When planning a wedding, couple must adhere to diocesan policies

A couple choosing to marry in the Catholic Church should realize that their wedding is more than a public display; it is a sacrament.

A well-planned liturgy gives insight into the importance the couple has placed on their wedding. But there are some diocesan policies that pertain to weddings.

In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, weddings are not permitted on Sunday or on holy days of obligation. Nor are weddings, even without the nuptial Mass, permitted after 3 p.m. on Saturday or days preceding the holy days of obligation.

Weddings on other weekdays must be scheduled to begin no later than 8 p.m.

There is no diocesan norm prohibiting marriage during Advent or Lent. But, where weddings are scheduled during these times of the church year, the couple should be advised to take into consideration the special nature of these liturgical seasons. In practice, the decor and liturgical arrangements determined by the parish during these seasons take priority over the environment desired by the couple for the wedding.

In the Diocese of Baton Rouge, weddings are usually to be celebrated in the parish church where either the bride or groom has a domicile, quasi-domicile or month-long residence. With the permission of the pastor of either the bride or groom and the pastor of the place of the proposed wedding, a wedding may take place in some other parish church. With the additional permission of the proper religious superior, a wedding may take place in a chapel attached to a religious house.

Weddings may not be celebrated out-of-doors, in commercial halls, secular facilities or private homes.

In the Catholic Church, a marriage of two Catholics normally takes place within a Mass. For a serious reason, a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic may take place at a nuptial Mass. Permission may also be granted for a Catholic and a non-baptized person to be married at a nuptial Mass for a grave reason.

When either the bride or groom is not Catholic, the couple is encouraged to choose a wedding liturgy that does not include Communion.

The wedding liturgy is complete whether or not there is a Mass.

The bride and groom are the ones receiving the sacrament and they are also the primary ministers of the celebration. There are also many other ministers at the wedding, each having a special role in the service. Care should be given that those persons asked to be ministers during the celebration have a clear understanding about what they are being asked to do and that they are people of faith.

Because the marriage ceremony is a public act of worship as well, it should reflect the communal nature of the sacrament, with the guests serving not merely as spectators, but more as participants in the marriage celebration. They are called upon to pray, to sing and to witness the love of Christ in the church and in society, to be signs of Christian love and support for the couple as they begin their married life.

The couple is encouraged to choose the readings, prepare the general intercessions and select the music for the wedding liturgy.

The Diocese of Baton Rouge recommends that music be chosen that is technically correct and of good quality. That which is cheap or a trite musical cliché should not even be considered.

The music at weddings should serve to emphasize the sacred event, not distract from it. Music at a particular wedding must be judged on how well it will enable this particular group of people present at this wedding to express their faith. Some churches require adherence to parochial guidelines for wedding music in hope that the suggestions contained there will offer even more help in planning the celebration of the wedding.

There are several books available that contain readings from sacred Scripture that would be appropriate in planning for a wedding. These books also contain relevant commentaries on the readings to assist the couple in choosing the readings and the Gospel that would be appropriate for their wedding.
Wedding photographers can tell stories of the day

By Nancy Wiechec
Catholic News Service

PHOENIX – Many photojournalists who have lost their jobs because of shrinking news staffs are turning to wedding photography as an alternative career. That makes good sense for photographers and for wedding clients.

Editorial photography is about documenting moments and emotion and making sure you’re where the key action is. That’s exactly what couples want when they lose a wedding at an event, said Doug Hesse, who left the world of news photography nearly 25 years ago.

“There are beautiful moments that don’t need to be set up and they are real and wonderful,” said Hesse, founder and owner of Kdog Photographers, a Kansas City, Missouri, business specializing in wedding and family photojournalism.

“We tell stories with images,” he said. “Weddings are wonderful because there’s a whole story going on, and if I stop the action to pose photos then I’m not capturing the whole story.”

He said his photographers will generally pose some traditional couple and group shots, but their focus is on candid, natural moments.

Hesse offers these tips for contracting a photojournalist for a wedding:

— Make certain that photojournalism is the style of photos that you want. In most cases photojournalists will rely on natural light, giving images greater depth and dimension. Another popular style would be portrait photography, in which many of the photos are posed.

— There are beautiful moments at weddings that don’t need to be set up and they are real and wonderful,” said Doug Hesse, founder and owner of Kdog Photographers, a Kansas City, Missouri, business specializing in wedding and family photojournalism.

Additionally, during the exchange of rings the wording has been slightly changed to “receive this ring” to emphasize that each one is freely giving themselves to the other.

Father Ranzino reiterated the importance of music during a wedding ceremony and said the hymns selected should reflect the Scriptures and the sacramental nature of marriage and “not music of the popular cul-

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New order of celebrating marriage has minor changes

By Richard Meek
The Catholic Commentator

Long-standing wedding traditions have been retained in the new Order of Celebrating Matrimony, which was released by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, according to Father Tom Ranzino, vicar general for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Father Ranzino said the changes were “not dramatic” and that the wedding ceremony is the “church’s celebration of a couple’s marriage.

“The church is just trying to uphold the dignity of both the husband and wife.”

The changes were mandatory beginning Dec. 30.

Father Ranzino said the new Order of Celebrating Matrimony sets guidelines, some optional, for the ceremony, including the opening procession, music, receiving of the rings and the readings to be used.

He said it’s important to note that the bishops are calling the wedding ceremony the Order of Matrimony, saying the word order means a “collection of rites.”

“There are three rites within the order plus the order of blessing an engaged couple, the order of blessing a married couple within Mass on the anniversary of a marriage,” Father Ranzino said. “The thing to notice about matrimony is using the word to reflect the sacrament that is between a man and a woman and the sacrament bond as permanent and God takes the initiative to invite the couple into the matrimonial union.

“So while that is significant in clarification, it also continues with the church’s belief that marriage is a sacrament and Christ is the bridegroom and the bride is a woman, and a woman into this kind of marital bond.”

He explained the new rite clarifies some of the language from the first edition, initially in both Latin and English in 1968 following the Second Vatican Council.

He said there was also a desire to find a way to allow the assembly to engage in such a way to give a witness to what is happening and to do so at appropriate times to express their support for the bride and groom.

One of the changes occurs early in the ceremony with the rite calling for a hymn to be sung after the entrance procession and everyone is in place. The second occurs after the bride and groom have given their consent and the priest invites the congregation to pray or sing either an acclamation suggested within the rite or a different acclamation.

Another change of note where the community can respond is the singing of a hymn or praise following the blessing and giving of rings.

The new rite presents the couple with myriad of options for the opening procession. Father Ranzino said the procession must take place in the “customary manner” which for liturgy is to enter with a cross. He recommends the procession to include the groomsman if they are going to be up front with the priest, as well as the altar servers and readers.

However, Father Ranzino said the procession can be arranged as the couple wishes.

“We are trying to do is show some equality between the husband and the wife and that they are co-partners,” Father Ranzino said. “Our long standing tradition has been to highlight the bride as if she is the only minister and that is not what we are doing.

“It’s not what we are. We are not celebrating the bride only.”

Father Ranzino encourages the bride and groom to walk in with their parents, saying “it’s a lovely way for both the bride and groom to express how much their mom and dad mean to them.”

He said a second procession option is for the priest and servers to process to the altar and wait for the bride and groom to enter.

Father Ranzino said the new rite mandates that at least one of the readings must explicitly speak of marriage, not just love. And the word consent is now being used and not vows.

Additionally, during the exchange of rings the wording has been slightly changed to “receive this ring” to emphasize that each one is freely giving themselves to the other.

Father Ranzino reiterated the importance of music during a wedding ceremony and said the hymns selected should reflect the Scriptures and the sacramental nature of marriage and “not music of the popular cul-

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In an address to engaged couples, Pope Francis said many couples are more concerned with the “exterior details” of their wedding planning such as the banquet, photographs, clothes and flowers. Those, he said, are “important for a celebration, but only if they point to the real reason for your joy: the Lord’s blessing on your love.”

Weddings are big deals, no doubt about it. But as the pope points out, it is easy for couples to lose sight of the bigger picture — the marriage — if their focus is on a single day’s celebration.

That’s where church-sponsored programs come in, to provide perspective.

“Our main challenge, as a church, is addressing a lack of understanding in what marriage is,” said Mimi Streett, director of family life ministry for the Diocese of Oakland, California. That is why marriage ministry leaders at the diocesan and parish level emphasize the need for solid, faith-based preparation that can help couples to lose sight of the bigger picture – the marriage – if their focus is on a single day’s celebration.

In an address to engaged couples, Pope Francis said many couples are more concerned with the “exterior details” of their wedding planning such as the banquet, photographs, clothes and flowers. Adobe Stock by Kzenon

Weddings are big deals, no doubt about it. But as the pope points out, it is easy for couples to lose sight of the bigger picture — the marriage — if their focus is on a single day’s celebration.

The tone of the retreat is “serious yet joyful, with caring and respect,” she said. “Sure, some couples are there to get it checked off, like a homework assignment, but we also see some beautiful things happen. A lot of couples tell us their communication is better, they take this commitment more seriously, many take steps to convert or return to church.”

Still, even the best, most faith-centered preparation may not drastically impact a couple’s concerns over what colors the bridal party should wear, or what they should serve at their reception or, whether they’re not just creating a one-time event.”

In the Diocese of Fort Worth, Texas, a mandatory three-stage preparation process includes a course in natural family planning, a retreat and an on-going connection with a sponsor couple.

The process is a means to “lay out what the church believes about the sacramental nature of marriage, and we help people discern what they believe and why, so they can be better prepared to further explore their relationship,” said Jared Zimmerer, director of adult catechesis and evangelization at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Grapevine, Texas.

“The preparation process allows couples the chance to find out where they may have different ideas — perhaps on how to raise children, or handle finances — so they can better understand and address those issues,” Zimmerer added.

As often as possible, priests or women religious are part of the presenting teams, “and it can make a huge difference,” said Streett. “At our weekend retreats, we offer engaged couples the sacrament of reconciliation, and many take advantage. And when they write to us afterward and tell us they’ve stopped cohabiting, that’s big.”

The Catholic Commentator April 28, 2017
Reading list for engaged couples should include ‘Amoris Laetitia’

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON – “Amoris Laetitia,” Pope Francis’ 2016 apostolic exhortation on marriage and family life, is not only something that can benefit parish programs but it also offers very basic and practical advice for engaged couples.

“Learning to love someone does not happen automatically, nor can it be taught in a workshop just prior to the celebration of marriage,” the pope wrote in his reflections on the October 2015 Synod on the Family.

He also said the main objective of parish marriage preparation should be to help engaged couples “help each to learn how to love this very real person with whom he or she plans to share his or her whole life.”

He suggested that couples learn this first from their parents and then from parish programs. He also said they should make use of the sacrament of reconciliation to find mercy and “healing strength” and also should reflect on the Bible passages selected for their wedding liturgy and the meaning of their exchanged rings.

On a practical level, he cautioned against the “exhausted and harried” feeling many couples experience on their wedding day and suggested they could avoid this through more modest or simple ceremonies.

“Have the courage to be different. Don’t let yourselves get swayed up by a society of consumption and empty appearances. What is important is the love you share, strengthened and sanctified by grace,” he said, sounding almost like the father of the bride.

Pope Francis also pointed out in “Amoris Laetitia” that there are many reasons young people don’t get married – financial reasons, fears or the sense that marriage would limit their independence. To counter these views, he said young people need help discovering the dignity and beauty of marriage.

“They should be helped to perceive the attraction of a complete union that elevates and perfects the social dimension of existence, gives sexuality its deepest meaning, and benefits children by offering them the best context for their growth and development,” he wrote.

He also said those involved in marriage preparation should try not to overwhelm couples with too much information and instead focus on helping them accept church teaching and obtain resources on practical advice and programs.

The pope recommended that marriage preparation programs help couples recognize eventual problems and risks they could face.

“In this way,” he said, couples can come to realize the wisdom of breaking off a relationship whose failure and painful aftermath can be foreseen.

The pope also pointed out that “many couples marry without really knowing one another.” To counter that, he said couples should discuss what they expect and want from their marriage and what kind of life they hope to build together.

“Marriage is not the ‘end of the road,’” he said, but “a lifelong calling based on a firm and realistic decision to face all trials and difficult moments together.”

The pope also encouraged couples to continue to get support from their parish after the wedding day and in the initial years of their marriage.

“Young love needs to keep dancing towards the future with immense hope,” he wrote.

Because that hope, he added, is the leash that “in those first years of engagement and marriage, makes it possible to look beyond arguments, conflicts and problems and to see things in a broader perspective.”

Couples should make dinners special, cooking priest says

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON – When Father Leo Patalinghug was leading parish marriage preparation programs, he noticed couples put a lot into wedding planning but didn’t necessarily think about celebrating small milestones after they were married such as their month anniversaries.

But as he sees it, newlyweds should not wait a year to celebrate their wedding anniversary but instead they should do something special once a month to celebrate their marriage.

He isn’t suggesting four-course meals necessarily but simply preparing and sharing good food and conversation. To that end, he wrote the cookbook “Spicing Up Married Life.”

Father Patalinghug’s apostolate is “Grace Before Meals” – encouraging families to eat dinners together and share their faith at the table. His “Spicing Up” cookbook offers prayer and conversation topics for couples along with pastoral advice about raising children, forgiveness each other, caring for extended family members and aging, in between dinner and dessert recipes.

In the introduction, he notes that it “may seem strange for an unmarried priest to write a book about marriage (much less a cookbook about marriage),” but he also points out that he is, in fact, a cooking priest, simply trying to stir the pot and encourage couples to actively work on their relationships.

He dedicated the cookbook, published in 2012, to his parents on their 50th anniversary. Today the book is used in a number of marriage preparation programs across the United States.

He told Catholic News Service that when he was growing up, his family life helped inspire the apostolate he now dedicates his life to. It involves travels across the country giving parish workshops and speaking at conferences, appearing on radio programs and communicating via social media about the need for families to celebrate everyday meals together. He also has written three books and is currently working on two more.

The Filipino-American priest is the youngest of four children and he jokingly says he grew up in “Hotel Patalinghug,” because of his family’s hospitality, which is so typical of the Filipino culture. He said he helped or watched his mother cook and they never ate dinner until his father, a doctor, came home from work, usually around 7:30 p.m.

His extended family still gets together for big meals and his mom still does a lot of the cooking, because she’s such a good cook, said Father Patalinghug.

SEE COUPLES PAGE 6B
Anything you want, honey

By Ann M. Bare
Special to
The Catholic Commentator

“Hey, it’s your day, Babe. Do whatever you want. Just tell me what time to be where.”

That may be the easy way out for the groom-to-be, but it sure isn’t the best way to plan your wedding. Your input is essential — but don’t dictate too much. Welcome to yet another confusion in the female psyche.

Of course, we can’t use words like “never” and “always” because every bride is different, but planning a wedding can improve or damage a perfectly happy engagement. The distinct personality of your relationship will be challenged during wedding plans, but it also can be enriched as you discover more details about what is important to each of you.

Suggested input:
Both: Wedding budget, date, guest list, attendants, venue.
Bride: Invitations, flowers, decorations, bridesmaids’ dresses/gifts, the cake.
Groom: Groomsman’s attire/gifts, transportation, surprise gift for your wife. (See how easy this is?)
Either/both: Reception menu and music, officiant, photographer, charge card usage.

Most couples reconsider the whole wedding day hoopla as the day approaches. “Why didn’t we just elope then come back for a wild reception? This is getting ridiculous. Our marriage is getting lost in the maelstrom of wedding plans. Honey, by the way…I still love you.”

Each step in the process of making your wedding day memorable should be deliberate and thought out — at least a little bit. Your attention to your mate should take priority, of course. As you respect and accommodate each other’s feelings, your relationship at the wedding will be more positively memorable than a perfectly arranged event.

Your wedding day is a celebration; your marriage is a process. Groom-to-be: Keep the planning light, doable and enjoyable. Save your stress for the big stuff. Bride-to-be: You might need a buffer; thank God for a good friend.

You’re going to be husband and wife. Congratulations!

Brides can give back

By Teresa Erickson
Special to
The Catholic Commentator

It takes most brides months to find just the right dress, so it is no wonder that many preserve it and tuck it away for safekeeping once the big day is over. Some cannot bear the thought of parting with the dress they worked so hard to find, while others hope their daughters will wear their dress one day at their wedding. For brides not as attached to their wedding gown and unsure what to do with it, donation might be a good idea.

Just because you had a small fortune to spend on the dress of your dreams doesn’t mean others will. Help out brides in need. Donate your dress to a charitable organization that will make it available for other brides to wear. There are several that accept gently used bridal gowns and offer them to brides in need. Many of these organizations will also accept gently used bridesmaid dresses for use in weddings and other special events, like homecoming and prom.

If you’d rather your dress be sold and the money put to good use, there are organizations that will do that, too. Many charitable organizations accept gently used wedding dresses, sell them and use the money for a good cause. Like raising awareness of domestic violence or searching for a cure for cancer. Just think. Someone somewhere could get the help they need to get out of a bad situation because you took the time to donate your wedding dress.

Can’t stand the thought of someone else getting married in your dress? No problem. Donate it to a charity that will repurpose it, for christening gowns or baby quilts, for example. Imagine an infant getting christened in a gown made from an old wedding dress. What a beautiful way to put an old gown to good use.

Along with your wedding dress, you may be able to donate other items left over from your wedding, such as candles, centerpieces and favors. Many charitable organizations will accept donations of wedding goods to help brides in need have the wedding of their dreams. Don’t throw away all of those boxes of wedding stuff sitting in your garage. Donate them instead.

These are just a few ideas for giving back after the big day. If you are in the initial stages of planning your wedding, you may also be able to give back on the big day, whether having your guests donate to a special cause in lieu of a gift or asking your caterer to take any leftovers from your reception to the nearest soup kitchen.

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Couples who take the time to share a meal together have stronger relationships, said Father Leo Patalinghug, whose apostolate “Grace Before Meals” encourages families to eat dinner together.
Church parishes teach children and youths about marriage

By Liz O’Connor
Catholic News Service

LEVITTOWN, Pa. – In the effort to promote Catholic marriages, which have been on the decline in recent years, some U.S. parishes are making conscious efforts to reach out not only to engaged couples but also to a much younger audience – children and youths – about the church’s teaching on marriage.

The declining number of marriages is “not simply a Catholic issue but a cultural phenomenon,” said Father Richard Kramer, director of the Office of Family Life for the Archdiocese of Washington.

“What we’re really talking about is evangelization,” about building a different kind of culture, he said. “We have to teach (young people) what marriage is.”

He suggested finding ways to make marriage a celebration of the whole parish and showing couples: “Look, we want you to have what Jesus wants you to have.” For example, honoring couples that are celebrating jubilee anniversaries – 25 or 30 or more years of marriage – says to young people, “So can you.”

Parish young adult ministries also should remind people that each of them is made to give their love away to someone else, whether to a parent, a sibling, a spouse or children of one’s own.

The priest stressed that parishes need to be intentional about their efforts to build the culture this way and to focus on “being a marriage-building parish” where newly married couples are immediately integrated into the life of the parish.

“Encouraging marriages isn’t going to come through quick fixes,” he added.

While the number of Catholics in the U.S. continues to increase, the number of Catholic marriages has been steadily declining.

According to 2014 data from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University, the number of Catholic marriages reported – 148,134 – was less than half the number in 1964 – 352,458 – despite the number of self-identified Catholics having grown from 48.5 million to 81.6 million between 1965 and 2015.

Many dioceses and parishes concerned about marriage have their hands full focusing on marriage enrichment and the immediate preparation of couples that present themselves requesting marriage in the church.


Steve Patton of the Diocese of Sacramento, California, said remote preparation begins in the family at birth, as a growing child sees those around him or her and how they relate to each other. Proximate preparation begins around puberty and continues through the dating years until a couple finds each other and decides to marry. “That’s the audience” that is not typically being addressed, Patton said.

But efforts to reach larger groups are spreading. The Sacramento Diocese, for example, attempts to reach young people with its message on marriage through a program created and launched in the Diocese of Memphis, Tennessee, that has gatherings for mothers and daughters and for fathers and sons.

Patton said the “evaporation of the sacramental understanding of marriage” has been influenced by no-fault divorce policies, the widespread acceptance of artificial contraception and the recent trend toward acceptance of same-sex marriage. Marriage is seen as a vehicle for individual satisfaction, he said, something that is easily abandoned if it ceases to bring happiness not only to the couple but also to the individual.

Steve Bozza of the Office for Life and Family at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia similarly said: “It’s no secret that the decline of marriage is a decline in faith practice.” He looks at marriage promotion as a matter of evangelization, and cited the possibilities of the Year of Mercy as a time to bring back people who have “self-selected” themselves out of the church.

“We’re not going to change this overnight,” he said, echoing Father Kramer’s point.

Bozza emphasized the need “to speak of marriage and its truth,” noting that it’s not serving anybody to loosen up on church teaching on marriage in an effort to attract more people.

The Fellowship of Catholic University Students, or FOCUS, which sends teams of trained recent college graduates to college campuses to evangelize, puts a lot of emphasis on the idea of vocation and helping students see both marriage or religious life as a calling, said Kevin Cotter of Denver, the organization’s senior director of curriculum.

He said the group calls on married couples to serve as models demonstrating what married life looks like, “how it’s possible and joyful.”

PHOTOGRAPHERS

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Natural light versus artificial light is a matter of preference.

– Meet with the photographer in person. Look for a laid back but confident photographer. You might ask to see the select images from of a complete wedding shoot. This will give you a good idea of the photographer’s skills and image quality.

– Make certain you know what you’re getting from your photographer. Read thoroughly the photographer’s contract or agreement. Consider the time the photographer will give to your wedding and the deliverables. Will you want the photographer to deliver prints, books, traditional albums and/or digital?

– Give the photographer a short list of shots you really want. When scouring Pinterest for ideas, remember that every wedding is different, from the time of day, season and location to the people that will be attending.

But most importantly: Be yourself on your wedding day. You have done your part in planning, so now enjoy, have fun and let the professionals do what they do best.

A couple works on a communication exercise at a marriage preparation class. In the effort to promote Catholic marriages, some U.S. parishes are making conscious efforts to reach out not only to engaged couples but to a much younger audience – children and youths, about the church’s teaching on marriage. OGS photo by Karen Callaway, Katolik

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Selecting food for your reception can be a little tricky

By Tresa Erickson
Special to
The Catholic Commentator

Plan your wedding for mid-afternoon, and food may not be much of an issue for you. You can serve cake and punch, and be done with it. Plan your wedding near mealtimes, and you better be ready to feed your guests, else you could wind up with a lot of hungry people who leave sooner than expected. If you don’t want to end up with an empty dance floor, here are some tips for serving the right food.

Consider the theme of your wedding. Formal affairs might call for a sit-down dinner prepared by friends and family. Consider the tone of your wedding. Formal affairs might allow for a buffet of finger foods prepared by friends and family. Consider the theme of your wedding. While fish and shrimp might work well for some, they might not go over so well for a southern-style wedding unless you’re planning to deep-fry the two.

Consider the food allergies of your guests. Some people are so allergic to certain types of food that they can go into anaphylactic shock at the mere whiff of it. You don’t want an ambulance at your reception. Steer clear of common trigger foods, like peanuts and shellfish, and ask around to see if there is anything else you should avoid.

Consider the tastes of your guests. Different people like different foods. Serve a variety of foods to appeal to the masses. Give guests a choice of meats and set up some food stations for those who like to graze. Don’t forget to include options for vegetarians and those on restricted diets.

Consider your budget. Foods vary widely in price. Seafood, for example, can be quite pricey compared to chicken. Buy the best you can afford and be prepared to make some compromises. Instead of three meals, for example, you might have to offer two meals.

Consider the flavor of foods. If you are using a caterer, request some taste tests so you can make sure what will be served at your wedding will please the palate. You don’t want to shell out big bucks on food no one cares for and have guests leaving early so they can go out to eat.

People have long been feasting at weddings. It is important that you take your time when selecting what to serve at your wedding. Try to accommodate as many people as possible within your budget, whether preparing your own food or relying upon the services of a caterer.

Father Ranzino also clarified potential misconceptions about the popular traditions of the couple lighting the unity candle and praying before the Blessed Mother. He said neither are part of the Catholic ritual of marriage and in some countries the lighting of the unity candle does not exist.

He called each cultural adaptations and said the unity candle was “really created by the florists as a way of making some money.”

“It is not pastoral practice to do it. It is not one of the cultural adaptations the bishops chose to put in the rite. I don’t recommend it. It can be done at the rehearsal supper or after the rehearsal.”

He said praying before the Blessed Mother is a devotional practice that in some parts of the world a bishop may grant permission for a specific reason but in the Diocese of Baton Rouge the ceremony must be celebrated in the church.

Father Ranzino said overall he likes the changes and is a positive step for the church.

“It forces us to rethink what we are doing and why are we doing it,” he said. “That can be helpful for the church to think about.”