

Fall-Winter 2020

Issue 13

# Altar & Hearth

Inspire. Amuse. Inform.

## Sacred Art

with Gwyneth Thompson-Briggs

## Tim Tams

That elusive perfect 10!

## When a Warrior Falls

The funeral arrangements of a priest

## All in Proportion

Modesty in dress and mathematics

## Say "NO" to Dirty Dancing

at your wedding reception!



# Staff

## Mission

Altar & Hearth Magazine is an ezine by traditional Catholic women responding to the need for a magazine reflective of our principles and values. We are focused on providing light-hearted, whimsical, and inspirational content within a Catholic moral and cultural context.

No more ads for contraceptives. No more ladies in painted-on yoga pants and sports-bra tops. No more impractical, expensive crafts directed toward two-child families.

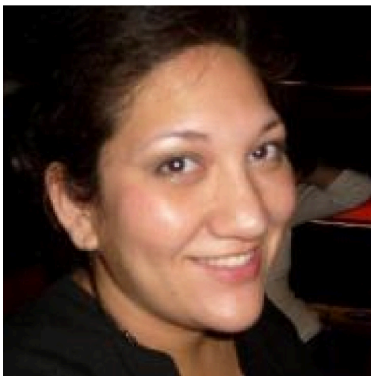
Just quality content for the trad woman.

Unless restating established traditional Catholic teaching, the opinions found herein belong to the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Altar & Hearth Magazine. If you find yourself in disagreement, you are more than welcome to voice your views in a letter to the editor.



## Managing Editor

Colleen Eldracher holds a bachelor's degree in Business Management, with a major in marketing and a minor in graphic design. She is an outspoken defender of the Oxford comma and has worked as a wedding dress designer, but currently makes church vestments and is writing a step-by-step book about the process. She much prefers writing historical fiction. She teaches 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades, high school English, and sewing at a Catholic parochial school in Ohio.



## Founder & Former Editor-in-Chief

M. Zapp is a mother, an avid fan of the British Regency, artist, and freelance writer. After editing for her high school newspaper and working for a small town paper between college semesters, she never lost her love for the publishing world.

She is a multi-published author of both fiction and web copy and is currently working on the production of several ebooks and novels.

**To read this magazine:** This magazine can be read online, downloaded as a PDF, or printed. If you do choose to print it, select the option to shrink the pages to fit in the printable area of the paper - otherwise you will lose the outer quarter inch since most printers can't put ink all the way to the edge.

We welcome your input, opinions, and comments. You can post to our FB page or send us an email at [altarandheartheditors@gmail.com](mailto:altarandheartheditors@gmail.com). For submission information or for information on how to support Altar and Hearth in other ways, please visit our website at <http://altarandhearthmagazine.com/>

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# Dear Readers,

The way I see it, at least two good things have come out of all the COVID hysteria worldwide:

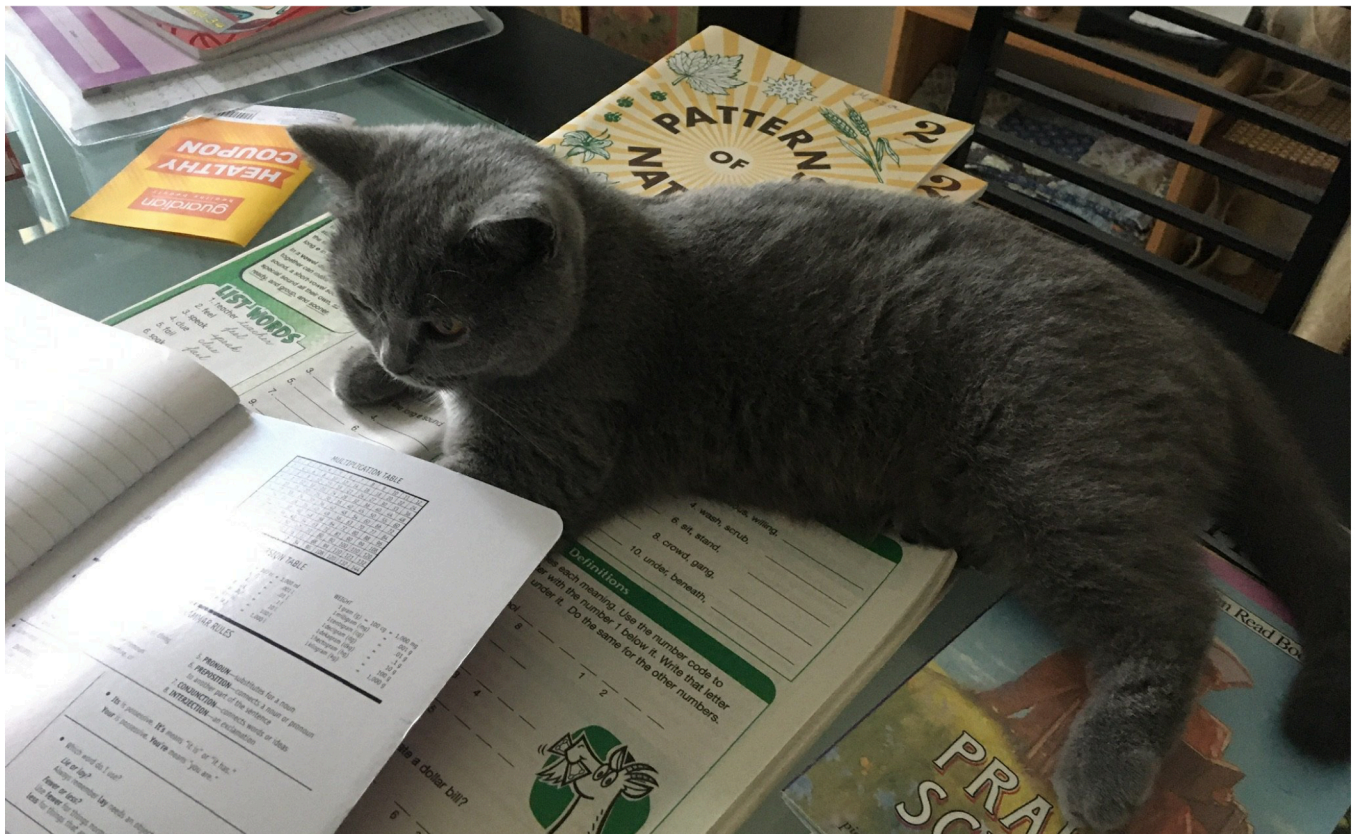
1. Homeschooling is now mainstream, so no one is making lame jokes about it anymore (check out @ElementaLatina's cat "helping" with the daily homeschooling routine below!)
2. Spending exorbitant sums of money on having one of the weddings of the century is quickly becoming passé.

Unfortunately, though, those are about the only good things. While regulations are pretty

lax here in Ohio (thank you, local sheriffs, for announcing that you won't be enforcing mask mandates), and we've never had to cancel Mass, many of our readers worldwide have not been so lucky. Please pray in particular for the Catholics of Australia, many of whom have not been able to even go to Confession since March. In this day and age, especially, we must not take our Faith for granted.

Pax Christi, and Merry Christmas!

Colleen





# Catholic Business Directory

**Alex & Co** - Photography - Brooksville, Florida

**Bedrock Fence** - Beautiful and functional - Cincinnati, Ohio

**C&P Cars** - Reliable and reasonable - Cincinnati, OH

**Current Construction** - Built to last - Johannesburg, Michigan

**My Holy Cards** - Fully-customizable holy cards for weddings, funerals, First Communion, and more! [www.myholycards.com](http://www.myholycards.com)

**St. Apollonia Dental** - Family dentistry - Sterling Heights, Michigan

**St. Jerome Library** - Spiritual & secular reading, homeschooling materials, gifts, and more - Metamora, Illinois

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Know someone who owns a Catholic business or offers professional services? Listings in the directory are absolutely FREE! To place an advertisement with us, contact us at [altarandheartheeditors@gmail.com](mailto:altarandheartheeditors@gmail.com). We provide design services by request; otherwise you can submit your own promotional pieces. We reserve the right to refuse objectionable ads or to modify ads to meet our criteria in terms of space and content.

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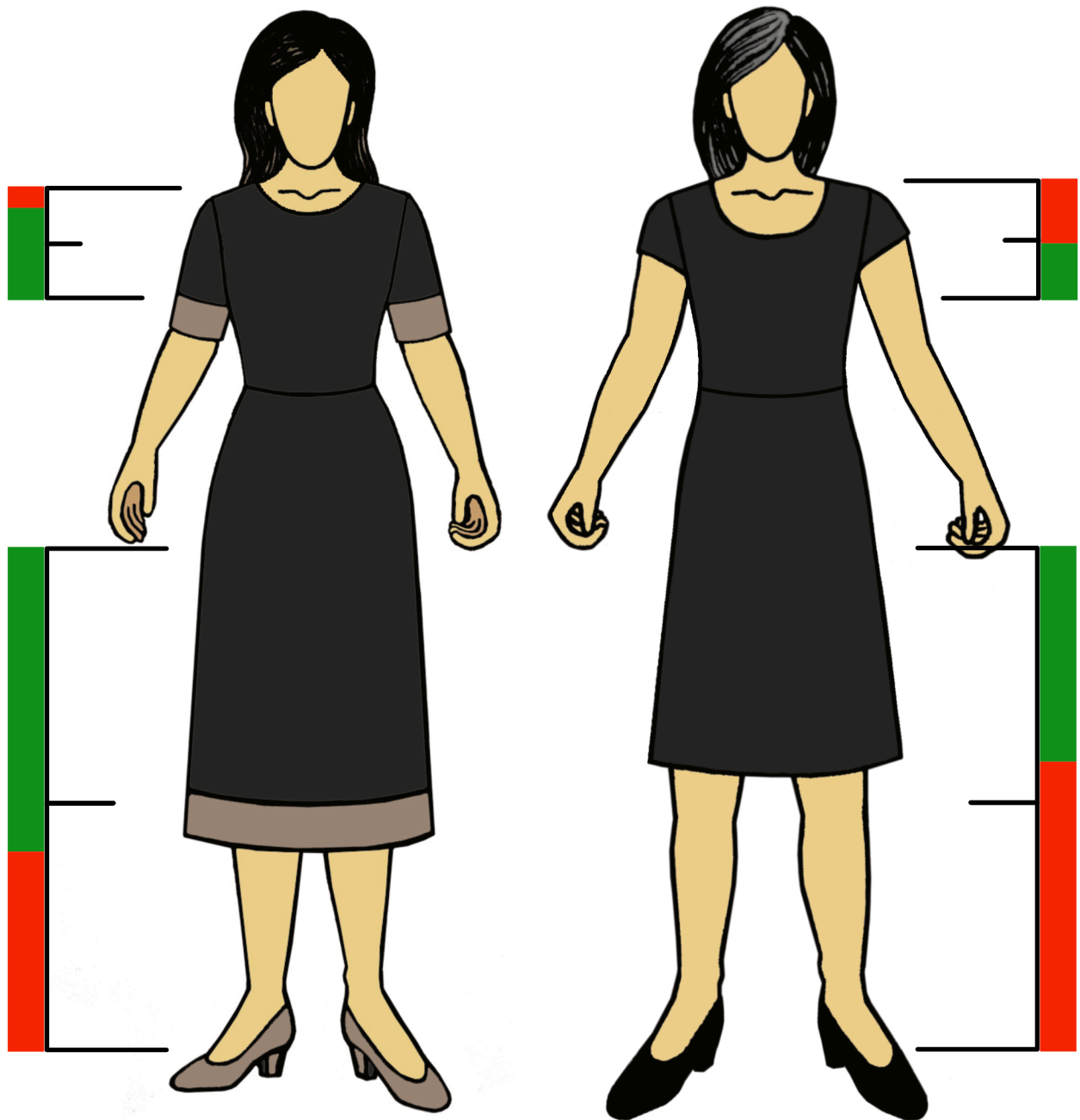
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Fall=Winter 2020

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# The Premise of Proportion



*by Colleen Eldracher*

**I**n gradeschool, every child learns how to round numbers - to the nearest 10, to the nearest 100, to the nearest 1,000, and so on and so forth. She learns that if the digit to the right of the place she is rounding to is 4 or less, the number stays at the lower value, while if the digit to the right is 5 or greater, she must round up.

What many girls and women do **not** realize is that this rule of mathematics is routinely applied by the eyes of their brothers, fathers, husbands, and friends to their bodies. It happens without conscious thought. The eye either rounds up . . . or it rounds down.

You may already be getting an idea of the direction this article is heading, but we will now proceed to the direct applications.

When a woman wears a skirt that ends at or above the top of her kneecap, as in the figure on the right, she is covering less than half of her legs. Accordingly, the eyes of everyone seeing her round up - to her rear end. And when she sits down, causing her skirt to rise even higher above her knees, all of a sudden everyone is seeing closer to three-quarters of her legs, if not more.

Likewise, when a woman wears short cap sleeves that cover waaaaaaaaaaaaaay less than half of her arms, the eyes of everyone seeing her round up - to the next patch of bare skin, which usually happens to be her chest. If they do happen to bounce up to her face, they come right back down again.

And when a woman wears a neckline that is cut to just the top of her cleavage, she is generally exposing well more than half of her bosom, and the eyes of everyone seeing her round toward seeing the rest of it.

It's a simple matter of mathematics and proportion.

On the other hand, when a woman dresses according to the figure on the left, which conforms to a modesty standard that was given the apostolic blessing by Pius XII on no fewer than two separate occasions, observe the differences.

When a woman wears a skirt that fully covers her kneecaps, she is covering more than half of her legs. The eye may come up from her ankles a bit, but it is forced back down by the length of the skirt. "Nothing to see here," it says, and moves on.

Likewise, when sleeves of at least one-quarter length (ideally elbow length) are paired with a neckline no more than two fingers' width below the pit of the collarbone, the eye is forced to jump up past the danger area of the wearer's chest to her face.

Again, the process is automatic. It is a simple matter of mathematics and proportion.

The same principle applies to skirts with slits in them. While the skirt itself may be long enough, the slit, whether in the back or at both sides, draws the eye significantly higher the minute the wearer starts moving. Once again, viewers are getting an eyeful of well more than half of the lady's legs, and rounding accordingly.

Therefore, do all of us a favor. Wear:

- Sleeves that cover at least one-fourth of your arms,
- Skirts that come unquestionably below the bottom of the kneecap, both while standing and while sitting;
- Close any slits to a point well below the kneecap, preferably entirely, and
- Choose necklines that end well before your cleavage begins.

It is better to err on the side of caution than to be an occasion of sin. Ω



**When I did** an internship at a local bridal salon about halfway through my college career, way back in 2011, I remember wondering if wedding dresses *could* get much worse than the strapless horrors that filled the racks and the bridal magazine pages at that time. Well, nearly ten years later, they certainly have. Now, not content with exposing the upper bust, arms, and back, wedding dress designers have become lingerie designers and are producing wedding “dresses” where the bodice consists solely of sheer lace and then has a skirt attached!

While strapless dresses (and strapless dresses with lace upper bodices and sleeves) come with their own set of headaches for the seamstress who gets the task of trying to add a top to them, at least they have something to build off of. These lingerie dresses come with a whole different set of considerations that must be taken into account if one is going to attempt to fix them.

The first consideration is, of course, opacity. Brides cannot just tell a seamstress to line such dresses - they **MUST** give clear directions as to the total lack of transparency required. The flimsy, slippery, semi-sheer polyester that is billed as lining fabric is just not going to

cut it (and it won't cut it for the lace upper bodices of strapless dresses, either). Not even as a double layer. In order to effectively

make such a dress NOT see-through, the seamstress will have to use actual satin. Mid-to-heavyweight satin, which is both stiffer and bulkier than typical lining fabrics, which means that the dress may even have to be purchased in a larger size to accommodate the extra bulk. At least two layers of this satin will be needed, with possibly some interfacing in between, before the bodice can be classified as decent. Essentially, the seamstress will have to make an entire non-sheer bodice (with sleeves, although those can usually be just one layer of satin), and the original dress will simply go on over the top as a decorative layer. Additional lace appliques may then need to be sourced, tea-dyed or bleached to match, and applied to fill in areas that would otherwise be left awkwardly open.

To be on the safe side, the opacity of the skirt should be checked as well - ideally by having the bride stand in front of a window or sliding door with direct sunlight behind her. If the outline of the legs can be seen, extra layers of satin will need to be added to the skirt, too. Five or six layers of sheer and semi-sheer fabrics like lace and tulle still don't amount to much in the way of coverage.

Brides should also have a friend with good eyesight check to make sure that any bust cups are not visible from the outside of the dress, especially if it is off-white. These foam cups are used to give the curve of the seams some support but only come in white and nude, so if the dress is a different color they tend to show through. They are often idiotically placed just below the surface layers of the dress rather than behind all of the lining layers where they should be. Thankfully they are usually only held in place by a couple of

# Lace ABOUT-FACE



large hand-stitches, making them comparatively easy to remove. The seamstress will just have to go up between the layers and cut the threads.

Speaking of bust support, it is also highly recommended for any bride, with any kind of dress, to wear flesh-colored undergarments. Remember how hard it is to keep undergarment lines from showing under white blouses? This is the same principle. Even if the bodice of a wedding dress consists of several layers, complete with stiff boning and interfacing, faint lines from white undergarments may still show through. It's best to be on the safe side!

If all this seems like a lot of work (and expense), keep in mind that modest dresses that do not need fixing can still be purchased. Both orthodox Jews and Muslims still require decent attire at wedding ceremonies, and many beautiful examples of such gowns can be found on the internet. (Mormon/LDS dresses, while better than what can be found at David's Bridal, tend to have too-short sleeves and too-low necklines. The ones that ARE modest tend to be boring.) An inexpensive option for a DIY wedding dress would be to order a plain white dupioni formal gown from eShakti, and then embellish it with large, ornate (and cheap!) lace appliques purchased through Etsy. Hobby Lobby also has a nice selection of bridal-type lace appliques and trims that are reasonably priced. Many brides find out the hard way that if they buy an immodest dress for \$200 on a sale, and then try to get it fixed, that the cost of the alterations alone will easily double what they initially paid for the dress! They would have been better off buying a somewhat more expensive dress that was decent in the first place.

Good luck, and remember that your wedding dress, thanks to your wedding photos, will be the most-often-seen dress in your entire

wardrobe. Your children, your grandchildren, and even your great-grandchildren will see that picture. Don't scandalize them. Ω







J  
GJB  
2019

St. Joseph, 2019. 30 in. x 40 in.





An Interview with

# Gwyneth Thompson-Briggs

I first became aware of this amazing modern Catholic artist on Twitter, when a retweet of this lovely photo of her working on a painting of the first Mass in Wyoming showed up in my timeline a few weeks ago. The whole aspect of it – a Catholic mom toting her baby while making good use of her God-given talents – just really struck me, and I decided to reach out about the possibility of an interview. Gwyneth was happy to oblige!

**A&H:** So Gwyneth, looking at your website, [gwyneththompsonbriggs.com](http://gwyneththompsonbriggs.com), it looks like you have pursued some very serious art training over the last twenty years. What decided you on sacred art vs. secular? Did you grow up having an interest in it?

**Gwyneth:** As a young teen, I used to pore over the art library at the Art Students League of Denver where I took Saturday morning youth classes; it was my first window into the grand tradition of Western art. For over a thousand years from the conversion of the Roman



Empire, Western art *was* sacred art; anything that we might classify as secular today was subsidiary. Certainly this was the case for painting. Secular portraits were a very minor genre until the Renaissance; to be a painter meant chiefly to paint Our Lord, Our Lady, the Saints, and sacred history. From a very young age I knew I wanted to be a painter, and since I was inspired by the grand tradition, that meant chiefly a painter of sacred art. But I was also aware from a young age that the tradition of painting was broken, even if I didn't begin to understand the historical and ideological reasons for this until much later. On the one hand, I recognized the aesthetic inferiority of the mass-produced, sentimental art that proliferates in most Catholic churches and homes today. On the other hand, I saw that modern secular art had grown coarse and ugly,

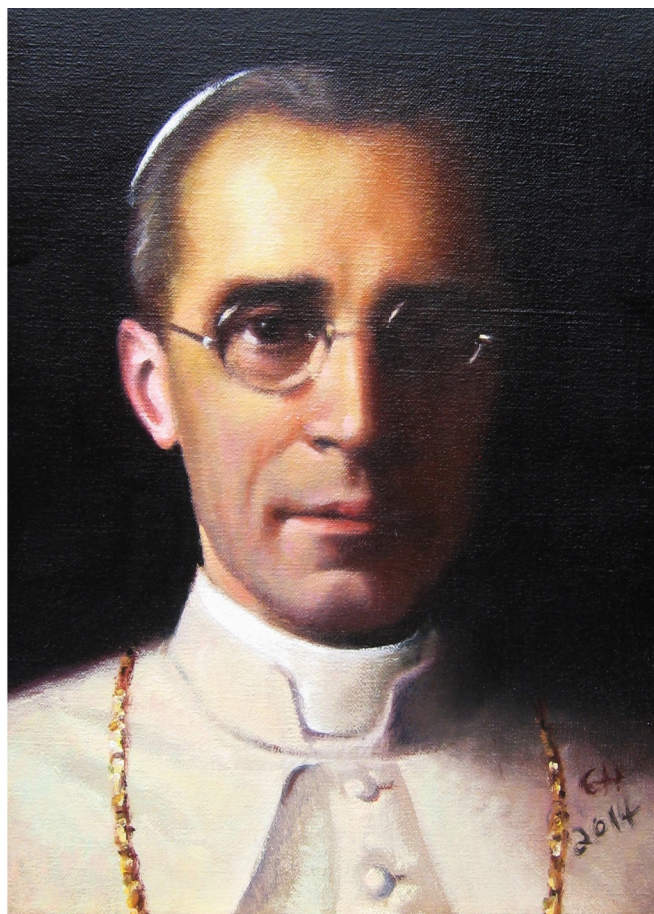
totally unmoored not only from the Western tradition, but from the whole aim of art in any civilization: to make something beautiful. So I didn't know where to turn for training and wound up wasting a lot of time and money going to art school. At last I discovered the atelier tradition, where you can still learn something of the authentic Western tradition of how to draw and paint, even though the context is usually secular.

**A&H:** That's very interesting. (I'd like to point out here to our readers that Gwyneth has a great page of advice on her website for the parents of budding artists, with several very useful recommendations for 'safely' pursuing the development of a serious artistic talent in today's crazy world.) Did you grow up in a conservative environment, or did you become attracted to it later in life?

**Gwyneth:** I grew up in a conservative home. My mother was a homemaker and homeschooled me and my three brothers. I always felt very supported as an artist and my mother saw to it that I had good-quality art supplies and instruction even as a child.

**A&H:** I was homeschooled as well! We did some very basic art tutorials, and I still doodle a bit, but mostly just fashion illustrations and odds and ends for the magazine. Do you have a favorite medium or mediums? Oil? Acrylics? Watercolors?

**Gwyneth:** Oils. I also enjoy pastels, which function in much the same way and are great for students. Watercolors are wonderful too, and very helpful for learning color and control. I don't like acrylics, because they dry so quickly and because they lack the luminosity of oils.



*Pius XII, 2014. 11 in. x 14 in.*

**A&H:** I never got into proper watercolors, but I do love watercolor pencils. They're basically watercolors for dummies, lol. Do you have a favorite size of canvas to work on?

**Gwyneth:** The bigger the better. I'm drawn to the grand gesture and dynamic brushwork of Rubens, Tiepolo, and other Baroque masters who painted enormous altarpieces and ceilings. For a portrait, I prefer to work life size or a little smaller. Anything smaller than that, one runs the risk of painting what one of my teachers called "shrunken heads"—at least in the tradition I'm working in, which grows out of the Renaissance and Baroque. I admire artists who paint miniatures, but I haven't the temperament!

**A&H:** From different things you've posted, it sounds like your husband helps you run the business end of your artistic endeavor. Did you meet through your work?

**Gwyneth:** Sort of. We met at church shortly after I'd moved to the Boston area to study in an atelier and he'd moved to teach in a Catholic classical academy. His background is in editing and education, so he handles most of the written communications—proposals, contracts, marketing—as well as fulfillment and accounting. Non-artists and aspiring artists alike often don't realize that about half one's work earning a living as an artist is not making art.

**A&H:** Yes - as a former dressmaker I can certainly attest to that! You sell a variety of paintings, drawings, and holy cards through your website, in addition to taking commissions. Is your artwork available for purchase through any Catholic bookstores or other outlets?



*Sorrowful Mother, 2019. 24 in. x 34 in.*

**Gwyneth:** Not currently. I've explored that avenue a bit, but I'm somewhat reticent, because I believe strongly in the importance of original art rather than prints. God gave man alone a share of His creative power, something we actualize in bearing and rearing children and in making art. With a print, a machine has intervened between the creative capacity of man and his creation. To me an original artwork, especially one depicting the human form, is a profound reminder that God saw that what He created was good, and that the Word became flesh. Obviously, I think reproductions have a place in the Christian life, but a monograph on the Sistine Chapel is no substitute for actually being there. Especially for churches and home altars, I encourage people to prefer even modest original art to prints. You may not be able to afford an Old



Master painting, but even an amateur work possesses an aura of reality that is more powerful than a mass-produced print. In addition, I can't say enough about the confidence and encouragement that is given to a young artist when he or she sells his or her first work of art. Patronage is possible for every household, regardless of its economic situation.

**A&H:** How has being a mom impacted the amount of time you are able to spend creating art? Are there any tips you would like to share with other moms who may be interested in running home businesses?

**Gwyneth:** As soon as I discerned that I was called to marriage, I knew that painting had to take second place to any children God might send us. I'm a wife and mother first; a painter second. In the course of our first five years of marriage, the role of my painting has shrunk and grown as necessary for our family. Initially,

I was able to dedicate one day of work to painting outside of a full time job. Then, when my first child arrived, it was more like one hour a week. Fortunately, my husband has always been amazingly encouraging and got me into the studio more than I ever would have without his support. Now, we have been blessed with three children and regular art commissions allow us to run the business as a family. I look forward to the day when the children can help out in the studio.

**A&H:** Going back to the piece you're working on right now, how long does a big painting like this usually take you?

**Gwyneth:** Each painting usually takes a month of planning and research, a month of actual painting, and then a period of waiting for the paint to dry before it can be framed and shipped. I do a lot of side projects like teaching and design work but in general I am satisfied if





I can produce around ten good-quality mid-size paintings each year. Last spring I did my first large-scale work that was roughly six by eight feet. There were seven life-size figures, so that project felt like it required the same effort as four smaller paintings sewn together.

**A&H:** Wow! Now was this on a canvas, or was it on some other surface? Would that technically be called a mural? I don't know the specific terms.

**Gwyneth:** *The Ascension* is on canvas. It's designed as an altarpiece, to be hung within the reredos above an altar, with the six altar candles and crucifix rising over the lower third or so of the painting. In fact, it was commissioned for the cafeteria and now hangs in the foyer of a Catholic school. Oils are hard-wearing and easy to clean, so they're a good choice for heavily trafficked or messy areas. That makes them perfect for above an altar,

too, where centuries of smoke, wax, and incense can be cleaned off without disturbing the paint.

**A&H:** I did not know that! Makes sense. Well, this has been very fun and certainly very informative, not to mention inspiring. Thank you so much for your time, Gwyneth, and I'm looking forward to seeing the finished version of your current project! Ω

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Gwyneth Thompson-Briggs is a painter in the perennial tradition of Western sacred art. Her work decorates churches, schools, and homes throughout the Americas and Europe. In 2019 she founded the Catholic Artists Directory ([CatholicArtistsDirectory.com](https://CatholicArtistsDirectory.com)) to connect patrons and artists for a new Renaissance of beauty.



*St. Hugh of Lincoln, 2019. 24 in. x 20 in.*



*The Ascension, (detail) 2020. 100 in. x 72 in.*





## SYMPTOMS:

Your mother or your boss assigns you a task which you're not particularly fond of, and instead of offering it up and beginning it immediately you see how long you can get away with putting it off, either by doing something fun on your phone, sneaking a book into the bathroom, etc. When they do finally come looking for you, you act innocent and give them an evasive answer to throw them off the scent: "Oh, sorry, I had to use the restroom and it took longer than I thought it would . . ."

## DIAGNOSIS:

- *Dishonesty* -

We all have a tendency to want to make ourselves look good, and to keep ourselves out of trouble (whether deserved or not). We tend to use either evasions or little white lies to smooth our way in the world and to avoid conflicts with family members or coworkers. "What they don't know won't hurt them," as the saying goes. But the question *should* be, "Does it actually hurt *us*?" Even little white lies are still venial sins. As Shakespeare says, honesty is truly the best policy, and sticking to the

unvarnished truth is good for both for the salvation of our souls and for the acquisition of some mental fortitude. While simple and straightforward honesty can be a painful habit to acquire, it is well worth the effort!

## TREATMENT OPTIONS:

**1** Think before you speak. Is it *really* justified for me to make an evasive response in this situation? Is it worth the risk of mis-speaking and accidentally telling an actual lie just to explain why I haven't gotten to doing the dishes yet? While it may be justifiable to speak truly but evasively for a serious reason, as St. Athanasius's friends did to save him from execution, in trivial situations it would be much better to practice humility, apologize for the procrastination, accept the scolding we deserve, and get right to work.

**2** Be faithful in little things. If you can conquer the bad habit of making plausible but not entirely truthful excuses for small matters, you will have a better chance of being faithful when a lot is on the line! **Ω**



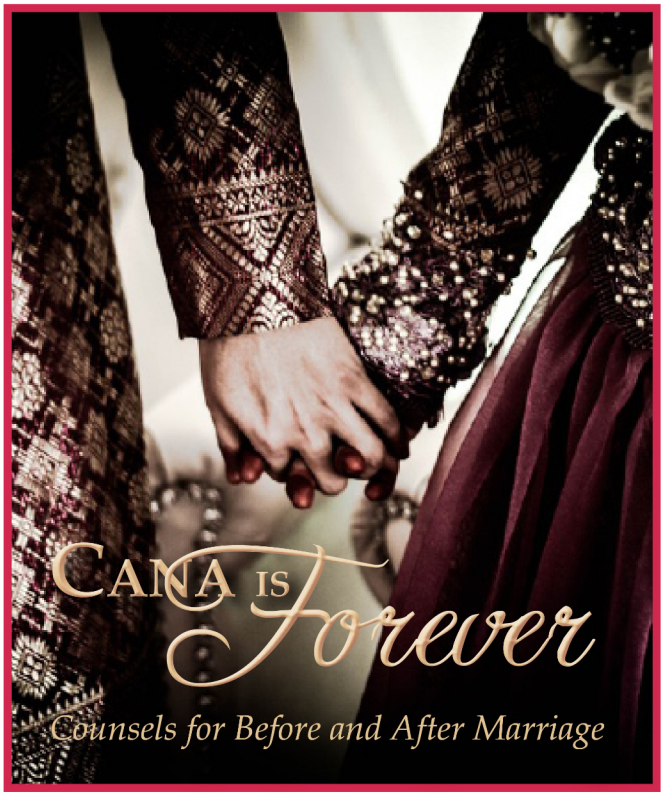


**C**ana is Forever: The wedding itself - the manner, place, time, season, and the requirements set by the Church for its proper celebration.

CHAPTER SIX  
*The Great Sacrament*

William Shakespeare, in "As You Like It," put these words into the mouth of Jacques: "And will you, being a man of good breeding, be married under a bush, like a beggar? Get you to a church and have a good priest that can tell you what marriage is. This fellow will but join you together as they join wainscot; and then one of you will prove a shrunk panel, and like green timber, warp, warp."

The fact that Shakespeare, writing in the year 1598, should demand the services of a priest and advise a definite, sacred surrounding for marriage, might indicate to some a certain antiquity and venerability for the matrimonial ritual. The truth is that the origin of the sacredness surrounding marriage goes back to the Garden of Eden and our First Parents. The very first marriage on this earth was a wondrous affair. It was glorious in its simplicity. God created man separately and



unsurpassed unity of conjugal life - a unity so pronounced that Adam exclaimed the principle which was to be the guiding rule for all his descendants: "Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh." (Gen. 2:24.) There is no question about the divine origin of marriage. The words of Scripture just quoted bear this out. That it was a special union and contract that merited a special blessing is equally patent from the words of the sacred and inspired writer:

# Book Review

He created woman separately; then He joined the two in a sacred union. Here are the exact words of Holy Scripture: "And God created man to His own image; to the image of God He created him. Male and female He created them. And God blessed them saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth...." (Gen. 1:27, 28.)

The mingling of the two elements of human nature engendered in Adam and Eve an

"And God blessed them saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth...." (Gen. 1:28.) And the immediate descendants of Adam and Eve and those who came after them down through the dim vista of the years recognized in marriage a definite sacredness and recognized, too, the need for the special blessing of God upon it. For instance, it was perfectly natural for the young Tobias before his marriage to pray to God and say in that prayer: "Lord God of our fathers, Thou madest



Adam of the slime of the earth: and gavest him Eve for a helper..." then, turning to his beloved Sara, say: "Sara, arise, and let us pray to God today, and tomorrow, and the next day: . . . For we are the children of saints: and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God." (Tob. 8:4, 5, 7, 8.)

So sacred did God want man to consider marriage that He imposed two special commandments - two out of ten - to preserve it from profanation. The two prohibitions were: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house: neither shalt thou desire his wife...." (Exod. 20:14,17.) Thus, from the beginning of the world, marriage has been considered by God as a very special and sacred contract in which two people promise to be faithful to each other, to help each other, and never to forsake each other. In this, marriage differs from all other human contracts. Any other contract may be set aside by mutual agreement, but not so marriage. While it is a private affair--private to the extent that the choice is free--once the marriage vows are made, the fate of all mankind is connected with that marriage and it becomes a public affair, and no one has the right to dissolve it.

Indeed, marriage is more than a contract. It is the mystical union of two bodies and souls. To hold less than this is to refuse to identify ourselves with the divine plan of God, and we reduce ourselves to the sad plight of our First Parents. The first love this world ever knew between a man and a woman went wrong because Adam and Eve betrayed their God. They had been asked simply to accept the Creator as the master of their hearts and souls and actions. Freely, however, our First Parents rejected God as their ruler and in that rejection lay disaster. That first mortal sin lost for them supernatural life and the consequent

loss of the friendship of God. Severed from God by their sin, Adam and Eve found that their human nature became dominant. They who had been made by and for God were conscious of their orphanhood and awful isolation. They had cut themselves adrift in a storm-tossed and cursed sea.

Never must our First Parents have so realized the awful cost of their lack of unity with God as when their son Cain murdered his brother Abel and displayed the depths to which impaired nature could descend. It took four thousand years of waiting, of prayer and penance, to make ready for the coming of Christ who, out of boundless love for fallen humanity, offered to come down on this earth and take a human nature and re-establish contact with the Creator...

It is worthy of profound contemplation that the first recorded act of the public life of the Son of God made man was to assist at and bless the nuptials of a man and his wife at Cana in Galilee. He it was who raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament and His divinely instituted Church has never ceased through the ages to promulgate and protect marriage as such.

The triune God is made up of the Three Divine Persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In marriage - the holy union of husband and wife - God is ever a third partner, and the union of all three is for the sole purposes of the Creator. The union of man and woman in Christian marriage is effected through the priestly power of Christ Himself. It is a union effected by God and for God. When a man or a woman, or both, deny God's plan in their union, the result is disaster...

Our Saviour, conscious of man's misfortune and altered state when He came to save man from his sins, and realizing that man would need special help to succeed in the marriage



career, raised matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament - that is, He made it an official channel by which baptized members are united to His mystical Body or, in other words, He made it a means of grace. It should be carefully noted that while the marriage of two unbaptized persons is certainly not a sacrament, and while it is more probable that the marriage of a baptized person to an unbaptized person is not a sacrament either, such marriages are, nevertheless, important, serious things besides being valid contracts [3]

Now, since the sacramental character of marriage is oftentimes denied today, it might be well to have a ready answer for those who raise such an objection. Only recently I heard a nationally famous radio broadcaster say that marriage did not become a sacrament until the middle of the fourteenth century. I took him to task and pointed out that the prime requisite for a sacrament is that it has been instituted by Christ. The other two requisites are that it is an outward sign and that it gives grace. I hastened to inform him of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (5:32), in which he wrote these words when comparing marital love with the love of Christ for His Church: "This is a great Sacrament [or mystery]: but I speak in Christ and in the Church."

In case he might think that I was attempting to use this text to prove immediately the fact that matrimony, for a Christian, is a sacrament, I hastened to quote the following from ***The Sacraments***, by Rev. Isidore O'Brien, O.F.M.:

"As explained, the Greek word *mysterion*, 'mystery' (which St. Paul employs here) was often used for 'sacrament.' In this text Catholic theologians so understand it. The King James Version of the Bible translates it 'mystery.' But this literal translation does not exclude the Catholic significance of 'sacrament.'

"The civil contract is not a 'great mystery'; it is not mysterious, in the sense of being transcendently sublime, unless it is a Sacrament. St. Paul describes matrimony as the symbol, the sign of Christ's union with the Church: and not, let us note, in the sense of a certain loose resemblance. It is a sign of that union because of the spiritual love by which Christ loves and rules the Church and by which the Church cleaves to Christ as a wife to her husband.

"Christ's union with the Church sanctifies the Church. The sacramental union of marriage sanctifies husband and wife in the holy state of matrimony. We have, therefore, in the marriage contract between Christians, as described by St. Paul, the three essentials of a Sacrament: an external sign, internal grace, and institution by Jesus Christ."

It is worthy of note that the Council of Trent derived its main argument for the sacramentality of marriage from the teachings of the Fathers and the early councils, and from the universal practice and belief of the Church. Let us here examine a few excerpts from the works of the early Fathers.

St. Ignatius, writing in the second century, said: "But it is fitting for those who marry - both with the men and the women - to accomplish their union with the consent of the bishop that their marriage may be according to God and not according to lust." [4]

Tertullian, in the same century, wrote: "How can we find words to describe the happiness of that marriage which the Church joins together and the oblation confirms (the Mass) and the blessing seals, the angels report and the Father ratifies." [5]

And should you need to prove that the Church has always been the careful guardian of





marriage and that marriage before a priest is in no way a modern invention, read these words of Timotheus of Alexandria, successor to the See of St. Athanasius, written in the third century A.D. : "If any one call in a cleric, to unite in marriage but he shall hear that the marriage is unlawful . . . ought the cleric to accede or to make the oblation? Answer - Say to him, if the cleric hear that the marriage is unlawful, the cleric ought not to become a partaker of another's sins." [6]

Again, this matter is well summed up in the following ancient Anglo-Saxon ordinance: "At the Nuptials there shall be a Mass-priest by law who shall with God's blessing bind their union to all posterity." [7]

When in the sixteenth century the professors of Tübingen University sought to win the

Greek Church to the creed of the reformers, the Greek Patriarch Jeremias indignantly scouted their suggestion that his Church could ever be won to their doctrine of only two sacraments. Testifying to the unvarying belief of the Oriental Church in the seven sacraments, including matrimony, he terminated their overtures with a scornful refusal. Thus eloquently do the voices of Christian tradition testify to the sacramental character of matrimony equal to the other six sacraments. Marriage, too, was instituted by Christ.

Speaking of the so-called Reformation, it might be only justice to say that if there is little or no respect today for marriage either as a binding contract or as a sacrament, the blame can be laid to the reformers themselves. Most non-Catholics are shocked to read that Calvin taught that "there is nothing more sacred about marriage than there is about agriculture, architecture, shoemaking or hair-cutting." [8]

Luther was just as vigorous in condemning the sacramental character of marriage, saying that "claims of sacredness for marriage are a mere jest." [9] In Luther's words lies the secret of marriage failures today - men and women continue to make a joke of it. Be this as it may, the task of present-day Christians is to follow the laws of God and of His Church and to safeguard themselves against the pagan onslaughts of the modern world. Christian lovers might well repeat often the poetic prayer of Thomas Moore:

*O guard our affection, nor e'er let it feel  
The blight that this world o'er the warmest  
will steal.*

*While the faith of all round us is fading  
or past,  
Let ours, ever green, keep its bloom to the  
last.*



Pope Pius XI, in his famous Encyclical letter ***Casti Connubii***, already referred to, expresses the benefits of the sacrament of matrimony in the following terms:

1. Husband and wife possess a positive guarantee of the endurance of the marriage bond.
2. They are provided with a strong bulwark of chastity against the incitements to infidelity, should they arise.
3. They are freed from anxiety lest in advanced years the partner prove unfaithful.
4. The human dignity of man and woman is maintained.
5. Mutual aid is assured.
6. It perfects natural love, confirms the indissoluble union and sanctifies both man and wife.
7. Christian marriage opens a treasure of sacramental grace from which is drawn the supernatural power of fulfilling the rights and duties of married life faithfully, holily, perseveringly till death.
8. In addition to sanctifying grace, the sacrament bestows particular gifts, dispositions, seeds of grace, by which the natural powers are elevated and perfected.
9. It assists the parties in understanding and knowing intimately, in adhering to firmly, in willing effectively, and in successfully putting into practice those things which appertain to the married state, its aims and duties.

Little wonder then that Dr. Paul Popenoe, director general of the American Institute of Family Relations, and author of ***Marriage, Before and After***, could say: "Those who

consider marriage a sacrament are naturally more disposed to turn it into success than are those who look on it as merely a ninety-day option." Remember that, before you choose a mate who does not or will not hold that marriage is a sacrament.

The marriage of baptized persons is ruled not only by the divine law of God but by the Canon Law of the Church, and this without prejudice to the power of the civil authority over the merely civil effects. To the Church alone belongs the right to safeguard the sacraments and therefore the marriage of the baptized, since the contract of marriage is a sacrament. Since there is no distinction, it is not possible that the State should regulate marriage as a contract, and the Church should be allowed to regulate it as a sacrament.

The power of the Church is legislative, judicial, and coercive. Legislative, inasmuch as it can lay down laws for valid and lawful marriages; judicial, since it can decide marriage cases; and coercive, because it can threaten and punish those guilty of dereliction of marital duties.

Having established the sacramental character of marriage and the Church's exclusive and independent authority over Christian marriage in respect to validity and lawfulness, let us get down to the practical application.

Those who plan to marry should follow the Shakespearean advice and get you to a Church and have a good priest who can tell you what marriage is. It is strongly advised that those who plan to marry ought to approach the girl's pastor a good month or more in advance of the date set for the wedding. In case of mixed marriages, the Catholic's pastor is the one to be consulted.

It is important, and it will save time, if on that initial visit you bring certain essential



documents. Catholics planning marriage should surrender to the priest on their first visit:

1. A recent copy of your baptismal certificate
2. Your First Communion certificate
3. Your Confirmation certificate
4. And in the case of a man, a *Letter of Freedom* from his own pastor, stating that to the best of his knowledge he is free to marry. In the case of a non-Catholic who plans a mixed marriage a baptismal certificate should be brought along as well as a letter from some well-known person, stating his belief as to the freedom to marry of the subject.

In any case, and especially where a mixed marriage is planned, we cannot overstress the importance of calling on the girl's pastor one month or more in advance of the date chosen for the marriage, since some dioceses demand that the non-Catholic take six instructions before the wedding.

Unless a special dispensation from publication of banns is requested and obtained in writing from the Bishop, three Sundays or two Sundays and an intervening Holy Day must be allowed for the publication of the names of the two Catholic parties at the principal Masses in the parish church of both persons concerned.

In the matter of mixed marriages the banns are not announced, but instead, the regular application for a dispensation for such a marriage must be made in writing to the Bishop. Attached to this application must be the signed promises already spoken of on page 84 (see *Form of Promises* in Issue 12 of *Altar & Hearth*).

Let us look at the matter of impediments and dispensations - a dispensation meaning a relaxation of law in a particular case.



Ever conscious of her obligation to safeguard the great sacrament of marriage, the Church places certain restrictions around the sacred contract and enacts laws concerning it. Pope Leo XIII made this quite clear in his Encyclical letter *Arcanum*, when he said: "Therefore when Christ bestowed marriage to the care of the Church, He entrusted and recommended the whole discipline of marriage to her. Concerning the sacrament, the Church alone can and should determine and prescribe."

The Church teaches that there are certain conditions which because of their nature make it impossible for persons to contract a marriage. Such conditions are called invalidating impediments. There are also conditions which make it unlawful to contract a marriage, but which do not actually prevent a real marriage from taking place. These are called forbidding impediments. Some invalidating impediments are clear from the Natural and Divine Law. Some are specified by the Church, which has been given authority over society by Christ. These latter are called impediments of Ecclesiastical Law.



The chief impediments which invalidate marriage are the following:

- Blood relationship in the direct line, i.e., father and daughter, grandfather and granddaughter, etc.
- Blood relationship in the collateral line, i.e., brothers and sisters, first and second cousins.
- Spiritual relationship, such as sponsors at baptism and the person baptized.
- Affinity, i.e., relationship arising out of marriage. One cannot marry the blood relation of his partner in marriage except beyond the second degree.
- Solemn vows taken in Sacred and Religious Orders.
- Disparity of religion, i.e., marriage of a baptized Catholic with a non-baptized party.
- Crime, i.e., adultery with the promise of marriage.
- Violence or compulsion by grave fear amounting to violence.
- Error regarding a person's identity or error substantially equal to that.
- Impotency, i.e., incapacity to have marriage relations. This must be perpetual and antecede the marriage.

The following are forbidding impediments:

- Simple vows of chastity.
- Marriage with baptized non-Catholics.

By the same power which the Church has over society in virtue of which she can place an impediment to marriage, she can also dispense from these impediments which she has established in particular cases. Thus the Church may dispense and permit the marriage of a baptized person with one not baptized, or without the publication of banns. But as

regards impediments contained in the Natural Law or the Commandments of God, the Church has no power of dispensation. The Church cannot dispense a person who is already married from the obligations of his or her marriage and permit remarriage. The parties themselves, their parents, relatives, or friends are bound to make known to the priest the existence of any of the above-listed impediments.

In the case of a mixed marriage it is important for the non-Catholic party to state whether or not he or she has ever been baptized and if not, to freely admit it. If the non-Catholic has been baptized, the priest will apply for a dispensation for "mixed religion"; and in the case of non-baptism, he will apply for a dispensation covering "disparity of cult."

It may occur to some that the Church acts very arbitrarily in the matter of declaring the attempted marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic before a justice of the peace or a minister as invalid, while holding that the marriage of two non-Catholics under the same conditions is valid and binding.

While comparisons are said to be odious, they do at times clarify an issue. With this in mind, let us compare the stand of the Church regarding the marriages mentioned and the arbitrary actions of important educational institutions regarding the recognition and refusal to recognize degrees of other institutions. Doubtless you have noticed from time to time advertisements in the national magazines inviting students to take correspondence courses leading to A.B., A.M., or B.Sc. degrees? True, if you take the course and pass the examinations, the said university or school will award a very formidable-looking diploma, but you will find that universities like Columbia, Yale, Harvard, Fordham, and Georgetown will refuse to recognize such a



degree. No one denies the universities this right. Then why deny the Church similar authority in the case of marriages which do not conform to her regulations? She really acts so in the case of mixed marriages because, as the Father of the Third Council of Baltimore declared: "The Church . . . has always been against marriages of Catholics and non-Catholics both on account of the disgrace to the divine communion and on account of the most grave danger of perversion of the Catholic party and of the evil institutions for raising the children."

Isn't it rather strange that people who agree wholeheartedly with the United States Government's strict control of the atom bomb, and the formation of a special commission to safeguard its development, should resent a similar control by the Church over marriage and the fact that Christ should appoint His Church to safeguard its sanctity?

Right reason dictates that anything that could wreak such havoc on mankind as an ill-used atom bomb should be controlled. In the same way, unless marriage as a contract and as a sacrament is protected and revered, mankind could wreck human society. Even the pagan Cicero taught this, for he said in *De Officiis*: "The first bond of society is marriage, the next, our children; then the whole family and all things in common." Until and unless the Church, through her pastors, is certain that there is no danger of perversion to the Catholic party or the children will she grant a dispensation for a mixed marriage...

After the marriage license has been secured from the proper civil authorities and turned over to the priest who is to perform the ceremony, the future bride and groom must answer under oath in the presence of a priest the following or a similar questionnaire:



### THE BRIDE (or Bridegroom)

*(The parties must be interrogated separately. The priest will propose the questions and write the answers.)*

The prospective bride (bridegroom) is to be reminded of the sacred character and binding force of an oath and then asked to take the following oath:

"I solemnly swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth in answer to all the questions that shall be proposed to me, so help me God."

- What is your full name?
- When and where were you born?
- What is your address?
- How long have you lived at that address?
- Have you lived in any other parish for six months or more since you were twelve years old and, if so, in what parishes, and for how long a time in each one?
- What is your father's name? His religion?



- What is your mother's name? Her religion?
- What is your religion? If non-Catholic, indicate particular sect.
- Have you proof of baptism? When? Where?
  - (a) Check whether proof was obtained by certificate \_\_\_\_\_  
by competent witnesses \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) If not baptized, check whether person is a Jew \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohammedan \_\_\_\_\_  
neither \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you aware of any physical defect that will prevent you from fulfilling the marital duties of a wife?
- Have you ever been treated by a neurologist or psychiatrist or suffered any mental disturbance? If so, how often? When?
- Are you marrying freely, i.e., free from compulsion or pressure exerted by any person or circumstance?
- Is your intended husband marrying freely?
- Investigate and check if any of the following impediments are present:
  - (a) Vow in Religion
  - (b) Spiritual relationship
  - (c) Legal relationship
  - (d) Public propriety.

**Catholics are to be asked:**

- Did you receive First Communion? When and where?
- Did you receive Confirmation? When and where?
- When and where did you receive religious instruction? Arrange for instructions before marriage if necessary. Remind person to go to Confession and receive Holy Communion before marriage.
- Have you ever been married before? How often?
  - 1. To whom? When? Where?  
Priest, Minister or Civil Magistrate?
  - 2. To whom? When? Where?  
Priest, Minister or Civil Magistrate?
- Proof of death of former spouse or of nullity of former marriage must be obtained.
- Check whether or not there is present the impediment of crime.
- Are you related to your intended husband by blood? By marriage? If a relationship exists, please indicate the precise degree by use of the genealogical tree at bottom of page.
- Explain the nature and essential obligations of Christian marriage and then ask:
  - (a) Do you intend to enter a permanent marriage, i.e., a marriage that cannot be dissolved by divorce or any other way except by death?
  - (b) Do you intend to be faithful to your husband (wife) always?
  - (c) Do you understand the object of marriage to be the begetting of children, God willing?
  - (d) Does your intended husband (wife) accept and propose to fulfill these obligations?
  - (e) Do you know that the use of methods or means to frustrate the purpose of marital relations is sinful?
  - (f) Have you or your prospective husband (wife) the intention of denying to the other the right to true marital relations and the natural consequences thereof?



(g) Have you or your prospective husband (wife) made any conditions or reservations concerning marriage or marital relations? Did you ever make a private or public vow? What was the precise nature of the vow?

- Are you a member of any condemned or atheistic society?
- If either party has not yet completed his twenty-first year, ask: Do your parents consent to your marriage (if not, consult canon 1034).
- When do you intend to be married?
- Are the witnesses to the marriage to be Catholics?

- Have you fulfilled the license and other civil requirements?
- Do you now swear to the truth of the above answers?

Signature of Bride (Bridegroom)

Signature of Priest

Date

The priest will record the following:

1. Date and place of marriage
2. Dispensations granted
3. Delegation asked for or given
4. Permission asked for or given
5. Date of notice sent to parishes of baptism





Note the question regarding the witnesses. The Church law is that both witnesses to the marriage of two Catholics or the witnesses to a mixed marriage must be Catholics. (Catholics may not be "attendants" at a non-Catholic wedding without the consent of the Bishop of the diocese.)

Let us now turn our attention to the matter of time, place, and types of ceremonies. A marriage may take place at any time of the year, but the different enactments of the civil law should be observed in this matter. Marriage at a Nuptial Mass, with the accompanying blessing, is forbidden by the Church from the first Sunday of Advent to Christmas inclusive and from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday inclusive, unless special permission is granted.

Regarding the place of marriage, if the bride is Catholic the marriage is celebrated in her parish church; and if it is a mixed marriage, the ceremony usually takes place in the parish rectory of the baptized non-Catholic bride.[10]

It sometimes happens that very unreasonable requests are made for the performance of marriages in hotels, country clubs, private homes and scenic gardens. In the name of all that is holy and good, don't ask for special concessions. It usually happens that those who want such special permissions are the ones least worthy of special favors.

As to the type of ceremony, let it be said that it is hard to imagine two Catholics who would consider any other ceremony than that which takes place at a Nuptial Mass, since it is only during a Nuptial Mass that the important Nuptial Blessing is given.

Hearken to the words of the Fathers in the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore: "Frequently and with grave words, pastors of souls are to inculcate that pious and laudable rite of the Church by which the faithful contract marriage not at night but at the time

of Mass with the blessing of the Nuptials. By which they profess tacitly their Catholic faith and show before all, how highly and splendidly as is becoming, they consider the dignity and sanctity of matrimony. And this is not only worthy of praise but seems necessary to us in these times, when the enemies of religion leave nothing unattempted, in order to strip matrimony of all sanctity, of every species of sacrament, if this were possible, and have it considered as a mere civil contract."

Catholics who withstand all types of urging in the matter of a Nuptial Mass for their wedding would be the first to raise a fuss if they were not allowed to have a funeral mass for a loved one. The Mass at a wedding is as important as a Mass at a funeral.

I know of no priest who does not become a little sick at heart when a Catholic bride-to-be says, "Oh, yes, Father, we want the organ and a singer at our wedding, and flowers on the altar and all that but - not the Mass"!

Not the Mass? Why, the mind of the Church is that marriage ought to be performed before the sacrifice and at the very altar of the Lord where it is sealed by the merging of the common sacrifice of each to the other in the universal sacrifice of Christ through participation of the husband and wife in both the sacrifice-oblation and the sacrifice-banquet. The whole Nuptial Mass, the prayers, the instructions are themed around unity in God. "May the God of Israel make you one," are the first words spoken in the Introit and the prayers ask God's blessing in a most special way. Apart from the proper parts of the Mass text, the priest prays twice for the newly married couple, each time intensifying the ordinary progress of the liturgical action of the sacrifice. After the Pater Noster the priest turns to face the newlyweds and recites the long prayer that follows. Read it slowly. It is beautiful.

"O God, who by Thy might has out of nothing made all things, who, in the beginning, didst create the world, and having made man, to Thy image, didst give him woman to be his constant helpmate, fashioning her body from his very flesh and thereby teaching us that it is never lawful to put asunder what it has pleased Thee to make of one substance; O God, who hast consecrated wedlock by a surpassing mystery, since in holy matrimony is shown forth the Sacrament of Christ and His Church; O God, who dost join woman to man, that theirs may be the blessing given by Thee in the beginning, and which was the only one not taken away as part of the punishment inflicted for the sin of our first parents, the only one left untouched by Thy wrath at the time of the flood; look down in mercy on this Thy handmaid, who is about to enter upon her wedded life, and who seeks to be strengthened by Thy protection. May the yoke she has to bear be one of love and peace; faithful and chaste, may she marry in Christ; may her whole life be modeled on that of the holy women; may she be pleasing to her husband as was Rachel, may she be wise as was Rebecca; may she be long-lived and true as was Sara; may he who is the author of all evil have no part in her actions; all the days of her life, may she be true to the troth she has plighted, faithful in obedience, innocent and pure, strengthened against weakness by wholesome discipline; may she be respected for her seriousness, venerated for her modesty, schooled in Divine wisdom, rich in children, worthy of all praise and above reproach, and in the end may she enter in a blessed rest and have a place in heaven. And may she and her husband see their children's children to the third and fourth generation, and come to the good old age to which they look forward."

Finally, just before the final blessing of the Mass, the priest again turns, takes up the last notes of the preceding occasion, and recites the concluding prayer of the Church's rite in behalf of the happiness of the couple:

"May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob be with you, and may he fulfill unto you His blessing; that you may see your children's children unto the third and fourth generation; thereafter enjoy forever eternal life, with the help of Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, God, through all eternity. Amen."

How, I ask you, can Cana be better re-enacted than for your marriage to take place at Mass, so close to the Master that He can hear your heartbeat? How better to commence life together than by receiving Holy Communion side by side, so that the first nuptial kiss will have in it, too, the heavenly taste of Jesus. No other kiss will ever be so sweet!





Have you ever thought how weak and trivial are the reasons given for not having a Nuptial Mass? For instance, I've heard brides-to-be say: "Oh, Father, I could never stand through a Mass!" Lady, you don't stand through a Nuptial Mass - you sit, and kneel. It has been my experience that the frail damsel who is jet-propelled up the aisle and down again at an afternoon wedding - too weak and nervous to sit and kneel through a thirty-five-minute Nuptial Mass - usually can find sufficient reserve strength to go to a public hall or hotel and stand in a reception line for two hours or more. No, it adds up simply to lack of faith.

Remember, you cannot receive the Nuptial Blessing outside of Mass and but once in your lifetime. Don't pass it up. You will regret it later on, for no Catholic celebrates his marriage in full conformity with the desires and spirit of the Church without the Nuptial Mass. Those who will not have the Mass cannot have the special blessing except by Apostolic Indult.

The ideal way to prepare for a worthy reception of the sacrament of matrimony is for both parties to make a week-end retreat, or at the very least make a general confession before marrying.

Just a word about the modern scourge of picture-taking at church weddings. I know of nothing so distracting, nothing that can so detract from the solemn dignity of a Catholic marriage as a shutter-happy photographer dashing hither and yon from sanctuary to belfry, in pursuit of an "unusual" candid shot, while setting off eerie pyrotechnics at the most sacred parts of the Mass and, at the same time, shedding used flash bulbs from reredos to narthex with all the reckless abandon of a startled porcupine shedding quills. If you are going to insist on pictures, first ascertain whether or not it is permissible and

in accordance with local parochial custom. If permission is granted, brief your photographer to stay out of the sanctuary and away from the front of the church. "Back and center" might be a safe slogan!

As regards the social side of the wedding, don't make a vulgar display of your nuptials *a la* Hollywood. Money wasted on a monster reception may later be regretted. Lend even to the social side of the wedding an air of dignity and reserve. As a point of information, it is quite proper to invite the celebrant of your nuptials to the wedding breakfast, and if he is free to accept, a place at the right hand of the bride should be reserved for him. He will say the grace before and the thanksgiving after the breakfast.

And if in the rush and fuss prior to the wedding you may be irked by the several essential requisites demanded by the Church and her apparent opposition to the modern element of speed, remember the advertisement prevalent in national magazines that says: "Some things just can't be hurried!" The Church feels that way about marriages.

On the other hand, be grateful that the Church takes such care of this great sacrament. Christ raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament and the Church maintains that dignity. Shakespeare may have been more right than he realized when he advised the church wedding mentioned earlier. There is more than a passing relationship between the kind of marriage ceremony one chooses and its ultimate results. Judge Sabath, who has for twenty years headed the divorce branch of Cook County, during which time he has heard more than one hundred thousand divorce cases, states that it is his experience that "the more impressive the wedding ceremony - one conducted in a church in a dignified and

sincere manner, with both families present, the fewer chances there will be of that marriage breaking up." What could be more impressive than a marriage at a Nuptial Mass? Too few of the faithful realize the abiding character of the sacrament of matrimony. The sacrament is not left behind when the bride and groom leave the altar. It is not just a sacrament that two lovers administer to each other but a very particular kind of sacrament. Like the Holy Eucharist, it is an abiding sacrament. In fact, St. Robert Bellarmine compares marriage to the Eucharist. [11] St. Robert wrote: "The sacrament of matrimony is a sacrament like unto the Eucharist, which, not only while it is being conferred, but as long as it remains, is a sacrament. For as long as the husband and his wife shall live, so long is their life together a sacrament of Christ and of the Church." Little wonder then that the Church looks upon a violation of marriage and the marriage bond with horror, because such a violation is the desecration of a sacrament of God.

Always remember that not only is sanctifying grace increased by the sacrament of matrimony but both parties receive another most special grace: They become entitled to God's help in all the trials and difficulties that affect them in this holy state and all the special helps necessary to make of their marriage a real and permanent success. In every trial, in every misunderstanding, in every great or small problem, a simple heartfelt prayer such as "Dear Lord, help us in our need, help us now," will bring swift and powerful spiritual aid.

Reverend Edmund D. Bedard in a recent radio talk on the sacrament of marriage, said: "This is the union of husband and wife. The little tasks of every day, the words they speak to one another, the joys they share and the sorrows they endure, the strength they give

and the strength they borrow, their hours and days and years together, shine with the brilliance of a sacrament, and are colored with its glory. And the house that shelters them and their family, whether it be a mansion or a cottage, a tenement or a Quonset hut, is like the tabernacle on the altar that protects the Body of the Lord!"

As at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee - and Cana is Forever - be sure Christ is invited first and made the honored guest. No marriage has a better chance of retaining its flavor and of withstanding the wear and tear of prosaic wedded life than one begun at a Nuptial Mass. The words of Tertullian, written in the second century, bear repetition: "How can we find words to describe the happiness of that marriage which the Church joins together; and the oblation (Mass) confirms; and the blessing seals; the angels report and the Father ratifies." Ω

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***Abridged from "Cana is Forever" by the Rev. Charles Hugo Doyle, 1949. This series will be continued in Issue 14 with Chapter 7.***

ENDNOTES

1. "A Map of Life," F. J. Sheed. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1937.
2. "Greater Love," "The Anthonian," 1938, V. I, 12 (No. 1).
3. When subsequent to the marriage the infidel is baptized, or both of the unbaptized receive baptism, then and there the sacrament of marriage is wrought.
4. Ad Polycarp No. 5.
5. L. 11. Ad Uxor. No. 9, P. 171
6. Galland T. VII Resp. Canon. pp. 348-349.
7. Liebermann - Gisetze der Angell-Sachsen 1.422.
8. Institutions - IV, IX, 34.
9. De Captivitate Babylonica - by Luther.
10. Woywod, I, p. 682.
11. "De Controveriis de Matrimonii sacramento," lib. I. Cap. 6.





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# When A Warrior Falls

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*Long-time subscribers may have picked up by now on our pattern of including some sort of piece related to the Holy Souls in our Fall-Winter Issues. When our managing editor had the opportunity to attend the funeral of the well-known traditional Catholic priest Father Anthony Cekada back in September, she noticed that there were several striking differences between the funeral for a priest and the funeral for a layman which she thought our readers might find interesting, since priestly funerals tend to be more rare.*







### The Wake

Priest laid out in the church rather than in a funeral home. Casket is completely open. Priest is vested for Mass with the exception of stole and maniple. While a layman is placed “facing” the altar, a priest is placed “facing” the people, to show his teaching role.

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### During Mass

The coffin is closed before the funeral Mass, and draped in the usual black cover. The deceased priest’s biretta is then placed on top, along with his folded stole. The Mass itself proceeds as usual.





# The Absolution

When a bishop officiates at the funeral of a layman, the faldstool is placed near the foot of the casket, and the bishop sits with his back to the altar rail, facing the body of the church. When a bishop officiates at the funeral of a priest, the faldstool is once again placed at the foot of the casket, but since it is reversed the bishop ends up sitting facing the same direction as the people in the pews. The crossbearer and acolytes switch their position relative to the placement of the casket as well, and stand by the sanctuary gates.

# Pallbearers

A layman’s casket is carried by six of his equals in life - his friends and family members. A priest’s casket is carried by six of his brother priests, vested in cassocks and surplices but not wearing their birettas.







Burial

Many Catholic cemeteries have a section that is exclusively for priests, but if this is not available, a priest may be buried among the regular plots. Requiescat in pace! Ω









# Getting Around to the Laundry on a Snowy Evening

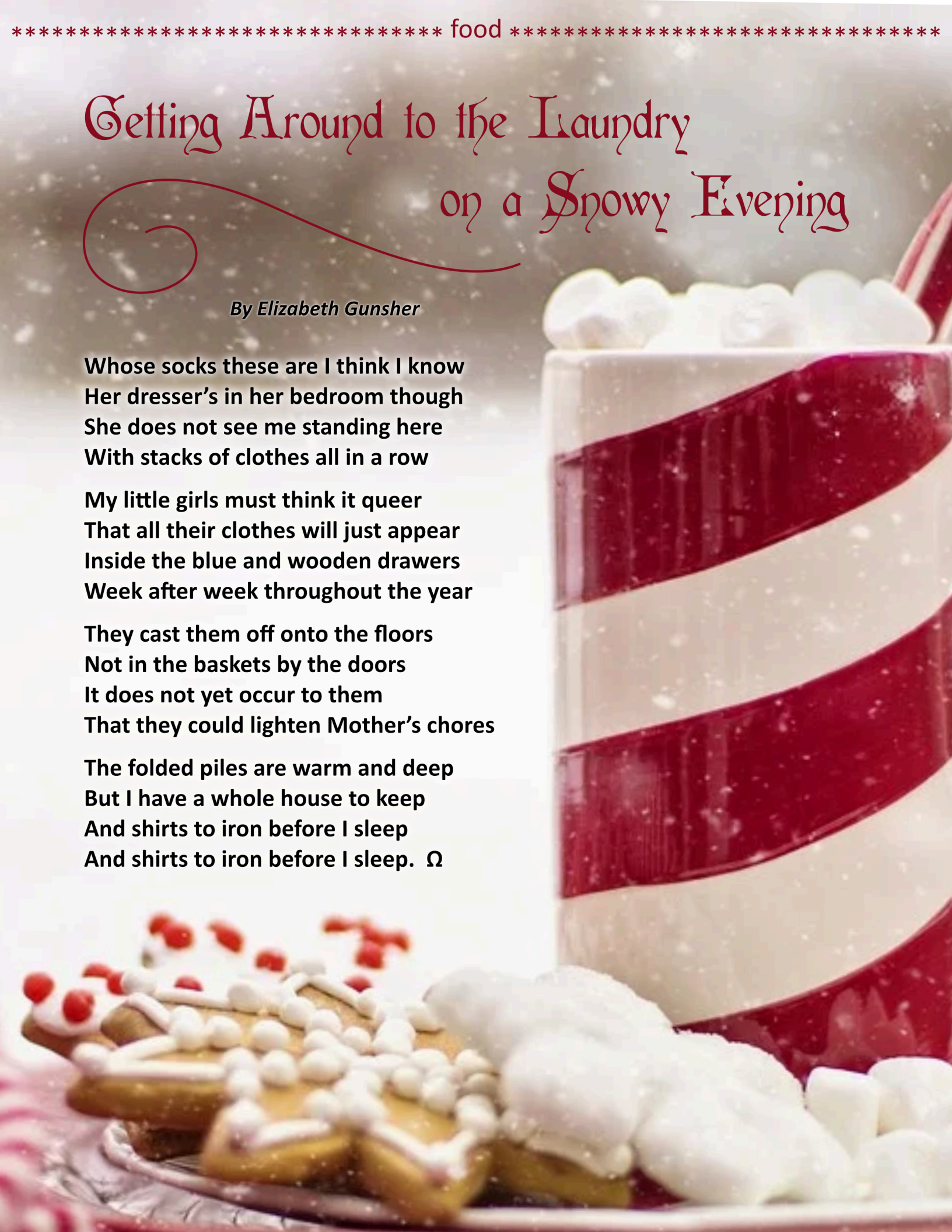
*By Elizabeth Gunsher*

Whose socks these are I think I know  
Her dresser's in her bedroom though  
She does not see me standing here  
With stacks of clothes all in a row

My little girls must think it queer  
That all their clothes will just appear  
Inside the blue and wooden drawers  
Week after week throughout the year

They cast them off onto the floors  
Not in the baskets by the doors  
It does not yet occur to them  
That they could lighten Mother's chores

The folded piles are warm and deep  
But I have a whole house to keep  
And shirts to iron before I sleep  
And shirts to iron before I sleep. Ω







# Tim-Tams: The Perfect Ten

by John Eldracher

*Tim-Tams are a popular cookie in the Land Down Under. They can be found at Amazon.com and at Jungle Jim’s in the USA if you want to test this VERY scientific theory for yourself.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you for the package of TimTams! I was so glad to see the 0.5 star health rating emblazoned on the package. Being a bit of a math whiz, it encouraged me to extrapolate the data to explain why TimTams are so popular around the globe.

If 5.0 stars would make food perfectly healthy to consume, one can assume that all one must do for a perfectly healthy diet would be to eat 10 of them! After all,  $10 \times 0.5 = 5.0$ .

Yes . . . AMAZING.

Probably the greatest reason for TimTam’s amazing success is that each package contains  $10 - 1 = 9$  of the tantalizing morsels.

Therefore, to reach the perfect 5-star healthy meal, one must buy at least 1 more package just to get the 10<sup>th</sup> part!

It only gets better.

The second perfect meal is now TWO short, since there are only 8 left in the 2<sup>nd</sup> package.

I believe I’ve hit on a conspiracy! After

purchasing the 3<sup>rd</sup> package to get the NEXT two fulfilling morsels, we find we are now THREE short of our next perfect meal. There is a pattern here.

After my 8<sup>th</sup> package there is finally light at the end of the tunnel. With only one left over, I just know that my 9<sup>th</sup> package contains everything I need for a truly efficacious and wholesome meal!

I knew, though, that it was just too good to be true. During the night, a thief must have noticed there was only one left, and thought, “Who would notice only one missing?”

Next morning it couldn’t be found. So, the saga continues. Imagine the millions of people engaged in this endless, exasperating struggle for the perfect ten.

Truly a recipe for success - in business!

\*\*\*\*\*

PS: I do feel a surge of good health today with the change in diet. Ω





# Bailey's Salted Caramel Espresso Frosting

---

## Ingredients

- 1 Batch Plain White Buttercream Frosting
  - Bailey's Salted Caramel Irish Cream  
(If it isn't available in your area, you can substitute regular Bailey's and add Hershey's Caramel Syrup ice cream topping and a few shakes of table salt.)
  - Instant coffee powder, any brand
- 

*To achieve the effect above, use a star tip and a piping bag and, starting at the outside edge of each cupcake, gradually make a spiral pattern, working in toward the center. Make sure there is some space around each cupcake while decorating; you can move them closer together once they are finished.*

## Directions

Make plain white frosting using the recipe of your choice. (I prefer the one from Taste of Home, myself.) For an even stronger booze flavor, you can substitute Bailey's for the milk in the recipe.

Partly dissolve a few tablespoonfuls of instant coffee in a few tablespoonfuls of the liqueur. You can add the instant coffee directly to the frosting but it takes longer to dissolve and you will have to beat it a lot longer.

Taste. Add more Bailey's and more instant coffee until you are satisfied.

Decorate your cake or cupcakes. While the frosting is still soft, dust with instant coffee. If you will be storing the cakes in closed containers, wait to dust with the coffee powder until shortly before serving, or it will melt from the humidity. Ω



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# Too Obese, or Not Too Obese

by *Anonymous in Oz* (with just a *little* plagiarism...)

'Twas the week after Christmas,  
And all through the house,  
Not a garment would fit me,  
Not one single blouse,  
Bewilderment befell me,  
Then exclaimeth I, 'Ahh!'  
'Tis all that consuming,  
I have takeneth too far!'

I will blameth that pudding!  
It hath madeth me plump!  
And O, homemade toffee,  
Thou art a foul, undigested lump!  
Lamb roast and goat's cheese,  
I have fallen for it all,  
But - 'tis one thing to be tempted,  
Another thing to fall.

That abundance of ham -  
Let me pause to remember...  
Forsooth, I have eaten a whole pig,  
Since the 25th of December.  
I didst not fare well after thee,  
O wafers, made in Bangladesh,  
Or when I ate all that turkey,  
Much more than one pound of flesh.

There wath that score of rum balls,  
I hadst hiddeneth out if sight,  
And had sneaketh out to eat,  
On a midsummer's night,  
And that peppermint candy -  
Mine one hundred and one-th,  
Methinkest I should have heeded,  
Father's sermon last month.



Shakespeare once wrote,  
If I maketh no mistake,  
Expectation is the root,  
Of all heartache,  
But as for me, I doth say,  
After mine own greed I didst slake,  
Exceeding my limit is the root,  
Of this, mine intense stomach ache.

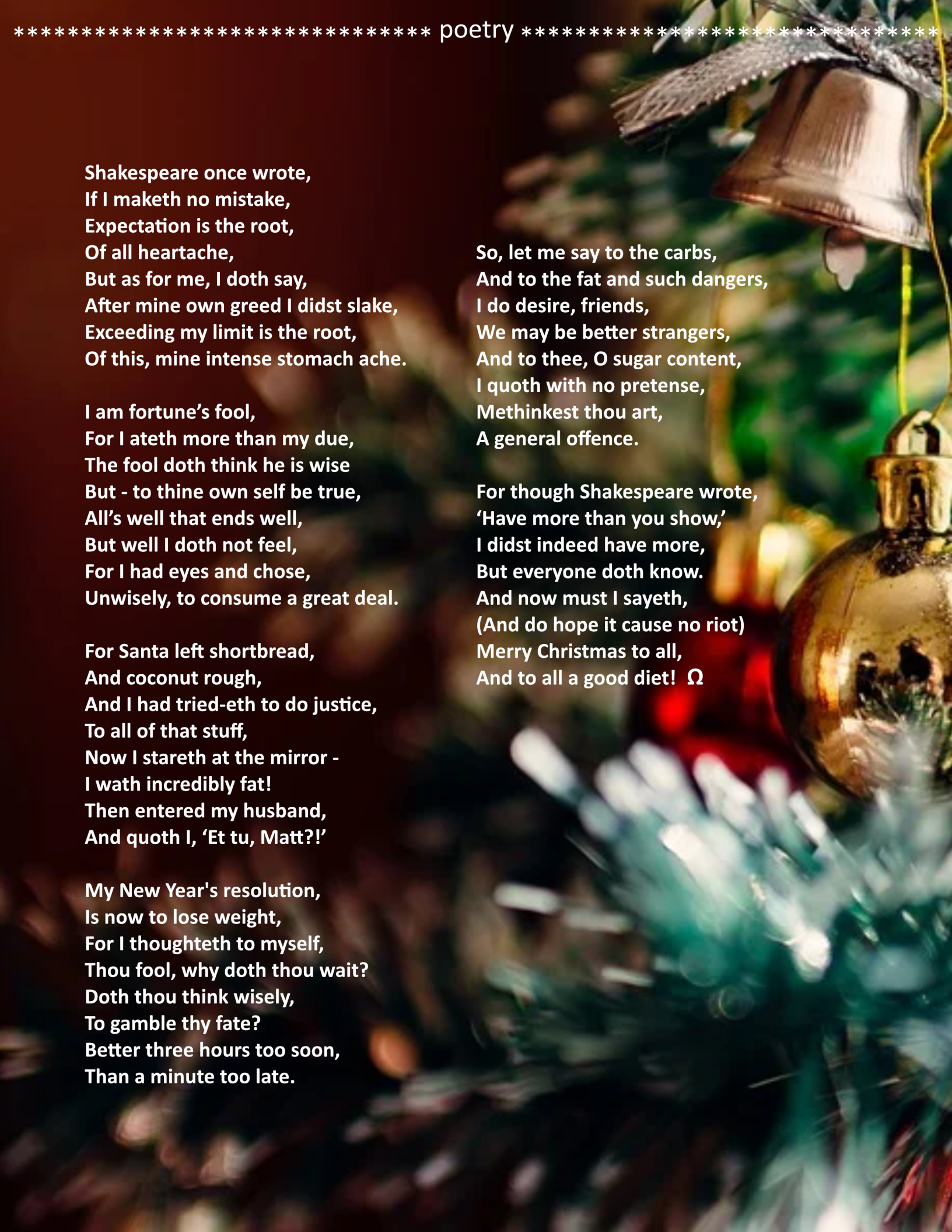
I am fortune's fool,  
For I ateth more than my due,  
The fool doth think he is wise  
But - to thine own self be true,  
All's well that ends well,  
But well I doth not feel,  
For I had eyes and chose,  
Unwisely, to consume a great deal.

For Santa left shortbread,  
And coconut rough,  
And I had tried-eth to do justice,  
To all of that stuff,  
Now I stareth at the mirror -  
I wath incredibly fat!  
Then entered my husband,  
And quoth I, 'Et tu, Matt?!'

My New Year's resolution,  
Is now to lose weight,  
For I thoughteth to myself,  
Thou fool, why doth thou wait?  
Doth thou think wisely,  
To gamble thy fate?  
Better three hours too soon,  
Than a minute too late.

So, let me say to the carbs,  
And to the fat and such dangers,  
I do desire, friends,  
We may be better strangers,  
And to thee, O sugar content,  
I quoth with no pretense,  
Methinkest thou art,  
A general offence.

For though Shakespeare wrote,  
'Have more than you show,'  
I didst indeed have more,  
But everyone doth know.  
And now must I sayeth,  
(And do hope it cause no riot)  
Merry Christmas to all,  
And to all a good diet! Ω











# Dirty Dancing

**Y**ou've done it. You have planned - and executed - a beautiful, dignified Catholic wedding, down to the last detail. Your dress, and your bridesmaids' dresses, are stunning yet tasteful and modest. Your hubby and groomsmen are dashing and handsome in their tuxedos. The ceremony has gone smoothly. Your organist, soloist(s), and choir have moved everyone to tears. Your photographer is beaming. Your guests are raving about the food. You and your new hubby take to the floor for your first dance. Then you stand up with your dad, and your husband leads out his mom. The bridal party joins you. So far, so good.

Then . . . disaster strikes. *"EVERYBODY DANCE NOW!"* shrieks a shrill, obnoxious

voice over the loudspeakers. The DJ, mistakenly assuming that your guests are just like the guests at 99.9% of the other weddings he's done, has inadvertently chosen one of the songs LEAST likely to get them up and dancing. A few people trickle onto the boards, but the way they then proceed to dance is hardly edifying. As the evening goes on, with only this meager success to judge by, the DJ goes from one bad choice to another - not necessarily songs with immoral lyrics, but ones that tend to bring out the worst in your guests.

Meanwhile, on the sidelines, those of your guests who refuse to dance to such 'music' are scandalized and bored, your elderly relatives and church friends are reduced to shouting at each other in futile attempts to carry on



conversations, and those who absolutely can't stand it either move outside or leave early.

What, then, is to be done?

The easiest solution is to simply eliminate the DJ. Not only will it save you some money, but it will also give you absolute control over what is played. Rent some speakers, hook them up to a laptop, and put a teenage boy with no interest in dancing in charge of it. If you want announcements and speeches, buy a karaoke mic for \$30, get a friend with the gift of gab to be your MC, and voilà, problem solved!

Now, I can already hear some rumblings rising from the peanut gallery.

"But - but standards of music and dancing change over time! Even the waltz was seen as shocking when it was first introduced!"

Let us remind our readers that the waltz was originally considered shocking because it was the first dance where a couple spent prolonged time in each others' arms (as opposed to the country dances seen in Jane Austen films, where couples dance side by side or in lines facing each other), NOT because of its tempo or accompaniment. It was soon accepted by the society of the time once it was realized that, done properly, the waltz was neither an occasion of sin nor undignified.

Not so the kinds of dancing ushered in by rock'n'roll.

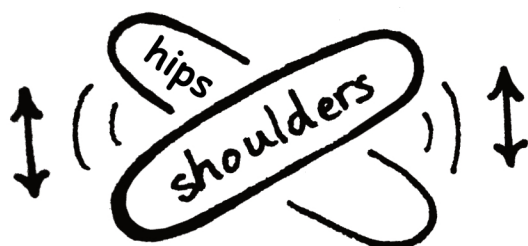
Elvis Presley, popular icon of the 1950s, 60s,

and 70s, was dubbed "Elvis the Pelvis" by critics and shown only from the waist up on the Ed Sullivan Show because of the highly suggestive nature of his moves. What many supposedly good Catholics do today under the heading of dancing at wedding receptions makes viewers wish *they* could be spared seeing these dancers below the waist as well - maybe even below the shoulders.

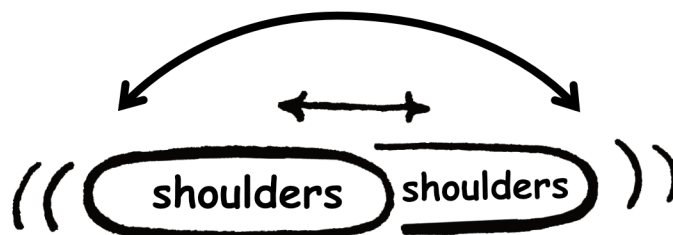
It's not that there's anything wrong in itself with peppy, rhythmic music or energetic dancing. A quick look at traditional Ukranian and Russian folk dances quickly dispels that idea. Dancing is great exercise and a lot of good clean fun can be had doing it. It used to be, and should become again, an important social skill.

The problem is suggestive dancing and the appeals to base animal nature aroused by the shuddering, pulsing synthetic vibrations of rock, rap, hip-hop, R&B, dubstep, electro, breakbeat, and other types of modern 'music' - music more accurately classed as 'noise.'

What is suggestive dancing? Simply put, gyrating your hips, posterior, and bosom in a way guaranteed to get attention from the opposite sex. There's nothing wrong with keeping time with your head and hands or swaying to the tempo of a song. But if you're going to sway, move your whole upper body in a linear fashion left to right and back, with your hips as the counterweight - not *just* your hips or *just* your bosom. Your shoulders should stay roughly parallel to your hips when



**BAD - flaunt effect**



**GOOD - whole body rotates**



Per Te - Josh Groban	When You Say Nothing At All - Alison Krauss, NOT Ronan Keating
Volare - Dean Martin	I Can Love You Like That - John Michael Montgomery
True Love - Patsy Cline	I Can't Help Falling in Love with You - Elvis Presley
Edelweiss - Traditional	Once Upon a December Instrumental - Anastasia
Valse Royale - Cinderella	I'll Always Be Your Mom - Aimee Zimmermann
In the Mood - Glenn Miller	Can You Feel the Love Tonight - Elton John
Waltz of Love - Eugen Doga	When You Say You Love Me - Josh Groban
Always There - Emmet Cahill	God Bless the Broken Road - Rascal Flatts
The Last Rose - Bobby Vinton	You Had Me From Hello - Kenny Chesney
I Walk the Line - Johnny Cash	I Will Be Here - Steven Curtis Chapman
The Virginia Reel - Traditional	Tale as Old as Time - Angela Lansbury
Mia Per Sempre - Josh Groban	Would You Go With Me - Josh Turner
San Antonio Rose - Patsy Cline	From the Ground Up - Celtic Thunder
The Chicken Dance - Traditional	Keeper of the Stars - George Strait
I Cross My Heart - George Strait	Someone Else's Star - Brian White
Emperor Waltz - Johann Strauss	Sold - John Michael Montgomery
Love & Marriage - Frank Sinatra	Stealing Cinderella - Chuck Wicks
To Where You Are - Josh Groban	When God Made You - Newsong
No Beer Today - Frankie Yankovic	Daddy's Angel - Anthony Carter
Duke of Kent's Waltz - Traditional	When I Said I Do - Clint Black
The Blue Danube - Johann Strauss	Incancellabile - Laura Pausini
Rocky Top, Tennessee - Traditional	Beautiful in White - Westlife
Waltz of the Flowers - Tchaikovsky	I Loved Her First - Heartland
Texas Star - Juggernaut String Band	This Dance - Scott Thomas
Beer Barrel Polka - Frankie Yankovic	I Volunteer - Collin Raye
Once in a Lifetime Love - Alan Jackson	Perfect - Ed Sheeran
La Valse de L'Amour - Cinderella (2015)	I Do - Paul Brandt
Unforgettable - Nat & Natalie King Cole	
If You Get There Before I Do - Collin Raye	
Who Stole the Kishka? - Frankie Yankovic	
The Way You Look Tonight - Frank Sinatra	
You Make Me Feel So Young - Frank Sinatra	
Blue River Waltz - Jay Ungar & Molly Mason	
I Just Wanna Dance With You - George Strait	
The Lovers' Waltz - Jay Ungar & Molly Mason	
I See the Light - Mandy Moore & Zachary Levi	
Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head - BJ Thomas	
Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer - The D-Day Darlings	
Can I Have This Dance for the Rest of My Life - Anne Murray	
Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home - Juggernaut String Band	



you rotate rather than describing an X pattern. Certainly don't thrust forward and back with your hips (you can do that with your head, if you don't mind looking like a chicken mincing along). When in doubt, imagine that the most intimidating cleric you know is watching you, and making judgments about your character accordingly. You'll find that you can be-bop and sashay around to a fun rhythm without objectifying yourself quite easily under those circumstances!

## Choosing the Perfect Playlist

Keep in mind that the type of music played is THE determining factor for how people act on the dance floor. (It is rather difficult, after all, to break-dance to Strauss waltzes, and vice-versa.) Pieces in the **GREEN** column on the previous page can be enjoyed in good conscience by anyone in the traditionalist milieu. If your ear needs retraining, go for pieces that sound like these, regardless of whether they are vocal or instrumental. Save, compare, and curate on a YouTube playlist.

Want to keep the atmosphere calm and elegant? Search waltzes by Johann Strauss, Laurence Welk, or Jay Ungar and Molly Mason, or opt for four-beat foxtrot material. The 101 Strings Orchestra also has a great album of instrumental Italian love songs.

Want to liven things up? Play polkas from Frankie Yankovic, bluegrass classics, *The Irish Washerwoman* for the crowd-pleasing Virginia Reel, classic swing pieces like *In the Mood* and *Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer*, and some light country like George Strait's *I Just Wanna Dance With You*. You can even introduce some easy square dances with *Texas Star* and *Bill Bailey* from the Juggernaut String Band - calls included right in the music.

Now, you will doubtless run into several songs that cause you to have some doubts as to their suitability. The lyrics are unobjectionable, the verses are at about the level of the pieces on the green list, but the beat picks up a bit for the choruses. We've given examples of several songs like this on the **YELLOW** list. While they may not suit everyone's tastes, nevertheless, they still shouldn't scandalize anyone, as long as you keep them spread out throughout your playlist. Your grandmother should also still be able to carry on a conversation while they're playing without having to leave the room.

The **RED** section at the bottom of this page is the naughty list - pieces that should never be heard at Catholic wedding receptions. If you're surprised by some of the pieces appearing under this heading, a closer

**Macarena - Los Del Rio**  
**Cha Cha Slide - DJ Casper**  
**Thriller - Michael Jackson**  
**Cotton-Eyed Joe - Rednex**  
**YMCA - The Village People**  
**Living on a Prayer - Bon Jovi**  
**All the Single Ladies - Beyonce**  
**Everybody Dance Now! - C+C Music Factory**  
**I Wanna Dance With Somebody - Whitney Houston**





examination of the lyrics is in order for a good half of them. The rest of them, although not technically objectionable in terms of lyrics, are deafening, sound sleazy, and the type of dancing that they require is anything but edifying. It is unfortunately necessary to mention that few sights are more revolting than the spectacle of supposedly nice Catholic girls in too-tight dresses - and even mothers of families - suggestively wagging their bosoms and derrières to earth-shaking, sultry beats. Whatever happened to being in the world but not of it? Since when does that not apply to wedding receptions? The author has even seen small children breakdancing, which is downright sad. How many times did those innocent little ones have to watch questionable videos to learn those moves?

At the beginning of the Nuptial Mass, when the priest is reading the exhortation to the soon-to-be-married couple, all too often he is thinking of songs like these and the types of dancing engendered by them: "Alas! It but too often happens that the minister of God extends a trembling hand in the performance of the nuptial ceremony. The scene, it is true, is one of joyous festivity; but how frequently is the blessing...rendered null by the invisible maledictions of him who penetrates the inmost recesses of the heart! How frequently, amid the rejoicings of the world, is the storm of tribulation already gathering..."

You may have noticed that your pastor tends to avoid wedding receptions altogether. It is primarily because of bad music and dancing, although he usually also has to write his sermon for Sunday.

## Rebooting Our Culture

Now, some may complain that nobody knows how to waltz, polka, foxtrot, and square dance any more. This is to some extent true. But I

would also respond that if you have managed to learn all the motions for the *Macarena*, *Cotton-Eyed Joe*, and the *Cha-Cha Slide*, you are also perfectly capable of learning how to waltz, polka, foxtrot, and do at least a couple of basic square dances. There are only 6 steps in the basic waltz pattern, 6 in the polka pattern, and maybe a dozen in the foxtrot pattern. Once you know what the square dance calls mean, you can perform them in any order for a wide variety of fun dance combinations.

Here's an idea - instead of wasting money on a DJ, hire a ballroom dance instructor (or a pair of them) instead. In the course of an hour, he should at LEAST be able to get your guests slow-waltzing and doing the polka. Foxtrot may take a little longer because it has more step patterns, but it is much more useful because it allows you to dance to songs in 4/4 time. Not only will this empower those of your guests who are





feeling a bit lost with your more old-fashioned music choices, but it will also equip them to have more fun at other weddings. Everyone appreciates a good dancer!

If a few other couples getting married around the same time also go this route, the young people in your circle of friends will soon catch on - and better yet, any kids attending will grow up with proper dancing as the norm. If we want to re-establish a Catholic culture rather than merely drift more slowly than the rest of the world down the rotten stream of modern culture, we have to put in the effort to swim against the current! Ω





# Love It vs. Hate It

I love country music! It speaks to genuine emotions and old-fashioned values.



I can't stand country music! It all sounds the same, both the words and the lyrics.

← [country music] →

**YOU SAID:** I absolutely hate it, for the most part. Loser music! As they say, if you want to get your dog back, your house back, your wife back, and your truck back, just play country music backwards! - **Mandy, FL**

I used to love country music, but I just don't find much uplifting in it anymore. - **DeAnne, MO**

I call most modern country music Bro-country. It is often as gross and disrespectful to women as rap and they can make it sound however they want as long as they have a twang and a banjo. I like folk and Americana-country for the sound. As long as the lyrics are good and poetic, I generally like it! Some of the mainstream country from the 90's was good, but it was kinda sappy if anything. - **Ally, NE**

I like older country music, and music from

certain singers or groups only - like Patsy Cline, older Toby Keith, Josh Turner (he has a beautiful voice!). Most of the top-40 stuff is just bad. - **Lois, NY**

I like country in moderation - the folksy kind, without too much of a twang. - **Becky, OH**

I don't usually care for country music. I like folk and bluegrass, though. - **Martha, MN**

\*\*\*\*\*

Join the **Love It vs. Hate It** fun  
in the next issue:

## **Contact Lenses**

Are contact lenses the greatest thing in eyecare since sliced bread, or are they more hassle and expense than they're worth?

altarandheartheeditors@gmail.com  
Subject: CONTACT LENSES

←

"Only in country music can you compare an old pickup truck and an old guitar to your wife and turn it into a love song."  
- Dierks Bentley

→





## Emily's Etiquette Essentials

*Dear Mrs. Emily,*

*My fiance and I are planning our wedding and want to keep to a strict budget. How do we tactfully tell people that we're keeping things small without making it sound like we're cheap? We just don't believe in going overboard for one day.*

*Sincerely,  
Conscientious in California*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Conscientious,

Good for you! While everyone expects to expend at least some capital on having a respectable wedding, spending tens of thousands of dollars is definitely not essential. Too many couples focus more on preparing for a spectacular party than on preparing for a long and happy marriage, often with tragic consequences.

First of all, don't worry too much about what people think - not having to explain small weddings is one thing we can thank COVID for, at least - but there are a few things you can do to make the topic of cost less awkward.

Try to avoid saying various things are "soooo expensive" or that they "don't fit in our budget" or that "we're doing it this way to save money." Putting it in those ways can come



across as a bit miserly, especially if people know that you are comfortably off. Instead, try to phrase things positively: "I love doing flowers, so we're buying them loose and arranging them ourselves." "We shopped around and found this convenient venue." "We want to actually get to talk to everyone at our reception rather than just wave 'hi' and 'bye' to them." "I found the PERFECT dress at this online boutique!" No one needs to know how much you spent on any of it, especially if you have a knack for pulling off the wow factor on a shoestring budget.

If you are severely limiting your guest list, however, keep in mind that the less the uninvited people know about your plans, the better. It stings less to get an announcement about a wedding after the fact than it does to hear everyone gushing about it beforehand - only to then find out that you aren't invited because "we're keeping it small."

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Emily



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