

## **Traveling Companion - My Bridal Store**

Fr. Michael Tracey

Since the hurricane, I never know what kind of “care” package I may receive in the mail. Of late, I have received some interesting packages from complete strangers. I have received a supply of small flashlight; a collection of pot scrubbers and other cleaning supplies, purchased by a stranger on eBay. I have received a box of altar server robes – the red and white combination. I have received T-shirts, miniature toys and even a supply of pantyhose. Obviously, the sender of the pantyhose must think I had a wife.

I got my most unusual “care” package the other day. It was sent “Priority Mail” through the Post Office. The box was insured and came from Lisle, Illinois. Inside the box, I found a plain white envelope with my name written on it. When I looked into the box, I couldn’t believe my eyes because I was to realize that this box contained the most unusual gift I ever received.

I opened the envelope and it read, “Dear Father Tracey: your recent visit to our church, left our family very concerned for all the needs still affecting the families in your community. Our financial contributions left us wishing to do more for your parish. Having had a recent family wedding, and the bride’s dress returning from the cleaners, we only had thoughts of storing it on some closet shelf. When we thought of the joy of seeing a loved one on her wedding day, a closet shelf did not appear to be the best answer. That’s when we decided to send the entire Bridal items to you to be used by anyone in need. For such a special day, a dress like this should be used again. The size of the dress is on the small size, either a 6 or size 8. we are hoping this will make someone happy for this special event. Sincerely.” They signed their name and concluded the note.

Armed with my new bridal store supplies, I asked the people in church if they know of anyone getting married in the near future. I was met with silent stares and non communication. Obviously, they had no idea what I was talking about. I restated my question: “Do you know any young lady who plans on getting married in the near future and who will fit into a size 6 or 8 wedding dress?” Still, I was met with bewilderment. I’m sure some people wondered if I had taken on another career to supplement my usual income.

Following Mass, some people came to let me know that it was a wonderful gesture that the couple from Illinois did in sending the wedding dress to be used by someone else. They mentioned that it was a very practical gesture; that, instead of putting the wedding dress away in a closet, they wanted some bride who may have been affected by Hurricane Katrina, to avail of the gift of a wedding dress for her special occasion.

Obviously, I have not received any offers from charming brides to avail of the special offer. After all, how many brides can say they got married in a “borrowed” or “used” wedding dress? Surely, there are some Katrina brides-to-be who might enjoy a special gift from a special family who really care.

If you know of anyone who intends on getting married in the near future and who would “fit” the wedding dress; please email me and let me know. After all, I don’t want to have to continue to explain to people why there is a wedding dress among my regular wardrobe.