Before it all Begins…

Mabuhay Bill,

Look guy, when you get here, if what you said is your goal then immediately ASAP get to the American Embassy, if you have been married b4, have your divorce papers with you, if you where married b4 and your wife died have her death certificate along with your marriage license with you, you only have a 2 1/2 hour window to hit, Legal Capacity to Marry
Mon through Fri 7:30am - 10:00am
Make sure you are there well before, sometimes 6;30 is not too early, first come first served, can't marry without it.

To wed in 3 weeks is a pipe dream, it can't be done, see when you go to apply for the license it has a waiting period of 10 days before it is valid, after applying, plus you have the class to attend, this>> Certificate of Attendance in a **pre-marital** counseling and family planning seminar conducted by the Division of Maternal and Child Health at the Municipal/City Hall in the same municipality or city where the contracting parties applied for the marriage license.
you know when you arrive you will get a 21 day free VISA, you can NOT wait till the 21st day to go in for your extension (38 days) because if there are any problems you will be left out in the cold, ideally you should go in with at least 3-4 days left so you would be talking 17-18 days into your VISA.

So I would suggest you stay in Manila your first day, where you can hit the embassy the second day and being as it is still early could even then go apply for your license in her hometown, here is the Embassy> American Citizen Services
U.S. Embassy
1201 Roxas Blvd.
Ermita, Manila, Philippines
very easy to access but hit that window early, do your waiting first not later, later might mean you waited for nothing, too late.

APPLICATION FOR A PHILIPPINE MARRIAGE LICENSE

Marriage License: a requirement for either a Civil or Church wedding to be held in the Philippines. The Application Form for a marriage license must be secured at the Local Civil Registrar from the city, town or municipality where either the bride or the groom habitually resides. The personal appearance of those getting married is required in applying for a marriage license.

Each of the contracting parties shall file separately a sworn application for each license with the proper local civil registrar. Philippine law prescribes a ten-day waiting period from the filing of the Application to the issuance of the marriage license. The license is valid for 120 days from date of issuance and may be used anywhere in the Philippines.

At the time the contracting parties appear to file their application for a Marriage License to the local civil registrar, he or she must also submit the following supporting documents:

> Birth Certificate: Certified True Copy required of each the contracting parties with the respective registry number. This document is issued by the National Statistics Office (NSO).
>
> NOTE: NSO now provides a web service which accepts online application for copies of birth and marriage certificates. It is called the **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**, a web facility aimed to provide Filipinos within and outside the country an alternative means in applying for copies of their civil registry documents. It also has a 24-7 **hotline** called the NSO Helpline Plus with telephone no. (632)737.1111. You could also reach them via email through: e-census.L.Hufana@mail.census.gov.ph

Parents' Consent (for 18-21 years old) or Parent's Advice (for 21-25 years old): Under Philippine law, the legal age for marriage is 18. If the contracting parties are between the ages of 18 and 21, they must present written consent to the marriage from their father, mother or legal guardian. While any contracting

party between the age of 22 and 25 must present written parental advice, i.e., a written indication that the parents are aware of the couple's intent to marry.

Certificate of Attendance in a **pre-marital** counseling and family planning seminar conducted by the Division of Maternal and Child Health at the Municipal/City Hall in the same municipality or city where the contracting parties applied for the marriage license.

But after the smoke all clears and you are wed, then when you go into immigration for your next **extention** (each is 59 days) just have your marriage license with you and your wife would help because of the lingo, and you can try and ask for it there, the BALIKBAYAN visa is given to spouses and family members of FILIPINO passport holders. So IF you are married to a **FIlipina** and your SURNAME is on her FILIPINO PASSPORT then you qualify, IF NOT you don't. You can NOT apply for this visa; it's issued to FILIPINO **Balikbayans** (defined as "returning countrymen") and family members when they ARRIVE back in the Philippines TOGETHER.

So after you get married THEN have a NEW Filipino passport issued in your wife's NEW name then leave the country and when you arrive you qualify for this visa.

Be advised, you STILL will have to leave once a year even with the Balikbayan, the best you can do is switch from Balikbayan to tourist after one year, but then you will have the trips to immigration again the best way to go if you don't like the idea of having to leave yearly or every 2 1/2 years (this includes tourist VISA) is the IMMIGRANT VISA-non quota VISA (13A) best applied for while living with spouse in another country but can be had here, cheap under 7,000 peso unless you want express then about 8,500 peso I can get you more info if you are interested.
Dave

Glossary of *'Kasal'*

(List of Filipino / Tagalog Wedding Terms)

The Event

Wedding - *kasal*
Getting married - *ikakasal*
Marriage (or the act of marrying) - *pag-iisang dibdib* (loose translation: two hearts as one); *pag-aasawa*
Wedding ceremony - *kasalan*
Reception / wedding banquet- *handaan*
Church wedding - *kasal sa simbahan*
Civil wedding / civilly married - *kasal sa jues* ('judge' in Sapnish)

The Wedding Participants

Soon-to-weds - *ikakasal; kakasalin*
Groom - adressed simply as "lalaki" (man) in a Filipino/Tagalog wedding ceremony;
Nobyo (boyfriend) or *lalaking kakasalin* (marrying man) in everyday converstion
Bride - adressed simply as "babae" (woman) in a Filipino/Tagalog wedding ceremony;
Nobya (girlfriend) or *babaeng kakasalin* (marrying woman) in everyday converstion
Priest - *pari*
Parent(s) - *(mga) magulang*
Wedding sponsor (male) - *ninong* (godfather in English; *padrino* in Spanish)
Wedding sponsor (female) - *ninang* (godmother in English; *padrina* in Spanish)
Maid of honor - *binibining pandangal*
Matron of honor - *ginang pandangal*
Best man - *piling ginoo*
Bridesmaid / groomsman / secondary sponsor - *abay*
Newlyweds - *bagong kasal*
Wife / husband - *asawa* or *kabiyak (*loose transaltion: better half)

The Bridal Ensemble

wedding gown - *traje de boda* (Spanish in orgin)
flower - *bulaklak*
ring (engagement or wedding ring) - *singsing*
arrhae (wedding coins) - *arras* (Spanish in orgin)
candle - *kandila*
veil - *belo*
cord - *yugal*

Commonly used phrases

Mahal kita. - "I love you."
Ini-ibig kita. - another variation of "I love you."
Ikaw ang babaeng pakakasalan ko. - "You are the woman I'll marry."
Dadalhin kita sa altar. - "I'll bring you to the altar" *or* "I'll marry you."
Pakakasalan mo ba ako? - "Will you marry me?"
Pakasal na tayo! - "Let's get married!"
Ikakasal na ako! -" I'm getting married!"
Kailan/Saan ang kasal? - When/Where is the wedding gonna be?
Mabuhay ang bagong kasal! - Cheers! *or* Long live the newlyweds!

Just for fun: Anagrams of the word *'kasal'*
note: most of the terms below generally have negative connotations
so be careful not to confuse them with the word "kasal"

aklas –a walkout; strike or revolt
askal - colloquial term which means or stray dog, mongrel; contraction of the phrase *"asong kalye"* (loose translation: street dog)
kalas - separate; pull apart
lakas - strength
laksa - literally means "ten thousand" *(i.e. laksa-lasang tao ang dumalo)*
lasak - a gamefowl term which refers to a white-feathered rooster with some spangle-like butchers
sakal - choke; strangle; wring one's neck
sakla - gamble; gambling with the use of playing cards

salak - prefix of the words *salakay* (attack; invade); *salakab* (trap); and *salaksak* (shove; push roughly)

Pinoy Pre-Wedding Rituals in Modern Times

The good news is that the days of *pikot* (shotgun marriage) and *kasunduan* (arranged marriage) -- where both the bride and groom had no choice but to comply with the parents' wishes – are long gone.

The bad news: *harana* (suitor's serenade) is mostly unheard of and *ligawan* (courtship) is simply reduced to dating. Love letters these days are just regular emails and SMS messages that took a little longer to compose. So when do constant dates officially make a couple? Decades ago, a girl may be expected to say 'Yes' first just so the guy would know that she liked him too. Nowadays, well… they just know.

While Filipino courtship rituals are going the way of the dinosaurs, the rituals for engagements and pre-weddings remain pretty much the same, except for some modern tweaking in keeping with the times. Despite these, the basic essence remains: sincere intentions, respect to elders and spiritual devotion. Read on….

Pagtatapat

Marriage Proposal without popping the actual question

They say that no woman wants to be married without first being asked. But do Filipino men really know how to propose? If so, why does the phrase "*Pakakasalan mo ba ako*?" (Will you marry me?) sounds more like a threat than a proposal? Popping the question is a totally Western concept that seems out of place within serious Filipino relationships where marriage is often a matter of 'when' rather than 'if'. For Pinoys, "*Pakasal na tayo*!" (Let's get married!) seem to be the more likely proposition. Quite rightly, as proposal literally means a presentation of some plan; so asking should be out of the question. Looks like we got it right.

Singsing / Paghingi ng Kamay

The Engagement Ring as dowry

A ring symbolizes such a deeper commitment that your average Pinoy will avoid this as a gift to a girlfriend early in the relationship to avoid sending the wrong signal. The engagement ring concept is likewise a Western influence, but its local adaptation is a consequence of practicality rather than colonial mentality. The giving of the ring is actually a scaled-down version of our forefather's offering of *dote/bigay-kaya* (dowry) to his future wife (and her family) to signify his intentions. It is a symbolic gift for her acceptance to the asking of her hand in marriage (*paghingi ng kamay*).

The most popular choice for a 'rock' is the diamond. But some traditional and sentimental Filipino families may insist on having their son offer a treasured family heirloom as an engagement ring to symbolize his family's approval and her acceptance into their family. In such case, it would be best to present the ring as a highlight of the *pamanhikan*.

Pamanhikan

The (often awkward) meeting of two families

The blueprints of wedding plans are drawn or made known during this occasion. The *pamanhikan* is often hosted by the bride's family as the groom and his folks visit them to formally ask their daughter's hand in marriage and discuss plans for the upcoming wedding over lunch or dinner. This can be an uneasy situation if it's the first time for both parties to meet. The soon-to-weds may feel a little awkward (nervous even) seeing and listening to their parents consult each other on matters like their wedding budget, guest list and the like.

It is customary that the visiting family bring a gift (often, the best home-cooked specialty of the groom's mom) for the hosts. Others may opt to hold the meeting on neutral grounds (a restaurant is a likely choice) or invite a mutual acquaintance to the gathering and help ease the awkwarness of the first meeting. Why do Pinoys bother with all the trouble? We all seek our parents' blessings for a happy and trouble-free marriage. Afterall, *pamanhikan* is a treasured Filipino heritage which, first and foremost, avoids the embarrassing situation of having the parents see each other as strangers come wedding day.

Paninilbihan

Laboring for a family's approval

Paninilbihan is said to be a long-forgotten tradition where the suitor performs some daunting chores for the bride's family to show his worth, fortitude and responsibility. Tasks like *pagsibak ng kahoy* (firewood chopping) or *pag-igib ng tubig* (water fetching) come to mind. But this ritual is still sub-consciously practiced in these modern times, only on a much simpler scale (thank goodness!).

As Filipinos parents prefer the boyfriend to pay a visit to their daugther in their house rather than date elsewhere, he is considered as an unofficial part of the household rather than a mere guest. Thus, it comes as no surprise when family members ask simple favors from him such as driving the girlfriend's mother to the supermarket or replacing a busted light in the kitchen. Come to think of it, future sons- or daughters-in-law are expected to run some simple errands for their would-be-in-laws if he/she seeks their approval. These little favors form part of the *paninilbihan* process still deeply imbibed in the Filipino psyche.

Pa-alam

Wedding announcements, Filipino style

The practice of pa-alam (to inform) should not be confused with the Pilipino term "paalam" (goodbye). Though less formal than the *pamanhikan*, *pa-alam* is another gesture appreciated by Filipino elders as a sign of respect. Basically, the practice is just a round of casual diplomatic visits and 'courtesy calls' to people who matter most to the couple (usually elder relatives in the province). The spouse-to-be is introduced to the people visited and informed of the impending wedding to secure their blessings. Couples may choose to do this at a family reunion while handing over the wedding invitations to save on trips. This is also the period when soon-to-weds visit their prospective *ninong*s or *ninang*s (godparents/principal sponsors) for the wedding and it is customary to bring a little something for the person visited (a basket of fruits is a popular choice).

Since the 'major hurdle' is over and done with after the *pamanhikan*, *pa-alam* should be a breeze. Couples should remain patient though as some elders may ask them to recount their love story, give a litany about married life, or ask the

groom-to-be about his line of work and family background.

Dulog

Meeting a 'father' other than the future spouse's

The term "*dulog*" literally means "approach." This is the time were soon-to-weds approach their parish priest for a meeting. In the past, this was done in reverence to the priest who served as a "father" to either the bride- or groom-to-be. It was once considered a necessary visit especially when the future spouse is somebody unfamiliar or from outside the parish.

Presently, *dulog* (Canonical/pre-nuptial interview) is a church requirement where the parish priest discusses with the couple their duties and responsibilities as husband and wife. The interview also serves the purpose of finding any possible impediments to the impending union and determining the couple's readiness to wed and knowledge about the doctrines of a Catholic marriage. This visit will be a good time to ask the priest whatever questions they may have related to the upcoming church wedding.

Despedida de Soltera

A wholesome bachelorette party

The *despedida de soltera* (literally, goodbye to spinsterhood) is a send-off party held close to the wedding date in honor of the bride-to-be and hosted by her family. This celebrates her family's consent and blessings for the upcoming union. The groom and his family, the wedding entourage, close friends & relatives from both sides are all invited to meet and get to know one another before the big day. The occasion may serve as the formal introduction of the two families/clans to each other. This affair can be anything from a formal sit-down dinner to a casual get-together party.

Alay-Itlog kay Sta. Clara

Rain, rain go away!

Although rain showers on the wedding day itself are believed to bring bountiful blessings to a newly married couple, many still prefer a bright and sunny

wedding day. But rain is something mere mortals can't control, so what do Pinoys do? Seek God's help through the intercession of a Saint by offering eggs. Despite its pagan origins, marrying Catholic Pinoys still troop to the monastery of Sta. Clara in Katipunan Ave. to offer eggs to the patron saint and request the cloistered nuns to pray that their wedding day be rain-free.
Sta. Clara, eggs, rain… what's the connection? St. Claire has long been considered a patron saint of good weather because her name in Spanish (*clara*) means clear, like the brightening of sky after a storm. The patroness' link with eggs came about as her name *(clara [de huevo])* is the Spanish for 'egg white'. That became the basis why the residents of Obando, Bulacan believed in offering eggs at the base of the altar of Sta. Clara to pray for good weather. But we suggest that soon-to-weds consider other offerings (food, fruits or monetary) for even our beloved nuns know too well that an egg too many means cholesterol overload!

Kasal Kumpisal

Coming 'clean' before the ceremony
This is more of a moral obligation than a tradition required by the Church of every marrying Catholic couple. A few days prior the wedding, soon-to-weds are asked to have their final confessions with a priest as single individuals since they will partake in the bread and share the wine (symbolic of the Body and Blood of Christ) during the Nuptial Mass. The confessions serve as a spiritual cleansing for the sins committed prior to the Sacrament of Marriage and a commitment & devotion to one's lifetime partner.

Pinoy Wedding Facts & Trivia
Traditionally, wedding expenses are paid for by the groom's family in the Philippine setting, unlike in some western cultures. But more and more couples are giving their share from their hard-earned savings. Other couples even shoulder the entire wedding expenses themselves. It normally follows that whoever foots the bill has the final say on the size of the wedding; he or she also has the 'majority stake' on guest list.

It was a tradition for the bride to hold an heirloom rosary with the bridal bouquet during the Nuptial Mass. This practice is now being revived by some brides to honor our Catholic heritage and respect the solemn occasion.

Instead of a bouquet toss, some Filipina brides opt to offer the flowers to a favorite Saint or to the image of Virgin Mary at the church. Some even go out of their way to offer the bouquet at the grave of a lost loved one.

Using rice grains as confetti are discouraged in most churches in keeping with the austere times.

Some Catholic churches don't allow Sunday weddings.

A Catholic Filipino wedding ceremony is held with a full Mass that runs about a hour.

Aside from the exchange of rings, the giving of the arrhae (earnest money in the form of 13 pieces of gold or silver coins) is a part of Filipino weddings as the groom's pledge of his dedication to the welfare of his wife and children *(read more about arrhae/wedding coins)*.

The arrhae/*arras* is carried by a coin bearer who marches with the ring bearer during the processional and recessional.

If the couple intends to write their own wedding vows instead of reading the standard vows provided by the church, they should inform the officiating priest and ask for his approval.

Most Filipino brides prefer a custom-made wedding gown than
having it ready-made or buying off-the-rack.

The most popular month for weddings in the Philippines is December (until early

January) rather than June.

***UPDATE**: On August 2006, the National Statistics Office announce that for four consecutive years, **MAY**, the month of flowers and fiestas, was consistently the peak month for getting married here in the country [READ MORE].*

Filipino bridegrooms also walk down the aisle, either alone or with his parents.

The proximity of the ceremony and reception venues is a major consideration for guests' convenience, taking into account the Manila traffic and parking concerns *(read more wedding traffic tips)*.

Traditionally, wedding invitations have an insert/page that includes all the names and roles of each member of the bridal party.

Reception cards are not so popular in the Philippines since it is usually expected that a wedding invitation covers both the ceremony and the reception.

Aside from the bridesmaids and groomsmen, three additional pairs of wedding attendants stand as secondary sponsors who assist in the *[a]* wedding candle, *[b]* veil and *[c]* cord ceremonies held during the Nuptial Mass.

[a] The candle sponsors light the wedding candles located at each side of couple. The flame from the candles symbolizes God's presence within the union. The lighting of a unity candle *(of Protestant origin)* is sometimes integrated as a variation.

[b] Next, the veil sponsors drape and pin the veil *(a long white tulle)* on the groom's shoulder and over the bride's head. This symbolizes the union of two people 'clothed' as one.

[c] Finally, the cord sponsors stand up with the cord (a silken rope, a string of

flowers or links of coins) in the form of a figure-eight, placing each loop loosely around the neck/shoulder area of the couple. This symbolizes the infinite bond of marriage.

The veil and cord ceremonies have the marrying couple 'tied-up' together while kneeling for almost half the time during the nuptial Mass *(it isn't as hard as it sounds, really)*.

Soon-to-weds do not arrive at the ceremony venue at the same time. The groom is expected to arrive several minutes *(an hour even!)* prior to the set time of the wedding to receive guests. The bride on the other hand, usually stays in the bridal car and only alights from the vehicle just in time for her bridal march.

As part of the ceremonial dance at the reception, some couples incorporate a 'money dance' where guests pin peso (or dollar!) bills on either the bride or groom in return for a chance to dance with them.

Newlyweds release a pair of white doves during the reception to signify a peaceful and harmonious marital relationship. Catchers find themselves going home with a new feathered pet.

Philippine Wedding Folklore & Superstitions

In this day and age, we Filipinos still cling numerous widely-held folk beliefs that have no scientific or logical basis. But as your *lola* may swear that they are indeed backed up by some past experiences, *lolo* may dismiss those incidents as mere coincidences.

What are enumerate below are mostly superstitions by the *Tagalog*s. We're quite sure there are more from the other regions as these beliefs vary from province to province. Some of the items here are based on Neni Sta. Romana's book called "***Don't Take a Bath on a Friday***" (Tahanan Books, 1996), while others are stuff we heard from our moms and relatives in the provinces from weddings past. These things do come up whenever there's a wedding in the family.

Some are still adhered to this day primarily because of our "there's-nothing-to-lose-if-we-comply" attitude; others are totally ignored since people find such things downright ridiculous. Whichever school of thought you subscribe to, we merely compiled this list for reference and entertainment. Notice that some of these may sound like as a convenient excuses to an unfortunate things happening during the big day. It could be our way of coping with unforeseen party poopers. It's ultimately up to you if you want to follow them, but be warned that one superstition may totally contradict another so don't go crazy over them. Pardon some of our side comments below some of the items, we really can't help it!
Here goes…

Never clear the table while somebody is still eating or that person will never get married.

Brides shouldn't try on her wedding dress before the wedding day or it will not push through.

Knives and other sharp, pointed objects are said to be bad choices for wedding gifts as giving them will lead to a broken marriage.

Giving an *arinola* (chamberpot) as a wedding gift is believed to bring good luck to the giver and the newlyweds.
(Cheapskate alert!)

Soon-to-weds are said to be accident-prone especially as their altar date draws near; thus, they must avoid traveling and taking long drives before their wedding day.
(Does that mean you can't drive to Antipolo and pray for a good voyage for your honeymoon?)

The groom who sits down before his bride does during the wedding ceremony will be *'under-the –saya'* (henpecked husband).

If a bride's monthly period falls on the wedding day, the couple will be blessed with a lot of children.
(One things sure though, no honeymoon baby here!)

Couples must offer eggs to *Sta. Clara* to pray that the wedding day would be rain-free.

A downpour during the wedding brings prosperity and marital bliss!
(So why offer eggs if the rain bring good luck? Smells fishy… maybe it's the eggs!)

The spouse on whose side the wedding candle is lit last will be a submissve partner.

If the flame dies out on one of the wedding candles, it means the spouse, on whose side the unlit candle belongs to will die ahead of the other.
(Glad somebody thought of the Unity Candle and overshadowed all these candle negativity!)

Throwing rice confetti at the newlyweds will bring them prosperity all their lives.

The groom must arrive at the church before the bride to avoid bad luck.
(Unless you want everyone to panic and make it appear that the bride's been stood up!)

It is considered bad luck for siblings to marry within the same year.
In the vernacular, this is known as *"sukob"* or sharing one's luck with somebody else.

Accidentally breaking something during the reception *(be it a plate or a goblet)* brings good luck to the newlyweds.

The bride should 'accidentally' step on the groom's foot while walking towards the altar if she wants him to agree with her every whim.

A bride who wears pearls on her wedding will be a miserable since these gems are considered 'tears' of the oysters.

A bride who wears pearls on her wedding will never become a miserable wife as the pearls will served as a foil for bad luck and represent the tears she could have shed if she hasn't worn any on the wedding day.

An unmarried woman who follows the footsteps (literally) of the newlyweds will marry soon.

The more food at the reception, the bountiful the blessings the marriage will receive.

Dropping the wedding ring, the veil or a coin in the arrhae during the ceremony spells unhappiness for the couple.
(Gheez! We let two grown-ups handle and pin the veil on the couple but we let two naughty little boys carry the rings and arras! Don't we care for happy marriages at all?!!)

Elements of a Filipiñana Wedding

For the wedding gown, wear a modernized *Maria Clara* complete with *panuelo*.

The groom, the male entourage and wedding guests should wear a *barong tagalog*.

The wedding invitation should be in Filipino/Tagalog.

Choose a turn-of-the-century venues for the ceremony and reception.

Intramuros comes to mind.

Instead of a bridal car, hire a horse-drawn *carruaje* or *kalesa*.

Have the Nuptial Mass in Filipino. Say your vows in the vernacular.

Use *Sampaguita* (our National flower) and other local blooms for the bouquet, confetti and decors.

Hold an heirloom rosary with your bouquet as you march to honor your Catholic heritage.

Let the choir sing Tagalog Liturgy songs for the ceremony
and OPM lovesongs for the communion, piacture-taking and recessional.

Upon exit at the church or during Grand Entrance at the reception, have the bestman exclaim: *"MABUHAY ANG BAGONG KASAL!!!"*

Create a *Barrio Fiesta* atmosphere in the reception.

Serve an all-Filipino buffet with a *lecheon* (roast pig) as a central part of the *handaan*.

For December weddings, have a *puto bungbong* and *bibingka* stall
to get the guests into the Christmas mood.

Dress up the ceiling of the reception hall with *banderitas* instead of drapes.

Instead of flowers, use tropical fruits *(mango, pineapple, rambutan, atis, etc.)* as table centerpieces.

Hire a *rondalla* instead of a string quartet.

Play the guitar and serenade the bride with a *harana*.

Do the money dance. It's a Filipino tradition!

Never miss the details.

Have a caketopper with the groom in a traditional *barong* than the usual tuxedo. **shameless plug**

Instead of champagne, propose a toast with *lambanog*.

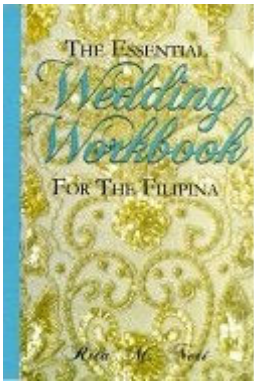
Gather the single ladies and play *agawang-panyo* or hang several blooms on a *pabitin* instead of doing the traditional bouquet toss.

Gather the single men to play *pukpok-palayok* instead of the garter toss.

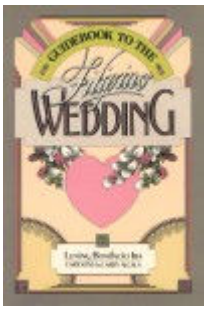
Our native delicacies and local handicrafts are perfect as wedding favors.

Books about *Pinoy Kasalan*
Aside from the wedding handbooks that W@W publishes annually, there are other worthy publications about Filipino weddings.

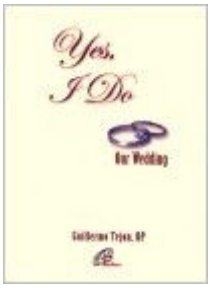
title: **Kasalan**
author: Jose "Pitoy" Moreno
ISBN: 9710849204
type: hardcover / coffee table book
published: 1990
publisher: National Bookstore
description:
Learn more about the Filipino wedding. Its rites and rituals. Myths and magic. Familiarize yourself with the icons and lexicons of Filipino weddings and even those of contemporary Western-inspired nuptials. This finely written book is veritable compendium of wedding lore and symbols. A must read for every prospective Filipino bride and groom.
[more info]



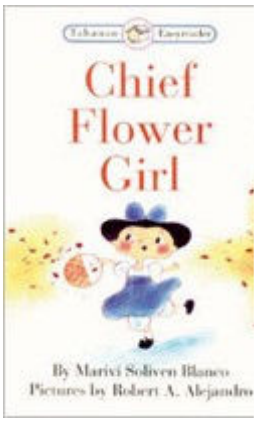
title: **The Essential Wedding Workbook For The Filipina**
author: Rita M. Neri
ISBN: 9712707768
type: hardcover / ring bound planner
published: 1998
publisher: Anvil Publishing
description:
This comprehensive publication whose most important asset is its suitability to local culture and contemporary conditions. The first part serves as an introduction consisting of articles tackling relevant issues. The second part is the actual planner which the user can write on. It is the first wedding planner of its kind addressing every question and need of the Filipina bride not only for the Filipina brides in the Philippines but for all Filipinas all over the world. [more info]



title: **Guidebook to the Filipino Wedding**
author: Luning Bonifacio Ira
illustrator: Larry Alcala
ISBN: 9711510170
type: paperback
published: 1990
publisher: Vera-Reyes Publishing
description:
Here, for the first time between book covers, are the answers to questions that arise once a couple begins preparing for the wedding. [more info]



title: **Yes, I Do**
author: Guillermo Tejon, OP
type: paperback / booklet
publisher: Paulines Publishing House
description:
This is a booklet that helps engaged couples to understand better the sacrament of marriage and its significance in their lives as Christians. It also contains a liturgical guide on the celebration of the said sacrament. [more info]



title: **Chief Flower Girl**
author: Marivi Soliven Blanco
illustrator: Robert Alejandro
type: paperback/ hardcover editions
publisher: Tahanan Books for Young Readers
description:
Join Christina's delightful romp down the aisle as she makes sure that Tita Ria's wedding will truly be an affair to remember. [more info]

Courtship and Marriage Rites in Philippine Provinces feature originally appeared in NY. Pilipinas!

Perhaps of all customs and rituals, none is as important to a society as courtship and marriage. For it is in these events that a culture secures its continuity. Ties are created, where previously there were none. Families clans are united. And through the observance of traditional courtship, the individuals find a bond, not only to each other, but to generations past... ancestors who have lived and loved and forged relationships in like manner.

This page takes us through the different kinds of courtship practiced in the Philippines today, culminating in the grand wedding. The nuances of these customs vary from region to region -- yet all of them are marked by a heady mix of enigma and excitement, nervousness and negotiation, ceremony and celebration.

Olog - The Betrothal House

Ifugao, Mountain Province

There is a practice among the Ifugaos of northern Luzon of segregating "marriage-able" girls in a communal abode called "*Olog*" or "*Agamang*". (The marriageable boys are accommodated in another communal house called the "*Ato*".) The boys from the "*Ato*" regularly visit the "*Olog*" and performed the first stage of courtship known as the "*Ca-i-sing.*" They unburden their feelings in native songs rich in meanings and insinuation. The girls respond likewise in native verse. All these are done under the watchful eye of the "*Olog*" head -- an

elderly and married woman or a childless widow who keeps the parents of her wards informed of the developments of the courtship.
The practice, unique to our Northern Mountain Tribes is also known as "*Ebgan*" (Kalinga) or "*Pangis*" (Tingguian).

Tapat - Courtship Through Poetry and Song
Ilocos province
"*Tapat*" is practiced in small towns of Ilocos. A young man employs music and verse to declare his attraction to his lady love. The would-be suitor (sometimes with a friend in tow for moral support) goes to the girl's house and serenades her from her window. The lady then answers in a song--usually one that suggests that the man has a long courtship ahead of him. The man then counters with another song this time more passionate. The musical repartee goes on and on until an "understanding" is reached.

This practice is also known "*harand*" in the Tagalog regions. Among the Maranaos, the practice is known as "*Tubad-tubad*" wherein playful verses are exchanged between the two would-be lovers.

Bisperas - The Eve of the Wedding
Province of Batangas
This is an old custom peculiar to Batangas. The day before the wedding, an entourage consisting of the groom's parents, relatives, "*abays*", "*ninangs*" and "*ninongs*", and others concerned with the wedding walk in a procession from the groom's house to the bride's house. The purpose of this journey is to deliver all the ingredients to be used in preparation of the wedding feast. Everything from the cows and chickens, to the vegetables and rice, down to the condiments and the cutlery are carried in the procession. Upon arrival at the bride's house, refreshments are served. Then the elaborate preparations for the reception will be proceed thereafter.

Pamalaye - The Formal Proposal
Province of Cebu

Among the traditional Cebuanos, the asking of the girl's hand in marriage is no simple matter. The entire family of the man troops the girl's home, bringing with them musicians, gifts, food and wine. The discussions regarding the marriage are deputized to a "*Mamamae*" and a "*Sagang*" whose main qualifications are great skill in the art of debate and rebuttal. They represent the interest of both families and are empowered to make binding contracts regarding the dowry. The reaching of an agreement between the families is the high point of this custom called the "Pamalaye", and lavish festivities ensue.
Among the Ilocanos, this is known as " *Tampd*" or, the more formal arrangement, the "*Danon.*" To the Tagalogs, it is "*Pamanhikan.*" It is "*Pasagull*" to the Palaweños and "*Kapamalai*" to the Maranaos.•

Pangagad - Bride Service

Province of Leyte

In Leyte, in lieu of paying a dowry, a Filipino man wishing to wed into a traditional family is expected to perform household service to the bride's family as proof of his sincerity and fortitude. This can include anything from fetching water and chopping firewood, working in the farm as well as running household errands. This usually lasts about one year. This is more of a test period--as the rendering of the "*pangagad*" still does not guarantee irrevocable acceptance of the marriage proposal. Thus, it is appropriately known as "*Paninilbihan*" (being of service) or "*Subok*" (trial) to the Tagalogs. In Bicol, it is called the "*Pamianan*."

Pangalay - The Wedding

Tausug

Of all social events, perhaps none is more elaborate than a wedding. And of all Filipino weddings, perhaps none is as full of color, splendor and pageantry as a Tausog wedding. On the eve of the affair, a cacophony of native percussion instruments--"*agong*", "*kulingtang*"and "*gabbang*" announce the impending wedding. Everyone in the village, young and old, are invited. The ceremony proper is performed by an "*Imam*" or Muslim priest. After readings from the "*Koran*", the groom puts his "fingerprint" on the forehead of the bride. This

gesture formally seals the marriage. Like all weddings--lavish feasting, singing, dancing and marry making ensue. And the entire tribe celebrates the joy and love and life.

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For more information about the different courtship, wedding & marriage practices in other regions of the Philippines, read Philippine Wedding Practices.

Related Link: IFUGAOS PRESERVE WEDDING CUSTOMS -Inquirer (August 3, 1999)

Filipino Wedding Customs

(article by Shu Shu Costa from the feature entitled: "Rituals of Bliss"; text &

images courtesy of aOnline)

In early Filipino custom, the groom-to-be threw his spear at the front steps of his intended's home, a sign that she has been spoken for. These days, a ring suffices as the symbol of engagement.

The Engagement

After the couple has decided to marry, the first order of business is the *pamanhikan*, where the groom and his parents visit the bride's family to ask for her hand in marriage. Wedding plans are often made at this time, including a discussion of the budget and guest list. Don't be surprised if the groom-to-be is expected to run some errands or help out around the bride's house. This tradition is called *paninilbihan*, where the suitor renders service to his future wife's family to gain their approval.

The Wedding Outfits

The white wedding dress has become popular in the last hundred years or so

with America's influence in the Philippines. Before that, brides wore their best dress, in a festive color or even stylish black, to celebrate a wedding. Orange blossom bouquets and adornments were a must during the turn of the last century. For men, the *barong tagalog* is the traditional Filipino formal wear. It is a cool, almost transparent, embroidered shirt, made from silky pina or jusi, two native ecru fabrics. It is worn untucked, over black pants, with a white t-shirt underneath. These days, a Filipino American groom might wear the conventional black tux, but Filipino male wedding guests will usually show up in their finest *barongs*.

The Ceremony

In pre-colonial days, a wedding ceremony lasted three days. On the first day, the bride and groom were brought to the house of a priest or *babaylan*, who joined their hands over a plate of raw rice and blessed the couple. On the third day, the priest pricked the chests of both bride and groom and drew a little blood. Joining their hands, they declared their love for each other three times. The priest then fed them cooked rice from the same plate and gave them a drink of some of their blood mixed with water. Binding their hands and necks with a cord, he declared them married. The majority of Filipino weddings are now Catholic weddings, but some native traditions remain. Most have special "sponsors" who act as witnesses to the marriage. The principal sponsors could be godparents, counselors, a favorite uncle and aunt, even a parent. Secondary sponsors handle special parts of the ceremony, such as the candle, cord and veil ceremonies. Candle sponsors light two candles, which the bride and groom use to light a single candle to symbolize the joining of the two families and to invoke the light of Christ in their married life. Veil sponsors place a white veil over the bride's head and the groom's shoulders, a symbol of two people clothed as one. Cord sponsors drape the *yugal* (a decorative silk cord) in a figure-eight shape--to symbolize everlasting fidelity--over the shoulders of the bride and groom. The groom gives the bride 13 coins or *arrhae*, blessed by the priest, as a sign of his dedication to his wife's well-being and the welfare of their future children.

The Food

The Filipino wedding feast is elaborate. One feast celebrated at the turn of the last century involved these foods: First was served cold vermicelli soup. The

soup was followed by meats of unlimited quantity--stewed goat, chicken minced with garlic, boiled ham, stuffed capon, roast pork and several kinds of fish. There were no salads, but plenty of relishes, including red peppers, olives, green mango pickles and crystallized fruits. For dessert, there were meringues, baked custard flan, coconut macaroons and sweetened seeds of the nipa plant.

Back to *Barong* (A Buyer's Guide to *Barong* Tagalog)
by **J. Anthony Lopez**, taken from the Jul. 15, 2006 edition of "About Weddings," The Manila Bulletin's wedding supplement. Republished with permission.

Most women have always dreamed about getting married in a church ceremony.

While very charming, the only drawback to this is that it requires a male presence in the church to get the party started.

Should you be the male, approach the event like you would your crowning moment – whether your definition of a crowning moment is an inauguration or a public execution. Either way, the *barong tagalog* is always the best choice for occasions like this.

Given the Philippines ' tempestuous climate, the *barong tagalog* will always be the formal outfit of choice, whether for a typical business day or attending a formal outdoor ceremony. Try wearing a coat and tie to work every day in the summer heat and you'll see what I mean. Likewise, try waiting for your bride outdoors decked out in a three-piece suit.

Of course, appealing to plain nationalism won't do the trick, as this is not a matter of picking one off the rack. To get married in a *barong* tagalog (or to bear witness at a wedding) means that you have taken the great responsibility of looking good, Filipino-style.

A Short History

According to many historians, the design of the *barong tagalog* and the choice of the material were considered a means of subjugation by Spain during the colonial era. The *barong tagalog* was an offshoot of a Spanish mandate that Filipino businessmen wear a formal suit but of a lesser degree in quality to theirs, and that the same should be made of transparent material to ensure that the *Indio*s (the term the Spaniards used to refer to the locals) wouldn't dream of hiding some weapons underneath. In addition, Filipinos of that era were allegedly instructed to keep their formal wear untucked to denote their lower status. Historically, keeping the shirt untucked is common sense for the warm Filipino weather. The designer of the *barong*, God bless his/her soul, wisely chose to consider this fact when he/she came up with the original design.

Of course, there is little evidence to back this particular theory, as we have yet to unearth an archive of dress codes from the Spanish era regarding the wearing of the *barong tagalog*. Besides, we can see old photos of our national heroes in western clothing—impeccably tucked and trousered.

Office or Occasion

Of course, when wearing *barongs*, there is a world of difference between the standard office *barong* and the formal event *barong*, so one should never wear one in lieu of the other. If you think wearing an office *barong* to a formal event

is a fashion faux pas, think about your mates' reaction when you show up for work in a *piña-jusi* ensemble.

Office *barong*s tend to be made from polyester and other synthetic fibers and tend to be totally opaque instead of transparent. Embroidery is more or less limited to the office logo and a few token designs. Popular among executives is the wearing of *barong tagalog*s made from the material called "*gusot-mayaman*." Composed of linen, "*gusot-mayaman*" is the easiest way to look like you've had a busy day.

Grooming for the Groom

For the formal *barongs*, only *jusi* and *piña* cloth will do. Jusi used to be made from *abaca* or banana fiber, but silk organza is now the preferred material. Mechanically woven, jusi is stronger and more durable. *Piña*, however, is the last word for ultra-formal *barong*s. Woven from pineapple leaves to create superfine fibers, *piña* cloth is thinner, softer, and much shinier than *jusi*. The embroidery of a *piña barong* is more impressive to look at.

Here is some advice for choosing a *barong* for your wedding:

- Always go for a custom-fitted *barong*. A ready-to-wear (RTW) version is the last resort of the hopeless. Men's bodies are an assorted lot, and it would be an extremely long shot for you to hope that you can get a *barong tagalog* that fits exactly right. Always look at the fit at the shoulders and the cuffs; these should be perfectly snug. Any difference, however slight, will be obvious and ugly.
- When deciding between *piña* and *jusi*, have the male entourage (never mind the godfathers—at their age, they're entitled to wear what they want) wear *jusi*, and reserve the *piña* version for the groom. This not only saves money, but creates a distinction for the groom. Since it's his day, it's only fitting - he deserves a spot above the rest. (After that, he'll have to learn to defer to the wife the rest of his married life.)
- When selecting the type of embroidery for your *barong*, try and restrain yourself from selecting overly intricate patterns. Apart from the conventional wisdom that anything in excess is bad, I have witnessed one too many scenes when the delicate piña *barong* ripped prior to the ceremony due to the undulations of the anxious wearer. Too much

needlework can speed up the half-life of this delicate clothing.

• Put on the *barong* only at the last moment, prior to getting married. Seatbelts, automatic doors, and drinks can invariably reduce the delicate *barong* to a mess, so covering it and placing it on a hanger in your car on the way to the church makes sense.

Cost Centers

Plenty of haberdasheries and tailoring shops can be found all over the country, and the tailors will be more than happy to show you their cloth selection and take your measurements on the spot. In some cases, their services may be cheaper than buying an RTW *barong*.

Those abroad, while limited with their choices, almost always get their clothes from the internet. Sites like **mybarong.com** offer a plethora of choices and can deliver *barong*s for both infants and giants. Smart Pinoys can always ask their friends or relatives to ship them the cloth instead, or shop around during their next visit home. Surely a little piña or jusi hunting will be worth the trip, and any professional tailor back home can create a masterpiece custom-fitted to their liking.

Weddings come once in a lifetime (in most cases), and since everybody has to defer the title of "most handsome guy" to you for a day, get a *barong* and make the most out of this privilege.

Driving & Traffic Tips for Metro Manila Weddings

Traffic . . . monstrous traffic seems to be an everyday concern for urban dwellers in this country's capital. Nowadays, it's no longer a matter of getting rid of it, its a matter of surviving it! Below are useful tips for the marrying couple and their wedding guests.

For the couple: Consider the proximity of the ceremony and reception venues. Guests often skip attending the ceremony and simply go straight to the reception just to avoid those long, nerve-wracking traffic jams in between. In short, don't let hunger turn to anger *grrrr!*.

For the guests: If the church is just a walking distance to the reception site,

consider parking at the latter venue and just walk to the ceremony. This way, you eliminate a great deal of trouble by parking ahead when the guests starts to troop the reception. After all, you can easily hitch a ride with somebody if you don't feel like walking to the reception site after the ceremony.

For the couple: Sunday may seem to be a perfect choice for weddings because of the lighter traffic, but most Catholic churches doesn't allow Sunday weddings. Check first with the church of your choice.

For the couple: Before the wedding day, consider driving to the ceremony and reception venues at the same time and day of the week that your wedding will take place. This could help you approximate the travel time and traffic condition on your wedding day.

For the groom: You know that you won't be in the bridal car when you get to the church. If you bring a car going there, who's going to drive it when you get in the bridal car after the ceremony? Spare yourself the hassle and have your best man drive you to the church. Remember, you have to be there ahead of the bride.

For the couple: Make sure you've prepared and brought all the necessary things for the wedding. One groom made sure his formal attire was ready and wrinkle-free; he even drove his car to the church using his driving sneakers so his shiny leather shoes would be good as new at the ceremony. Halfway to the church, he checked his stuff and realized he had left his shiny shoes and all he had was the pair of rugged sneakers. He made a quick turn around and had to go through the weekend traffic twice.

For the bride: Consider checking in at a nearby hotel the night before the wedding especially if your residence is far from the church and the reception. This way, you won't have to worry knowing you will get there on time.

For the couple: It's not a bad idea to have an insert in the invitation providing

site maps. These can be very useful to guests who aren't very familiar with the location. Just make sure that these inserts are well made and must not ruin the overall look of your elegant invitations.

For the guests: Make an effort to witness the ceremony and not just show up at the reception. This is basic bridal etiquette.

For the couple: Some couples choose to print the time on the invitation 30 minutes ahead of the actual schedule to ensure everybody's presence when it's time to start. This is a common practice, but strictly, Ms. Etiquette wouldn't like this.

For the guests: Carpool.

For the couple: Make sure the bridal car is in good condition on your wedding day. Many cars have gone bonkers and overheated on the big day. A chauffeur and the bride was found unconscious (a true story mentioned in the Wedding Workbook for the Filipina) due to the leakage of the freon gas that cools the car air conditioner. Now who would ever want that?

For the bride & her dad: The father of the bride normally sits with his daughter in the bridal car to the church, but where will he ride when it's the groom's turn to sit with the bride? We have heard of fathers accidentally being left at the church because of this. The bride's family is often so busy that day that they overlook this detail.

For the couple: December is the 'wedding-est' month and it also has the worst traffic jams because of the Christmas rush. Weekend dates may have already been booked in hotels and restaurants for company Christmas parties. Most churches are also often booked a year in advanced on weekends by other marrying couples. Having these in mind, you may want to consider holding your wedding some other time.

For the members of the bridal party: Make sure you're there at the ceremony on time come hell or high water. Estimate the travel time and make the necessary allowance for possible traffic condition. You wouldn't want to bear the ire of the couple, believe me.

For the bride and her party: You may want to meet the females in the bridal party at your house/hotel room at an appointed time, this way they could all proceed to the church all at the same time.

For the designated drivers: Have fun at the reception but keep away from the booze. Don't take the risk; never be a drunk driver.

For the couple: Arrange for your transfers after the reception. Remember, a bridal car service is only good for three hours (four hours tops). This means a comfortable ride to the reception, but how about afterwards? Make sure you have a car ready (or at least someone to drive for you) to get you where you're going after the reception. Don't wait until all the guests have left before you realize this.

For the couple: Have a separate car ready to take home those wedding gifts. You'd want a breath of fresh air after the whole affair and getting stuck in a car full of boxes isn't a wonderful idea.

For the couple: If you really can't stand the traffic--elope *(kidding!)*.

For everybody: Check out the last digit on your license plate of the car (especially the bridal car) before leaving. Sometimes the color coding (Mondays through Fridays) traffic schemes escape our minds. Make sure you're not in a car which isn't allowed on the road on the wedding day. No ticket for a wedding gift please . . . *(except for plane tickets, of course)*.

You May Be Married to a Filipina if . . .
(This joke was found on the Internet and has circulated and been forwarded

many times over via email. Foreigners planning to marry Filipinos should note that these are exaggerations, but they will somehow get the idea. It was written by an American man who loves his Filipina wife despite what follows.)

You may be married to a Filipina if . . .

- your refrigerator is always full but you cannot find any food that you recognize.
- instead of a dowry, you got the whole bill for the wedding and honeymoon.
- most of the decorations in your house are made of wicker.
- you are expected to be able to read her mind just by watching her eyebrows move up and down and which way her lips are pointed.
- all her relatives think your name is Joe.
- the instant you are married you have 3000 new close relatives that you can't tell apart.
- your house isn't really on fire, but there is a very charred fish right on top of the stove burner.
- all the desserts are sticky and all the snacks are salty.
- she eats her fruit with giant salt crystals and her fried chicken with ketchup.
- even the ketchup tastes weird . . . very weird.
- you throw a party and everyone is fighting to chop the leathery skin off a dead pig.
- all your kids have 4-5 middle names.*
- your in-laws take 10 years to acknowledge your existence and to call you by something other than "that white guy."
- you try to call her up on the phone and someone tells you "for a while" and you want to know "for a while, what??"
- you are trying to go to sleep and she keeps asking for the comFORT'r, and you ain't got a clue what she's talking about . . .
- your first Christmas present is some funny looking baggy see-thru shirt made out of leftover lace doilies.
- your phone bills are all international and average 3 hours per call.
- she sweeps with something that witches usually fly around on.
- her idea of classy, expensive champagne is Asti Spumante

- the rice cooker is on 24 hours a day and uses up 50% of your electric and food budget.
- on your first trip to the Philippines, you have 18 giant boxes that weigh 1000 pounds each and your "carry on" luggage requires a small forklift truck.
- the same luggage is over filled with things that cost an average of 15 cents each like old magazines and M&Ms -- the worst part is when you get off the plane, the same stuff you've been hauling around half way around the world is available in every store in the airport for half the price!
- all her pajamas look like they were worn by the Dalai Lama until they got too faded.
- the first time she's pregnant you have to go out at 4:00 in the morning looking for some weird type of greasy sausages, green mangoes and bagoong.
- You buy a new $500 freezer so she can store 200 pounds of SPAM and CORNED BEEF that was on sale.
- everything in your house was bought on sale, even if you don't need it .. as long as it was a "bargain" is all that matters.
- she gets really excited by sucking the fat out of pig knees.
- your daughter gets her ears pierced when she's 2 minutes old but your sons are not circumcised until they turn 21.
- all your postage bills instantly double.
- you hire a yaya because your wife thinks you clean mirrors with soap and a sponge and the yaya seems cheaper than a divorce.
- the only "white meat" she likes is You, and that's if you're lucky . . .
- her favorite sauce is called patis, Americans call it turpentine.
- she actually thinks that bowling and golf and billiards are real sports and are more important than baseball and football.
- you were married 5 years before she explained to you that "ARAY!" doesn't mean "ooh, baby!"
- she prefers bistek to beef steak.
- her idea of new upholstery is rinsing the bagoong stains out of the slip covers.

- she can eat and talk at the same time, in fact that's her especialty!
- her favorite meal is leftovers, her favorite fancy dessert is Jello mold and for something REALLY romantic, she'll offer you a halo-halo with 2 straws.
- you still don't know what's the difference between manong and manok.
- she and the kids are always saying "Daddy made utot" and you still don't know what it means but they think it's pretty funny.
- other than eyebrow raising and lip puckering, her next most expressive form of communication is grunts and pssst's
- she goes to the movies just for the AC.
- her homeland has more Megamalls than islands.
- before every holiday and visit, her sisters fax you a 10 page "bilin" list which says "suggestion only."
- your kitchen table has a merry-go-round in the middle.
- all the vegetables she buys at the Filipino store look like they were grown at Chernobyl.
- your in-law's first visit lasted 5 years.
- her friends are named Chinky, Girlie, Boy and Bimbo and you are not allowed to smirk.
- her home economics course only taught shopping, eating and siesta; cooking, cleaning and sewing were not electives.
- her idea of edifying reading is gossip magazines.
- all your place settings has the silverware backwards and there are no knives.
- she washes her hair with a bucket and her car with a broom.
- she uses an umbrella even if its not raining.
- her favorite book (she has 3 copies) is "1001 New Recipes for Pig Parts You Were Gonna Throw Out"
- you are the only family in a 200 mile radius with 2 VCRs, 3 televisions.
- she's done her best job planning a surprise party for you if she manages not to tell you about it until a week or two before.
- she "cleans" her closet by throwing all the crap into your closet.
- AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST: you are pretty proud of yourself because

you think you snagged up for yourself some unique, rare, tropical goddess type until you go to the Philippines and can't tell her apart from anyone else in the whole country (unless she's taller than 5'1", then it's a bit easier).

- BONUS ENCORE: it was your wife's idea for you to write this cause she thought it was funny . . . for a while though until the list got TOO LONG!!!

The Real Deal

You May Be Married to a Filipina If . . . (Part II)
(While many of the items in Part I might be true, Bob Lingerfelt (also married to a Filipina) of FilipinaWives.com thinks they are a bit misleading. After all, Filipina wives are not mere eccentricities, they're also loving, nurturing women who typically do their best to make a perfect home. So after you finish reading the preceding list, try this one. It's a bit more even handed.)
You may be married to a Filipina if . . .

- there's always singing in your house, even when the radio's off.
- your own mom, who was lukewarm about your marriage originally, now calls you long distance...to talk to your wife, not to you.
- your family announces that in the unlikely event of a divorce between you and your wife, she will always have a place to stay, but you better find a new family.
- your wife asks to get a job so that you will both have a little extra money, then thanks you for not complaining about having to drive her to work.
- your wife has a contagious smile.
- you both decide to divide your spare income, and you spend yours on a computer game or a power tool, only to learn that she spent her money buying clothes for you
- she might not have had a second pair of shoes growing up, but she's rapidly making up for lost time.
- everything in your house is "name brand".
- you have a Western Union "Preferred Customer" card. Really.
- you complain when your wife tells you that longaniza is only for breakfast.

- you learn to like rice, even plain.
- you have a budget.
- she may only tell you she loves you once in awhile. But, she *shows* you that she loves you in everything she does and says.
- you go to sleep each night knowing you're the luckiest man in the world.

The Guys' Rules

At last a guy has taken the time to write this all down
Finally, the guys' side of the story.
(I must admit, it's pretty good.)
We always hear "the rules"
From the female side.

Now here are the rules from the male side.
These are our rules!
Please note... these are all numbered "1"
ON PURPOSE!

1. Men are NOT mind readers.

1. Learn to work the toilet seat.
You're a big girl. If it's up, put it down.
We need it up, you need it down.
You don't hear us complaining about you leaving it down.

1. Sunday sports. It's like the full moon
or the changing of the tides.
Let it be.

1. Shopping is NOT a sport.
And no, we are never going to think of it that way.

1. Crying is blackmail.

1. Ask for what you want. Let us be clear on this one:
Subtle hints do not work!

Strong hints do not work!
Obvious hints do not work!
Just say it!

1. Yes and No are perfectly acceptable answers to almost every question.

1. Come to us with a problem only if you want help solving it. That's what we do.
Sympathy is what your girlfriends are for.

1. A headache that lasts for 17 months is a Problem.
See a doctor.

1. Anything we said 6 months ago is inadmissible in an argument.
In fact, all comments become null and void after 7 Days.

1. If you won't dress like the Victoria 's Secret girls, don't Expect us to act like soap opera guys.

1. If you think you're fat, you probably are.
Don't ask us.

1. If something we said can be interpreted two ways and one of them makes you sad or angry, then we meant the other one.

1. You can either ask us to do something
Or tell us how you want it done.
Not both.
If you already know best how to do it, just do it yourself.

1. Whenever possible, Please say whatever you have to say during commercials.

1. Christopher Columbus did NOT need directions and neither do we.

1. ALL men see in only 16 colors, like Windows default settings.
Peach, for example, is a fruit, not A color . Pumpkin is also a fruit.

We have no idea what mauve is.

1. If it itches, it will be scratched.
We do that.

1. If we ask what is wrong and you say "nothing," We will act like nothing's wrong.
We know you are lying, but it is just not worth the hassle, besides we know you will bring it up again later.

1. If you ask a question you don't want an answer to, Expect an answer you don't want to hear.

1. When we have to go somewhere, absolutely anything you wear is fine...Really.

1. Don't ask us what we're thinking about unless you are prepared to discuss such topics as baseball, the shotgun formation,
or golf.

1. You have enough clothes.

1. You have too many shoes.

1. I am in shape. Round IS a shape!

1. Thank you for reading this.
Yes, I know, I have to sleep on the couch tonight;

But did you know men really don't mind that? It's like camping.

Pass this to as many men as you can -
to give them a laugh.

Pass this to as many women as you can -
to give them a bigger laugh

The James Wilson Cope and Nila Quico Delana Wedding Ceremony Begins…

Music: "Elsa's Wedding Procession to the Chapel" by Richard Wagner from the opera, "Lohengren."

The groom comes forward, preceded by Primary Sponsor and Best Man, Stephen Griffith Earnhardt and waits, Primary Sponsor and Matron of Honor, Karmen Slater Earnhardt, comes forward, preceding the bride and waits. The groom is dressed in a White Jussi Baro ng Tagolog Wedding Shirt with Black Embroidery, a Black Tie with a Pearl, and a Black and White Beaded Necklace, Black Trousers, and Black Shoes.

The bride comes to the groom and takes her position next to him and to his left. Primary Sponsors, Stephen Griffith Earnheart, takes his position to the right of the groom, and Karmen Slater Earnheart, takes her position to the left of the bride.

Celebrant: The ceremonies you are about to witness, The Unity Wedding Coins, the Unity Veil & Unity Cord, the Wedding Rings and Vows and the Unity Candle Lighting are uniquely and traditionally a part of the Filipino wedding. If there is anyone present who feels that this unique and beautiful wedding ceremony should not take place, let him or her now come forward and state your reasons or forevermore hold your peace.

Blessing of the Unity Wedding Coins / Arras / Arrhae:

Celebrant: Stephen Tyler Earnheart will present the pillow with the coins.

Celebrant: Originally, there was an understanding of husband as "bread winner" and wife as "home maker" so the coins were given and received not in a spirit of reciprocity but in a give/take relationship.

Celebrant: Nowadays the coins are a reminder of good stewardship for **all** couples; that they will mutually support each other, their children and the world around them.

As the coins are offered by the Coin Bearer:

Celebrant: Lord, bless these coins. Grant James and Nila, in the Name of Jesus, not only material possessions, but abundant spiritual strength, which these coins symbolize, so that they use them to bless others and to attain eternal life. Hold the coins in your hands as a sign that your blessings will no longer be held separately, but together. And may you always show that whatever gift you may have in this life is not ultimately yours but the Lord's.

As the couple exchange the coins:

Bride: James, take these coins as a pledge of our commitment to share God's gifts.

Groom: Nila, I accept and treasure your gift. Let us together always share God's blessings.

Celebrant: May God bless these arras as a sign of mutual support and responsibility.

Groom: I give you these coins as a pledge of my dedication to you, the care of our home, and the welfare of our children.

Bride: I accept them and in the same way, pledge my dedication to you, the care of our home, and the welfare of our children.

The groom lets the coins fall into the hands of the bride.

Groom: Nila, accept these coins as a pledge of my total dedication and constant concern for your welfare. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Music: "Ebb Tide" performed by Bobby Hatfield of the Righteous Brothers.

Celebrant: reads as Veil Sponsors place veil over couple's shoulders):

Celebrant: James & Nila, at Baptism you were clothed with the white garments symbolizing the new life of purity and joy in the Lord, to which the Risen Christ has called you. We clothe you again with this precious garment as you enter into the new phase of your life with God. Wear it unstained and let the joy of the Holy Spirit shine forth to you and your children whom the Lord's loving design will bring into your life.

Celebrant: The Veil covers this couple today reminding them and us that Christ covers us in His love. Their new home will be a place where God dwells because this couple chooses to be under the mantel of His love.

Unity Veil Prayer

Celebrant: Lord, with this veil, which represents this couple's union and mutual surrender to each other, may You always protect **James & Nila** from any harm and strengthen them to provide continuous moral and spiritual support to each other and their children. May they remain loyal helpmates to each other as they carry life's burden with joy.

Celebrant: James & Nila, **Stephen and Karmen** will now place a veil over you. Let this be a symbol of the faithful love you have for each other. Through the passing of the years, let the veil remind you that you belong to each other and to no one else, and that the love you have for each other becomes more beautiful in self-surrender that is total and pure. In Jesus' Precious Name.

ALL: Amen.

Music: "Unchained Melody" by Bobby Hatfield of the Righteous Brothers

Celebrant: As Unity Wedding Cord Sponsors **Stephen and Karmen** place cord over couple's shoulders:

Celebrant: This cord symbolizes the love of God which brings your hearts and souls together. May your love grow stronger and bind you closer together through years, from here to eternity. We ask this from the Father, through Christ our Lord.

May this cord remind you to face your life together courageously and to be mutual in support of each other in carrying out your duties and responsibilities as a couple.

The Cord, looped and crossed in the middle is wrapped around the bride and groom to symbolize the Blessed Trinity; The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are one and the same. The cord symbolizes this same union and the infinite nature of marriage.

Unity Cord Prayer

Celebrant: Lord, with this cord, may the bond of love and friendship uniting **James & Nila** grow stronger over the years. May they remain united to You all their lives knowing, loving and serving in each other and the community.

Celebrant: James & Nila, **Stephen and Karmen** will lay the cord on you to remind you of your responsibility to hold each other with the tenderness that Christ has for His Church. Keep the bond of your love steadfast so that you can support one another throughout your lives.

Music: "Lady" written by Lionel Ritchie, performed by Kenny Rodgers

Celebrant: And now **Stephen Tyler Earnheart** shall come forward with the

wedding rings.

Our Wedding Vows

Celebrant: James, do you choose Nila to be your lawfully wedded wife?

Groom: I do.

Celebrant reads the vows, groom repeats them.

Groom

From this day forward, I, James, choose thee, my beloved Nila, to be my wife, before God who brought us together; to love and cherish you even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, to lead you and share all of life's experiences with you by following God through them. That through His grace, Nila, we might grow together into the likeness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

I give you this ring, wear it with love and joy.

[James places Engagement Ring and Wedding Band on Nila's third finger, left hand.]

I pledge to live with you and laugh with you; to stand by your side, and sleep in your arms; to be a joy to your heart, and food for your soul; to bring out the best in you always, and, for you, to be the most that I can. I promise to laugh with you in good times, to struggle with you in bad; to solace you when you are downhearted; to wipe your tears with my hands; to comfort you with my body; to mirror you with my soul; to share with you all my riches and honors; to play with you as much as I can until we grow old; and, still loving each other sweetly and gladly, until our lives shall come to an end.

Celebrant: Nila, do you choose James to be your lawfully wedded husband?

Bride: I do.

Celebrant reads the vows, bride repeats them.

Bride

From this day forward, and with this ring, I, Nila, choose thee, my beloved James, to be my husband, before God who brought us together, to love you, cherish you, to submit to you myself unto you in all things, and to follow you through all of life's experiences as you follow God. That through His grace we might grow together into the likeness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

I give you this ring, wear it with love and joy.

[Nila places wedding band on James' third finger, left hand.]

I pledge to live with you and laugh with you; to stand by your side, and sleep in your arms; to be a joy to your heart, and food for your soul; to bring out the best in you always, and, for you, to be the most that I can. I promise to laugh with you in good times, to struggle with you in bad; to solace you when you are downhearted; to wipe your tears with my hands; to comfort you with my body; to mirror you with my soul; to share with you all my riches and honors; to play with you as much as I can until we grow old; and, still loving each other sweetly and gladly, until our lives shall come to an end.

Lighting of the Candles

Celebrant continues: **James & Nila**, **Stephen and Karmen** now light the candles for you. The candles represent the light from God that you will need to guide you throughout the rest of your married life. The candles also express the silent promise that the couple will continue to be light and warmth to each other for life.

(candle lighters come forward to light the two outside candles)

Celebrant reads as the candle lighters light the candles:

Celebrant: James & Nila, will now light center Unity Candle. You will take the flame from the candles which (**Stephen and Karmen**) have lighted.

You will see that this center candle is larger than the other two because it is the new family that has been formed today as you repeated your vows and will be a blending of all the love, traditions and experiences you have both shared with your individual families. It is also larger because the middle candle represents Christ, who has brought you both together for this moment and to remind you that He is with you always as a partner in your marriage, to guard and to guide you in all that you do.

Lighting of the Unity Candle by the couple

The couple comes forward to light the center Unity Candle.

Celebrant: James & Nila, now light the candles that represent the light from God.

Celebrant continues as the couple lights the center candle:

Celebrant: As you light the Christ candle let it remind you that Jesus Christ is with you always as a partner in your marriage, to guard and guide you in all that you do.

Celebrant: Today, as candles are lit at the altar, remember the light of Christ that burns in all Christian hearts and is our responsibility to share that light with the world, especially in this celebration of Eucharist.

Celebrant: May we all please bow our heads in prayer.

Dear God in Heaven, may today be all that you need it to be today. May the peace of God and the freshness of the Holy Spirit rest in your thoughts, rule in your dreams tonight and conquer all your fears. May God manifest Himself today in ways that you have never experienced. May your joys be fulfilled, your dreams be closer and your prayers be answered. I pray that faith enters a new height for you; I pray that your territory is enlarged and I pray that you step into your destiny within the ministry. I pray for peace, health, happiness and true and undying love for God. I pray this in the Name of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Celebrant: By the power vested in me by Almighty God, and the State of Louisiana, I hereby pronounce you husband and wife. James, you may now kiss Nila, your bride.

Celebrant: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my greatest pleasure to present to you, Mr. and Mrs. James Wilson Cope.

Please join me in a warm applause.

Philippine Weddings - Facts and Trivia

Planning a wedding in the islands? Want to do it grand style? Or maybe you'd just like to learn a bit more about how weddings are conducted in the Philippines? Well, no matter what your plans, you'll surely enjoy reading the following list of facts and trivia about Philippine weddings. A genuinely nice couple, John and Bennette, run a small business in Manila that caters to brides and grooms getting ready for the big event. It's called Weddings@Work. I've swapped a few emails with John and he was kind enough to give me permission to post some of his site's materials here on ASAWA. This is just a sampling of what he and Bennette have available on their site, however, so when you're done reading these tidbits of information, I encourage you to drop by their homepage and see what else they've got to offer. I guarantee you'll learn something.
Here goes!

Traditionally, wedding expenses are paid for by the groom's family in the Philippine setting, unlike in some western cultures. But more and more couples contribute their share from their hard-earned savings. Some couples even shoulder the entire wedding expense themselves. It normally follows that whoever foots the bill has the final say on how big the wedding will be and has the 'majority stake' on the guest list.

Using rice grains as confetti is discouraged by most churches in keeping with the more austere times.

Marrying couples have a few pairs of *ninongs* & *ninangs* (godparents) to stand as principal sponsors/witnesses in the ceremony, much like the practice observed during a child's baptism.

Most Catholic churches don't allow a Sunday wedding.

A Catholic Filipino wedding ceremony is held with a full mass that runs about an hour.

Aside from the exchange of rings, the giving of the *arrhae* (earnest money in the form of 13 pieces of gold or silver coins) is a part of Filipino weddings as the groom's pledge of his dedication to the welfare of his wife and children.

The *arrhae* (or thirteen coins) are carried by a coin bearer who marches with the ring bearer during the processional and recessional.

If the couple intends to choose their wedding vows instead of using the standard vows provided by the church, they should inform the officiating priest and ask for his approval.

Most Filipino brides prefer custom-made wedding gowns over those ready-made off-the-rack.

The most popular month for weddings in the Philippines is December (until early

January) and not June.

Filipino grooms also walk down the aisle. Solo or with their parents.

Proximity of the ceremony and reception venues in Manila is a major consideration for guests' convenience due to traffic and parking concerns.

Wedding Invitations usually have an insert-page that includes all the names and roles of each member of the bridal party.

Reception cards are not so popular in the Philippines, since it is usually assumed that a wedding invitation covers both the ceremony and the reception.

Aside from the bridesmaids and groomsmen, three additional pairs of wedding attendants stand as secondary sponsors; they will facilitate the wedding candle, veil and cord ceremonies during the nuptial mass.

The candle sponsors will each light wedding candles which are located on either side of the couple. The flames from the candles symbolize God's presence within the union. The lighting of a unity candle (of Protestant origin) is sometimes integrated as a variation.

Next, the veil sponsors will drape and pin the veil (a long white tulle) on the groom's shoulder and over the bride's head. This symbolizes the union of two people, 'clothed' as one.

Finally, the cord sponsors stands-up with a cord (a silken rope, a string of flowers or links of coins) that is in the form of a figure eight loops it loosely around the neck-shoulder area of the couple. This symbolizes the infinite bond of marriage.

The veil and cord ceremonies have the marrying couple 'tied-up' together while kneeling for almost half the time during the nuptial mass. But don't fret, it isn't

as hard as it sounds...

Filipino brides and grooms do not arrive at the ceremony venue at the same time. The groom is expected to arrive several minutes (even an hour) prior to the set time of the wedding in order to receive guests. The bride, on the other hand, usually stays in the bridal car and will only alight the vehicle just before her bridal march.

As part of the ceremonial dance at the reception, some couples incorporate a 'money dance' where guests pin peso (or dollar!) bills on either the bride or groom. In return they get a chance to dance with them.

Newlyweds release a pair of white doves during the reception to signify a peaceful and harmonious marital relationship. Catchers find themselves going home with a new feathered-pet.
Interested in learning more? Visit my friends at Weddings@Work, a Manila-based site that specializes in Philippine weddings. Here's just a few of the many topics they cover at their site:
*Filipino Pre-Wedding Traditions * Philippine Wedding Folklore and Superstitions * Courtship and Marriage Rites in the Philippine Provinces * The Law of Marriage in the Philippines in the 1900s * Driving & Traffic Tips for Metro Weddings * A bunch more stuff I don't have room to list. You get the idea...

Our Wedding Story

By

James Wilson and Nila Quico Delana Cope

James has just published a new poem in an international poetry anthology book, "Timeless Voices," entitled, "Our Love is Here to Stay," which won the Editor's Choice Award from the International Society of Poetry, and written for his bride, Nila. Also for the first time, on August 23, 2005, James met his father-in-law, via the internet. Mr. Romulo Cuento Delana, who has no experience with or knowledge of computers, so with Nila handling the computer and the web cam, James was introduced. After a short chat with Senor Delana, with Nila translating, James asked Senor Delana's permission and blessing for Nila's hand in marriage. Senor Delana quickly acknowledged this question with a very big yes, and Nila was grinning from ear to ear. So now, it was "Official!" Nila Quico Delana becomes Mrs. James Wilson Cope. As time progressed, in

October of 2005, James also met, online, via the web cam, with Nila translating, his mother-in-law, Maria Nadilla Quico Delana, and later, his two sisters-in-law, Mevelyn Quico Delana Andelab, and Emelda Quico Delana Quimno Barcelona and his brother-in-law, Marcos Quico Delana.

James has presently become a husband for the very first time. His new bride, Nila Quico Delana, whose nickname is Elang, a native of the Republic of the Philippines, from the Island of Mindanao, where she left on 22 May and traveled to Manila to meet him. Nila was born in Barangay of Balubohan, Municipality of Rizal, Province of Zamboanga del Norte, Island of Mindanao, on February 21, 1975. James, on 29 May 2007, left Shreveport at 5:30 AM on his journey to the Philippines, for the first time, and face to face, to meet his bride in the City of Manila, Island of Luzon, Republic of the Philippines.

Because of the problems with American's traveling to certain parts the Philippines, the United States State Department has issued a stern warning against Americans traveling to parts of the Philippines because of Islamic terrorist activities, especially certain parts of Mindanao, it is not a good place for American or European citizens to be, especially when it is possible they may get kidnapped, tortured and murdered, should they come in contact with any of these terrorist groups. There has also been a problem with kidnap for ransom gangs as well. This is why James met Nila in Manila.

He arrived on the morning of 31 May. For the 1st two weeks, James and Nila stayed at the Villa Carolina Townhouse and then stayed with members of Nila's family in Cavite and Bulacan. It was a very interesting trip, traveling to and from the Philippines, and on the total trip, James flew on 6 different jet aircraft, an American Airlines ERJ 140, an ERJ 145, an American Airlines Boeing 737-800, a Boeing MD 80, a Philippine Airlines A330-300 and a Philippine Airlines Boeing 747-400. The flights were from Shreveport, Louisiana to Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas, to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, to Manila, Philippines. The return flights were from Manila to San Francisco, California to Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas, to Shreveport. James and Nila spent a total of 41

days together, from 31 May to 10 July where James left Manila at 10:30 PM Manila time. James logged over 15,000 air miles.

James, by extending his time, passport, and flight extensions, and Nila being able to get her corrected birth certificate in Manila and additional required documents, went through the legal process, got permission from the US Embassy to marry on 8 June, attended an SFO Marriage Seminar and received a Certificate of Attendance, filed all the proper paperwork with the Marriage License Bureau of Manila, and on 2 July, obtained a marriage license. On 4 July 2007, James and Nila were wed in a Civil Ceremony before a Judge, the Hon. Leoncio M. Janolo, II, a friend of their friend, Marilou S. Casimiro, who agreed to perform the ceremony at the Pasig City Court House, Branch 264, Regional Trial Court, Pasig City, Capital Compound, Pasig City, Manila, Philippines, and who, after questioning them and speaking to them about the procedure and about marriage in the Philippines, pronounced them husband and wife. Witnesses were Marilou S. Casimiro, Nila's Female Sponsor, Godmother and Maid of Honor, Eswin D. Maputol, James' Male Sponsor, Godfather and Best Man, and Teresita Macute.

After the ceremony and changing into regular attire, James and Nila, along with their friend, Marilou, had dinner at the Manila MegaMall, Pasay City, Metro Manila. James and Nila honeymooned at the Villa Carolina Townhouse, Tambo, Paranaque, Metro Manila, and before James returned to America. Nila and James hope to start a family in the very near future. Once Nila and James are together in America she will file for permanent residency and a work permit.

James is currently working on Nila's K3 Marriage Visa, Once Nila is able to get through her medical exam, inoculations, vaccinations, and her interview with the US Embassy, in Manila, she will then receive her K3 marriage visa. James plans to be with Nila, in Manila, during her interview with the US Embassy. Once Nila receives her visa, James will bring her back with him to America. If this does not work out with her immigrating to America, as they

wish and hope for, James will choose to live in the Philippines. Nila and James can live very well on his pension, but they really want to live in America and for Nila to become a US Citizen, that way, if something should happen to James, she will get his widow's benefits, although James does not plan to kick the bucket anytime soon. James and Nila are also considering Dual Citizenship where they can both own property and homes in both countries. From Nila and James, to all of their family and friends, please keep them in your prayers. God Bless you all.

Philippine Wedding Traditions

Filipino Weddings reflect the strong traditions of family (& extended family) and symbolism. Thus, Filipino wedding ceremonies typically involve many people, and the wedding rituals typically "speak" to the couple personally.

Beyond the usual bridal party, the Filipino wedding involves people who are also significant in the couple's life: the Principal Sponsors and the Secondary Sponsors.

The Principal Sponsors (aka Stephen and Karmen, Best Man/Matron of Honor). These are women and men whom the bride and groom respect & admire. They are, as in the early days of the Church, sponsors of the couple attesting to their readiness for marriage and freedom to marry. These are often aunts and uncles or close friends of the family. In the Philippines, they are the official witnesses of the state and they sign the marriage license. Worldwide, their participation is symbolic of the wisdom & support they shall offer the new couple. The number of sponsors can vary from a single couple to many couples. The Principal sponsors are part of the bridal procession. At the nuptial blessing, they may also be invited to "come up with the celebrant and to extend their right hands to join in the prayer of blessing." In doing so, they are fulfilling their roles as sponsors.

The Secondary Sponsors: These are women and men whom the couple chooses to involve in their ceremony because of their affinity or friendship with them. They are typically relatives or close friends.

There are four sets of Secondary Sponsors:

The Coin Sponsors - those who will present the Wedding Coins / Arras. Often, they will also provide the Wedding Coins.

Alternately, the coins may be brought to the altar by a coin bearer who is a child (relative or friend).

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of men and angels,
But have not love,
I have become sounding brass or a tinkling symbol.

And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge,
And if I have all faith so as to remove mountains,
But have not love, I am nothing.

And if I dole out all my goods, and
If I deliver my body that I may boast
But have not love, nothing I am profited.

Love is long suffering,
Love is kind,
It is not jealous,
Love does not boast,
It is not inflated.

It is not discourteous,
It is not selfish,
It is not irritable,
It does not enumerate the evil.

It does not rejoice over the wrong, but rejoices in the truth

It covers all things,
It has faith for all things,
It hopes in all things,
It endures in all things.

Love never falls in ruins;
But whether prophecies, they will be abolished; or
Tongues, they will cease; or
Knowledge, it will be superseded.

For we know in part and we prophecy in part.
But when the perfect comes, the imperfect will be superseded.

When I was an infant,
I spoke as an infant,
I reckoned as an infant;
When I became [an adult],
I abolished the things of the infant.

For now we see through a mirror in an enigma, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know as also I was fully known.

But now remains
Faith, hope, love,
These three;
But the greatest of these is love.

The Wedding Ceremony Begins…

Music: "Elsa's Wedding Procession to the Chapel" by Richard Wagner from the opera, "Lohengren."

The groom comes forward, preceded by Primary Sponsor and Best Man, Stephen

Griffith Earnhardt and waits, Primary Sponsor and Matron of Honor, Karmen Slater Earnhardt, comes forward, preceding the bride and waits. The groom is dressed in a White Jussi Baro ng Tagolog Wedding Shirt with Black Embroidery, a Black Tie with a Pearl, and a Black and White Beaded Necklace, Black Trousers, and Black Shoes.

The bride comes to the groom in her beautiful wedding dress, carrying a bouquet of white roses, and takes her position next to him and to his left. Primary Sponsors, Stephen Griffith Earnhardt, takes his position to the right of the groom, and Karmen Slater Earnhardt, takes her position to the left of the bride.

Celebrant: The ceremonies you are about to witness, The Unity Wedding Coins, the Unity Veil & Unity Cord, the Wedding Rings and Vows and the Unity Candle Lighting are uniquely and traditionally a part of the Filipino wedding. If there is anyone present who feels that this unique and beautiful wedding ceremony should not take place, let him or her now come forward and state your reasons or forevermore hold your peace.

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Celebrant: Stephen Tyler Earnhardt will present the pillow with the coins.

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Celebrant: Nowadays the coins are a reminder of good stewardship for **all** couples; that they will mutually support each other, their children and the world around them.

As the coins are offered by the Coin Bearer:

Celebrant: Lord, bless these coins. Grant James and Nila, in the Name of Jesus, not only material possessions, but abundant spiritual strength, which these coins symbolize, so that they use them to bless others and to attain eternal life. Hold the coins in your hands as a sign that your blessings will no longer be held

separately, but together. And may you always show that whatever gift you may have in this life is not ultimately yours but the Lord's.

As the couple exchange the coins:

Bride: James, take these coins as a pledge of our commitment to share God's gifts.

Groom: Nila, I accept and treasure your gift. Let us together always share God's blessings.

Celebrant: May God bless these arras as a sign of mutual support and responsibility.

Groom: I give you these coins as a pledge of my dedication to you, the care of our home, and the welfare of our children.

Bride: I accept them and in the same way, pledge my dedication to you, the care of our home, and the welfare of our children.

The groom lets the coins fall into the hands of the bride.

Groom: Nila, accept these coins as a pledge of my total dedication and constant concern for your welfare. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Music: "Ebb Tide" performed by Bobby Hatfield of the Righteous Brothers.

The Unity Veil Sponsors

Wedding Ceremony Prayers for Couple's Veil & Cord:

Veil Sponsors place a white veil over the bride's head and the groom's shoulders.

Depending on the slippiness of the material, the veil might be attached using pins.

This veil is quite different to the Western-wedding-dress-type veil that is little more than decoration associated with a few old superstitions. The Filipino veil is like a large Spanish tulle *mantilla* and is deeply symbolic of two people clothed as one. The whiteness of the veil symbolizes purity.

Spanish missionaries introduced this practice in the early 18th century and it is similar to the Orthodox Jewish custom of draping a prayer shawl (*tallith*) over the bride and groom. Traditional Jewish weddings are often performed beneath a large white lace canopy (*chuppah*) which symbolizes the home the couple will build together. Further, a canopy implies hospitality; a home without walls, enabling easy access for guests to shelter from the sun.

The veil used in a Filipino wedding may be new or a family heirloom.

Celebrant: reads as Veil Sponsors place veil over couple's shoulders):

Celebrant: James & Nila, at Baptism you were clothed with the white garments symbolizing the new life of purity and joy in the Lord, to which the Risen Christ has called you. We clothe you again with this precious garment as you enter into the new phase of your life with God. Wear it unstained and let the joy of the Holy Spirit shine forth to you and your children whom the Lord's loving design will bring into your life.

Celebrant: The Veil covers this couple today reminding them and us that Christ covers us in His love. Their new home will be a place where God dwells because this couple chooses to be under the mantel of His love.

Unity Veil Prayer

Celebrant: Lord, with this veil, which represents this couple's union and mutual surrender to each other, may You always protect **James & Nila** from any harm

and strengthen them to provide continuous moral and spiritual support to each other and their children. May they remain loyal helpmates to each other as they carry life's burden with joy.

Celebrant: James & Nila, **Stephen and Karmen** will now place a veil over you. Let this be a symbol of the faithful love you have for each other. Through the passing of the years, let the veil remind you that you belong to each other and to no one else, and that the love you have for each other becomes more beautiful in self-surrender that is total and pure. In Jesus' Precious Name.

ALL: Amen.

Music: "Unchained Melody" by Bobby Hatfield of the Righteous Brothers

The Unity Wedding Cord Sponsors

The Wedding Cord

The ceremony has a mix of old, pre-colonial, customs and imported Latin rites. Gone is the chest-pricking of the couple and drinking their mixed blood, but the custom where the priest, minister, magistrate or *babaylan* (female shaman) binds the couples' hands necks with a cord is retained in some form.

In modern weddings, Cord Sponsors drape a decorative silk cord (*yugal*) in a figure-eight shape over the couple's shoulders, rather like a lasso but with the reverence given to a rosary. The figure-eight is like the infinity symbol, meaning everlasting love.

The infinity symbol "∞" conjures up all sorts of paradoxes. Infinity is not easy to understand. Think for too long about the 'fact' that there are an infinite number of points on a circle, and then realize for that to be true, these points would need to be infinitely small, that is, zero width. You end up with no circle but a splitting headache. So most of us non-philosophical, non-pure mathematical types, are content with the notion that *infinity* is as long as something that's really very long. How long we don't know, but longer than we need to worry about for all practical purposes. Infinite love is like that. It goes on for as long as we need, and then keeps going. That's pretty long. (See also

Everlasting Cross)

Celebrant: As Unity Wedding Cord Sponsors **Stephen and Karmen** place cord over couple's shoulders:

Celebrant: This cord symbolizes the love of God which brings your hearts and souls together. May your love grow stronger and bind you closer together through years, from here to eternity. We ask this from the Father, through Christ our Lord.

May this cord remind you to face your life together courageously and to be mutual in support of each other in carrying out your duties and responsibilities as a couple.

The Cord, looped and crossed in the middle is wrapped around the bride and groom to symbolize the Blessed Trinity; The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are one and the same. The cord symbolizes this same union and the infinite nature of marriage.

Unity Cord Prayer

Celebrant: Lord, with this cord, may the bond of love and friendship uniting **James & Nila** grow stronger over the years. May they remain united to You all their lives knowing, loving and serving in each other and the community.

Celebrant: James & Nila, **Stephen and Karmen** will lay the cord on you to remind you of your responsibility to hold each other with the tenderness that Christ has for His Church. Keep the bond of your love steadfast so that you can support one another throughout your lives.

Music: "Lady" written by Lionel Ritchie, performed by Kenny Rodgers

The Wedding Rings and Vows

In the pre-colonial Philippines, a male suitor would make his intentions known by thrusting his spear into the ground at the entrance of his intended wife's house. This tells everybody (including the occupant) that she is spoken for. Fewer men actually throw spears around in the Philippines these days, preferring instead to present her with a diamond engagement ring.

Like most cultures, during the Filipino wedding ceremony the couple exchange wedding rings with their vows.

Traditionally, Filipinos wear their wedding rings on their right hands, but there is no hard and fast rule about this. When they live in the West, they might opt to wear their rings on the left hand to avoid confusion. Jim and Nila will both wear their matching rings on the third finger of their left hands. (See wedding rings for the reasons for using the third finger.)

The vows may seem rather long, but this is by far the most important part of the ceremony. It is a declaration of the person's intention to love the other person for ever. And this is affirmed before all the witnesses, including the main family members and closest friends. The vows are also spoken before God. It is difficult to imagine a more important part of the wedding than this.

Celebrant: And now **Stephen Tyler Earnhardt** shall come forward with the wedding rings.

Wedding Vows and Wedding Ring Ceremony:

Celebrant: James, do you choose Nila to be your lawfully wedded wife?

Groom: I do.

Celebrant reads the vows, groom repeats them.

Groom

From this day forward, I, James, choose thee, my beloved Nila, to be my lawfully wedded wife, before God who brought us together; to love and cherish you even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, to lead you and share all of life's experiences with you by following God through them. That through His grace, Nila, we might grow together into the likeness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

I give you this ring, wear it with love and joy.

[James places Engagement and Wedding Band on Nila's third finger, left hand.]

I pledge to live with you and laugh with you; to stand by your side, and sleep in your arms; to be a joy to your heart, and food for your soul; to bring out the best in you always, and, for you, to be the most that I can. I promise to laugh with you in good times, to struggle with you in bad; to solace you when you are downhearted; to wipe your tears with my hands; to comfort you with my body; to mirror you with my soul; to share with you all my riches and honors; to play with you as much as I can until we grow old; and, still loving each other sweetly and gladly, until our lives shall come to an end.

Celebrant: Nila, do you choose James to be your lawfully wedded husband?

Bride: I do.

Celebrant reads the vows, bride repeats them.

Bride

From this day forward, and with this ring, I, Nila, choose thee, my beloved

James, to be my lawfully wedded husband, before God who brought us together, to love you, cherish you, to submit to you myself unto you in all things, and to follow you through all of life's experiences as you follow God. That through His grace we might grow together into the likeness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

I give you this ring, wear it with love and joy.

[Nila places wedding band on James' third finger, left hand.]

I pledge to live with you and laugh with you; to stand by your side, and sleep in your arms; to be a joy to your heart, and food for your soul; to bring out the best in you always, and, for you, to be the most that I can. I promise to laugh with you in good times, to struggle with you in bad; to solace you when you are downhearted; to wipe your tears with my hands; to comfort you with my body; to mirror you with my soul; to share with you all my riches and honors; to play with you as much as I can until we grow old; and, still loving each other sweetly and gladly, until our lives shall come to an end.

Wedding Ceremony Prayers for Unity Candle:

Candles are more than just lovely ornaments; they add a bright and warm ambience to any situation. Whether scented with incense or packed with dust to emit sparks when lit, candles are *alive*.

During the ceremony, Candle Lighters reverently light two small candles, which the bride and groom use to light a single larger candle. The Candles Lighters are typically the mothers of the bride and groom. The ceremony of the couple carrying the flame from their mothers' lights and merging them into a single light, symbolizes the joining of the two families. The lighting also invokes the light of Christ and this Light will guide the couple through their married life together.

In contrast to the veil, rings and cord, the so called 'Unity Candles' are neither an ancient

Christian rite nor a traditional Filipino custom; rather a relatively modern idea which has increased popularity over the past fifty years or so.

At about 13 lumens of visible light and 40 watts of heat, the candle is well-suited for representing married life. It is ignited by the heat of another flame, just as the bride and groom's wedding is celebrated by their families and friends. As the candle wick is lit, it first melts and then vaporizes a small amount of the candle wax fuel. Once vaporized, the fuel combines with oxygen in the atmosphere to form a flame. This flame then provides sufficient heat to keep the candle burning via a self-sustaining chain of events: the heat of the flame melts the top of the mass of solid fuel, the liquefied fuel then moves upward through the wick via capillary action, and the liquefied fuel is then vaporized to burn within the candle's flame. Once a couple begin married life together, they can enjoy sustaining each other through the rest of their married lives.

Candle wicks sometimes need trimming. Similarly, marriages sometimes need external help to overcome difficulties. The wedding ceremony is attended by families and friends who will be there for such assistance.

Another advantage of candles is that they can be stored for a lifetime. The couple may decide to retain the main candle after the wedding (and the two smaller candles if they are part of a set) and light them during wedding anniversary dinners.

Lighting of the Candles

Celebrant continues: **James & Nila**, **Stephen and Karmen** now light the candles for you. The candles represent the light from God that you will need to guide you throughout the rest of your married life. The candles also express the silent promise that the couple will continue to be light and warmth to each other for life.

(candle lighters come forward to light the two outside candles)

Celebrant reads as the candle lighters light the candles:

Celebrant: James & Nila, will now light center Unity Candle. You will take the

flame from the candles which (**Stephen and Karmen**) have lighted. You will see that this center candle is larger than the other two because it is the new family that has been formed today as you repeated your vows and will be a blending of all the love, traditions and experiences you have both shared with your individual families. It is also larger because the middle candle represents Christ, who has brought you both together for this moment and to remind you that He is with you always as a partner in your marriage, to guard and to guide you in all that you do.

Lighting of the Unity Candle by the couple

The couple comes forward to light the center Unity Candle.

Celebrant: James & Nila, now light the candles that represent the light from God.

Celebrant continues as the couple lights the center candle:

Celebrant: As you light the Christ candle let it remind you that Jesus Christ is with you always as a partner in your marriage, to guard and guide you in all that you do.

Celebrant: Today, as candles are lit at the altar, remember the light of Christ that burns in all Christian hearts and is our responsibility to share that light with the world, especially in this celebration of Eucharist.

Benediction:

The final blessing of the couple and the congregation may be a benediction found in the Scriptures (for example Numbers 6:24-26), a personalized version written by the celebrant, or a combination of the two. Here is the closing prayer for Jim and Nila's wedding:

Celebrant: May we all please bow our heads in prayer.

Dear God in Heaven, may today be all that you need it to be today. May the peace of God and the freshness of the Holy Spirit rest in your thoughts, rule in your dreams tonight and conquer all your fears. May God manifest Himself today in ways that you have never experienced. May your joys be fulfilled, your dreams be closer and your prayers be answered. I pray that faith enters a new height for you; I pray that your territory is enlarged and I pray that you step into your destiny within the ministry. I pray for peace, health, happiness and true and undying love for God. I pray this in the Name of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Celebrant: By the power vested in me by Almighty God, and the State of Louisiana, I hereby pronounce you husband and wife. James, you may now kiss Nila, your bride.

Celebrant: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my greatest pleasure to present to you, Mr. and Mrs. James Wilson Cope.

Please join me in a warm applause.

A special website has been created to tell the story of James and Nila's wedding story for the world to see. The website URL is:

http://www.seiyaku.com/seiyaku/ph/weddings.html

http://www.myspace.com/jnn4evr

The Families of

Jack Wilson and Evelyn Bernadeen Phillips Cope ~ Romulo Cuento and Maria Nadilla Quico Delana

Proudly announces that their children

James Wilson Cope and Nila Quico Delana

Were wed on this, the 4th day of July, in the Year of Our Lord,
Two Thousand and Seven,

At the

Pasig City Court House, Branch 264, Regional Trial Court, Pasig City, Capital Compound,
Pasig City, Manila, Philippines

By the Honorable Leoncio N. Janolo, II, Judge

Witnesses were:

Marilou S. Casimiro, Ninang, Eswin D. Maputol, Ninong, and Teresita Macute

The couple honeymooned at the Villa Carolina Townhouse, Tambo, Paranaque, Metro Manila

James Wilson and Nila Delana Cope, 4 July 2007
Before the Judge

Script for

Filipino-style Wedding in America

Extract from the seiyaku website page
on weddings in the Philippines
http://www.seiyaku.com/seiyaku/ph/weddings.html

Introduction

Celebrant: The ceremonies you are about to witness, the Unity Wedding Coins, the Unity Veil and Unity Cord, the Wedding Rings and Vows, and the Unity Candle Lighting, are uniquely and traditionally a part of the Filipino wedding.

If there is anyone present who feels that this unique and beautiful wedding ceremony should not take place, let him or her now come forward and state their reasons or forevermore hold your peace.

Blessing and exchange of coins

As the coins are offered on a pillow by the Coin Bearer:

Celebrant: Lord, bless these coins. Grant *(Groom)* and *(Bride)* not only material possessions, but abundant spiritual strength, which these coins symbolize, so that they may bless others.

Hold the coins in your hands as a sign that your blessings will no longer be held separately, but together. And may you always show that whatever gift you may have in this life is not ultimately yours but the Lord's.

As the couple exchange the coins:

Bride: *(Groom)*, take these coins as a pledge of our commitment to share God's gifts.

Groom: *(Bride)*, I accept and treasure your gift. Let us together always share God's blessings.

Celebrant: May God bless these arras as a sign of mutual support and responsibility.

Groom: I give you these coins as a pledge of my dedication to you, the care of our home, and the welfare of our children.

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Bride: I accept them and in the same way pledge my dedication to you, the care of our home, and the welfare of our children.

The groom lets the coins fall into the hands of the bride

Groom: *(Bride)*, accept these coins as a pledge of my total dedication and constant concern for your welfare. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayers for Couple's Veil

Music is played as Veil Sponsors place veil over couple's shoulders.

Celebrant: *(Groom)* and *(Bride)*, at Baptism you were clothed with the white garments symbolizing the new life of purity and joy in the Lord, to which the Risen Christ has called you. We clothe you again with this precious garment as you enter into the new phase of your life with God. Wear it unstained and let the joy of the spirit shine forth to you and your children whom the Lord's loving design will bring into your life.

The Veil covers this couple today reminding them and us that Christ covers us in his love. Their new home will be a place where God dwells because this couple chooses to be under the mantel of his love.

Lord, with this veil, which represents this couple's union and mutual surrender to each other, may you always protect *(Groom)* and *(Bride)* from any harm and strengthen them to provide continuous moral and spiritual support to each other and their children. May they remain loyal helpmates to each other as they carry life's burden with joy.

(Groom) and *(Bride)*; *(Male veil sponsor)* and *(Female veil sponsor)* will now place a veil over you. Let this be a symbol of the faithful love you have for each other. Through the passing of the years, let the veil remind you that you belong to each other and to no one else, and that the love you have for each other becomes more beautiful in self-surrender that is total and pure. In Jesus' precious name...

ALL: Amen

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Prayers for Couple's Cord

Music is played as Cord Sponsors place cord over couple's shoulders:

Celebrant: This cord symbolizes the love of God which brings your hearts and souls together. May your love grow stronger and bind you closer together through years, from here to eternity. We ask this from the Father, through Christ our Lord.

May this cord remind you to face your life together courageously and to be mutual in support of each other in carrying out your duties and responsibilities as a couple.

The cord, looped and crossed in the middle, is wrapped around the bride and groom to symbolize the Blessed Trinity; The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are one and the same. The cord symbolizes this same union and the infinite nature of marriage.

Lord, with this cord, may the bond of love and friendship uniting *(Groom)* and *(Bride)*, grow stronger over the years. May they remain united to you all their lives knowing, loving and serving in each other and the community.

(Groom) and *(Bride)*; *(Male cord sponsor)* and *(Female cord sponsor)* will lay the cord on you to remind you of your responsibility to hold each other with the tenderness that Christ has for His Church. Keep the bond of your love steadfast so that you can support one another throughout your lives.

Prayers for Wedding Vows and Wedding Ring Ceremony

Music is played as the Ring Bearer comes forward with the rings

Celebrant: *(Groom)*, do you choose *(Bride)* to be your lawfully wedded wife?

Groom: I do.

Celebrant reads the vows, groom repeats:

Celebrant /Groom: From this day forward, I, *(Groom)*, choose thee, my beloved *(Bride)*, to be my wife, before God who brought us together; to love and cherish you even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, to lead you and share all of life's experiences with you by following God through them. That through His grace, *(Bride)*, we might grow

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together into the likeness of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

I give you this ring; wear it with love and joy.

Groom places engagement and wedding band on the third finger of bride's left hand

I pledge to live with you and laugh with you; to stand by your side, and sleep in your arms; to be a joy to your heart, and food for your soul; to bring out the best in you always, and, for you, to be the most that I can. I promise to laugh with you in good times, to struggle with you in bad; to solace you when you are downhearted; to wipe your tears with my hands; to comfort you with my body; to mirror you with my soul; to share with you all my riches and honours; to play with you as much as I can until we grow old; and, still loving each other sweetly and gladly, our lives shall come to an end.

Celebrant: *(Bride)*, do you choose *(Groom)* to be your lawfully wedded husband?

Bride: I do.

Celebrant reads the vows, bride repeats:

Celebrant /Bride: From this day forward, and with this ring, I, *(Bride)*, choose thee, my beloved *(Groom)*, to be my husband, before God who brought us together, to love you, cherish you, to submit to you myself unto you in all things, and to follow you through all of life's experiences as you follow God. That through His grace we might grow together into the likeness of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

I give you this ring; wear it with love and joy.

Bride places wedding band on the third finger of groom's left hand

I pledge to live with you and laugh with you; to stand by your side, and sleep in your arms; to be a joy to your heart, and food for your soul; to bring out the best in you always, and, for you, to be the most that I can. I promise to laugh with you in good times, to struggle with you in bad; to solace you when you are downhearted; to wipe your tears with my hands; to comfort you with my body; to mirror you with my soul; to share with you all my riches and honours; to play with you as much as I can until we grow old; and, still loving each other sweetly and gladly, our lives shall come to an end.

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Prayers for Candles

Celebrant: *(Groom)* and *(Bride)*; *(Male candle lighter)* and *(female candle lighter)* now light the candles for you. The candles represent the light from God that you will need to guide you throughout the rest of your married life. The candles also express the silent promise that the couple will continue to provide light and warmth to each other for life.

Candle Lighters come forward to light the two outside candles

Celebrant: *(Groom)* and *(Bride)* will now light centre Unity Candle. You will take the flame from the candles which *(Male candle lighter)* and *(female candle lighter)* have lit. You will see that this centre candle is larger than the other two because it is the new family that has been formed today as you repeated your vows and will be a blending of all the love, traditions and experiences you have both shared with your individual families. It is also larger because the middle candle represents Christ, who has brought you both together for this moment and to remind you that He is with you always as a partner in your marriage, to guard and to guide you in all that you do.

(Groom) and *(Bride)*, now light the candles that represent the light from God.

The bride and groom light the centre Unity Candle

Celebrant: Take the flames from the candles which have been lit. This centre candle is a sign that a new family has been formed today blending all the love, traditions and experiences you have both shared with your individual families. It also represents Christ, who has brought you both together for this moment.

As you light the Christ candle let it remind you that Christ is with you always as a partner in your marriage, to guard and guide you in all that you do.

Today, as candles are lit at the altar, remember the light of Christ that burns in all Christian hearts and our responsibility to share that light with the world, especially in this celebration of Eucharist.

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Benediction

Celebrant: May we all please bow our heads in prayer.

Dear God in Heaven, may today be all that you need it to be today. May the peace of God and the freshness of the Holy Spirit rest in your thoughts, rule in your dreams tonight and conquer all your fears. May God manifest Himself today in ways that you have never experienced. May your joys be fulfilled, your dreams be closer and your prayers be answered.

I pray that faith enters a new height for you; I pray that your territory is enlarged and I pray that you step into your destiny within the ministry. I pray for peace, health, happiness and true and undying love for God. I pray this in the Name of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Marriage pronouncement

Celebrant: By the power vested in me by Almighty God, and the *(State of --------),* I hereby pronounce you husband and wife.

(Groom), you may now kiss *(Bride)*, your bride.

Celebrant: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my greatest pleasure to present to you, Mr. and Mrs. *(Groom)*.

Please join me in a warm applause.

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