

Catholic Review announces engagement contest winners

By Catholic Review Staff

The Catholic Review ran an engagement contest for couples who got engaged Dec. 1, 2014 through Jan. 1, 2015. We have selected a winner, who will receive \$250 toward the cost of their wedding and we have also selected a runner-up who will receive \$125.

Here are their stories:

‘Do you like my rock better?’

Erin Buckingham and Christopher McNamara, the winners of our contest, got engaged Dec. 29, 2014 and will be married July 9, 2016 at St. Mary’s Church in Annapolis.



Erin Buckingham and Christopher McNamara

Erin says: Perhaps I should have been suspicious when Christopher took me on our annual summer date on Dec. 29. But as we sat eating crab dishes and looking at the river from the Severn Inn, I just thought it was a nice surprise. As has become tradition, we headed to the World War II memorial and overlook after lunch.

A curved stone ledge at the overlook underlines the Annapolis skyline, an invitation to couples to etch their names into its surface, as we have done the last three summers. The writing usually fades, but this time I found our markings from the previous summer, CM + EB enclosed in a heart.

I exclaimed with excitement and was about to retrace them with the rock in my hand when I heard Christopher behind me.

“Do you like my rock better?”

I turned around to find Christopher on his knee, a ring glittering in his hand. I said yes before he even finished asking. After reading a letter he gave me and retracing our initials, we went to pray the rosary at St. Mary’s Church, first the site of our high school Masses and now of our future wedding. When we returned to my house, both of our families were there to celebrate with us.

“I said, ‘Yes!’”

Sara Vollmerhausen and Brandon Vance, the runners-up in our contest, got engaged Dec. 25, 2014 and will be married at the Shrine of Ss. Peter and Paul, part of Our

Lady of the Mountains Parish in Cumberland.



Sara Vollmerhausen and Brandon Vance

Sara says: Our story started when, unknown to us, the Lord was working through my fiancé's sister.

She had been trying to introduce us to one another; however, it never worked out at the right time. Finally, she was able to convince us both to go on a blind date. When we met for dinner that first time it felt like we had known each other forever!

From that moment on, we decided to let the Lord lead our relationship. Brandon, my fiancé, had been away from church for several years, but he knew that he was being called back. He started going to Mass with my family and me, which in turn led him to RCIA. He enrolled and is now going through the process to convert to Catholicism. The Lord has been moving us closer to him every day throughout this. Then Christmas Day, we not only got to celebrate the birth of our Lord, but Brandon also proposed! Brandon went to visit my parents weeks before to get their blessing for my hand in marriage. I said, "Yes!" We are truly blessed the Lord has brought us together and excited for the next step in our journey!

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