

Office of Marriage and Family

Diocese of Worcester

Mission and Goals

Under the umbrella of the Diocesan Respect Life Office, the Office of Marriage and Family strives to build a culture of life and a civilization of love by promoting the teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage, human sexuality, and the family. The office is responsible for implementing and overseeing the Diocesan Policy for Marriage Preparation which includes the marriage preparation/formation programs for engaged couples. A particular emphasis on Church teaching on marriage as articulated by St. John Paul II in his Theology of the Body serves as the basis for understanding marriage as a vocation and life-long union of husband and wife, giving rise to the family as the most vital cell of society. Programs of marriage preparation, ongoing marriage and family education and enrichment, resources, and pastoral support services, serve to invite all people to embrace God's glorious plan for marriage and family through each and every human person created in His image and likeness.

Strengthening marriage and the family is one of the priorities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The diocesan Office of Marriage and Family follows the guidance of the USCCB departments overseeing Marriage and Family, Natural Family Planning, and the Defense of Marriage, and also works closely with the Massachusetts Catholic Conference and its Pro-Life/Pro-Family subcommittee.

Programs and Services

- Marriage Preparation
 - Diocesan Pastoral Policy for Marriage Preparation
 - God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage
 - Catholic Engaged Encounter
 - FOCCUS pre-marital inventory
 - Resource materials for engaged couples
- Marriage Enrichment and Pastoral Support
 - Marriage Encounter
 - Retrouvaille
 - Referrals for pastoral support services
- Natural Family Planning
 - Education and referrals to area instructors, physicians
- Defense of Marriage in public policy and education
- Resources and educational programs for clergy and laity on marriage and family related issues
 - The Future Depends on Love – educational marriage resources (MCC initiative)
 - Marriage, Unique for a Reason – (USCCB initiative)
- Annual Wedding Anniversary Mass and reception
- Participation in professional organizations and conferences
- Providing print contributions to local and national publications educating on marriage and family issues
- Exhibit tables providing educational resources at major diocesan conferences