



## St Mary of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Parish

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*Forming saints for Christ and the Church since 1857*

Dear Engaged Couple:

The people of St. Mary share your joy for the love you have for each other. We want to help you prepare for your wedding day, and for a long, happy life together. It is our goal to provide a marriage preparation experience that will add strength to the foundation of your marriage.

By reason of their state in life and of their particular vocation, Christian spouses have their own special gifts and roles in the People of God. This grace proper to the Sacrament of Matrimony is intended to perfect the couple's love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace, they help one another to attain holiness in their married life and in welcoming and educating their children.

Christ is the source of this grace. Just as of old, God encountered His people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the Spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Christ dwells with Christian spouses, gives them the strength to take up their crosses and follow Him, and to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another's burdens, to be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ, and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love. In the joys of their love and family life, He gives them, here on earth, a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb.

The attached *Wedding Guidelines* were prepared to help you plan your wedding in our parish church. We know you want your ceremony to be special, reflective of your personal taste and personalities. There is room for this, however, marriages, and therefore wedding ceremonies, are not private occasions. They are a public witness of a shared faith. It is easy to become caught up in the *celebration* of the wedding and lose sight of the *reason* for the occasion: **A wedding is, first of all, a Sacramental event, a religious Rite!** Even if your wedding will not include the full celebration of the Mass, the ceremony still is taking place in a sacred place where the Blessed Sacrament resides, in the context of the Faith community, and under the guidance of Christ's Church. Your wedding plans and decisions on appropriateness should take these into consideration.

The information in these *Wedding Guidelines* will answer many of your questions about what "works" in St. Mary Catholic Church. We hope this will help you avoid disappointments, and assure your wedding day is a joyous occasion and your marriage one filled with life and love.

In Christ,

Rev. Jeremy M. Gries  
Pastor