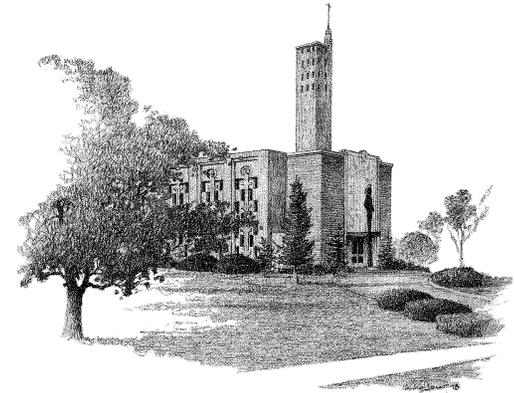


Wedding Guidelines

St. Gertrude Parish



Saint Gertrude Church - Madeira Ohio

This is my commandment:
Love one another as I have loved you.
No one has greater love than this,
To lay down one's life for one's friends.
John 15:12-13

6543 Miami Avenue
Cincinnati, OH
(513) 561-5954
parishoffice@stgertrude.org

Updated: 01/2021

Celebrating your Marriage at St. Gertrude Church

- Congratulations on your engagement and your decision to make a lifelong commitment to each other in the sacred vocation of marriage. In celebrating marriage before God and your family and friends, you are publicly declaring an unselfish love for each other. With God's grace, the new family created with the exchange of your vows will become your chosen path to holiness.
- This policy is designed to help you plan your wedding as well as make you aware of what will be expected if you choose to be married at St. Gertrude Church. Please read the following information carefully.
- Your wedding day is meant to be a manifestation of your faith in God and the consecration of your lives to each other through a grace filled, sacred ceremony. May the Lord bless you both.
- Please contact the parish secretary or priest on staff if you need any further assistance.

Request for a Recent Baptismal Record with Notations For Baptized Catholics Only

Date: _____

Name of Church:

Address:

Dear Rev. Pastor,

I am planning a marriage on _____, at St. Gertrude Catholic Church in Cincinnati, Ohio.

I am requesting a recent baptismal certificate which is needed for the marriage investigation. Please include any notations as well.

Kindly send the baptismal certificate to presiding Priest:

Rev. _____, O.P. (*name of priest*)
St. Gertrude Catholic Church
6543 Miami Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45243

Name of Person Requesting Certificate:

Birthdate of Person Requesting Certificate:

Names of Parents:

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Daily Prayer for Engaged Couples to Recite Together

*Thank you, Lord, for bringing us together.
Strengthen our hearts so that we will keep faith
with each other, please You in all things, and
so come to the happiness of celebrating
the sacrament of our marriage. Amen.*

Policy of Marriage Preparation/Celebration at St. Gertrude Church

All registered parishioners of St. Gertrude Parish may ask to be prepared for marriage and/or the celebration of the sacrament of marriage at St. Gertrude Church. This means that at least one member of the engaged party must be a registered parishioner. A registered parishioner is defined as someone registered in the parish, or a baptized Catholic living within the parish boundary. This registered parishioner policy also covers adult children of registered parishioners. The couple will be asked to contribute the parishioner rate of \$1000.

Ordinarily marriage should be celebrated in a person's own parish, however we will consider outside requests as we are able. The people asking for preparation/investigation, and/or marriage at St. Gertrude's who are not registered or living in our parish boundary must provide a Letter of Membership from their pastor/parish. The couple will be asked to contribute the non-parishioner rate of \$1500.

Couples requesting a priest/deacon outside of St. Gertrude Church to celebrate the marriage Mass/ritual, are asked that the priest/deacon send a letter to the pastor of St. Gertrude Church informing the pastor that he plans to preside over the marriage ritual/Mass. If a priest/deacon is outside the Archdiocese of Cincinnati the priest/deacon is required to provide a Letter of Good Standing from their (arch)diocese to the pastor of St. Gertrude Church.

Couples planning on a marriage here at St. Gertrude, but being prepared elsewhere are asked to observe the following policy: A letter from the preparing priest/deacon/pastoral minister, etc., is to be sent to the pastor of St. Gertrude Church. Only after that letter has been received by the pastor of St. Gertrude Church can the couple book the date of the marriage. The pastor of St. Gertrude Church will then assign a priest on staff here at St. Gertrude to monitor the impending marriage, and act as the celebrant of the marriage Mass/ritual, if the cou-

Contacts

St. Gertrude Catholic Church	(513) 561-5954
Fr. George Schommer, O.P.	Pastor
Fr. Clement Dickie, O.P.	Parochial Vicar
Fr. John Mark Solitario, O.P.	Parochial Vicar
Parish Secretaries Susan Kane, Teri Forlini	(513) 561-5954
Director of Music Catherine Fishlock	(513) 561-5954 ext. 2116 musicdirector@stgertrude.org
Wedding Coordinator AnnaMaria Spurgin	(513) 561-5954 ext. 1124 amspurgin@stgertrude.org
Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation Program Diocesan Family Life Office for Pre-Cana	(513) 421-3131
Ruah Woods 6675 Wesselman Road Cincinnati, OH 45248 www.ruahwoods.org	(513) 407-8672
Required Instruction on Natural Family Planning David and Ann Stein Couple to Couple League	(513) 561-5751
Rebecca Harping Creighton Model Method Rebecca@covenantresourcesfcc.org	(812) 222-1881

NOTES

ple wishes. Marriage investigations not done at St. Gertrude's must follow the policy of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati: the marriage preparation/investigation must be sent to the chancellor of the (arch)diocese where the marriage investigation was done. Upon approval from that chancery, that chancery will send the investigation to the chancellor of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Fr. Steve Angi, **no later than three months** prior to the date of marriage. Upon the approval of the chancellor of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati the investigation will then be sent to St. Gertrude Church.

For couples, who are only being prepared by a priest at St. Gertrude's, the preparing priest at St. Gertrude will send a letter to the pastor of the parish where a couple is planning on celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage, stating that the priest at St. Gertrude Church is taking responsibility for the couple's marriage preparation/investigation. Once the preparation/investigation is complete it will be forwarded **no later than three months** prior to the marriage to the chancellor of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Fr. Angi, and then to the chancery of the (arch)diocese where the marriage will be celebrated, and then on to the parish where the marriage will be celebrated. The couple will be asked to contribute \$500 to the priest for his services.

Please contact the pastor of St. Gertrude Church for any clarifications on this policy.

Purpose of Marriage Preparation

- To help couples appreciate marriage as a Christian vocation and mission by instructing them in the Catholic vision of marriage as a sacrament and the divine laws that govern it.
- To help couples identify aspects of their personal relationship that they may need to work on before they commit themselves to marriage.
- To plan the marriage ceremony.

General Policies

- Weddings must be scheduled a minimum of six months in advance of the date planned for the celebration of the wedding, however nine to twelve + months is preferable in order to insure adequate time for the marriage preparation process.
- Before scheduling a wedding, it must be understood that Catholics are practicing their Faith, attending weekend Masses, and registered in the parish (or the parents of the bride or groom registered in the parish).
- If you belong to another parish and have no parental ties to St. Gertrude's but wish to be married at St. Gertrude's, you will need your pastor's permission to be married at St. Gertrude's and you must prepare under his guidance, or be assigned to a friar here at St. Gertrude's.
- Ordinarily a Dominican friar of St. Gertrude Church will witness your marriage vows. Any priest or deacon (with pastoral approval) can witness your marriage at St. Gertrude. Catholic priest/deacon from outside the State must be licensed by the state of Ohio for witnessing marriages.

There can be no exceptions to this condition. In the case of a mixed religion marriage, the minister of a non-Catholic is most welcome to participate in the marriage ceremony.

Cohabiting and/or Sexually Active Couples

Marriage is a sacrament of Jesus Christ and a sacred vocation given to us by God. It is a means to holiness in the life of the spouses. Those married in the Church receive a special sacramental grace that helps them live a life of love and fidelity. The Church wants to help engaged couples prepare well for marriage so that their union will be lasting and fulfilling.

Unfortunately, many couples who ask to be married in the Church come confused, poorly educated in the teaching of the Church, and are already living together. Even though cohabitation is widely accepted in our society, it is clearly contrary to the teaching of the Word of God. Sacred Scripture and the Church teaches that cohabitation and sexual union between the unmarried is sinful (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2350-2400), and such behavior undermines the very holiness of life one seeks in the sacrament of marriage. Cohabitation is scandalous and detracts from the sacredness of marriage.

The Church urges all engaged couples who are living together to separate and those engaging in sexual relations to stop. To live such false lives undermines the most fundamental aspects of married life: integrity, commitment, and self-communication. Those who are Catholic should seek to be reconciled with God by receiving the Sacrament of Confession. In this sacrament, God's forgiveness and strength are always available to us.

The love sought in the sacrament of marriage requires a trust established in chastity and self control. It is a time in which the couple learns intimacy apart from sexual expression. Cohabitation and sexual activity is a bad way to prepare for marriage, as it leads to a lack of real commitment to each other. Couples living together before marriage have a higher divorce rate and incidence of domestic violence.

The integrity of Christ's sacrament is to be safeguarded both for the Church and for every couple seeking the sacrament. Consequently, it is more fitting for couples to celebrate the sacramental marriage in a simpler manner if they are sexually active and/or living together.

Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan

We ask Mary, the mother of the Lord, and the holy men and women who have gone before us, to pray for young couples that they may choose marriage in the Church and prepare well for it.

Regulations for Photographers and Videographers

The official photographer /videographer must see the priest conducting the Wedding Ceremony **before** the ceremony takes place to review Church policy and procedures concerning the taking of photographs and the use of video equipment. In keeping with the solemnity of the ceremony and occasion, the following policies are to be observed.

- Flash pictures may not be taken during the service. However, flash pictures are permitted during the procession and recessional.
- Pictures may be taken only after the ceremony provided they do not conflict with the next scheduled event. The photographer and the wedding party must exit the Church by 3:30pm on Saturday when confessions begin.
- Video cameras are not permitted in the sanctuary or the main aisle. One stationary video camera is permitted in either of the side aisles.
- Neither the bride nor the groom is to wear a microphone during the ceremony. Only Church-issue microphones will be permitted anywhere in the sanctuary.
- Video cameras and official photographers are permitted in the choir area. Tripods must be placed in a position approved by the organist so as not to interfere with the musicians.
- Photographers and videographers are permitted to walk discreetly around as long as the ceremony is not interrupted or disrupted. They are not allowed to enter into the sanctuary. No one is permitted in the sanctuary beyond the communion rail.
- The celebrating priest will **not** wear any additional microphones other than the one owned by the church.
- Videographers **under no circumstances** may have access to our sound system.

- Mass is celebrated at a wedding only when both parties are Catholic. (See page 12)
- Weddings are held at St. Gertrude's on Saturday at 2:00pm or at 6:30pm. As confession begins one hour before the Saturday evening Vigil Mass, the wedding party must vacate the church by 3:30pm.
- There are no Sunday weddings. Friday weddings may be scheduled according to the church's availability.
- The above policies apply unless the pastor makes an exception in a particular case.

Steps in Marriage Preparation Program

HOW DO WE PREPARE?

Each priest will ask you to fulfill certain requirements for marriage preparation. Generally these are the requirements for marriage preparation at St. Gertrude Church:

Marriage Guidelines, Timeline, and Required Meeting with Priest and Mentor Couple

- All couples inquiring about weddings here at St. Gertrude Church begin by reading the Marriage Guidelines that may be obtained through the parish secretary (513-561-5954 ext.2101). After the couple has thoroughly reviewed and agreed to the guidelines they need to fill out the Marriage Request Form and submit to the Parish Office. The Pastor will assign your priest, and you will be contacted.

Step 1: (Introductory Meeting):

The priest will meet with the couple. The purpose of this first introductory meeting is to administer the *Fully Engaged* Inventory and to acquaint the priest with the couple so that he can determine if they are free to marry. If one or both have had a previous marriage, no wedding plans may proceed until there is some ecclesiastical determination concerning previous marriages. Catholics should bring recently-issued copies of their baptismal certificates (issued within the past six months). For

baptized Catholics, when requesting the baptismal record from the church of your baptism, please specify “with notations.” Non-Catholic Christians should bring whatever proof of baptism they have. Please see page 23 for the form that may be used when requesting your baptismal certificate.

Step 2: Engaged / Mentor Couple Assignment

The Wedding Coordinator will assign a Mentor Couple (a married couple from the parish trained as a *Fully Engaged* Facilitator) to the Engaged Couple upon return of the *Fully Engaged* Inventory results.

Step 3: Marriage Preparation Meetings with Priest and Mentor Couple: 8 Total Meetings

Meetings generally last between 1-2 hours. The basis of the Priest-Engaged Couple conversations will be the Marriage Catechesis booklet given to the engaged couple.

- The basis for the Mentor Couple-Engaged Couple conversations are the *Fully Engaged* Workbook and Inventory.
- All meetings should be concluded 1-2 months prior to the wedding date.
- There are a total of 8 preparation meetings . Additional meetings may be scheduled at will, if the Engaged Couple has special circumstances that necessitate them.
- All conversations are strictly confidential and will only be discussed with the preparing priest.

Curriculum of Meetings with Priest and Mentor Couple (Schedule of Meetings)

- **Introductory Meeting with Priest and Engaged Couple:** *Fully Engaged* Inventory administered.
- **Meeting 2: Mentor Couple and Engaged Couple:** *Fully Engaged* Section 1-3
- **Meeting 3: Mentor Couple and Engaged Couple:** *Fully Engaged* Sections 4-6.
- **Meeting 4: Mentor Couple and Engaged Couple:** *Fully Engaged* Sections 7-9
- **Meeting 5: Mentor Couple and Engaged Couple:** *Fully Engaged* Sections 10-13

Music at the Wedding Ceremony

- **Prelude/Postlude:** A variety of instrumental/vocal music may be used before and after the ceremony.
- **Processional Music** begins when guests are seated and the wedding party is lined up: one piece may be enough, especially if the bridal party is small.
- **Responsorial Psalm:** This is sung after the First Reading. The text must be the approved version, not a paraphrase.
- **Gospel Acclamation:** This is sung before the reading of the Gospel.
- **The Lord’s Prayer:** The Our Father may be spoken or sung by the priest and congregation. Solo versions of “The Lord’s Prayer” may not be used.
- **Recessional:** Joyous music may accompany you and guests as you exit church.

The following selections are only used at Masses:

- **Offertory:** Since there is no offertory collection, a brief music selection is recommended.
- **Eucharistic Acclamation, The Holy, Holy, Holy; Memorial Acclamation; Great Amen; and Lamb of God** are led by a cantor. The Music Director can help you choose musical settings to these selections that will be familiar to many at your wedding.
- **Communion:** As your guests receive Communion, there are many pieces of music from which to choose that are conducive to Eucharistic meditation.
- **Dedication to Mary:** Either vocal or instrumental may accompany the presentation

Please see the Director of Music for a list of approved music.

Music Guidelines

Please contact the Music Director after you have finalized the date of your wedding with the priest.

Some couples come with definite ideas about what they want. Others have no idea and feel overwhelmed by the process. There is nothing to worry about. They will walk you through every step of what happens musically in the liturgy.

Your wedding ceremony is a sacred service before God who has called you together in marriage. Therefore the music for your wedding should be sacred, beautiful, and prayerful. Musical choices, including the prelude and/or postlude, should be free from any association with theater, movies, commercials, television shows, taverns and other non-sacred contexts. Such secular music is more effectively used at the reception where it can be appreciated in the proper venue. These guidelines will help you choose appropriate music and apply to all weddings celebrated at St. Gertrude Church, even those from couples registered outside of the parish.

We strongly recommend that you use St. Gertrude's organist, cantors and instrumentalists. The Music Director has access to a variety of talented, qualified instrumentalists, and singers who are familiar with our guidelines and ready to provide beautiful and appropriate music for your ceremony. To engage any of these musicians, please contact the Music Director.

Outside musicians and cantors must be professional church musicians who are **(a)** familiar with Roman Catholic Wedding Liturgy, and **(b)** willing to follow the guidelines of St. Gertrude Church.

Anyone brought in to sing or play for a wedding who is not a regular singer or instrumentalist at St. Gertrude's (outside Musician/Vocalist) must consult with the Music Director. If an additional rehearsal is necessary, you will be charged \$35 per hour for their services.

If another organist or group is brought in, it will be necessary to schedule a mandatory consultation with our Music Director.

- **Meeting 6: Priest and Engaged Couple:** Review Fully Engaged Assessment and Marriage Catechism Booklet (Sections Intro – 1)
- **Meeting 7: Priest and Engaged Couple:** Review Marriage Catechism Booklet (Sections II-III)
- **Meeting 8: Priest, Engaged Couple, and Wedding Coordinator:** Finish up any remaining paperwork, sign the M1 Declaration of Matrimonial Intent, process any dispensations, review wedding liturgy planning sheet .

Additional Preparations:

- **Complete a Natural Family Planning Program:** A couple must complete a Natural Family Planning (NFP) program. There are two options of NFP programs available. Please choose one of the following:
 - **Sympto-Thermal Method:** consists of three classes to gather information or register for this course at St. Gertrude, please contact David and Ann Stein at (513) 561-5751. To register for this program at a different Archdiocesan location: please visit the Couple to Couple League website: www.ccli.org or call (513) 471-2000.
 - **Creighton Method:** consists of one introductory course plus two follow-up classes (online through Skype). To gather information or register for this course, please contact Rebecca Harpring at (812) 222-1881.

***Upon completion of one of the above NFP programs, the couple will be given a certificate that must be presented to their preparing priest.**

- **Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation** if you are Catholic shortly before your marriage.
- **Both parties must apply for the license:** There is a five-day waiting period for the license and it must be picked up within thirty days. Your license is valid for sixty days. You must have proof of age (birth certificate, driver's license accepted). You must obtain this civil marriage license and give it to your celebrating priest BEFORE the day of your rehearsal.
- **Non-Required Enrichment:** Couples who wish to learn more about the Sacrament of Matrimony may be interested in the various programs offered at Ruah Woods. Two classes we highly recommend for engaged couples are: *God's Plan for a Joy-filled Marriage* and *Theology of the Body*. For further information on these classes and others, please contact Ruah Woods at www.ruahwoods.org or call (513) 407-8878.
- **Reserve Church for Rehearsal/Wedding Ceremony:** While you may make arrangements with the priest for your rehearsal and wedding date and time, **the church will not be reserved until the non-refundable deposit is given.** Please contact the parish secretary to have your date entered onto the parish schedule and to make arrangements for the deposit. (Offerings and deposits are listed on page 15.) (See page 21 for contact information.)
- **Contact our Music Director:** Please contact our Music Director to schedule the organist and musicians for your wedding immediately after your dates and times have been secured. Please note that all plans for music must be approved by our Music Director well in advance of the marriage ceremony. (See page 21 for contact information.)
- **Contact our Wedding Coordinator:** Please contact our wedding coordinator as soon as your dates and times have been secured. (See page 21 for contact information.)

Offerings, Fees, and Deposits:

St. Gertrude Church uses the word "offering" when referring to money given to the Church for the usage of the church proper. This offering is used for building maintenance, utilities, and staffing. If for any reason you cannot give the entire offering, please speak to the pastor as soon as possible, so that arrangements can be made as to what you are able to give to the church.

Breakdown of Wedding Fees

Church Facilities and Personnel: parishioner	\$1000
non-parishioner	\$1500

**(Half due to confirm date – payable to St. Gertrude)*

Couples Requesting Marriage Preparation only:	\$500
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(planning to get married somewhere other than St. Gertrude)

Dominican Community Offering:	\$100
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(for presiding Dominican priest)

Altar Servers Offering: (2 @ \$20 Each)	\$40
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**(Two altar servers required for Wedding Mass)*

(Total of Offerings distributed at the Rehearsal
Priest + Altar Servers = \$140)

Other Possible Fees:

Fee for a St. Gertrude Organist:	\$200
Other musicians or vocalists:	Fees Vary

(Consult Music Director for details) (\$100-175)

*Deposit Notes

\$500/\$750 To be offered at the time your date for wedding is finalized with priest and secretary. Your date is not secured until this offering is given to the Church. This is a non-refundable initial payment toward the final total. Final payment is due 30 days prior to the ceremony.

- For the protection of both the facilities and the wedding guests, no throwing of rice, flower petals, confetti, or birdseed is permitted anywhere on church property, inside or out.
- Balloons are not permitted inside the church.

The Wedding Rehearsal

The Church Building: The Catholic Church teaches that the church building is a sacred place. The Blessed Sacrament, the real presence of Jesus Christ, is reserved in the church building. During the rehearsal, and before and after the ceremony, we expect that everyone will at all times conduct themselves with dignity and decorum in the sacred space of the church.

The marriage license must be given to the priest some time during the week preceding the wedding, but definitely before the evening of the wedding rehearsal. A Marriage License is valid for 60 days. No wedding can be performed unless the marriage license is presented. (See page 21 for license contact information.)

The Wedding Rehearsal is conducted under the supervision of the presiding priest and wedding coordinator. The rehearsal should be scheduled with the priest when you set your wedding date. Please inform your wedding party that the rehearsal **will start on time no matter if the entire wedding party is present, the rehearsal will last only one hour.** To accommodate the habitual latecomers, please inform your wedding party that the rehearsal time is 15 minutes **before** the actual time so that they will be present at the beginning. Please inform the priest ahead of time if you wish confessions to be heard post-rehearsal.

The wedding rehearsal is the appropriate time to distribute the remaining offerings since on the wedding day you do not want to be distracted with offering details. This is the appropriate time to give offerings to your celebrating priest for his services, and for the servers if there is going to be a wedding Mass.

The Actual Wedding Day

Mass or No Mass: Usually a marriage between two Catholics is held during the celebration of the Eucharist. A marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic is held outside the Eucharistic celebration. This is to ensure that all those present who are not Catholic are not excluded from any part of the ceremony.

The Church Building: The church building is a sacred place. The Blessed Sacrament, the real presence of Jesus Christ, is reserved in the church building. During the rehearsal, and before and after the ceremony, we expect that everyone will at all times conduct themselves with dignity and decorum.

Arrival: The church will be open one hour before the ceremony. No one should arrive before that time. The parish center will be available for the wedding party and guests prior to the start of the ceremony.

***The wedding party is responsible for removing all wedding-related trash and placing it in the dumpster in the parking lot.**

Before the Ceremony Begins: All items must be picked up and secured in your cars. For your security we urge that all valuables be locked in your cars. St. Gertrude Church cannot be held responsible for any valuables left unattended.

Bride, Wedding Party, and Parents

- As a courtesy to those involved, ceremonies must start on time.
- Match up your bridesmaids and groomsmen prior to the rehearsal.
- The priest and wedding coordinator will direct the wedding party and parents as to exactly where everyone is to be standing and seated for the ceremony.
- Designate two groomsmen in your wedding party to escort the mothers (and grandmothers, if you choose) down the aisle.
- Mothers will be escorted down the aisle five minutes before the ceremony begins.

Groom and Groomsmen

- Groomsmen should be at the front doors of the church to seat guests 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.
- The Groom and Best Man are required to be in the sacristy 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.

Alcohol and Smoking: No consumption of alcohol is permitted on the Church property. Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the building complex.

Aisle Runner: The attractive floor of St. Gertrude Church is well maintained and kept clean. Because aisle runners can be slippery, often wrinkle and tear, they are a liability, and thus are **not permitted**.

Altar Servers: If your wedding includes Holy Mass, please arrange for altar servers with the parish priest. An offering for each server is customary. (See page 15)

Candles: The lighting of a unity candle is not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage, and is therefore not included in the wedding ceremony at St. Gertrude Church. If the wedding couple wishes to incorporate the lighting of a unity candle, this is more appropriate at the wedding reception. Candelabra are also not permitted.

Flowers: Up to two bouquets may be arranged at the high altar. Additionally, flowers may be placed on the two side altars dedicated to the Blessed Mother and to St. Joseph, or in front of the main altar. It is hoped that flowers placed in church for the wedding would be left in the church for the weekend Masses. Vases may be collected later on during the week when the sacristans will remove the flowers.

For reasons of safety and aesthetics, dropping flowers or flower petals, by flower girls, in the church aisle is not permitted.

Other Details

- Bows or decorations must be tied to the pews. Tape, tacks, etc. are not permitted. There are 24 pews on each side of the center aisle.