

# dear Padre

January 17, 2010

## Have marriage-preparation programs changed?

I recently heard that the Church doesn't call its marriage-preparation program "pre-Cana" anymore. Why? Did the content of the program change too?

Antonio

Dear Antonio,

It's true some dioceses no longer use the name *pre-Cana*, a beautiful allusion to the wedding feast of Cana, but some still do. Either way, the name of the program isn't as important as its purpose.

Over the years, marriage preparation has changed a great deal. When my parents married fifty-eight years ago, they met with the priest once and gave him their baptism certificates. Marriage banns (announcements) were published in the parish bulletin, and a month later they were married.

Marriage preparation has evolved as the Church has come to realize it can play a key role in helping couples have a successful marriage. Individual dioceses determine the scope of their program, but most now include teachings on the sacramental aspect of marriage, the importance of communication, sexuality, natural family planning, and finances.

The length of the program has also expanded. Throughout the United States, most dioceses require four to six months of preparation. The purpose of this is to keep couples from rushing into marriage. Marriage is a serious step—a sacrament—and we want couples to take the time to think about what they're doing.

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## ST. PATRICK MARRIAGE PREP

The Coordinators for our Marriage Prep here at St. Patrick's are **Rick & Laural Ronk**. You may reach them at their home phone number, 322-4656 or at Laural's work number, 328-4992. Rick & Laural are the ones to call when you would like to reserve the date for your wedding and then they will set you up for Marriage Prep.

A good resource regarding the Catholic Church's teaching on Marriage Prep is the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org)