

*This article was originally printed in the October 2011 issue of New Earth, the newspaper for the Diocese of Fargo.*

## **Planning a wedding?**

*Recently engaged? Want to get married in the Catholic Church? Here is a list of minimum diocesan requirements. (Of course, there are always exceptions to these rules, within reason. Contact your parish priest if you have questions.) Remember, getting married is not just an event; the sacrament is to last a lifetime.*

### **Diocesan Policy on Preparation for Marriage**

- First, you need to make sure you begin with adequate time for preparation for this life-long sacramental commitment. Marriage preparation must begin at least six months prior to and be completed no less than six weeks before the wedding date.
- Completion of a diocesan approved marriage preparation weekend is required for the benefit of the couple. This program must contain aspects of Theology of the Body.
- The use of a marriage preparation instrument such as FOCCUS or PREPARE is required for the benefit of the couple.
- Couples are required to attend a diocesan approved, full course of instruction, consisting of at least three separate encounters, in a method of natural family planning.
- The use of sponsoring couples adequately trained and witnessing to complete fidelity to the church's teaching is encouraged for the benefit of the couple.