



**THE SACRAMENT
OF MARRIAGE
IN
ST. PIUS V
CATHOLIC
COMMUNITY**

Rev. 2/22/16

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE?

The Catholic Community believes that Christian marriage is the union of a baptized man and woman who freely enter into a covenant of love with each other in Christ. Marriage is a covenant relationship (*I will love you unconditionally*), not just a contractual relationship (*I will love you if you love me and under certain conditions*).

Married persons live their sacraments by the way they care for one another, love one another and are enthusiastic for one another as husband and wife. The couple becomes a living sign (a sacrament) in their daily love for each other, their children and the members of the community. As they work their way through marital and family crises and struggles, a couple witnesses to the power of the Holy Spirit at work in all our lives.

The requirements for entering into Christian marriage are twofold. In order to live out the ideal of Christian marriage, a married couple must have the ability to give and receive love and to sustain an intimate relationship. To do this they should each have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and His Body, the Church. The Christian purposes of marriage are also two-fold: the giving and receiving of love and the procreation and education of children.

Preparation for marriage involves a process of discernment, which is meant to be an affirming experience as you become more aware of your readiness to enter Christian married life. This process is meant to help you assess your personal faith and your relational readiness, not to make those judgments for or about you.

PRELIMINARY PLANNING

At least six (6) months before the tentative marriage date, couples should contact the parish office (713473-9484) to speak with a priest or deacon and discuss marriage preparation. This will allow sufficient time for preparation, not only for the wedding celebration, which will last a short time, but also for the marriage, which will last a lifetime. Couples are asked to make only tentative wedding arrangements before attending the first marriage preparation session. The priest and the couple together have the responsibility to determine the couple's readiness to receive the sacrament of matrimony. A firm wedding date may not be set until this assessment process has been completed.

Be sure to allow extra time if either of you has had a previous marriage.

If you want another priest or deacon to witness the marriage (for instance, a campus minister or relative), the pastor can give him permission for that person to also coordinate your marriage preparation.

To highlight the sacredness of the celebration, and to underscore the relationship between your marriage and the Christian community, the Catholic Church stipulates that Catholic weddings take place in Catholic churches. In this archdiocese, permission will not

be given for outdoor weddings or unusual locations. Normally, the wedding will be celebrated in the parish where either of the Catholic parties resides. The pastor may give permission for it to be celebrated in another Catholic church or chapel. If you are marrying a non-Catholic Christian or non-baptized person, you may request permission to have the wedding take place elsewhere (e.g., in another Christian church or synagogue or in another suitable place).

Any marriage involving a Catholic is subject to Church norms known as "canon law." Catholics are obliged to marry in the Catholic Church, following the marriage rite of the Catholic Church. Their exchange of vows must be witnessed by either a priest or deacon and two other witnesses. A Catholic can receive permission to marry a non-Catholic and they may be married in the church of the non-Catholic party, but if their exchange of vows will be witnessed by a minister of that denomination, the Catholic must seek a written dispensation from the local Catholic Bishop. Any priest or deacon can assist in this matter.

WEDDING PREPARATIONS

Baptismal Certificates—Couples must obtain a current copy (dated within 6 months of the wedding date) of the baptismal certificate of each party (bride and/or groom) from the church of baptism. If either the bride or groom is Christian, but not Catholic, he/she should provide evidence of baptism. Some non-Catholic churches do not provide baptismal certificates or keep baptismal records. In such a case, a letter from someone who witnessed the baptism (usually a parent) will suffice. Similar arrangements can be made in the (rare) case of a Catholic who cannot obtain a current baptismal certificate. The parish office can help in obtaining baptismal certificates when difficulties arise.

Marriage License—A Civil Marriage License must be brought to the wedding rehearsal or delivered to the parish office prior to the rehearsal. Contact the Harris County Clerk's Office or the County Court House in Pasadena (713-274-6230). A discount is available upon presenting a marriage preparation certificate from the parish or diocese. Note that the license is not valid for the first 72 hours and becomes invalid if the marriage does not occur within 90 days.

Dates and Times—Couples are not to make firm commitments regarding a wedding date until after they have met with the priest or deacon and confirmed it with him. Weddings are permitted throughout the church year, but are discouraged during Lent. Ordinarily, weddings are celebrated on Saturdays, either at 10:00 am, 12:00 pm or 2:00 pm. It is also possible to choose another day of the week as long as the time does not interfere with any other scheduled church services.

Formation —In order to help couples prepare for the celebration of a lifelong marriage commitment, the Catholic Church requires all engaged couples to participate in a process of instruction and formation. Sessions with the priest, married couples and other engaged couples are spent discussing marriage expectations and the Christian ideals of marriage. The particular form of instruction and formation is selected at the first marriage preparation session.

Planning the Wedding Liturgy—During the course of preparation for marriage, couples will have an opportunity to plan their wedding liturgy. They will work closely with the priest or deacon, with the Director of Music, and the Wedding Coordinator who will advise them of the parish liturgical guidelines for selecting the music, Scripture readings, prayers, blessings and vows. Contact the Director of Music for an appointment at least 3 months before the wedding.

Rehearsal—Arrangements and scheduling of the rehearsal are made through the Coordinators of Weddings & Rehearsals at least thirty days before the wedding ceremony. You may hire an outside wedding coordinator, but please remember that the parish coordinator has full authority over all wedding rehearsals and procedures at St. Pius V.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Mixed Religion Marriages...To enter into a marriage with a non-Catholic, a Catholic must receive either Permission or Dispensation from the Bishop. The Catholic party promises to keep living his/her Catholic faith and share that faith with the children to the best of his/her ability. The non-Catholic party makes no promise but must acknowledge the obligation of the Catholic party.
2. Previous Marriages... Previous marriages must be mentioned when the couple first contacts the church for marriage preparation. If either party (Catholic or non-Catholic) has been previously married in any way, an annulment may be necessary. (An annulment is a declaration that a sacramental marriage never existed.) No marriage can take place until a Decree of Nullity (Annulment) has been granted.
3. Pregnancy, of itself, will not be considered sufficient reason to enter marriage or to shorten the preparation process. The couple may be asked to delay marriage until after the birth of the child.
4. Cohabitation...The Church has always taught that sexual intercourse outside of marriage is contrary to the divine law. Those who are living together will need to enter into specific discussion with the priest/deacon.

The Rite for the Celebration of Marriage

The Church provides three different rites for marriage:

- a. sacramental rite during the Eucharist, which is the usual (but not mandatory) form when both parties are Catholic; this celebration may take place at a special time (“Nuptial Mass”) or be celebrated within the parish’s Sunday Eucharist.
- b. a sacramental rite outside Eucharist, which is the usual (but not mandatory) form when one party is baptized, but not Catholic;
- c. a non-sacramental rite between a Catholic and an unbaptized person.

AN OUTLINE OF THE WEDDING LITURGY

The Entrance Procession may include the liturgical ministers and presider, as well as the bride and groom, family members, and attendants. Although there are many ways to plan it —a liturgical procession (as at a Sunday mass) followed by procession of the wedding party; attendants entering as couples rather than the bridesmaids alone; bride and groom accompanied by all parents or relatives in the procession; or the bride escorted by her father — please consider the following

The bride and groom enter marriage as equal and complementary partners. The entrance procession, as described in the Rite of Marriage, symbolizes the equality and complementarity of the bride and groom. Following the priest or deacon and the other members of the wedding party, the bride and groom enter, escorted by their parents. Rather than suggesting that the bride is being "given away" by her father, the church's approach to the procession also manifests and celebrates the emergence of a new family from two existing families. The father of the bride is not left out; he is simply joined in his happy role by the bride's mother and the groom's parents, all of whom support their son or daughter on the journey to marriage.

The Liturgy of the Word follows the format as at any mass. The readings may be selected from the many options given in the lectionary, or may be other appropriate Scriptures. Non-scriptural readings are not used. The psalm is preferably sung, as is the gospel acclamation. The general intercessions address the needs of the world and the universal Church as well as the needs of the couple.

The Marriage is celebrated according the Rite of the Roman Catholic Church immediately following the homily. No significant change, additions, or deletions are permitted. (The Vows must be pronounced according to the rite. Original compositions are not permitted, although there is an option for the couple to offer a prayer of their own composition upon completion of the rite.)

At a Nuptial Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated as it would be at Sunday Mass (with the Nuptial Blessing following the Lord's Prayer).

Within the rite outside of Mass, the Liturgy of Eucharist is omitted and the liturgy continues with intercessions and the Lord's Prayer.

In both cases, the rite concludes with a simple blessing upon all present, dismissal, and a recessional.

PREPARING THE LITURGY

The wedding liturgy, like all other sacramental celebrations, is by its very nature communal—a celebration of the whole Church. While the wedding touches the couple, their family and friends in a particularly intimate way, it nevertheless pertains to the local parish and to the larger church as well. The couple is not simply renting the church building for an hour. They are expressing their faith and undertaking a grace-filled commitment in the midst of a local church community and the parish is celebrating God's covenant with the church as expressed in this couple's marriage.

Catholic weddings follow the general norms for liturgical celebrations, but there are a number of options available for you to choose from that will enable you to enrich the celebration with expressions of your own faith. The priest or deacon will assist you in understanding the nature of the liturgy, and the various options and choices available regarding music, readings, and the ritual. Reflecting prayerfully on these together can be an important part of your spiritual preparation for the sacrament.

The wedding liturgy should be planned to encourage the participation of the assembly through song and prayer. It should express both your faith and commitment and that of the gathered community. It provides an opportunity for the community to pray for you, and to promise you their support in your married life.

The decision to enter into marriage is made mutually by the man and woman, which has implications both for the wedding liturgy and its preparations. Just as both partners participate in marriage preparation sessions, so both partners work with the parish staff to prepare the wedding liturgy. This is not just "her special day," but a special day for the couple, their families, and the church. Family members and friends can offer much assistance to couples, but they cannot pre-empt the primary role of the couple working together.

MINISTRIES OF THE LITURGY

There are a variety of ministries in each liturgical celebration. Some roles can only be filled by a Roman Catholic (for example, an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion); other

ministries, like that of reader, can be served by qualified persons of other faith traditions. When choosing lectors and communion ministers, look first to parishioners who are going to be at the wedding and who are trained in these ministries. Next, look through your guest list for people who serve in these ministries at their home parish. Finally, identify family members and friends whose faith and talents would qualify them for these roles at the wedding. Avoid the temptation to choose people for these ministries simply as a way to honor particular family members or friends.

The minister of the sacrament of marriage is the couple. The priest or deacon is a witness. A priest or deacon presides at the wedding liturgy but the couple serves as the minister of the sacrament of marriage. Husband and wife marry each other; they are not married by the presiding priest or deacon, nor does the priest or deacon "pronounce them man and wife." The couple exercises their ministry by preparing the wedding liturgy with the presiding priest or deacon, the parish music director, and other pastoral ministers. Within the wedding liturgy, they exercise their ministry when they exchange vows and rings and respond to the questions posed by the priest or deacon concerning their intentions.

The fundamental ministry at a wedding, as at any Catholic liturgy, is that of the entire assembly of people who gather to celebrate. This assembly of people is one of the expressions of Christ's presence in the liturgy.

HOSPITALITY IS PART OF THE MINISTRY OF MARRIED COUPLES.

We might suggest that you make sure everyone is greeted warmly at the door. Ministers of hospitality could include male and female members of the wedding party. If the couple and their parents greet arriving guests at the doors of the church, then members of the wedding party could distribute the worship aid and help to seat people near others in the front of the church. You might seat everyone close together toward the front of the church and not divide the assembly into "bride's side" and "groom's side". You could provide a simple worship booklet with the music to be sung and an order of service for those who may be unfamiliar with the Catholic wedding liturgy. Have music as people gather.

Choose the language for celebration with consideration for the assembly. The parish clergy at St. Pius V can celebrate Marriages in English, Spanish, or in a Bi-Lingual form. In the event that most of the assembly understands one language, but there a few who don't, consider praying some of the simple prayers of the Mass (the Sign of the Cross, for example) in the language of the few, to make them welcome.

CUSTOMS AND CREATIVITY

Some things are essential to a Catholic wedding liturgy; others are not, e.g., the practice whereby the bride and groom do not see each other before the procession. Other social

customs, such as an entrance procession which excludes the groom and all parents but the bride's father, do not well reflect what the Rite of Marriage presents for a Catholic wedding,

The wedding liturgy is not the only place for religious expression and prayer. Other opportunities exist for couples to express and celebrate their faith concerning marriage. Some customs which are not part of the church's Rite of Marriage could add a religious dimension to other parts of the marriage celebration. For example, the wedding rehearsal could begin with a prayer and the placing of flowers before the statue of Mary. The lighting of a "unity candle" could be part of a blessing or prayer before the meal at the reception.

The Rite of Marriage provides so many options and allows for so many adaptations that there is great scope for creativity in its planning. With care and the help of the priest and parish staff, you can make your wedding as unique or as traditional as could be desired.

MARRIAGE AT ST. PIUS V CATHOLIC CHURCH

A year to six months prior to the anticipated date of the weddings, call the Parish Office to arrange a meeting with a priest or deacon. Both of the engaged need to be present for this meeting. The best time for a meeting is usually during the week, during the day or in the evening. Weekends are busy times for our clergy and they can meet with couples on weekends only in exceptional circumstances.

At the that meeting the priest or the deacon will review with you the requirements for the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church and explain the process of preparation. He can also answer any questions that you might have regarding your celebration of Marriage.

You may call the office at any time to see if a date and time for the Celebration of Marriage is available, but no date can be set until after the first meeting with clergy. We request that you make a deposit of \$100 to reserve a date. This deposit may be brought or sent to the Parish Office any time in the 30 days after the first meeting. The deposit is non-refundable. However, changes to the date and/or time may be made at any time *subject to availability* and this deposit will be counted as part of your donation.

The requested donation for Weddings in the main church at St. Pius, with or without a Nuptial Mass, is \$800.00 for . We request a smaller donation from parishioners (see * below). This donation is to defray the costs of providing preparation, to provide a stipend for the priest or deacon who will be witnessing your marriage, and in support of the Parish and its varied ministries. The engaged couple is responsible for arranging directly for music and flowers (if desired). Musicians and Cantors set their own fees and these are usually in the range of \$125.00-\$200.00.

The requested donation for chapel weddings is \$350.00. The chapel can accommodate, at most, 30 guests and so is best suited to smaller and simpler ceremonies.

❖ *Parishioners, by the definition of the Church, are all those who live within the territory of a parish and those who live beyond that territory but have chosen to belong to this community by registering themselves in the parish. Recognizing the contributions of faithful parishioners over many years, we request that parishioners make a donation of **\$600.00** for a church wedding and **\$250.00** for a chapel wedding. The same applies to the children of these parishioners.*

IMPORTANT

THERE IS NEVER A CHARGE FOR ANY OF THE SACRAMENTS.

WHEN BUDGETING FOR YOUR WEDDING WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO THINK FIRST OF GOD AND THE CHURCH, BEFORE THE CATERERS AND THE LIMOUSINE. HOWEVER, GOD WILL NOT ALLOW MONEY TO COME BETWEEN YOU AND HIS LOVE FOR YOU IN THE SACRAMENTS.

IF IT WOULD CAUSE UNDUE HARDSHIP TO DONATE ALL THAT IS REQUESTED, ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE FOR A SIMPLER CEREMONY.

FOR EXAMPLE, THERE IS NO DEPOSIT, NO REQUESTED DONATION, NO COST FOR MUSICIANS WHEN MARRIAGE IS CELEBRATED WITHIN THE PARISH'S SUNDAY LITURGY.

WE CAN ALSO HELP WITH FEES WHEN NECESSARY.

IF THIS IS THE CASE FOR YOU, PLEASE DISCUSS IT WITH THE PRIEST OR DEACON AT THE FIRST MEETING.

Marriage Preparation at St. Pius V

St. Pius V provides wedding preparation, upon request, for all of parishioners regardless of the parish in which they will celebrate their Marriage. Non-parishioners who are marrying at St. Pius V should properly complete their preparation in their home parish, but may do so at St. Pius V with the permission of their pastor.

A couple preparing for marriage will normally meet first with the Pastor or his delegate and one, two, or three times thereafter with a priest or deacon. The Archdiocese requires that all couples preparing for marriage complete a Couple's Inventory and some form of extended preparation in addition to meeting with a priest or deacon. Extended preparation at St. Pius V is available in the form of a weekend retreat or under the auspices our Parish Marriage Preparation Program wherein couples meet with a facilitator couple as well as in group.

There is no fee for Sacramental Preparation at St. Pius V, but there are costs associated with some of the required steps and these costs are separate and apart from any donation made for the celebration of Marriage..

- Couple Inventory (Prepare and Enrich)
 - English \$45.00*
 - Spanish: \$35.00*
- Engaged Couples Retreat (if recommended):
 - Archdiocesan (English): \$225.00*
 - Archdiocesan (Spanish): \$150.00*
 - St. Pius V (Spanish only): \$40.00
- Convalidation Retreat (for couples who are civilly married):
 - Archdiocesan (English or Spanish): \$75.00*
 - St. Pius V (Spanish only): \$40.00

**Note: These fees are set and collected by the Archdiocese or Prepare and Enrich, Inc. and are subject to changes.*

MUSIC FOR MARRIAGE LITURGIES AT ST. PIUS V

As you begin plans for your liturgy, keep in mind that the ceremony is both a personal and communal celebration. As with all forms of the liturgy, music can enhance the jubilant and prayerful aspects of this happy celebration. Music for the wedding should reflect and communicate, above all, the mystery of God's love in Jesus, especially as it pertains to the couple joined together in marriage.

Music with scriptural or other sacred texts is appropriate for songs. Secular love songs and ballads that have personal meaning to the couple are best played or sung at the reception. The Director of Music can assist you in choosing the music for your wedding. He/she can provide you with a brief outline of the liturgical celebration and a list of suggested and appropriate musical selections.

You should contact the Director of Music at least three (3) months in advance of your wedding to schedule a meeting to select the music for your Marriage ceremony. Please call the parish office to arrange this. Do not assume someone will be there on your special day if you have not made plans with the Director of Music and Liturgy.

All liturgies include the singing of the Psalm and the Gospel Acclamation. A Nuptial Mass (in which the Marriage Ceremony is part of the celebration of the Mass (which includes the Eucharist) also involves singing. The parts of the Mass such as the Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen, and Lamb of God are sung. Musical instruments (e.g., flute, trumpet, harp, strings, brass) can also add a festive tone to the celebration.

The Director of Music can help you find both instrumentalists and singers from within the parish, although you are responsible for obtaining their services. You are free to invite instrumentalists and singers from other parishes to assist at your wedding. If you have a qualified family member or friend that you would like to include at your marriage celebration, you can discuss this matter with the Director of Music. However, all musicians (instrumental and vocal), no matter how qualified, must have the approval of the Director of Music. You must obtain that approval before inviting them and they will be required to contact the Director of Music at least two weeks prior to the date of the wedding. All guest musicians should have some experience playing in a church setting. Mariachis are allowed (subject to approval).

Only organists who are associated with the parish (and approved by the Director of Music) are allowed to play the organ. Guest musicians may not play the organ.

MUSIC FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

If your marriage will be celebrated during Mass, you will need to consider music for the following:

- The Introductory Rites begin with a procession, which may be accompanied by a congregational hymn or instrumental music. If there is no singing during the procession, a hymn may be sung immediately after the procession.
- During the Liturgy of the Word, the cantor leads the congregation in singing the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel Acclamation.
- The Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated almost exactly the same as at Sunday Mass. There will be a song or instrumental music during the preparation of the altar and gifts. The whole assembly should join in singing the acclamations of the Eucharistic Prayer and the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God). If possible, all should be invited to join in singing during or after Communion, but instrumental music or another song may also be used.
- The Concluding Rite consists of a simple blessing and dismissal. The recessional generally takes the form of instrumental Music, or all may join in a hymn.

If your marriage is to be celebrated outside Mass, the musical choices are identical to those listed above, except that there is no Liturgy of the Eucharist. The liturgy includes Introductory Rites and the Liturgy of the Word before the Rite of Marriage, followed by a brief Concluding Rite.

Whether the wedding takes place within Mass or not, it is usually appropriate to plan for a brief period of prelude music, perhaps ten to fifteen minutes. The prelude should help to prepare the congregation to enter into the celebration in a spirit of reverence and joy.

Because the marriage rite is a liturgical celebration, it calls for liturgical music. The requirements for music at the wedding liturgy are the same as for Sunday Mass or any other liturgical celebration.

Each piece of music for the liturgy is evaluated according to liturgical, pastoral, and musical criteria. Secular music is inappropriate for the wedding liturgy even if it speaks of love or marriage.

The choice of music should foster the full, conscious, and active participation of the entire assembly. There are some parts of the liturgy that by their nature call for active singing by everyone, while other parts may be sung by choir or cantor or spoken by all.

Music for the wedding celebration is above all a way to experience God's loving presence and to respond in praise and prayer. Once the planning has been done, allow yourself to enter into the wedding ceremony in a spirit of prayer. May the marriage liturgy and its music strengthen you and the other participants in your faith as you begin life together.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOTAPING AT WEDDINGS AND QUINCEANERAS

To protect the solemnity of the sacrament, photography and videotape recording is restricted. PLEASE SEE THAT YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER OR VIDEOGRAPHER RECEIVES A COPY OF THESE GUIDELINES.

1. Photographers and videographers are expected to contact the priest or deacon before the wedding ceremony starts to determine where they may stand during the service. The photographer, videographer, and assistants are never permitted closer than the first row of pews during the Liturgy. Videography and photography is only permitted from the side aisles, except during the procession and recessional. During the procession, the photographer and videographer are permitted to approach the main aisle only in as much as they do not interfere with those in procession or guests already in their place. During the recessional, they are permitted in the main aisle, no closer to the altar than the 3 rows of pews in front of the baptismal font.
2. PHOTOGRAPHER - PLEASE NOTE: The Church is open to the photographer NO EARLIER than 30 minutes before the wedding Liturgy. No pictures are permitted in the Church proper prior to the ceremony. If a picture of the father and the bride, or parents, etc., is to be taken, please do this in the vestibule, not in the aisle of the Church.
3. Flash pictures may NOT be taken during the service. Only existing light exposures are permitted during the service as long as the photographer remains out of view of the congregation (in the side aisle or in the body of the church BEHIND the last pew in which people are seated).
4. Flash pictures are permitted as the wedding party leaves the Church.
5. When pictures are taken after the service, photography is limited to 20 minutes immediately following the service. There may be another liturgy following yours, so please be considerate.

A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT PUNCTUALITY

Rehearsals and the wedding ceremony must start on time. Be sure to let everyone know the exact time of the wedding and rehearsal and give them proper directions to the Church. A ceremony which starts 15 minutes late will leave time for only 2 or 3 photographs in the church following the ceremony. A ceremony which starts 30 minutes late will be limited to a Liturgy of the Word (no Mass or Communion). Ceremonies which would start 45minutes late will be rescheduled for another day.

Appointments must also start on time. If you cannot attend a scheduled appointment with the Priest or Deacon, Wedding Rehearsal Coordinators, the Director of Music, or any other member of the Staff, call before the appointment (preferably a day ahead) to let them know that you will be unable to attend. Then you will need to reschedule your appointment.

FLOWERS AND CANDLES

Candles: The Unity Candle is a custom of fairly recent origin but has no foundation in the Catholic Rite of Marriage. When used with attention to proper form, it can express some of the Catholic beliefs about the Sacrament of Marriage, but it is not permitted at St. Pius V. (In part, for safety reasons.) It is suggested that if the couple wishes to have a Unity Candle, it be used as part of the celebration during the reception.

Flowers: The couple is permitted to decorate the church with flowers as they see fit and in keeping with the solemnity of the Liturgy. The church and altar will already be decorated with flowers for the celebration of parish liturgies and NONE of these may be removed or relocated. However, it may be arranged to decorate with additional flowers. These flowers may be placed to the sides and on the steps of the Sanctuary.

Flowers or other decorations for the pews may only be attached with hangers or cords. No adhesives or fasteners are permitted. Artificial flower petals are permitted, but no natural petals. Floral deliveries cannot be accepted more than 30 minutes before the wedding and should be in place well before the scheduled time.

ALL flowers, decorations, petals, must be gathered up and removed after the wedding. The couple must provide the wedding coordinator with name of the person who will be responsible for doing this following the wedding.

Our Art and Environment Coordinator, Mary Vasquez, can assist you in planning decoration. Mrs. Vasquez is also a gifted floral designer and you might wish to arrange for her to provide your flowers. Please call the parish office to contact her.

A note on presentation of flowers to the Virgin: By ancient tradition, the bouquet that the bride carries in procession is a sign of her status as an unmarried maiden. She would not normally carry the bouquet in the recessional because her status has now changed to that of a married woman. The question, then, is what to do with the bouquet? In some traditions, the bride presents her bouquet to the Blessed Virgin in thanksgiving for Mary's protection, through intercession with her Son, during the bride's now-ended maidenhood. In another tradition, the bride presents her bouquet to another unmarried maiden. (Or she gives it to one of her attendants to bring to the reception where is presented to whoever catches it when it is tossed.)

Since it is impossible to carry out both traditions, some couples prefer to present a separate bouquet to the Blessed Virgin (or another Saint) while praying for the intercession of that Saint in the course of their marriage.