

COVID has created challenges, but couples still exchanging vows

By Peter Finney Jr.
Clarion Herald

One of the collateral effects of COVID-19 has been the postponement or rescheduling of many Catholic weddings, but despite challenging public health guidelines that have dictated smaller liturgical celebrations and receptions, engaged couples still are finding a way, through their faith and commitment to each other, to "get me to the church on time."

Chris O'Neill, director of the Office of Marriage and Family Life for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, said while the pandemic has "definitely put a damper on marriages in general," many couples are doing much more than coping with the challenges.

"It's just been really hard on couples to plan their weddings, and it's kind of added another level of discouragement to people getting married in the first place," O'Neill said. "But what's encouraging are the couples that I've been seeing who've been coming to the marriage prep program are really determined to do what they need to do to get their marriages started in the right place."

"The couples we see in the Days for the Engaged have their eyes focused on what they're trying to do and trying to do it the right way."

Countering the culture

O'Neill admitted that over the past several decades, "the whole popularity of marriage" has declined "pretty dramatically." That is reflected in the cohabitation rate, he said.

"Couples aren't getting married at all – they're living together," O'Neill said. "That's kind of the trend, and (COVID) has only encouraged that even more – 'Look, let's just not get married at all.' But the couples that we're seeing



Photo | COURTESY BROCATO PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTIVE

Grace Britsch and Jordan LeBlanc were married July 31 by Father Beau Charbonnet at Immaculate Conception Church, New Orleans. Their groomsmen and bridesmaids wore face coverings to meet public safety guidelines.

in (marriage prep) tend to be pretty determined. It's like they've got their eyes focused on what they're trying to do. They're trying to do it the right way, and that's really encouraging."

Speaking from the perspective of a Catholic ministry leader, O'Neill is concerned about the couples who are not looking to the church to start their married lives together "and are discouraged from taking the commitment toward marriage and the married life."

"That's something I'm concerned about, and I'm not exactly sure how we can address that effectively, but it's something on all of our minds," O'Neill said.

Father Beau Charbonnet, pastor of St. Angela Merici Parish in Metairie, prepares about 15 engaged couples each year for marriage. The pandemic has forced about five couples he knows to reschedule their wedding dates, because many had planned with the expectation of a large rehearsal dinner and wedding reception.

"With these changes, they've had to change their view of how all this will play out, and that's been a tough thing," Father Charbonnet said. "But it hasn't been a

bad thing because it's made people focus on what the most important thing really is. It's not about the reception; it's about getting married and understanding that even from the get-go, there's sacrifice involved. What I have found is that it has really purified the intention of a number of couples."

Intimate setting

One of the couples Father Charbonnet began to prepare for marriage had intended to have their wedding in New Orleans, but other circumstances prompted them to decide on a small wedding liturgy in the Washington, D.C., area, with a priest friend presiding. Only 10 family members and friends were allowed in the church.

"They had a very, very small party and they livestreamed everybody else," Father Charbonnet said. "I respect them because they didn't want to put it off. They were ready. They knew God had prepared them. I watched the livestream, and I was proud to work with them. They had a huge community of people watching them online – about 200 people – which was neat to see."

During the last seven months, O'Neill said mar-

riage preparation in the archdiocese has been conducted as normal, but with obvious tweaks due to social distancing rules. More engaged couples are using online methods to either speak to a priest or to a mentor couple to go through their discussion exercises.

"The bottom line is the pastors have the responsibility to do the formation for marriage prep, and a lot of parishes are doing mentor couple programs," O'Neill said. "Some pastors are doing more of the traditional one-on-one themselves to help people get through."

Lived experience of mentors

The mentor couple program is the preferred marriage preparation program, O'Neill said, because "that's the one that most connects the couple to their parish community."

"When you go through marriage preparation with a mentor couple in the parish, it's someone you establish a relationship and friendship with," O'Neill said. "Then you're set up in a much better way to be successful, to have the support you need in your first few years."

Many of the mentor couples are still meeting engaged couples in their homes, or the parish provides a meeting space that is large enough to allow the participants to space out, allaying any CO-

VID fears. They have also used online conferencing tools.

The Days for the Engaged program is up and running, with capacity limited to about 50% of normal, although that capacity may start to ramp up soon. Engaged Encounter weekends will be available in October and November, O'Neill said.

One of the blessings of a difficult year, he said, has been refocusing couples on what really matters about the sacrament of marriage. Smaller weddings can mean a deeper focus into the unity marriage represents.

"Actually, I kind of like that," O'Neill said. "One of the obstacles for people getting married is this idea that the 'Catholic wedding' is this great, big, huge, grand thing with all of the family and all of the friends and all these accoutrements that go along with it. That can actually be a hindrance to people who maybe couldn't afford to do that, so they're kind of hesitant to get married. We're seeing more examples of a smaller, normal, straightforward wedding that doesn't have to be this huge, huge event. The couple can have a wedding that's more aligned with what's reasonable for them."

O'Neill encourages engaged couples to speak with

See COVID 'I DO' page 27 ►

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NEW ORLEANS

They're really, really, REALLY trying to get to the altar

By Kim Roberts
Contributing writer

It is a joyous time when one of your children becomes engaged. Hours of planning are expected and anticipated.

Brides, grooms and their families who live in New Orleans have to consider a myriad of things when it comes to picking a date: LSU and Saints games; festivals, fairs, concerts; holidays; hurricane season; little sister's cheerleading competitions; wedding party work schedules, weather and temperature, and in this case, the groom's military availability.

The stars all have to align for that one perfect day to come to fruition. The one thing that is not on the radar is a pandemic – resulting in the total shutdown of the country.

Pandemic has other plans

My daughter, Victoria Roberts, and Christopher Dedo are one local couple that has been hit by the pandemic in a way they never imagined.

The Roberts/Dedo wedding was scheduled not only once, but twice, at Holy Name of Jesus Church in New Orleans, with a reception following at Rosy's Jazz Hall. That was more than a year ago when we planned every aspect of this traditional New Orleans wedding – down to the streetcar ride and second line.

The first wedding date was May 9, and then the second



Photo | COURTESY GK PHOTOGRAPHY

Christopher Dedo and Victoria Roberts painstakingly planned every aspect of their upcoming wedding – only to have their nuptials postponed twice. Author Kim Roberts, the bride-to-be's mom, hopes the third time is a charm.

date was Oct. 2. Since the pandemic is still plaguing our country and affecting military leave, the couple has now had to cancel the October date in New Orleans and come up with yet another plan.

A New Orleans dream

The bride is my eldest daughter and a graphic designer. She always wanted a New Orleans wedding and meticulously planned a lovely day with her groom, a Lafay-

ette native with ties to the city.

"It was important for us to have the ceremony at Holy Name since Christopher's grandparents were married in the same church," Victoria said. And for the bride's family, the Jesuit ties were a plus.

With the pandemic in full swing and everything in the city closing and remaining closed, rescheduling the wedding became a reality. The re-



Photo | COURTESY KIM ROBERTS

Christopher and Victoria hope to finally marry in the near future.

scheduling became even more difficult because Christopher is a Naval officer who is training in San Diego. Initially, he had no-travel orders until the end of May, but those orders were upgraded, prohibiting travel out of California until the end of the year.

Did I mention invitations had already been sent as well as change the date cards?

Change of plans

This was uncharted territory. We had to come up with a plan – actually, a few plans. First, we contacted Holy Name and, thankfully, bridal consultant Liz Broekman was extremely accommodating, supplying alternate date options. Then we contacted the celebrant, Father Joseph Tran from the bride's home parish

(St. Matthew the Apostle in River Ridge), who, also thankfully, was available for alternate dates.

"We had to look at the calendar from the church and check my availability and the groom's training schedule before we could pick a date," Victoria said. "When we thought we could still get married this year in New Orleans, we did take everything into consideration and knew that everyone who had weddings and events planned for April and May were rescheduling as well."

The bride, groom and both mothers shared the tasks of contacting the reception and rehearsal dinner venues, band, photographer, florist, bakery, hotel, videographer, transportation and streetcar, hair and make-up stylists to make sure everyone was available on the new date in October.

Since we had pretty much paid everything in full prior to the pandemic and we were happy with our choices, we wanted to use the same vendors and let them keep the money that we paid – not wanting to ask for a refund or start all over.

"The reality is that no matter how much of the country shuts down, the Navy must continue to operate and be prepared to support our mission around the world,"

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COVID 'I DO'

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their pastor about how to best complete their marriage preparation process in their unique circumstances.

Father Charbonnet said rather than seeing jitters and nerves and complaints from engaged couples – and from their parents – he is seeing a resurgence of thankfulness

displayed by those who are preparing for their trip to the altar.

"I think overall I've seen the gratitude that people have," Father Charbonnet said. "When you look at the things that we take for granted – and I think COVID has really made us look at a lot of these things that we do take for granted – you start to really appreciate life, relation-

ships, family, the freedoms that we do have, our church community.

"When you see people starting off a family in the midst of all this and the fact that they are able to work through these obstacles and get to that point, I think I really appreciate these weddings even more, because in the midst of all this struggle, there's hope."

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Handling a crisis before your wedding is a good COVID practice

Your wedding is only three months away – or is it? Who could have imagined that a tragedy such as the coronavirus could alter the course of the future?

You ask, “Lord, why are you allowing this to happen? Times are troubled. My future spouse and I are fighting over little things. My future in-laws aren’t being flexible. I’m afraid this marriage won’t happen. What can I do?”

How you handle that situation says a lot about you and how others will see you. It also will speak to how you’re likely to handle future crises in your marriage.

Take the time now to grow from the current situation. Mold yourself to be a strong spouse, friend and in-law, someone others will look to in times of trouble.

Start, end with prayer

So where do you begin? As with all things, big and small, let it begin with prayer. Be sure to include your future spouse.

Start with the Serenity Prayer: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change ... the courage to change the things I can ... and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Remember, acceptance is a strength. It’s what will separate you from those who are unwilling



Deacon W. Gerard
GAUTRAU
GUEST COLUMN

or too weak to deal with the situation. It’s the first step in moving forward to an acceptable conclusion.

Next, analyze the situation. Who/what does it affect? What are its components/impacts? Who or what can influence its outcome?

Find alternative solutions. (I could do this or this or that). Then weigh them. (Which has the most likely positive outcome?)

Be sure to share them with your future spouse, future in-laws and maybe friends who are concerned about overcoming this temporary setback.

Pray again, with your future spouse, that you have made the right decision. The two of you, absolutely, must resolve any disagreement. In marriage prep, we emphasize the importance of conflict resolution and communication. Now is the time to develop those skills and to use them effectively to heal all wounds.

Now, take action.

Finally, don’t look back. Be confident that you made the best decision based on the information available and what you decided in prayer.

Having done all the above,

it’s time to reflect not on the decision, but on the “players” and how they acted out during the process. Did your spouse take an active role with you, withdraw, or “take sides” against you?

Were your future in-laws accepting of your decision and did you take their concerns into consideration?

Was the problem-solving exercise helping you and

your spouse grow together or was it tearing you apart?

It’s important that any conflicts that arose during the process be addressed now. Amends must be made with future in-laws. Remember, they will become future family. Encourage your future spouse to collaborate with and support you in this process.

In time, your wedding

will take place. Perhaps in a different time, method or place. But remember that the most important thing is that you and your future spouse can stand before God and humans and make a commitment to love each other “for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do you part.”

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Forgiveness can come in small doses by focusing on Christ

On the first of January – long before any thoughts of COVID-19 – I began the trip of my lifetime.

I had been gifted with a trip to the Holy Land. It was a 10-day tour to all the sacred places of Galilee and Jerusalem. I took 10 months to prepare for the trip. To say I was excited was an understatement. It would be more fitting to say I was “mind-blown.”

From the moment I boarded the first aircraft to the time I boarded my return flight 12 days later, I found myself nervous, concerned and exhausted. The planned tours proved to be both spiritually and physically impactful.

Walking where Christ walked, touching the rocks that held his cross in the ground, kneeling in his tomb



Deacon Dave
FARINELLI
GUEST COLUMN

– each act was extraordinary.

After returning home, many people questioned me about my experience: Was I taken up with the beauty? Was it inspiring? How blessed had I been?

To summarize, the trip was everything I could have hoped for and more. However, I found myself focusing on how difficult the trip had been, almost to the point of being unable to enjoy the experience.

It is that last point I want to draw your attention to – not allowing our own actions to prevent us from experienc-

ing the blessings God so strongly wants to give us.

More specifically, I want to explain how forgiveness, of both self and others, plays a pivotal role in God’s plan.

Focus on joy, not pain

Just as I dwell on the difficulties of the trip rather than on the highlights, human nature frequently leads us to focus on moments of injustice or pain in our lives rather than taking the time to look at what occurred before and after the incident. Through time and distance, we eventually are able to reflect on and determine how we have been impacted by these moments. Often, the temptation is to hold onto the memory in a negative light.

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FLEXIBILITY

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Christopher said. “Closing the doors is not an option, and our leaders are making tough decisions at every level.”

We were pleasantly surprised that all of the wedding vendors and everyone in the wedding industry have been working together to help couples in any way possible. Everyone was willing to work with us.

Our photographer, George Kuchler from GK Photography, went out of his way to help with this process and provided much-needed guidance. He assured us that everyone in the industry wanted the same thing we did – a beautiful wedding rescheduled with as little trouble as possible.

Thankful to vendors

What took months to plan originally took just three days to reschedule. We were so thankful that all of our

plans were salvageable, and we were able to keep the same vendors.

Fast forward to August, everything changed again: The October date had to be scrubbed for the New Orleans wedding since the groom could not leave California for the foreseeable future.

“At first, all we could hope for was rescheduling the same elements and getting as far out from the pandemic as we could,” Victoria said. “Was October the month I wanted for my wedding? No,

but that didn’t really matter, and everything has changed again. Now, we are hoping to have a small ceremony and plan a New Orleans wedding in the future. What matters most is that Christopher and I are able to get married with our family and a few friends in attendance. The date and place really aren’t that important.”

On a personal note, I also want to thank Thibodeaux’s Florist, Haydel’s Bakery, Coach House on St. Charles Avenue, Creole Cuisine

Restaurant Concepts, Columns Hotel catering, Shotgun Films, RTA, American Luxury Limousines and Cody Miller for helping us through this stressful time. Each vendor not only accommodated a rescheduled date, but also offered complete refunds when we had to cancel everything for this year.

Let’s hope the third time’s the charm. Many blessings for the happy couple.

Kim Roberts can be reached at k_rob136@cox.net.

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.

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 in the parish community that we most fully encounter God, who joins man and woman in marriage and sustains them. Your first step is to contact your parish priest or deacon at least 6 to 8 months before the wedding to discuss your plans. Every couple is unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to marriage preparation. Your parish priest

or deacon will know which resources are available and will recommend the best possible marriage preparation for you, 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.

PARISH-BASED MENTOR COUPLE PROGRAMS

Parish-based mentor couple programs provide a unique opportunity to explore the sacrament of marriage one-on-one with a married couple who is living it day by day. Because of the rich insights that come from the practical day-by-day experience of

mentor couples, and the personal friendships that are often formed in these programs, a parish-based mentor couple program is the recommended approach to marriage preparation, whenever possible.

CATHOLIC ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

An Engaged Encounter retreat is a weekend experience which enables each couple to concentrate exclusively on one another. The weekend is designed to give the couple an opportunity to discuss honestly with each other, in a face-to-face manner, their strengths and weaknesses, desires, ambitions, goals, their attitudes about money, sex, family, their role in the church and society.

Engaged Encounter weekends are offered approximately eight times a year in the Archdiocese of New Orleans and are the next best option if a parish-based mentor couple program is not practical.

DAYS FOR THE ENGAGED

The Days for the Engaged are held in two, separate, daylong Saturday sessions. Day "A" focuses on everyday challenges marriage presents and the virtues that grow when those challenges are faced with generosity and grace. Day "B" focuses on the

scriptural understanding of marriage, the various teachings of the Church that flow from this understanding, and the meaning and significance of the sacramentality of marriage for the couple.

ONLINE MARRIAGE PREPARATION

An online marriage preparation program is available for those couples who are separated by distance or who otherwise are unable to attend any of the other marriage preparation programs. The couple works through a series of written exercises, and

an online mentor reads and provides written feedback. The gradual, step-by-step nature of the program means that couples typically spend about five weeks to go through the program, providing a thorough preparation for the sacrament of marriage.

LOCAL MARRIAGE PREP PARTICULAR LAW; MARRIAGE PREP PROGRAM DATES; MENTOR COUPLE INFORMATION

For a copy of the Marriage Preparation Particular Law for the Archdiocese of New Orleans or Marriage Prep Program dates, go to www.nolacatholic.org/documents. Married couples interested in becoming a mentor couple – engaged couples and your

parish could use your help! Contact your parish and let your pastor know of your interest in helping with the parish mentor couple program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE OFFICE OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE AT (504) 861-6243 OR GO TO [HTTPS://ARCH-NO.ORG/MFL](https://arch-no.org/mfl)

Don't let COVID-19 or any other circumstance be an obstacle to starting your marriage on the right foot!



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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. Start your wedding planning by meeting with your pastor to discuss pre-marriage counseling. (See resource chart on page 29.) The Office of Marriage and Family Life is available to answer any questions at (504) 861-6243.

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.

- Enroll in a Natural Family Planning course.

- 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.

- Create a wedding website where you can post details about your special day, post pictures/bios of your wedding party, write a short bio about the couple's love story (how you met and the proposal), set up your online registries and online RSVPs as desired.

- Create an Excel spreadsheet of your guest list (with mailing and/or email addresses) and have your fiancé make his list. If you plan to mail invitations, be sure to format it properly, so you can upload your spreadsheet to make mailing "save the dates" and wedding invitations easier.

- Optional: Take engagement photos and send out "save the dates."

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

- Select attendants' dresses and shoes.

- Have your fiancé select the groomsmen and his tuxedos or suits.

- Select a photographer.

- Select a florist.

- Plan your music, selecting organist and singer.

- Book makeup and hair stylists.



I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life.

- 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 wedding invitations online with mailing addresses by uploading the Excel spreadsheet to the website.

- 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

- Mail or email wedding invitations.

- Decide upon gifts for your attendants.

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

- 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 spouses and as future parents 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.

- Prepare wedding programs.

- Get the marriage license.

- Make transportation plans for the wedding party.

- Have the final fitting of your bridal gown.

- Order your wedding cake, the groom's cake and other desserts you may desire for guests to take home.

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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The Catholic Church provides three different forms of celebrating the Rite of Marriage.

When two Catholics are marrying, the celebration will normally take place

within a Mass.

The second form, which does not include a Mass, is used when a Catholic marries another baptized Christian.

A third form, also outside Mass, is usually celebrated when a Catholic marries someone who is not baptized.

The second and third forms are structured around the celebration of

the Liturgy of the Word.

The couple chooses one of these options based on its particular circumstances in conversation with the priest or deacon who will witness the marriage vows. When a deacon leads the liturgy, which is increasingly common, the wedding is celebrated outside of Mass even when two Catholics marry.

FORGIVENESS

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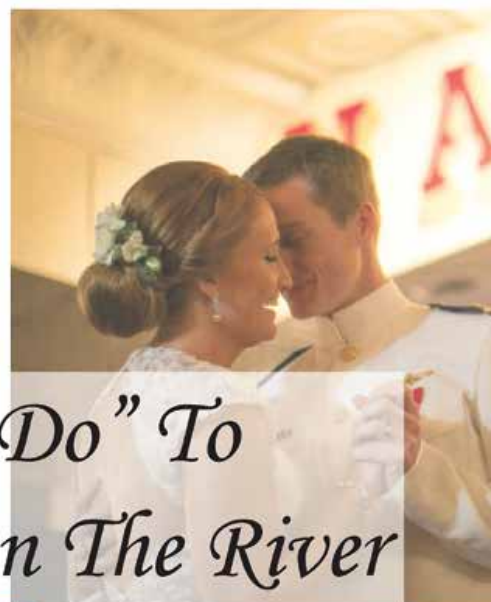
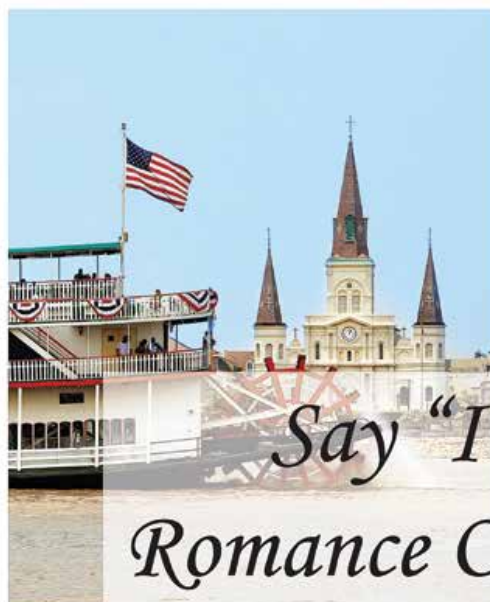
Yet, when we delve into Scripture, we see we are called to forgive, to let go of judgment and to love far more than we often want to. In Chapters 5 and 6 of the Gospel of St. Matthew, Jesus invites us into that change – no longer giving the bare minimum, but challenging us to give all that we have. It is his method that places us on the path to perfection. It is his desire that we choose this path for our own sanctification.

Thus, the act of forgiving someone is not enough. We are also called to rewrite our emotional responses so we can truly “let go” and see into God’s gifts to us.

Many people think this is impossible. However, by taking time and utilizing the graces given by God, we are capable of responding positively to these situations. We need to look to his example. God did not hold onto our offenses; nor did he simply say “I forgive you” to all of humanity. He took that next step, going to extraordinary measures by sending his son to die for our sins, extending his unconditional love and providing us the opportunities needed to achieve true holiness.

Many of you may wonder if it is possible to achieve this ultimate call to holiness. To that I say, yes; the more we let go of our will in small increments and attach ourselves to the will of Christ, the closer we come to perfection and are able to enjoy the journey. It’s a process.

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Questions: Wedding music; interfaith; civil marriage

Q Our oldest daughter is scheduled to be married in our parish church a few months from now. While we look forward to the ceremony with joyful anticipation, she was dismayed to read in the instructional manual provided by our parish that only one piece of music is allowed during the processional.

Also, instead of arriving at the altar before the bridal procession begins, our parish stipulates that the priest, the groom and groomsmen all be part of the entrance processional along with the bride and her father. I am a "cradle Catholic" and this was not the protocol when I was married 32 years ago. Who has decided this, and is there room for discussion with our priest? (Richmond, Virginia)

A The Catholic "rite of marriage," which is the Vatican-approved "playbook" for a wedding ceremony, is quite general and allows for a fair measure of cultural adaptation. Nothing is stipulated about the number of musical pieces for the processional, although most dioceses do specify (in their guidelines) that any music chosen for the ceremony should highlight God's presence and not be drawn from the secular



Father Kenneth
DOYLE
QUESTION CORNER

world.

The ritual allows the priest to meet the bride and groom at the altar or to accompany them in a procession; if there is a procession, it may (according to local custom) include the parents of the bride and groom as well as the two witnesses.

Frequently in the United States, the groom is left out of the procession and the bride walks up the aisle with her father who "gives her away." The inclusion of both spouses might highlight more clearly their mutuality and equality.

The short answer to your question is that the local parish does have some discretion as to the "look" of the ceremony, so you might want to discuss with your pastor which parts are stipulated and which are not. All of this can be done amicably, so as not to detract from the joy that the wedding day is meant to bring.

Q My boyfriend and I are madly in love and have decided to get married. He is American (from New Hampshire), and I am from the South American country of Ecua-

dor. We met four years ago, and our relationship has survived distance as well as differences in language and culture. Additionally, I am a Catholic and he is a Jew. We would like to have a wedding ceremony reflecting our two faiths. What is the process for having that recognized by the church?

We would like to have both a rabbi and a priest give us their blessings at the marriage. We have in mind a wedding about a year from now in Florida. I can't, though, go right now to Florida to make these arrangements, since I am still in the middle of the visa process. What can we do to have this happen? (Ecuador)

A I have been involved in a number of interfaith wedding ceremonies such as you describe – all with the blessing of the Catholic Church. It's a little bit complicated for you and your fiancé because of the geographic distances, but it can certainly happen, and this is what I think you should do.

First, you should telephone the Catholic diocese in the area of Florida where you would like to be married. (The Florida dioceses are Miami, St. Augustine, St. Petersburg, Orlando, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Palm Beach and Venice.) When you call, ask for the marriage tribunal office, explain your situation and seek

their advice. Ask them to put you in touch with a priest they think might be willing to accommodate you.

Then speak with that priest and, if he's willing to be involved, ask him to suggest a local rabbi who might participate. Then call that rabbi and seek his or her assistance. At some point, you and your fiancé will need to fill out some paperwork with the church seeking the required permissions, as well as obtain a civil marriage license.

One question you'll have to decide is whether you want the priest or the rabbi to be the one to receive your vows during the ceremony; it can work either way, but there's a technical difference in the sort of permission/dispensation you need to obtain. You have a year to work on this so it can certainly come together, but it would be best to start soon. Meanwhile, I will pray for the two of you and for God's blessings on your marriage.

Q My family has been dedicated Catholics for generations. Recently, a nephew of mine announced that he is planning to get married in a civil ceremony. (I believe that neither he nor his fiancée is dedicated to a religion. He is a "fallen-away Catholic" millennial.)

As the eldest in the family, I am saddened by this

turn of events and have researched the stand of my religion relative to my participation in this union. To be honest, the guidance I'm finding is not very direct as to the church's stance. Can you provide me some clarity?

As a Catholic, can I attend? (My current decision is to not attend, and this is causing great angst in the family, a family that I treasure.) (City of origin withheld)

A I am not surprised that you are finding varying guidance in your dilemma. It is basically a "strategy question" with no hard and fast "rule." You are trying to strike a balance between fidelity to the church's teaching and your legitimate desire to maintain family harmony, and different people will have different ideas as to how to do that.

Here would be my suggestion: Go to the wedding, but first sit down and talk with your nephew. Tell him that you feel a certain awkwardness in attending, since he is not being married in a religious ceremony. Explain to him what the Catholic faith has meant to you, how it has sustained you over the years, offering comfort and guidance.

Tell him how much he means to you and that your deepest hope and prayer is that, one day, he might return to the practice of the faith he grew up with and seek the church's blessing on his marriage.

If you do that, he will not see your attendance as an "endorsement" by the church, you will not risk a family rupture that could be permanent and you keep open the possibility of his return to Catholic practice through your prayer and gentle example.

Questions may be sent to Father Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 40 Hopewell St., Albany, N.Y. 12208.

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Breaking out of a spiritual rut requires bold action

We were newlyweds, and as a late wedding gift, a priest friend invited us to attend our bishop's annual fundraising gala. A black-tie affair, my husband needed a tuxedo and I a gown. Off to the department store we went, a bit reluctant to spend money on fancy clothes we thought we'd never wear again.

Fast forward to a random Friday three years later, and my husband walked out of the bathroom in his tuxedo, shoes shined, hair slicked down. I burst into laughter and asked him why he was wearing a tux moments before heading to work.

He explained that things were getting stale and boring in his classroom, and his high school Biology I students needed a shake-up, some fun on a Friday. So, he dubbed the day "Formal Friday," donning his tux and bringing a smile and a laugh to 150 students.

My husband is nothing if not bold and clever.

Sartorial splendor

When he got home that afternoon, I was eager to find out how the tuxedo had played with his students. Did they find him unbearably cheesy or were they amused and more dialed in, thinking that if their teacher was willing to look a fool, then he was also willing to work hard to help them understand biology?

"It killed, Katie. I think I'm going to do this every week."

And with that, he set off for the thrift store to go find classic tuxedo vests and ties to spice up his future "Formal Friday" outfits.

Perceptive as he is, my husband knew his students needed a shake-up – so he did something amusing and unique to get them out of the mid-fall classroom funk. I admired his creativity in trying to find a way to bring energy and joy at the end of the week.



Katie
**PREJEAN
McGRADY**
GUEST COLUMN

But it simultaneously made me feel guilty, as I realized I was in a rut myself – becoming lax, even lazy, with my prayer and needing a shake-up.

I was far less perceptive of my own spiritual life's ruts: ignoring regular prayer, avoiding daily Mass, making excuses for not setting my phone down and reading Scripture, convincing myself I needed to scroll Twitter rather than dive into the Word of God.

Routine can bring you down

If you're too far down a spiritual rut, it's almost impossible to even realize you are stuck. The cavernous sides of the rut become comfortable, almost cozy.

Instead of looking up and out and continuing to grow, we settle into a routine that perhaps proves detrimental to our relationship with the Lord, because it's overly familiar and not stretching us. Virtue is formed when we're stretched – when we're pushed out of our comfort zones and challenged to talk to God in a new way and focus our attention on him



Being willing to "stretch" and change your normal routine – even if it calls for forsaking sleep to squeeze in extra prayer time once a week – can result in countless blessings, Katie Prejean McGrady writes.

with renewed fervor. It's not that the rut was a bad place, it was just a place I wasn't growing. I was stuck, not blooming.

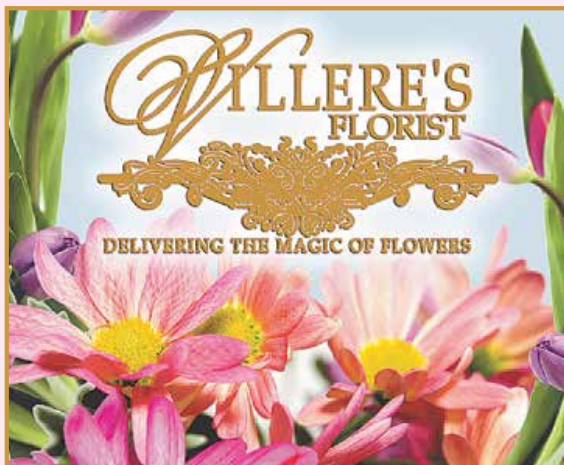
I set out to create my own "Formal Friday" routine. Wake up early, go to 6:30 a.m. Mass. Pray a rosary during my daughter's midday nap instead of mindlessly staring at my phone. Cook a nice meal and dessert for Friday dinner, perhaps inviting friends over to enjoy it

with us. I set out to mark the day as something unique, to use Friday as a reset to the week and get us excited for a weekend of family time.

And just like my husband's tuxedo in a classroom, my shake-up and renewed commitment to praying intentionally, serving my family in a special way and diving into Scripture on Fridays helped me push past a rut that had made me lazy and bored in my spiritual life.

It seems we may each need a tuxedo, especially after we've become aware of all the ways we aren't growing but are just spinning our spiritual wheels. How can you get out of the rut?

Katie Prejean McGrady is an international Catholic speaker, award-winning author and host of the *Ave Explores* and *Ave Spotlight* podcasts. She lives in Lake Charles, Louisiana, with her husband and two daughters.



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Three modern obstacles to a healthy marriage

FOR YOUR MARRIAGE.ORG

It's cliché to lament divorce statistics, but in an attempt to combat the problem of rising divorce rates and declining marriage rates, let's take a look at some cultural problems that can be obstacles to healthy marriages.

1. We have a mixed-up idea of married love.

It's normal to go into marriage with some expectation of romance and lovey-dovey stuff. After all, that's how people wind up wanting to get married in the first place.

Just as people have different personalities, though, different marriages do, too, and most marriages don't maintain that full-force "romantic" feeling forever. And we should not expect them to.



If marriage is a vocation, that means it is your life's work – and certainly not a part-time job.

Fading romance in a culture that tells couples they can quit when it gets hard, leave when they "fall out of love" or their spouse "doesn't make them happy anymore," is a recipe for discouragement and the kinds of negative, selfish thoughts that can lead to divorce.

2. We fail at self-giving love.

This is a problem I have observed even among very "faithful" Catholics who know and love a lot about their faith. Somehow, we as a Church have failed to help some husbands and wives hear and understand that their call to marriage is a call to make a

total gift of self to their spouse.

In my own life, I have seen what look like "perfect" marriages on the outside fall apart on the inside because of a failure of one or both of the spouses to recognize this simple fact: Love comes first. Charity above all things. You can be an otherwise "perfect" Catholic couple – earning a decent living, setting up a home, having children and educating them well – but if you fail to recognize the importance of loving your spouse with self-giving love, you are failing at the most important thing. None of that other stuff matters.

3. We misunderstand the importance of vocation.

Vocation is a tough concept for many of today's younger generations to understand. The idea of a calling – not a job, but a calling – to marriage, priesthood or religious life is a foreign one to many. When we fail to recognize marriage as a

calling, however, we belittle it. Culturally, it becomes a hobby or something nice to do "if you're into that kind of thing." It certainly isn't something you would sacrifice your career for.

If marriage is a vocation, that means it's your life's work; it's not a job and not something you do on the side. It's something you do first, and then build the rest of your life around, not something you try to fit in later, once you've saved up enough money and you've accomplished "more important" things.

Let's support marriage. Let's pray for each other. Let's encourage each another.

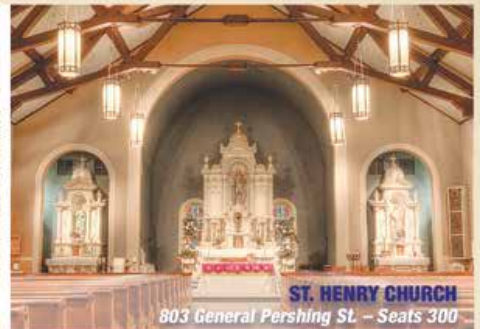
Article originally published by CatholicMatch Institute, which provides resources to help single Catholics develop a strong foundation for marriage through advocacy, programs and scholarships. Used with permission.



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We can always count on God's faithfulness to us

By Don Paglia

foryourmarriage.org

Most engaged couples – at least the brides – love thumbing through any of the popular bridal magazines, reading the numerous helpful articles and taking note of the various ads, photos and other information offered, be it helpful wedding tips, reception planning or honeymoon ideas.

These magazines try to be a resource guide for couples who want to have the perfect wedding. This isn't a negative notion in itself, other than the fact that "perfect" is not reachable, nor even necessarily, desirable.

There is an adage in Catholic Engaged Encounter: "A Wedding is a Day; A Marriage is a Lifetime."

So, the key is not to put more emphasis on the wedding plans than the subsequent marriage. These magazines are not designed to do any more than they do: sell gowns, rings, dinnerware, furniture, luggage, travel packages, honeymoon trips, sex appeal and "take-your-breath-away-beauty."

A celebration of God's love

There is, of course, nothing wrong with a well-planned wedding day; nor for that matter, with a reception and wedding celebration of large proportions – that is, if they fit into the proper context. This means that the wedding celebration needs to point to the reality of what is truly happening with this coming together as husband and wife. It is actually a party to celebrate that God loves his people.

The husband and wife express this divine love concretely – through words and deeds – as they live out their conjugal love over a lifetime. Their bond of love becomes the image and symbol of the covenant that



The promise the couple makes – publicly to God and to the community – is a radical departure from any contract. Marriage is a covenant.

unites God to his people. This is wonderful! It is wonderful. It demands to be celebrated. And the need and desire to have a great wedding celebration is therefore appropriate and fitting.

Questions to ask

Sometimes, though, a couple can get so caught up in planning that a reality check is needed. When wedding planning threatens to spin out of control, it's time to step back and ask a few questions:

➤ Why are we doing whatever we are doing regarding our wedding plans?

➤ What is the purpose of our large, small, costly, intimate, informal, formal, etc. reception?

➤ How are we acting as a visible sign of God's love for all of us as we participate in the celebration and related events?

➤ Who are we inviting? And why are we asking these people?

➤ Is there anything we can do to help others? Perhaps even assist family reconciliations? How might we be a sign of God's love to the poor, the afflicted and the needy?

➤ What does the term "counter-cultural" mean to us in the context of our wedding celebration?

For the ecumenical or inter-faith couple (where only one person is Catholic):

➤ How can aspects of both our faith traditions be acknowledged and affirmed in our wedding celebration?

The marriage covenant illustrates and illuminates God's love for us. The couple enters this covenant with its own promise, or vow, to do three things: to be faithful to each other forever; to be exclusively for one another; and to be open to new life.

The couple says "yes" – to be their word – while not knowing how they are going to fulfill such a promise. They say "yes" to live out their commitment, regardless of whatever circumstances come about in their life. They do so, not solely based upon their own good intentions and abilities, but do so in the confidence of God's grace. It is God's faithfulness that we can always count on, and it is this faithfulness that the couple is committed to mirror to each other and to the world.

The promise the couple makes – publicly to God and to the community – is a radical departure from any contract, whereby in a contract both parties know up front what will or won't take place before hand. This promise

– or covenant – is counter-cultural, and it is profoundly freeing and powerful.

Invitation to growth

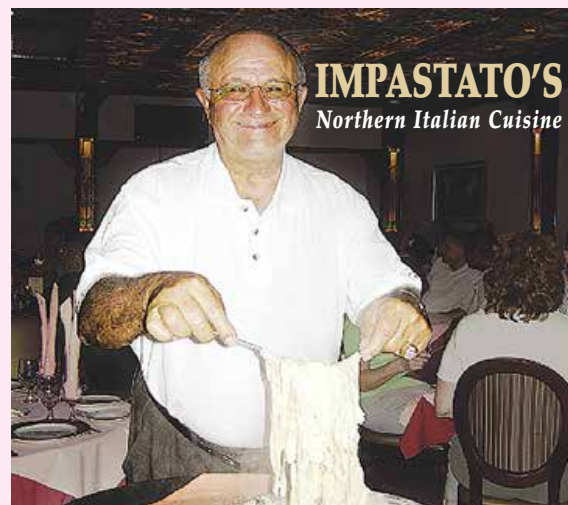
Marriage is also a social matter. It has always been an occasion for rejoicing, bringing together families and friends. For Catholics (indeed, for all baptized Christians) it is also a sacrament that draws them into an ongoing process of sacrifice, compromise, raising children, prayer and dealing with the joys and annoyances of a life shared together. For the wise couple, it is a challenge that, when embraced, opens

FOR  YOUR MARRIAGE.ORG

the door to tremendous opportunities for personal growth and development. The married couple takes this way of living on as its specific spiritual journey – one where maturity and growth occurs for each person, as God gets revealed over and over through the spouses' love for one another.

In addition to making thoughtful and wise choices concerning the wedding

See **FAITHFULNESS** page 36 ➤



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Coronavirus gives newlyweds opportunity to focus on sacrament

"I finally understand why he compares heaven to a wedding feast," I whispered to my husband as I looked out at the faces of the guests at our reception. "I wish I could live in this moment forever."

I had been to plenty of weddings by that point, and no one would accuse me of having been a wallflower at any of them. I'm a great wedding guest, and by that I mean that you can count on me being on the dance floor until last call.

As a guest, I fully embrace my role as I understand it: to help extend a newly married couple's joy as long as possible.

But there was something different about my own reception, when everyone whom I loved – whom



Elise
**ITALIANO
URENEK**

GUEST COLUMNIST

we loved – were together in one room, eating, drinking, laughing and dancing because of our joy and God's goodness. Until that evening, eternity had been a concept that both intrigued and frightened me. That night I had a sense of what unending joy might be like, and the foretaste made me yearn for it more.

This is why I have felt so much sympathy for the brides and grooms of 2020. The choice to indefinitely delay their weddings or to

have a ceremony but forgo a celebration with loved ones must be excruciating.

Hardly anyone's wedding day ever goes as planned. The coronavirus has been an unusually cruel teacher of that lesson.

Each couple will have to discern what works best for them in these strange times. Every marriage is unique, and starting off with a solid foundation is the most important investment a couple can make.

Solid prep can really help

The best pre-Cana programs are designed to help couples do this: to more intimately know themselves, each other and God, the author of marriage. In my own experience, I came to better understand God's plan for marriage generally, alongside the truth that he had a particular destiny for my marriage.

I must say that I have been encouraged by those moving forward. To me, it's a sign of just how radical Christian hope is. In the midst of economic uncertainty, Catholic couples are promising to be faithful in good times and in bad, for richer or poorer.

As a deadly virus with still-unknown effects spreads through the globe, they are vowing to love one another in sickness and in health.

One story in particular has inspired me, not only because it was published by my alma mater. Two young

Providence College alumni got married this past March in a ceremony much different than the one they anticipated. The guest list was cut, priests they invited could not come and they had their first dance to music played on an iPhone. But the couple had a perspective that many only arrive at much later in marriage, if at all.

"We have the sacrament, we have each other, and it's a great story we'll be able to tell," the bride said. "We can have our party later. This is much bigger than us."

Beyond themselves

In fact, they seem to know that their whole lives, as well as their marriage, are about more than themselves. The bride and groom are second lieutenants in the Air Force and are studying medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences with the goal of serving as physicians in the military after graduation. Their celebrant, Dominican Father James Cuddy, was ordered on active duty to serve as a Navy hospital chaplain for coronavirus patients on the USNS Mercy.

In its simplicity, their wedding was a testament to what Bishop Robert E. Barron, auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles and founder of "Word on Fire" ministries, has preached: The path to holiness involves discovering that "your life is not about you."

That revelation usually comes in time, in the ordinary days of marriage, when the vows take on flesh. How fortunate to have a sense of it so early on.

Jesus does compare the kingdom of heaven to a wedding feast, because those celebrations reveal something about eternity. Yet the entirety of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, compares God's relationship with his people to a marriage, a relationship marked by fidelity and fruitfulness over time.

In these unsettling days brought about by the coronavirus, let's look to Christian marriages as signs and symbols of God's fidelity that will get us through good and bad times, sickness and health.

Elise Italiano Urenek is a communications consultant and is a columnist for Catholic News Service.

Let's look
to Christian
marriages
as signs and
symbols of
God's fidelity.

– Elise Italiano Urenek

FAITHFULNESS

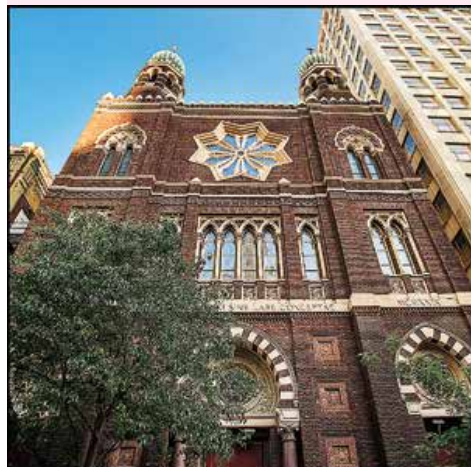
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plans, a couple needs to put a major effort into its marriage plans. The wedding can often be exhausting and lots of work. It's only worthwhile if the couple has also prepared for the marriage. Then the work of the marriage, the work that continues long after the bills for the reception and gown are paid, and long after the honeymoon photos are placed into an album or on a website, can become

the exclusive focus.

While bridal magazines are exciting and fun to look at, they won't say all this. And they only tell a part of the story. The rest is about the excitement and fun in store for those blessed and courageous enough to invest in this lifelong journey of work and effort – this thing called sacramental marriage. So plan for a great wedding as well as for a great and fulfilling marriage.

Don Paglia is the co-director of the Family Life Office in the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut.



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Wedding times, guidelines 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 your wedding date and for the churches' wedding guidelines. This is not a comprehensive list.

ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL, 615 PERE ANTOINE ALLEY, NEW ORLEANS, (504) 503-0351, WWW.STLOUISCATHEDRAL.ORG/MATRIMONY: Wedding fee includes the church, cantor, organist, wedding director and security. Weddings scheduled Monday-Friday at 3 or 7 p.m. and Saturday at 11 a.m.; 1, 3 or 7 p.m.

ALL SAINTS, 1441 TECHE ST., NEW ORLEANS, ALLSAINTSCHURCHNOLA.ORG: Weddings may be scheduled Monday-Friday by request. Times also available on Saturday before 1 p.m. or at 7 p.m. Call (504) 361-8835.

ANNUNCIATION, 517 AVENUE B, BOGALUSA, (985) 732-4280: Call the church office at for details.

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD, 1900 GREENWOOD DR., LA PLACE, (985) 652-2615, AOLPARISHOFFICE@GMAIL.COM; WWW.AOLPARISH.ORG: Organist fee additional.

BLESSED FRANCIS XAVIER SEELOS, 3037 DAUPHINE ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 943-556, WWW.SEELOSCHURCHNO.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday evening (except first Fridays) or Saturday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., and from 6-8 p.m. Other dates and times considered.

BLESSED SACRAMENT-ST. JOAN OF ARC PARISH (ST. JOAN OF ARC CHURCH), 8321 BURTHE ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 866-7330: Reserve church prior to booking reception venue. Additional fees for musicians.

BLESSED TRINITY, 4230 S. BROAD ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 822-3394: Call the church office for details.

DIVINE MERCY, 4337 SAL LENTINI PKWY., KENNER, (504) 466-5016, WWW.DIVINEMERCYPARISH.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday evening and Saturday between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Call about other days. Some smaller-

scale weddings Saturday at 5:30 p.m.

GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH: See St. Stephen Church, St. Henry Church and Our Lady of Good Counsel Church.

HOLY FAMILY, 1220 14TH AVE., FRANKLINTON, (985) 839-4040: Weddings Friday from 4-7 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m., and 7 p.m. Reserve church before booking reception venue. Musicians contracted separately.

HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS MISSION, 1701 BRIDGE CITY AVE., BRIDGE CITY, (504) 341-9522: Weddings scheduled Friday at 6:30 or 7 p.m.; Saturday between 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and from 6-7 p.m. Other dates and times considered. Additional fees for musicians.

HOLY NAME OF JESUS, 6367 ST. CHARLES AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 865-7430, WEDDINGS@HNJCHURCH.ORG: Wedding times are Friday at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday at 11 a.m.; 1, 6 or 8 p.m. Wedding coordinator Elizabeth Broekman.

HOLY NAME OF MARY, 400 VERRET ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 362-5511, WWW.HOLYNAMEOFMARYNOLA.ORG, HNMARY@ARCH-NO.ORG: Call or email for guidelines.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION,

4401 7TH ST., MARRERO, (504) 341-9516: Weddings scheduled Friday at 7 p.m., or Saturday until 1 p.m. or after 6 p.m.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, 130 BARONNE ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 442-2622, WWW.JESUITCHURCH.NET: Weddings scheduled Monday-Friday throughout the day; Friday at 7 p.m.; and Saturday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., and 5:30 or 7:30 p.m. Wedding coordinator, Julie Vanderbrook.

INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE MISSION, 700 MAPLE AVE., HARVEY, (504) 368-1397: Call for details.

MARY QUEEN OF PEACE, 1501 W. CAUSEWAY APPROACH, MANDEVILLE, (985) 626-6977, WWW.MARYQUEENOFPEACE.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday until 2 p.m. and at 7 p.m. Musician fees additional.

MATER DOLOROSA, 8128 PLUM ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 866-3669, WWW.MDOLOROSA.COM: Additional fees for the wedding coordinators, cantor and organist.

MOST HOLY TRINITY, 501 HOLY TRINITY DRIVE, COVINGTON, (985) 892-0642: Weddings scheduled Friday at 7 p.m. or Saturday from 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; or after 6:30 p.m.

OUR LADY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE, 1000 N. STARRETT ROAD, METAIRIE, (504) 466-4511: Weddings scheduled Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and at 8 p.m.

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL CHURCH (GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH), 1307 LOUISIANA AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 899-1378, WWW.GOODSHEPHERDPARISHNOLA.



"I take you for my lawful wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part."

COM: Call Ivy Rohr, wedding coordinator. Additional fees for musicians.

OUR LADY OF GRACE, 780 HWY. 44, RESERVE, (985) 536-2613, OLGCHURCH@ARCH-NO.ORG: Call or email for details.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, 411 N. RAMPART ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 525-1551: Call for details.

OUR LADY OF THE LAKE, 312 LAHITTE ST., MANDEVILLE, (985) 626-5671, WWW.OLLPARISH.INFO: Weddings scheduled Friday at 7 p.m. or Saturday at 1, 6 or 7 p.m. Wedding coordinator and sacristan services provided.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES, 400 WESTCHESTER BLVD., SLIDELL, (985) 643-4137, EXT. 300, WWW.OLLPARISHSLIDELL.COM: Organist fee additional.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES, 2621 COLONIAL BLVD., VIOLET, (504)

682-7070, WWW.OLLOL-CHURCH.COM/SACRAMENTS, OLL@ARCH-NO.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday or Saturday between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and after 6 p.m. Other times may be available.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP, 8968 HWY. 23, BELLE CHASSE, (504) 394-0314, CHURCHOFFICE@OLPHBC.ORG: Organist fee additional.

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP, 1908 SHORT ST., KENNER, (504) 464-0361, SECRETARY@OLPHLA.ORG: Arrangements must be made eight months in advance. Call the parish office to make an appointment. Weddings scheduled Friday at 7 or 7:30 p.m., Saturday between 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. or at 7:30 p.m. Musicians/singers

See **CHURCHES** page 38 ▶



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CHURCHES

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additional.

OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR, 146 FOURTH ST., WESTWEGO, (504) 341-9522: Weddings scheduled Friday at 6:30 or 7 p.m.; Saturday between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and from 6-7:30 p.m. Other times considered. Additional fees for musicians.

OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY, 3368 ESPLANADE AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 488-2659, WWW.OLR-NOLA.ORG: Wedding calendar and guidelines are online.

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, 1835 ST. ROCH AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 944-0166, OLSSNO@ARCH-NO.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday at 6:30 or 7 p.m.; Saturday at noon or 1 p.m.; after 6 p.m. Other dates and times are considered.

SACRED HEART, 28088 MAIN ST., LACOMBE, (985) 882-5229: Call for details.

ST. AGNES, 3310 JEFFERSON HWY., JEFFERSON, (504) 833-3366 or (504) 833-4118, WWW.STAGNESJEFFERSON.ORG, PARISH@STAGNESJEFFERSON.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and 7 p.m. Organist and cantor fees are additional. Wedding guidelines and forms online.

ST. ALPHONSUS, NEW ORLEANS: See St. Mary's Assumption Church and St. Mary's Chapel.

ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE, 3101 ETON ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 393-2334, WWW.STANDREWPARISH.NET,



May the Lord in his kindness strengthen the consent you have declared before the Church and graciously bring to fulfillment his blessings within you. What God has joined, let no one put asunder.

MDALLAM@STANDREWPARISH.NET: Weddings scheduled Friday at 6 p.m. or Saturdays at 1 or 6 p.m. Other days and times considered. Wedding guidelines online. Wedding coordinator, Mary Ann Dallam, (504) 415-7402

ST. ANGELA MERICI, 901 BEVERLY GARDEN DRIVE, METAIRIE, (504) 835-0324: Call for details.

ST. ANN, 3601 TRANSCONTINENTAL BLVD., METAIRIE, (504) 455-7071: Call for details.

ST. ANSELME, 306 ST. MARY ST., MADISONVILLE, (985) 845-7342, WWW.STANSELMAPARISH.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday at 6:30 p.m.; Saturday before 1 p.m. and at 6:30 p.m. Schedule date with the parish office first.

ST. ANTHONY, 924 MONROE ST., GRETN, (504) 368-1313: Weddings are scheduled Friday at 6:30 p.m.; Saturday between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. or at 6:30 p.m. Wedding coordinator, Debbie Swiler. Organist and cantor fees additional.

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, 4640 CANAL ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 488-2651: Call at least six months in advance for date. Weddings are scheduled Friday at 6 or 7 p.m.; Saturday at 1 or 7 p.m. Organist and cantor fees additional. Lighted parking in the schoolyard. Dede Dardis, wedding coordinator, (504) 488-3578.

ST. AUGUSTINE, 1210 GOV. NICHOLLS ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 525-5934: Call for details.

ST. BENEDICT, 20370 SMITH ROAD, COVINGTON, (985) 892-5202, OFFICE@STBENCOV.ORG: Wedding times by appointment.

ST. BENILDE, 1901 DIVISION ST., METAIRIE, (504) 834-4980, WWW.STBENILDE.ORG: Weddings are scheduled Friday at 6, 6:30 or 7 p.m.; Saturday at 11 or 11:30 a.m., noon, 6, 6:30, 7 or 7:30 p.m. Wedding guidelines and forms online. Wedding coordinators, Danielle Delaup Hill, (504) 666-1106 or Anita Delaup, (504) 874-1210.

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA, 105 BONNABEL BLVD., METAIRIE, (504) 835-9343, WWW.SCSCHURCH.COM, INFO@SCSCHURCH.COM: Weddings scheduled Friday between 6-8 p.m.; Saturday between 10 a.m.

and 1:30 p.m. or between 6-8 p.m. Wedding guidelines online. Michelle Alley, director of liturgy and sacraments, (504) 835-9343 or michelle@scschurch.com.

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO, 13396 RIVER ROAD, DESTREHAN, (985) 764-6383, SBOURG@SCBHMILITAS.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 1 or 7 p.m.

ST. CHRISTOPHER, 309 MANSON AVE., METAIRIE, (504) 837-8214, SCMRECTORY@OUTLOOK.COM: Weddings scheduled Friday between 6-8 p.m.; Saturday between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; and between 6-8 p.m. Organist and vocalists separately contracted.

ST. CLEMENT OF ROME, 4317 RICHLAND AVE., METAIRIE, (504) 887-7821: Weddings scheduled Friday between 6-8 p.m.; Saturday before 1:30 p.m.; and after 6:30 p.m. Nicole Jouandot, wedding coordinator, njouandot@scrparish.org.

ST. CLETUS, 3600 CLAIRE AVE., GRETN, (504) 367-7951: Call for details.

ST. DAVID, 5617 ST. CLAUDE AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 947-2853, STDIVID@ARCH-NO.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and between 6:30 and 8 p.m. School gymnasium available for receptions. Terry C. Montegut, wedding coordinator, (504) 427-4586. Organist is Irene Young.

ST. DOMINIC, 775 HARRISON AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 482-4156, CMYERS@STDPARISH.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday at 6:30 or 7 p.m.; Saturday at 1:30 or 6 p.m. or later.

ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, 4921 W. METAIRIE AVE., METAIRIE, (504) 888-0703, STEDWARD@STEDDY.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday after 7 p.m., Saturday 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, (504) 891-4479, WWW.STFRANCISUPTOWN.COM: Weddings scheduled Friday at 6:30 or 7 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m.-1 p.m., and 6:30 or 7 p.m. Wedding handbook online.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, 444 METAIRIE ROAD, METAIRIE, 834-0340, RGRIFIN@STFRANCISXAVIER.COM: Weddings scheduled Friday after 6 p.m.; Saturday between

10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. and after 6:30 p.m. Wedding coordinator included. Additional fees for musicians.

ST. GABRIEL THE ARCHANGEL, 4700 PINEDA ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 282-0296, WWW.STGABE.NET, STGABRIEL@ARCHNO.ORG: Call at least six months before anticipated wedding date. Reserve church before booking a reception venue. Additional fees for musicians.

ST. GENEVIEVE, 58203 HWY. 433, SLIDELL, (985) 643-3832, STGENEVIEVE@STGENEVIEVE.US: Weddings scheduled Friday at 6 p.m. and Saturday between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. or at 6 p.m.

ST. GERTRUDE, 17292 LA. HWY. 631, DES ALLEMANS, (985) 758-7542: Call for information.

ST. HENRY CHURCH (GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH), 803 GENERAL PERSHING ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 899-1378, WWW.GOODSHEPHERDPARISHNOLA.COM: Ivy Rohr, wedding coordinator. Additional fees for musicians.

ST. JAMES MAJOR, 3736 GENTILLY BLVD., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 304-6750: Additional fees for organist and cantor.

ST. JANE DE CHANTAL, 74020 MAPLE ST., ABITA SPRINGS, (985) 892-1439: Weddings scheduled Friday evening and Saturday before 2 p.m. or after 6 p.m. Wendy Talbot, wedding coordinator, (504) 914-6724.

ST. JEROME, 2402 33RD ST., KENNER, (504) 443-3174: Weddings scheduled Saturday before 2 p.m. or after 6 p.m. Other times considered.

ST. JOACHIM, 5505 BARATARIA BLVD., MARRERO, (504) 341-9226: Call for details.

ST. JOAN OF ARC, 529 WEST FIFTH ST., LAPLACE, (985) 652-9100, SECRETARY@SJACHURCH.COM: Call at least 6-8 months before the wedding. Weddings scheduled Friday after 4:30 p.m. and Saturday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., and after 6:30 p.m.

ST. JOHN BOSCO, 2114 OAKMERE DRIVE, HARVEY, (504) 340-0444, OFFICE@SAINTJOHNBOSCOCHURCH.ORG: Call for details.

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, 61050 BRIER LAKE DRIVE, LACOMBE, (985) 882-3779: Call for details.

See **CHURCHES** page 40 ►



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*For More Information
Contact*

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CHURCHES

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St. John the Baptist, 1139 ORETHA CASTLE HALEY BLVD., NEW ORLEANS, WWW.OLDSTPATRICKS.ORG/SACRAMENTS: Weddings scheduled Monday-Friday from 3-7 p.m.; Saturday from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Other times considered. Paige A. Saleun, wedding coordinator, (504) 525-4413, ext. 1001.

St. Joseph Church and Shrine, 610 SIXTH ST., GREINA, (504) 368-1313: Weddings scheduled Friday at 6:30 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; or 6:30 p.m. Debbie Swiler, wedding coordinator. Organist and cantor fees additional.

St. Joseph, 1802 TULANE AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 522-3186, WWW.STJOSEPHCHURCH-NO.ORG: Weddings scheduled Monday-Saturday. Wedding guidelines online. Fee includes wedding sacristan and parking lot attendant for rehearsal and wedding.

St. Joseph the Worker, 455 AMES BLVD., MARRERO, (504) 347-8438: Call for details.

St. Katharine Drexel, 2015 LOUISIANA AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 891-3172, STKATHARINE@ARCH-NO.ORG: Call or email for details.

St. Louis King of France, 1609 CARROLLTON AVE., METAIRIE, (504) 834-9977, WWW.SLKFCCHURCH.COM/SACRAMENTS: Weddings scheduled Friday at 5 p.m. and later; Saturday 10 a.m.-1 p.m. and after 6 p.m. Father Mark Raphael is wedding coordinator, mraphael@

archdiocese-no.org.

St. Luke the Evangelist, 910 CROSS GATES BLVD., SLIDELL, (985) 641-6429: Weddings scheduled Friday after 5:30 p.m.; Saturday from 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. and after 6:30 p.m. Contact Deacon Harold Burke.

St. Maria Goretti, 7300 CROWDER BLVD., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 242-7554: Weddings scheduled Friday evenings, Saturday morning or evening. Additional fees for organists, musicians and/or cantor.

St. Margaret Mary, 1050-B ROBERT BLVD., SLIDELL, (985) 643-6124, WWW.SAINTMMCHURCH.ORG: Weddings scheduled Friday evening, Saturday morning and midday.

St. Martha, 2555 APOLLO DRIVE, HARVEY, (504) 366-1604: Call for details.

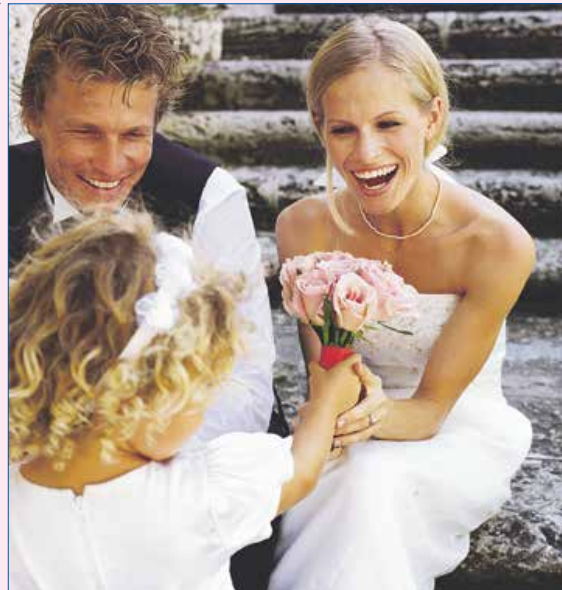
St. Mary Magdalen, 6425 WEST METAIRIE AVE., METAIRIE, (504) 733-0922: Call for details.

St. Mary of the Angels, 3501 N. MIRO ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 945-3186: Call for details.

St. Mary's Assumption Church (St. Alphonsus Parish), 923 JOSEPHINE ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 522-6748, WWW.STALPHONSUSNO.COM: Check website for wedding guidelines.

St. Mary's Chapel (St. Alphonsus Parish), 1516 JACKSON AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 522-6748, WWW.STALPHONSUSNO.COM: Check website for wedding guidelines.

St. Mary's Church, c/o St. Louis Cathedral, 615 PERE ANTOINE ALLEY, NEW ORLEANS, (504) 503-0351, WWW.STLOUISCATHEDRAL.ORG/MATRIMONY: Weddings scheduled



In a Catholic wedding, the bride and groom are the ministers of the sacrament of matrimony.

Monday-Saturday at 3, 5 or 7 p.m. Fee includes the church, cantor, organist, wedding director and security.

St. Matthew the Apostle, 10021 JEFFERSON HWY., RIVER RIDGE, (504) 737-4537, WWW.STMATTHEWTHEAPOSTLE.NET: Call for details.

St. Patrick, 724 CAMP ST., NEW ORLEANS, WWW.OLDSTPATRICKS.ORG/SACRAMENTS: Weddings scheduled Monday-Friday from 3-7 p.m.; Saturday from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Other times by special arrangement. Fee includes wedding coordinator and security. Paige A. Saleun, wedding coordinator, (504) 525-4413, ext. 1001.

St. Patrick, 28698 Hwy. 23,

PORT SULPHUR, (504) 564-6792: Call for details.

St. Peter, 125 E. 19TH AVE., COVINGTON, WWW.STPETERPARISH.COM/GETTING-MARRIED: Weddings scheduled Friday evening, Saturday in the afternoon or evening. Wedding guidelines online. Contact Katie Lee, marriage and family life director, (985) 892-9353 or MFL@StPeterParish.org.

St. Peter, 1550 Hwy. 44, RESERVE, (985) 536-2887: Call for details.

St. Peter Claver, 1923 St. PHILIP ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 822-8059: Call for details.

St. Philip Neri, 6500 KAWANEE AVE., METAIRIE, (504)

887-5535: Call for details.

St. Raymond and St. Leo the Great, 2916 PARIS AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 945-8750, EXT. 4: Call for details.

St. Rita, 7100 JEFFERSON HWY., HARRAHAN, (504) 737-2915, WWW.STRITAHARRAHAN.COM/CHURCH/SACRAMENTS: Bridal guidelines online. Call for details.

St. Rita, 2729 LOWERLINE ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 866-3621, WWW.STRITANOLA.COM/WEDDING-GUIDELINES, OFFICE@STRITANOLA.COM: Weddings scheduled Friday 1 p.m. or later, and Saturday 1 p.m. or earlier and after 6 p.m. Organist or musician fees additional.

St. Rosalie, 600 2ND AVE., HARVEY, (504) 340-1962: Call for details.

St. Stephen Church (Good Shepherd Parish), 1025 NAPOLEON AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 899-1378, WWW.GOODSHEPHERDPARISHNOLA.COM: Wedding guidelines online. Call Ivy Rohr, wedding coordinator. Additional fees for musicians.

St. Theresa of Avila, 1404 ERATO ST., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 525-4226: Call for details.

Transfiguration of the Lord, 5621 ELYSIAN FIELDS AVE., NEW ORLEANS, (504) 302-7931: Weddings scheduled Friday evening, Saturday morning and early afternoon. Music fees additional.

Visitation of Our Lady, 3500 AMES BLVD., MARRERO, (504) 347-2203, WWW.VOL.ORG/MATRIMONY: Weddings scheduled Friday evening, Saturday day or evening.

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