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

Dear Friends,

The Clergy and Pastoral Staff of St. Denis rejoice with you at the announcement of your engagement. We are pleased that you have come to the Catholic Church to assist you in the preparation of your wedding celebration. This is a sign that your faith is important to both of you, important enough that you wish to stand before Almighty God, His Church with family and friends to express that faith through your marriage vows.

This booklet has been prepared to assist you in those preparations necessary for your wedding. 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 civil marriage license, baptismal certificates, etc. Included as well is the information and registration form for the Parish Pre-Cana sessions. 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 the guidelines in this booklet, your opportunities to speak with 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.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Reverend Kevin J. Gallagher

Reverend James J. Cardosi

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.

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, and is required for all St. Denis engaged couples and those planning to participate in the St. Denis Marriage Preparation Program.

- **Pre-Cana Program** This dimension provides opportunities to work with other 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 in addition the priest and the Director of Liturgy.

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 "**F**acilitating **O**pen **C**ouple **C**ommunication, **U**nderstanding and **S**tudy (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 one month before the Pre-Cana date. When you register for the Pre-Cana the inventory log in will be emailed to you.

Pre-Cana Session

The St. Denis Small Pre-Cana program is held twice a year. The day includes topics discussed by parishioners and time for review of the FOCCUS inventory.

You are expected to attend the entire day as a couple. It is recommended that you attend the program at least six to nine 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. Pre-Cana Team members 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, February 6, 2027
8:30 AM – 6:00 PM

Saturday, April 3, 2027
8:30 AM – 6:00 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; A notice about the program with additional details will be mailed to you approximately two weeks prior to your session.

Location
The Pre-Cana Program is held at the IHM Spirituality Center, Bryn Mawr

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_____

Priest _____

Pre-Cana Date Requested:_____

BASIC REQUIREMENTS IN PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

A. Documents needed

1. Baptismal Certificates (newly issues, not the original) dated within six (6) months of your wedding are required for both parties, unless baptized at St. Denis.

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, the priest will provide the guidance and information necessary for you to proceed.

4. Initial interview and meeting with St. Denis Parish priest. 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 on the sacredness and seriousness of the moment. The following is information to acquaint you with what St. Denis provides, and the procedures that are in place:

1. Our Director of Liturgy, Mr. Richard Grillone, is available to assist with your liturgy. He can be contacted at the rectory (610-446-0200) or by email rgrillone@stdenishavertown.org.

2. Cantors for the Liturgy will be arranged by the parish.

3. If you wish to have musicians other than what the parish provides this must be coordinated with Mr. Grillone. He is responsible for making sure that visiting musicians are competent and that the music selections meet the criteria of the Sacred Liturgy.

D. <u>Church Offering and Fees</u>

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 $800.00. This includes the church donation and the stipends for the pianist and cantor.

2. Additional Instrumentalists: **Fees & payment arranged with Instrumentalists.**

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. **Times available for weddings and rehearsals:**

Weddings are scheduled for Fridays and Saturdays at a time acceptable to the Parish and the couple. Rehearsals are usually held on the Thursday or Friday evening after 6:00 p.m.

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. 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.

*<u>All</u> photographers and videographers should be dressed in an appropriate manner reflecting the dignity of the Church and that of a wedding guest. (Please provide this information to your photographer).

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, Animals, Wagons, etc.**
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 driver. 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.

8. **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 prepared for this presentation.

9. **Wedding Coordination**
You may choose to utilize the service of a professional wedding coordinator to assist you and your family on the day of the wedding. However, the wedding coordinator will have NO role in the rehearsal or the Wedding Celebration. The priests and staff will handle ALL of the preparations and elements of the Church and Liturgy. It is highly requested that the wedding coordinator be excused from the Rehearsal and Ceremony details to avoid confusion.

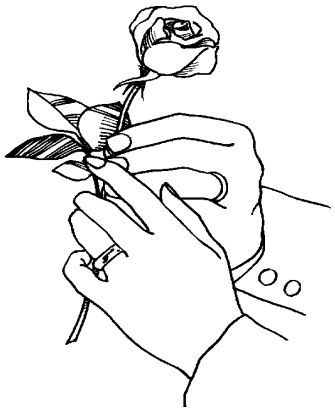
FLOWERS

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. Flowers, greens, or bows to decorate the ends of the pews are not permitted because the use of tape or wire attaching these arrangements damage 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 Staff assisting you with your marriage arrangements.