

## **A Personal note from the Rector**

Congratulations on your engagement. Marriage is a beautiful gift from God. God established marriage at the beginning of creation to allow man and woman to participate in a unique way in His divine life and love by genuine self-giving to each other in love. Christian sacramental marriage is a holy *vocation*. This means that marriage is a “God-designed” way of life to enable husband and wife and the family life that grows up around them *to achieve holiness* in this life *and Heaven* in the life to come.

At St. John’s we take this vocational nature of marriage seriously. We accept the responsibility and commitment it takes to provide fruitful pre-marital instruction. We recognize that the beginning of a healthy sacramental marriage arises out of an *existing disciplined life* and discipleship that all who are baptized are called to live. We recognize that Christians face many challenges in today’s culture to building and sustaining a strong and spiritually healthy marriage. Among the many challenges are *premarital sex and cohabitation*. Both have become acceptable cultural norms and sadly, they are normative for many Christians too.

Both premarital sex and cohabitation, far from being helpful are *the* leading causes to casual sex, adultery and divorce. Neither *in any way* conform to God’s plan for sex and marriage. Neither is acceptable for those baptized into Christ.

I know that this is a lot to say and some will disagree with me. But at St. John’s we pledge our energy and prayers to assist couples to receive a right understanding of what constitutes a sacramental marriage before God. We want to make sure that there are no moral impediments that would prevent the couple from receiving all the grace God wants to bestow upon them through the Church’s nuptial blessing.

*This being said, and without exception, all couples seeking marriage at St. John’s must live in a chaste relationship with one another until after the wedding. If you are cohabiting you must separate and if you are involved in pre-marital sex this must cease before counseling sessions will begin.*

All of this is very do able.

If you truly desire love you must take a stand against the culture with a heart full of courage. You must look at the meaning of sexuality according to God’s plan and look at your commitment to Jesus Christ to live a fruitful and faithful Christian life.

God’s plan for love and marriage are so profound that He made them to be beautiful signs of the Kingdom that is coming.

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ continue to guide you through your love for one another and in all your planning.

The Reverend David F. Klein, Rector