



The Church of St. Clare
110 Nelson Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10308

Rev. Msgr. Richard J. Guastella
Pastor

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Dear Engaged Couple,

Congratulations and best wishes on this joyous time in your lives. Having helped our two daughters celebrate their weddings, I can appreciate some of what you are experiencing at this time.

I am writing this letter for two reasons. First, to introduce myself and second to explain some of the background behind our parish based Marriage Preparation Program.

My husband, Deacon Rich Mitchell, and I have been parishioners of St. Clare's for 40 years and have been working in the Diocesan Marriage Preparation program for about 30 years. During that time we have interacted with thousands of engaged couples. The program we have set up here at St. Clare is in response to what these engaged couples have told us they would have liked as part of their marriage preparation.

Engaged couples have repeatedly asked for an opportunity to talk with each other in small groups and to be able to ask questions in a non-threatening atmosphere. They also wanted to spend some time preparing their marriage ceremony. Our Discovery sessions will address some of these needs but, because of limited time, cannot deal with all of them.

The second suggestion that was raised again and again, was that we provide more information on Natural Family Planning. For most of the engaged couples, their Marriage Preparation was the first time they had heard of a natural means to plan and space the size of their families that is both in keeping with the Church's teaching and is safe and effective. Part II of our program Natural Family Planning is in response to this request.

Much time and effort have been given to make your Marriage Preparation Program as meaningful to you as possible and to enhance the skills you need to have a marriage that is happy and rewarding.

If I can be of any assistance to you, please call me at 718-984-4975 Tuesday to Friday between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.

Sincerely,

Marcella Mitchell
Program Coordinator

PART I You should plan on attending these sessions approximately one year before your marriage.

DISCOVERY PROGRAM

This program consists of one session held at St. Clare. This session explores various areas of married life, including communication, expectations, sexuality and decision-making. It is conducted by a married couple. The second half of the day will cover the Sacrament of Matrimony and will include a talk on planning the wedding ceremony.

PART II You should plan on attending this course between four and six months before your wedding.

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

Natural Family Planning is not calendar rhythm. Natural Family Planning sympto-thermo method (NFP) uses practical dependable body signs to precisely identify a couple's fertile and infertile phases. Couples can accurately achieve or postpone pregnancy, not only in ordinary cycles, but also when there is great irregularity of cycle lengths.

NFP's rate of reliability for postponing a pregnancy is 98-99% when properly implemented. This is as good, if not better, than any other form of birth regulation. The method is free of unhealthy physical side effects, and, of course, is in complete accord with the Church's teachings.

You are only required to do the **Introductory Session** of the Natural Family Planning. For information about the introductory session for Natural Family Planning please contact Brittany Fleury at brittanyfleuryCrMS@gmail.com or by phone at (631) 972-8642. The cost of this class is \$50.

Call the rectory at 718-984-7873 for the current dates for Marriage Prep/Discovery classes.