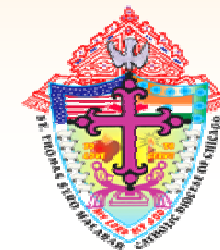


**ST. THOMAS
SYRO-MALABAR
CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF CHICAGO**



**PREPARATION
FOR THE SACRAMENT
OF MARRIAGE
(PRE-CANA)
An Overview**

Revised in September 2015

“Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one?” – Matthew 19:4-5.



Christian marriage preparation can be described as a journey of faith which does not end with the celebration of marriage but continues throughout family life.

Office of Family and Marriage
St. Thomas Catholic Diocese of Chicago
372 S Prairie Ave. Elmhurst, IL 60126-4020
Ph: 630-279-1386 Fax 630-279-1479

The importance of

Preparation for Christian Marriage

The Sacrament joins the spouses to the self-giving love of Christ the Bridegroom for the Church, his Bride (Ephesians 5:25-32) by making them the image of, and shares in this love. It makes them give praise to the Lord, it sanctifies the conjugal union and the life of the Christian faithful who celebrate it, and gives rise to the Christian family, the domestic church, the “first and living cell of society” (Apostolicam Actuositatem, 11), and the “sanctuary of life” (EV 92 and also 6, 88, 94). Therefore, the sacrament is celebrated and lived in the heart of the New Covenant, i.e, the paschal mystery. Therefore, Christian couples and families are neither isolated nor alone.

Additional Resources

- ◆ **Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium (CCEO)**
- ◆ **The Catechism of the Catholic Church.**
- ◆ **Gratissimam Sane**
- ◆ **Evangelium Vitae (EV)**
- ◆ **Gravissimum Educationist**
- ◆ **Familiaris Consortio**
- ◆ **Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium 12**
- ◆ **The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality— by the Pontifical Council for the Family (December 8, 1995)**
- ◆ **Sacrosantum Concilium**
- ◆ **Humanae Vitae**

Preparation for Christian Marriage

The starting point for an itinerary of marriage preparation is the awareness that the marriage covenant was taken up and raised to a sacrament of the New Covenant by Lord Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Focus on:

- ◆ *A broad and thorough process of education for married life.*
- ◆ *Current psychological and cultural situation .*
- ◆ *Make use of pedagogical and psychological aids*
- ◆ *Educating for the respect and care for life in the Sanctuary of families.*

Main Topics Covered

- **Sacramental Dignity of Marriage**

Marriage is the intimate, exclusive, indissoluble communion of life and love entered by man and woman at the design of the creator for the purpose of their own good and the procreation and education of children: this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament (Gaudium et Spes, n.48 and Code of Canon Law, Can. 1055)

- **Marriage in Bible**

God had given the human beings –male and female–the authority “to be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the earth” thus establishing the human family in dialogue with the universe. (Gen 1:27-28)

- **Marriage and Canon Law**

“The matrimonial covenant, established by the Creator and ordered by his laws by which a man and woman by an irrevocable personal consent establish between themselves a partnership of the whole life, is by its very nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the

generation and education of the offspring” (c.776.I)

- **Sexual Intimacy**

Human sexuality is expressed in all five aspects of the human personality i.e., in the physical, intellectual, psychological, social, and spiritual.

- **Catholic Parenting**

According to the plan of God, marriage is the foundation of the wider community of the family, since the very institution of marriage and conjugal love is ordained to the procreation and education of children whom it finds its crowning (Familiaris Consortio #14).

- **Responsible and Prudent parenthood**

Responsible and prudent parenthood points to the obligations of the spouses with regard to the responsible transmission of life and proper education of children.

- **Natural Family Planning**

Openness to procreation in the marital act involves—acknowledging that one is not the master of sources of life. Using the technology of contraception is an attempt at such mastery. (Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan from USCCB Nov 2009, page 31)

- **Moral Challenges in Married Life**

Church is “an expert in humanity” with a mission to serve the “civilization of love and of life. This session deals with a broad range of issues, including sexuality, marriage, reproduction, birth control, sterilization and abortion, reproductive technologies, including artificial donor insemination, in-vitro fertilization, surrogacy and cloning, end-of-life issues, including advance directives, palliative care and pain control, suicide, euthanasia and refusal or cessation of futile treatments, organ donation and the definition of death. (CCCC 2258-2300)

- **Conjugal Psychology**

It is not simply man and woman that enter into a wedlock; but two distinct individuals.

- **Family and Family Prayer**

“Be joyful always. Pray without ceasing, be thankful in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thes. 5:16-18) “....Persevere in prayer” (Rom. 12:12)

- **Communication**

What an amazing ideal in fact, a central belief for Christians is the revealed truth that God took on our humanity in Jesus in order to communicate love to us.

- **Problems in Family Life**

One of the most excitements about being married is realizing that it will take many years of loving and living to learn to know each other. A good marriage will have unimagined joy, unexpected depths of love, and unanticipated experiences and trials—all of which have the capacity to bind and build a couple into a growing oneness. Problems the families may encounter in the areas of sex, finance, occupation, children, culture, health, substance abuse, communication, and fidelity are discussed in this session.

- **The celebration of Marriage**

The preparation for marriage leads to married life, through the celebration of the sacrament, which is the culmination of the journey of preparation which the spouses have made and the source and origin of their married life. Therefore, the celebration cannot be reduced only to a ceremony, the product of culture and sociological conditioning. (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 77; Familiaris Consortio, 67)