

GUIDELINES FOR CELEBRATION THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH SLINGER, WISCONSIN 53086

Congratulations and blessings to both of you for making the decision to unite yourselves in Marriage. You have, no doubt, informed your family and friends of your decision to marry, and now you come to your parish church to request preparation for the Sacrament you will celebrate in the near future. Marriage is, first and foremost, a Sacrament of the Catholic Church. Your relationship and love for each other will bring God's love into this world in a very special way – through you! Your life-long commitment to each other will reflect the love of Christ for His Church. Your new family is an important addition to God's family. The following guidelines are presented to assist you in planning and celebrating the most important event thus far in your lives.

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

At least one of you must be a registered, practicing member of this parish. Having received other Sacraments (Baptism, First Communion, or Confirmation) here, having attended the parish school or religious education programs, or having parents who are registered members does not give you the privileges of membership in this parish. Adults, 18 years and older, must be personally registered in order to receive the services the parish offers its members. Weddings may also take place in instances where the bride or groom no longer live in the area yet desire to be married in their former parish, but only with the written permission of their present pastor attesting to their status as active, practicing Catholics registered at his parish. This written permission must be received before a wedding date is set.

CELEBRANT

The present pastor or deacon are the first and preferred celebrants of all weddings in this parish. Delegation of another celebrant by the pastor can be made by way of exception.

CHURCH NOTIFICATION AND CALENDARING YOUR WEDDING DATE

You must notify this parish at least **4 to 6 months** prior to your anticipated wedding date.

PREPARATION PROGRAMS

We do realize that we cannot prepare you for every aspect of married life. However, the community of faith would like to offer you the best we can in order to demonstrate our sincere concern and emphasize the importance of this sacrament in your life and in the life of the Church. Your marriage preparation will include:

- 1.) Completion of the PRE-NUPTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE and, when needed, AFFIDAVITS concerning freedom to marry. Recent copies of your BAPTISM and CONFIRMATION records will also be requested at this time.
- 2.) Attendance at an ENGAGED ENRICHMENT PROGRAM provided by the Nazareth Project for Marriage and Family Formation, part of John Paul II Center Adult of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. These special programs are offered at various locations throughout the Archdiocese – **reservations** must be made on-line well in advance @ www.johnpaul2center.org/NazarethProject/EngagedEnrichment.htm.
- 3.) Participation in FOCUS: PRE-MARITAL INVENTORY, a tool and process valuable in bringing to the surface a number of concerns over which you may have some disagreement, uncertainty or lack of clarity, and which can be discussed in a calm, non-threatening environment. The exercise is taken on-line at the home of the married couple appointed and trained to assist you; discussion follows at another time(s) with that same couple. Please be in touch with your assigned couple early in your preparation process as they will also help you with IN PERFECT UNION: LIVING THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE, Catholic Marriage Compendium, for all Catholic Churches in the State of Wisconsin
- 4.) Meeting with pastor/deacon for PASTORAL INSTRUCTION regarding reception of Marriage as a Sacrament & what this implies in the lives of Catholic Christians. During this meeting a "TOGETHER FOR LIFE" booklet, including many options for your wedding Mass/Service, is presented and reviewed.
- 4.) www.catholicbrides.com and www.foryourmarriage.org are two wonderful websites for ideas and inspiration

INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

A special permission must be granted to proceed with a marriage involving two people of differing faith traditions (mixed religion marriage). As a necessary preliminary, and to ensure the practice of the faith in the future, the Catholic person must promise that he/she will continue to practice their Catholic faith (including Mass on Sunday & Communion regularly) and will do everything they can to see to it that the children born of the marriage are baptized, raised and educated as Catholics. If a non-Catholic is a baptized Christian, he/she should provide a copy of their baptismal record.

MAY A CATHOLIC MARRY IN A NON-CATHOLIC CHURCH?

Sometimes, for serious reasons, permission for a Catholic person to marry in a non-Catholic church may be obtained from the Archbishop of Milwaukee. When this permission is obtained through the Catholic pastor the marriage is recognized as a sacrament by the Catholic Church. If this situation occurs, all the marriage preparation described previously must be done through the parish of the Catholic party; preparation offered through the non-Catholic's church is considered supplementary to, not a substitute for, the required components of Catholic preparation.

LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

Although your wedding is the most important day of your young adult life, it takes place within the greater mystery and reality of the Church's Liturgical Year. The liturgical environment, the symbols, colors, and decorations have been carefully, prayerfully planned and arranged for the entire faith community that gathers for Mass here every Sunday. The seasonal liturgical environment is to be respected and remain intact. Neither yourselves nor your florist may remove anything from or change anything in the sanctuary. Further specific requests are:

- 1.) Use STRING OR RUBBER BANDS only to attach pew bows; tape destroys the wood finish.
- 2.) Flowers may not be placed on the ALTAR OF SACRIFICE, including a bouquet around the unity candle; a special location on one of the side devotional altars will be designated.
- 3.) Candelabra are allowed only if DRIP-LESS CANDLES are used; these are available through the parish for an additional free-will offering.
- 4.) It is not necessary, nor recommended, to use an aisle runner.

MUSIC

The music you select for your wedding Mass or Service must have holiness as its point of reference, be marked by dignity and a spirit of prayer. It must meet the specific requirements of the liturgy. Music not written for the liturgy most often does not convey that spirit or meet those requirements as it was not written for those purposes. Music for your wedding must be CHRISTIAN in nature and be suitable for congregational singing as well as contemplative, appreciative participation. Our church hymnals should be the primary sources from which you select the music to be used at your wedding. Music from other sources must have direct reference to the Church, God, Jesus, and the Sacrament of Marriage. Please use the attached sheets to help in planning and placing your music. Music for all weddings **must be approved** by the Director of Music, Mr. Andrew Smith (1-262-644-8083, ext. 18, or 1-262-545-7463 – andy.smith@stpeterslinger.org). Please call him or visit with him in the choir loft after one of our Saturday evening or Sunday morning Masses. He will assist you in selecting beautiful music for your wedding and will play for it. If you wish to engage the services of other or additional musicians for your wedding, **you** must request his agreement and have his permission in accord with musician's right of first refusal. He will instruct guest musicians on the proper use of the church's musical instruments and sound systems.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

We ask that you respect the church as a sacred and holy place. Modesty in attire and dress by all, wedding party and guests, is one of the signs of such respect. Please remind your wedding party to dress appropriately at rehearsal, too.

REHEARSAL

Practices for the wedding ceremony usually take place on the evening before the wedding. A time will be agreed upon during your preparations. A rehearsal requires about 45 minutes to 1 hour and all in the wedding party should be urged to be on time. Bring the following to your rehearsal: your wedding license, all appropriate fees, your ceremony program (if there is one), and the options sheet from the booklet given you (unless already given to celebrant beforehand).

CONFESSION

Marriage is a major moment in your life, and a very important sacrament for you as individuals and as a couple. Before your wedding day, you deserve a good experience of the mercy and forgiveness of God. At this important time in your lives, you can prepare for a better future together if you let God cleanse your souls of the sins of your past. You can do this by going to confession to a Catholic priest and in the sacrament of reconciliation receiving the forgiveness of sins which we call absolution. You may make your confession to any priest you choose; It is good to make your confession within one month before your wedding. That can also help you deal with the pressures of planning, and remind you to be good to the people who love you. Waiting until the final week, or hoping to talk with the priest on the day of rehearsal, leaves too much to chance. Your wedding is a great milestone in your life and a great new beginning. Ask God to help you be worthy of your spouse's love and the many gifts you have already received. Confess your past sins and promise to avoid them in the future. Don't miss your best chance in years to regain a totally clear conscience and a great new attitude about yourself.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographers are requested not to interfere with the progress of any activity during the wedding. Processions are not to be stopped for poses and lens adjustments. During the ceremony, photographers are not allowed in the area around the altar, beside or behind it. The church is a sacred and holy place, NOT A PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO. When taking pictures after the wedding, the utmost respect for Christ present in the Holy Eucharist, reserved in our tabernacle, must be maintained by photographers and all involved. Video taping may be done from a stationary camera from the balcony or with a mono-pod from side aisles. Photographers may never come forward of the seats reserved for the wedding party and immediate families.

WEDDING TIMES

Weddings at St. Peter's are scheduled either at 10:00 AM, 12:00 NOON, or 2:00 PM. Especially if another wedding follows yours, we highly recommend the Receiving Line take place at the reception – where it is most appropriate - and pictures immediately follow the wedding. That will give you ample time to be finished at least ½ hour before the next wedding Mass/service may be scheduled to begin. Posed photos in church are normally limited to **after weddings only** and to **30-45 minutes**. Please inform your photographer(s) of these policies.

LICENSE

A valid marriage license must be presented prior to the wedding; for requirements, please contact the Washington County Clerk's website (www.washcowisco.gov) or call 262-335-4301.

CLEAN-UP

You are responsible for the disposal of flower boxes, flowers, petals, runners, pew bows, pins, booklets, tissues, etc. Please assign your ushers to take care of these details.

TAILGATING

Tailgating on the parking lot or in front of the church is in extremely bad taste, an embarrassment to both of you and your guests. Please inform your wedding party, drivers or chauffeurs that this is not permitted.

FOR INVITATION PURPOSES

The church address is: 200 East Washington Street, Slinger WI 53086

RICE THROWING

Please inform your guests that rice, bird seed, flower petals and the like are not to be thrown inside or outside the church. The parish custodians thoroughly clean the church before weekend Masses and it is to remain neat and orderly between services. Also, rice or bird seed can be dangerous for people who have difficulty walking and, in case of a fall and injury, a cause for heartache on your special or, in some cases, possible subsequent litigation.

FEES

For parish members: Stole Fee - \$75.00 (Checks made payable to the officiating priest/deacon)
Musician(s) Fee – \$250.00 (Checks made payable to the musicians)
Optional Donation to Church – Up to \$100.00 (Separate check payable to ST. PETER PARISH)
Mass Servers – A \$5.00 tip per server is customary (cash only)

For non-parishioners: Stole Fee - \$75.00 (Checks made payable to the officiating priest/deacon)
Musician(s) Fee – \$250.00 (Checks made payable to the musicians)
Donation to Church - \$150.00 (Separate check made payable to ST. PETER PARISH)
Mass Servers – A \$5.00 tip per server is customary (cash only)

For parishioners, all fees must be paid in advance of the ceremony and no later than rehearsal night; for any non-parishioners, all fees (including \$150 parish donation) must be paid 30 days in advance of the ceremony.

INVITATION

Your celebrant is very grateful for the kind invitations he may receive to attend your dinner and reception. However, due to two Saturday evening Masses and confession periods, it is frequently necessary for him to decline. He does appreciate and find it easier to accept invitations to rehearsal dinners when there is not more than one wedding on the weekend. The best man, maid of honor, or some other person close to the bride or groom could easily and properly lead the prayer before the meal at the reception. The celebrant will provide options for their use upon request.

PARISH CENSUS

If you are continuing as parishioners at St. Peter's after your wedding, please inform the pastor during your preparations and we will automatically update our census to include you as a new domestic church in our parish community. If you are moving from the area, please remember that it is your responsibility to register promptly in a new parish near your new residence and home. Thank you.

MUSIC SELECTIONS FOR MARRIAGE CELEBRATIONS

Preludes: 1.) _____ 2.) _____

3.) _____ 4.) _____

Processional Music: _____
(One selection only for entire wedding party)

Greeting and Introduction

Glory to God: _____
(Must have at least a refrain able to be sung by the congregation)

Responsorial Psalm: _____
(Must have a refrain able to be sung by the congregation)

Gospel Acclamation: _____
(Must be familiar enough for congregation to sing the refrain)

Hymn of Praise: _____
(Must be a congregational hymn)

Unity Candle: (optional) _____
(May be instrumental or vocal, but must be brief enough to conclude immediately after the candle is lit)

Offertory: _____
(May be instrumental or vocal, but must be concluded when priest is ready to continue)

Eucharistic Acclamations: _____
(Setting must be familiar to congregation to enable participation – may be sung/said)

The Lord's Prayer: _____
(Always said or sung together by the congregation; never performed by a soloist)

Sign of Peace: (music is optional here) _____
(May be instrumental/vocal, but must conclude when priest is ready to continue)

Holy Communion: _____
(You may need both a congregational hymn as well as an instrumental/vocal meditation)

Mary's Altar: (optional) _____
(A Marian hymn may be sung by a soloist, by the congregation, or played instrumentally)

Recessional: _____

Directions:

For Marriages within Mass: All line items may be filled in with music selections.

For Marriages outside Mass: Please do **not** fill in **Offertory**, **Eucharistic Acclamations**, or **Communion** line items.

This sheet is used only for music selections. A separate sheet for choosing the prayers and readings for your wedding Mass or Service accompanies your options book, TOGETHER FOR LIFE. When preparing a program for your wedding, please use both sheets for complete information. Thank you!

Additional Musicians Available for Weddings:

If you wish to have additional musicians assist in musical selections during your wedding, contact Andy Smith, Music director, for contact information.

A Suggested Order for Wedding Processions:

- 1.) The Reader(s)
- 2.) The Mass Servers (if there are any)
- 3.) The Priest/Deacon Celebrant
- 4.) The Groom (accompanied by both his parents)
- 5.) The Groomsmen and Bridesmaids (together as couples)
- 6.) The Ring Bearer and Flower Girl/Miniature Bride (if there are either/both)
- 7.) The Best Man and Matron/Maid of Honor
- 8.) The Bride (accompanied by both her parents)

(From: The Rite of Marriage from **The Roman Ritual** as Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Council and published by the authority of Pope Paul VI #20 – “If there is a procession to the altar, the **ministers** go first, followed by the **priest**, and then the **bride and bridegroom**. According to local custom, they may be escorted by **at least their parents and the two witnesses.**”)

Revised: August, 2022

Why Didn't Somebody tell Me The Truth?

Let me warn you: what you are about to read is *politically incorrect*. The society we live in has promoted the lie that sex is without consequence, that it is a little like brushing your teeth, that "if it feels good, we should do it," that sex is something we can't control, that condoms are safe and really do protect against HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. Few young adults are really taught about how strong the sex drive is and how our bodies respond to that. Let's start with a little biology refresher.

A woman's cycle is composed of 3 phases. Immediately following her period is the follicular phase, when the body is preparing to ovulate. For pregnancy to occur, sex needs to occur 1-5 days before ovulation. As the woman gets close to ovulation, her body gives off signals about the impending event. There are pheromone changes. (Pheromones are scent molecules that are not perceived by the normal olfactory cells but by different cells at the base of the interior nose called a VNO. Some people are incapable of detecting these molecules and are said to have anosia. We are all familiar with the pheromones in moths and other creatures, but most of us don't realize that they are at work in human attraction as well.) When a woman is getting close to ovulation she gives off pheromones that males detect. These pheromones cause testosterone surges in the male, making him sexually more interested and aggressive. The female during this time also dresses a little more suggestively and behaves in a more flirtatious fashion. Her biology is exerting itself and trying to attract a male to achieve continuation of the species. Sex is 6 times more likely to happen during this phase. 20% of couples will get pregnant in the first month of having sex and 50% within the first 6 months. Pregnancies do happen the first time someone has sex because, quite likely, she is in her ovulatory phase. Nature wants to keep the species reproducing. Also, sexual arousal during this time will condition her body. Researchers showed women in this phase an erotic movie and found the women had an erotic response. They showed the same movie to women in other phases of their cycle and discovered that nothing happened. As a follow up they showed the same movie to the women who had had an erotic response during another phase of their cycle and discovered that the erotic response had been conditioned by the *one viewing* of the movie. Many believe that this is why women become "hooked" on bad partners. They shared sex when she was vulnerable to being sexually conditioned and now she stays with this partner. If a partner suggests sex, take 24 hours to think about these things. It can get you out of the passion of the moment and really give you time to think before making a decision that can radically alter your lives in a few minutes.

"Falling in love" has a biochemical element as well. The first stage of infatuation involves a brain chemical called PEA. The chemical is type of naturally occurring amphetamine. It makes us feel invulnerable, like walking on water. It produces a powerful, natural high. Unfortunately this stage lasts only 18 months to about 4 years. At that point, the chemical dynamic needs to shift to an oxytocin-driven one. Oxytocin is the hormone of affiliation. This hormone, if we are sensitive to it, acts as an opiate in our brain. It calms us. Opiates are far more addictive than amphetamines. This shift in chemistry is often at the root of the "4 or 7 year itch." Some people are simply incapable of moving to the oxytocin phase, perhaps because of the failure early in life to receive proper chemical stimulation that caused these receptors to develop, and they will swing wildly from relationship to relationship in pursuit of the "infatuation high." Needless to say, someone with that sort of a relationship pattern is not a good choice for a marriage partner.

Pheromones are powerful signals. Women living in close proximity will begin to cycle together after a couple months. Experimenters took pheromones from an absent woman, mixed it with rubbing alcohol and put this mixture under the nose of women. The control group received only alcohol. The group with pheromones began cycling with the woman they had never met within two months. The others were unaffected. Women who are with an ovulating woman and not quite there in their cycle may have their ovulation speeded up. If the other women have just finished ovulating, it may slow down the cycle of the other woman by a day or two. Have you ever noticed how cousins tend to run in clusters? It is advantageous to women and young to cycle together. When we were hunters and gatherers, it was to the advantage of all the young if the mothers were all nursing so that while some could be out gathering, the young could still be fed. Mothers identify their young by smell within a couple of days after birth. Babies can identify the scent of their mother's breast milk within 24 to 48 hours and will turn away from the scent of another woman. Men and women, when asked to sniff t-shirts worn without deodorant, can accurately identify their own and distinguish males and females.

Sex is a very complicated biological process contrary to the media message that proclaims it is without consequence. Every time a woman has sex and is exposed to any fluid from her partner, her body launches into a full scale immune system response. Her body has to come to recognize the fluids of her partner as non-foreign material or she will never conceive a child. Sometimes it takes up to 6 months for this adaptation to be made. A little known fact is that when a woman conceives a child she will carry stem cells from that child the rest of her life, regardless if the pregnancy ends in miscarriage or abortion; or if the child is delivered vaginally or by C-section. If a woman has one partner and all her children are with the partner, her immune system will have made one adaptation for life. If she has had many partners and perhaps many pregnancies, though perhaps no surviving children, her immune system will be working much harder because of the many adaptations it has had to make. Motherhood is incurable and this is the living proof that

that is so. These cells continue to be active after the child is born (or dies) and have been found in women even 37 years later. (Might these cells be the basis of "mother's intuition?") It could be said, therefore, that pregnancy does not last the 40 canonical weeks, but the woman's entire life. This same research raised the problem of renting a womb (surrogate motherhood) and again pointed out that the mother who carries the embryo accepts a being whose genetic material is 100% foreign, and who will 'modify' her for the rest of her life. We have no idea of the long-term consequences of such procedures.

Some other difficulties to ponder are these. If the couple had been using condoms consistently, her body will not have made the adjustment. If a couple is using condoms, at what point is the marriage truly consummated? It is not biologically complete until the woman's body has made the adaptation. Furthermore, a small body of research points to a fact: women, who experience unprotected sex, seem to be less vulnerable to depression. Some conclude that perhaps this is due to exposure to the hormones contained in male ejaculate. Cohabiting man and women are more depressed than married couples. Might this be why? Again a small body of research links the use of condoms prior to a pregnancy to a life threatening condition during pregnancy called "toxemia." This appears to be an immune system (rejection) response to the child. Interestingly, this condition happens more often in the first pregnancy or in the first pregnancy with a new partner after previous pregnancies with another partner.

The couple who cohabits and uses chemical contraceptives is at risk. The presence of the male causes the woman's cycles to become more regular, increasing the chance of pregnancy. If they were using the pill before they moved in together, this may not be a good marriage match. They may not like each other after they go off the pill. They may have fertility problems when they try to achieve pregnancy because of immunological incompatibility. While living together, the fact of proximity and touch releases chemical cascades that bond them to each other. Even if one party senses this is not a good fit, it is extremely difficult to break off the relationship because the physical absence of the other causes brain chemistry not unlike withdrawal from an opiate, making them uneasy, depressed and generally unhappy.

Now of course, we assume correctly that cohabiting couples are practicing contraception. The pill, which has been around since 1960 has many side effects that no one is ever told about and is the source of health risks for women. The same is true of Depro-Provera (the shot, as it is called). As pill usage rose, so did the divorce rate. The pill opened the door to discuss sex and sexuality as never before. It implied that sex could now be without consequence, and the free-love generation was born. Now the contraceptive makers, looking to increase profits, advertise in teen magazines, promising relief from acne. Health services on college campuses hand it out like candy to remedy all sorts of ailments, including menstrual cramps. No one mentions to these young women that 4 or more years of pill usage before age 20 is associated with increased risk for breast cancer at an early age. They do not mention that the chemistry of the pill alters naturally occurring mucous secretions that offer some protection against certain STDs and in fact make her more vulnerable to contracting one of the many diseases that may leave her infertile or cause cervical cancer, as the HPV virus does. (This virus causes genital warts.) They don't tell her that it can cause nutrient deficiencies that can make her more susceptible to illness nor do they tell her that between 30 – 50% of women on the pill will suffer depression. They do not tell her that with the new combination pill, 40% of her cycles will be normal and, yes, the pill is an abortifacient. It does not prevent ovulation. It just prevents the baby from implanting properly in the womb. Nor do they mention that it may lower her libido. The very thing that opens the door to free sex potentially causes you to lose interest in sex! Most importantly, however is that the pill changes pheromones in women, perhaps masking them completely. In addition the woman on the pill chooses a mate differently on the basis of pheromones than the woman not on the pill. The woman on the pill will choose a mate by scent who is more like her father or brother in regards to immunology because her body believes it is in a state of induced pregnancy caused by the chemistry of the pill. A woman not on the pill chooses a mate who has an immunology quite different from hers and that complements hers, possibly enhancing fertility. Couples who are using the pill and planning to have children should go off the pill for a while to see if they are still attracted to each other. Women on the pill, according to Scottish research, chose males higher in testosterone, more sexually aggressive. These males are more the material of one night stands. The woman not on the pill tends to choose less aggressive and more nurturing males.

Let's imagine a scenario. A female has been on the pill for a number of years and the couple marries. She remains on the pill for several years and then goes off, hoping for a pregnancy. Suddenly she no longer finds her mate sexually attractive and perhaps he has the same reaction to her since her pheromones will now return to normal. How many times have we heard of couples who say they no longer find each other attractive; they just can't put their finger on the reason? Depro-Provera (the shot) also lowers libido. (In fact, Depro-Provera is used with male sexual offenders to chemically castrate them.) In addition, it triggers the eating center of the brain, and the weight a woman gains (5 pounds the first year, 8 pounds the second year) is real weight, not water weight. It suppresses mineralization in bones, a significant problem for young girls at a time when they can still build bone mass. This progesterone based contraceptive can reduce sex drive, cause depression and irritability. It can aggravate PMS and reduce sexual attractiveness in females based on scent. Because it decreases sensitivity to oxytocin, the hormone of bonding, it may interfere with normal sexual bonding. Furthermore there is increased risk for women using Depro-Provera to develop breast cancer, especially if used before age 15. Cohabiting couples become addicted to the oxytocin rush that comes

from close contact. This hormone is a bonding hormone and it surges in intimate contact with other human beings, our sexual partner and our children included. It is one of the reasons that couples living together find it hard to break up, even when things are not going well in the relationship. The brain chemistry is very addictive and clouds the other issues of incompatibility and dissent. When couples do not live together, they do not get this constant chemical bath and may be able to make decisions about the relationship with a clearer mind.

There are some things that may interfere with your sexual intimacy as a couple. These are sexual abuse and abortion. Consider sharing your sexual histories with each other so that you can begin life together without secrets and with an understanding of where you each are coming from. Often a female with an abortion history will find a male with an abortion history. They will not discuss it and yet, when they both become emotionally fragile at some time in the marriage, he symbolically becomes the male who abandoned her and she becomes the female who had an abortion against his wishes. This dynamic can result in verbal if not physical abuse. Some couples marry after an abortion (30%) and they resolve to put the abortion behind them and to live happily ever after. Unfortunately, the abortion often follows them into the bedroom and sexual intimacy is unsettled or impossible. To choose to have an abortion is to reject sexual intimacy and the result of that intimacy, the child. They do not trust each other any more. These couples often turn up in marriage counseling saying that they just don't talk to each other. The abortion secret keeps them from truly sharing. Other sexual history scenarios include the virgin married to a more experienced partner, who believes that the partner is also inexperienced. A woman could marry believing her partner to be inexperienced, only to have him share some months later that he had had 10 previous partners! She would be confused and betrayed. A woman with an abortion loss may not share that with her partner but later, when she becomes emotionally fragile, he has no idea what is happening. He could be of great support to her if he understood her past. Lack of honest sharing can get in the way of true intimacy as a couple. Secrets can only be destructive and interfere with the growing trust relationship of the couple.

Natural Family Planning is highly scientific and as effective as chemical birth control; we strongly urge you to learn about it before getting married. Couples using NFP are not risking the possible side effects of chemical contraception which include infertility. Couples who use NFP have a divorce rate of less than 5% compared to the 50% in society at large. They communicate better and are more sexually satisfied than contraceptive users. In any other realm of risk, that difference would result in a federal mandate! (Think seat belts!) We dare to be so gutsy as at least to strongly urge you explore NFP before marriage.

Author: Vicki Thorn

Executive Director of the National Office of Post-Abortion Reconciliation and Healing

www.Marquette.edu/rachel