

CWG I: The Challenge to Witness Both, the Beauty and Realism of the Catholic Vision of Marriage and Family
Our Lady of Guadalupe, C.V. Parish Listening Session, August 17, 2016 + 50 Participants
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1. *How can the local Church of San Diego witness most effectively to both the beauty and realism of married and family life?*

- 1) Start our testimony in our own homes, to later bring it to the community shown in our actions, our way to speak and treat others.
- 2) Back to basics information in marriage-related issues: family prayer, quality time, more dialog between couples, eat together as a family, and shared responsibilities.
- 3) The interest of priests in the state of the marriage of his parishioners.
- 4) Making a continuous invitation to live in communion with Christ in our families.
- 5) Supporting and educating all couples engaged in marriage to overcome all challenges.
- 6) To live in harmony with our families and to see the beauty that God gives us every day.
- 7) To live in the understanding that even if we don't have perfect families, we still manage to live according to God's will, and the teachings of the Church.
- 8) Promote the beauty of marriage at all levels: Catechism, parent's groups, young adults, youth groups, seniors, etc...
- 9) Listen to those couples with experience and learn from their knowledge.
- 10) Priests can include more information about marriage retreats in their homilies.
- 11) For the Diocese to promote events for the whole family where the family bonds can be strengthened.
- 12) To encourage families to be in prayer constantly to reinforce union.
- 13) Support Catholic radio programming.

2. *Which societal and cultural challenges to marriage are most powerful in our diocese?*

- 1) The reality of the way of thinking of our youth about marriage, the fear of failure and lack of commitment of the couples towards it; as well as the lack of more information about the benefits of marrying in the church.
- 2) The Gender Identity Culture is playing a big role, when our society is witnessing "families" formed by homosexual couples, who are able to adopt children.
- 3) People who work in parish offices who don't offer a warm welcome to couples looking to get married in that parish.
- 4) General cultural differences between locals and immigrants.
- 5) The long work hours to be able to provide an adequate level of economic support is affecting our families because we are focusing mainly in material goods.
- 6) The broad use of contraceptives, and the acceptance of abortion as "normal", excess of 'trash information' in media, especially in social media.
- 7) Put more focus in the spiritual preparation of new couples who are going to get married, teaching them of marriage as a lifetime vocation.
- 8) The society we live in accepts many aberrations which destroy the sanctity of marriage.
- 9) Schools are including teachings contrary to family values.
- 10) To be in constant communication with our families.
- 11) Special training to all who work in parishes to be very open to the needs of couples who come asking about what to do when they want to get married.

- 12) Married couples don't use the Natural Family Planning because of the lack of information readily available to them in parishes.
- 13) People who work for long hours can't find time to comply with the length of the preparations for marriage, and simply don't do it.
- 14) The challenge to strengthen the cultural roots and customs of our families, to counteract against teachings of this culture we live in, which is very different from ours in many ways.
- 15) Young people who stop coming to Mass don't get important information about celibacy end up having sex "just because everybody does it", so inviting all youth to participate in talks and classes will help a lot.
- 16) This new culture of living free of commitment with couple, family, or God, fueled by programs in TV, movies, which promote to have an 'open mind'.
- 17) The abundance of bad examples in social media, which hinder the spirituality in our youth.
- 18) Misinformation in the general population about what the Catholic Church "accepts", or not, like hatred for homosexuals, and their condemnation for their sins.
- 19) The high incidence of families where the parents have not gotten married, so their sons and daughters don't want to marry either.
- 20) New generation of youth who want to develop professionally and economically before getting married, and focus more in the economical area before the spiritual.

3. *What steps can parishes take to support the permanence of the commitment of married life?*

- 1) Offer more classes to engaged couples, as well as younger couples who are dating about how to have a healthy relationship, and how by avoid living together before marriage can help them to have a better start in their marriage.
- 2) Ensuring all who work in marriage-related ministries to treat them with love and compassion when teaching them in classes and retreats. Their true example will say a lot.
- 3) Get more involvement out of those couples who have been married for a long time to share their experiences with new couples, and establish a campaign to visit families in our community to share information about services given in the parish.
- 4) Share information about the sanctity of marriage starting in groups of young adults, so they can learn it before they think about getting married.
- 5) Classes and retreats that help couples to make responsible decisions to stay together based in the faith we were taught.
- 6) Exhorting married couples to have a deeper knowledge of a marriage according to the Church teachings, supported by groups who can help them achieve this.
- 7) For priests to give a lecture at least once a month to matrimony groups.
- 8) Be very open to listen to the couples' problems and offer help without judging or criticizing.
- 9) To speak clearly and simply to couples taking classes and retreats about the challenges and struggles of the Catholic family, so they can prepare themselves in all aspects: Economical, spiritual, and familiar.
- 10) For marriage preparation to be standard at ALL parishes, so the couples don't end up cutting corners in churches that don't ask for all the requirements.
- 11) Promote Christian and family values at early stages of life, not just teach them to pray.
- 12) Offer help to those couples who were married once, and now they are trying to live a life with another person. Same thing with those couples living together who never got married.

- 13) Support the formation of Catholic psychologists to help our community in their problems.
- 14) Form support groups for people with family members who have left the Catholic Church, to inform them on how to deal with their doubts.
- 15) Provide information to remarried divorced couples who don't come to church because they feel rejected. Let them know they are welcomed and show them the way to live in a Catholic way.