

# Sacrament of Marriage



Whether you are a newly engaged couple, a couple thinking of taking that step, hopeful parents, or a couple wishing to have your marriage blessed by the Church, St. Francis Xavier Parish welcomes you.

In our parish we typically wish to have a year's notice of intent to marry, so as to provide all the proper preparation. A face-to-face meeting between the couple and the priest is always the first step. Take a pink leaflet from the entranceway to the church, for further information.

When the Catholic Church teaches that marriage between two baptized persons is a sacrament, it is saying that the couple's relationship expresses in a unique way the unbreakable bond of love between Christ and his people. Like the other six sacraments of the Church, marriage is a sign or symbol which reveals the Lord Jesus and through which his divine life and love are communicated. All seven sacraments were instituted by Christ and were entrusted to the Church to be celebrated in faith within and for the community of believers. The rituals and prayers by which a sacrament is celebrated serve to express visibly what God is doing invisibly.

In a sacramental marriage, God's love becomes present to the spouses in their total union and also flows through them to their family and community. By their permanent, faithful and exclusive giving to each other, the couple reveals something of God's unconditional love. The sacrament of Christian marriage involves their entire life as they journey together through the ups and downs of marriage and become more able to give to and receive from each other. Their life becomes sacramental to

the extent that the couple cooperates with God's action in their life and sees themselves as living "in Christ" and Christ living and acting in their relationship, attitudes and actions.