

DIOCESAN PROCESS FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION FOR COUPLES WHO HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY MARRIED

- WHO?** *COUPLES* who have been previously married (one or both partners) and desire to remarry in the Roman Catholic Church. One or both may be divorced or widowed. One or both may have an annulment or need to seek an annulment.
- WHAT?** A program of marriage preparation that builds on the experience of use of the *FOCCUS* instrument. It is assumed that couples being referred to this program have taken the instrument and have begun the interpretation of it. They are to bring *FOCCUS on the Future* to their first Mentor Couple meeting.
- WHY?** People who have married before bring both experience and expectations to their new relationships. Remarriages often result in ready-made families including dependent children or fully-grown children from previous unions. The incidence of divorce is higher in second marriages. This process is designed to help couples identify the areas of strength in their relationship and the areas where they may face real challenges as they approach marriage once again.
- HOW?** When these couples come forward to schedule their wedding (after determining whether or not they need to seek an annulment) the pastoral minister administers the *FOCCUS* instrument and refers them to one of the remarriage mentor couples as the first step in their marriage preparation process.
- The couple contacts one of these advisors and schedules an initial meeting.
- The couple completes the *Who We Are* questionnaire and sends it to the Mentoring Couple before the first scheduled meeting. The couple brings *FOCCUS on the Future* with them.
- FEE:** \$40 per couple. Check made payable to the Diocese of Rochester. This check should be enclosed with the *Who We Are* questionnaire and mailed to the mentor couple when they schedule their first appointment.

THE ROLE OF THE REFERRING PASTORAL MINISTER

At the initial meeting, determine the necessity of seeking an annulment for either or both parties, or obtaining a permission for mixed religion or a dispensation for Disparity of Cult as necessary.

Begin the *FOCCUS* process and describe the *Mentoring Couple* process and give the couple a copy of the *Marriage Preparation* information brochure and the *Who We Are* questionnaire.

Receive the certificate of Marriage Preparation from the engaged couple. Do follow-up sessions with the couple to determine readiness to marry based in part on their experiences with *FOCCUS*, the marriage preparation process and the *Pre-Nuptial Investigation*, including issues of permanence and fidelity.