



Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Marriage and Family Life Office
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May 2021

Dear Reverend Fathers, Deacons, and Pastoral Ministers,

Greetings from the Marriage & Family Life Office! It is with joy that we write to you with exciting updates related to marriage formation in the Diocese of Columbus as we emerge from the pandemic.

The incredible mission of accompanying couples as they prepare for marriage is often a beautiful, yet challenging journey, providing a unique opportunity for evangelization and formation. We recognize that this process is best accomplished in a gradual, relational context and because of this, we have identified some new ways of supporting you in it, no matter your parish demographic or resources. Keeping in mind the principle of subsidiarity and the importance of pastoral discretion, we have developed three different options for Pre-Cana going forward. They are as follows:

- **Option 1: Diocesan-Parish Partnership:** Our innovative approach to Pre-Cana is to empower local parishes, or cluster of parishes, to host this one-day retreat with the direct support of the Marriage & Family Life Office. The parish will simply recruit 2-3 couples, and then the Diocesan Marriage Formation Coordinator will train the team, host registration, purchase materials, etc. This model is sustainable and ensures for some consistency in formation throughout the Diocese, yet is flexible enough to meet the needs of the parish. It also builds community and allows for development of strong teams of married couples giving of themselves to their parish. Multiple teams have already been formed and Pre-Canas are already taking place using this model. We invite you to get your local Pre-Cana ministry started today by e-mailing Catherine Suprenant at csuprenant@columbuscatholic.org!
- **Option 2: Diocesan Witness to Love Pathway:** We recognize the diversity in our parishes and Option #1 may not be feasible for some, such as parishes with a small number of weddings per year. In this instance, we recommend the [Witness to Love](#) process, where engaged couples build a strong relationship with a mentor couple, and work on a variety of virtues in that context. Paired with a video on the theology of marriage by Dr. Perry Cahall, Academic Dean at the Josephinum, and a full course of NFP, it offers both the instruction as well as a longer accompaniment. For smaller parishes, or parishes that want to simply try this out, we offer a "Diocesan pathway", where the Marriage Formation Coordinator oversees this process. Clergy are absolutely included, yet lay couples are invited into the process. For questions or to get this process started for an engaged couple, simply email Catherine Suprenant at csuprenant@columbuscatholic.org.
- **Option 3: Online Pre-Cana:** While not ideal, sometimes an online option for marriage preparation is necessary. There are many options available, yet the two programs we recommend engaged couples take in tandem are: the [Joy Filled Marriage Course](#) (\$50) and the [Preparing for Marriage](#) program (FREE). These two courses are self-paced and provide the engaged couple with certificates. Note: The latter course is kerygmatic, and recommended for all couples in marriage prep. Of course, ministry in the context of a relationship is always beneficial and therefore, we recommend that mentor couples be utilized if possible. It can be as simple as having the engaged couple choose another couple to watch these online courses with them, yet will make all the difference!

We understand that we are living in a time of many changes, yet believe the options listed above provide a solid marriage formation experience for couples, while also allowing for pastoral discretion and flexibility depending on the situation. Additionally, each one can be used with couples who are preparing for remarriage or convalidation.

Ultimately, we seek to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through serving you all as well as marriages and families. We will always strive to support you in your ministry and look forward to continuing this work in the future. As always, we are so grateful for all that you do to courageously share the truth in love, and you are in prayers!

All for Jesus,



Stephanie Rapp
Director



Catherine Suprenant
Marriage Formation Coordinator