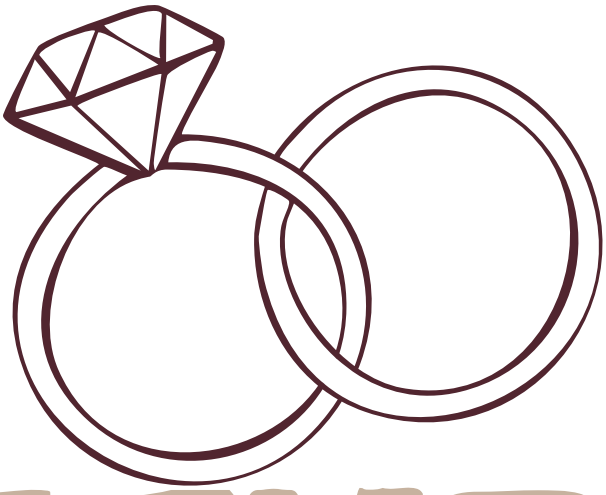


Bridal Lent



LENT

Becoming Bride

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WELCOME!

Congratulations, Bride! You're preparing for your vocation! You've come so far in discernment, patience, trust, and surrender - and how you're preparing for the Big Day! The engagement period is sometimes marked by a bit of chaos! All the details, opinions, and decisions come out and sometimes do a number on your peace. But sis, I want you to arrive at your wedding day prepared in your heart and your relationship with Jesus too! This Prayer Companion is here to offer you a full buffet each morning in prayer. Go down the page, pick and choose your favorites, come back for seconds, skip servings - whatever you need. This isn't a I-have-to-get-everything-done situation. This is a "welcome to the abundance of ideas! Help yourself!" situation.



Every week, pray with the theme assigned. Every day, pick any arrangement of the offerings. The important thing is that you spend time with God in prayer, not exactly what you're doing within that. Enjoy!

xo
Monica

IDEAS:

Some fun *extra* ideas to consider as you enter this season:

- Begin the 54 Day Rosary Novena 54 days before your wedding - add it to your calendar now.
- Take on a Lenten fast with your fiance.
- Take on a Lenten fast (secret) FOR your fiance that he doesn't know about.
- Commit to a daily prayer you pray every day in your engagement
- Take a patron saint, even if you already have one, for the rest of this engagement season
- Start a book ! Holy Sex, Three to Get Married, Jesus the Bridegroom, For Better Forever are great suggestions
- Choose a virtue of the week for the rest of your engagement, or a specific Marian virtue you want to focus on leading up to the wedding
- Is there anything special you want to do for your fiance on your wedding? A letter? A video compilation of yourself talking to him every day, starting today? A photo collage? A spiritual bouquet?
- Is there anything you want to ask your bridesmaids & family to pray for you OR with you leading up to the wedding? The Divine Mercy Novena begins on Good Friday and extends to Divine Mercy Sunday.
- Do you have prayer scheduled on your wedding day, or time to pray with your fiance before the wedding mass? Do you want that?

FIRST "HALF" WEEK:
ASH WED-SATURDAY

Ephphatha:
BE OPENED

DIRECTION:

The cry of the Heavenly Bridegroom to us is one word: Ephphatha.

Be opened.

This season, that's what you are preparing to do for your husband. To open to him physically. To receive him and bear life. To trust him. To let him in. God the Bridegroom wants the same thing spiritually with you. He wants to woo you, to earn your trust, to give you life, to fill you with his spirit, his healing, his joy, his peace.

But if our hearts are clenched shut tight, we can't receive him.

This first half week of Lent, let the invitation, "Be opened," hit your heart. Jesus won't force himself in. He knocks, and he waits. Perhaps, like Martha at the tomb of Lazarus, you fear opening because of what's inside - the stench, she says. Perhaps, like the bride in the Song of Songs, you can't be inconvenienced long enough to go open the door. The activities & resources this week are designed to bring you to a surrender and to this prayer:

Jesus, I am open. My heart is yours.



BIBLE PASSAGES TO PRAY WITH:

- John 11 - story of Lazarus
- Mark 7:31 - healing of deaf man
- Isaiah 54:10-11 - words of love from God
- Hosea 2:14-15 - consider 'Lent' your 'wilderness'
- Ephesians 3:17-19 - words of consolation & love
- Revelation 3:20 - a plea from the Lord to open

SONGS TO PRAY WITH:

"Audio Divina" (Listen & read along lyrics, reflect, respond, rest)

- "Getting Ready" by Maverick City
- You Came (Lazarus) by Bethel Music
- Deeper (I Trust In You) by Damascus Worship
- Open Space by Housefires
- Make Room by The Church Will Sing
- My Heart is Yours by Passion

PODCAST/TALKS:

- Slaking Thirsts, Fr. Pat Schultz on Soundcloud - or just google it
    - "Fr. Patrick - Christ the Bridegroom and the Implications of the Spousal Analogy for Discipleship" , Sept 21, 2021 on Slaking Thirsts



PRAYERS

- Surrender Novena (beautiful at the beginning of Lent)
- The Gospel & readings this week (a staple recommendation)

ACTIVITIES & JOURNAL PROMPTS:

- As you start this Lenten season, is there anyone that comes to mind that your heart is closed to? Perhaps this is a season to try to open to them in forgiveness or outreach.
- Draw your heart & try to imagine what is "in it". What is "taking up space" - what do you prioritize, spend time on, worry about, think of often, etc. Draw these things in your heart. Pray with surrendering your heart to Jesus using this image.
- Use dry flowers as a visual image for yourself. Order some on Amazon or (depending on your climate) press some yourself. Use this metaphor of something beautiful dried and preserved. These are the dreams and desires you may have "put away". Let Jesus open up your heart to see fully what you've been keeping under lock and key.
- Do you have any "guardians" or "defenders" who won't let you open your heart to Jesus? Can you ask God to help you identify them?

- QUOTES
    - "That is why I said that this little word, 'Ephphatha—Be opened,' sums up Christ's entire mission. He became man so that man, made inwardly deaf and dumb by sin, would become able to hear the voice of God, the voice of love speaking to his heart, and learn to speak in the language of love, to communicate with God and with others." - Benedict XVI

LENT WEEK 1:

Daughter

DIRECTION:

This week is about the first of several identities we will explore. Before you can be Bride, you must know that you are Daughter. Beloved, cherished, precious daughter.

There are lots of aspects of a wedding that involve a father. The dance, the walking down the aisle, the speech, the (traditional) payment for the wedding. This is a moment for a father to shine. Sometimes, because we're human, this can be a source of disappointment and pain.

God your Father is a perfect dad. He isn't stingy. He isn't insecure. He isn't stubborn. He wants to give you away to your husband, to honor you, to cherish you, to make you feel like a protected and beloved daughter.

This week, take some time to allow space for God to be your Father. Out of this identity, you'll step into being a bride, given away.

BIBLE VERSES TO PRAY WITH:

- Luke 15 - Prodigal Son
- Matthew 6:25-33, 10:29-31
- Romans 8:14-17
- 1 John 4:4 & 3:1-2
- Luke 11:9-13/12:22
- 2 Peter 3:8-9
- Psalm 40:17
- Hosea 11:3-4
- Psalm 103:12-14

SONGS TO PRAY WITH:

"Audio Divina" (Listen & read along lyrics, reflect, respond, rest)

- Out of Hiding - Stephanie Gretzinger
- Closer by Amanda Cook
- Lean Back by Maverick City
- Good Good Father by Tomlin
- Song of my Father - Urban Rescue (personal fave, though cheesy)
- Pride of a Father - Hillsong Young & Free
- Run to the Father/ O Come to the Altar - Caleb & Kelsey

PODCAST/BOOKS:

- Slaking Thirsts, Fr. Pat Schultz, "Revealing the Heart of the Father Through Holy Week" 3/28/23
- Abba's Heart by Neal Lozano. Honestly - a quick read. You can probably finish in one week if you really want to.
- The Heart of the Father, Abiding Together with Fr Mike Schmitz June 10,2019
- The Wild Goose is Loose Father series 'Spirit of Adoption'
- "Daughter" part of the Abiding Together - 4 parts starting 10/4/2021

PRAYERS:

- The Our Father

ACTIVITY #1: Father-Daughter Time

- Take yourself on a "Father Daughter" date to a restaurant you like. Splurge a little! Get a nice meal! Sit alone, and spend time with Father God. (I did this and trust me, it's not as weird as you think!)
- Choose a "Daddy Daughter Dance" song for you and Father God. It can be worship or not!
- Pray with the idea of Father God giving you away & walking you down the aisle

ACTIVITY #2: "It Ends With Us"

- Your marriage is going to be holy and powerful. It has potential to make generational impact on your family line. Before getting married, it's good to look at your family or origin and your parents' marriage. Without a spirit of judgment, but with a spirit of truth, reflect on the shortcomings of your parents' marriage. You will have a tendency to take into your marriage anything - good and bad- you've seen your parents do. Identify anything you've seen that you DO and DON'T want to bring into your marriage and talk to Jesus about it.
  - How did mom and dad handle conflict?
  - ...talk about one another to the kids?
  - ... do romance?
  - ...build a domestic church?
  - ...talk to one another?
  - What fears/wounds did your parents work out of sometimes?
  - Do you have fears approaching marriage?

ACTIVITY #3: Mother's Daughter

- Mary cared about wedding details at the wedding feast of Cana. Do you have concerns about wedding details? Talk to Mary. She will set them straight.
- Wedding Feast of Cana in John 2

LENT WEEK 2:

Sister

DIRECTION:

This week is about being 'Sister.'

Whether or not you have siblings, weddings are surrounded by the idea of sisterhood. Bachelorettes, bridal parties, maid of honor speeches, etc - it's all about celebrating the women who have accompanied you in your life to this point. This is a beautiful week to pray and reflect on those relationships.

In the Song of Songs, the Bridegroom calls his Bride his "SISTER" first. Strange! But when you think about it, our first relationship to our spouse is actually 'sibling' in Christ. We are adopted children of the Father. We are called to bring our husbands to Heaven, as 'sister', as co-adopted-child-of-God.

This is a really beautiful week to ask the Lord:

Have I been the sister that you've asked me to be?

BIBLE VERSES TO PRAY WITH:

- Luke 1 :39- 56- Visitation / healthy relationship of Mary & Elizabeth
- Luke 10 - the misunderstood relationship between Mary & Martha
- Genesis 16 - the wounding relationship of Sarah & Hagar
- Genesis 29 - the wounding sisterhood of Leah & Rachel
- 1 John 4:9-11

PODCAST/TALKS/ Other:

- Abiding Together Sister Series (four episodes!)
  - We are Family, I Got All My Sisters With Me November 1, 2021
  - Communion and Acceptance
  - Mean Girls: The Wounds
  - The Redemption of Sisterhood

  These come with show notes of Lectio Divina & Journaling Questions!
- Check out Blessed Is She - there's lots of blogs, resources, courses, devotionals - anything you'd need to take steps towards a community of sisters.
- Cultivating Catholic Sisterhood Mini Documentary with Jenna Guizar

ACTIVITY #1: My Sister My Bride

- Song of Songs 4:9 says "You have captured my heart, my sister my bride." In a strange way, you are your fiance's SISTER before you are his BRIDE. You are daughter and son of Father together. Reflect:
  - How have you been a good "sister" to your fiance and spoken life and love to him? Encouraged him, nurtured him, 'visited' him, celebrated with him, suffered with him, etc? What are habits you want to continue/begin to do this?
  - Take some time to list ways you want to grow with your fiance and the family culture you want to establish. How do you want to "be his sister" in bringing him to your Father? In honesty, talk with Jesus about your fiance's faults and shortcomings too. You can love him AND be aware of where he's imperfect. Ask God how you can love him best in these.

ACTIVITY #2: The Women In Your Life

- Time to think about the gals in your life.
  - Part 1: List and pray about the women who have most encouraged and upbuilt you in your life. Defining moments of sisterhood? Affirmations and words of truth that have stuck with you?
  - Part 2: Acknowledge and bring to Jesus any times you've been hurt by women in your life, in ways large in small, in the ways they may have let you down this engagement season or the ways they have championed you. Bare that to Jesus.
  - Part 3: Comparison. Leah & Rachel are a pair of sisters we see in Genesis 29, and comparing their lives does not go well for them. They are bitter and fighting for the love of Jacob. Take some time to talk with Jesus about women you compare yourself with. Is it the different timelines you are on in life? The different ways you look? The different job titles? Bring all the comparisons to Jesus and let him help you replace them with blessings.

ACTIVITY #3: Sister Celebration

- This time of engagement usually involves a lot of celebrating YOU and your fiance! Before the wedding comes and goes as quick as a flash, pause and see if there's anything you feel called to do to love your 'siblings'. Dream and plan with the LORD for a little bit - is there an opportunity for you to bless, affirm, and celebrate the sisters & siblings in your life?
- Consider praying about a really intentional letter or gift for each of your bridesmaids, sisters, siblings, etc.
- Consider praying a novena with or for your sisters that ends on your wedding day.
- Consider having a moment at your wedding (or wedding weekend) that pampers & cherishes your sisters (or siblings!)

ACTIVITY #4: 'Saint Squad'

- I don't want to play into a cliche too much, but the idea of a 'Saint Squad' is very real! Pick patron saints ("Heavenly siblings") to accompany you in this engagement season! Brides, married women, or just saints you feel that you can talk to as a sister. Wear their medals, place pictures of them around your daily routine, celebrate their feast days, etc.
- I am a visual gal, but I recommend printing photos of these saints and keeping them around. They are the "cloud of witnesses" Hebrew 12 you just might need to get to your wedding day! Put them on your desk, your steering wheel, your mirror, your phone background - anywhere they can encourage you when you get stuck in bridal stress!



LENT WEEK 3:

DIRECTION:

Finally, it's time to talk about becoming a bride.

A bride, by nature, is given. The new part of your identity you're taking on is that you're given away. You give yourself fully to another. You're given by your father. You're a gift. And you're entering into *covenant*.

A bride prepares herself in a hundred ways for her wedding day. You're preparing your body, your attire, your future home, your relatives' travel plans, your reception, your Mass, your makeup and hair plan, your cake, your menu...and your heart.

Let me just speak peace to you for a moment. You *will be ready* on your wedding day, Sis. Even if you feel rushed and overwhelmed. God gives grace in the sacrament. Take it from one bride who didn't feel spiritually prepared or ready or holy enough on her wedding day - the grace of the sacrament fills all the gaps.

But if you want to take a little extra time to prepare your heart, I encourage you to dive into this week. It's a what-I-wish-I-would-have-made-time-for week for you, from my anxious bride heart to yours.

BIBLE VERSES TO PRAY WITH:

- Proverbs 31:10-31 - the description of Wisdom, the "woman of worth", the "ideal wife"
- Matthew 4:1-11 - The "desert" of waiting & engagement, where you may be attacked with lies
- Isaiah 43-44 - lots of words of hope and love from God
- Exodus 24 - the covenant of Moses, a marriage covenant!

SONGS:

- So Will I (Shane & Shane)
- New Wine (Hillsong)
- Over My Head (Bethel)
- On the Altar (UpperRoom)
- Hey Jesus (Elyssa Figueroa)
- Pour My Love On You (UpperRoom)
- No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus (Steffany Gretzinger)
- I Just Love You (UpperRoom)

PODCAST/TALKS/ Other:

- Abiding Together Bride Series starting 5/9/22
    - These come with show notes of Lectio Divina & Journaling Questions!
- Holiness for the Working Day Episodes:
    - "Marriage is Literally God's Love in the World" 11/2-18
    - "Masculinity, Femininity, and the Domestic Church" 11/21/22
    - "Wives Be Submissive?" 8/26/24

PRAYERS

- Breastplate of St. Patrick Prayer

ACTIVITY #1: BRIDAL ATTIRE

Pray & look into each item you're wearing to understand the symbolism, history, and your personal meaning!

- Like the "Armor of God", you put on each piece for a reason! You can borrow from Armor of God like "shoes of peace". (Ephesians 6)
- Examples: gown is white for purity, rings are circles and symbols of eternity, veil, groom wears black as a symbol of his "death" to self today
- Consider adding something to your attire to represent your faith, something that has secret meaning to you!



ACTIVITY #2: PONDER IN YOUR HEART

- Like Mary pondered in her heart, take some time to reflect, remember, write down your proposal story and your hopes for your wedding day.
- Isaiah 49 and 43 are full of reminders that God had chosen us and we are his. You have been chosen - you are going to be your fiance's! You are wanted, chosen, known, and loved. Before you were chosen by your fiance, you were chosen by God. Write yourself declarations and reflect on these.

ACTIVITY #3: BRIDAL LANGUAGE

- You are stepping in a new "season" and "piece" of your identity that you haven't previously accessed. You're about to be bride. Identify a list of words that describe what 'bride' is to you. Committed. Chosen. Beloved. Given. Desired. Beautiful. Prepared. Let God speak to you in the picking of these words.
- I like visual things, so I took a photo of a wedding dress, traced its outline in pencil, and wrote the words over the lines of the drawing in pen. Then, when I erased the pencil lines, I had a sketch of the wedding dress, written in words of love and Bible verses and songs! It was like God was "adorning me" in my dress of his love!

ACTIVITY #4: Pray with your Vows!

Word for word, line by line - pray with your vows! Write your own vows, if you like. Rewrite the words of the vows you chose, in handwriting, and frame it. Or write it again and again, like some brides practice writing their new last name. Writing your own vows is beautiful, of course - but the words that have been passed down and made part of the Sacrament by the Church hold meaning. Consider all the generations of people who have gone before you, saying the same words! The saints! Those in Heaven that we don't know about! The families with a dozen children, well into marriage & still thriving!

You also chose readings for your Wedding Mass (or you will!) Pray with those choices & read them. Commit them to memory if you choose! As well as the songs you chose at your wedding - you chose them for a reason. Pray with the lyrics and let God speak to you through them.



LENT WEEK 4:

Jesus Bridegroom

DIRECTION:

Jesus the Bridegroom.

This is a pretty appalling claim we make, that Jesus is seeking to wed himself to us poor sinners. Yet, it's not our idea.

In the Old Testament, God presented himself as "Bridegroom God" to Israel. The Mosaic Covenant with the 10 Commandments on Mount Sinai was a "wedding covenant". Thereafter, when Israel broke covenant, they were referred to as committing "spiritual adultery" on God. "Playing the harlot". Infidelity.

In the New Testament, Jesus presents himself as "Bridegroom" yet again. His covenant is a wedding as well.

In Revelation, John's vision of the end times shows us Jesus marrying his new bride, the Church. Us. You and me. (Portrayed as the New Heavenly Jerusalem, with Jesus as a Lamb. It's an odd match, to be sure.)

The whole concept of Jesus as Bridegroom is all over scripture, agreed and commented on by saints, Church Fathers, Popes, and modern Biblical scholars alike. The Song of Songs is a book we can take as an allegory of God's pursuit of each of our individual souls.

Have you let it strike you yet? Have you received this truth, that Jesus wants you? This week is for you to meet your Bridegroom King.

BIBLE VERSES TO PRAY WITH:

- John 4 - Woman at the Well with Podcast recommended below
- Isaiah 62:3-5
- Jeremiah 31:3-4
- Zephaniah 3:17-20
- Isaiah 43:4-5
- Psalm 139
- Luke 5:8-10

SONGS TO PRAY WITH:

"Audio Divina" (Listen & read along lyrics, reflect, respond, rest)

- I Love You Lord - Hannah Hobbs
- First Love - Kari Jobe
- Pieces - Bethel
- Only You - Beau Maddox
- Taste of Eternity - Bellarive
- On the Altar - Upperroom

PODCAST/TALKS/ Other:

- "Holiness for the Working Day" Podcast episodes on Woman at the Well, through the lens of Bridegroom meeting Bride at Jacob's Well
    - A Heart Won & The Feminine Mystery 3/20/22
    - The Woman at the Well & the Tenderness of Jesus 3/31/19
- Latte & Laundry 'Disarming Love' December 2024

ACTIVITY #1: VISIT

- If you have any extra time this week, try to visit Jesus in person in the Eucharist through daily mass or adoration.

ACTIVITY #2: Anthony of Padua

- Look up and pray with the Be Satisfied with Me Prayer by Anthony of Padua. It shows the jealous & protective love of God.

ACTIVITY #3: Dates with Jesus

- Jesus is the perfect listener. He loves to hear you talk about yourself. Maybe it's been awhile since you've taken some personality tests. Consider taking them again, this week, with Jesus "at your side". The Myers- Briggs, the Temperaments, the Enneagram, whatever! Spread out all your results and talk to Jesus about yourself. Self-awareness is a huge gift when you're approaching marriage. Tell Jesus all about yourself, how you've grown, what you love about yourself and where you'd like to grow. It's really intimate to have him listen to your self-assessments. Obviously, let him speak too. :) (The Temperament God Gave You book is a great resource here! There's one for a spouse too!)

ACTIVITY #4: Love Letter

- As you approach marriage, there are ample opportunities to write your spouse a love letter, to be read the morning of the wedding etc. Consider writing a love letter to God first, thanking him and lavishing love on him for everything he's seen you through.

LENT WEEK 5:

Mother

DIRECTION:

This week is about looking ahead, to becoming Mother.

Whoa, whoa, whoa! Monica, one thing at a time here! But that's just it - sometimes it's *not* just one thing at a time. Sometimes marriage and pregnancy come together right away! Sometimes marriage involves the adoption of a child from an earlier marriage. And yes, of course, sometimes marriage comes first and babies come a bit later. You've probably been learning some kind of Natural Family Planning throughout engagement, and you're probably as familiar as I am with countless stories of friends who had honeymoon babies & jumped into two major transitions at the same time!

Thank goodness pregnancy takes 9 months and you have time to let your heart expand (as your body expands haha!) But for this week, spend some time considering the identity Mother. All women are mothers, no matter if they have children. We mother our 'children' spiritually sometimes instead of physically, but a woman's heart is fashioned towards maternity. For you, bride, it might come physically soon! Part of the marriage vows involve welcoming children from God generously. I want your heart to be ready to give a yes when that question comes in the wedding mass, because you've prayed and processed with the Lord this week!

Have you stopped to reflect that when God made you, he created a space within you that is empty? Waiting. Capable of growing new life. Capable of receiving. That's where motherhood starts: receiving and surrender. Let's pray with those two words this week.

BIBLE VERSES TO PRAY WITH:

- Isaiah 66:13 - about a mother's comfort
- Isaiah 49:15 - about God's love
- Luke 1:26 - 38 - when Mary discovers she'll be a mother
- Genesis 25:21-22 - an example of a Biblical woman struggling in pregnancy
- Psalm 127:3-5
- Psalm 139:13-14

SONGS TO PRAY WITH:

"Audio Divina" (Listen & read along lyrics, reflect, respond, rest)

- Make Room by The Church Will Sing
- Sound Mind by Melissa Helser
- You Make Me Brave by Bethel
- The Blessing by Kari Jobe
- On the Altar by Upperroom
- It Is Well by Bethel

PODCAST/TALKS/ Other:

- The Abiding Together Podcast "Mother" series starting February 2022 with the episode 'The Power of Motherhood'
- Abiding Together Podcast "Feminine Genius Part 4: Maternity" April 10,2017
- Abiding Together Podcast "Things We Learned from Our Moms" in May 2020
- Holiness for the Working Day Podcast "Perfectionism and the Surprise of Love" 1/27/2025
- Latte & Laundry Podcast: The 'She Loved Letters' series starting April 1, 2025, 5 episodes
- Abundance of Grace has a Litany of Motherhood prayer card that's just gorgeous!

ACTIVITY #1: FEARS

- Motherhood often comes with fear and uncertainty since becoming pregnant is unlike anything we've yet experienced! If you're harboring fear in your heart that you will get pregnant right away, don't be ashamed! Take out a piece of paper, draw a box at the bottom called "motherhood" or "pregnancy" and pretend you are 'unpacking' it. Let anything inside there - any fear, doubt, preconceived notion, expectation, hope, wound, dream - spill out all over the page. Be uncensored. Now, you have something to bring to conversation with God and your fiance.
- Here's a series of passages to help you know that God is provider!
    - Deuteronomy 2:7 , 32:10-12
    - Proverbs 3:5-6
    - Isaiah 44:2
    - Matthew 6:25-33 & Luke 12:22 +
    - Philippians 4:6-7

ACTIVITY #2: My Momma

Just as weddings have many moments with Daddy-Daughter time, weddings bring out mother relationships too. She may not give a speech or dance with you, but she is usually there to support you, help you get dressed in the morning, etc.

- Do the same 'unpacking' activity listed above. Is there anything about your relationship with your mom that feels tense or hurtful? Is there time to address it and bring reconciliation?
    - Is there a way in the wedding weekend or this engagement season to honor your mother? A letter, flowers, a one-on-one dinner, following her wishes on a particular wedding plan...? Whether or not your relationship has been rocky, and whether or not she's let you see it,YOUR season of engagement has probably been a wildly emotional season for HER too.

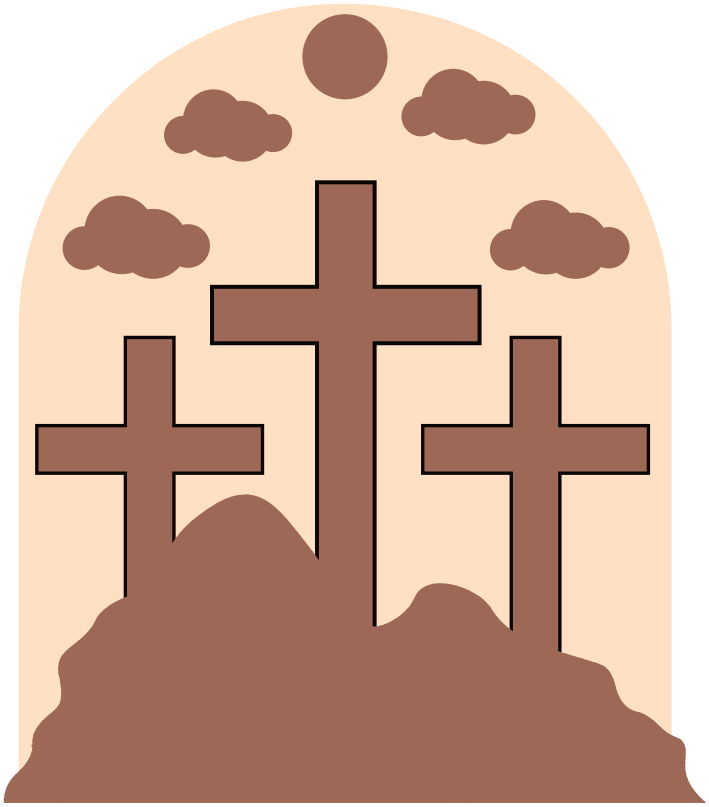
ACTIVITY #3: Navigator Meetings

My friend introduced me to this monthly habit she does with her husband - a touchpoint meeting for them to check in on eachother's wellbeing AND dreams. In engagement, it's fun to do this with your fiance of course - but first take time to do it with the Lord.

- First - check in. How are you physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually? How is sleep and stress, diet, and social life? Which bad habits are you stuck in? Audit your heart.
- Second - a dream "checkin" (Or for now, goal establishment.) Dream with the Lord about your life in sixth months, one year, five years, ten years, and "lifetime". Write down what you want in each season, each on its own sticky note. Converse with God about these! (Later, with your husband, you can make a practice of sorting through dreams, aiming for goals, and building your life. Get practical later. Right now, open your heart and see what comes out!)
- Motherhood - contrary to popular belief - is not an interruption of your dreams. But it's okay if you feel that way right now, or you're afraid of what it'll ask of you. Ask the Lord how he dreams of your motherhood. What shape will it take? And who does he want you to become through it? Are there specific words of encouragement he wants to give you about your future motherhood?



HOLY WEEK



the week of the BRIDEGROOM

DIRECTION:

I know, I know. We just DID a week on Jesus the Bridegroom. But - as you'll see - one is not enough. The entire theme of Lent and Easter is the romantic love of the Bridegroom King, seeking and saving his wounded bride! The other week was about Jesus' romance. This week is about our response to it.

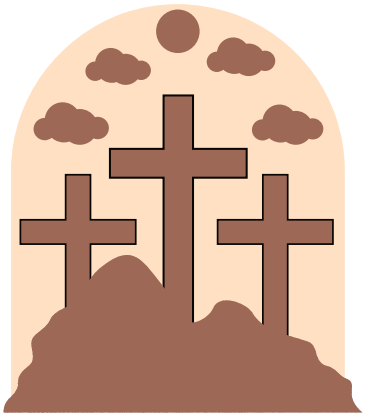
Holy Week is called "The Week of the Bridegroom" in the Eastern Church. I love that title more - both because it's romantic, and because it's accurate. This is the week Jesus *acts as bridegroom*. He, like a groom on his wedding night, lays down his life for his bride, and tells her "This is my body, given for you." There is so much spousal imagery here! Jesus is the New Adam. The old Adam was put into a sleep, out of his side came Eve, his bride. The New Adam was "put to sleep", dead on the cross, and out of his side came blood and water, the symbols of Baptism and the Eucharist, his sacraments, his church, his bride.

This gives a new meaning to Paul's words, *"Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her."*

Husbands, die for her. Die in a million little ways.

Wives? Submit to your husbands. *Sub-missio. Come under* the mission of your husband. Come under the mission of your husband, *which is to die for you.* Wives, receive his love.

We can fly by Holy Week with gritted teeth to make it past long liturgies to Easter, but I implore you to move slow. Wait. Feel. Notice. Engage. The Bridegroom King is laying down his life so that you would receive it and be free.



BIBLE VERSES TO PRAY WITH:

- Pray with the seven readings of the Easter Vigil
  - Genesis 1:1-2:2
  - Genesis 22:1-18
  - Exodus 14:15-15:1
  - Isaiah 54:5-14
  - Isaiah 55:1-11
  - Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4
  - Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28
  - Luke 24:1-12

SONGS TO PRAY WITH:

- Oh the Cross - UpperRoom
- Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence - I like Red Mountain Church's version
- At the Cross - Chris Tomlin
- Lead Me to the Cross - Hillsong United
- Scandal of Grace - Hillsong United

PODCAST/TALKS:

- Slaking Thirsts, Fr. Pat Schultz, "The Week of the Bridegroom: A Look at the Passion, Death, and Resurrection Like You've Never Seen Before" March 24, 2024

ACTIVITY #1: YOUR STORY

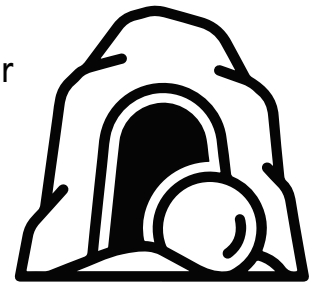
- Make a timeline of your own life and your own "salvation history" that God has done in your life. Do it however you like; I recommend a bullet point graph where you connect the dots at the end. Consider the "highs" and "lows" of your life, the most impactful moments, the "pivots" and decision points.



- The whole Old Testament pointed forward to this week and this covenant: the Paschal Mystery. In what ways can you see that God has been preparing your whole "Old Testament" for this wedding, for this covenant, for this sacrifice? Notice the patterns in your life, the hints at your vocation, the ways God spoke to you, the wounds that tried to keep you from your "yes" as bride. Write down your own convictions and certainty that you are called to marriage, that you are saying YES to God's invitation to this covenant. You may find this "mission statement" helpful later in moments when marriage and covenant is difficult!

ACTIVITY #2: IN THE GRAVE

- Read Hebrews 12:1-3.
- What "burdens and sins" do you need to let go of to run the race before you - into this wedding & the life with your husband?
- What needs to go "into the tomb" this Good Friday and die with Jesus? What in your life needs resurrection? Consider:
    - Doubts, fears, or lies about marriage or yourself or your fiance
    - Bad behaviors, habits, vices
    - Comparison
    - Negative self-talk
    - Selfishness or desire to "hold back" and "take care of yourself" / self protect
    - Parts of your story that you feel "disqualify" you from love.
- Consider on Good Friday, bringing those things to Jesus in some symbolic way to "seal in the tomb" with him.



ACTIVITY #3: Foot Washing

- Are you doing the traditional foot-washing at your wedding? It's a sweet thing couples do to signify that in their marriage, they commit to "washing the feet" and serving one another as Christ served his apostles. It's usually a tender moment, and it comes from the Gospel of John.
- Pray with John 13:1-7, and imagine Jesus washing your feet. Pray with the image of washing your fiance's feet - what does that mean? How will you "wash his feet" in your marriage? At Holy Thursday Mass, pay attention.
- Pray with Luke 7:36 + (the story of the woman who washes Jesus' feet)



- Peter refused to let Jesus wash his feet at first. Are there parts of you ("stinky feet") that you don't want your fiance or the Lord to touch, or to wash?
- "Sketch" a visual image of what your feet represent. I like to draw feet in my journal and fill them in with words. Let Jesus wash them.

ACTIVITY #4: Easter Vigil

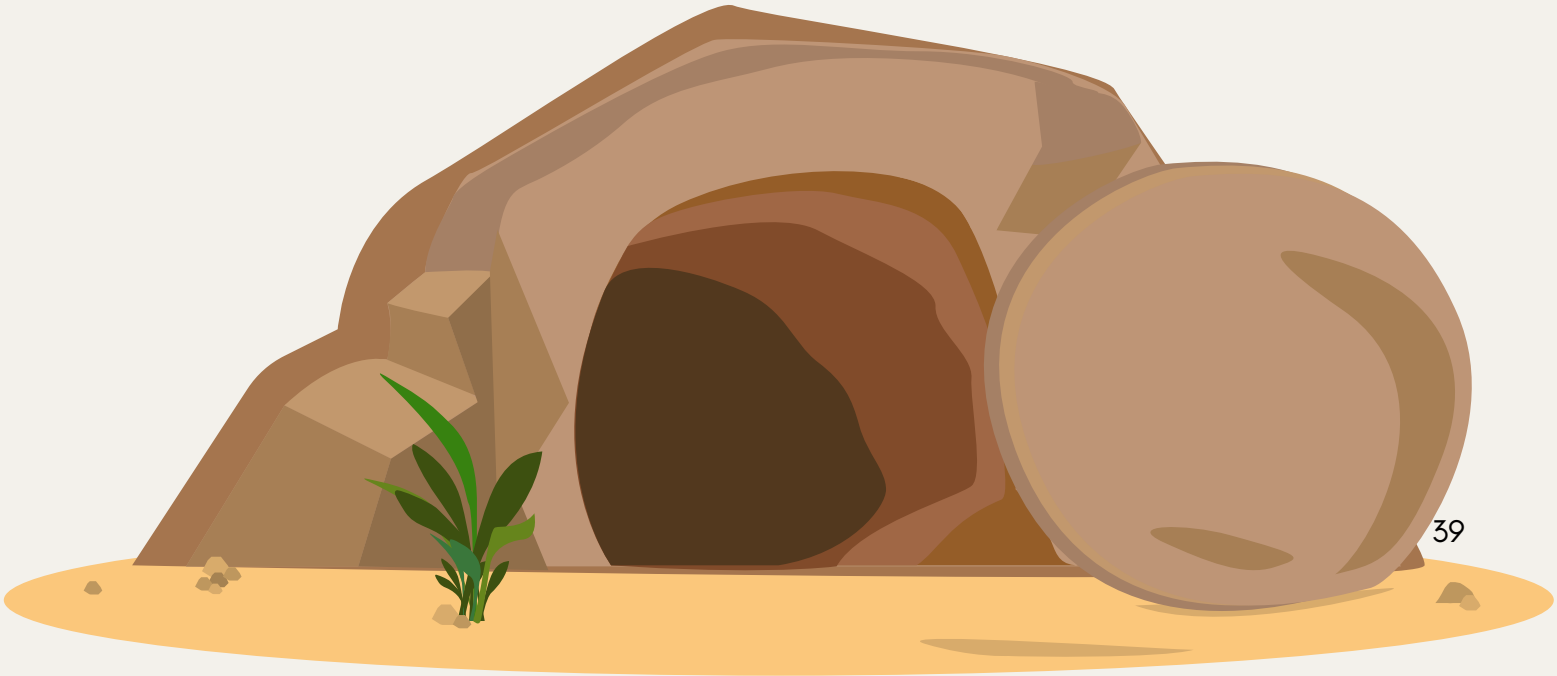
- Easter Vigil is a strange, long, and *romantic* liturgy of the Church. Here, the Bridegroom Jesus consummates his marriage with the church by his death on Friday and Resurrection on Sunday.
    - The plunging of the candle into the baptismal font is the symbol for the marital union of Christ and his church!
    - Consider going to the Easter Vigil with your fiance and renewing your own Baptismal Vows in preparation for the Wedding Vows soon to come. Go out for pancakes afterwards!

HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY

Easter!

SONGS TO PRAY WITH:

RESURRECTING (ELEVATION)
GLORIOUS DAY (PASSION)
ALL HAIL KING JESUS (BETHEL)
WE DRAW NEAR (DAMASCUS)
HOMECOMING (BETHEL)
I THANK GOD (MAVERICK CITY)
ALLELUIA (JESUS CULTURE)
WORTHY OF IT ALL/ALL THE GLORY (UPPERROOM)



Want More?

Romance & Bridal Prep?

Check out The **Catholic Bible Pod With Mon** (podcast) and the miniseries on the Song of Songs, published Lent 2026!

Prayer Guides?

Check out **TheCatholicBibleClassWithMon.Com** for a library of Prayer Companions to guide you through your next prayer season!