

Mary's Mantle: A Prayer Ministry for Brides and Grooms
Founded by Lorrie Gramer,
Co-Executive Director of "Marriage Building USA"

Mary's Mantle is an exciting new parish ministry which encourages women of the parish to "*espouse with prayer, acts of kindness and spiritual encouragement*" each Bride as she prepares for her wedding and takes on her new role as wife in her marriage in the Church. Mary's Mantle also offers the parish priest additional support in ministering to the engaged and newlyweds of the parish, and adds a very personal connection with the parish community in which the wedding takes place. These couples are our sons and daughters and our grandchildren. They belong to us, our friends and our fellow parishioners.

When parishioners are more intentional in joining in the preparation of these couples to be married in our parishes, the couples encounter the love of the Lord through our love. This is the most fertile opportunity we have for evangelization of young adults today. Throughout the Bride's engagement and preparation time, and then following her into her marriage, the Bride will be "blanketed" with many prayers and acts of kindness.

In keeping with the title of this effort, following the announcement of an engagement and upcoming marriage, a Prayer Minister (a member of the faith community) is assigned.

- The Prayer Minister will receive a blue cloth, "Mantle," to be used as a symbol of the covering worn by our Blessed Lady.
- Using the words spoken by Our Lady to St. Dominic "...have boundless trust in me. My mantle will always be your safe refuge." The "Mantle" is included in each prayer activity for the Bride.
- Select a specific prayer candle to use during this special engagement time for both the Prayer Minister and the Bride. A candle holder that allows for new candle inserts could be used before and after the wedding.
- The "Mantle" is presented, along with the full Spiritual Bouquet, to the Bride at the rehearsal before the wedding.
- The "Mantle" is cut in half – with half kept by the Prayer Minister and half presented to the Bride with the promise of continued prayers. (Note: There could always be more than one Prayer Minister for each Bride, if so chosen.)
- The Bride is encouraged to place the "Mantle" at the feet of the Blessed Mother statue either before or during the wedding with a special Mary's bouquet. She will also be encouraged to keep the cloth in a special place in her home where she will be reminded to pray that she becomes the wife God envisions for her to be.
- After the wedding, the Prayer Minister will continue to pray for this new wife, but now will include correspondence with some "Homemade Holiness" ideas, such as a blessing for their Christmas tree, or a Valentine's Prayer of Married Couples in February. Sending of special ideas during the liturgical year will help to encourage this newly married couple to make their home a blessed and prayerful place.

**Mary's Mantle: A Parish Ministry of Prayer/ Support for Engaged Couples
Founded by Lorrie Gramer, Marriage Building USA, www.marriagebuildingusa.org**

Specific Prayers for Mary's Mantle Prayer Ministry

Prayer for the Light of Christ to shine on this soon to be New Bride

Loving God, shine your grace on this woman who is soon to be a bride. Fill her heart with your love. Inspire her with your Holy Wisdom as she seeks to create a home that will be a holy haven for her family. Nurture her as she learns to negotiate the delicate aspects of a married relationship. Bless her with compassion, generosity, creativity, forgiveness and marital bliss. Amen

Prayer to St. Elizabeth

St Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, you were chosen by God to offer prayers, wisdom and encouragement to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Today, I seek your intercession as I begin a special relationship with a woman from my parish that needs support as she begins her role as a wife. You were a woman of deep faith and prayer. Guide me in my efforts to grow closer to God and offer prayers for this woman. May I be responsive to the nudging of the Holy Spirit and recognize the ways I can offer support with prayer, cards, and acts of kindness. Just as you recognized Christ living within Mary, may I always remember that the spark of the Divine lives in this special woman. You proclaimed, "Who am I that the Mother of my Lord would come to meet me?" I desire to also be in awe of the unfolding blessing of this relationship in my own life. Your greeting and insights helped to inspire Mary to proclaim, "My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior!" May this woman I am praying for, as a Mary's Mantle Minister, discover the joy of God's blessings in her life. Amen

Prayer during the cutting of the Mary's Mantle

Spirit of the Living God, on the days this bride and groom were conceived, You gave them to their respective parents. As this "Mary's Mantle" is cut, may their parents make an offering of their children back to you, God, so that tomorrow, on their wedding day, You may give the bride to the groom and the groom to the bride. One half of this mantle will remain with a representative of our faith community, with a commitment for continued prayer for this couple. May the other half find a special place in the newlywed's home where they may use it as a prayer tool. When we think of Mary's Mantle, we usually think of it as her veil. But in her days, she would have also used the mantle as a fabric carrier to tote baby Jesus around. So, when we ask Mary to wrap her mantle around us, we are actually asking her to carry us as she did baby Jesus, close to her heart. This is a place that calmed baby Jesus as he snuggled close to His mother's warmth, her beating heart and her gentle movements. May you seek that calm, reach for that protection and trust in her intercession on your behalf to her son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.