



A Catholic wedding planner has encouraged married women in Ecuador to “put a smile on the face of a poor bride” by donating their wedding dresses this Christmas.

“The goal is to have women give up their wedding dresses, since they don't have a real use for them anymore. What's better than keeping them is to give them to someone who needs one,” Maria Alejandra Guerra told ACI Prensa.

Guerra explained that the idea came to her Nov. 26, when she went with a group of missionaries from the Bonds of Marian Love Movement to St. Arnaldo Janssen Parish, located in a poor section of Guayaquil, to coordinate a Christmas campaign for the children there.

She said that the pastor, Fr. John Codjoe, told them that one of the parish's ministries was marriage preparation, and that because “most of these women don't have wedding gowns,” that he was looking for dresses to be donated.

“So that little light went on, because that was something I wanted to do for some time, and so I said to him 'Father, I'm a wedding planner, I'm going to help you and I'm going to promote this for your parish,” Guerra related.

Fr. Codjoe “was thrilled” with the proposal and told her about 19 couples who would soon be getting married in the parish.

“That's why I decided to launch this campaign on my social media. I didn't think I was going to get a good reception because some time ago I did a poll and most women told me they preferred to sell their wedding dresses. But it turned out just the opposite and now seven women have offered to give me their dresses,” she said.

“I'm going to go pick up the dresses and I'll bring them over to St. Arnaldo Janssen parish. I even told Fr. Codjoe that I wanted to attend the couples' weddings,” she commented.

On her Instagram account where she launched the campaign, Maria Alejandra Guerra said that Christmas is a “joy, it's giving something to someone you don't know but who

needs it more... 'giving without remembering and receiving without forgetting,' because that bride you give the dress to will be immensely grateful."

She hopes that "we can put smiles on the faces of the brides most in need."

Guerra said that "if I succeed in coming up with the dresses that Fr. Codjoe needs for next year and I continue to get more dresses, then I'll be looking for other parishes that will want to receive them as donations."

She also invited married women from other Latin American countries to look for churches where they could give their wedding dresses to low-income couples who are preparing for marriage.

For women who live in Mexico, Guerra suggested they give their gowns to the charitable initiative called "Brides with a Cause" which collects dresses throughout the country to give them to needy young women.