

**Editorial Note:**

**Warning:** THIS EPISODE OF THE REV. KNOW IT ALL IS EXTREMELY OFFENSIVE. IT IS NOT ABOUT YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW. PLEASE READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE. THE REV. KNOW IT ALL IS NOT OPPOSED TO ALL WEDDING CELEBRATIONS. HE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT YOUR WEDDING WHICH WAS A TRIUMPH OF PERSONAL SANCTITY AND GOOD TASTE. HE IS PROBABLY JUST HAVING A BAD DAY.

Dear Rev. Know-It-All,

I visited your church once and am thinking about having my wedding there. How long is your main aisle?

Mary O'Burne

Dear Mary,

I am often asked that question, and never quite understand it. Are brides curious about the length of the aisle because they think a longer aisle may give them a few more minutes to back out of the whole thing? Or, as I suspect, does a long aisle prolong the glorious promenade of which a young girl dreams as she thumbs through bridal magazine as she contemplates her special day, when all eyes focus on her as she approaches her enchanted prince and all the world thinks she's gorgeous and knows that she has bagged her man just as surely as a Wisconsin bricklayer bags a deer and ties it onto the roof of his pick up truck? I have certainly seen a few grooms who look like a frightened deer caught in the headlights of an oncoming truck.

Why is it that weddings cause people to spend so much time, energy and money? And more money. The average American wedding costs almost \$29,000, according to "The Wedding Report", a market research publication. \$29,000!" Oh, by the by, the usual donation to the church is about \$200.00. That \$200 goes to the church, not to the priest. The usual gift to the priest is a hearty handclasp. The usual cost of the photographer is \$2,000.00. All this tells me that the photographs are ten times more important than the grace of the sacrament, in most peoples' estimation. The usual fee for the DJ is \$1,500.00. I am consoled by this. It means that painful, occasionally obscene music loud enough to cause brain damage is only seven-and-one-half times more important than the grace of the sacrament.

You must be thinking why is this guy so down on weddings? I am down on some weddings because I am very "up" on the sacrament of matrimony and really in favor of marriage. That's why the modern method of marrying and the wedding industry make me crazy. They militate against marriage. Here is the heart of my

complaint. **IT IS STUPID TO SPEND MORE TIME AND MONEY PREPARING FOR THE WEDDING THAN YOU DO PREPARING FOR THE MARRIAGE!!!** I

have known people who are still paying the credit card bills generated by the wedding years after the marriage is over.

**The Modern Method of Marriage, a Reprise.** The following is taken from my own experiences and things people have told me (outside of confession, you'll be glad to know.) Here goes:

A young man and a young woman meet and have a few dates. They go for a weekend at a bed and breakfast where they bed one another, and then have breakfast. If he isn't too much of a jerk and she isn't too picky, they are then an item. She goes to the doctor gets a prescription and goes on to a more permanent form of birth control. At some time during this stage, the uncomfortable meeting with the parents happens. Everyone is polite and "supportive." Secretly the father of the young woman who knows exactly what's going on, contemplates buying a gun and the mother of the young man begins gossiping with whomever will listen about how her little boy could do better. After a while, if things hold up, they begin to have the conversation about taking their relationship to the "next level" by which they mean shacking up, as we used to call it. Now, I think it's called moving in together.

Mom and Dad buy housewarming gifts in an attempt to, once again, be supportive. They don't want their little dears to hate them and besides, it's what everyone is doing these days, so it can't be wrong. They have vague thoughts about getting married at that point and mom explains to grandma and to friends at church that they are just doing it to save money for the wedding. At this stage an engagement ring may appear. At some point, when they think about getting the house and the kids, because that's what you do, they decide to have the wedding. They rent the hall and then go see the priest. He tells them there are four other weddings that day and they respond, "but we've rented the hall already." Someone suggests a garden wedding if the church is occupied. The priest says we can't do garden weddings. (More on this later.) The young couple begins to complain about how narrow-minded the Church is with all these rules and regulations. They eventually pick a date. Then the bottom drops out. It seems the groom is not Catholic. He was baptized in the First Reformed Church of the Druids, though he never practiced. This means there must be a dispensation for the marriage, another irritating Catholic invention, and the wedding date cannot be confirmed until the dispensation is received. The bride goes back to her doctor, this time for a prescription for valium. Her mother joins her on this visit. Finally the dispensation is granted, The groom's druid will do one of the readings at the wedding, the loans are taken out, the banns are published. Then there is the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner. The best man comes to the rehearsal drunk out of his mind, the groom only slightly tipsy. The bride is furious at everyone for some reason known to her alone. Probably because the groom is far more interested in drinking and watching the football game on his hand held

computer thing than he is in gazing lovingly into her eyes in anticipation of the great day. In fact they haven't been, well... friendly in weeks. It is, after all, football season.

The special day comes, the best man is still drunk, the groom is hung over, no one knew about that interesting tattoo that the maid of honor had way low on her back, now revealed by the plunging back of her dress that is held up only by wishful thinking. Grandma, upon reading the logo of the maid of honor's tattoo, has fainted. Somewhere in all this the vows are exchanged, and quite a few of the wedding party receive their first Holy Communion that day, however one of the ushers puts the host in his suit pocket not having a clue what it is. (This actually has happened to me twice.) The pictures have been taken. The noise level in the church reaches that of an English soccer match after the riot has broken out. The children are jumping off the altar and the priest is scowling at everyone. Now on to the pictures in the forest preserve, a "must" at every wedding. There the wedding party is attacked by mosquitoes, one of the children falls into the lagoon and the bride is having a hard time smiling for the photos. The best man passes out. On to the reception.

The bride loses it because the shade of fuchsia in the floral center pieces clashes with the shade of fuchsia in the wedding party's outfit. The groom adjourns to the bar where the game is on the television. The wedding dinner is served as music is played at a mind numbing volume. Grandma is better now. She has turned off her hearing aid. The priest is seated with the pious relatives in plaid suit coats and leaves shortly after the grace before meals. The best man makes the toast which drones on about how he loves the groom and one begins to wonder. The college roommate/maid of honor does the same for the bride, going on for fifteen minutes about how she knew the bride would find eternal marital bliss the moment she met her in the third grade and they have been like sisters ever since. Then at some point, there is a video presentation of embarrassing photos not unlike the ones that are now shown at wakes. The bar opens up again. The music reaches levels that cause blood to drip from some peoples' nose and ears. The joyous event ends with the bride and groom being the last to leave the hall. They are slow to go up to the room they have rented in the hotel because nothing new or beautiful awaits them there. The groom promptly falls asleep, being heavily sedated already, and, as he snores away, with his shoes still on, our blushing bride, having shed her dress of virginal white, thinks back on this day, her special day, the most important day in her life, the day she has dreamt of since she was a little girl. They will stay an extra day at the hotel, but cannot afford the time or money to go on a honeymoon because on Monday they will both be back at work in order to pay off the colossal bill that their special day has incurred. For some reason, the bride is depressed. Perhaps she is realizing that the high point of her life is now past and the rest of it will be spent with the lump that is now snoring beside her with whom she has never really had a serious conversation, except about the proper shade of fuchsia for the floral

centerpieces. So it is that we celebrate the marriage of Christ and His Church in these enlightened and tolerant times.

Remember, none of these things happened at your wedding, thank God and don't think from reading this that I am down on marriage or even weddings. I love a wedding celebration when there is something to celebrate. Also, it is never too late to begin again by taking Christ and His gospel seriously.

**PLEASE SPEND MORE TIME AND MONEY PREPARING FOR THE MARRIAGE THAN YOU DO PREPARING FOR THE WEDDING.**

Yours,

Rev. Know-It-All

**P.S. Garden weddings:** They look good in all the bridal magazines but they are just opportunities to feed biting insects and suffer from sunburn. It is however amusing to watch the bridesmaids sinking in the mud as they try, after a few margaritas to maneuver the newly laid sod in spiked heels. The bride is generally exhausted from not having slept for three weeks as she worries about the weather reports which are promising a 50 percent chance of typhoons and earthquakes that day. And destination weddings. Don't get me started on Destination Weddings! You want to be married with just your closest friends on a beach in Maui. That means that Grandma can't go because she hasn't flown since the Hindenburg Disaster, and is thinking of cutting you out of the will, and all the friends and relatives who aren't with you on the beach in Maui realize they aren't very close to you after all. And I haven't a clue how long the aisle is here at St. Dymphna's