

A Continuum of Ministry & Care for Marriage

I. Remote Preparation - Childhood

- ❖ Experiential learning about marriage & family in *church of the home*
- ❖ Formal catechesis in *parish church*
- ❖ Liturgical experience – weddings attended; homilies, blessings, intercessions at Sunday Eucharist
- ❖ Adult formation, **marriage enrichment**, parenting skills for parents (subsidiarity principle – supporting *home church*)

II. Proximate Preparation – Adolescence & Early Adulthood

- ❖ Continue I above
- ❖ Youth Ministry & Catechesis includes
 - Healthy friendships
 - Christian dating rules
 - Discerning a vocation (single, married, religious, ordained)
 - Formation in Chastity, Sexuality, Fertility
 - Include parents in above and give encouragement, education, skills for parents

III. Immediate Preparation

1. Initial meeting with engaged couple (clergy)
 - ❖ Welcome; story-telling
 - ❖ Canonical & spiritual assessment
 - ❖ Assign appropriate inventory & explain procedure to couple
 - ❖ Pray with couple
2. Review inventory results & decide on preparation plan
 - ❖ 1st feedback session (usually clergy)
 - ❖ Subsequent sessions with clergy or couple ministers (2 to 5)
 - ❖ Pray with couple / give homework
 - ❖ Refer to professional counselor if needed
3. Couple attends appropriate preparation day
 - ❖ Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter weekend or PREP skills day
 - ❖ CANA II (stepchildren) or PREP (no stepchildren) for remarriage (either or both)
 - ❖ These days build on Prepare-Enrich results
4. Summary session(s) with clergy
 - ❖ Review feedback sheets from couple ministers
 - ❖ Summarize the preparation process & learnings with couple
 - ❖ Plan wedding liturgy
5. Wedding Liturgy & Reception
 - ❖ Powerful sacred passage for both couple and families
 - ❖ Include in petitions and bulletin / pictures in parish hall or foyer?

IV. Marriage Enrichment & Support

- ❖ Annual events for married couples (plan as clusters)
 - *Enrich - Empowering Couples*, PREP skills, Marriage Course, Marriage Encounter, Day Reflection, World Marriage Day
 - Integrate into parent Sacrament, school & PSR meetings
 - Helpful websites on parish website & bulletin www.foryourmarriage.org (U.S. Bishops)
 - Other – Support for stepfamilies (higher risk of problems and divorce)
- ❖ Distressed couples
 - Have them take Enrich inventory
 - Refer to professional counselor if needed
 - Connect with 12 step programs for addictions
 - *Retrouvaille* weekend for troubled marriages
 - *Third Option* program (can be offered in districts or clusters)