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ONE LIGUORI DRIVE
LIGUORI, MO
63057-9999
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Preparing for Marriage



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TEN TOOLS FOR THE JOURNEY

WILLIAM URBINE

Marriage is a big issue in our culture today. There are widespread and varying reports of divorce statistics. The Barna Group, which studies religious groups, says that about 75 percent of married Catholics stay married, and that about 25 percent have been divorced.

Indeed, how couples learn to dialogue and relate is what marriage is all about—from its romantic beginnings to its difficult ending when a spouse passes away.

We all know that as an engaged couple prepares to approach the altar, they bring with them all the hopes, dreams, common sense, intelligence, courage, confidence, and goodwill that brought them together in the first place. But, in almost all cases, they also bring some baggage that will be a factor throughout their lives. Let's take a look at some of the big issues that any couple considering marriage should be thinking about.

Good marriage preparation challenges couples to begin looking at and exploring together the feelings, values, and ideas they cherish. These will shape the way they make lifetime decisions. A lifetime of love will continue to uncover the good and raw stuff of a man and woman's characters. Yet, we know a lot in advance about what makes marriages work.

Couples can better prepare themselves for the changes in marriage by looking hard and honestly at a number of key issues. In what follows, I offer ten areas about which the happiest couples communicate often. The first one, of course, is the most obvious.