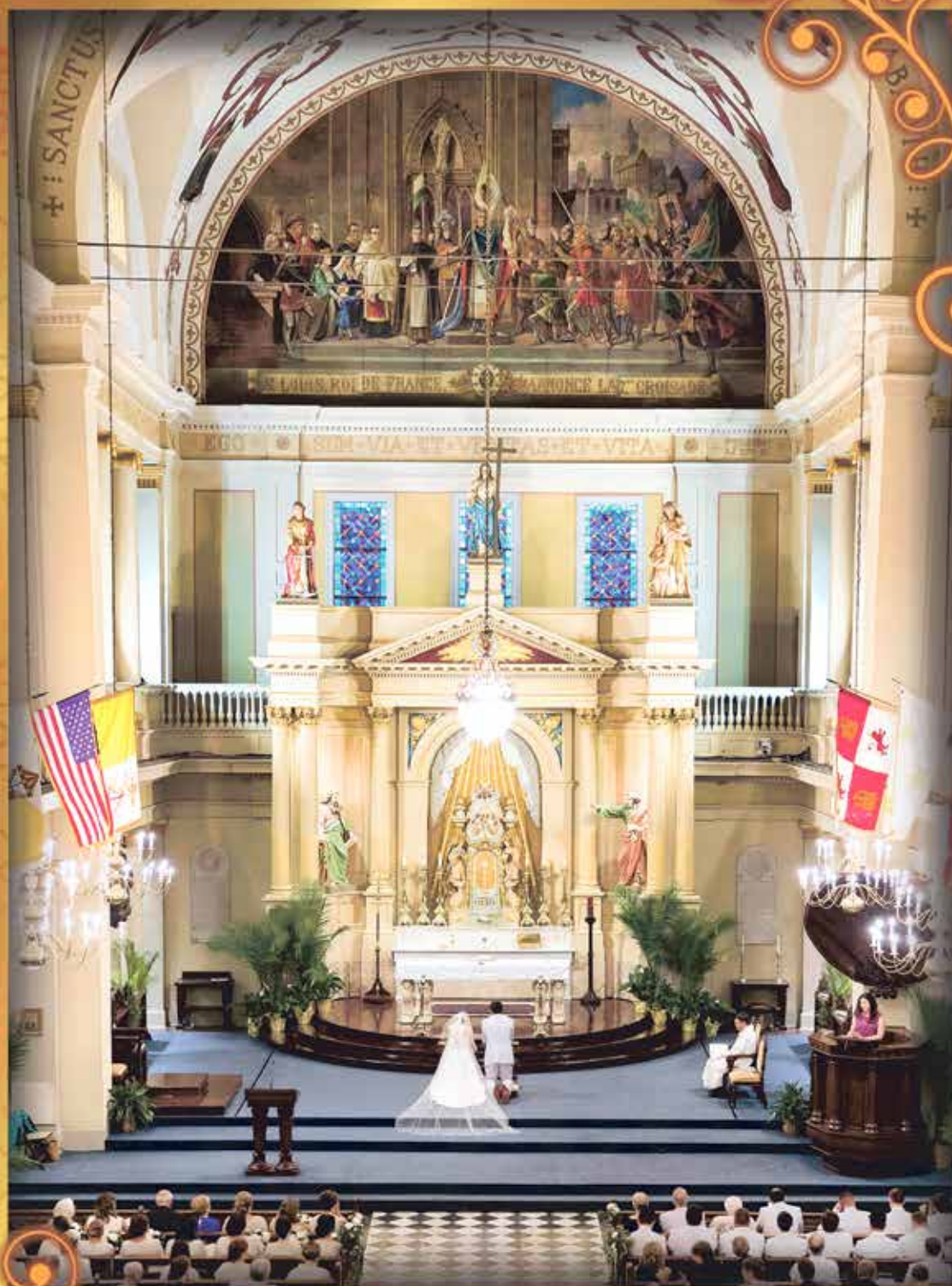


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CATHOLIC
Wedding Guide



THREE UNIQUE VENUES TO SUIT EVERY WEDDING DREAM



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Bride and groom offer Bread of Life at wedding

Normally at a Catholic wedding Mass, the bride and groom are the first to receive Communion in the sanctuary and then remain kneeling until Communion is distributed to their relatives and friends. When Emily France and Matthew Poche married on May 26, 2018, at St. Louis Cathedral, they decided together that they would like to serve as extraordinary ministers of holy Communion as another sign of their connection and love for each other and God's love for their family and community. Emily and Matthew each had served as extraordinary ministers of holy Communion in high school – Emily at St. Mary's Dominican and Matthew at Holy Cross.

A weekly check-up with your spouse can revitalize marriage

One of the many gifts of St. Ignatius of Loyola to our Church was the practice of the Daily Examen.

Throughout our busy days and weeks, the Lord is always trying to break in and communicate with us that he loves us and is here with us despite our distractions and challenges.

St. Ignatius encouraged his followers to take some time at least once a day to review the day's events and your interactions with others and in hindsight to reflect on God's presence and 1.) give thanks to God or 2.) seek forgiveness when you didn't respond in a loving way to others or to the promptings of God in your heart.

We can seek the grace to respond more faithfully in the future and to be more attentive to God's presence in the moment.

The examen cultivates a sense of our awareness of God moving throughout our lives – we are never alone.



Jan and Lloyd
TATE
GUEST COLUMN

We encourage married couples to embrace the practice of the examen in their personal lives with a particular emphasis on a weekly examen exercise which we developed.

In most busy families it is very helpful for a married couple to take some time at least once a week, preferably on a Sunday, the day of Sabbath rest, to review the calendars and plans for the coming week. This can avoid a lot of misunderstandings during the week and also help establish expectations for each spouse for the coming week.

This weekly encounter can also be a wonderful time to reflect on God's movement in your marriage and family

life over the previous week by sharing on the following questions:

How did we encounter Christ in our lives this week? What gifts from the Lord were we particularly aware of this week? How did we share those gifts with others?

Conclude this part with a prayer of gratitude and praise.

Did we serve one another unselfishly this week?

What steps did we take this week to nurture the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of our relationship?

Did anything happen this week that is still unsettled between us? Can we talk about it now and seek reconciliation?

Is there any change we would like to make in the week ahead to live out our sacrament more faithfully?

Conclude this part with a time of contrition and recommitment. Ask for the specific graces needed in prayers of petition together.

Matrimony is a lifestyle sacrament – the graces of the

sacrament are as abundant in the daily living out of the sacramental call to mirror Christ's love as they are on the wedding day.

Invite the Lord to join you once a week in this prayerful reflection whereby you check in with one another to reorient yourselves to your spouse and the health of your

marriage relationship. This exercise should take less than 30 minutes most weeks but it can truly be an instrument of grace.

Jan and Lloyd Tate are the authors of *Home Marriage Prep*, used in different parishes of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. They can be reached at jan_tate72@bellsouth.net.



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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.

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 inventory 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 rneil@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/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE OFFICE OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE – (504) 861-6243



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How do I know if I'm ready to get married?

FOR  YOUR
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How do I know if I'm ready to marry?

➤ Do most people consider you emotionally mature, able to compromise, communicate well, share your feelings and handle anger constructively?

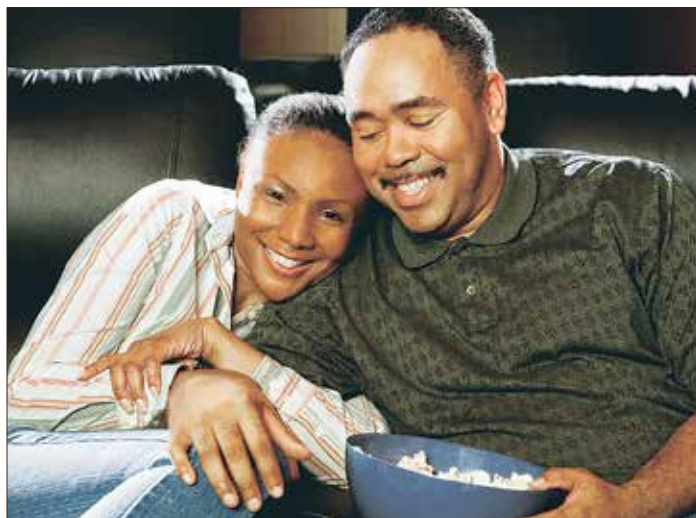
➤ Do you love this other person so much that you are willing to put his or her happiness before your own?

➤ Are you marrying out of strength (I know who I am and am happy with myself) rather than weakness (I need someone to fill the gaps in my personality)?

➤ Have you developed strong friendships that have lasted over time?

➤ Are you able to keep commitments and delay gratification?

➤ Do you struggle on a regular basis with harmful habits or addictions, e.g. to alcohol,



"The family is ... the domestic Church. In it parents should, by their word and example be the first preachers of the faith to their children." – Lumen Gentium

drugs or pornography? That's not necessarily a reason not to marry, but it is something that left untreated can seriously weaken your ability to have a healthy marriage.

➤ Is God calling you to marriage? Have you prayed and discerned about this?

How do I know if this is the right person?

➤ Do you share similar basic values about respecting human life, fidelity, commitment, what's right and wrong, honesty, life goals and lifestyle?

➤ Does your significant

other bring out the best in you, and you in him or her? Are you physically attracted to this person?

➤ Can you imagine growing old together?

➤ Do your trusted family members and friends support your relationship and affirm that it's healthy and respectful?

➤ Do you experience ongoing conflict or, worse, violence and abuse in your relationship? That is a red flag to slow down and seek advice and help, ensuring your safety, if necessary.

➤ Is God calling you to marriage with this person? Have you prayed and discerned about this?

Is it necessary to feel 'chemistry' between us for this to be the right person to marry?

➤ Chemistry, or feeling like you "click" with another person, is a natural part of a

deepening relationship and a wonderful part of falling in love, but unfortunately, chemistry is sometimes confused with infatuation, which can be fleeting.

➤ In the good sense, chemistry means you feel a strong physical and emotional attraction to the other person and want to become closer to him or her. You feel happy in his or her presence and enjoy your time together. This sense of unity and joy at the other's presence can be a great foundation for a happy marriage. In contrast, infatuation means you are consumed with thinking of the other person to the point of doing silly or risky actions to be together. You are blind to the faults of the other and consumed with being noticed by him or her. Your need to be liked is so strong that you are willing to give up your own personality or morals for the other's affection. Often infatuation is an

See **QUESTIONS** page 7 ➤

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QUESTIONS

► From **PAGE 6**

unequal relationship between the object of adulation and the infatuated person. If this describes your relationship, you may want to step back and reevaluate.

Doesn't living together before marriage prevent me from marrying the wrong person and thus getting divorced later on?

Although it may sound counterintuitive, studies show that cohabiting couples:

- Increase their risk of breaking up after marriage (46% higher divorce rate)
- Increase the risk of domestic violence for women, and the risk of physical and sexual abuse for children
- Have lower levels of happiness and well-being compared to married couples

Why should I attend a marriage preparation program? We've known each other for a long time and can't imagine we'd learn anything new.

You don't have to discover all the things that make a marriage work by trial and error. Others have done some of that work for you. At a marriage prep program, you get a glimpse into other couples' marriages so you can have a more realistic sense of what's normal and what's not, and you can get solid advice on how to have a happy, holy marriage.

Although every marriage relationship is unique, there are many tips experienced couples can share that will help you when you face bumps in your own marriage. Marriage preparation programs also give you an opportunity to talk with each other about the wide spectrum of "must-have conversations" before marriage. You've probably talked about most of them, but you may have avoided a few. This is a time to check yourselves.

Most likely you will find that you gain confidence in your decision to marry as a result of attending a marriage preparation program. Occasionally, attending a marriage preparation program can make you realize that it

isn't the right time to marry, or that this may not be the right person. That's okay, because engagement is a time to discern marriage actively and intentionally.

How much income should we have between us to marry?

Many couples, especially younger ones, start their married lives together without a large income, and possibly with debt. This can be a chal-

lenge, but it shouldn't necessarily delay marriage. There's no magic number when it comes to the income and financial assets a couple should have before marrying, and bride and groom promise to be faithful "for richer" or "for poorer." At the same time, it's important to realize that financial hardship can cause conflict in a marriage, and to talk with each other about your plan for meeting your

basic needs. Don't be afraid to seek wise counsel if you're not sure how you'll make ends meet.

How much does a typical wedding cost?

Many wedding planners will tell you that the average wedding costs between \$20,000-\$30,000, but it definitely doesn't have to! Although the ante has been rising as to what is consid-

ered "typical" for a wedding, simplicity can be elegant. Consider asking friends and family for help on your big day, having a smaller wedding if cost is a major concern, or researching inexpensive do-it-yourself alternatives. Don't let the perceived cost of weddings keep you from saying "I do." And remember, a wedding is a day; a marriage is a lifetime.

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The joy and beauty of marriage promises kept

By Deacon Greg Kandra
The Deacon's Bench

My wife's parents, Gerry and Brenda Meyer, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in August 2008. They renewed their vows at a special Mass. This was my homily for that occasion.

Maureen Dowd, the columnist for the New York Times, wrote about all the celebrity divorces going on. People like Christie Brinkley and A-Rod, she concluded, had married the wrong people – and Dowd wanted to find out what people should look for in a spouse.

So she spoke with a priest in New Jersey, Father Pat Connor, 79 years old, who for 40 years has been giving a lecture to high school girls called "Whom Not To Marry." And Father Connor gave his two cents worth.

It contains a lot of common sense wisdom: Never marry someone who doesn't have friends; make sure he has a sense of humor; check out if he's responsible with money; see what his family is like. And avoid the strong, silent type. More marriages, he said, are killed by silence than violence.

Good advice, I thought. And if you had to boil it all down to just one sentence, it would be what we just heard in the Gospel.

Build your house on rock. It's really that simple. Find solid ground. Build on rock.

When I was looking over



Photo | COURTESY DEACON GREG KANDRA

The secret of Brenda and Gerry Meyer's long marriage has been their daily recommitment to each other, their son-in-law, Deacon Greg Kandra, says.

this Gospel, it got me to thinking about the house Gerry and Brenda have built, and lived in, for most of their marriage. And that house tells part of their story.

I can still remember the first time I came to your front door, to pick up your daughter for a date, over 30 years ago. I've been to that door hundreds of times since then. Spending time around the kitchen table. Thanksgivings in the dining room. Christmases in the rec room, the floor littered with wrapping paper ... and the house overflowing with people and food and music.

Like so many houses, it has been a place for joys and sorrows, laughter and tears. A place for making plans and sharing dreams. A place where children took their first steps, where grandchil-

dren visited and puppies struggled – not always successfully – to be housebroken.

It has been a place where the door is always open, the light is always on, arms always waiting in welcome.

That has been your house.

That has also been your marriage.

One of the great joys of my life has been being a part of your family and watching your marriage unfold. It's made me realize that, frankly, at this late date, there is nothing I can tell you about marriage that you don't already know. I imagine there is a lot you could tell ME.

Probably the best homily about your 50 years of marriage is right here, in these pews.

It is in the children you have raised – and the chil-

dren THEY are raising, learning how to be parents from you.

It is in the friends you have gathered around you – the family you have chosen for yourselves.

And it is in the faith that has brought you to these pews today – your love for the God who loves you. I know this Mass is your way of celebrating your 50 years together and of offering thanks to God. But I think that HE is probably thanking YOU. To a doubting and skeptical world, you have shown what a long and happy marriage looks like.

In a moment, you will renew the vows you made to one another 50 years ago.

But I think you have already renewed them, and continue to, every day of your lives.

If there is any secret to making a marriage last, I think maybe that is it.

It's vowing to love and honor and care for one another, not just on that first day, when there's the pretty dress and the flowers and the music. But every day: when life is all flannel pajamas and a leaking roof and a car that won't start and kids who are sick.

It's a promise kept. And renewed. Every morning. And every night. Across half a century.

It is weathering the storms – while the wind howls and the walls shake ... and then you realize, with a sense of

On the Web:

www.patheos.com/blogs/deaconsbench/

blessed relief, that it's not the wind.

It's just the person next to you, snoring.

And it is loving the snoring. And the quarreling. And the thousands of small negotiations that go on every day between a husband and wife. Because it reminds you that you are alive. And you are loved. And you are in love.

And your joy is complete. Because, as St. Paul reminded the people of Corinth: Love never fails.

That house on Greenlane Court has changed over the years. You've built a new kitchen, a garage, added another level. It's a little different from the house that you built.

But so is your marriage. And that's how it should be. Change is a part of life. We grow. We adapt. We adjust. Christ's first miracle was at a wedding, and it was all about change – turning water into wine. The miracle of this sacrament is one of transformation.

But you've reminded us that a marriage, like a house, will only survive change, and stand, when it's made of the right materials. And they're not the kind you find at Home Depot.

You've secured the walls with patience and tenderness and prayer. You've installed a heating system that is cooled by laughter. And you have made sure that the roof is supported with love. Love for one another. Love for your children. Love for God.

Gerry and Brenda, what more can I say?

You have built your house on rock.

Deacon Greg Kandra is the creator of "The Deacon's Bench" (www.patheos.com/blogs/deaconsbench). He was ordained for the Diocese of Brooklyn in 2007. He and his wife live in Forest Hills, New York, where he serves at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Parish. You can contact Deacon Greg at dcngreg@gmail.com.

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Finding unity in marriage takes effort, commitment

As long as I have been doing counseling for individuals and couples, I find myself amazed every time the presenting issue is "We aren't on the same page" or "We have communication problems."

I wonder why the couple finds itself in that situation. Did the couple really think marriage was a personal benefit without any cost?

It is interesting to hear sometimes about the symbols an engaged couple requests for the wedding liturgy: the three candles, different colored sand, etc., all indicating they are becoming ONE.

The wedding ceremony even states: "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

The goal of unity has been stated and people appear to understand, yet, so often couples do not give it their best to achieve the goal.



Deacon Dave
FARINELLI
GUEST COLUMN

The bottom line for both individuals and couples is to review the purpose and call of marriage. Each person is challenged to deny self in favor of forming a strong marital unit.

Can it be said there is some pain to be endured? Of course! No change or goal worth attaining is ever achieved without some pain or suffering.

People endure diets and exercise to lose weight; athletes endure pain and suffering to win a game or a championship.

Transforming two people to achieve a solid unit in marriage will not be any less



"God himself is that author of marriage," and he has given it a purpose. – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

painful. It takes time, effort and investment of self to achieve marital union. This has to be the daily goal of both parties.

There are a couple of elements I haven't mentioned:

You don't have to do it alone. There are two sources of assistance, God's grace and counselors.

The sacrament of marriage has a special grace attached

to it that strengthens one's resolve to become vulnerable through the transition into becoming one.

Counseling adds a dimension of coaching, which is a given in every other challenging endeavor. It's not a sign of weakness, and it's not an embarrassment. It is the closest we will come to having a book to follow.

No one is really an expert at

marriage; however, there are people whose vocation it is to spend their lives studying relationships and assisting individuals to attain their rightful places in marriage.

The Archdiocese of New Orleans cares about the mental health of individuals and couples. Catholic Counseling Service, located at 2814 South Carrollton Ave. in New Orleans, has counselors waiting to assist a couple in achieving relationship goals. Sliding fees are available; more importantly, help is available when needed.

If you sense you need help in working through the obstacles to unity as a married couple, please pick up the phone – 861-6245.

Deacon Dave Farinelli is clinical supervisor and therapist for Catholic Counseling Service. He can be reached at 861-6245 or 606-4342; dfarinelli@archdiocese-no.org.



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Parceling out the 'routine' chores can alleviate stress

By Mary Carty
Contributing writer

In vintage romantic movies, there is often the final image of the groom carrying the bride over the threshold into their new home to live "happily ever after." But the audience never gets a chance to see what their life will be like on a normal day after they move in together.

Today's modern couple is more likely to cross the threshold, exhausted from the months of preparation, the wedding day and honeymoon, and coming home to ask, "What's for dinner?"

This simple question opens up a whole series of responding questions such as: Is there any food and who is going shopping to get it? Who is cooking? Who's setting the table. Who is doing the dishes? What time do we want to eat?

These seemingly small and mundane questions concern-

ing their first meal in their new home shows the number of never-ending details that require the choices and actions that will define the marriage.

Most Catholic couples are required to go through pre-Cana classes that include discussions about some typical marriage situations and help prepare them for this first 24 hours of marriage when they will be forced to face issues related to household space, food, rest, intimacy, chores, and even money.

It is impossible to be prepared for all situations in any marriage, and it may be helpful for engaged couples to begin before the wedding to discuss and to work out and work together to decide and acknowledge who is doing what. Among these most basic questions of their new life together, questions that will need to be answered throughout the marriage, include:



"Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated." – 1 Corinthians 13:4

➤ 1. Who is doing the cooking? Who is deciding on the grocery list and stopping at the store to pick up the food? What will the menu for the week look like? Is there a specific time we are going to have dinner?

➤ 2. What does intimacy mean to each of us?

➤ 3. Who is responsible for doing the laundry and ironing?

➤ 4. What time will the alarm be set for weekdays and are we going to share breakfast in the morning?

➤ 5. What parish will we belong to and which Mass will we be attending regularly?

➤ 6. Who is going to take on the task of paying the household bills? How are we going to both keep connected about our household finances, knowing that money can

be one of the biggest issues married couples face?

➤ 7. With the taking on of new responsibilities of running a household, how can we keep our love growing?

➤ 8. How will we ensure that we make room for fun in our marriage?

➤ 9. How will we determine what goes where? Will we discuss what space is for our own personal things, and where we will keep our shared things?

➤ 10. Will we set aside special time each week to talk about schedules, dreams, goals and responsibilities?

The list seems a bit overwhelming. But there will be a lot of time after the wedding to cooperatively find answers. Here are some general suggestions that might help couples begin to navigate through some of these daily trials and tribulations:

➤ **Household issues.** First, write a list of household

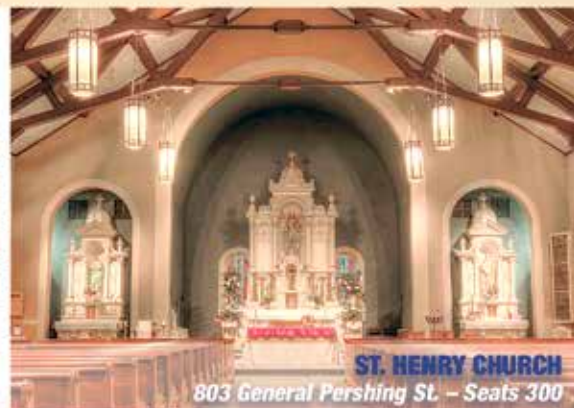
See **ROUTINE** page 17 ➤



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Fifty years of 'I do' really began 25 years ago



Peter
FINNEY JR
CLARION HERALD

In Vegas, the smart guys who keep the house comfortably in business would have taken these odds off the boards.

Fifty years of marriage? For Judi and Mike Diedling? For a couple whose marriage had deteriorated so badly that both spouses felt as if they had been dropped on the tarmac

in Siberia in flip-flops, T-shirts and shorts?

But there they were in June 2017 – inside St. Philip Neri Church in Metairie along with more than 200 other couples – giving thanks for the miracle of a resurrection too sublime for words.

Did they ever, in the darkest days of their dead-end relationship, feel they would have been celebrating 50 years of marriage together?

"Knowing where we were, I wasn't thinking about 50 years – I was thinking about the next day," Mike said.

"I don't think we even

thought about anniversaries that far ahead," Judi said. "We were just working to get to the next anniversary."

Even looking ahead one year at a time, that seemed like a sucker's bet. In 1993 – 26 years after they had been married at St. John Brebeuf Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago – Judi, a dental hygienist, silently poured out her agony at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Slidell, praying, but mostly sobbing.

"The crisis was so staggering at the time I could barely catch my breath," Judi recalled. "It was such a monumental moment, not knowing where to turn. I knew there was something wrong with this relationship. I remember looking up at the crucifix saying, 'You know what's wrong with my marriage! I need an answer!'"

The next morning, almost immobilized by her grief, Judi fought off the temptation to stay home from work. She had patients to take care of.

"I felt if I kept my mind busy, that would keep me going," Judi said. "I was totally broken."

In the middle of the morning, a woman walked in and sat in Judi's chair. She had taken a canceled appointment.

"She said to me, 'I sense that you're in great stress,' and I said, 'No, I'm fine,' and she said, 'No, you're not,'" Judi said.

The woman went on to tell Judi that she had initially declined to take the open appointment but "all of a sudden felt called by God" to take it.

And now, she was sitting in the chair front of Judi. Instead of playing the role of a captive audience – after all, Judi had "the sharp tools" in her hands – the patient deftly turned around the dental spotlight.

"I just turned into a pillar of jello," Judi said. "She told me there was a priest at her parish, St. Margaret Mary, and he was the person I needed to talk to."

After the appointment, Judi got herself back together



Photo by Peter Finney Jr. | CLARION HERALD

Judi and Mike Diedling, parishioners of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Slidell, decided to fight for their marriage when it appeared everything was lost.

and made the call. Father Joe Benson just happened to be walking through the office and picked up the phone after a few rings.

"I told him, 'My marriage is falling apart and I'm in dreadful pain and a lady from your parish told me I needed to speak with you,'" Judi said. "He said, 'OK, I have 7:30 tonight available. Be there.'"

When Judi showed up alone that night, Father Benson took one look and remarked: "Well, you're here – where the heck is he?"

In what Judi believes is another way the Holy Spirit worked in their lives, Father Benson told Judi that just that afternoon he had read a newspaper article about a program he had never heard of or knew much about. It was something called Retrouvaille, and a couple in his parish, Bonnie and Richard Chase, were in charge of the local group.

"I don't know if this is what you need, but here is their number. Call them," he told Judi.

"Things that happened along our path of recovery taught us there are no coincidences – none," Mike said.

Judi called the Chases, but they told her the next Retrouvaille weekend would not be for another three months.

"So, we continued to go through the motions of being in a marriage, and I was not a very nice person," Judi said.

"That's when she found her voice," Mike said, laughing.

"But it was not the voice of God," Judi replied.

Their weekend in November 1993 – and their subsequent commitment to attend several follow-up sessions – changed everything. Father Steve Bruno, who has worked with couples on Retrouvaille weekends, described it as the paschal mystery.

"It's the birth, the growth and the death of a relationship – and then the resurrection," Mike said. "We're certainly a perfect example of coming back from death. If we could do it, anybody can do it. The whole purpose of the weekend is to get people back into communication. If they're not talking, you're never going to get this solved. The weekend is just to get your head on straight to mentally go after this thing."

In the 25 years since their marriage was restored, the Diedlings became the coordinating couple for Retrouvaille in the archdiocese.

"I've told people it's as close as I'll ever come to seeing a miracle, because you see them on the weekend and after the

See 'I DO' page 17 ►



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I dos and I don'ts: Building blocks, stumbling blocks

TOP 10 POSITIVES: BUILDING BLOCKS IN A MARRIAGE

1. Love, accept and support your spouse.
2. Discuss issues, concerns, dreams and fears.
3. Let your spouse know that you love them through actions.
4. Share the responsibilities of marriage and the home.
5. Communicate clearly.
6. Show respect.
7. Practice the spirit of gratitude.
8. Share goals of marriage.
9. Make intimacy a priority in and out of the bedroom.
10. Remind yourselves each day that your marriage is a priority.

Mary Carty is a New Orleans writer-photographer and author of The PMAT: The Perfect Marriage Aptitude Test (Glitterati Incorporated, 2009).

TOP 10 PITFALLS: STUMBLING BLOCKS IN A MARRIAGE

1. Believing you can change your spouse. Only they can change themselves (control, parenting).
2. Assuming you know what your spouse thinks. This is mind reading, and if you have that gift, you could open your own psychic center.
3. Insisting on always winning, being right and never admitting you are wrong and never apologizing.
4. Avoiding facing and discussing issues, being in denial.
5. Not respecting spouse, sarcasm, joking, criticism.
6. Expect marriage to be perfect.
7. Blame the other person for all problems.
8. Complaining to others about your spouse behind their back rather than raising issues directly.
9. Do and act exactly what you think your spouse wants you to do or what they tell you, out of fear.
10. Put self above spouse or below, rather than on equal ground.



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Pope: More energy must be given to marriage prep

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

ROME (CNS) – The Catholic Church must reach out to couples living together without being married, Pope Francis told those involved in family ministry in the Diocese of Rome.

The church's outreach should extend "also to those young people who choose to live together without marrying. We must witness to them the beauty of matrimony," the pope said Sept. 27 during an evening meeting at the Basilica of St. John Lateran, the cathedral of the Rome Diocese.

Some 850 priests, permanent deacons and married couples involved in diocesan and parish projects to prepare couples for marriage and minister to families met with the pope after a three-day course promoted by the diocese and the Roman Rota, a church tribunal specializing in marriage cases.

The meeting was closed to the media, but the Vatican press office said the pope read his prepared text.

Pope: Improve marriage prep

Most of the pope's prepared remarks focused on the importance of improving marriage preparation programs, not only informing engaged couples about the obligations and responsibilities of married life, but



Photo | CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE, VATICAN MEDIA

Pope Francis calls for improved marriage preparation, support for newlyweds and outreach to unmarried couples during a meeting Sept. 27 at Rome's Basilica of St. John Lateran with priests, permanent deacons and married couples involved in diocesan and parish programs promoting marriage and family life.

including basic catechesis about the church, the sacraments, salvation and God's design for humanity.

Preparing couples for marriage, he said, the church "cannot take for granted" that couples have a basic understanding of the faith because the Catholic education of most of them stopped with their first Communion or confirmation.

In addition, he said, "ex-

perience shows that the time of marriage preparation is a time of grace in which the couple is particularly open to hearing the Gospel and welcoming it."

Marriage preparation cannot consist only of a few meetings, the pope said. "Marriage is not just a social event, but a true sacrament that requires an adequate preparation and a knowledgeable celebration. In fact,

the marriage bond requires the engaged persons to make an informed choice focused on their desire to build together something that must never be betrayed or abandoned."

When problems do arise, he said, the roots of the difficulties often are found in a "weakness of Christian faith and in a lack of accompaniment by the church," which, in effect, "leaves the newly-

weds alone after the wedding celebration."

Support in the first months and years of marriage, he said, can help the couple "develop the antibodies needed to face the inevitable moments of difficulty and struggle in marriage and family life."

Help in tense times

And when couples "experience serious problems in their relationship and find themselves in crisis, we must help them revive their faith and rediscover the grace of the sacrament," the pope said. However, "in certain cases, which must be evaluated with integrity and interior liberty," the pastoral worker should "offer appropriate indications for undertaking a process of nullity."

When a couple becomes "aware of the fact that their union is not a true sacramental marriage and they want out of that situation, may they find the necessary support in bishops, priests and pastoral workers who communicate not only juridical norms, but first of all an attitude of listening and understanding."

Marriage preparation and ministry to couples, he said, "is a vast, complex and delicate apostolic field in which it is necessary to dedicate energy and enthusiasm with an intent to promote the Gospel of the family and of life."

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“Marriage is not just a social event, but a true sacrament that requires an adequate preparation and a knowledgeable celebration.

– Pope Francis

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NEW ORLEANS

Sisters, sisters, there were never such devoted sisters

By Allison Ochoa

Catholic News Service

MUNJOR, Kan. (CNS) – Growing up in Munjor, and later Hays, fraternal twins Amber and Brianna Wooldridge were used to celebrating milestones together.

From their baptism and their birthday to first Communion, confirmation and graduation, pictures and home videos tell the story of sisters used to sharing the major events in each other's lives.

Fast forward to 2016 when Amber and Brianna, both newly engaged, began planning their weddings, Amber to Zach Binder and Brianna to

Clay Kear.

The sisters were part of each other's plans from the beginning, both preparing to be the other's witness during her nuptial Mass. As the arrangements began to take shape, the pair and their husbands-to-be discovered that scheduling was going to be difficult. Initially both weddings were scheduled within weeks of each other.

Then, the joking began.

Dad saw the practical side

Clay recalled that Amber and Brianna's father, Brian Wooldridge, commented, "We should do both weddings at the same time to save some

money!"

"He was joking, but it made sense," Clay told The Register, newspaper of the Diocese of Salina.

While the couples wanted their own separate days, Brianna said the logistics of having a double wedding started to become clear especially when considering that some attendants would otherwise be in both weddings and the twins' extended family members and friends who live out of town might have to choose to attend one wedding over the other.

"Yes, our family started joking about it a lot," said Amber, "but we thought, 'We've done all these other major milestones together, so let's do it!'"

Clay and Zach were on board with the idea as well.

While the couples did their formal marriage preparations through the Catholic Church separately, the four came together in front of family and friends this summer at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Munjor to celebrate their nuptial Mass.

Sisters witnessed for each other

As planned, the sisters served as witnesses for each other, with their brother, Tyler Wooldridge, serving as best man and witness for Zach and Amber's vows, and friend Philip Nowak serving in the same capacity for Clay and Brianna.

For celebrant Father Jarett Konrade, the July 7 double wedding was a first.

"I think there have been two or three times in my 13 years of priesthood where I've had two weddings in one day, but a double wedding is rare," he said. "In fact, it proved to be a little more challenging as the rites and rituals of the sacrament are generally written with only one couple in mind, so I had to adjust some of the wording to incorporate two couples."

Now, having been married for almost two months and living on opposite sides of Kansas, Clay and Brianna in Edgerton and Zach and Amber in Hays, the couples agree that sharing their wedding ceremony was something unique.

Brianna recalled watching a home video of the twins' baptism during a visit with some family members a week after



Photo | CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE, EMILY GARCIA PHOTOGRAPHY

Twin sisters Amber and Brianna Wooldridge celebrated a double wedding July 7 at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Munjor, Kansas. From left are Clay and Brianna Kear and Amber and Zach Binder. The fraternal twins served as the witness for one another during their vows.

the wedding.

Sacramental bonds

"I watched as they went through the parts for Amber and then for me, and you know, I've done every sacrament with her so to me this (double wedding) was natural!"

"Brianna and Clay have become some of our closest friends through this process," said Zach. "You know, you do some sacraments like first Communion and confirmation as part of a group, but most times the sacrament of marriage is just one couple and isn't something you get to share."

Amber added, "Brianna and I have both found our soul mates so being able to share the day and the sacrament together was really special."

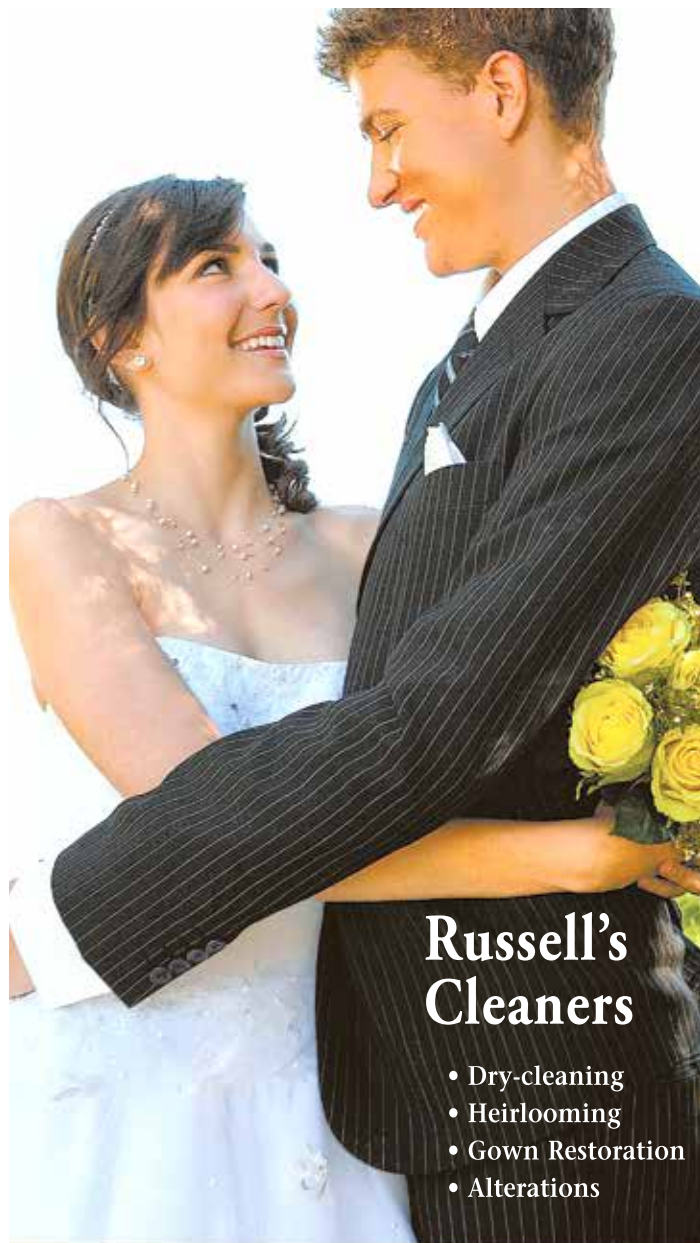
The sacramental aspect is something Father Konrade

noted in speaking about the rarity of this double wedding.

"It was a cool thing because the sacramentality of marriage sometimes gets lost with all the bells and whistles that our culture has pushed on weddings and marriage," he said. "In preparing for this wedding, it brought to my mind, and hopefully the minds of the people in attendance, the sacramental nature of marriage."

As the couples look toward the future, they know the sacraments and their faith will be the foundation of their unions, and that their faith, like their wedding day, is meant to be shared.

"Our faith hasn't changed a ton, but our perspective has," said Zach. "We used to think that faith was an individual thing, but now we know it's about me making her more faithful and her doing the same for me."



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ROUTINE

► From **PAGE 10**

tasks that need to be taken care of and then decide who does what for the first few weeks and then revisit the list. Having a written list is both a reference and a reminder of a compact of how both husband and wife will share responsibilities in the marriage.

► **Finances.** Estimate monthly expenses, discuss how and when bills will be paid, and decide how money will be budgeted. The challenge is to pay the bills and set aside a bit of money for fun and entertainment.

► **Food.** Enjoying delicious food is cause to celebrate, and there are many opportunities from romantic dinners to picnics to holiday feasts. Keeping an ongoing grocery list and meal plan for the week and deciding when to eat, what to eat, where to eat, and who will cook may be helpful tools to deal with the daily food/meal tasks.

► **Friends and Family.** Spending time with new and old friends and two families



"(Love) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." – 1 Corinthians 13: 7-8.

is important and enriching. The challenge is how to balance both spouses' schedules. A calendar is a helpful tool to keep track of and plan for upcoming events and holidays. But, more importantly, a couple should commit to regularly discussing how to balance time with family and friends and commit to making those plans.

► **Intimacy.** Intimacy is a way of showing and sharing love and it may take time and patience for both partners to feel comfortable talking about their physical relationship in this new marriage relationship. Since this is new territory, it may be helpful for each of the individuals to read about how to grow intimacy, respect and caring in mar-

riage and regularly discuss together.

► **Communication guidelines.** Last, but not least, setting up some guidelines concerning discussions sets a positive tone from the beginning of the marriage. A few basic communication considerations are: Treat the other person with respect; keep an open mind; clearly state thoughts; listen, really listen; use a pleasant tone of voice, and watch any tendency to sarcasm. Remember the three Cs: collaboration, cooperation, and, occasionally, compromise.

Mary Carty is a New Orleans writer-photographer and author of *The PMAT: The Perfect Marriage Aptitude Test (Glitterati Incorporated, 2009)*.

'I DO'

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weekend," Mike said. "Most couples are visibly changed on the weekend. They come in on Friday night not touching one another, and they don't even want to sit next to one another. Some don't. By Sunday afternoon, many are holding hands. This is a different group than we saw on Friday night."

The follow-up sessions allow the couple to delve deeper into their challenges.

"I remember heading to the post sessions and then turning around and heading for home and then turning around again and going back to the posts," Mike said. "It was somewhere in that sequence of six weeks that we figured out we could do this."

The next Retrouvaille weekend will be held Jan. 11-13, 2019.

After the Diedlings left St. Philip Neri Church following

the anniversary celebration, they picked up dinner for their grandkids so that their son and daughter-in-law, celebrating their sixth anniversary, could go out alone on a dinner date.

"One of the great things was that as we renewed our vows, I listened to them without the sparkles I had in my eyes on my marriage day," Judi said.

"I had a true sense of what those vows entail. So, it was a renewal. And then letting our kids celebrate their anniversary was wonderful, because we could give them the joy that we were experiencing also."

For more information on Retrouvaille, call the archdiocesan Family Life Apostolate at 861-6243 or go to www.retrouvaille.org.



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Human sexuality is gift from God, pope says

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Human sexuality is not taboo, it is a gift of God, Pope Francis told a group of young people from France.

Sexual relations between a man and woman joined together in marriage is “a gift that the Lord gives us. It has two purposes: for loving each other and generating life. It is passion, it is passionate love. True love is passionate,” he said.

The pope was speaking with young people from the Diocese of Grenoble-Vienne in France, Sept. 17. The Vatican press office released a transcript of the audience in which the pope answered several questions on issues such as vocations, helping the poor, evangelization, living one’s faith and sexuality.

Sexuality is a ‘gift’

Manon, 16, asked how to navigate a world that “desecrates” the human body and that proposes so many “different opinions.”

The pope said, “Sexuality, sex, is a gift of God. Not taboo.”

“Love between a man and a woman, when it is passionate, it leads you to give your life forever. Forever. And to give it with your body and soul,” he said.

God made in his image and likeness both male and



Photo | CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE, VATICAN MEDIA

Pope Francis embraces a youth during a meeting with a group of young people from the Diocese of Grenoble-Vienne, France, at the Vatican Sept. 17. In remarks at the meeting, the pope said human sexuality is a gift from God and is not taboo.

female together, he said, and when they join in marriage they become “one flesh; this is the grandeur of sexuality. And one must talk about sexuality like this and one must live sexuality like this, in this dimension of love between a man and a woman for life.”

It is true that human weakness or spiritual failings can lead people to use their sexuality in a way that does not follow “the very beautiful way” it was intended to be – as love between a man and

woman – but as “objectified sexuality, detached from love and used for amusement.”

The pope criticized pornography as being part of an

“industry of lies,” an industry “of sexuality detached from love.”

Sexuality, the way God intended it, “is great,” he said,

urging them to “safeguard it well and prepare for that love” that will be part of their whole lives.

Another young man told the pope about his concerns that the church was losing its standing and number of followers in an increasingly secular world. “Why make an effort in an institution that sometimes seems to me pointless” and has lost its place, the man asked.

The pope said belonging to the church is not belonging to an “institution” but is belonging to “a person, to Jesus.”

“It’s about following Jesus,” he said, not following the “social consequences, if the church is big or if it is small. No. Jesus. To follow him when things are easy, when the church thrives, and follow him during the times in which the church is in crisis.”

The church goes on because of saints, he said. “Not us, not even the pope. No. Saints. They will forge the way ahead of us,” he said, “because they follow Jesus.”

It takes three to make a marriage A Prayer for Couples - By Janice Carbon

Come, Lord Jesus!

Come fill our hearts with your love!

Lord, we know that our creation came through you.

We know that you are the source of all life.

We know that we are created by love, out of love, for love.

Dear Lord, we want to grow in this love.

We want to become the persons you created us to be.

Lord, we know that you know us better than we know ourselves.

You know the secret desires of our hearts.

You know the woundedness in our hearts as well.

Lord, we know that you are the Divine Physician, and all healing comes from

you.

We ask that you heal our hearts, Lord.

We ask that you touch those areas of woundedness with your love so that we can be free to love one another.

Lord, send your Holy Spirit to open my eyes as well as my heart so that I may see myself and our marriage through your eyes.

Give me the courage, Lord, to receive the healing that you, in your mercy and love, wish to give me.

Help me, Lord, to become a better (husband/wife) to my (wife/husband).



Help me, Lord, to grow in my commitment to my marriage, giving it new priority in my life.

Help me, Lord, to grow in deeper understanding of my partner’s needs.

Help me, Lord, to grow in my ability to forgive my partner, and not take offense in times of disappointment.

Help me, Lord, to grow in my ability to lovingly express my sincere appreciation for all that my partner does for our family.

Lord, because we know that you will all families to grow in your love, and to prosper in all good things, I surrender my family in total trust to your holy will.

Amen.

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Wedding and contact information at archdiocesan churches

The following information is the latest available information for church weddings at various parishes in the Archdiocese of New Orleans as of September 2018. 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: olgchurch@arch-no.org. Check for details.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, 411 N. Rampart St., New Orleans, 525-1551: Check 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, 400 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 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

See **CHURCHES** page 20 ►



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CHURCHES

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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.

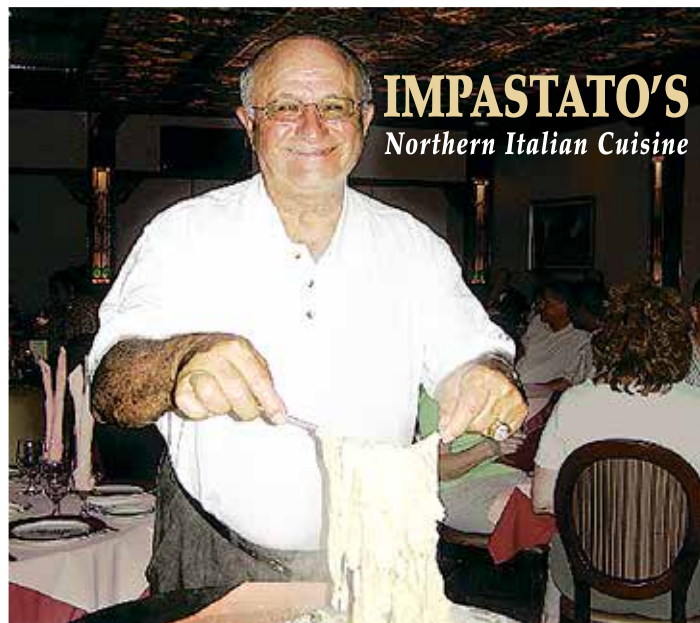
Our Lady of the Rosary Church, 3368 Esplanade Ave., (Parish Office: 1322 Moss Street), New Orleans, 70119. Visit www.olr-nola.org for the wedding calendar and guidelines. Please call the Parish Office, 488-2659, for additional information.

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

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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: Check for details.

St. Ann, 3601 Transcontinental Blvd., Metairie, 455-7071: Check 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, 525-5934: Check 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

See **CHURCHES** page 21 ►

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CHURCHES

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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 Bonabel Blvd., Metairie, 835-9343, info@stcatherineparish.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 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, misslindacjones@yahoo.com.

St. Gabriel the Archangel, 4700 Pineda St., New Orleans, 282-0296, stgabriel@archno.org, www.stgabe.net. Call the



"Marriage is a call to give oneself to one's spouse as fully as Christ gave himself to the Church." – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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 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: Check 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: Check 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.

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CHURCHES

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St. Louis King of France, 1609 Carrollton Ave., Metairie, 834-9977: Wedding times are Fridays 5 p.m. and following; Saturdays 10 a.m. through 1 p.m.; and 6 p.m. and following. 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 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: Check for details.

St. Mary of the Angels, 3501 N. Miro St., New Orleans, 945-3186: Call parish office for details.



"In their marriage promises, the spouses pledge love and fidelity for as long as they live." – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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: Check 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: Check 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.sritanola.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: Check 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: Check 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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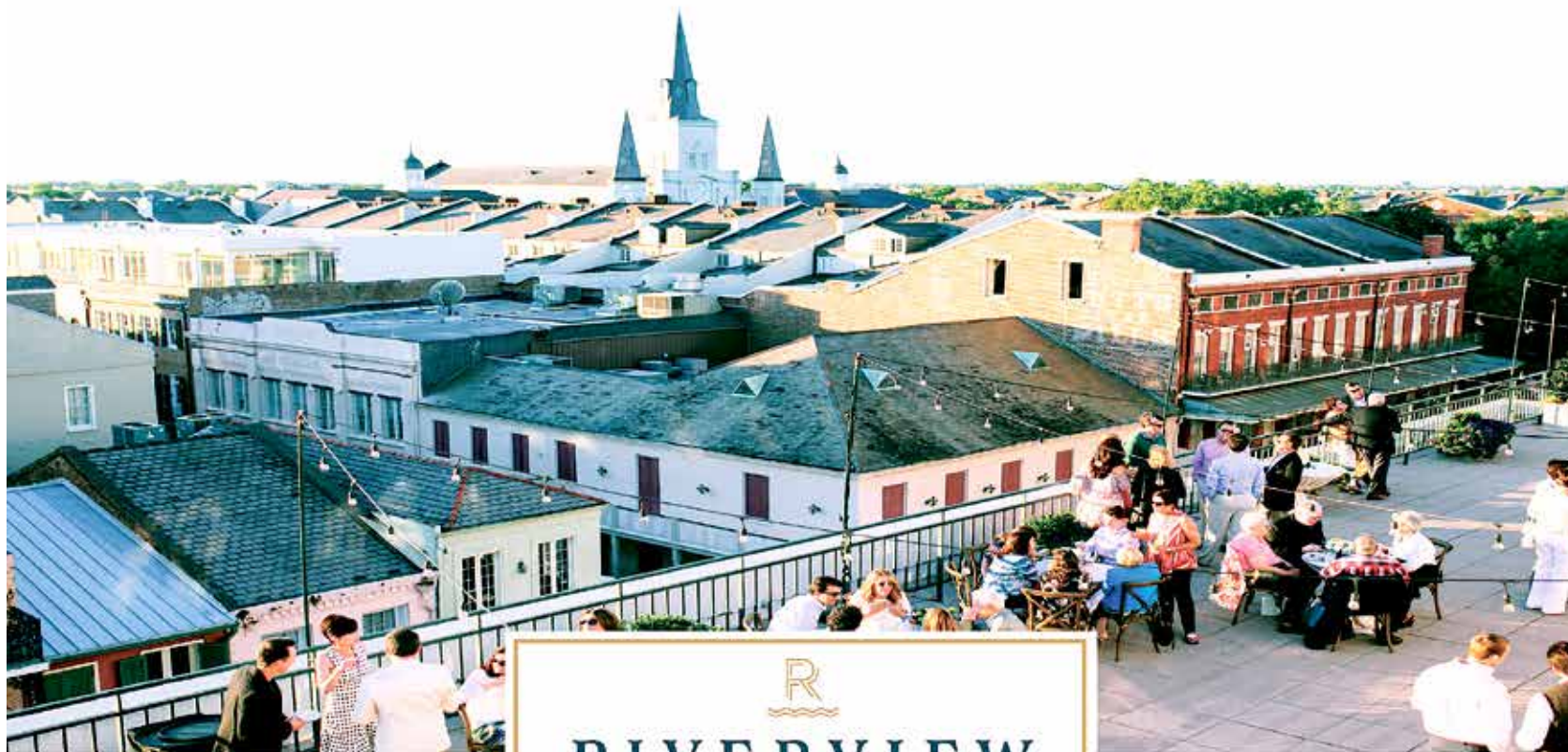
A bride in a large, ruffled white wedding gown is seen from behind, looking out a window. The scene is backlit by bright sunlight, creating a soft glow around her and highlighting the texture of her dress. The window has a wooden frame, and a dark curtain is visible on the right side.

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