



## The Marriage Preparation Process

Dear Engaged Couple,

Congratulations on your engagement! We are so happy that you are inquiring about the marriage preparation program at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Portland, OR. This document will help guide you through the steps of our marriage preparation process and elucidate the program's expectations.

At St. Patrick we believe, teach, and uphold what the Catholic Church believes, teaches and upholds concerning the sacrament of marriage. The Church teaches that marriage is a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman for the spiritual and material good of the couple, and for the generation and education of children.

To enter into the marriage preparation program at St. Patrick Catholic Church an engaged couple must include at least one Catholic party and promise to complete the following requirements.

### **Requirements**

1. Register as parishioners at St. Patrick's.
2. Be engaged in the community and attend Sunday Mass for at least 3 months prior to beginning the marriage preparation program.
3. Meet with the Marriage Preparation Coordinator for the Freedom to Marry Interview and signing of contracts.
4. Complete the Prepare/Enrich online assessment.
5. Attend the marriage preparation program at St. Patrick's.
6. Commit to living as brother and sister and cease engaging in all sexual activity until after marriage.
7. Be open to children after marriage.
8. If either of the parties have been married before, in any church or venue, an annulment may be required before another marriage can be contracted. Please see the Archdiocese of Portland [page on annulments](#) for more information. If you have been previously married please email [furlowappointments@gmail.com](mailto:furlowappointments@gmail.com) to schedule an annulment meeting with Fr. Furlow.

## **Complete the Marriage Preparation Inquiry Form**

Fill out the marriage preparation inquiry form on the St. Patrick's website "Marriage" page or right here [Marriage Preparation Inquiry Form](#)

1. Please fill out this form with your fiancé and answer all the questions truthfully and completely. If a translator is required, please reach out to the parish office.

## **Meet with the Marriage Preparation Coordinator**

- The marriage preparation coordinator will reach out to you after receiving your application and will inform you as to whether you can enter the marriage preparation program or if more information is required. If you are able to enter the marriage preparation program the coordinator will then schedule your initial interview.
- The initial interview with the marriage preparation coordinator lasts roughly two hours and both parties will need to be present. If so desired, please bring your deposit with you to the meeting or pay on our website.
- Submit your email addresses to the marriage preparation coordinator to be signed up to complete the Prepare/Enrich assessment. This assessment will be reviewed in one of your meetings with Fr. Furlow. The fee is \$35, to be paid on the Prepare/Enrich website.
- Come prepared to request your preferred wedding date at the initial interview.
- Schedule NFP instruction class with the marriage prep coordinator. Natural Family Planning is a method for tracking fertility and must be learned by all couples before marriage. Our in-house instructor Rachel Lux will be happy to guide you through the process.
- Schedule a General Confession with Fr. Furlow (See instructions and description under general confession below).
- A wedding coordinator will be assigned to you for planning your wedding day.
- The parish fee for weddings is \$600 for parishioners and \$1200 for non parishioners. Please bring a check for the amount to your first meeting with your wedding coordinator.

## **Marriage Preparation Course**

1. **Classes:** Marriage preparation runs for three months and consists of six classes every two weeks on Saturday from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Marriage preparation is held in the 1st, 2nd, and 4th quarter of the year. A couple must attend all classes or be dispensed from a class by the marriage preparation coordinator. If a class is missed without proper dispensation then the couple must restart the program during the next available quarter. To view the full schedule please check the parish calendar here: [St. Patrick Catholic Church Calendar](#)
2. **Pastoral Meetings:** Two meetings with the pastor will be scheduled with him to check in and pray with you and go over Prepare/Enrich assessment.
3. **Dinner Meetings with Sponsor Couples:** We have many wonderful couples here at St. Patrick who are living vibrant, Catholic lives. Part of the marriage preparation process is entering into our parish community and getting to know couples who have been married for some time. These couples will invite you into their homes for guided discussions and a chance for real Christian fellowship. Your sponsor couple will be given your contact

info at the start of the marriage preparation program and they will reach out to you to schedule your meetings.

- 4. General Confession:** Here at St. Patrick we believe in the healing power of Christ and the power of His sacraments. Confession is the primary instrument by which we are forgiven of our sins. In the general confession we go through our whole life, bringing everything before the Lord for his healing gaze. The wounds we bring into marriage from our past sins, relationships, etc. will affect how well we succeed at having a healthy marriage. The general confession helps free us from past wounds so we can give ourselves freely to our future spouse. Fr. Furlow will personally guide you through this process. He has also written this guide to help prepare you to make your general confession. [☰ How to Make a General Confession \(Penitent's Guide\)](#)

### **The Rite of Matrimony**

A wedding coordinator will be assigned to you to help facilitate the Nuptial Mass or Rite of Matrimony and the rehearsal. The rules and guidelines for weddings held at St. Patrick's are listed below.

Please note that when a marriage is celebrated between two Catholics, it is normally done so within the context of Mass. A marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic Christian (or a non-baptized person) is normally celebrated outside the context of Mass.

**1. Readings:** The reading of Sacred Scripture during the celebration of the Nuptial Mass or Rite of Matrimony can be done only by Catholic family members or friends who exemplify a Christian lifestyle. The readings themselves are selected from the Together for Life booklet. This booklet will be given to you by your wedding coordinator. When your selections are made please input them on the [Together for Life website](#). This website will generate a form of your selections. You will then email this form to your wedding coordinator and the St. Patrick Office.

**4. Music:** Music must be in keeping with archdiocesan liturgical norms. Only live musical accompaniment, approved by the pastor and the Coordinator of Sacred Music (Mary Berger) is permitted. Liturgical music selections must be submitted to the Coordinator of Sacred Music at least 30 days prior to the ceremony. The Coordinator of Sacred Music can suggest musicians, vocalists, and music selections. Please email Mary at [Music@stpatrickpdx.org](mailto:Music@stpatrickpdx.org)

**2. Altar Servers:** Altar servers may be requested from St. Patrick's. There is no guarantee in-house servers will be available on your wedding date. Speak to your wedding coordinator for more details.

**5. Wedding Program:** You may want to provide a program for the Nuptial Mass or Rite of Matrimony for your guests. If non-Catholics will be attending the ceremony we recommend you include instructions in your program concerning the proper dispositions needed to receive Holy Communion. Only Catholics who have been baptized, have received 1st Communion and are not in a state of mortal sin can receive Holy Communion. Otherwise all are asked to stay in their pews or come up with hands crossed over the chest to receive a blessing.

**6. Flowers:** If you wish to have your own flower arrangements placed on the altars for the wedding the following guidelines must be followed:

1. Decor must respect the church decor and liturgical season. No flowers may be placed on the low altar. Use of tape, staples, nails, and other artificial means of attachment are not permitted. Flower arrangements must not extend beyond the upper base of the high altar to the candles and must not touch or obstruct the tabernacle.
2. Optional: If you wish to offer flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary during your wedding, please consult your wedding coordinator.

**7. Photography and Videotaping:** Photographers and videographers must consult with the wedding coordinator prior to the wedding. Their work should be done discreetly and unobtrusively. Pre-wedding photos should be completed at least 45 minutes prior to the wedding. Flash photography is limited to the processional and recessional. No photographer should move from their stationary position during the Eucharistic Prayer which is from the Sanctus (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) to the Pater Noster (*Our Father*). At no time during the ceremony should the photographer enter the Sanctuary. It is the couple's responsibility to inform the photographer and videographer of these policies.

**8. Dress Code:** In respect for the sacredness of the church, we ask your wedding party to dress modestly and, if needed, to use wraps or shawls. The wedding dress should be respectful and modest.

**9. Alcohol/Drugs:** The consumption of alcohol or drugs on church property is strictly prohibited. For one to contract a marriage, even civilly, one must be completely sober. If there is suspicion of intoxication on the day of the wedding the ceremony will be canceled without question. This cancellation is at the discretion of both the celebrant and the wedding coordinator.

## **Marriage Preparation Resources**

Books:

- [\*Into the Deep An Unlikely Catholic Conversion\*](#) by Abigail Favale
- [\*Men and Women are from Eden: A Study Guide to John Paul II's Theology of the Body\*](#) by Mary Healey
- [\*Theology of the Body for Beginners\*](#) and [\*Theology of the Body Explained\*](#) by Christopher West
- [\*Couples. Awaken Your Love\*](#) by Robert Cardinal Sarah
- [\*Men, Women, and the Mystery of Love\*](#) by Edward Sri
- [\*Jesus the Bridegroom\*](#) by Brant Pitre
- [\*Three to get married\*](#) by Fulton Sheen
- [\*The First Society\*](#) by Scott Hahn
- [\*Be Healed\*](#) (general healing) / [\*Be Devoted\*](#) (healing within marriage)/ [\*Be Restored\*](#) (healing of sexuality) by Dr. Bob Schuchts
- [\*Just Married\*](#) by Dr Greg and Lisa Popcak (2013) Paperback
- [\*For Better Forever: Revised and Expanded\*](#) by Dr Greg and Lisa Popcak
- [\*Holy Sex!: A Catholic Guide to Toe-Curling, Mind-Blowing, Infallible Loving\*](#) by Dr. Gregory Popcak

## **Marriage and Relationship Counseling**

Patricia Mackie, LPC

[www.everydaycounselingpdx.com/](http://www.everydaycounselingpdx.com/)

## **Natural Family Planning**

**In-House Instructor:** Rachel Lux

Email: [luxfertility@gmail.com](mailto:luxfertility@gmail.com)

Info: Website Coming Soon

**Holy Family Clinic:**

<https://holyfamilyclinic.com/>

Holy family clinic offers NaPro and Creighton fertility training as well as in person visits and follow up care.

**SymptoPro classes:**

<https://symptopro.org/>

Online option: \$120 for three sessions with an instructor

In-Person Option: \$120.

**Couple to Couple League:**

<https://ccli.org/learn-nfp-from-ccl/>

Self-paced online option: \$135

Live online class: \$135 Once a month meetings, three times for two hours each

In-person option: \$135 Once a month meetings, three times for two hours each

**InSight Fertility:**

[www.insightfertility.com](http://www.insightfertility.com)

All via zoom, Group intro session is \$25 per couple

(\$100 for a private intro). After the Intro Session is completed, couples enroll in the program, which includes the cost of the first followup, materials, and setting up for long distance instruction (\$200). Further follow ups are \$100 each, as needed.