

The Dialogue



Quarterly Newsletter of the Worldwide Marriage Encounter Community of the Austin Diocese

August 2003

WWME CONVENTION REPORT

by Raul and Dora Gonzalez

Raul: On July 25-27, Dora and I attended the Marriage Encounter Convention at DeKalb, Illinois, along with Mike and Renee Furtado, Nathan and Mary Ausley and Jose and Marilyn Garcia from the Austin community. The convention was held on the campus of Northern Illinois University, which is about an hour from Chicago. Dora and I will share about our experience.

The theme of the convention was "YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE." You have to believe that Jesus is present in our relationship; you have to believe in our goodness; and you have to believe that we can make a difference in the world. This theme was repeated over and over in all presentations and in the liturgies.

Dora: The convention was attended by about 75 priests, 3 bishops, and over 1,000 couples. The atmosphere was electric with excitement. It was a joyous event with great liturgies and music and challenging presentations. We'd get the warm fuzzies as we greeted couples and priests from our section and we met new ones. There was so much positive energy in the air. It was festive and joyous. A big sacramental party!



"Everything that happens in a marriage, the daily living and routine, can be used to transmit God's love to one another."

All the section leaders from the U.S. were introduced and we were told that our movement needs dreamers to dream big dreams. We were knocked off our seats as the couple shared on Friday night that they had 13 years of daily dialogue.

Raul: The talks were divided into three sections: GOD MADE US TO KNOW HIM, LOVE HIM AND SERVE HIM, and the presenting team & priest spoke about this in the context of their own relationship. The first presentation covered GOD MADE US TO KNOW HIM. One of the points that I took from this presentation is that we have to believe that WE ARE SACRED. God calls us to sanctity and we need to submit our will to God. We need to love one another like Jesus loves us and submit all of our will to God. In short, we are called to be modern day apostles. We are called to make Jesus present in the world. In order to do this, we must believe in God's love for us, and that he will give us the graces we need to love others as he loves us.

Dora: The next presentation's main points were taken from 1 John 4:20: If anyone says, "I love God" but hates his brother, he is a liar, for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God

...continued on page 2



Two bishops and over fifty priests concelebrated the closing mass on Sunday of the convention. The background banner of St. Joachim and St. Ann, Mary's parents and patron saints of the convention, was created specially for the convention.



Couples from the Austin Diocese included: Charlie & Mary Copeland, Renee & Mike Furtado, Mary & Nathan Ausley, Marilyn & Jose Garcia (back row) and Raul & Dora Gonzalez.

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Fr. Len (above) hams it up as part of the Blue Brothers entertainment group shown at right!

Photos from Marriage Encounter Community Event
Mass, Dinner and Dance
at St. John Neumann Catholic Church
June 7, 2003



Nathan and Mary Ausley (above) work on their dance moves.

Renee and Mike Furtado (below) enjoy a delicious gourmet meal prepared by Juliani Salim and Guy Vachon of the Westlake Circle.



WWME CONVENTION... continued from page 1

whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him; whoever loves God must also love his brother.

And our spouse is our closest neighbor. This presentation also covered the need for prayer, individual prayer and couple prayers and gifts or charisms. One of the main points of this section was that the gifts that God has given each one of us is not for us alone but for the whole church and that we are called to share these with the whole church.

Raul: The last talk on Sunday was on Spirituality of Marriage and Family. Everything that happens in a marriage, the daily living and routine, can be used to transmit God's love to one another. Our frustrations, our hurts, the misunderstandings, the affectionate teasing, the laughter, our love making, the forgiveness and healing are all part of spirituality in marriage.

Our goal is to make each moment a God moment, a holy moment. Whether it's changing diapers, cleaning the kitchen or taking out the trash. If we

have the mentality that we are standing or sitting on holy ground and we practice the presence of God each moment, we will grow in our couple spirituality, and our capacity for God to be in us deepens.

All in all, it was a great convention. We came back even more committed to this way of life and ministry.

Question for dialogue: How I love you (my spouse) is a reflection of my love for God. How does this make me feel?

UPCOMING MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EVENTS

August 8-10: ME Weekend Cedarbrake Retreat Center Belton, TX

October 3-5: ME Weekend Cedarbrake Retreat Center Belton, TX

November 14-16: ME Weekend Cedarbrake Retreat Center Belton, TX

December 7: Austin ME Community Christmas Party at Nathan and Mary Ausley's, Caldwell, TX, all welcome, please contact nmausley@tconline.net or 979-535-4867 for details.

August 2003

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October 2003

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...And the two of them become one body.

-Genesis 2:24

SPOTLIGHT ON THE COMMUNITY

Judi and Vince Sweat (College Station Circle)

Marriage Encounter at Work

Judi: Little did I know when Vince dragged me on a Marriage Encounter weekend on March 2, 1979 that our lives would be drastically changed forever.

Vince and I struggled so much with our differences, with discipline of our two boys, control of money and sex and a general lack of intimacy, especially after I had gone to work a few years before we moved to Texas. We were deep into disillusionment when we made our weekend.

Vince: Our weekend was a dramatic conversion for us. Through dialogue on the weekend, we rekindled that early love and passion for each other and for life that we thought we had lost. We heard for the first time about God's Plan for unity and the concept of being a Sacramental couple. We were invited to become a presenting team and how could we say no when we had been given such a marvelous gift!!

Judi: After our weekend, we began attending the Bryan/College Station circle twice a month and have been participating ever since. We have also been a dialoguing couple for the 14 years since our weekend. I won't say we haven't missed a day, but we have never gone for more than 4 days in a row without dialoguing, and not more than two days in a row for the last ten years. Our dialogue has been the lifeblood of our relationship.

Vince: Realizing the positive impact that dialogue had on us, and having made the commitment to do it, finding the 20 minutes a day became not an IF question, but a WHEN can we do it question.

Judi and I are completely opposite personality types and as a result, we have maximum conflict and maximum interest. Our dialogue has helped us to learn to appreciate our differences, even though that is still difficult in the midst of a conflict.

Judi: Over the years we have brought the weekend to couples who may never be able to go on a weekend. One example is the hundreds of engaged couples that we have worked with in the Pre-Cana program at St. Mary's. We brought the weekend concepts to the young married couples who make presentations and work as facilitators for the Pre-Cana.

Vince: After we stepped down from being an ME presenting team, we began working with Retrouvaille program, a program for struggling couples, which was just beginning in the Austin diocese. We are currently Retrouvaille coordinators for the Austin diocese. Retrouvaille also teaches dialogue as the means for communicating and for rebuilding a broken marriage.

Judi: We can never thank God enough for the people we have met and the growth we have experienced. We learned early on that if Marriage Encounter is something you do, you will certainly burn out. But if Marriage Encounter is someone you are becoming, God's grace will be sufficient for the journey. God Bless you all!

To save money for ME, we started cooking for the weekends at Cedarbrake in the early '90s. Since we became Austin Retrouvaille Coordinators, we have turned that over to the capable hands of Sam and Wayne Miller. This tradition has saved ME thousands of dollars in food costs over the years. And maybe, just maybe you've heard Vince's *Outrageous, Efficacious Sacrament Blues!* That about says it all!!

Consider being a prayer couple during a Marriage Encounter Weekend for one of the attending couples. If you are interested, please contact Mark and Nell Reinberg (markr@iolbv.com).



Judi and Vince Sweat with their grandsons, Elliott and Michael

"Realizing the positive impact that dialogue had on us, and having made the commitment to do it, finding the 20 minutes a day became not an IF question, but a WHEN can we do it question."

Marriage Encounter Dialogue Calendar

Are you looking for a convenient source of great questions for your daily dialogue? Check out the Marriage Encounter Calendar. Every Sunday there is a scripture-based question, and there are opportunities to expand your dialogue to include your entire family. The price for calendars is \$10.00 and they can be purchased from Wayne and Sam Miller. Information at gwmiller4445@earthlink.net.



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As always, we need your help to invite couples to experience a Worldwide Marriage Encounter. We are confident that the brilliance of your love for each other as husband and wife, and the gift of daily dialogue to keep that relationship strong, will be the light that attracts other couples to want what you have and to attend a Marriage Encounter in whatever format their schedule allows. If you need additional information please contact Jose and Marilyn Garcia at (512) 342-9727, or visit our local WWME website, www.austinme.org.

Austin Diocese Marriage Encounter Circle Information:

Austin Central: Matt Kerwick and Lynne Kammer

3911 Walnut Clay Dr., Austin 78731 ph: 512-453-4967
email: lynne@visionaryresearch.com
Meets various times.

Austin South: Raul and Dora Gonzalez

10511 River Plantation Dr., Austin, TX 78747 ph: 512-280-1002
email: rpiegonzo1@aol.com
Meets various times.

Austin Westlake Hills: Barry and Kathleen Meyer

11800 Lake Stone Drive, Austin, TX 78738 ph: 512-402-0740
email: barry@meyerbox.com, kathleen@meyerbox.com
Second Saturday every month, 7:00pm.

Caldwell: Nathan and Mary Ausley

5760 CR 324, Caldwell, TX 77836 ph: 979-535-4867
email: nmausley@tconline.net
Meets various times.

College Station: Randy and Irene Light

2100 Bent Oak, College Station, TX 77845 ph: 979-693-1931
email: light@brain-doc.com
Meets bi-monthly.

LaGrange: Louis and Mary Frerich

1002 Nink Road, Smithville, TX 78957 ph: 512-369-5127
email contact: Dave & Dorinda Hickey, ddhickey@prodigy.net
Meets various times.

Pflugerville: Michael and Laura Cowan

17909 Dansworth Drive, Pflugerville, TX 78660 ph: 512-251-6797
email: lauraanncowan@hotmail.com
Meets 3rd Saturday of every month.

Round Rock: Marcos and Marie Palacios

1109 North Riviera Circle, Cedar Park, TX 78613 ph: 512-918-1931
email: marcospalacios@yahoo.com, mariepalacios@yahoo.com
Second Friday every month, 7:30pm.

San Marcos: Michael and Renee Furtado

PO box 1733, San Marcos, TX 78667 ph: 512-396-3620
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Meets various times.

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