

## **CWG VI: Challenge to Provide Authentic Pastoral Support for Those Who are Divorced**

**St. Therese Parish Listening Session, September 7, 2016 + 13 Participants**

**Report by: Kimberlee Centera, Synod Delegate**

1. What are the elements necessary for a robust program of pastoral and spiritual support for those undergoing divorce, both during the process and afterward?
  - Welcoming Church – Pastor, Staff, & Community; people need to feel comfortable coming to the Church and asking for help without being judged.
  - The Diocese Separation & Divorce Workshop was very helpful; awareness of the programs offered in the Diocese, Relationship Skills Workshop. Awareness of Marriage Encounter; Retrouvaille
  - List of Counselors
  - Strong Marriage Preparation for the couple is imperative; discussion and awareness about the danger of divorce
  - Ongoing programs for couples and families; incorporate meetings over time to educate.
  - Mentor/meetings to help couples who are having problems. Follow-up is critical.
  - Children get lost in the divorce process – counseling, ongoing help so they do not turn to unhealthy choices. It is critical that there be assistance/an outlet for the children.
  
2. How can the diocese make the annulment process more accessible for our people?
  - Shorter timeframe; reasonable cost
  - It is critical that the priest be kind and loving
  - Misconception about the annulment process – What is it? Why?
    - Make people aware of the process for an annulment and the reason for it.
  - Are annulments really necessary? What is the purpose or benefit?
  
3. How should we bring an understanding of the internal forum and conscience to our people, not only regarding the topic of participation for those who are divorced and remarried, but for all Catholics in their moral and spiritual lives?
  - Explanation of conscience
  - Knowledge of conscience
  - Basics – help form conscience
    - Education
  - Healthy balance; always being kind and loving
  - Follow-up in the bulletin to increase awareness