



Bishop's Office

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER
1150 Buffalo Road · Rochester, NY 14624
(716) 328-3210

My Dear Friends,

First of all, let me take this opportunity to share with you my congratulations as you begin this important time of preparation for marriage. This is a special time in your life as a couple--a time to listen to the Lord's call deep within you. When you request marriage in the Church, you are saying "yes" to this call from the Lord to become the couple He wants you to become. Your love for one another is to mirror Jesus' love, so that when people experience your relationship it should be a sign to them of Jesus' love for the Church.

Your marriage is of great importance to the Church. Like the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the Sacrament of Marriage is a social sacrament. As a couple you are being commissioned to become the best sign of God's love you can possibly become. This sign (Sacrament) is not just for the two of you, but together you are being asked to love all those who will be a part of your life. You become a witness of God's presence with us. Your marriage is your vocation, and marriage in the Lord is your call to holiness.

Your wedding is just the beginning of your commitment to become a Sacramental Couple. Your journey of marriage begins with the wedding ceremony, and does not end until death separates you. Like all journeys you can expect good times, and bad, sorrow, as well as joy, throughout all of your years together. This is a serious undertaking, and that is why I am so glad you are taking this time to prepare for marriage.

My prayers are with you as together you discern the Lord's call, as you prepare to respond to His call, and as you embark on your journey of marriage in the Lord.

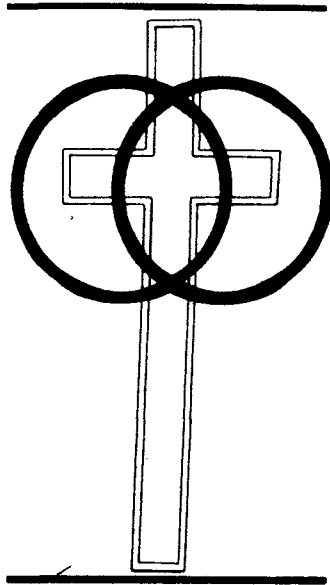
Your brother in Christ,

Matthew H. Clark, D.D.
Bishop of Rochester

Married Life Takes Special Planning

Dear Special Lovers,

Congratulations! Couples planning to be married are so full of joy and hope - that's why we are calling you special lovers. We, too, are pleased about your upcoming marriage, and we share in your excitement and your hope. We are delighted you are choosing to be married in the Church, as we know that symbolizes a caring for each other and a commitment to each other and to God that is very special. We believe in Christian Marriage as a way of life, and we want the best for you and your future.



To help you in planning for your future, we urge you to take some time very soon to attend a Marriage Preparation Program. On the Pre-Cana schedule, appearing in this issue of the Courier-Journal and also obtainable from your parish, you will notice the dates and places of the sessions we have scheduled. There are one-day sessions included especially for those couples with different working times, or where one of the couple is out of town. Engaged Couple

Encounter dates are listed too. This group has an excellent program which you may want to consider.

Also notice the special program - New Horizon - for those persons who have been previously married and have gone through the Church annulment process, as well as those persons entering a second marriage as the result of the death of a spouse.

We recommend that you register for one of these sessions as soon as possible - participation six to eight months before

your wedding date is ideal.

Marriage is a lifelong experience of challenges to grow as individuals, and as a couple. We who are involved in the ministry to engaged couples care about you and your marriage and we are anxious to share with you. We see marriage preparation as the opportunity for the two of you to get away from the hectic details of planning your wedding day, and to spend time together with other engaged and married couples and a priest, to do in-depth thinking about marriage as a vocation. After all, your wedding is a day - your marriage is a lifetime.

Again, congratulations. Our prayer is that God will bless you as you prepare to celebrate your marriage and that His love will continue to shine upon you as you grow through your years together.

Peace, Love, and Joy
Jim and Donna Fitch
Pre-Marriage Coordinators

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841 Clinton Avenue North
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"We help create beautiful memories"

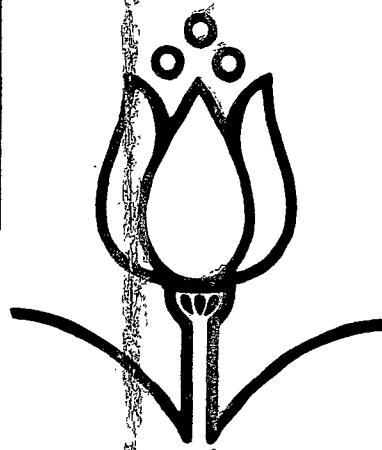
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Jeff and Susan
Blanchard



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