

## Introduction



Following the recent November 2011 revision to the Roman Missal, the Holy See (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments) and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) have spent much time in focusing efforts in revising the remaining rituals for the sacraments (i.e., Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony, etc.), which naturally flow from the Eucharist—the source and summit of our faith.

On June 3, 2016 I had the pleasure of attending a clergy workshop, hosted by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) in Denver, on the revised rite for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony (which will be implemented on December 30, 2016 within the U.S.).

While a standard part of many marriages of couples of Mexican nationality in the U.S. for years, one portion of the revised rite, now includes for all, the optional use of the *lazo and arras*—which have been longstanding symbols of unity and financial responsibility to each other within the Hispanic (Mexican) culture. The origin and significance of these symbols stretches back centuries in the Roman Catholic Church and its faith-based traditional practices in Mexico.

### Lazo – Lasso

A lazo (lasso) is generally a large rosary, ribbon or decorated cord that is symbolically draped (by the godparents or parents) around the necks or shoulders of the bride and the groom. It is placed in a horizontal figure 8 (the symbol of: infinity), while they are kneeling at the altar (or in place on kneelers), to affirm their union and their commitment (united in the matrimonial bond by God Himself in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony) to always live together side-by-side. The lazo is associated with and placed on the couple before the wedding's Prayer of the Faithful (intercessory prayers) (it takes place during the ceremony, after the bride and groom have exchanged their vows) and is removed before the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. Ultimately, it visually symbolizes our prayers to Almighty God that He unify the couple for all eternity.

At the end of the ceremony, the lasso is then typically given to the Bride as a keepsake.

### Arras - Thirteen gold coins

The groom gives the bride thirteen gold coins blessed by the priest. The 13 coins represent Jesus Christ and his 12 Apostles. The Arras are given to the bride as a public symbol of the unquestionable devotion the groom has for his bride, and his promise to support, care, and provide for the present and future financial needs of her and their future children and home.

Generally, he presents them in an ornate silver or gold box, or on a silver or gold gift tray.

By accepting these Arras, the bride publicly receives and pronounces her unconditional trust and confidence in her groom to fulfill his promise. These coins traditionally become a part of their family as a heirloom.