**Six Month Marriage Preparation**

**Pre-Matrimonial Investigation:** Six months prior to your wedding date you must arrange an appointment with a Priest. You will need the following if you are Roman Catholic:

* A recent copy of your Baptismal Certificate (within past 6 months) from the Church where you were baptized.
* First Holy Communion Certificate
* Confirmation Certificate Non-Catholic Christians will need to obtain their Baptismal Certificate.

**Marriage License:** To be obtained from the Town of Windham. Apply one month prior to the wedding date. **The Marriage License must be presented to the Priest at or before the rehearsal**.

**Music:** The Music Director of Music is responsible for all wedding music and music fees for wedding at Corpus Christi Parish. Fees for music are in addition to the donation to the Church. All couples must contact Annette and Zoila at their earliest convenience to the parish office 860-423-8439. Mr. McCarthy will gladly assist you in planning music for your wedding in accordance with Diocesan Guidelines. He can also assist in contacting vocalists and instrumentalists. For music at Saint Mary’s or Sagrado Corazón de Jesús please contact the appropriate church.

**Donation to the Church:** The customary donation to The Church is $500 for Parishioners and $600 for all others. **Checks should be made payable to the church at which the wedding is held and brought to the Rectory prior to your wedding rehearsal.**

**Altar Servers:** Altar Servers assist at a wedding Mass only. We ask that a courtesy gift of $10.00 be given to each Altar Server. **This gift should be brought to the Rectory prior to your wedding rehearsal.**

**Pre-Cana:**

Pre-Cana is a Catholic course on marriage. Engaged couples must take part in a course before they can be married in the Catholic Church. Married Catholic couples give presentations on various topics to educate and support the couple as they enter marriage. A priest will discuss that in Catholicism, marriage is a sacrament. A sacrament is an outward sign of Christ's love. Pre-Cana is mandatory.

The wedding couple must arrange the Pre-Cana courses at least six months prior to the wedding. The Pre-Cana choices can be found at www.norwichdiocese.org under the Ministries tab - Office of Family Life, or phone the Office of Family Life at 860-889-8346 ext. 283. Some of the current Pre-Cana options are:

**Engaged Encounter:**

The Diocese of Norwich offers the Engaged Encounter program. An Engaged Encounter is a weekend away with other engaged couples to plan your marriage. The weekend is a very low-key time with emphasis on quiet and relaxation. Through a series presentations by a team of two married couples and a priest, the couple is encouraged to speak in private with each other on all aspects of married life. Communal meals and liturgy provide group participation.

**God’s Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage:**

This course is offered by The Diocese of Norwich, Office of family life. This comprehensive course offers the guidance and groundwork necessary to assist the couple in evaluating their readiness to make a permanent life commitment.

**On-Line Catholic Marriage Preparation:**

This program is available at www.catholicmarriageprep.com. You will need to contact the Norwich Diocese, Office of Family Life if you are registering for the on-line course to also complete the Natural Family Planning Diocesan requirements.

Marriage Preparation Brochure Rev. 09/14

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Matrimony

“For I know the plans I have for your life...they are plans to give you a future and to give you hope.”

 -Jeremiah 29:11



**Marriage** is a “covenant or partnership of life between a man and woman, which is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children. When validly contracted between two baptized people, marriage is a sacrament.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1601).

Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman as spouses in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a glorious vision of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. In other words, the whole of creation and redemption is a marriage between God and His people, and for this reason St. Paul teaches that the union of husband and wife is an image or icon of the union between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:25-32).St. John tells us that the first miracle worked by the Lord Jesus was at a wedding feast (John 2:1-11), thus revealing the intimate connection between the messianic mission of Christ and the dignity of marriage, which is the one blessing of God not lost by original sin or washed away in the flood. The bond of husband and wife, however, was disfigured by sin (like everything else in nature), and requires the grace of Christ to be purified, healed, and restored to its original dignity.

Because of the weakness of human nature after sin, Moses permitted the children of Israel to repudiate the solemn covenant of marriage, but the Lord Jesus restored the original pattern of spousal love by revealing that the true bond of marriage, once begun by the mutual consent of the spouses, can never be broken in this life.

By restoring the original order of creation, Jesus was not giving us a burden too heavy to carry, because He Himself gives the strength and grace to live marriage as a permanent union by following Him in the Way of the Cross, renouncing oneself, and living for the sake of the other. The grace of sacramental marriage is a fruit of Christ’s holy Cross, the source of all Christian life.

Unlike the other six sacraments which are all administered by a bishop, priest, or deacon, *the sacrament of matrimony is administered by the husband and wife to each other*; the priest or deacon is merely the Church’s witness who blesses the union created by the exchange of consent. The marriage bond, created only by those who are truly free by God’s law to marry, is an irrevocable covenant which binds the spouses to each other for life, and the sacrament of matrimony conveys the special grace necessary to strengthen them for lifelong fidelity and growth in holiness.

Christ dwells with the spouses and gives them the grace to take up their crosses daily, to rise again after they fall, to forgive one another, to bear each other’s burdens, to be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ, and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love.

**If you have any questions or concerns regarding the preparation for your wedding, please feel free to contact a parish listed on our website catholicwindham.org**

TO BE MARRIED at any of the churches in the Corpus Christi Catholic Community or Saint Margaret Chapel, either the bride or groom must be a practicing Catholic, registered at a Catholic parish before beginning the six month marriage preparation, and regularly attending Mass and participating in the life of the parish.  Please call the rectory to talk to a priest one year or at least 6 months before the intended date of your wedding and before you make any other arrangements for your marriage.

Please call the rectory to speak with a Priest six to twelve months before the intended date of your wedding and before you make any other arrangements for your marriage.

**The rehearsal** time and date are set after the pre-matrimonial investigation. **Marriage License, Altar Server Gifts, and Donation to Corpus Christi Parish must be brought to the Rectory prior to the Wedding rehearsal.**

**Flowers** are handled by the florist of your choice. If flowers are placed in the Sanctuary, it is understood that you leave them for the honor and glory of God and to add to the beauty of the Church’s Altar and Sanctuary.

**Photographers** are not allowed in the Sanctuary at any time. You may return to the church to take pictures following your receiving line if you wish, and if time permits.

As a matter of courtesy, we absolutely insist that **no confetti, rice, birdseed, flower petals, etc.** be thrown at the entrance of the church or in the streets. Please inform your wedding party and guests of this policy.