

Marriage Preparation

Session 1

How the Catholic Church Understands Marriage

- Diocese of Colorado Springs

Initial Theology of Marriage

- Scripture – covenant, being Christ to one another
- Permanence, till death do we part
- Self-sacrifice, self-giving and forgiving (good times, bad times)
- Open to children and good of the couple/unity
- Society's context of marriage
- Role of faith, prayers, and the Church, pray together – stay together

Valid Marriage

- Properly trained, understand what they are offering, intend it, are free to offer it, witnessed by priest or deacon, in a Catholic Church.
- A valid Catholic marriage results from four elements:
 - The spouses are free to marry
 - They freely exchange their consent
 - In consenting to marry, they have the intention to marry for life, to be faithful to one another and be open to children
 - Their consent is given in the presence of two witnesses and before a properly authorized Church minister. Exceptions to the last requirement must be approved by church authority.

Sacramental Marriage

- What is grace?
 - Grace is a participation in the life of God. (CCC 1997)
 - Types of grace.
 - Receive grace through the sacraments.
- What is a sacrament?

“The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.” (CCC 1131)

 - The Church is the dispenser of the sacraments.

Sacramental Marriage (con't)

- Sacramental marriage is all the above under “Valid Marriage” *plus* both spouses are validly baptized.
- The Catholic Church teaches that marriage between two baptized persons is a sacrament.
- The sacraments make Christ present in our midst.
- Like the other sacraments, marriage is not just for the good of individuals, or the couple, but for the community as a whole.
- The Old Testament prophets saw the marriage of a man and woman as a symbol of the covenant relationship between God and his people.
- The permanent and exclusive union between husband and wife mirrors the mutual commitment between God and his people.
- The Letter to the Ephesians says that this union is a symbol of the relationship between Christ and the Church.

Freedom to Marry

- Every adult Catholic has the right to seek the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony in his or her church.
- For the sacrament to take place there must be a freedom from previous bonds (other marriages) and certain impediments.
- To determine this freedom, a Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire is completed as part of the initial marriage preparation process.