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Pure Sex, Pure Love Box, Wine and Love Letter

By Dr. Christine B. Whelan

In the living room of my next-door neighbors' house is a wooden crate. It's nothing fancy, just pieces of plywood nailed together, but Kim and Matt keep the box in a place of honor by the fireplace as a constant reminder of their commitment to each other.

When Kim and Matt took their vows of marriage four years ago, they incorporated a new twist into their celebration: It's called the box, wine and love-letter ceremony, and I wanted to share this beautiful idea with Busted Halo® readers.

Kim and Matt found a strong wooden box to hold two bottles of wine and two wine glasses. Each of them wrote a love-letter to the other, expressing their feelings, why and how they fell in love and their hopes for the future. They kept these letters secret and they sealed them in the box with the two bottles of wine and two glasses.

During their wedding ceremony, the presider told the couple that they could open the box on their 25th anniversary, in celebration of their love. Or, if the pair should ever find their marriage in serious trouble, the wine and love letters would be there to help. Before making any rash choices or decisions to separate, Matt and Kim have promised to open the box, drink the wine together and read the letter that they wrote to each other in preparation for their nuptials, as a reminder of their love.

Nailed Shut

Then, after Matt and Kim took their vows, they nailed the crate shut to symbolize their bonds.

A popular American tradition is to freeze the top of the wedding cake to eat on the couple's first anniversary. This wine-box ceremony kicks it up a notch.

I'm a traditionalist when it comes to weddings. My husband Peter and I chose the tried-and-true nuptial Mass when we took our vows. But this idea really hit a chord with me. First, it's a nice touch on the wedding day. Second, it's a visual symbol of your commitment and marriage bonds in your house, every day. Third, it's a life-preserver on the sometimes-rough river of relationships.

In Catholic wedding ceremonies, there really isn't a place for nailing wine crates shut, but this could happen at some other point in the wedding weekend, says Paulist Fr. Dave Dwyer, and be mentioned in the wedding Mass. "The rehearsal dinner may be a great time for something like the wine box ceremony," he said. "And if I were the priest working with a couple that told me of the wine-box tradition, I would almost certainly mention it in the homily, making a connection between the religious celebration and the party."

Betrothal Letters

Here's another idea: Catholics who attend pre-Cana weekends or seminars like Engaged Encounter write betrothal letters to each other, love letters that express hopes and dreams, that tell your spouse-to-be why you love them, and share them on the spot. Keep those letters in a safe place, because those can also be a buoy for tough times in the relationship.

If you haven't done something like this yet, consider writing love letters now, to save and share on an upcoming anniversary. It's a wonderful way to reaffirm our commitments.

Finally, even if you don't have something as big as a wine-crate to symbolize your love, any small token or symbol, prominently displayed in your home, can serve as a reminder never to take our blessings for granted. We do that when we hang a cross or a religious painting on the wall, but we can also do that with a trinket that is special to us personally, as a couple.

Maybe it's a stone from the beach where you first kissed. Maybe it's a candle you used on your marriage preparation retreat. Whatever it is, place it somewhere where you'll see it often.

Love isn't something that just happens on its own. Little ceremonies like these can provide the boost we need to keep our energies focused on each other.