Unity Candles are a Wonderful Wedding Tradition by Thomasgalvin

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If youâ€™ve been to a Christian wedding ceremony lately, youâ€™ve probably witnessed the popular unity candle lighting tradition â€“ that moment in the ceremony when the bride and groom take their individual taper candles and light the large column in the middle, signifying the joining of two as one. Itâ€™s a touching moment, often accompanied by an equally as touching vocal solo that proclaims the sanctity and joy of marriage.

Unity candles, as wedding traditions go, are a fairly modern addition to the wedding ceremony. While Wedding Candles have long decorated church sanctuaries during a marriage ceremony, unity candles in particular seem to date back only to the 1960s or 1970s. As a matter of fact, thereâ€™s a couple in Illinois that takes credit for having the first unity candle ceremony at their wedding celebration, but thereâ€™s really no way to verify the validity of that claim.

Pastors, however, will tell you that the popularity of these wedding candles and the ceremony that goes with them soared after one particular momentous television wedding â€“ the marriage of Luke and Laura on â€œGeneral Hospitalâ€• in 1981. The ritual of lighting the unity candle was a big deal for the TV couple and many â€œregularâ€• couples who got married that year and shortly thereafter decided to follow in their footsteps, including the candles in their celebration.

Today, itâ€™s not a stretch to call unity candle rituals a tradition. Now about 40 years old, their lighting has become an important part of the ceremony in many Christian denominations, though some pastors or denominations discourage their use for a variety of reasons. Hence, any couple planning on including it in their ceremony should first check with their officiant to see if it is allowed.

If so, then itâ€™s time to shop for a candle set. Unity Candles sets no longer consist of just plain white candles as they did in the beginning. These days, you can purchase them in white or ivory and sometimes in other pastel colors. In addition, most are personalized and include the name of the bride and groom, the date of the wedding, and often a short Scripture verse or line from a poem or some other prose/verse. Some include lovely silver-toned medallions with an inscription, tied to the candle. These can be removed for safekeeping or for other uses.

You might even find an oil burning candle that includes an engraved glass vessel that holds the oil and wick. Candles can also be purchased with a stand that supports the larger center candle and the two tapers. They may also be purchased individually. In that case, the couple can choose to use heirloom candle sticks or other candle holders that have special meaning to them.

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