

A Preparation Prayer

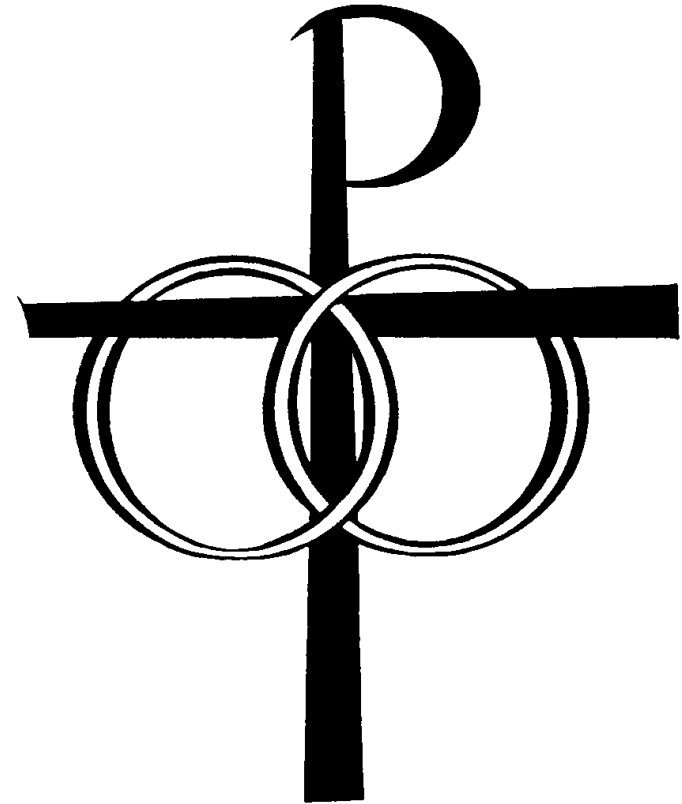
We praise and bless you,
O God.

In your wisdom
You have drawn us together
in love for one another.

Strengthen our hearts,
so that we may keep faith
with each other
and please You in all things.

With your help
may we one day
joyfully celebrate our
marriage

Graciously hear us
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Preparing for Marriage in the Diocese of Boise

Introduction for Couples

Welcome from Bishop Peter F. Christensen

Dear Engaged Couple:

Congratulations on being called to the sacrament of marriage! Marriage is the center of Catholic family life and the vocation through which most people live out their baptismal commitment. I rejoice with you as you approach the sacrament of marriage and wish to support you in living your married life to the fullest.

Cultural influences today can work against a personal commitment and development for a healthy marriage and a lifetime commitment. The Catholic Church wants to work with you to succeed with your vocation to marriage and offer you the resources which you can use to build a solid foundation for your marriage.

The cornerstones of the preparation process include meetings with clergy, attending a parish-based marriage preparation program, or a couples' retreat like Catholic Engaged Encounter. You will also use an assessment tool to assess your strengths and areas for growth, both as individuals and as a couple. I strongly encourage you to develop a prayer life together as a couple. Most importantly through this process, you will discover that Catholic marriage is about making a total gift of yourself to your spouse. Through the sacramental covenant of marriage, you are no longer two but one flesh (Mt 19:6).

As your bishop, I urge you to make the most of the marriage preparation process. It is true to say that you will get out of it what you put into it. Please enter the process with open hearts and minds to God's grace so that you might fully embrace the wonderful gifts and challenges of this state of life. Again, congratulations as you prepare for this life-long journey of grace.



Most Reverend Peter F. Christensen
Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise

Marriage Preparation in the Diocese of Boise

Step 1: Consult your Parish Priest, Deacon, or other Parish Minister a Minimum of Four (4) Months in Advance of the Intended Date of Marriage:

As you begin this process of preparation, you will need to participate in inquiry and complete paperwork that will establish your freedom to marry. The parish minister helping you will explain to you what is involved. After you have completed the paperwork and all other details in this initial process, you may set a date and time for your marriage. The parish minister will discuss with you the diocesan and parish policies for marriage.

Step 2: Provide the Necessary Documents:

This process can be time consuming, so don't let it go until the last minute!

Baptismal Certificates: You (the Catholic party) must obtain a recent baptismal certificate from the parishes in which they were baptized. "Recent certificate" means one dated within six months prior to the wedding date. In a mixed marriage, the non-Catholic Christian should confirm the fact of their baptism by a similar certificate or letter from the church where they were baptized.

Testimony of Freedom: A parent, relative, or long-time friend must testify that you are not already married and that you are marrying freely. The person assisting you will provide the form that your witness needs to complete. If you have been married before in any form, civil or religious, make this known to the parish minister when you first meet. You may need to supply a death certificate for your previous spouse, or a declaration of nullity (annulment) issued by a diocesan Tribunal, or a decree of freedom also issued by a diocesan Tribunal.

Parental Consent: If one or both of you is under 18 years of age, you will need a letter from your parents or guardians stating their consent to your marriage.

Step 3: Obtain any Necessary Special Permissions or Dispensations:

Some marriages require a special permission or dispensation. For example: when you plan to marry a baptized person who is not Catholic, a person who is not baptized, or when you plan to be married before someone other than a Catholic bishop, priest, or deacon. The person assisting you will apply for these permissions, but be sure to allow plenty of time—at least 30 days before you begin the formal marriage preparation period (a minimum of four months).

Step 4: Attend a Marriage Preparation Program and Prepare Spiritually

Obtain information about required marriage preparation programs from the parish minister assisting you. You will need documentation that you have participated in a program. Save the card, letter, or certificate you receive and present it to the parish minister assisting you.

Pray, attend Mass, read the Bible, and participate in other religious activities. The Church encourages Catholics to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation to prepare spiritually to enter more fully into the holy mystery of marriage.