

Planning to marry?

Planning to marry at Blessed Sacrament, West Fargo?

What are the steps to a successful marriage preparation?

- 1)** Visit Blessed Sacrament for a weekend liturgy.
- 2)** Identify yourself/selves to Fr. Bert at the end of liturgy or to Karen Beets in the Parish Office.
- 3)** Register to be a member household of the parish.
- 4)** Make an appointment with Fr. Bert (call 282-3321) for your first of at least 3 meetings.

In preparation for your first meeting with Fr. Bert, you might begin assembling these items:

- 1)** A history of sacraments for the Catholic individual/individuals.
This document needs to be requested from the parish where you were baptized. No certificates from mom's shoebox will be accepted. The history of sacraments will show every sacrament you have received (Baptism, Confirmation and previous Marriages).
- 2)** If you have been married previously, you could have a copy of the marriage license, the divorce decree and the annulment along for Fr. Bert to read and put in the file.
If you are Catholic and have been previously married outside the Catholic Church, you need to provide the marriage license and the divorce decree.
- 3)** If you are planning to have a Pre-Nup Agreement, you will need to provide that as soon as possible for review by the Tribunal Office.

During this 2-hour meeting, you will be visiting with Fr. Bert, filling out paperwork, walking through a wedding ceremony as it is celebrated at Blessed Sacrament, and be given the worksheets and books needed to plan your wedding ceremony. If a wedding date is set this night, you will need to write a check for \$150 to hold the reservation.

After this meeting, Fr. Bert will expect to see you/the couple at weekend liturgies at least 2 times a month. You will need to check in with Fr. Bert or Sally Haugen following every weekend liturgy you attend. You also could volunteer for events in the parish. We want you to be part of the parish.

The next morning, (after your first meeting with Fr. Bert) you need to set a meeting with Sally Haugen, the parish music director. Sally's phone number is 282-3321. The meeting needs to happen within 10 days of the first appointment you had with Fr. Bert. If this contact is not made, you will forfeit your opportunity to be married at Blessed Sacrament and the \$150 reservation fee.

In preparation for your meeting with Sally Haugen, you need to read the book given to you and fill out the worksheet as best you are able.

Things to consider include:

- 1) At least one member of the music team needs to be from Blessed Sacrament – the accompanist or the cantor (or both). Sally will assist you with your final decision.
- 2) All music must be Christ-centered, except Prelude music.
- 3) Photography is limited during the wedding. (At the rehearsal, you could note shots that could be taken during picture-taking time the next day.)
- 4) All flowers, including those held by the bride and bridesmaids are real; fake flowers are not allowed. The flower girl is NOT to throw petals on the floor as she goes down the aisle.
- 5) There is NO aisle runner, NO Unity/Mary Candle, NO Pew Bows and NO Candelabras.
- 6) Dad does not give the bride away. *Parents escort their children (bride/groom) to the altar where they “freely” marry one another.* There will be nothing happening that looks like Dad is “selling his daughter to the groom.”

When you are done meeting with Sally Haugen, you need to make another appointment with Fr. Bert. This 2-hour appointment should be made the next day and should happen within 10 days of your appointment with Sally Haugen.

At this meeting, you could give Fr. Bert your History of Sacraments documents (or a Baptism and Confirmation certificate from the non-Catholic fiancé), and any other of the needed documents as noted for the first meeting (above). During this meeting, you will be:

- 1) Finishing any paperwork not completed at the first meeting;
- 2) Discussing any loose ends following your meeting with Sally Haugen;
- 3) Taking a personality tool entitled Focus.
- 4) Receiving directions for other activities you will need to complete before your wedding preparation period ends.

The next steps include:

- 1) Discussing the results of Focus with a sponsoring couple. This will likely be 2-3 nights of 2 hours each to discuss highpoints and low moments of the personality tool. When these sessions are completed, the sponsoring couple will give Fr. Bert a report. You will be asked for your comments in session 3 with Fr. Bert.
- 2) Attend a pre-marriage weekend. This is to be done early in the preparation process and not at the last moment. This is a Friday night/Saturday all day event at the Pastoral Center (52 AVE S); there is a fee. You need to sign up as soon as possible. When you have completed the weekend, you will be given a certificate to give to Fr. Bert. You can do this the next Sunday that you are at liturgy.
- 3) Take a course in Natural Family Planning. These sometimes meet once a month for 4 months. There is a fee. You need to sign up as soon as possible. When you have completed this course, you will be given a certificate to give to Fr. Bert. You can do this the next Sunday that you are at liturgy.

When all of this is completed, set up your last meeting with Fr. Bert.

This is expected to be at least 6 weeks before the wedding date.

Some items to be prepared to discuss, include:

- 1) What you learned about yourself/selves while meeting with the sponsoring couple. You could have a one-page written report.
- 2) What you learned about yourself/selves at the pre-marriage weekend.
- 3) What you learned at Natural Family Planning, and how you think this could have a positive effect in your lives.
- 4) Your application for a dispensation, if one is needed. (As a Baptized Catholic, you are a child of the Bishop of Fargo. If you marry someone not of your faith, you need to promise the Bishop of Fargo that you will “to the best of your ability” get your children baptized and raise he/she/them as Catholics. If you can not make this promise, the Bishop likely will not grant you permission to marry a non-Catholic.)
- 5) Any last minute details.

Fr. Bert prefers Friday late afternoon or evening weddings. All Saturday weddings are at 2 p.m. (so the building can be cleaned and prepared for the celebration of regular Saturday sacraments.)

