

## **Traveling Companion: You do it every day**

Fr. Michael Tracey

Flipping through the TV channels the other night, I came across a program called “Bridezilla.” Maybe, because it was in the middle of the wedding season, I stopped and watched the antics of one Bridezilla as she prepared for her wedding rehearsal and the wedding itself. She was a human form of Godzilla as she barked out commands to everyone who was in her bridal party as well as the groomsmen. As the charade went on, there were angry outbursts from the attendants. The groom was absent from the picture. Yet, I wondered about his sanity in the midst of such a tirade.

I thought about a wedding rehearsal I had just completed and it was childlike compared to the devilish behavior of the bride on the small screen.

Usually, at wedding rehearsal, I invite the wedding party around the altar; remind them of where they are, the sacredness of the occasion, the need for respect and responsibility. Then I outline the wedding ceremony for them. Seeing that the wedding included a Mass and many, including the groom were not Catholic, I outlined the church’s understanding of Communion. Finally, I remind them that what happens around the altar is what really matters; everything else is peripheral to the occasion. Once I have finished, I usually exit and allow the wedding coordinator to take over.

Something prompted me to go down and chat with some of the other guests at the rehearsal. I noticed one family – a husband, wife and two teenage daughters. I introduced myself and we started to chat.

Following some pleasantries, the husband indicated that his family were members of the First Baptist Church in a city about a hundred miles away. Inevitably, the conversation led to a discussion on the Eucharist. He asked how often we celebrated the Eucharist and when I told him, “daily,” he was surprised and said, “You do it every day.” I said that in his church, one usually went to church on Sundays and Wednesday, but in our church, we have the option of availing of the Eucharist daily.

The eldest daughter then asked, “Don’t you believe that the wafer you receive in Communion is just symbolic of Christ, like we do?” Then I found an opportunity to share some insights into the Eucharist as taught, believed and understood by the Catholic Church.

Following my explanation, she still didn’t comprehend and stated, “So, you don’t believe that Communion is just symbolic of Christ?” I explained some more and reiterated how, in the Catholic Church, Communion is reserved for Catholics who are in good standing.” I then showed her the inside cover of the missalette where it states the “Guidelines for the reception of Communion.” Seeing her confusion, her father turned to her and said, “He has already explained Communion to you as the Catholic Church believes it!”

We celebrated the wedding the next day. Again, the Baptist family were present. The father caught up with me afterwards and reminded me that the wedding ceremony was very meaningful and special to him.

My thoughts flashed back to the “Bridezilla” episode. I remembered another segment of the show. Finally, the bride donned her wedding dress, complete with a twenty-four foot train carried by a group of young bridesmaids. All of a sudden, she needed to take a bathroom break. I chuckled as she marched into the bathroom with her train held high by the young bridesmaids.

A priest appears on the scene. She is about to bark out instructions to him. Immediately, he lets her know who is in charge of the wedding ceremony, reminding her, “I am in charge now.” It stuns her tongue for a moment. Moments later, she is the Bridezilla from hell as she informs everyone. “This is my day. I have dreamed about this since I was a little girl and no one is going to destroy it for me.”

In the meantime, I hope and pray I don’t have to deal with any “Bridezilla,” during this year’s long wedding season.