

January 15, 2021

Dear Monsignor, Father, or Deacon:

As we find ourselves still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous indications continue to suggest that the pandemic is likely to get worse before it gets better. In light of that fact, I am sending you updated guidance regarding marriage preparation and the celebration of weddings for 2021. We will communicate any changes to these protocols if they develop.

For all weddings scheduled through 2021:

1. Bishop Persico has dispensed from the obligation to make an in-person marriage preparation retreat (such as Pre-Cana, NOVA, and Engagement Encounter) for those couples whose weddings are scheduled to take place in the Diocese of Erie anytime from now through December 31, 2021.
2. Couples are encouraged (but not mandated) to do an online marriage preparation retreat. Links to recommended online retreats are below.
3. All other portions of the marriage preparation process (such as FOCCUS, M-A and M-B forms, theological discussion, etc.) are still required and may be done by video conferencing if necessary.
4. Weddings celebrations (whether during Mass or outside of Mass) must follow Commonwealth, diocesan and parish COVID protocols in place at the time of the wedding.

Marriage Preparation Retreats Through June 30, 2021:

5. All in-person Pre-Cana, NOVA and Engagement Encounter retreats scheduled in the Diocese of Erie from now until June 30, 2021 should be cancelled.

Marriage Preparation Retreats July 1 through December 31, 2021:

6. Those retreats scheduled after July 1, 2021 should plan to proceed at this time, but we will reevaluate that plan in the next few months in light of the changing COVID situation.

Please direct questions or requests for additional information to Deacon Steve Washek at sjwashek@eriercd.org or 814.824.1215. In the meantime, be assured of my continued prayers.

Sincerely,
Msgr. Edward M. Lohse
Vicar General

Online marriage preparation retreat options:

1. <https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/marriage/better-together.html>
2. <https://livingourfaithinlove.com/>