

The perfect marriage

Most of our marriages began “perfect”: the perfect ceremony; the perfect day; the perfect dress; the perfect reception. But then, as time passed, something happened to that perfection. Life got in the way. The competing pressures of family and work. The added responsibilities of children and perhaps of aging parents. The stress and uncertainty of changing careers, changing cities or moving to a new country.

When times are difficult, we frequently don't take the time that we need for each other in our marriage, and our marriage can suffer because of it. Like the photographs of that perfect day, our marriage can grow brittle and fade if we don't care for it. And even when we do find ourselves in a strong and faithful relationship, we also deserve to rediscover some of the warmth and excitement of the days when we began our lives together.

The BLD Marriage Encounter Weekend is your opportunity to rediscover the joy in your marriage. It is a carefully conducted process which places God at the centre of your married lives, and gives you powerful tools to use in communicating – with each other, within yourselves, and with our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is Marriage Encounter?

The Marriage Encounter Weekend is planned to be a positive and personal experience for a married couple. It's an opportunity for you to look carefully and deeply into your relationship with each other and with God. It teaches you a technique of loving communication that can last for the rest of your lives, and enables you, in a trusting and private environment, to share your feelings, hopes, fears, joys and frustrations.

Marriage Encounter is not a quick-fix marriage clinic. It's not a time to dwell on the past, but rather an opportunity to look at your future and take the first steps toward the renewal of your married life together. It's not a place to take your spouse to “get repaired” – you are as much a part of your marriage as he or she is.

Who can participate in the Marriage Encounter Weekend?

The Marriage Encounter presented by BLD is open to all couples married sacramentally in the Roman Catholic Church, or a Church approved by Rome. No married couple is too young or too old to experience the blessings which are the fruits of the Marriage Encounter Weekend. Race, age, education and financial status are of no concern to the Lord as he extends his hand to lead you through the weekend.

Marriage Encounter is also for priests and religious who want to revitalize their relationship with the people of God and develop an even deeper appreciation for their own vocation.

What happens at a Marriage Encounter?

Because the pressures and obligations of day-to-day life can be so distracting, we do away with them! The Marriage Encounter is conducted on a weekend, in a protected and nurturing atmosphere in which you can concentrate exclusively on one another. Together, you will attend a number of sessions conducted by an “ecclesial team” consisting of a spiritual director and two presenting couples.

The spiritual director will talk about your lives: as individuals, as a couple, as members of a community and as children of God. The two presenting couples will share the story of their lives – completely frank, open and honest. Together, the members of the ecclesial team will show how you fit into God's world, and how God is real and present in your lives.

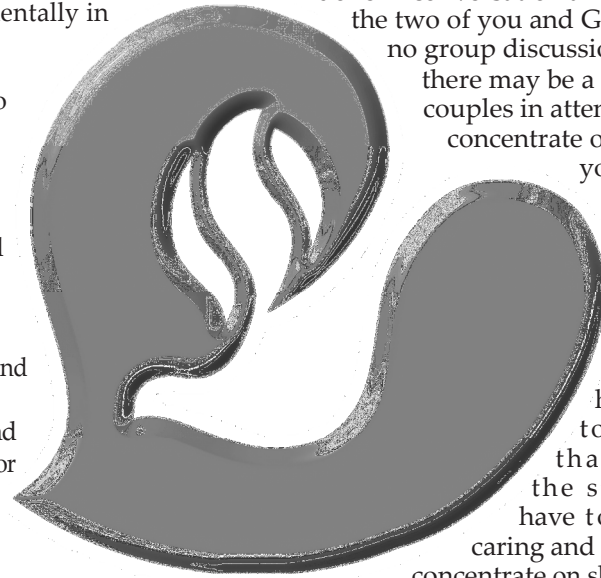
Is that all there is?

No, that's just the beginning. The real work – the ground-breaking and earth-shaking work is done by you – the attending couple. It is done in conversation and prayer with only the two of you and God listening. There is no group discussion. In fact, although there may be a large number of couples in attendance, the two of you concentrate on each other so much you are hardly aware there is anyone else around.

Throughout the weekend, all your needs are looked after, so that all you have to do is listen together to the ideas that are presented, and the stories that others have to tell. Then, in a caring and loving way, concentrate on sharing with each other the things that are important to each of you.

As the weekend progresses, you will come to a deeper, richer appreciation of the person with whom you have chosen to share your life.

Don't be surprised if you feel the way you did in the heady, romantic days of your honeymoon. When we work hard to become closer as a couple, God showers us with the rewards of married love.



What difference will it make in our marriage?

The major difference between marriages which are so-so and marriages which are strong and vibrant is communication. In every marriage, there are times when we take each other for granted. The Marriage Encounter Weekend offers the opportunity to get away from the hectic everyday world, to stop and take a good long look at yourself and each other.

You will learn a powerful non-threatening communication technique that will allow you to explore the important areas of your life together in a spirit of love and understanding. The experience will offer you the insights, tools and confidence to enrich your marriage and strengthen your love for one another.

Marriage Encounter Weekend
September 8-10, 2017

Valley of the Mother of God Retreat Centre
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*Questions and
Answers about
your Marriage
Encounter*

Q. What good will it do us? We already have a good marriage.

A. If you have a good marriage you are blessed, but the Lord has even more blessings in store for you. Marriage Encounter can do more than improve the so-so marriage; it can help you make a good marriage into a great marriage. Think of it as a second honeymoon, with the two of you and The Lord.

Q. We already have good communication skills.

A. Many people have excellent communication skills when it comes to the ordinary aspects of their lives. But there is a deeper communication, a relationship with your spouse in which you can convey your most intimate feelings, hopes and fears. It's a learned skill, and it's here for the asking.

Q. We are too young. / We are too old.

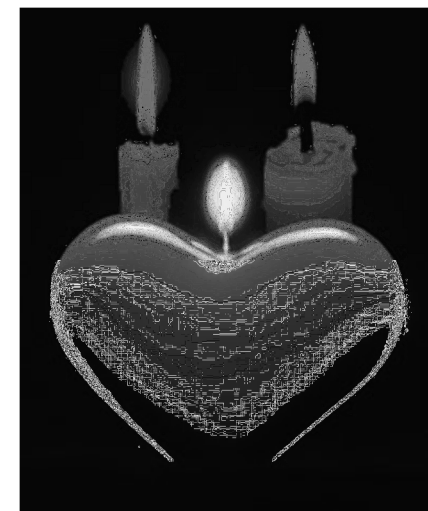
A. What a blessing for a young married couple to make the deeper commitment to each other and to God which comes through the Marriage Encounter. There is no better preparation for a life together with The Lord. For those who have spent many years together, this is the opportunity to be young again, and to face the future with a fresh, spiritually enriched marriage. To put it simply, if you're married you're old enough, and if you're still alive you're young enough!

Q. I feel uncomfortable in a spiritual retreat.

A. Many others felt the same way. But remember one important thing: as a married couple, the Lord comes to you through each other. During this Marriage Encounter Weekend, you trust in the Lord by trusting in each other. You talk to the Lord by talking to each other. When it comes time for you to take an active part, it will simply feel like you're communicating with your spouse, because that's exactly what you will be doing.

In His own way, in His own time, the Lord will let you know He is with you.

*"...and
the two
will become
one."*



*Catholic
Marriage Encounter
Weekends*



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