

On Your Wedding Day: Thoughts From a Friend

By Wm. R. McHoughlin

Today, on this very special occasion, you are undertaking a difficult journey. I call it a difficult journey because the pitfalls are many and the temptations great. I say these things to you because you are young, yet old enough to realize that the time ahead will not always be pleasant. There will be time that will tax your faith; yes, even times that you will question your love.

This is a sacred moment for you both, one brought about by strong mutual feelings of love and respect. There is no question of that love, otherwise, this marriage would not be taking place.

God wants you both to realize the perils of young marriages today so that you may strengthen and fortify yourselves against them. Let us look at some of these dangers and meet them head-on.

Money, or perhaps the lack of it, has caused young marriages to fail. Unless you are endowed with a lot of it, then there will be times that important sacrifices must be made.

It is sad but true that some young couples do not possess a realistic attitude on their impending marriage, perhaps having lofty ideas as to what makes it a success. This eventually leads to unpleasant disagreements. It is important that the marriage bonds be made stronger and one of the many ways to accomplish this

is to say a simple "I love you" to each other. It is true that you can't live on love alone but be assured that no marriage will survive without it. When you find your faith and love in doubt, your mind troubled — the cure is quite simple: grasp each other's hand and say, "Father, thank you for saving this special person for me." Let there be no misconceptions concerning the part God plays in the success of any marriage. Was it not He who instituted this sacred rite?

This is a solemn occasion but there will be times when you shall share laughter and happiness with each other — happiness like that experienced when the sun, coming over the horizon, signals the beginning of a new day; or the happiness one feels while strolling through the forest, seeing how pure everything seems to be after a gentle rain.

This will be a new life style for each of you and it will call for patience and understanding of each other's habits and idiosyncrasies. Sometimes the success of a marriage is based on how well each of the partners adjusts to them and makes allowances. There will be times that will call for a great deal of self-control and patience on days that seem to start wrong and there will be displays of emotion to which your partner in marriage has never been exposed. A simple "I love you" may not be a panacea but it is nice to hear when things are not what they should be.

There was a man, upon his enlistment into the Army, who was asked what he would like to do. Without hesitation he answered: "Be a paratrooper." The strange thing about it was that height terrified him. Every phase of training which involved height was an ordeal. When the time arrived to actually jump from the airplane he prayed. "Father, give me the courage that I may not falter." He jumped and continued to do so for some time.

This is, perhaps, a strange situation from which to draw an analogy but has not marriage often been compared to a "big step" or a "big jump?" You will come to realize that the Sacrament of Marriage is far more complicated than a parachute jump and will require more courage, in the long run.

And so this is where "Father, give me the courage that I may not falter" comes in. You will be tried and you will be tested but you shall succeed.

I never cease to be amazed at the number of people who fail to realize that God is there anytime He is needed. All one has to do is ask. Granted, it may appear that He is a little slow in His response but one thing is certain, He never fails to answer.

It is very important to remember — never let material things become so outstanding as to cause you to lose sight of the most important elements in your relationship — faith, love, and understanding.

Organized Planning A Must for Showers

The custom of honoring brides-to-be with "showers of little gifts" has been with us for generations. The original purpose to help the couple start housekeeping is still valid today. These parties can be fun and provide fond memories for the hostess, participants and guest of honor. It's an easy form of entertaining, with little advance planning.

Bridal showers are especially festive gatherings that are fun to plan and give. The fun you have planning will be reflected in the good time your guests have. A wise hostess leaves nothing to chance.

Today most brides-to-be are working at the time of their marriages. Often a group of co-workers may wish to give a shower. Because the guest may live some distance from each other consider reserving a table or room at a nearby restaurant. Someone from the office may go ahead with favors, decorations, and the gifts.

In some places "family showers" are given, especially if the bride or groom-to-be is from a large family. Invitations are restricted to family members.

The old rule still holds: showers are not given by the immediate family of the engaged woman. In some instances a sister of the groom-to-be might give a

shower if she is a close friend of the bride-to-be.

Invitations should go out about two weeks in advance and should specify what type of shower it is — kitchen, linen, personal, miscellaneous or whatever. Telephone invitations are acceptable and preferred for small informal showers. Remember, a shower is no longer just a gathering for women. Many hostesses make it a couples night or invite men friends in for refreshments after the gift opening.

Some of the traditional types of showers have supplied the newlyweds-to-be

with staples for the kitchen, bath and linen closet. Give these favorite showers a new twist with your imagination. For example, present bathroom gifts in a clothes hamper or laundry basket. Use kitchen towels as napkins and favors for each guest. Or make a linen closet out of folded paper for shower invitations.

The ideas for theme showers can center around hobbies and special interests of the prospective bride such as gardening, sewing or travel. Just be sure to coordinate with other showers given to avoid duplicate themes.

The Best Man's Role

Everyone wants their wedding to go as smoothly as possible but with the mountains of obligations pressing upon the bride and groom, it's no wonder that they often feel overwhelmed. This is where the wedding party can best serve the happy and sometimes harried couple.

Every person in the wedding entourage has specific duties to perform that will aid the bride and groom, and one of the major players in every wedding scenario is the Best Man.

Usually a good friend of the groom, the best man takes on a great many

important wedding duties, the most familiar of which is holding the bride's ring until the ceremony and then presenting it to the groom, who then places it on the bride's finger.

Planning the bachelor party is also left up to the best man.

After the service is over, the best man will usually drive the newlyweds to the reception and preside as official toastmaster. Acting in this capacity, he will generally propose the first toast to the happy couple and take over as host should the bride and groom choose to depart early.

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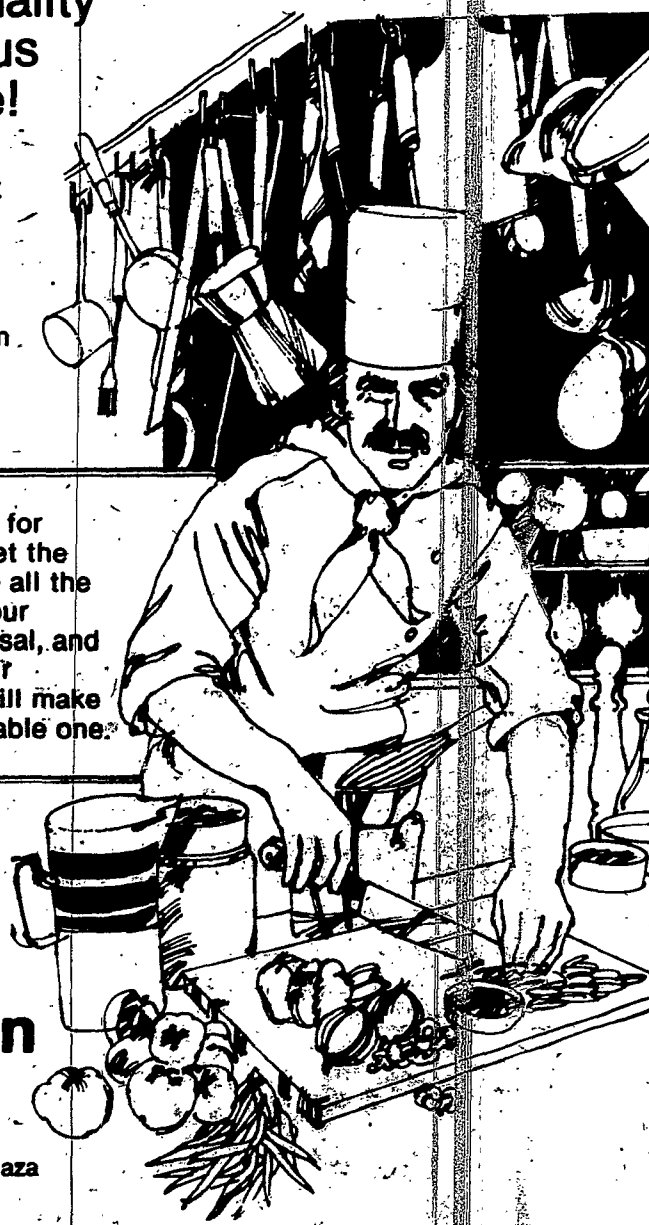
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