

Getting Married in the Catholic Church

MARRIAGE PREPARATION IN THE DIOCESE OF BROWNSVILLE

Congratulations on your Engagement! May the Lord guide you during this time of preparing for a **Sacramental Marriage**. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us in Paragraph 1660: *“The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with its own special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament...”*

Our hope and prayer, as a Catholic Church, is that the Marriage Preparation that you receive will be a blessing and a guide for you two to develop a **life long marriage** which reflects *“the (love and) union of Christ and the Church”*(CCC 1661).

A Wedding is A Day; **A Marriage** is a Life Time!

STEPS TO THE ALTAR

STEP I: A Time For Welcome

The engaged couple meets with pastor or deacon of the parish of either the bride or groom 6 to 12 months before desired wedding date to: *(Contact your **parish**)*

insure they are eligible to marry according to civil law and Church law.

- arrange for all necessary documents (ex. Baptismal Certificate)
- answer FOCCUS Pre-marital questionnaire
- obtain information on **SPONSOR COUPLE PROGRAM** and **MARRIAGE PREPARATION RETREATS** (ex. Catholic Engaged Encounter, Retiro Pre-Matrimonial, For Better and Forever Retreat, New Life Remarriage Retreat, Convalidation Conference)

STEP II: A Parish Wide Ministry

♥The engaged couple is assigned to a **Married Sponsor Couple** who will meet with them several times (app. 6 - 10 times) to facilitate their discussion over marriage topics (ex. communication, faith, religion, values, finances, etc.)

♥The engaged couple will make the **Diocesan Marriage Preparation Retreat** recommended by the pastor or deacon. (Please click on **Marriage Preparation Retreats**)

STEP III: Final Meeting with the Pastor

♥ During this meeting the pastor will have an opportunity to talk with the couple about what they have gained from the marriage preparation process as well as to ensure that all documents have been obtained and all paper work is complete.

♥The pastor, deacon, or other marriage preparation minister will help couple plan the liturgy for their wedding.

(For more complete info on Marriage Preparation Requirements, click on *Synodal Legislation* pgs 15-20)