

WEDDINGS AT

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY
CATHOLIC CHURCH

2855 BRIARCLIFF ROAD, NE
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30329
(404) 636-1418
WWW.IHMATLANTA.ORG



Dear friends in the Lord,

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 Church. 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 Immaculate Heart of Mary 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:

Let them pray to you always in the holy assembly
and bear witness to you in all the world,
and after a happy old age,
together with the circle of friends that surrounds them,
may they come to the Kingdom of Heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Your brother in Christ's word and work,

Monsignor Albert W. Jowdy
Pastor

INTRODUCTION

WHERE SHOULD WE BEGIN?

Catholics ordinarily celebrate their wedding in the parish church of which the bride or groom is a member, or another Catholic church. In some special circumstances, such as the wedding of a Catholic and a member of another faith community, permission may be given by the Archbishop for the wedding to take place in a non-Catholic house of worship. Because marriage is a sacrament of the Church, Catholic weddings never take place in secular venues or outdoors.

The first step in your preparation is a meeting with one of the priests or deacons of the parish for the required pre-marriage interview. This should take place at least six months prior to your contemplated wedding date, and before you reserve a reception hall or any other ancillary wedding services. The purpose of this meeting is to help determine that both parties are free to marry according to Church law. Only at this meeting can a date be set for your wedding. No dates are ever set, even tentatively, by other staff members, over the telephone or by email.

Note that *all* previous marriages—civil, non-Catholic and Catholic—are presumed to be valid by the Catholic Church. A previously-married person is free to marry in the Catholic Church only if the former spouse has died or if the previous marriage has been declared null by a Church tribunal. A wedding date cannot be set, even tentatively, until such an annulment has been granted.

Weddings at IHM are celebrated on Saturdays at 11:00AM and 2:00PM; they may take place on weekdays, contingent upon the availability of the church, clergy, musicians and wedding coordinator, but not on Sundays or holy days. Because of its penitential nature, Lent is not an ideal time for the festivity that should surround your marriage, and weddings are strongly discouraged during that season.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church is reserved exclusively for weddings of registered and active IHM parishioners until one year prior to a date.

During your first meeting, the priest or deacon will explain the sacramental formation for marriage. Several programs of pre-marriage instruction are available; the priest or deacon will direct you to the one that best suits your needs. It is required that you take part in one of these programs and present a certificate of participation to the priest or deacon upon completion.

Your priest or deacon will request subsequent meetings with you according to circumstances. Normally, after finishing the marriage preparation program, the couple will complete either FOCCUS or Prepare & Enrich, pre-marital inventories that provide a basis for discussion between the couple and officiant.

It is your responsibility to register for and complete your marriage preparation program and to arrange subsequent meetings with clergy and the Director of Liturgy and Music in good time before the wedding.

WHAT DOCUMENTS DO WE NEED?

At your first meeting, the priest or deacon will explain the need for these documents, which should be completed and returned to him as soon as possible:

Baptismal Certificate. The Catholic party or parties must obtain an original copy of the baptismal record, with notations, issued within six months of the wedding date, from their church of baptism. A copy of the baptismal certificate for a non-Catholic party is also helpful.

Affidavits of Freedom to Marry. Both parties will receive Affidavits of Freedom to Marry from the priest or deacon; these forms, usually completed by parents or other relatives or close friends, should be notarized by a priest, deacon or notary public, and returned to the officiant in a timely manner.

Required Promise in Interfaith Marriages. Permission is given for Catholics to marry persons of other faith traditions when the Catholic party indicates that the Catholic faith is a value in his or her life, and one which he or she intends to hand on to the children. The Catholic party will be asked to promise: "I hereby promise to practice my faith, and to fulfill to the best of my ability my obligation to have all children who may be born to our marriage baptized in the Catholic Church and carefully raised in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic faith."

Marriage License. It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain a civil marriage license in good time prior to the wedding. It is a violation of state law for clergy to proceed with a wedding without a license in hand. The license must be presented to the parish office during the week prior to the wedding; the rehearsal will not begin without a license, and the wedding cannot take place without one. Your marriage preparation program qualifies you for a discount in the cost of the license; your officiant will provide a certificate to take to the marriage license office at your local county probate court.

WHO WILL PRESIDE?

Normally, a couple would ask one of the priests or deacons assigned to Immaculate Heart of Mary to preside, or “officiate,” at their wedding here. However, if a couple desires that a priest or deacon from outside the parish preside, they should ask him to contact the Pastor at IHM to confirm in writing that he will do so and to request the Pastor’s delegation under Church law.

It is assumed that a visiting presider will take responsibility for the couple’s pre-nuptial investigation and sacramental formation, although if this imposes a grave hardship, the Pastor may ask one of the parish priests or deacons to do so.

All documentation required by the Archdiocese of Atlanta must be received at IHM from the visiting presider two weeks prior to the wedding. Visiting presiders are expected to follow the IHM parish liturgical guidelines.

THE WEDDING LITURGY

The model for any liturgical celebration in the Catholic tradition is Sunday Mass, since it is the heart of our worship life.

A Wedding Liturgy is communal prayer. In a spirit of faith-filled festivity, our joy at the marriage of man and woman calls us to ritualize this “symbol of Christ’s love for his Church” in a ceremony that is at once community-oriented as well as prayerful, personal, beautiful and memorable both for the couple and for their assembled relatives and friends.

This community focus does not mean that you, as a couple, will be unable to make this celebration “your own.” In addition to choosing members of your wedding party, you are encouraged to select, from among the options provided by Catholic tradition, readings from Sacred Scripture, prayers and music, and to decide who will participate as ministers in the celebration.

INTERFAITH WEDDINGS

When Catholics marry other Catholics, the natural setting for the celebration is the Mass, since it is the summit and source of all our prayer as a Church.

In ecumenical and interfaith marriages it is usually preferable to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage in the context of a Liturgy of the Word, rather than a Mass, so that the

inability of the non-Catholic party and guests to receive Holy Communion does not become a source of hurt.

In either case, the “full, conscious and active participation” of the whole assembly in the wedding liturgy is an ideal never to be compromised.

MUSIC

Music will add much joy to the occasion of your wedding. Its primary purpose will be to help the assembled community to pray. Congregational singing, therefore, is to be preferred, even though a vocal soloist may be very appropriate at certain times before and during the liturgy.

These guidelines are intended to help you plan music for the wedding that will not only recognize the presence of the community of faith gathered to pray with and for you, but will also enable and encourage them to do so.

Your wedding is a sacred moment; live sacred music is appropriate. Favorite secular or recorded music can always be used at the reception.

The parish will provide the instrumentalist and cantor for all weddings. Other musicians are generally unfamiliar with the specific requirements of Catholic liturgy and congregational singing.

Please contact the Director of Liturgy and Music at least three months in advance of the wedding date, to schedule a consultation regarding the music at your celebration.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

ATTENDANTS

The Church requires you to be married in the presence of a priest or deacon and two witnesses. You may choose to have other, honorary witnesses (bridesmaids and groomsmen).

ADDED CEREMONIES

In its reform of the liturgy, the Second Vatican Council mandated that the primary liturgical symbols be given prominence in worship and that there be a noble simplicity in the rituals used. Therefore, in preparing your wedding liturgy, any elements that might distract the assembly from these primary symbols should be treated cautiously, and

perhaps omitted. These might include:

Very young children (i.e., those below the age of seven) are often uneasy about being in front of large groups, do not fully understand the nature of liturgical gatherings, and cannot remain attentive throughout a celebration that may last up to one hour. Although couples often imagine that young children will add an element of sweetness and innocence to their wedding, the reality is often disappointing. Older children prove more satisfactory.

The presentation of flowers to the Blessed Mother, while often associated with Catholic weddings, is not actually a part of the rite. Since it is an expression of the private devotion of the bride or of the couple, it is best done privately, immediately following the liturgy, but not during it.

Throwing rice, seed or flower petals is a pagan fertility custom that has little or no Christian meaning. Practically speaking, since there is no one to perform the exhausting clean-up required to make the church and grounds safe and attractive for those attending other weekend services, the throwing of rice, seed, flower petals, or similar items, is not permitted on church grounds.

The Unity Candle, although often imagined to be a traditional part of the wedding ritual, was in fact invented by florists in the 1960s to add symbolism and ceremony to shorter civil and non-Catholic services. In Catholic worship, the unity candle is repetitive of the meaning of the Scripture readings, the homily, the vows, the exchange of rings and Holy Communion. For this reason, the use of a unity candle is unnecessary, and it is discouraged.

FLOWERS AND ENVIRONMENT

At weddings, flowers are often used for their beauty, freshness and promise of abundant life. Flower arrangements and plants should be modest, and must not visually overwhelm the primary symbols of the altar, the ambo, the presider's chair and the couple.

As during all liturgies of the Church, the altar candles in the sanctuary will burn during your wedding to remind us of the light of Christ; during the Easter season, the Paschal Candle will also burn in a prominent place. These candles may not be moved.

There is a great deal of movement in Catholic weddings on the part of the presider, the couple, and other ministers. Flowers, plants and any other decorations must be placed in such a way that they do not obstruct this ritual movement. Neither should such decorations create a visual barrier

between the sanctuary and the assembly.

Floral arrangements in locations outside the sanctuary must be in keeping with the overall aesthetics of the church. If desired, flowers may be placed in the narthex (gathering area), by the baptismal font or near the *Sedes Sapientiae* (the sculptural image of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary). Arrangements already in place in these areas may not be removed.

Aisle runners, once practical and necessary when they were made of canvas and covered dusty dirt or wooden floors, are a safety hazard on a tile floor, and they are not permitted at IHM.

Care must be taken of the church floor when placing flower arrangements and candle stands. If wax candles are used, a plastic cloth must cover the floor. Pew decorations are discouraged, but if used, they must be affixed with plastic clips or ribbons. Tacks, staples, tape or putty may not be used under any circumstances.

All flowers and other decorations must be removed from the church within 30 minutes after your wedding. We encourage you to take them with you to your reception where you may continue to enjoy them.

During the Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons, as well as at other times during the year, the church and sanctuary will already be decorated in an appropriate manner with flowers or other installations. Under no circumstances may these be removed for weddings. Please contact the Director of Liturgy & Music if you have any questions about what will or will not be in the sanctuary on a given date.

An agreement incorporating these guidelines is included at the end of this brochure. Please deliver it to your florist as soon as you engage their services. If they have any questions, they should contact the parish Director of Liturgy and Music. Their signed acceptance of these policies is required one month before the wedding.

LAY MINISTERS

A great deal of freedom is offered to you in the selection of lay ministers for your wedding: readers, altar servers, greeters/ushers, presenters of the gifts, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are for you to select. While all of these lay ministers may be members of your families or chosen from among friends, they should be selected for their skill in performing their ministerial responsibilities. Or, because your wedding is an important part of our parish's liturgical life, you may want to make your selections from

among those who ordinarily serve in these capacities at the Sunday liturgy.

PASTORS OF OTHER TRADITIONS

In the case of an ecumenical or interfaith marriage, you may choose to invite the non-Catholic party's minister to participate in the ceremony. In the context of a wedding liturgy outside of mass, the visiting minister may vest, proclaim one of the scripture readings before the gospel, and offer a message. At the conclusion of the ceremony, he or she may offer an additional prayer and a blessing. If an ecumenical wedding is celebrated during a Mass (which is not recommended—see above, page 3), the visiting minister may come from the assembly at the end of the ceremony to offer an additional prayer, exhortation and blessing. You should, of course, discuss this with the priest or deacon who is assisting you.

PROGRAMS

To help your guests follow the plan of the Catholic rite, and to encourage congregational participation, particularly in the singing of songs, responses and acclamations, the parish will provide a simple but elegant program for your wedding. If you prefer to prepare your own program, it must contain the texts necessary for the assembly's full participation, and it must be submitted to the Director of Liturgy and Music for approval before it is printed.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

We understand that photographs and videos are important mementos of your wedding day. However, we have learned that guidelines are necessary to ensure that those whose services are engaged respect the sacred nature of the rites they are witnessing.

On the day of the wedding, your photographer and videographer must report to the parish wedding coordinator immediately upon arrival at church. They must be appropriately dressed for their work in a church.

Photographs may be taken one hour before the wedding or 30 minutes after the wedding. If you will require the use of the historic church or rooms for your photographs, please make these arrangements well in advance through the parish receptionist.

During the ceremony itself, flash photographs may be taken only during the recessional, at the rear of the church, as

the wedding party exits down the center aisle. During the rest of the ceremony, the photographer may only take pictures without flash from a fixed location at the rear of the church.

No pictures may be taken from anywhere in the sanctuary at any time, or by relatives and friends in the pews, after the celebration begins. Flashes of light, electronic camera noises, movement of photographers and equipment, loading and unloading of film, etc., create a very disturbing environment and detract from the prayerfulness of the worship.

After the wedding, you may stay in the church for 30 minutes for posed pictures. Please be aware that the priest or deacon who presides at your wedding will have other weekend commitments. He will be happy to pose with you in the first picture immediately after the ceremony, but he may not be available after that, or if your pictures are delayed for any reason.

The sanctuary in a Catholic church is a sacred place, and the altar is consecrated as a symbol of Christ's presence. It is inappropriate and absolutely forbidden to use the sanctuary as a studio for casual photographs. In particular, sitting on the floor or on the sanctuary steps, and moving the altar or leaning against it, are not permitted.

The following additional guidelines are in effect for videography: (1) All video equipment must be in place no later than 30 minutes before the wedding begins. (2) Once in place, the equipment may not be moved during the ceremony. (3) No video cameras may be located in the sanctuary or music area. (3) No additional lighting may be used.

An agreement incorporating these photography guidelines is included at the end of this brochure. Please deliver it to your photographer and videographer as soon as you engage their services. If they have any questions, they should contact the parish Director of Liturgy and Music. Their signed acceptance of these policies is required one month before the wedding.

REHEARSAL

Normally, all rehearsals are on Friday evenings—at 6:00 for the first wedding scheduled on a weekend and at 7:00 for a second (regardless of the time of the weddings themselves). Your priest or deacon will set the rehearsal time when he sets the wedding time.

Rehearsals must begin on time: there will often be another rehearsal or service on the same evening. Please remind

the members of your wedding party of the traffic congestion in Atlanta and surrounding areas on Friday evenings at rush hour, and encourage them to plan to arrive 30 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time.

Rehearsals will proceed in a quiet and dignified manner. Members of the wedding party should be reminded that they are in a holy place. They should dress appropriately in view of the setting. Food should not be brought into the church area. Smoking is permitted only outdoors. The consumption of alcohol or drugs before or during the rehearsal or the wedding is absolutely prohibited, and intoxicated members of the wedding party or guests will be asked to leave.

Rehearsals are conducted by the parish wedding coordinator. The officiating priest or deacon is not normally present.

BRIDAL PARLOR

The Parlor will be reserved during the time of your wedding for the bride and her attendant(s) to use as a dressing room. Please note that space limitations make it necessary for the attendants to have their hair and makeup ready when they arrive, so that they can just slip into their gowns.

Please leave the parlor in the state in which you found it. The room will be used by many others over the weekend, and there is no one to clean up after you except you. Please: no smoking is permitted in this room. Ask your attendants to leave any valuables in the car or at home. A friend should be designated to come clear the bride's room shortly after the ceremony ends.

RECEPTIONS ON SITE

The historic church is often available for wedding receptions. For contract information and rental cost, inquire at the parish office well in advance of your wedding.

PARISH WEDDING COORDINATORS

Immaculate Heart of Mary parish will provide the services of a parish wedding coordinator, who has been trained to assist you in every need related to your wedding in our church. After your consultations with the priest or deacon and the Director of Liturgy and Music, you will be assigned a wedding coordinator.

FEES AND GIFTS

There is no charge for the use of the church by registered and active IHM parishioners. The fee for non-active parishioners is \$500; the fee for non-parishioners is \$1,000. This fee must be received in the parish office before the wedding date can be reserved.

There is no fee for the services of the parish priest or deacon who assists you and presides at your wedding. It is customary, however, to offer him a gift, in proportion to the overall expense of your wedding.

Others who assist you will receive a fee comparable to that in other area Catholic churches:

Church reservation fee.....	\$1,000 or \$500 (waived for active IHM parishioners)
Preparation for wedding elsewhere.....	\$200 (waived for active IHM parishioners)
Organist.....	\$350
Cantor.....	\$150
Parish wedding coordinator.....	\$100
Altar server(s) (each).....	\$50
Officiating priest or deacon (suggested gift).....	\$300

Outstanding fees should be brought to the parish office one week before the wedding. Checks should be made payable to IHM Church—except for gifts to the officiating priest or deacon, which, if in the form of a check, should be written to the priest or deacon himself.

CANCELATION

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church reserves the right to cancel a wedding if the requirements of church law or civil law have not been met. A couple whose wedding plans change should inform the parish office immediately.

ACTIVE PARISHIONER

In several places these guidelines use the term “active parishioner.” An active parishioner: (1) is registered in the parish; (2) participates regularly at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days; (3) has a parish Time & Talent commitment on file for the current year and participates in at least one parish ministry; (4) has a parish Treasure commitment on file for the current year and contributes in an accountable manner on a regular basis; and (5) has fulfilled or is fulfilling a pledge to the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal for the current year.

PHOTOGRAPHER & VIDEOGRAPHER AGREEMENT

Please copy this page and deliver it to your wedding photographer and videographer.

Name of Bride and Groom: _____
Please print

Date of wedding: _____

Name of Business: _____
Please print

Photographer: _____ Videographer: _____ (check one)

Name of Owner: _____
Please print

Business address: _____
Please print

Name of Authorized Representative: _____
Please print

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church understands that photographs and videos are important mementos of a wedding day. However, we have learned that clear guidelines are necessary to ensure that photographers and videographers respect the sacred nature of the sacrament they are witnessing.

On the day of the wedding, the photographer and videographer must report to the parish wedding coordinator immediately upon arrival at church. They must be appropriately dressed for their work in a sacred place.

Photographs may be taken one hour before the wedding or 30 minutes after the wedding. If you will require the use of the historic church or other rooms for your photographs, please make these arrangements well in advance through the parish receptionist.

During the ceremony itself, flash photographs may be taken only during the recessional, at the rear of the church, as the wedding party exits down the center aisle. During the rest of the ceremony, the photographer may only take pictures without flash from a fixed location at the rear of the church.

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The following additional guidelines are in effect for videography: (1) All video equipment must be in place no later than 30 minutes before the wedding begins. (2) Once in place, the equipment may not be moved during the ceremony. (3) No video cameras may be located in the sanctuary or music area. (4) No additional lighting may be used.

I have received a copy of these parish policies and I agree to abide by them.

Signature of Owner or Authorized Representative: _____

Please return this signed form to the parish office no later than four weeks prior to the wedding. If there is to be both a photographer and a videographer, each should submit a separate, signed agreement.

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH

2855 BRIARCLIFF ROAD NE
ATLANTA, GA 30329

WM. JEFFERSON BUSH, DIRECTOR OF LITURGY & MUSIC

(404) 636-1418 EXT. 247
JEFFBUSH@IHMATLANTA.ORG

WEDDING FLORIST AGREEMENT

Please copy this page and deliver it to your florist.

Name of Bride and Groom: _____
Please print

Date of wedding: _____ Time of wedding: _____

Name of Business: _____
Please print

Date of delivery: _____ Time of delivery: _____

Name of Owner: _____
Please print

Person responsible for takedown after wedding: _____
Please print

Name of Authorized Representative: _____
Please print

Business address: _____
Please print

Phone: _____ Email: _____

At weddings, flowers are often used for their beauty, freshness and promise of abundant life. Flower arrangements and plants should be modest, and must not visually overwhelm the primary symbols of the altar, the ambo, the presider's chair and the couple.

As during all liturgies of the Church, the altar candles in the sanctuary will burn during the wedding to remind us of the light of Christ; during the Easter season, the Paschal Candle will also burn in a prominent place. These candles may not be moved.

There is a great deal of movement in Catholic weddings on the part of the presider, the couple, and other ministers. Flowers, plants and any other decorations in the sanctuary must be placed in such a way that they do not obstruct this ritual movement. Neither should such decorations create a visual barrier between the sanctuary and the assembly.

If desired, flowers may also be placed in the narthex (gathering area), by the baptismal font or near the *Sedes Sapientiae* (the sculptural image of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary). Arrangements already placed in these areas by the parish may not be moved.

Care must be taken of the church floor when placing flower arrangements and candle stands. If wax candles are used, a plastic cloth must cover the floor. Pew decorations are discouraged, but if used, they must be affixed with plastic clips or ribbons. Tacks, staples, tape or putty may not be used under any circumstances. Aisle runners and the strewing of flower petals, real or artificial, and the throwing of rice are not permitted.

All flowers and other decorations must be removed from the church within 30 minutes after the wedding. We encourage the couple to take their flowers with them to the reception where they may continue to enjoy them.

During the Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons, as well as at other times during the year, the church and sanctuary will already be decorated in an appropriate manner with flowers or other installations. Under no circumstances may these be removed for weddings. Please contact the Director of Liturgy & Music if you have questions about exactly what will or will not be in the sanctuary on a particular date.

Decisions about the placement of flowers and other decorations made by the Director of Liturgy & Music are final.

I have received a copy of these parish policies and I agree to abide by them.

Signature of Owner or Authorized Representative: _____

Please return this signed agreement to the parish office no later than four weeks prior to the wedding.

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WM. JEFFERSON BUSH, DIRECTOR OF LITURGY & MUSIC

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LOVE
SO
bears all things
FAITH
believes all things
HOPE
hopes all things
LOVE
endures all things
A B I D E
these three but the
greatest
of these is
LOVE

1 CORINTHIANS
13: 7, 13
NAS

MARRIAGE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

AT LEAST 6 MONTHS BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Contact parish priest or deacon for pre-marriage interview, to establish freedom to marry and reserve wedding date.
- ☐ (If not active parishioner) Submit church reservation fee to parish office to secure wedding date.
- ☐ Register for and complete Catholic marriage preparation program approved by priest or deacon.
- ☐ Request baptismal record from church of baptism (Catholic party/ies)
- ☐ Return baptismal record(s) and signed affidavits to priest or deacon.

3 MONTHS BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Contact Director of Liturgy and Music to schedule consultation.
- ☐ Meet with priest or deacon for FOCCUS or Prepare & Enrich inventory discussion.

ONE MONTH BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Obtain civil marriage license and return to assisting priest or deacon.
- ☐ Ensure that signed agreements from florist, photographer and videographer have been returned to the parish office.

ONE WEEK BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Telephone conference with parish wedding coordinator.
- ☐ Bring any outstanding wedding fees and gift for officiant to parish office.

IHM STAFF CONTACTS

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