



**OUR LADY of MERCY  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

701 South Eola Road, Aurora, IL 60504

[www.olmercy.com](http://www.olmercy.com) | 630.851.3444

Dear Engaged Couples:

A message from our priests and deacons,

Congratulations on your engagement and desire to be married in the Catholic Church! Please know that the two of you will be in our prayers and the prayers of the wider Our Lady of Mercy parish community. We look forward to celebrating this momentous occasion with you!

We know that your wedding day is a big deal – something you are looking forward to with great anticipation. As you know, there are many details and costs that go in to planning the perfect wedding. We want to do everything we can to help make that day special. We encourage you to also keep in mind that your wedding is one day, whereas your marriage is for a lifetime!! It is with this perspective and spirit that we ask you to engage in your preparation for marriage.

Currently around 40% of marriages in the United States end in divorce. Surely, no one enters marriage with the intention of becoming part of this statistic. Yet, high divorce rates like this have been around for a while. We encourage you therefore to ask the question, "Why will our marriage be different?" By requiring our engaged couples to participate in a church sponsored preparation program, we hope to equip and support you in whatever way we can to provide greater stability and deeper happiness in your life-long commitment to each other.

The following information will walk you through the marriage preparation process and guidelines for your wedding liturgy at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church. May God continue to bless you as you prepare for the beginning of the rest of your lives!

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Kearney", written over a horizontal line.

Father Michael Kearney  
Pastor

---

## We Have Reserved Our Wedding Date, What Is Next?

- **Decided What Type of Liturgy In Which Your Marriage Will Be Celebrated:**

You have two options for the type of liturgy for celebrating your marriage:

*The Wedding Mass* **OR** *The Wedding Ceremony*.

The Wedding Mass includes the reception of Holy Communion for those who are Catholic and properly disposed. Non-Catholics may receive a blessing. A priest officiates the Wedding Mass

The Wedding Ceremony omits Holy Communion and is the recommended option for inter-faith couples. A deacon usually officiates the Wedding Ceremony.

If you did not inform us when you reserved your date of your decision to have the Mass or the Ceremony, please do so within two weeks of receiving this information.

- **Request The Clergy Person You Desire to Officiate:**

If you did not already inform us when you reserved your wedding date the clergy person at Our Lady of Mercy, you would like to request to officiate your wedding, please do so within two weeks of receiving this information. Our clergy will try to honor your request but there may be times when the clergy person you request not available. If you have no preference one of our priests or deacons will be assigned depending on your decision of having the Mass or the Ceremony.

If you have a family member or good friend who is an ordained Catholic priest or deacon, they are welcome to officiate. If they are not a priest or deacon assigned in the Diocese of Joliet, they will be required to provide a letter of good standing to the Chancery office at the Diocese of Joliet at least a month before the wedding.

- **Set An Initial Meeting With the Clergy Who Will Officiate Your Wedding:**

When you know who will officiate your wedding, make an initial appointment to meet with him so that he can verify your freedom to marry in the Catholic Church. **While your wedding date is reserved, it is not confirmed until you have this initial meeting.** He will also answer any additional questions you may have about our marriage preparation program and your wedding liturgy.

## Then What is Next?

- Begin your marriage preparation program which consists of the following four elements:
  1. Once the priest or deacon officiating your wedding has confirmed your wedding date, you will be set-up to take the online marriage communication tool called FOCCUS. Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding and Study. You will be informed by email when the survey is set-up and ready for you to take online. This survey will help clarify any potential blind-spots spots or early indications of disagreements between the couple. Honesty while completing the survey is imperative for its effectiveness. (It's not a test!)
  2. Upon completion of the FOCCUS, you will be assigned a mentor couple from the parish who will review and discuss the FOCCUS results with you. This will be done in two to four sessions either at the home of the mentor couple or through zoom meetings. The mentor couple may ask the priest or deacon who is officiating your wedding to provide you with additional input
  3. All couples view on their own schedule, the 12 session "Beloved" program on FORMED. Create your free account by going on your web browser to: <https://formed.org/subscribe> Enter your personal information & enter "Our Lady of Mercy Church Aurora" under "Find Your Parish". Click on the "Programs" tab at the top left, and click on "The Sacraments." Scroll down until you locate the "Beloved: Finding Happiness in Marriage" program. After each session you view, write five sentences on what you learned, found interesting, or were struck by. Keep the sentences you write out to review at a later date with the priest or deacon officiating your wedding.
  4. Natural Family Planning Certificate (NFP). In NFP, couples are taught to understand, appreciate, and cooperate with the God-given biological processes of fertility. NFP methods promote virtue, mutual respect, communication, and the fullest expression of married love, while also avoiding the moral, relational, and health-related issues that come with contraception. Couples need to complete a course introducing and training them in NFP through a professional NFP facilitator.

**Vitae Fertility Education hosts FREE 60 minute sessions online every third Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm. Sign up at:**

<https://www.vitae fertility.com/nfp-talk-marriage-prep/>

A certificate of completion is available upon request. Please have it sent to [theresas@olmercy.com](mailto:theresas@olmercy.com) at Our Lady of Mercy Church. Afterwards, we encourage you to invest in further training in the Marquette Method of NFP.

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM  
AT LEAST 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING DATE**

## After Completing Our Marriage Preparation Program, What is Next?

- **Set an appointment with the priest or deacon officiating your wedding to:**
  1. Discuss what you discovered and wrote down about the Sacrament and spirituality of marriage in the 12 video session "Beloved" you watched.
  2. At this appointment, you will receive the "Together for Life" booklet for planning your wedding liturgy. The priest or deacon officiating will go over it with you.
  3. Complete your Pre-Nuptial questionnaire. This questionnaire confirms that there are no impediments to being married in the Catholic Church

## DOCUMENTS REQUIRED AT LEAST 2 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING DATE

### 1. **Baptismal Certificates.**

The bride and/or groom, who have been validly baptized, must submit newly issued baptismal certificates to Our Lady of Mercy within six (6) months of the wedding date. In order to do so, once your wedding is less than six months away, contact the church where you were baptized and request that a new baptismal certificate be sent to Our Lady of Mercy via snail mail, personal delivery (you), email, or fax (630-851-3468). This is a common request at Catholic Churches. Please ask the church of your baptism to also note your Confirmation information along with any/all notations on the back of the baptismal certificate. For non-Catholics, your original baptismal certificate or a letter from the church of your baptism is sufficient.

### 2. **Witness Affidavits**

When the priest or deacon do not know the bride and/or groom personally, the bride and the groom will each need two people to schedule a meeting with a member of clergy to complete a Witness Affidavit. These witnesses should be people who have known the bride/groom for a most of their adult life and can attest to the freedom of the bride/groom to marry. Witness Affidavits can be completed in the presence of any priest or deacon at any Catholic Church so long as they are sent to Our Lady of Mercy upon completion. These are usually only about ten (10) minute interviews.

## PLANNING YOUR WEDDING LITURGY (MASS OR CEREMONY)

The "Together For Life" booklet guides you in the correct order and choices of options you have for your wedding liturgy. Keep in mind that the Wedding Liturgy is a public act of Worship of the Catholic Church and therefore has set rituals and guidelines that may not be changed.

### MUSIC

Once the wedding date is confirmed, the couple is expected to contact the OLM Music Director at 331-707-5379 or [franks@olmercy.com](mailto:franks@olmercy.com) to schedule music during the ceremony. The Music Directors fee is \$250. The fee for a Cantor is \$150.

- The Music Director will provide a packet of music choices to help with the selection process. Assistance can also be provided in locating copies of music, sources for purchase, publishers' addresses, etc.
- In order to assure parish guidelines are followed, choosing from parish musicians is strongly recommended. If other musicians are chosen, they must be made aware of parish expectations provide their own sheet music and have music selections approved by the Music Director.
- The Parish Music Director can provide information on string musicians and soloists.
- These guidelines apply to all weddings at Our Lady of Mercy, whether within the Wedding Mass or The Wedding Ceremony, even if the Presider is a guest priest or deacon.
- Because the wedding liturgy is a sacred act of worship, music of a secular nature is not permitted for use during a wedding.

### CHURCH DECORATIONS

- If you wish to place flowers by the statue of Mary and pray for her intercession during the ceremony, let the presider, music director, and wedding coordinator know. This arrangement is not to be removed after the ceremony since it is considered a gift to Our Blessed Lady.
- No flowers are to be placed directly on the Altar or arranged in a manner that inhibits the celebrant. Large floral arrangements may be placed on either side of the altar on the steps in front of the candles. These arrangements cannot be taller than three (3) feet (36 inches).
- Simple decorations (flowers or bows) may be placed on the end of the pews but must be removed after the wedding. Note that the end of the church pews have no arms on them. Elastic or rubber bands can be used to secure arrangements to the pews, but no tape, wires or hooks may be used. Likewise, no arches, columns, pedestals, trees, candelabras or lanterns are allowed in the aisles or sanctuary.
- If your wedding is during Easter or the Advent-Christmas season, keep in mind that there will probably be seasonal decorations in church. These MAY NOT be removed or altered during your wedding.
- Our center aisle is fifty-six (56) feet long from the steps at the altar to the narthex doors. Aisle runners are optional. If you chose to have a runner we suggest using a runner that is no shorter than sixty (60) feet so that the wedding party may assemble outside the Narthex doors and proceed down the aisle without tripping on the end of the runner.

- We do have a stand for the (optional) unity candle with the taper candles attached. Your unity candle should be approximately three inches in diameter to fit the stand. This is an optional part of the ceremony.

### **ALTAR SERVERS**

Our Lady of Mercy will assign two servers for your wedding Mass. If you have your own servers, kindly inform the parish office *at least 3 months in advance* of the wedding. It is customary to give the servers a small cash gratuity of \$20 each.

### **PHOTOS/VIDEOGRAPHY**

Pictures and videography are allowed in the Church during the ceremony as long as photographers use good judgment regarding position.

- Pictures of the bridal party and families can be taken in the sanctuary area of the church immediately following the wedding.
- Two maps of the church are provided; they indicate areas the photographer/videographer are not allowed during the wedding ceremony.
- Only ambient lighting can be used for photos/video during the wedding ceremony; no flash or external lighting can be used.

**Please respect the Church by reminding your videographer and/or photographer of these guidelines.**

- **Couples have the option for Our Lady of Mercy Church to Live Stream the wedding ceremony for \$150.00 (make check out to Our Lady of Mercy). If interested contact Zara Tan at 331-707-5381 or zara@olmercy.com at least three weeks prior to the wedding date.**

### **WEDDING COORDINATOR**

Our Lady of Mercy is very fortunate to have its own wedding coordinators. The Wedding Coordinator can help with any concerns pertaining to the rehearsal and wedding ceremony. An OLM Wedding Coordinator, trained in the protocols of weddings at OLM, will be assigned to assist with the details of your wedding liturgy. She will conduct your rehearsal and be present at your wedding to coordinate the bridal procession as well as assist you with other details of the ceremony that day. The fee for the Wedding Coordinator is \$100 and is to be paid at the rehearsal.

The Lead Wedding Coordinator, Phyllis Anderson, will contact you via email or phone at least two weeks prior to your rehearsal. If you have questions prior to hearing from her, you may send her an email at phyllisanderson5027@yahoo.com.

### **DUPAGE COUNTY MARRIAGE LICENSE**

Please acquire a marriage license issued by the **DuPage County Clerk** (421 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton) and **BRING THE LICENSE TO YOUR REHEARSAL**. The marriage license can be applied for as much as sixty (60) days in advance, but must be applied for at least one day before the wedding and requires both parties to be present. Be prepared to present proof of age, proper identification, and a license fee of \$35. For more information, their phone number is 630-682-7035 or visit: [https://www.dupagecounty.gov/elected\\_officials/county\\_clerk/licenses.php](https://www.dupagecounty.gov/elected_officials/county_clerk/licenses.php)

# A Catholic Introduction to Natural Family Planning

Free Online NFP Class

## **Natural Family Planning Certificate (NFP)**

In NFP, couples are taught to understand, appreciate, and cooperate with the God-given biological processes of fertility. NFP methods promote virtue, mutual respect, communication, and the fullest expression of married love, while also avoiding the moral, relational, and health-related issues that come with contraception.

Couples need to complete a course introducing and training them in NFP Through a professional NFP facilitator.

**Vitae Fertility Education hosts FREE 60 minute sessions online every third Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm. Sign up at:**

<https://www.vitae fertility.com/nfp-talk-marriage-prep/>

(or scan the QR code below)

This 60-minute live online video presentation dives into the details of human fertility, the basics of Natural Family Planning (NFP), and explains the theological aspects of why the Church asks Catholic couples to use NFP in their marriage.

**A certificate of completion is available upon request. Please have it sent to [theresac@olmercy.com](mailto:theresac@olmercy.com) at Our Lady of Mercy Church.**

Afterwards, we encourage you to invest in further training in your preferred Method of NFP.



**SCAN ME**



# Simply NFP

## FAQs

### **What is NFP?**

*NFP is short for natural family planning. NFP uses a woman's biological markers, research, and technology to determine the fertile window (this is not your Grandma's rhythm method!) NFP can be used to avoid pregnancy by avoiding intercourse in the fertile window, or to achieve pregnancy. NFP provides insight into your overall health as a woman, not just fertility!*

### **Why is it good for me?**

*According to the Catholic Church, NFP is part of God's design for marriage and family. Instead of treating your fertility like a disease, NFP gives you the tools to know your fertility, and make decisions accordingly, while keeping God in charge. NFP doesn't have nasty side effects like hormonal birth control, or IUDs. A woman's body is a powerful thing, and God made it perfectly. Women who practice NFP feel empowered living in harmony with their bodies' natural cycles!*

### **How does it work?**

*There are many different methods of NFP. Some are focused on biological markers, and some on technology. The Marquette Method uses the Clearblue fertility monitor to measure hormones, and provides the user with low, high, or peak fertility, and can also incorporate biological markers. Unlike other methods, the Marquette Method provides subjective and objective data. NFP can be used to diagnose hormonal disorders as well!*

### **Does it work?**

*The Marquette Method can be used to avoid or achieve a pregnancy. It is 98-99% effective when working with an instructor, and all protocols followed! Marquette can be use when breastfeeding, with hormonal disorders like PCOS, and during perimenopause.*

### **How do I get more info?**

*[simplynfp.com](http://simplynfp.com)*

*[annie@simplynfp.com](mailto:annie@simplynfp.com) , (815) 953-9067*

*[megmkay@yahoo.com](mailto:megmkay@yahoo.com) (708) 465-3718*





# Simply NFP

## Different NFP Methods

	BILLING'S	CREIGHTON	MARQUETTE	SYMPTO-THERMAL
Cervical Mucus	✓	✓	✓	✓
Basal Body Temp	✗	✗	✓	✓
Hormonal Monitoring	✗	✗	✓	✗
Cervical Changes	✗	✗	✗	✓

## **The Marquette Method (MM)**

*The MM incorporates fertility monitoring devices, such as urinary hormone testing and fertility monitors, along with other signs like cervical mucus and basal body temperature (although the charting and tracking of cervical mucus and BBT are optional in this method). Marquette incorporates advanced technology alongside manual charting, while digital tools for charting are also available. MM involves formal training and ongoing support from certified instructors. All Marquette Method instructors are licensed healthcare professionals.*

*Perfect use effectiveness rate= 98%-99%*

*Pros: objective, effective, easy for couples to chart together, utilizes technology and hormonal monitoring*

*Cons: costly (purchase of monitor and test sticks)*

*Contact: Annie Norton: [simplynfp.com](http://simplynfp.com), [annie@simplynfp.com](mailto:annie@simplynfp.com), (815) 953-9067*

*Meg Murray: [simplynfp.com](http://simplynfp.com), [megmkay@yahoo.com](mailto:megmkay@yahoo.com), (708) 465-3718*

## **The Billing's Ovulation Method (BOM)**

*Relies on the observation of cervical mucus to determine fertility. It is a low-tech method that uses visual observations and manual charting. The BOM often requires formal instruction and ongoing support from a certified instructor.*

*Perfect use effectiveness rate =98.9%*

*Pros: affordable, effective*

*Cons: subjective, relies on self-observation*

*Contact: [boma-use.org](http://boma-use.org), [boma@boma-usa.org](mailto:boma@boma-usa.org), (651) 699-8139*

## **The Creighton Model (CrM)**

*Uses cervical mucus observations as the primary indicator of fertility. Creighton may consider additional indicators like pelvic pain or other cycle-related symptoms to help determine fertility. CrM primarily employs manual charting, but digital tools and apps may be available for recording observations. The Creighton Model follows a standardized protocol taught by certified instructors who provide ongoing support.*

*Perfect use effectiveness rate=98.8%*

*Pros: effective, can help diagnose hormonal and fertility problems, practitioners work closely with NaPro physicians and surgeons*

*Cons: subjective, relies on self-observation*

*Contact: Michelle Sullivan: [pqsully@att.net](mailto:pqsully@att.net), (815) 995-0480*

## **The Sympto-Thermal Method (STM)**

*The STM combines various fertility signs, including cervical mucus, BBT, and changes in the cervix. It places significant emphasis on tracking basal body temperature (BBT) to identify the fertile window. STM can utilize paper charting or digital tools for tracking fertility signs. It requires training and education, which can be obtained through classes, instructors, or self-study materials.*

*Perfect use effectiveness rate= 99.4%-99.6%*

*Pros: effective, uses several indicators of fertility*

*Cons: subjective, can get confusing charting many indicators, relies on self-observation*

*Contact: [ccli.org](http://ccli.org), (513) 471-2000*

## **How to decide on a method**

*It's important to note that while these methods have some differences in their approach and emphasis, their ultimate goal is to assist couples in understanding their fertility and making informed decisions about family planning based on natural indicators. The best method for a couple depends on their preferences, needs, and lifestyle. Many couples with infertility issues tend to prefer Creighton because they work with NaPro Doctors and help diagnose fertility problems, while postpartum breastfeeding women praise Marquette for the wonderful breastfeeding protocols available. Each couple is different, and each method has something unique to offer.*

## MARRIAGE PREPARATION USING THE "BELOVED" SERIES



### **BELOVED: Finding Happiness in Marriage**

In 12 stunning sessions, *Beloved* uncovers the mystery and the meaning of the sacrament of marriage. What if marriage is more than you think it is? What if God has woven into the very fabric of your humanity a purposeful need and desire that can only be fulfilled in your marriage? *Beloved* invites all couples to experience firsthand the wonder, mystery, and joy behind that first "I do" ... whether you said it last year or many years ago.

*Beloved* is comprised of two parts: *The Mystery and Meaning of Marriage* has 6 sessions and *Living Marriage* has 6 sessions.

**This FREE Video Series Can Be Found on Formed.org**

<https://watch.formed.org/beloved-finding-happiness-in-marriage>

**First, you will have to create a FREE formed.org account through Our Lady of Mercy:**

- 1.) Go to <https://formed.org/signup>
- 2.) Enter your personal info
- 3.) Enter "Our Lady of Mercy Church Aurora"
- 4.) Search "Beloved Marriage" and start watching for free

SCAN ME



## Wedding Fee Breakdown Our Lady of Mercy

### Church

It is customary to give the Church a stipend as a sign of your love reaching out to others in the pastoral ministry of our parish, as well as to help offset the expenses of administrative, utilities and maintenance on the day of your wedding. At the time the wedding is scheduled the church fee is required.

Bride/groom/or parents registered with a history of regular contributions to OLM is \$250.

Bride/groom/or parents registered within six months of initial contact with the church and/or with no history of regular contributions to OLM is \$500.

### Musicians

OLM Pianist/Organist	\$250.00
OLM Vocalist	\$150.00
Optional Instrumentalists	As contracted

Additional fees may apply if a rehearsal are needed with outside musicians. Please consult with OLM Music Director for more information.

### OLM Wedding Coordinator

A gift of \$100.00 to the wedding coordinator would be appropriate and should be paid at the rehearsal.

### Gift to the Officiating Priest or Deacon

The suggested gift to the priest celebrate the wedding mass is \$150. If a deacon will be celebrating a wedding ceremony the suggested gift is \$100. If there is hardship to pay priest/deacon, the fee may be waived after a conversation with the celebrant.

**Altar Servers** Two (2) altar servers will be assigned if you are having the Wedding Mass. A cash gift of \$20 for each server is appropriate.-No servers are needed when you are having a Wedding Ceremony.

**Please remit all outstanding fees to the Parish Secretary a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to your wedding. Checks should be made payable to the individual providing the service.**

### SUMMARY OF FEES

	Contributing	New/Non-Contributing
<b>Church</b>	\$250	\$500
<b>Pianist/Organist</b>	\$250	\$250
<b>Vocalist</b>	\$150	\$150
<b>Priest</b>	\$150	\$150
<b>Wedding Coordinator</b>	\$100	\$100
<b>Altar Servers</b>	\$40	\$40
<b>Total</b>	\$940	\$1,190