

Let Everyone Share In Wedding Rites

"Liturgy is used to say something about the Christian faith life," Sister Margaret Mary Mattle said in her Department of Liturgy office. "We use ritual signs to express the deep parts of life that we can't say in ordinary language."

Wedding liturgy can be used to say something unique about each couple, but Sister Margaret Mary reminded couples that liturgy is a community worship and should not be individualized so much that the congregation cannot participate.

The couple's selection of prayers, readings, and music can singularize their ceremony. Something may be said before each reading to help focus on its meaning. The homily is another way of making the ceremony real.

One trend that Sister Margaret Mary said she sees in weddings today is the couple's conscious use of signs. For example, selecting special people to do a reading, facing the congregation while speaking, vows, walking down the aisle with both parents, asking symbolic people to present the gifts are all conscious uses of liturgical sign language that can be used in different combinations in different situations to create a unique impression.

The setting for the wedding can create a special atmosphere. Size and architecture of the church, decorations, lighting, and music can set a solemn, dignified tone or a more casual mood. Many couples enjoy making banners to hang in the church, communicating special messages. When congregational singing or reading is anticipated some couples have programs printed. Often a message or meaningful picture is on the front.

Wedding Folklore

The Folklore of Weddings and Marriage offers advice for wedded life that could prove most useful.

* If your husband leaves the house in an angry mood, go to a friend's house and eat applesauce. When he comes home, everything will be forgotten.

** If your wife becomes angry and tries to fight you, catch and kiss her while she is angry. If you do not, some other man will kiss her before the year is out.

* When the husband gets mad, he must take off his hat and turn it around. This will make peace in the family at once.

* The fur of a cat blowing the wrong way means that your husband is looking favorably at another woman. This may be counteracted by greasing the fur.

* Never, never let a man see you undress. It always causes trouble in the family and maybe a divorce.

* It is very bad luck to set up housekeeping with a new coffee pot. Borrow a battered old coffee pot and use it for a month or two, before bringing a brand-new one into the house.

Baptismal Certificate

A baptismal certificate issued not more than six months before the wedding must be presented to the priest by both bride and groom. A baptismal certificate may be obtained by calling or visiting the rectory of the parish in which you were baptized.

Another trend that Sister Margaret Mary has observed is the desire of many couples to keep the wedding as un-materialistic as possible, avoiding using the occasion to comment on the family's wealth or status.

Couples interested in planning their own wedding liturgies should contact their parish priest to explore the resources within their church. Usually the priest, the organist, a member of the liturgy committee, or a pastoral assistant can aid the couple. Sister Margaret Mary said more churches are realizing that such assistance is an invaluable service they can offer their young couples.

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