



# C<sup>◊</sup>NGRAT ULAT IONS

*on your*

ENGAGEMENT



ARCHDIOCESE of MIAMI  
Marriage Preparation Information



ARCHDIOCESE OF MIAMI  
*Office of the Archbishop*

Feast of St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

Dear brother and sister in Christ,

Please know how happy I am that you are planning to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony. I invite you both to use this time of your formal engagement to not only plan your wedding day, but also your married life. Your presence and active participation in the various programs of marriage preparation presented by your parish and the archdiocese will help you to do just that. The Church has always valued and esteemed the committed relationship called marriage. For us as Catholics, marriage is a sign of the love of Jesus Christ for his bride, the Church. Husbands and wives are called to love each other as Christ loves his Church.

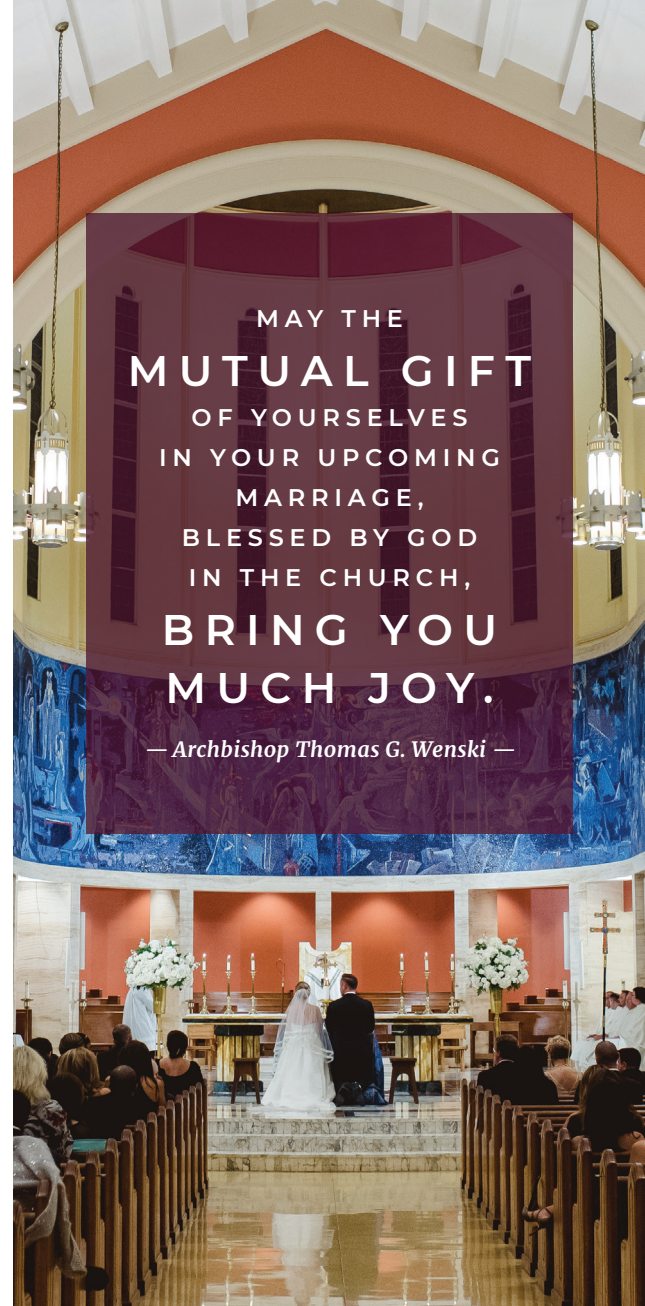
If one of you is not Catholic, we welcome you and hope that you find the various elements of this preparation helpful and practical as it does try to present the vision of marriage from a Catholic perspective.

If one or both of you are Catholic and are actively practicing, we hope this preparation further strengthens your practice and commitment to the goodness, truth, and beauty of the Catholic faith. If you are not currently practicing your faith, I hope your preparation for marriage provides you with a renewal of the gift of faith you were given in Baptism and I invite you to a more active practice of the faith.

As men and women created in the image and likeness of God, we can be happy only through the sincere gift of ourselves. May the mutual gift of yourselves in your upcoming marriage, blessed by God in the Church, bring you much joy.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski  
Archbishop of Miami



MAY THE  
**MUTUAL GIFT**  
OF YOURSELVES  
IN YOUR UPCOMING  
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BLESSED BY GOD  
IN THE CHURCH,  
**BRING YOU**  
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— Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski —



## THE FIVE ELEMENTS

- 1 PARISH CONNECTION
- 2 MARRIAGE FORMATION
- 3 FAITH FORMATION
- 4 LITURGICAL FORMATION
- 5 MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT



## OF MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Marriage preparation was often referred to as “pre-Cana” because the first miracle of Jesus was at a wedding in the town of Cana. Mary, his mother, was also present and noticed the wedding party had run out of wine. She then asked Jesus to help the newlyweds. Changing the water into wine was the first public miracle of Jesus. This miracle reveals both Mary’s loving intercession for married couples and Jesus’ presence and care for our needs. Therefore “Pre-Cana” refers to preparing for a marriage in which Jesus is invited to the wedding and into the marriage that follows.

Couples often ask how quickly they can get married in the Catholic Church. Due to the importance of the different elements, it is recommended that you allow at least nine months to complete all of your preparation. This is a reasonable timeframe to engage in the elements both practically and thoughtfully.

As you anticipate the joy of your wedding and marriage, we invite you to enter into this marriage preparation process in the Catholic Church as an opportunity to grow individually and as a couple rather than as a checklist of things you “have to do”. Preparing for marriage is so important that every diocese has required elements.

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## 1 PARISH CONNECTION

As soon as you get engaged (and prior to making any other wedding plans such as reserving the reception hall, caterer, etc.) please contact your parish. If you are not actively engaged in a parish community, contact the parish closest to the residence of the bride or the groom.

Your parish will welcome you and set up a meeting for you with the pastor, priest, or deacon. This will allow you:

- To get to know one another better,
- To review these elements of preparation,
- And to discuss the necessary paperwork required by the Church and by the State.

The priest or deacon officiating at your wedding ceremony is responsible for your preparation and will journey with you throughout your preparation. He may delegate aspects to others however you should continuously be checking in with him regarding your experiences and completion of these elements.

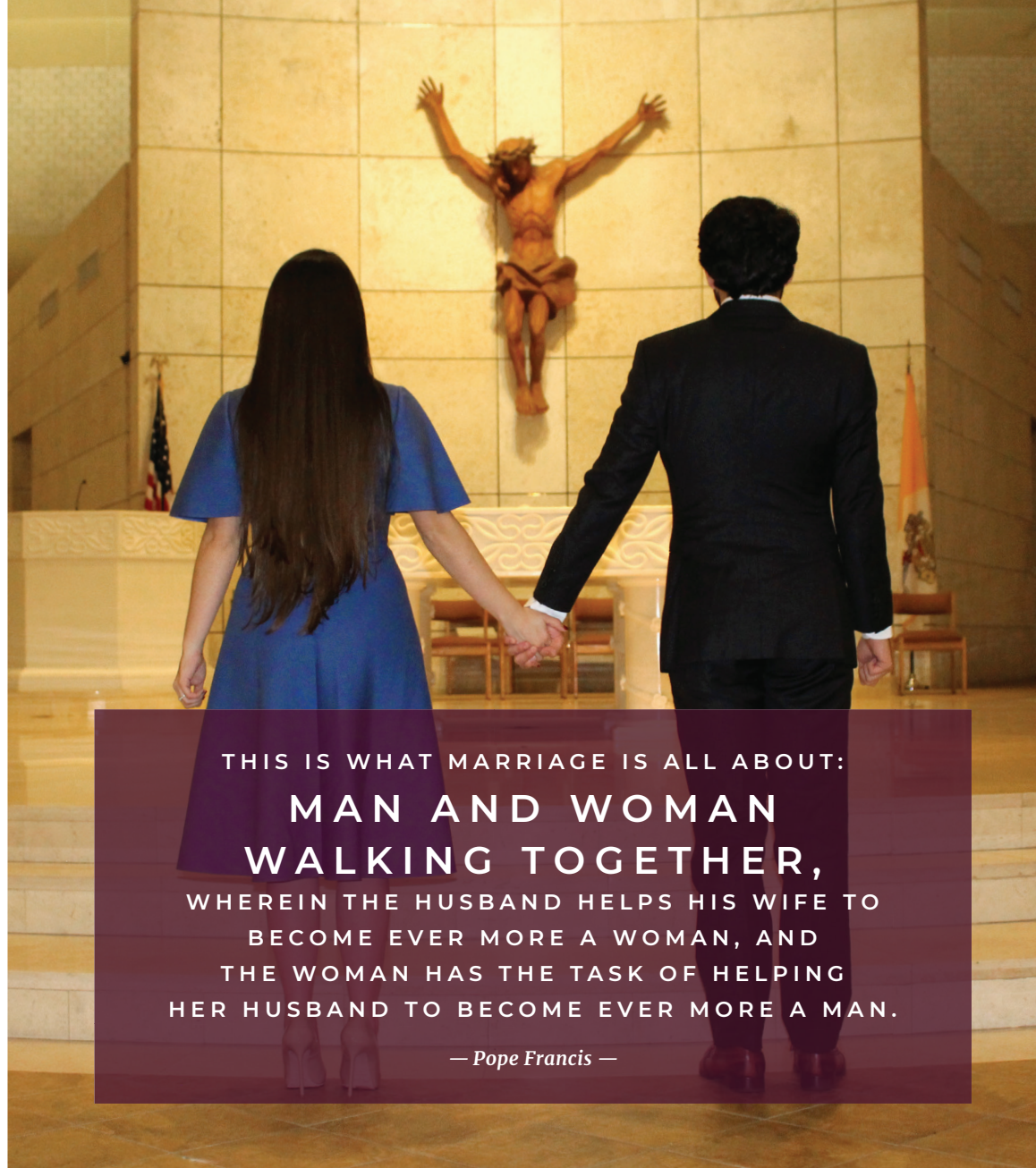
PRIEST OFFICIATING \_\_\_\_\_

PARISH \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

MEETING DATES AND TIMES \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



THIS IS WHAT MARRIAGE IS ALL ABOUT:  
**MAN AND WOMAN  
WALKING TOGETHER,**  
WHEREIN THE HUSBAND HELPS HIS WIFE TO  
BECOME EVER MORE A WOMAN, AND  
THE WOMAN HAS THE TASK OF HELPING  
HER HUSBAND TO BECOME EVER MORE A MAN.

— Pope Francis —

## 2 MARRIAGE FORMATION

Your pastor or his delegate will guide you through these elements and meet with you in between to discuss your experiences.

### *Fully Engaged Inventory & Discussion*

*Fully Engaged* is an inventory designed to help you identify and discuss your expectations for your future together in a number of areas (children, careers, roles, faith, finances, etc.). You will take the inventory at the parish when you first meet with the pastor, priest, or deacon. Afterward, you will meet with a trained facilitator (priest, deacon, or married mentor couple) at least three times to discuss your answers and expectations with each other.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.MiamiArch.org/FullyEngaged](http://www.MiamiArch.org/FullyEngaged)



### *Marriage Preparation Group Program* (either *Transformed in Love* or *Camino*)

These are group programs, led by teams of married couples and clergy, that cover topics such as self-knowledge, communication, expectations, finances, Sacramental Marriage, marital sexuality, marital spirituality, etc. The priest or deacon overseeing your preparation will recommend one of the above for you. After you attend the group program you will want to follow up with the pastor, priest or deacon overseeing your marriage preparation process to present your certificate and discuss your experience together.

To register for the group program recommended by your priest or deacon, please visit:  
[www.MiamiArch.org/MarriagePrep](http://www.MiamiArch.org/MarriagePrep)



### *Natural Family Planning Class*

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the general title for scientific, natural, and moral methods of family planning that can help married couples either achieve or postpone pregnancies with just reasons. Since the methods of NFP respect the love-giving (unitive) and life-giving (procreative) nature of the conjugal act, they support God's design for married love. The Marriage Preparation Group Program will introduce you to what NFP is and why the Church supports it. These classes will teach you signs to recognize your own fertility. You can choose a live in-person class, a live online class, or a self-paced online class. Depending upon the method you choose, it will take 3-6 months to complete this element of your preparation.

To register, please visit:  
[www.MiamiArch.org/NFP](http://www.MiamiArch.org/NFP)



### 3 FAITH FORMATION

We invite you to actively participate in a parish, attend Sunday Mass, and to make the sacraments and the Christian faith a foundation of your future together. Experience reveals, and research confirms, that “the rate of satisfaction in marriage is higher for husbands and wives when both regularly maintain religious attendance and feel that God is the center of their marriage.”<sup>1</sup>

If you are Catholic and have not received your *First Holy Communion*, the priest overseeing your preparation will speak with you about this and provide options for you to be able to receive this sacrament.

If you are Catholic and not yet Confirmed, then it is best to talk with your priest so you can start to get involved in a parish RCIA program (that you may begin but may not be completed until after your wedding date). The lack of the *Sacrament of Confirmation* is not an impediment to marriage.

The *Sacrament of Reconciliation* is also recommended prior to your wedding. Your pastor will discuss options for receiving this sacrament. Remember that there is no sin that God is not eager to forgive. Participation in this sacrament can become a significant moment of grace in your preparation to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony fruitfully.

<sup>1</sup> [www.ForYourMarriage.org/factsfigures/](http://www.ForYourMarriage.org/factsfigures/) as accessed on September 1, 2016. See also W. Bradford Wilcox, University of Virginia National Marriage Project, *The State of Our Unions: Marriage in America 2011* (December, 2011), no. 31f.



THE EUCHARIST  
INEXHAUSTIBLY  
STRENGTHENS  
THE INDISSOLUBLE UNITY  
AND LOVE OF EVERY  
CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE.

— Pope Benedict XVI —



## 4 LITURGICAL FORMATION

When you have completed the other elements of your preparation, the pastor will review your experience with you and complete all the correct paperwork for the Church and the State. Having completed the elements, he will also discuss your readiness to enter into marriage and will confirm the date and details.

The various elements of your preparation thus far will have provided you with a greater understanding of the promises you will make to one another in the *Celebration of Matrimony*. You will also learn the options you have for making your *Celebration of Matrimony* unique to you as a couple (such as the readings and music you have, the people you have involved, etc.). If you have not already done so, this will be the time to thoughtfully and prayerfully prepare for the actual liturgical celebration.



## 5 MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

We encourage you to also be intentional in constantly enriching your relationship after your wedding day. Investing in your marital relationship is extremely important and should not end at your wedding. Please continue to be active members of your parish by attending Sunday Mass and participating in the

sacraments and parish life. Check your parish bulletin and the Archdiocesan website for a variety of marriage enrichment opportunities.

For more resources, please visit  
[www.MiamiArch.org/MarriageEnrichment](http://www.MiamiArch.org/MarriageEnrichment)

LOVE  
NEVER  
FAILS

— 1 Corinthians 13:8 —

# MARRIAGE PREPARATION OVERVIEW AND CHECKLIST

*These elements are proposed according to a timeline and in a preferred sequence; however, there may be adaptations based upon need and scheduling. Your priest overseeing your preparation will decide and may also add to this process to meet your specific needs.*

## 1 PARISH CONNECTION

Make first contact with the parish as soon as you are engaged. This is preferably 9 months prior to when you would like to get married but at least 6 months prior to adequately prepare for your marriage.

As you complete each of these elements, it is very important that you are periodically checking in with the priest or deacon overseeing your preparation to discuss your experience, ask any questions, and to make sure that you are completing the elements required.

- **Contact your parish.** This is the parish closest to where you live or where you are registered.
- **Meet with the pastor.** He will assist you in determining your freedom to marry and if necessary help you process past marriages and civil unions. Some pastors may designate another priest or deacon to meet with you.
- **Gather all paperwork needed.**

*My Parish Information*

## 2 MARRIAGE FORMATION

- **Take the Fully Engaged Pre-Marital Inventory.** For more information please visit: [www.MiamiArch.org/FullyEngaged](http://www.MiamiArch.org/FullyEngaged).
- **Meet with a Fully Engaged Trained Facilitator.** Meet with a trained married couple, priest, or deacon to discuss the inventory at least 4-6 months before your wedding date as you will have multiple meetings.
- **Attend a Marriage Preparation Group Program.** Attend either *Transformed in Love* or *Camino* preferably 6 months before your wedding. For more information and to register please visit: [www.MiamiArch.org/MarriagePrep](http://www.MiamiArch.org/MarriagePrep)
- **Take a Natural Family Planning (NFP) Course.** Register and begin preferably 4-6 months before your wedding as it takes at least 3 months to complete this element of your preparation. For more info and to register visit: [www.MiamiArch.org/NFP](http://www.MiamiArch.org/NFP)

## 3 FAITH FORMATION

- **Participate in the sacraments and parish life.** Preparing for Marriage is a great time to develop practices together that will strengthen your relationship with each other and God. The pastor or his delegate will discuss options for reception of the sacraments listed below.
- **First Holy Communion.** If applicable.
- **Confirmation.** If applicable, enroll in and begin the process for a year-long RCIA program.
- **Reconciliation.** As needed and especially before your *Celebration of Matrimony*
- **Attend weekly Sunday Mass.**

## 4 LITURGICAL FORMATION

Meet with your Pastor as soon as you have completed all the other elements and at least 1 month prior to your *Celebration of Matrimony*.

- **Confirm the submission and reception of all necessary documents** for your *Celebration of Matrimony*.
- **Discuss your readiness to enter into marriage** and confirm your date and time.
- **Thoughtfully prepare** for your *Celebration of Matrimony*.

## 5 PARTICIPATE IN MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT

After your wedding, continue to enrich your marriage and faith. For more information please visit your parish website and [www.MiamiArch.org/MarriageEnrichment](http://www.MiamiArch.org/MarriageEnrichment)

- **Continue to participate in programs to enrich your marriage.**
- **Continue to attend weekly Sunday Mass.**
- **Continue to participate in the sacraments and parish life.**

***Thank you for choosing to marry in the Catholic Church!***

We wish you all the best during this exciting time of your life and pray for your loving, lasting, and fruitful future union.