

THE CHURCH OF ST. DENIS
2401 St. Denis Lane
Havertown, PA 19083

Dear Friends,

The members of the pastoral staff of St. Denis rejoice with you at the announcement of your engagement. Congratulations! We are pleased that you have come to us to assist you in the preparation of your wedding celebration. This is a sign that your faith is important to you, important enough that you wish to stand before family and friends to express that faith through your marriage vows.

This booklet has been prepared to assist you in your preparation. It will inform you about the guidelines and canonical requirements of the Catholic Church. Included in your preparation are mandatory requirements such as: obtaining a marriage license, baptismal certificates, etc. Beyond these requirements of the State and the Church, our pastoral staff is here to facilitate your understanding of the sacrament of marriage. We hope that the guidelines in this booklet, the opportunities to speak to the members of our pastoral staff and your participation in the preparatory program will be of great benefit to you.

The Catholic Church has a rich tradition of acknowledging significant events in our lives through our liturgical worship. Your wedding is one of those important moments when we gather as a community of faith - family and friends - to celebrate and to praise God. The staff wishes to assist you in planning your wedding liturgy, for carefully preparing the liturgy offers you a unique opportunity to express your special love and faith.

St. Denis strives to promote hospitality as a hallmark of our parish. We welcome you and look forward to working with you. We hope you will feel comfortable in allowing us to assist you at this special time.

Peace,

Reverend Kevin J. Gallagher
Pastor

Reverend James J. Cardosi
Parochial Vicar

PRE-CANA PROCESS

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROCESS AT ST. DENIS PARISH

When a couple seeks to be married in the Catholic Church, the community recognizes that they are responding in faith to an invitation and call from God. Indeed, when the persons to be married are baptized Christians, their marital union will be a sacrament.

Since Catholics believe the marriage of Christians is a sacrament and is a very serious relationship, a decision to make this life-long commitment requires sufficient reflection, discussion, and responsible preparation. Therefore, the celebration of this sacrament is preceded by a period of preparation. You may in fact remember the preparation you went through at First Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation. There are three aspects to your preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage at St. Denis:

- **Personal & Relational** This dimension of the preparation is foundational in that it consists of honest and open discussion between the future spouses. **FOCCUS** is a marriage readiness inventory, which is highly recommended by the Archdiocese, and is required for all St. Denis engaged couples and those planning to participate in the St. Denis Marriage Preparation Program.
- **Marriage Preparation Program** This dimension provides opportunities to work with married couples who have been specifically trained to assist engaged couples explore significant areas that contribute to successful marriage and family life;
- **Liturgical** This dimension assists the engaged couple in the planning of their wedding liturgy according to the Church's expectations. St. Denis provides an opportunity for this preparation through a Liturgy Preparation Workshop, in addition to consultation with the priest and the Director of Music Ministry.

DETAILS OF THE PREPARATION PROCESS

Personal & Relational

Marriage is a sacred and serious commitment. During the engagement period it is essential that the couple make time for true communication and sharing. It is a time for each person to come to a deep understanding of the values, ideals and perspectives held by the other. Marriage unites two people with unique personalities and styles, as well as different family, social and personal experiences.

FOCCUS, a marriage readiness inventory, is an aid in “Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS). It helps you to explore basic expectations, and attitudes on money, children, religion, sexuality, and in-laws. In addition, it attempts to encourage your exploration of other key issues in marriage, such as personality factors, the impact of individual backgrounds, two-career families, interfaith marriages and second marriages.

THE FOCCUS INVENTORY NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED AT LEAST ONE MONTH BEFORE THE PRE-CANA. PLEASE CALL DONNA LEONARD (610-446-0200) TO SET UP AN APPOINTMENT TO TAKE FOCCUS.

Pre-Cana Session

The St. Denis Small Pre-Cana program is held two times a year. The day includes topics discussed by parishioners and time for review of the FOCCUS inventory. We go to Mass together. We conclude the evening with dinner together.

You are expected to attend the entire day. It is recommended that you attend the program as a couple at least six (6) to nine (9) months prior to your wedding date. The program is designed to help you prepare for marriage in a casual, relaxed small group setting which promotes the opportunity for couple discussion.

The program for engaged couples consists of the FOCCUS inventory, support from a married couples and presentations on the following topics:

- Marriage as Sacrament
- Family of Origin
- Communications
- Adjustments/Decision Making
- Intimacy
- Spirituality

Married couples from the parish share information and experiences in the context of building a relationship which enriches a Christian marriage. Sponsors who share a commitment to marriage join you during mass, dinner and one informal meeting as another source of information and support during your preparation. While the focus is on you enhancing your relationship, we hope that informal conversation with engaged couples and team couples will add to your experience.

Available Dates

Saturday, January 29, 2022

8:30 AM – 7:00 PM

Saturday, March 12, 2022

8:30 AM – 7:00 PM

Registration Information

Use the attached registration form and mail with your \$150 fee to:

St. Denis Church

2401 St. Denis Lane

Havertown, PA 19083

Space is limited; therefore early registration is encouraged as sessions fill quickly. The **non-refundable** fee is \$150.00 and must accompany your registration form.

Please make your check payable to St. Denis Church; your check is your receipt. A notice about the program with additional details will be mailed to you approximately three (3) weeks prior to your session.

Location

The Pre-Cana Program is held at a location off campus.

***For questions regarding St. Denis Pre-Cana Program please call
Donna Leonard 610-446-0200.***

PLEASE DETACH AND MAIL TO:

**St. Denis Church
2401 St. Denis Lane
Havertown, PA 19083**

TODAY'S DATE _____

Please Print

Your Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Your Phone Number _____

E-Mail Address _____

Parish/Church _____

(If not Catholic, please indicate Church affiliation)

Fiancé's Name _____

Fiancé's Address _____

Fiancé's Phone Number _____

Fiancé's E-mail _____

Fiancé's Parish/Church _____

(If not Catholic, please indicate Church affiliation)

Date of Marriage _____

Church of Marriage _____

Pre-Cana Date Requested: _____

BASIC REQUIREMENTS IN PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

A. Documents needed

1. Baptismal Certificates dated within six (6) months of your wedding are required for both parties, unless baptized at St. Denis. If one of the parties is not Catholic, a proof of baptism is required.
2. Two witnesses that would be able to give testimony to the fact that you and your fiancé are free to marry. *To be free to marry* means that neither you nor your fiancé have *ever* been married before in any kind of ceremony, civil or religious. Parents of the bride and groom are asked to send a signed letter stating these facts.
3. If you have been married before, you will also need a certificate of death for your former spouse or a Catholic Church nullity decree.
4. An interview with a priest of St. Denis is required. At that time the priest will compile the information that you provide. At the same time the priest will ask you your understanding and intentions regarding marriage. This interview is referred to as a Pre-nuptial Investigation.

B. Marriage License

This can be obtained at any County Courthouse in Pennsylvania **sixty days before the wedding date. It must be presented to the Priest as soon as you obtain it.**

C. Music at Your Wedding

The Sacrament of Marriage is enhanced by the use of liturgical music. Whether a couple chooses a nuptial Mass or a nuptial ceremony, music can help to focus the attention of those assembled and create the mood for prayer. The following is information to acquaint you with what St. Denis provides, and the procedures that are in place:

1. Our parish Director of Music, Mr. Richard Grillone, is the pianist for weddings and is at your service. **To insure that Mr. Grillone will be available on the date of your wedding, contact him at the rectory (610-446-0200), or by email rgrillone@stdenishavertown.org following your initial meeting with the priest.**

2. There are parish cantors available to help facilitate the singing. More information can be discussed with Mr. Grillone.
3. If you wish to have musicians other than what the parish provides you will need to speak with Mr. Grillone. He is responsible for making sure that visiting musicians are competent and that the music selections meet the criteria of the Archdiocese.

D. Fees

All of the following fees are due ONE WEEK prior to the wedding date.

1. One check made payable to St. Denis in the amount of \$650.00 for all services
2. Additional Instrumentalists: **Fees & payment arranged with Instrumentalists.**
3. Altar Servers: Two servers are assigned to each wedding unless you provide servers of your own choosing. We suggest giving the Altar Servers a minimum of \$10.00 each. Place the **cash** in two separate envelopes and provide at the Rehearsal.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. **Times available for weddings and rehearsals:**
Weddings are scheduled for Fridays at 3:30 PM and Saturdays at 11:30 AM and 1:30 PM. Rehearsals are usually held on the Thursday or Friday evening after 6:00pm before the wedding date and should be arranged with the priest.
2. **Photographs and Videotapes:**
You and your families will treasure these. The taking of pictures, however, should not become a distraction from the Liturgical ceremony. If possible, we suggest hiring a professional photographer and/or video camera operator. Only one of each is permitted to photograph the ceremony. The photographer and/or video camera operator are required to check with the presider at least 30 minutes prior to the ceremony. The video cameras must use battery power and be on tripods. No additional external lights are permitted.

Picture taking is permitted in the church after the wedding but for only an additional 30 minutes after the wedding ceremony because of the scheduling of other parish liturgies.

3. **Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, Balloons or Bubbles:**

These are not permitted because we wish to avoid an accident, injury and harm to our environment.

4. **Alcoholic Beverages:**

These are not permitted on church property at any time. This space is sacred and we wish to treat it with the dignity it deserves. We ask that the couple communicate this to the wedding party and to the chauffeur, if a limousine is used. The use of alcohol by a couple prior to the ceremony could seriously impede one's ability to fully and consciously make the vows, and therefore this could affect the validity of the marriage.

5. **Parking for Bridal Party:**

To ensure your safety, no parking whatsoever is permitted on Eagle Road in front of the church. This includes limousines. Please park on St. Denis Lane. Other parking is available across the street from the church.

6. **Unity Candle:**

This practice has never been a tradition in the Roman Catholic Church and it is not included in the Church's Marriage Ritual. For this reason, this practice is not permitted at St. Denis.

7. **Aisle Runner:**

These are not permitted because of safety and insurance concerns.

9. **Blessed Mother**

You may honor the Blessed Mother in a special way at your wedding. Any who wish to do so are invited to have a floral arrangement placed before the Blessed Mother statue in our church prior to the beginning of the liturgy, or a flower arrangement may be placed on the altar under the statue after the *Prayer after Communion*, or the final prayer in the wedding ceremony.

FLOWERS

In addition to the personal flowers of the wedding party, many desire floral arrangements in the church to enhance the liturgical space. We ask you to keep in mind the following guidelines when making arrangements with your florist.

1. **The liturgical season prevails.** Whatever has been placed in the church to enhance our daily and Sunday worship during the different liturgical seasons will remain and cannot be removed for your wedding ceremony. For example, during Advent (November & December) and Lent the seasonal environment will remain.

Christmas and Easter often afford us with an abundance of flowers in the liturgical space. **If you are getting married during either of these seasons, please speak to the Priest. Additional flowers may not be necessary.**

2. If you wish to use flowers, greens, or bows to decorate the ends of the pews, please note that **the use of tape or wire is prohibited when attaching these arrangements due to the damage this causes to the pews. Please communicate this to your florist.**
3. If there are other weddings on your date, we suggest you contact the other couples. You may be able to share your flower arrangements and split the cost. The office staff would be happy to assist you in these arrangements.

God bless you both. If further assistance is needed, please contact the parish priest assisting you with your marriage arrangements.

