



Office of the Bishop

Diocese of Rockford

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June 6, 2023

Dear Brothers,

Thank you for all the good work you are doing in preparing couples for marriage in the Diocese of Rockford. I want to take this opportunity to inform you of upcoming changes in the diocesan marriage preparation program. The Diocese of Rockford is **updating diocesan marriage preparation requirements at the diocesan level, effective July 1, 2023**. We know that marriage preparation at the parish level takes different forms. These new requirements do not change the individual parish preparation style.

Couples beginning marriage preparation in the diocese on or after July 1, 2023, will be directed to **complete two courses of diocesan preparation**:

- (1) pre-Cana and
- (2) Natural Family Planning.

Both courses will be offered in English and in Spanish, and both courses will have online as well as in-person options for attendance.

Upon completion of diocesan preparation requirements, parishes will receive **two diocesan certificates** for the prenuptial file:

- (1) pre-Cana completion certificate and
- (2) NFP completion certificate.

This is instead of the one certificate which is currently issued. These certificates indicating successful completion must be included in the marriage file when submitting it to the diocese for any dispensations/permissions/approvals as well as kept in in the marriage file when filed at the parish.

Couples who **begin preparation before July 1, 2023**, will fall under the current policy for preparation, needing to complete only one course and receiving only one certificate to indicate completion of diocesan requirements, no matter when their marriage is scheduled.

Details of the changes, certificates, and costs are enclosed and provided by the Life and Family Evangelization (LiFE) Office. The LiFE Office will also provide full explanation of the changes for priests and parish staff and volunteers via explanatory meetings (information is enclosed). Please reach out to the LiFE Office (email: life@rockforddiocese.org or phone: 815-399-4300) for more information and with questions.


The curriculum includes the essential characteristics of marriage, spiritual experiences designed for couples, an overview of the saving mission of Christ, and a full introduction to NFP in both English and Spanish languages. Couples preparing for marriage are expected to complete both of these courses; priests and deacons should not request dispensations for couples from these courses except in unique situations which should be discussed in advance with the Chancery.

The Diocesan content contained within this resurrected structure fully implements Bishop O'Neill's 1992 decree on marriage preparation, which is particular law for this diocese, as well as Bishop Doran's 2005 mandatum regarding NFP and diocesan marriage preparation. If you wish to have copies of these documents, please contact the LiFE Office.

I thank the LiFE Office for its continuing evaluation of our diocesan offerings as well as the team of Spanish clergy and laity that assisted with the evaluation of our Spanish-language preparation program.

Please join me in continuing to pray for the health of marriages and families in the Diocese of Rockford.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Malloy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend David J. Malloy
Bishop of Rockford

CC: LiFE Office