

Dear Engaged Couple:

The Sacrament of Matrimony, which you are preparing to celebrate, is indeed an honored institution of our Church and speaks to the entire Christian community of the love and unity binding Christ and His Church. As you enter into your preparation for marriage, you also enter into a process that demonstrates to all within our faith community that your love is rooted in God. Your preparation for the sacrament is an important responsibility for you and the Church.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (#59), from the Second Vatican Council states:

As with all the sacraments, marriage demands adequate preparation if the sacrament is to have its full meaning and effect. The planning of the liturgical celebration with the intimate involvement of the priest, musicians, and the couple is an essential part of that preparation because '(the sacraments) not only presuppose faith, but by words and actions they also nourish, strengthen, and express it'.

The pastoral staff of St. Matthias the Apostle Church is committed to providing you as a couple with the best and most adequate preparation available. We are especially committed to you during the months of immediate preparation. We will do what we can to enliven in you a sense that your marriage will be not only a lifelong commitment to one another but also a relationship into which you are inviting the presence of God.

The role of the priest or deacon in marriage preparation is one of leader and coordinator. He is also friend and counselor on behalf of the Church. He will witness and accept your vows on the day of the wedding. He will draw all present into a faith-filled participation in the sacrament. Your roles, as bride and groom, are those of the ministers of the sacrament; roles bestowed by the dignity of your baptism. When you publicly state your commitment, you in fact minister the unifying grace of Christ's love to each other, to your family and friends, and to the entire Church and society as well.

In order to assist you with these important preparations, we are providing you with the attached guidelines. On behalf of the people of St. Matthias the Apostle Church, we rejoice with you as you embark on this exciting and extremely significant segment of your lives. We assure you of our commitment in assisting you in the coming months and remaining faithful to you in our prayer. May God bless and unify you in His Love!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Reverend Jeffrey M. Defayette
Pastor