

WEDDINGS

AT IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

2855 BRIARCLIFF ROAD, NE

ATLANTA, GA 30329

ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA





Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Sacrament of Matrimony is a sign to the whole Church of the intimate and faithful love God has for each of us. Your wedding day is but the beginning of a sacramental way of life for you. It is truly a joyous occasion not only for you, your family, and your friends, but also for the whole Church. We are delighted for you!

Your wedding is, and should be, one of the happiest moments of your life. The Church rejoices in this experience and is eager to help make it an occasion that will be remembered with deep joy. The wedding need not be elaborate or expensive to be meaningful and beautiful. The true meaning and beauty lie in the spirit and attitude of those who take part.

These guidelines will help you to prepare for the celebration of this Sacrament at Immaculate Heart of Mary. It is hoped that they will answer many of your questions and make your preparations a little smoother. The parish priest or deacon you choose to help you with your preparation, our Director of Liturgy and Music, and our parish wedding coordinators will all be happy to give you any further clarification needed and will work with you to make your wedding a meaningful celebration of your lifetime commitment to each other.

You have a special place in the prayers of all of us at IHM as your wedding day approaches. May these months of anticipation and formation bring you ever closer to each other, to Christ, and to his Church. We make our own the words of the Church's nuptial blessing, and we pray:

May they pray to you always
in the community of the Church
and be your witnesses in all the world.
May they reach old age
in the company of their friends,
and come at last to the kingdom of heaven.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monsignor Albert W. Jowdy
Pastor

BEGINNING PREPARATIONS

The first step of your preparation is a meeting with one of the clergy of the parish for the required pre-marriage interview. This meeting normally occurs at least six months prior to the date of your wedding. The purpose of this assessment process is to help determine that both parties are free and ready to marry. Only after this initial meeting can a date be confirmed for your wedding. At this first meeting, the priest or deacon will discuss the necessary documents that need to be in the files of the church prior to the wedding date (wedding license, baptismal certificates, etc.)

Catholics are ordinarily expected to celebrate their wedding in the parish in which the bride and/or groom, or their parent(s) is/are a member. To be considered an active member at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (IHM) you must be registered and active in the parish for at least one year prior to your wedding. An active IHM parishioner is one who has embraced and demonstrates their stewardship of time, talent and treasure as a way of life with regard to their membership at IHM. Active membership includes not only financially tithing to the parish, but becoming involved in the liturgical, spiritual, and social life of the parish as well. Of course, after the wedding, if Atlanta is going to be your home, we hope that you choose to keep Immaculate Heart of Mary as your spiritual home.

RESERVING THE CHURCH FOR THE WEDDING

To reserve a date for your wedding, please contact the parish priest of your choice. Only a priest or deacon may authorize the reservation of a date and time for your wedding on the parish calendar. All reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis. Generally speaking, weddings may be scheduled any time during the year. However, because of the penitential nature of Lent, weddings in this season are strongly discouraged. Weddings may not be scheduled under any circumstances during Holy Week, on Sundays, Holy Days or on Christmas (or Christmas Eve) or on New Year's Day (or New Year's Eve). Weddings may be scheduled during the week at the discretion of the Pastor. Any exception to the above scheduling must have the explicit, written approval of the Pastor.

INTERFAITH MARRIAGE

In an interfaith marriage, the Catholic party promises to maintain his or her own faith and to do all in his or her power to ensure that any children born of the union will be raised in the Catholic faith. In an interfaith marriage, the minister of the non-Catholic party is encouraged to participate in the ceremony.

PRESIDER

Usually, one of the priests or deacons assigned at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish is asked to preside at weddings at the parish. However, if a couple wishes a priest or deacon from outside the parish to officiate, they must first contact him and ask that he, in turn, contact the Pastor at Immaculate Heart of Mary to obtain delegation. The visiting priest must confirm in writing that he will officiate and that he is responsible for completion of any necessary pre-marital instructions and paperwork.

All documentation required by the Archdiocese of Atlanta must be received at IHM at least two weeks prior to your wedding date unless the Pastor has made other arrangements. Visiting clergy are expected to follow the policies of IHM regarding the conduct of the ceremony. They are also expected to cooperate with the parish staff and members of the Wedding Guild.

WEDDING COORDINATORS

In the period leading up to your wedding, the Director of Liturgy and Music can work in conjunction with your own wedding coordinator, should you choose to have one. However, IHM has its own wedding coordinators: the Wedding Ministry. The IHM Wedding Minister will coordinate the rehearsal and will also be present on the wedding day. They are there to ensure that everything runs smoothly, both at the rehearsal and on the day of your wedding.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals are scheduled for one hour, and it is expected that they begin and end on time. The bride and groom are responsible for ensuring prompt arrival of the wedding party. The parish suggests that the bride and groom ask those attending the rehearsal to be present at least fifteen minutes before the scheduled starting time. The parish wedding coordinator and assistants will facilitate the rehearsal itself. The parish priests usually do not attend, nor does the Director of Liturgy and Music.

During the rehearsal, all members of the wedding party must be mindful that they are in a sacred place where respectful behavior is expected from everyone. Proper attire is expected, both at the rehearsal and at the wedding itself. The use of cell phones is inappropriate. Please note also that food or drink are not permitted in the church at any time. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at any time on our campus. It is the couple's responsibility to ensure that every member of the wedding party knows this. The Pastor reserves the right to cancel any wedding where the wedding party abuses this policy.

CANCELLATIONS

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish also reserves the right to cancel the wedding if the legal requirements (either Church or state) are not met. The Pastor will notify the bride and groom if such a cancellation becomes necessary. Conversely, the bride or groom, or members of their families, need to notify the presider (priest or deacon) and the Director of Liturgy and Music if there have been any changes in the couple's wedding plans.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

The following documents are required prior to the marriage:

If Catholic, you must obtain a current copy of your baptismal certificate. This copy must be issued no more than six months prior to the date of the wedding. This can easily be obtained by contacting the parish in which you were baptized and requesting a copy. It is

important to indicate that the certificate is for the purpose of marriage. To avoid delays and any confusion, you should request a copy of your baptism certificate “with notations.”

If non-Catholic, but baptized in another religion, you need to supply the date of baptism, the name of the church, and the city and state in which the baptism occurred.

Both parties, whether Catholic or not, must have an affidavit of freedom to marry from two persons. These are usually completed by your parents, but may be done by anyone who has known you since your early teenage years. A priest or notary public may witness their signatures.

To satisfy the civil requirements, you must obtain a marriage license. It is illegal in the State of Georgia for any clergy to officiate at a marriage unless the license is in hand: assurances that the license has been issued are not sufficient. The license is ordinarily obtained in the county of residence of either one of the parties; or in the case that neither party is a resident of the State of Georgia, then the license is to be obtained in the county where the church is located. The parish expects the license and the return envelope furnished by the county to be obtained and placed in your file at least two weeks prior to your wedding. Any other arrangements must be approved by the Pastor. The license will be signed and returned to the appropriate county office by the parish the week following the wedding. Certified copies of the license can be obtained only from the county office from which the license was issued.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Marriage preparation is mandatory. On your first visit the Priest/Deacon will discuss how to fulfill this requirement.

It is required that you participate together in one of these programs and that certification of participation be presented to the Priest/Deacon when completed. You have the choice of one of these programs that offer you an opportunity to reflect on the life decision that you are making. Contact information for each of them will be available in a separate packet.

- Engaged Encounter weekend retreat
- Archdiocesan Pre-Cana program
- Sponsor Couple Program

The most important aspect of your preparation is the spiritual, to ensure your readiness to be united in a Sacrament before God. It is important that each of you has a strong and active relationship with God and that this relationship is fostered by your active participation in a faith community. Participation in volunteer parish ministries and financial support of the parish according to your means is expected of every parishioner. For a Catholic, in addition to the participation specified above, it is also suggested that the Sacrament of Reconciliation be celebrated prior to your wedding. Also, the priest or deacon conducting the pre-marriage preparation facilitates a discussion with both of you

using the FOCCUS instrument, which is a simple list of questions you answer individually. This instrument helps ascertain your readiness for marriage.

USE OF FACILITIES

When planning your wedding, please take into consideration the liturgical season in which the wedding is to occur. If, for instance, you choose to schedule your wedding during the season of Advent or Lent, then wedding décor needs to take that into consideration. Both of these seasons require that the church environment be pared down—simple and refined. Since Lent is even more penitential in nature than Advent, the scheduling of weddings during this season usually occurs under very specific conditions and with the total absence of decorations, including flowers. Please keep in mind that environment installations (church decorations), such as the Advent Wreath, Easter flowers, or the Christmas Creche, cannot be moved under any circumstance for your wedding. For more information on this subject, please feel free to contact the Director of Liturgy and Music. The Director will be able to discuss with you the environment the parish has planned during the season of your wedding.

Due to liability issues and environmental concerns, runners, rice, flower petals, birdseed, balloons or bubbles are never allowed inside or outside the church under any circumstances. Smoking is not permitted in any building on the parish and school property. Alcoholic beverages may not be brought into the church or on the grounds before, during, or after the rehearsal or wedding. It must be made clear that on the day of your wedding alcohol is never allowed to be served prior to your wedding, and you and your wedding party must not consume alcohol prior to the wedding whether on campus or not. The Pastor of the parish reserves the right to cancel any wedding where it is found that this policy has been violated. To avoid any potential problems, please make all members of the wedding party aware of these restrictions.

Your florist, photographer, and videographer must all sign a letter of agreement, acknowledging that they understand our requirements, and will cooperate in that regard. (The florist, photographer, and videographer agreements are contained in this policy.)

WEDDING TIMES & GENERAL INFORMATION

Weddings are celebrated at IHM at two times on Saturdays, according to availability:

- 11:00am
- 2:00pm

Rehearsal times for weddings are on Friday evenings at:

- 6:00PM for the first wedding scheduled on the weekend (regardless of the time of the wedding)
- 7:00PM for the second wedding scheduled on the weekend (regardless of the time of the wedding)

Weddings are scheduled at times that enable the parish to schedule other events such as confessions, baptisms, funerals, etc., and therefore these are the only times that weddings can occur. We will do everything we can to make your wedding day a happy and memorable occasion. Your cooperation in this will be appreciated.

On the day of the wedding, bridal parties should not arrive more than one and one-half hours (90 minutes) before the ceremony. This allows ample time for pictures before the ceremony. We allow thirty minutes after the ceremony for pictures to be taken with the celebrant and the families and bridal party. However, we strongly encourage as many photos as possible to be taken before the wedding, including photos of the bride and groom together. This allows you, as the guests of honor, to arrive at your reception in a timely manner.

Also, please remind your photographer/videographer that the church is a sacred place and everyone representing their business should dress accordingly and conduct themselves accordingly. To ensure that this is the case, we have provided agreements for your videographer, photographer and florist to sign. It is your responsibility (the bride and groom) to make sure these forms are signed and returned to the parish office at least one month prior to the wedding.

FEES, STIPENDS & HONORARIUMS

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church’s fee structure for weddings is based upon whether you or your fiancé are considered active parishioners.

Wedding Fees

Active Church Parishioners:	No Fee
Non-Parishioners and Non-Active Parishioners:	\$500

An active registered parishioner is an individual who is registered in Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish and who has been active in Time, Talent, and Treasure for one year prior to the entry of the wedding date on the parish calendar. The determination of whether one is an active parishioner is reserved to the Pastor and is based upon regular celebration of Mass with the IHM community whenever possible, regular and on-going volunteer work in parish ministries and financial contributions of more than a nominal amount through envelopes or check so that the contribution is recorded in the records of the parish.

Though there is no fee associated with a wedding for parishioners, there are stipends incurred for your wedding:

Organist/pianist	\$350
Cantor	\$150
Altar Servers	\$50
Wedding Coordinators	\$100

Note: Additional musicians (trumpeters, violinists, harpists, guitarists, flautists, etc., would be additional expenses. You can discuss the music (and musicians) with the Director of Liturgy and Music.

There are also optional fees that are associated with elements of the wedding that you may elect to incorporate:

Two floral arrangements	\$350
Program	\$150

The presider (either a priest or a deacon) is customarily offered an honorarium as well, the amount of which is at the discretion of the couple.

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

The Rite of Marriage is a Sacrament of the Church. As such, the music for your wedding should come from the rich wealth of music that the Church espouses as appropriate for worship. The Director of Liturgy and Music (DoLM) will assist you in making appropriate choices regarding the music for your wedding. The DoLM is also the principal organist/pianist for all liturgical events at the parish, including weddings. As such, he/she will be the person responsible for the music at your wedding. If you have family members or friends who want to participate in the music prior to the ceremony or during the ceremony, they are welcomed to do so as long as they are willing to work with the DoLM. If the Director of Liturgy and Music has given you permission to use musicians from outside the parish (in lieu of the parish Director of Liturgy and Music) the music that is used at your wedding still must have approval of the Director of Music, and this approval must be sought at least one month in advance of the wedding.

The use of a parish cantor at a wedding, whether celebrated within the context of Mass or not, is obligatory. The parish cantor serves as soloist for the wedding, and leads the community in its sung prayer. For more information regarding this, please speak with the Director of Liturgy and Music.

Parish musicians do not attend the rehearsal. Music rehearsals, if required, must be scheduled with the Director of Music and Liturgy separately. It is the responsibility of either the wedding couple or the visiting musician to arrange that rehearsal with the Director of Liturgy and Music.

QUESTIONS?

While we have tried to address key issues in this material, we realize that you may have many other questions and concerns. Please know that the parish staff is ready to help you in any way possible. Our contact information is listed below. We look forward to working with you, praying with you, and celebrating this wonderful event in your life with you. In the meantime, our prayers will be with both of you as you go through this period of preparation.

Monsignor Albert Jowdy
Pastor
404.636.1418 ext. 235
ajowdy@ihmatlanta.org

Rev. Javier Muñoz
Parochial Vicar
404.636.1418 ext. 228
jmuñoz@ihmatlanta.org

Rev. Mr. Bob Hauert
Deacon
404.636.1418 ext. 251
bhauert@ihmatlanta.org

Wm. Jefferson Bush
Director of Liturgy and Music
404.636.1418 ext. 247
jbush@ihmatlanta.org

Yolanda Muñoz
Liturgy Associate
404.636.1418 ext. 241
ymunoz@ihmatlanta.org

Silvia Maldonado
Parish Secretary
404.636.1418 ext. 240
smaldonado@ihmatlanta.org

Gaby (Mayra) Perales
Parish Receptionist
404.636.1418 ext. 221
mperales@ihmatlanta.org

WEDDING CHECKLIST

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
Atlanta, Georgia

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make sure all agreement forms (photographer, florist, videographer) are understood and signed by the appropriate personnel and returned to Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Please make certain to include the name of your clergy contact on all correspondence.

Bride's Baptismal Certificate

Groom's Baptismal Certificate

Contact the church where you were baptized to request a recent (issued within the last six months) copy of your baptismal certificate "with notations." The certificate may be sent to you or directly to Immaculate Heart of Mary. If you are unable to obtain a baptismal certificate, please consult with the clergy person who is preparing your pre-nuptial file.

Director of Liturgy and Music

Contact the Director of Liturgy and Music (Wm. Jefferson Bush at jbush@ihmatlanta.org) as soon as the wedding is entered on the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church calendar. It is your responsibility to contact the Director of Liturgy and Music.

Bride's Affidavits—Free Status to Marry Form

Groom's Affidavits—Free Status to Marry Form

In some cases, the bride and groom will receive two copies of the affidavits. They must be completed by someone who has known you all your life or since you were about 13 years of age. Parents are preferred, but relatives and friends are acceptable. The signature must be witnessed by a priest, deacon, pastoral minister or notary public. The originals must be returned to the parish (fax copies can not be accepted).

Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter, or Sponsor Couple Certificate

At the completion of the pre-marriage workshop the couple receives a certificate which must be included in the pre-nuptial file. (The certificate is also proof of pre-marital counseling that qualifies for a reduction in the cost of the marriage license.)

Marriage License

You must have a valid marriage license under Georgia law. It should be included in your pre-nuptial file no less than thirty (30) days before the wedding date.

Selections from *Together for Life* book

Florist, photographer, and videographer agreements completed and received by office staff

Ensure all fees have been paid to the parish office

Final Meeting with Clergy

Final Meeting with the Director of Liturgy and Music

FLORIST AGREEMENT

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
2855 Briarcliff Road, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Page one of two

Wm. Jefferson Bush, Director of Liturgy and Music
404.636.1418 ext. 247 or jbush@ihmatlanta.org

Wedding/Event: _____
(Please include Bride AND Groom’s names, or IHM Staff contact.)

Wedding/Event Date: _____ Wedding/Event Time: _____

Delivery/Setup: _____
(Please indicate day of delivery, and approximate time of delivery.)

Takedown: _____
(Please indicate WHO is responsible for takedown, if applicable.)

Please review the policies regarding wedding flowers, candles, and pew decorations at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. We ask that you review them carefully and acknowledge your agreement to adhere to them by signing this document. The signature(s) must be that of the actual provider or a corporate officer with authority to enforce these regulations. The signed agreement must be received at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church no later than four weeks prior to the wedding.

FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY: The flowers in the sanctuary (the raised platform where the altar and ambo/pulpit are) directly affect the entire space. If there are arrangements of any kind (cut or fresh flowers already in the church prior to the wedding, these CANNOT be moved. There are no exceptions to this policy. The Director of Liturgy and Music can answer questions about exactly what will (or will not) be in the sanctuary for a particular wedding.

OTHER FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS: If you are engaged/contracted with to provide arrangements for other locations other than the sanctuary (the raised platform where the altar and ambo are), they must be arrangements that are in keeping with the church aesthetics. They may be placed in the Gathering Space, by the font (as wedding guests enter the nave of the church), and/or by the *Sades Sapientiae* (the image of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary). Other arrangements that have been placed by the Worship Commission can not be moved under any circumstances. The decision about placement of flowers is made by the Director of Liturgy and Music and is final. ALL flower arrangements that have been placed in the church for a wedding MUST be removed after the wedding.

PEW DECORATIONS: Pew decorations are discouraged, but if used, they MUST be affixed with plastic clips or ribbons. Tacks, staples, tape, or putty can not be used under any circumstance. All pew decorations must be removed immediately after the Wedding (within thirty minutes).

FLOWER GIRLS: Flower petals, real or artificial, may not be strewn on the floor.

AISLE RUNNERS: Aisle runners are strictly prohibited.

_____ (Initials of Florist)

FLORIST AGREEMENT

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
2855 Briarcliff Road, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Page two of two

Wm. Jefferson Bush, Director of Liturgy and Music
404.636.1418 ext. 247 or jbush@ihmatlanta.org

Name of Business: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Name of Owner: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Name of Authorized Representative and Contact: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Signature of Owner
and/or Authorized Representative: _____

Contact Information:

Address: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Website: _____

Please return this form (**both pages, with the first page initialed**) to the parish offices no later than four weeks prior to the wedding/event date.

EVENT PHOTOGRAPHER & EVENT VIDEOGRAPHER

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
2855 Briarcliff Road, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Page one of two

Wm. Jefferson Bush, Director of Liturgy and Music
404.636.1418 ext. 247 or jrbush@ihmatlanta.org

Wedding/Event: _____
(Please include Bride AND Groom’s names, or IHM Staff contact.)

Wedding/Event Date: _____ Wedding/Event Time: _____

Please review the policies and procedures regarding photography at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. We ask that you review them carefully and acknowledge your agreement to adhere to them by signing this document. The signature(s) must be that of the actual provider or a corporate officer with authority to enforce these regulations. Your signed agreement must be received at Immaculate Heart of Mary no later than four weeks prior to the date of the wedding.

The Bride and Groom (or Event planner) make their own arrangements for photography and/or videography. Within reason, the photographer/videographer is permitted a good deal of leeway. However, the photographer/videographer must not enter the sanctuary area (the raised platform where the altar and ambo/pulpit are) at any time during the ceremony, nor should the photographer/videographer come past the first pew in any section of pews at any time. Flash photography is not permitted during the liturgy (wedding ceremony or Mass), but can be used both before and afterwards. Camera lights for videography are not allowed during the ceremony either. The official photographer/videographer should keep in mind the sacredness of the church, and should conduct themselves accordingly. Similarly, the photographer/videographer and their assistants (if any) must be dressed appropriately for a formal church wedding or event. The photographer is allowed thirty minutes after the ceremony/event for posed photographs, after which she/he will be asked to vacate the premises. If there are posed photographs with the presider (priest or deacon), it is expected that these will occur first.

All equipment must be in place no later than thirty minutes before the scheduled time of the event. Wireless microphones may not be worn by the bride or groom. Video equipment must be stationary; no “roving” cameras allowed. Cameras may not be set-up anywhere in the sanctuary or transepts (sides) of the church. No floodlights or any other special lighting may be used during the ceremony. No wires may be laid down across any aisles. Nothing may be tacked, pinned, stapled or otherwise affixed in any way to church walls, furnishings or floors.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church reserves the right to ask any photographer or videographer who violates these rules to either correct the violation immediately or vacate the premises. No exceptions will be made.

_____ (Initials of Photographer/Videographer)

EVENT PHOTOGRAPHER & EVENT VIDEOGRAPHER

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
2855 Briarcliff Road, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329
Wm. Jefferson Bush, Director of Liturgy and Music
404.636.1418 ext. 247 or jbush@ihmatlanta.org

Page two of two

Photographer: _____ Videographer: _____
(Check one)

Name of Business: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Name of Owner: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Name of Authorized Representative and Contact: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Signature of Owner
and/or Authorized Representative: _____

Contact Information:

Address: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Website: _____

Please return this form (**both pages, with the first page initialed**) to the parish offices no later than four weeks prior to the wedding/event date. If there is to be both a photographer and a videographer, there should be TWO separate, signed, and initialed agreements.