details.

Immaculate Conception (Jesuits'), 130 Baronne St., New Orleans, 442-2622; Website: www.jesuitchurch.net. Wedding coordinator, Julie Vanderbrook. Weddings scheduled Monday through Friday throughout the day; Friday evenings at 7 p.m.; and Saturdays between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., then 6 p.m. or 8 p.m. Check for details.

Infant Jesus of Prague Mission, 700 Maple Ave., Harvey, 368-1397. Call the parish office for details.

Mary Queen of Peace, 1501 W. Causeway Approach, Mandeville, (985) 626-6977: Weddings scheduled Fridays at 7 p.m.; Saturdays until 2 p.m. and at 7 p.m. Please refer to website at www.maryqueenofpeace.org and call church office for details. Musician fees additional.

Mater Dolorosa, 8128 Plum St., New Orleans, 866-3669: Check for details. Additional fees for the wedding coordinators, cantor and organist. Refer to mdolorosa.com for guidelines.

Most Holy Trinity, 501 Holy Trinity Drive, Covington, (985) 892-0642: Weddings on Fridays at 7 p.m. or Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; or 6:30 p.m. or later. Additional fees for organist and vocalist.

Our Lady of Divine Providence, 1000 N. Starrett Road, Metairie, 466-4511: Weddings scheduled on Fridays at 7 p.m.; Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. Call parish office for details.

Our Lady of Good Counsel Church (Good Shepherd Parish), 1307 Louisiana Ave., New Orleans, 899-1378: Information (under sacraments tab) at www.GoodShepherdParishNOLA.com or call Paige Saleun, wedding coordinator, 277-3796. Additional fees for musicians.

Our Lady of Grace Church, 780 Hwy. 44, Reserve, (985) 536-2613, E-Mail: [arch-no.org.** Check for details.](mailto:olgchurch@</p>
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Our Lady of Guadalupe, 411 N. Rampart St., New Orleans, 525-1551: Call for details.

Our Lady of the Lake, 312 Lafitte St., Mandeville, (985) 626-5671, www.ollparish.info: Weddings scheduled Fridays at 7 p.m. or Saturdays at 1 p.m., 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. Please visit the website or call the church office for wedding guidelines and information. Wedding coordinators and sacristan services provided.

Our Lady of Lourdes, 700 Westchester Blvd., Slidell, (985) 643-4137, ext. 300: Contact the office for details or check the website, www.ollparishslidell.com.

Organist fee additional.

Our Lady of Lourdes, 2621 Colonial Blvd., Violet, 682-7070, E-Mail: oll@arch-no.org: Weddings may be scheduled on Fridays outside of Lent. Saturdays between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. or later. Other times depending upon parish schedule. For information, contact the office or check wedding guidelines at <http://www.olol-church.com/sacraments.html>.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 8968 Hwy. 23, Belle Chasse, 394-0314, E-Mail: churchoffice@olphbc.org: Check for details. Organist fee

See **CHURCHES** page 20 >



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CHURCHES

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additional.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 1908 Short St., Kenner, 464-0361: Arrangements must be made eight months in advance. Please call the parish office to make an appointment. Wedding times are Fridays at 7 or 7:30 p.m., Saturdays between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. or evenings at 7 or 7:30 p.m. Musicians/singers not included in the fee. For more information, call or email secretary@olphla.org.

Our Lady of Prompt Succor, 2320 Paris Road, Chalmette, 271-3441, Website: olps-chalmette.org. For details, call rectory or check website.

Our Lady of Prompt Succor, 146 Fourth St., Westwego, 341-9522: Wedding times Fridays at 6:30 or 7 p.m.; Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and from 6-7:30 p.m. Other dates and times considered upon request. Additional fees for musicians.

Our Lady of the Rosary Church, 3368 Esplanade Ave., (Parish Office: 1322 Moss St.), New Orleans, 70119. Visit www.olr-nola.org for the wedding calendar and guidelines. Please call the Parish Office, 488-2659, for additional information.

Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, 1835 St. Roch Ave., New Orleans, 944-0166, olssno@arch-no.org: Weddings are held on Fridays between 6 and 7 p.m.; Saturdays starting at 11 a.m. but no later than 1 p.m., and Saturday evenings beginning at 6 p.m. Weddings will not be held on religious holy days, civil holidays, Christmas week or during Holy



"One word or a pleasing smile is often enough to raise up a saddened and wounded soul." – St. Therese of Lisieux

Week. Other dates and times are considered upon request. Contact parish office for more information.

Sacred Heart, 28088 Main St., Lacombe, (Mail: P. O. Box 1080, Lacombe, LA 70445-1080), (985) 882-5229. Check for details.

St. Agnes, 3310 Jefferson Hwy., Jefferson, 833-3366 or 833-4118, call or email Sabrina Haynes or Kelly Wilbert at stagneschurch@nocoxmail.com. Organist and cantor fees are additional.

Wedding times are Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and 7 p.m. For Wedding guidelines and forms, see www.stagnesjefferson.org (click "Weddings").

St. Alphonsus, New Orleans: See St. Mary's Assumption Church and St. Mary's Chapel.

St. Andrew the Apostle, 3101 Eton St., New Orleans (Algiers), 393-2334: Contact wedding coordinator Mary Ann Dallam, 415-7402 or mdallam@standrewparish.net. Wedding

times on Fridays at 6 p.m. or Saturdays at 1 p.m. or 6 p.m. Other days and times are considered upon request. Website for wedding guidelines at www.standrewparish.net under sacraments/marriage.

St. Angela Merici, 901 Beverly Garden Drive, Metairie, 835-0324: Call for details.

St. Ann, 3601 Transcontinental Blvd., Metairie, 455-7071: Call for details.

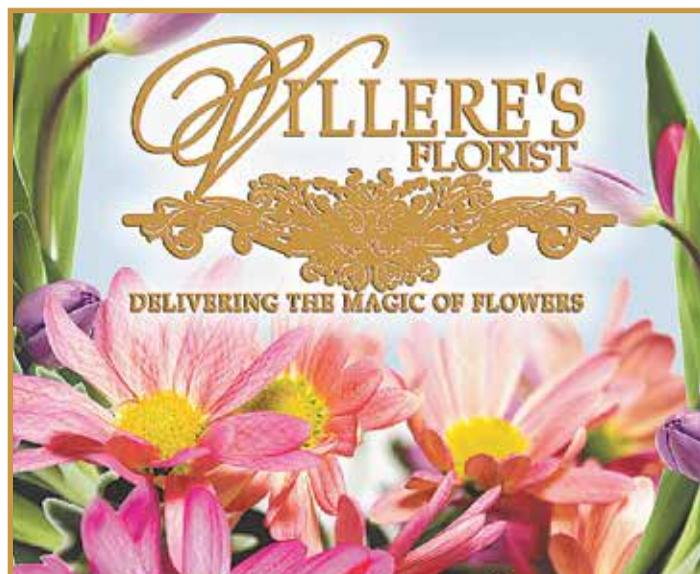
St. Anselm Catholic

Church, 306 St. Mary St., Madisonville 70447: Schedule date with the parish office before any other wedding arrangements are made. You may also visit www.stanselparish.org for additional information or contact our Wedding Coordinator, Debbie Freda, at (985) 845-7342. Weddings are Fridays at 6:30 p.m.; Saturdays before 1 p.m. and Saturdays at 6:30 p.m.

St. Anthony Church, 924 Monroe St., Gretna, 368-1313: Check for details. Wedding times are Fridays at 6:30 p.m.; Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; or 6:30 p.m. Fee includes services of Debbie Swiler, wedding coordinator. Organist and cantor fees additional.

St. Anthony of Padua, 4640 Canal St., New Orleans, 488-2651: Call at least six months in advance for date, availability and appointment. Wedding times are scheduled on Fridays at 6 or 7 p.m.; Saturdays at 1 or 7 p.m. All fees include the services of a wedding coordinator. Contact church organist and cantor for fees. Lighted parking in the schoolyard. Mrs. Dede Dardis, wedding coordinator, 488-3578.

St. Augustine, 1210 Gov. Nicholls St., New Orleans, 525- See CHURCHES page 21 ►



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5934: Call for details.

St. Benedict, 20370 Smith Road, Covington, (985) 892-5202, office@stbencov.org: Wedding times by appointment. Call the office for more details.

St. Benilde, 1901 Division St., Metairie, 834-4980: Wedding times are Fridays at 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m. or 7 p.m.; Saturdays at 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m., noon, 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 7 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. Wedding guidelines and forms available at www.stbenilde.org. Wedding coordinators, Danielle Delaup Hill, 666-1106, and/or Anita Delaup, 874-1210.

St. Catherine of Siena, 105 Bonnabel Blvd., Metairie, 835-9343, info@scschurch.com: Weddings scheduled on Fridays between 6-8 p.m.; Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; or 6-8 p.m. Wedding coordinator Jeanie Favret, 583-3438, favretc0@aol.com. Wedding guidelines at parish website, www.scschurch.com. Contact parish office for more information.

St. Charles Borromeo, 13396 River Road, Destrehan, (985) 764-6383, sbourg@scbhumilitas.org: Wedding times are Fridays at 7 p.m.; Saturdays at 1 p.m. or 7 p.m. Call parish for more information.

St. Christopher, 309 Manson Ave., Metairie, 837-8214: Weddings scheduled Fridays between 6-8 p.m.; Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and between 6-8 p.m. Organist and vocalists separately contracted by the couple.

St. Clement of Rome, 4317 Richland Ave., Metairie, 887-7821: Wedding times are Fridays



"Receive this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." – "The Order of Celebrating Matrimony," No. 67A

between 6-8 p.m.; Saturdays before 1:30 p.m.; and Saturday evenings no earlier than 6:30 p.m. Wedding coordinator is Theresa Laughlin, email, tloughlin@scrparish.org.

St. Cletus, 3600 Claire Ave., Gretna, 367-7951: Call church office for more details.

St. David, 5617 St. Claude Ave., New Orleans, 947-2853, E-Mail: stdavid@arch-no.org: Wedding times are Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and between 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Weddings may be scheduled on Friday evenings at 7 p.m. St. David School gymnasium is available for receptions. For more information, call the parish office. Music guidelines and fees available upon request. Wedding coordinator, Terry C. Montegut, 427-4586. Organist is Irene Young.

St. Dominic, 775 Harrison Ave., New Orleans, 482-4156, mhug@stdparish.org: Weddings scheduled on Fridays at

7 p.m.; Saturdays at 1:30 or 7 p.m. Call parish office for details.

St. Edward the Confessor, 4921 W. Metairie Ave., Metairie, 888-0703, stedward@steddy.org: Weddings scheduled Fridays after 7 p.m., Saturdays before 1 p.m. and Saturday evenings after 6 p.m. Organist and cantor fees additional. Contact the parish office for more information.

St. Francis of Assisi, 631 State St., New Orleans, 891-4479: Weddings scheduled Fridays at 6:30 or 7 p.m.; no Friday night weddings during Lent. Saturdays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 6:30 or 7 p.m. Time adjustments may be made based upon parish events. Visit www.stfrancisuptown.com under sacraments, then matrimony to find Wedding Handbook. Contact Teresa Miller at parish office or tmiller@stfrancisuptown.com.

St. Francis Xavier, 444 Metairie Road, Metairie:

Check for details. Additional fees for organist and cantor. Wedding coordinator/cantor/soloist, Linda Jones, 421-7946, misslindajones@yahoo.com.

St. Gabriel the Archangel, 4700 Pineda St., New Orleans, 282-0296, stgabriel@archno.org, www.stgabe.net. Call the parish office for complete details at least six months before anticipated wedding date. Reserve church before booking a reception venue. Additional fees for musicians.

St. Genevieve Catholic Church, 58203 Hwy. 433, Slidell (Mailing address: 58025 St. Genevieve Lane, 70460), (985) 643-3832, E-Mail: stgenevieve@stgenevieve.us; Wedding times are Fridays at 6 p.m. and Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. or at 6 p.m. Please call the parish office for details.

St. Gertrude the Great, 17292 La. Hwy. 631, Des Allemands, (985) 758-7542: Call rectory to schedule or for information.

St. Henry Church (Good Shepherd Parish), 803 General Pershing St., New Orleans, 899-1378: Information (under sacraments tab) at GoodShepherdParishNOLA.com or call Paige Saleun, wedding coordinator, 227-3796. Additional fees for musicians.

St. James Major, 3736 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, 304-6750: Check for details. Additional fees for organist and cantor.

St. Jane de Chantal, 74020 Maple St., Abita Springs, (985) 892-1439: Visit saintjanedechantal.com. Contact See **CHURCHES** page 22 ►



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CHURCHES

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parish office for wedding fees.

St. Jerome, 2402 33rd St., Kenner, 443-3174: Call parish office for details. Wedding times vary on Saturdays before 2 p.m. or after 6 p.m.; other times considered upon request.

St. Joachim, 5505 Barataria Blvd., Marrero, 341-9226. Please call the church office for details.

St. Joan of Arc, 529 West Fifth St., LaPlace, (985) 652-9100, email, secretary@sjachurch.com: Check for details. Church use fee. Additional fees for musicians.

St. John Bosco, 2114 Oakmere Drive, Harvey, 340-0444, office@saintjohnboscochurch.org: Call for details.

St. John of the Cross, 61050 Briar Lake Drive, Lacombe, (985) 882-3779: Check for details.

St. Joseph Church and Shrine, 610 Sixth St., Gretna, 368-1313: Check for details. Wedding times are Fridays at 6:30 p.m.; Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; or 6:30 p.m. Fee includes services of Debbie Swiler, wedding coordinator. Organist and cantor fees additional.

St. Joseph, 1802 Tulane Ave., New Orleans, 522-3186: Weddings scheduled Monday through Saturday. Check with wedding director for available times. Refer to www.stjosephchurch-no.org for church guidelines. Fee includes wedding sacristan and parking lot attendant for rehearsal and wedding.

St. Joseph the Worker, 455 Ames Blvd., Marrero, 347-

8438: Call for details.

St. Katharine Drexel Parish, 2015 Louisiana Ave., New Orleans, 891-3172, stkatharine@arch-no.org: Please call or email the church office for details

St. Louis King of France, 1609 Carrollton Ave., Metairie, 834-9977: Wedding times are Fridays 5 p.m. and later; Saturdays 10 a.m. through 1 p.m.; and 6 p.m. and later. For information, visit <https://slkfchurch.com/sacraments>. Wedding coordinator is pastor, Father Mark Raphael, mraphael@archdiocese-no.org.

St. Luke the Evangelist, 910 Cross Gates Blvd., Slidell, (985) 641-6429: No fees for parishioners. Non-parishioners, call for information. Wedding times are Fridays after 5:30 p.m.; Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and after 6:30 p.m. For wedding information, call Deacon Harold Burke.

St. Maria Goretti, 7300 Crowder Blvd., New Orleans, 242-7554: Wedding times available on Friday evenings 6:30-7:30 p.m., Saturday morning, afternoon or evening. Additional fees for organists or musicians. Contact the parish office for details.

St. Margaret Mary, 1050-B Robert Blvd., Slidell, (985) 643-6124: Wedding times available some Fridays. Saturdays 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Website: www.saintmmchurch.org.

St. Martha, 2555 Apollo Drive, Harvey, 366-1604. Call the parish office for details.

St. Mary Magdalen, 6425 West Metairie Ave., Metairie, 733-0922: Call for details.

St. Mary of the Angels, 3501 N. Miro St., New Orleans, 945-



"When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' (And) Jesus said to her, 'Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servers, 'Do whatever he tells you.'" – John 2:3-5

3186: Call parish office for details.

St. Mary's Assumption Church (St. Alphonsus Parish), 923 Josephine St., New Orleans, 522-6748, www.stalphonsusno.com. Check website for details.

St. Mary's Chapel (St. Alphonsus Parish), 1516 Jackson Ave., New Orleans, 522-6748: www.stalphonsusno.com. Check website for details.

St. Mary's Church, c/o St. Louis Cathedral, 615 Pere Antoine Alley, New Orleans, 503-0351, <http://www.stlouiscathedral.org/matrimony>: Wedding fee includes the church, cantor, organist, wedding director and security. Weddings scheduled Monday through Saturday at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. or 7 p.m.

St. Matthew the Apostle, 10021 Jefferson Hwy.,

River Ridge, 737-4537, www.stmatthewtheapostle.net under Sacraments.

St. Patrick, 724 Camp St., New Orleans: Times: Monday through Friday from 3-7 p.m.; Saturdays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Other times by special arrangement. Fee includes wedding coordinator and security for evening weddings. Contact wedding coordinator Ann Johnston, 715-3610.

St. Patrick, 28698 Hwy. 23, Port Sulphur, 564-6792: Call for details.

St. Peter, 125 E. 19th Ave., Covington: Wedding times available on Friday evenings, Saturdays in the afternoon or evening. Additional fees for wedding coordinator, organist and cantor. Please call office at (985) 892-2422 and check website (www.stpeterparish.com/marriage-preparation) for procedures and guidelines as well as necessary forms.

St. Peter, 1550 Hwy. 44, (P. O. Box 435), Reserve, (985) 536-2887: Call the church office for details.

St. Peter Claver, 1923 St. Philip St., New Orleans, 822-8059: Call for details.

St. Philip Neri, 6500 Kawanee Ave., Metairie, 887-5535: Please call the church office regarding fees and further detailed information.

St. Raymond and St. Leo the Great, 2916 Paris Ave., New Orleans, 945-8750, ext. 4: Check for details. Additional fees for musicians.

St. Rita, 7100 Jefferson

Hwy., Harahan, 737-2915: Call for details. Check bridal guidelines at www.stritaharahan.com/church/sacraments.

St. Rita, 2729 Lowerline St., New Orleans, 866-3621, <http://www.stritanola.com/wedding-guidelines> to fill out request form, or contact weddings@stritanola.com: Weddings usually scheduled on Fridays 1 p.m. or later, and Saturdays 1 p.m. or earlier and 6 p.m. or later. Fees include coordinator of rehearsal and day-of, but do not include organists or musicians.

St. Rosalie, 600 2nd Ave., Harvey, 340-1962: Call for details.

St. Stephen Church (Good Shepherd Parish), 1025 Napoleon Ave., New Orleans, 899-1378: Information (under Sacraments tab) at GoodShepherdParishNOLA.com or call Paige Saleun, wedding coordinator, 227-3796. Additional fees for musicians.

St. Theresa of Avila, 1404 Erato St., New Orleans, 525-4226: Call for details.

Transfiguration of the Lord Church, 5621 Elysian Fields Ave. (corner Prentiss Avenue), New Orleans, Friday evenings, Saturday mornings and early afternoons. There is an additional charge for music. Call the Parish Office at 302-7931 for fees and appointments.

Visitation of Our Lady, 3500 Ames Blvd., Marrero, 347-2203: Weddings scheduled Friday evenings, Saturday day or evening; go to www.vol.org/matrimony.

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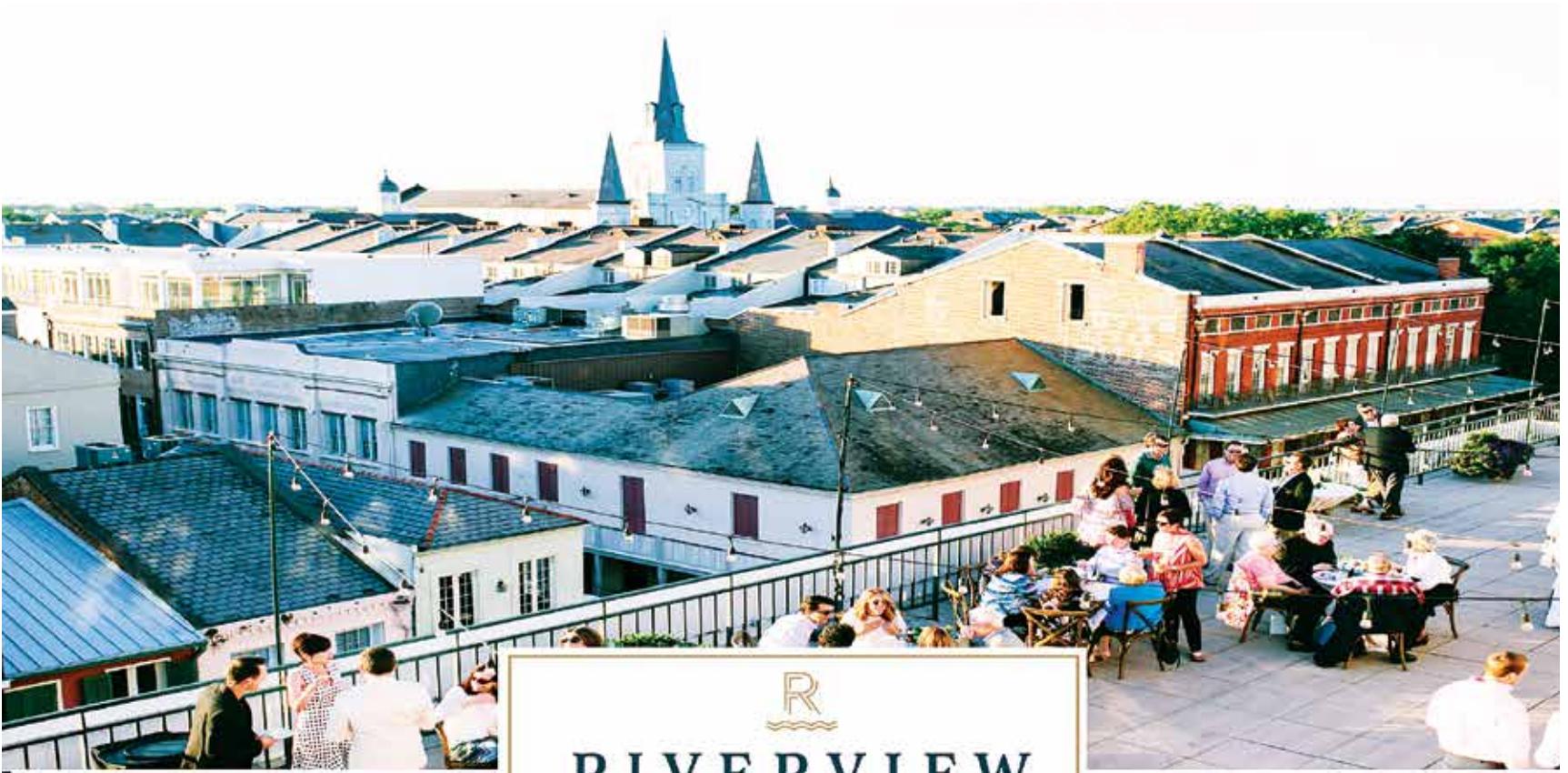
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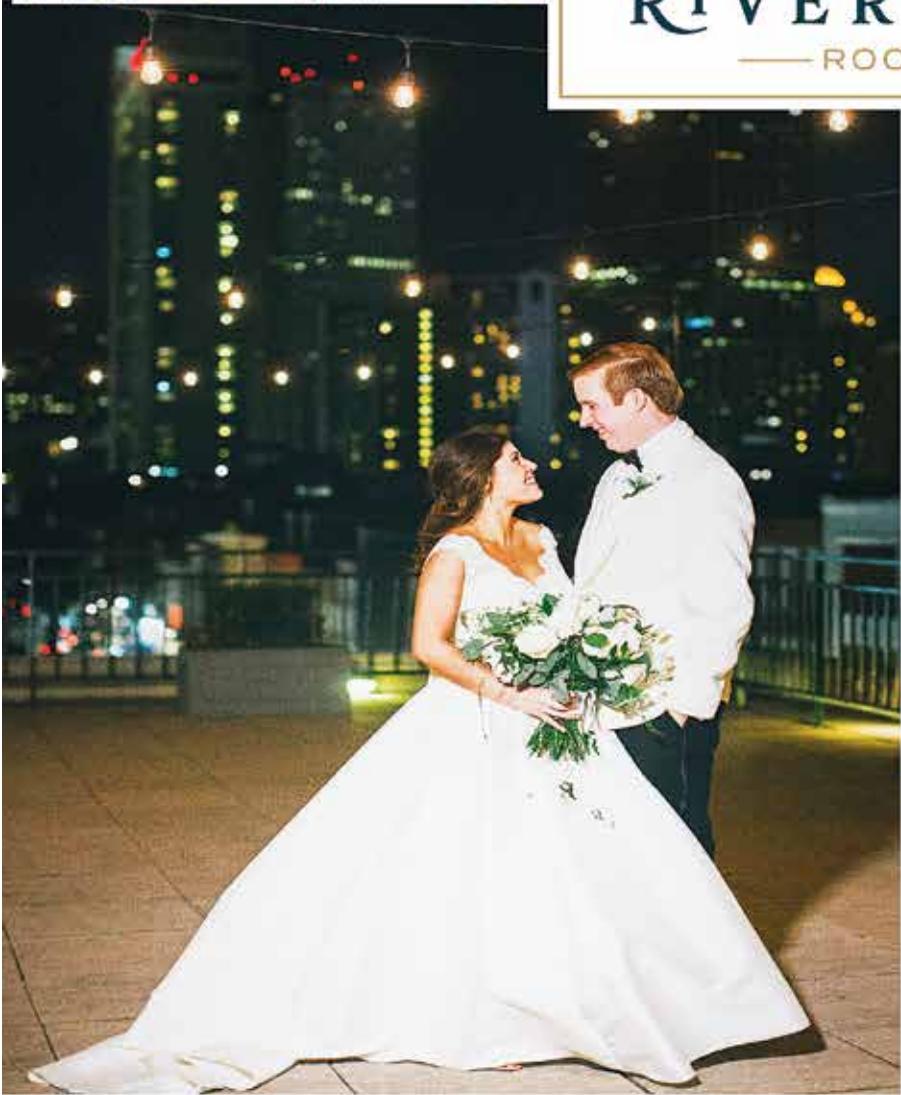
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