

Protocol for Assessment of couples wishing to marry in the Catholic Church who are referred by priest/parish

To comply with the Diocese of St. Cloud Marriage Preparation Policy, Catholic Charities, Caritas Family Services has defined a protocol and form to respond to referrals for marriage assessments. When evaluations are needed, as in Policies 11.1 (Pregnancy), 113.1 (Chemical Health/Addictions), 114.1 (History of Psychological or Emotional Problems), 115.1 (Physical and Mental Disabilities) or 117.1 (Courtship Violence/Family Violence), the priest will call Caritas with the request (650-1660 or 800-830-8254, ask for Intake.) The clients should then contact Caritas, asking for Intake to arrange for the assessment. The client will be charged a fee on a sliding fee scale, which depends on income and number in the family. This will be discussed when they call. After the assessment has been completed, a form will be sent to the priest, which will provide a summary and recommendation of the assessment.

Goal: Complete assessment with letter of recommendation/form to priest

Objective: To determine each individual's freedom, choice and ability to make the decision to enter into a life long commitment for the Sacrament of Marriage.

Process to achieve this goal:

- A. Each person needs to complete a Personal/Social history form
- B. Meet with the couple:
 - 1. Discuss current situation
 - 2. Gather social history including family of origin; growing up experiences, any abuse history;
 - 3. Gather couple relationship history
 - 4. Administer diagnostic interview to rule out mental illness
 - 5. Administer Beck Depression Inventory and Beck Anxiety Inventory as appropriate
 - 6. Administer Chemical use inventory or history
 - 7. Explore attitudes of parents regarding this decision to marry
 - 8. Explore work history, career goals and stability of such
 - 9. Explore future plans

Talk with parish priest about his impressions, concerns and the results of the FOCCUS Inventory

- C. Review all information
- D. Recommend delay if there are issues that need to be resolved through counseling or if immaturity is evident to the extent that they do not understand the commitment of life long marriage.
- E. Recommend to proceed if the couple is determined to be free to make this choice, mature in their decisions about life circumstances.
- F. Complete form and send to the priest.