

NFP courses in Spanish meet ‘great need’ and ‘build the culture of life in Spanish’

By Natalie Hoefler

Until recently, central and southern Indiana were what Gabriela Ross called a “desert”—and it has nothing to do with a lack of rain.

She discovered the “desert” while looking for natural family planning (NFP) facilitators in the archdiocese who could instruct in Spanish.

“There were only three,” said Ross, director of the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. “And there was only one other, maybe two, in the rest of the state.

“We called other dioceses, and they had a great need for NFP instructors in Spanish, too. There was a Spanish NFP desert.”

Online courses were available in Spanish, said Claudia Corona, who works as coordinator for Ross’ office.

“But Hispanic couples maybe don’t have computers, or they work a lot and aren’t available when the classes are offered,” she said.

Corona also noted a lack of knowledge about NFP among Hispanic Catholics.

“It is not preached in homilies, so many Hispanic Catholics don’t know what it is, how it works, what the Church teaches about it,” she said.

“All they mostly know is contraception and sterilization. Doctors push the [birth control] pill on [women], and then when they reach a certain age or have so many children, doctors push getting a hysterectomy.”

New statistics support the need for Spanish-speaking NFP instructors, said Ross. She cited a recent study that identified Indianapolis as having the second fastest-growing population of Hispanic Catholics in the episcopal region of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin.

“To respond to the needs of the Church, we need to be more proactive,” she said. “And we’re not really being proactive, because [Hispanic Catholics] are already here.”

The needs of the Church also include Spanish natural family planning classes being available for Hispanic engaged couples.

“NFP is usually part of marriage preparation,” said Father Todd Goodson, pastor of Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish in Greenwood. “If we’re following the guidelines, it needs to be available in Spanish for Spanish-speaking engaged couples.”

Ross and Corona devised a plan to



address the situation. The first step was to find Hispanic couples familiar with NFP who would be willing to teach others.

“We looked for couples who are not just comfortable presenting the information,” said Ross. “They have to have experience using NFP and they have to know what the Church teaches. They have to be living witnesses to the culture of life in marriage.”

Five couples were identified. They agreed to take a course through the Couple to Couple League (CCL) to become certified instructors of the sympto-thermal NFP method. They were certified in December 2021, and 12 more couples are currently enrolled in the CCL

certification course to become Spanish NFP instructors in the archdiocese.

“These couples were already active in their parishes and in ministry,” said Ross. “They are leaders, and I give them credit for being missionaries in their parishes that [NFP] is what married love looks like, that it changed my life and my marriage, and we can help you.”

The first archdiocesan-sponsored Spanish-speaking NFP course was held at Our Lady of the Greenwood in April.

The couples were “very grateful” to learn about the sympto-thermal method in Spanish, said Corona.

“Comments on the evaluations said the course is well-organized, the topic was

treated respectfully, the facilitators were kind and friendly, the instruction was clear,” she said.

Father Goodson agreed, noting that couples were “pleasantly surprised to find [NFP is] beneficial and helpful.”

A course consists of four weekly sessions, materials, a book, a thermometer, three personal sessions with the instructor and a one-year subscription for the CCL app. The cost is \$75. The same course online in Spanish is currently \$135.

“It is better to do the course in a group,” said Corona regarding the advantage of in-person sessions. “It is

See COURSES, page 12

Los cursos de planificación familiar natural en español responden a una ‘enorme necesidad’ y ‘construyen la cultura de la vida en español’

Por Natalie Hoefler

Hasta hace poco, el centro y el sur de Indiana eran lo que Gabriela Ross denominó un “desierto,” lo cual no tiene nada que ver con la falta de lluvia, sino con la ausencia de facilitadores de habla hispana con la que se topó mientras buscaba instructores que pudieran impartir cursos de planificación familiar natural (PFN) en español en la Arquidiócesis.

“Solamente había tres,” afirmó Ross, directora de la Oficina de Matrimonio y Vida Familiar de la Arquidiócesis. “Y apenas había otro más, quizá dos, en el resto del estado.

“Llamamos a otras diócesis y también tenían una gran necesidad de instructores de PFN en español. Había un vacío tremendo en la planificación familiar natural en español.”

Claudia Corona, coordinadora de la oficina de Ross, aseguró que existían cursos en línea en español.

“Pero las parejas hispanas quizás no tienen computadoras, o trabajan mucho y sus horarios no coinciden con los de las clases,” comentó.

Corona también señaló la falta de conocimiento sobre la planificación familiar natural entre los católicos hispanos.

“No se predica en las homilias, por lo que muchos católicos hispanos no saben qué es, cómo funciona, qué enseña la Iglesia al respect,” aseveró.

“Prácticamente lo único que conocen son los métodos anticonceptivos y la esterilización. Los médicos las presionan para que tomen la píldora [anticonceptiva], y luego, cuando llegan a cierta edad o tienen muchos hijos, las presionan para que se hagan una histerectomía.”

Según comenta Ross, las nuevas estadísticas respaldan la necesidad de contar con instructores de PFN de habla hispana. Citó un estudio reciente que identificaba a Indianápolis como la segunda ciudad con mayor crecimiento de población hispana

católica en la región episcopal que abarca Illinois, Indiana y Wisconsin.

“Para responder a las necesidades de la Iglesia, debemos ser más proactivos,” aseguró. “Y en verdad no estamos siendo proactivos, porque [los católicos hispanos] ya están aquí.”

Las necesidades de la Iglesia también incluyen ofrecer clases de PFN en español para las parejas de

novios hispanos.

“La planificación familiar natural generalmente forma parte de la preparación para el matrimonio,” afirma el padre Todd Goodson, párroco de la parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Greenwood. “Si seguimos las directrices, estos cursos deben ofrecerse en español para los novios hispanohablantes.”

Ross y Corona idearon un plan para hacer frente a la situación. El primer paso fue encontrar parejas hispanas familiarizadas con la PFN que estuvieran dispuestas a impartir clases a otras.

Ross explicó que “no solo buscamos parejas que se sientan cómodas presentando la información, sino que además tengan experiencia usando el método y que sepan lo que la Iglesia enseña. Tienen que ser testigos vivos de la cultura de la vida en el matrimonio.”

En la búsqueda realizada identificaron cinco parejas quienes aceptaron realizar un curso a través de la Couple to Couple League (CCL) para convertirse en instructores certificados del método sintotérmico de planificación familiar natural. Se certificaron en diciembre de 2021, y actualmente hay otras 12 parejas

Mira PFN, página 12



Gabriela Ross



Claudia Corona

Wedding ANNOUNCEMENTS

Barron-Naylor



Monica Chiara Barron and Blake Andrew Naylor will be married on Nov. 19 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Dina and Michael Barron, Jr. The groom is the son of Robert and Loretta Naylor.

Chan-Elam



Leanna Victoria Chan and Cory Jeffrey Elam were married on May 14 at Christ the King Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Bobby and Elena Chan. The groom is the son of Jeff and Kecia Elam.

Behr-Goff



Jessica Lynn Behr and Eric Kyle Goff were married on Feb. 12 at St. Paul Chapel in Clear Lake, Ind. (Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend). The bride is the daughter of Charles and Lara Behr. The groom is the son of Charles and Keira Goff.

Chapleau-Martin



Abigail Katherine Chapleau and Jarryd Kyle Martin will be married on Sept. 10 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Thomas and Nancy Chapleau. The groom is the son of Joel and Noemi Martin.

Bordenkecher-Weber



Millie Bordenkecher and Chris Weber were married on Feb. 26 at Marian University's Bishop Chartrand Memorial Chapel in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Ann and the late Joseph Bordenkecher. The groom is the son of the late Charles and L. Ann Weber.

Courtney-Small



Kelcie Marie Courtney and Samuel Pierce Small will be married on Aug. 27 at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg. The bride is the daughter of Clay and Patricia Courtney. The groom is the son of Jeffrey and Sally Small.

Borger-Foster



Mackenzie Caitlyn Borger and Drew Edward Foster were married on July 9 at St. Agnes Church in Nashville. The bride is the daughter of Mike and Carmen Borger. The groom is the son of Kevin and Holly Foster.

Crowe-Hutt



Lauren Elizabeth-Joy Crowe and Tanner James Brown Hutt will be married on Nov. 19 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in New Albany. The bride is the daughter of Jerry Doyle and Theresa Crowe. The groom is the son of Donnie Hutt and Jenny Fugate.

Buchheit-Blaszczyk



Kathryn Elizabeth Buchheit and Zachary Ronald Blaszczyk will be married on Sept. 24 at St. Matthew the Apostle Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Kevin and Grace Buchheit. The groom is the son of Stan and Adela Blaszczyk.

DiSano-Atkinson



Abigail Marie DiSano and Marshall Evan Atkinson were married on June 25 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Keith and Mary DiSano. The groom is the son of Thomas and Joy Atkinson.

Dunn-Kramer



Cheyenne Lynn Dunn and Jordan Lee Kramer were married on Aug. 6 at St. Bartholomew Church in Columbus. The bride is the daughter of Jay and Sherry Dunn. The groom is the son of Ken and Tina Kramer.

Etchason-Webb



Emma Kathryn Etchason and Nathan Julius Webb will be married on Sept. 10 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Chicago, Ill. The bride is the daughter of Marc and Lisa Etchason. The groom is the son of William Webb and Dr. Diana Brawka.

Fernkas-Adams



Sara Louise Fernkas and Patrick Michael Adams were married on June 4 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Eric and Ann Fernkas. The groom is the son of Michael and Beth Adams.

Kincaid-Smith



Maureen McIntyre Kincaid and Mitchell Ryan Smith will be married on Nov. 12 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Brian and Janet Kincaid. The groom is the son of Scott and Teresa Smith.

Kirk-Hamlin



Kerry Anne Kirk and Zachrey Lee Hamlin will be married on Aug. 27 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Michael and Lisa Kirk. The groom is the son of Marshall Hamlin and Lori Rolph.

Knorr-Zander



Mary Kate Knorr and William Roarke Zander will be married on Aug. 20 at St. Mary of the Angels Church in Chicago, Ill. The bride is the daughter of Thomas and Marie Knorr. The groom is the son of Anthony and Jean Zander.

Lamping-Hogg



Ella Grace Lamping and Tyler Gerard Hogg will be married on Aug. 27 at Sisters of St. Francis Chapel in Oldenburg. The bride is the daughter of Scott and Sarah Lamping. The groom is the son of John and Rhonda Hogg.

Maloof-Smith



Malorie A. Maloof and Boyd Keith Smith were married on Feb. 26 at St. Therese of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Mark and Aliceann Maloof. The groom is the son of Keith and Kathy Smith.

Mazer-Hublar



Kyleigh Erin Mazer and Joshua Daniel Hublar will be married on Oct. 22 at St. Mary Church in Lanesville. The bride is the daughter of Mark Mazer and Cynthia Weaver-Mazer. The groom is the son of Robert and Donna Hublar.

Molter-Avery



Rose Mary Molter and John Scott Avery II will be married on Oct. 22 at St. Malachy Church in Brownsburg. The bride is the daughter of Andrew and Mary Lu Molter. The groom is the son of John Scott Avery and Suzanne Avery Lee.

Pachciarz-James



Mary Catherine Pachciarz and Connor Joseph James will be married on Oct. 15 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Barry and Jamie Pachciarz. The groom is the son of Daniel James and Lonna Williams.

Pangburn-Minnick



Elizabeth Pangburn and Connor Minnick will be married on Oct. 22 at SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Jeffery and Lynn Pangburn. The groom is the son of Tim and Jill Minnick.

Poliskey-Fehribach



Samantha Kate Poliskey and Joseph Fehribach were married on April 30 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Jeffery Poliskey and the late Tammy Jessup. The groom is the son of Steve and Lauri Fehribach.

Ritman-Hawkins



Mallory Paige Ritman and Zachary Allen Hawkins will be married on Oct. 29 at Christ the King Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Thomas and Kathryn Ritman. The groom is the son of Troy and Gretchen Hawkins.

Settles-Burnside



Katie Marie Settles and Levi Walter Burnside were married on July 30 at St. Mary Church in Greensburg. The bride is the daughter of Matthew and Angela Settles. The groom is the son of Jason Burnside and Chastity Harley.

Steele-Pollard



Maggie Steele and Jacob Pollard will be married on Aug. 13 at St. Jude Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Tom and Patty Steele. The groom is the son of Louie and Jane Pollard.

Stoll-Long



Rachel Elizabeth Stoll and Matthew Allen Long will be married on Oct. 22 at St. Lawrence Church in Lawrenceburg. The bride is the daughter of Albert and Karen Stoll. The groom is the son of Shawn and Sue Long.

Thibault-Davis



Genevieve Marie Thibault and Gregory Allen Davis, Jr. will be married on Aug. 20 at St. Monica Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Lisa and the late Mike Thibault. The groom is the son of Greg Davis and Angel Mooney.

Wood-Neari



Marie Iaria Wood and Anthony Vincent Neari will be married on Aug. 27 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Brett Wood and Santina Iaria. The groom is the son of Paul and Debra Neari.

Wood-Sullivan



Sarah Rachel Wood and Drew Howard Sullivan were married on July 30 at St. Simon the Apostle Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of James and Andrea Wood. The groom is the son of Blake and Mary Sullivan.

Marriage retreat events set for Aug. 27 in Greenwood and Sept. 24 in Guilford

Criterion staff report

Two marriage-enrichment events will take place in the archdiocese in August and September.

The **Celebrate Marriage Annual Conference**, sponsored by the Celebrate Marriage Ministry, will take place at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., in Greenwood, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on Aug. 27.

A keynote address will be offered by Dr. Ray Guarendi, a Catholic father of ten adopted children, clinical psychologist, author, professional speaker and national radio and television host.

The day includes breakout sessions by Susan Vogt, former content editor for the USCCB website on marriage; Father Daniel Bedel, director of spiritual formation at Bishop Simon Bruté College Seminary in Indianapolis; Keith and Kathy Syberg, married 44 years and parents of seven, including Fathers Andrew

and Benjamin Syberg; and Kelly and Eric Moster, core team members of the Celebrate Marriage Ministry.

The cost is \$75 per couple, which includes lunch and materials. Registration is required by Aug. 20.

For more information or to register, go to cutt.ly/MarriageConference. For questions, contact Marcy and Tom Renken at 317-489-1557 or info@celebratemarriageministry.com.

The second marriage-enrichment event is **"Laughter: the Sanity of the Family"** for married and engaged couples. It will take place at the St. John the Baptist Campus of All Saints Parish, 25743 State Route 1, in Guilford, from 7-9 p.m. on Sept. 24.

The event will also feature Dr. Ray Guarendi, who will address widespread myths, cultural influence and the daily challenges of family life and parenting.

The event, which is free, includes dinner. Registration is required by Sept. 23.

For more information or to register, call the parish office at 812-576-4302 or email clairkeck.asp@gmail.com.

Dr. Ray Guarendi

COURSES

continued from page 9

better to get to know other couples who are learning.

“And if they can’t find a class at a time that works for them, they can meet with an instructor one-on-one.”

A course has also been held at St. Monica Parish in Indianapolis, and another will be offered at Our Lady of the Greenwood in October. Ross said her office is actively working with St. Joseph Parish in Shelbyville and St. Bartholomew Parish in Columbus to make the course available.

“Our gaze is on the whole archdiocese, and I’m so excited to build the culture of life in Spanish,” said Ross. “But for now, we want to make sure we’re well-planted and able to support what we have, see how it goes and grow from there.”

Still, she encourages anyone interested in having their faith community offer an NFP course in Spanish to “ask their pastor and see if he can invite us to bring classes to the parish, and we can work to make that happen.”

Father Goodson is grateful that he and his brother priests now have a resource for Hispanic couples—engaged or married—to learn about NFP.

“It’s the Church’s teaching that married couples need to be open to life and not using contraception,” he said. “In a culture where contraception is accepted, these couples need to be informed on Church teaching so they can make the right decisions.”

It’s that same culture that makes the need for NFP so important, especially with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, Ross observed.

“Abortion is at the forefront of the state, and we want to be part of that conversation in terms of NFP as an alternative to birth control,” she said.

“The thought of legislators is that if abortion is no longer available, then there’s a need to provide more access to birth control.

“Now is a very good time to talk about NFP in Indiana and in the Church. Now is a very good time to spread the word that we have NFP, that it’s accessible, and we have options in English and Spanish.

“We need to change the narrative, that it’s no longer a Spanish NFP desert here.”

(For more information on natural family planning, go to www.archindy.org/nfp or www.archindy.org/nfp-espanol. The next four-session NFP course in Spanish will be held at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, 335 S. Meridian St., in Greenwood, from 7-9:30 p.m. on Oct. 4, 11, 18 and 25. The cost is \$75 per couple. To register, call or text Claudia Corona at 317-800-9306 or e-mail her at ccorona@archindy.org.) †

NaPro: managing fertility based on principles of *Humanae Vitae*

Criterion staff report

Natural Procreative Technology, or NaPro Technology, is an approach to understanding women’s reproductive health and regulating fertility by identifying and treating the underlying causes of problems, not just symptoms.

It was developed on the principals of Pope Paul VI’s 1968 encyclical, “*Humanae Vitae*” (“On Human Life”). NaPro Technology uses natural methods and surgery to treat underlying problems with the help of information gathered using the Creighton Model of natural family planning.

The method provides solutions to infertility, menstrual cramps, premenstrual syndrome, ovarian cysts, irregular bleeding, polycystic ovarian disease, repetitive miscarriage, postpartum depression,

prematurity prevention, hormonal abnormalities and more.

Local providers include:

- Dr. Casey Delcoco, Magnificat Family Medicine, LLC, Indianapolis, 317-306-5588
- Dr. Michael Padilla, Franciscan FertilityCare Center, 610 E. Southport Road, Suite 205, Indianapolis, 317-781-7370
- Dr. Holly N. Smith, Ascension Medical Group, Fishers, Ind., 317-415-6110, holly.smith4@ascension.org
- Dr. Bill Blanke, Integrity Family Physicians, Evansville, 812-491-3236
- Dr. Jason Mattingly, Mercy Health-West Hospital, Cincinnati, 513-981-5922

For more about NaPro Technology, go to naprotechnology.com. †

PFN

continúa de la página 9

inscritas en el curso de certificación de la CCL para convertirse en instructores de PFN en español en la Arquidiócesis.

“Estas parejas ya colaboraban activamente en sus parroquias y en el ministerio,” expresó Ross. “Son líderes, y les reconozco el mérito de ser misioneros en sus parroquias para transmitir el mensaje de que esta [la PFN] es una expresión del amor conyugal. Gracias a esta cambió mi vida y mi matrimonio; y sin duda podemos ayudarles.”

El primer curso de PFN patrocinado por la Arquidiócesis se celebró en Nuestra Señora de Greenwood en abril.

Las parejas estaban “muy agradecidas” de conocer el método

sintotérmico en español, dijo Corona.

“Los comentarios de las evaluaciones decían que el curso estaba bien organizado, que el tema se trataba con respeto, que los facilitadores eran amables y simpáticos, y que la instrucción era clara,” afirmó.

El padre Goodson estuvo de acuerdo y señaló que las parejas estaban “gratamente sorprendidas al descubrir que [la PFN] es beneficiosa y útil.”

El curso consta de cuatro sesiones una vez por semana, materiales, un libro, un termómetro, tres sesiones personales con el instructor y una suscripción de un año a la aplicación de CCL. El precio del curso es \$75; el mismo curso en línea en español cuesta actualmente \$135.

“Es mejor hacer el curso en grupo,” apuntó Corona con respecto a la ventaja de las sesiones presenciales. “Es positivo

conocer a otras parejas que están aprendiendo. Y si no encuentran una clase en un horario que les convenga, pueden reunirse individualmente con un instructor.”

También se ha impartido un curso en la Parroquia de Santa Mónica de Indianápolis, y se ofrecerá otro en Nuestra Señora de Greenwood en octubre. Ross dijo que su oficina está trabajando activamente con la Parroquia de San José en Shelbyville y la Parroquia de San Bartolomé en Columbus para poner el curso a disposición de estas comunidades.

“Nuestra mirada está puesta en toda la Arquidiócesis, y me hace mucha ilusión construir la cultura de la vida en español,” aseguró Ross. “Pero por ahora, queremos asegurarnos de que estamos bien plantados y somos capaces de

mantener lo que tenemos, ver cómo va y crecer a partir de ahí.”

Aun así, anima a quien esté interesado en que su comunidad de fe ofrezca un curso de PFN en español a que “hable con su párroco y vea si puede invitarnos a llevar las clases a la parroquia, y colaborar con ellos para llevarlas a la práctica.”

El padre Goodson se siente agradecido de que él y sus hermanos sacerdotes tengan ahora un recurso para que las parejas hispanas (comprometidas o casadas) aprendan sobre la planificación familiar natural.

“La enseñanza de la Iglesia es que las parejas casadas deben estar abiertas a la vida y no usar anticonceptivos,” afirmó. “En una cultura en la que los métodos anticonceptivos son la norma, las parejas deben recibir información sobre la enseñanza de la Iglesia para que puedan tomar las decisiones adecuadas.”

Es esa misma cultura la que refuerza la necesidad de la planificación familiar natural, especialmente ante la anulación del caso *Roe v. Wade*, observó Ross.

“El tema del aborto está en primera plana en el estado, y deseamos formar parte de la mesa de diálogo y plantear la PFN como alternativa para el control de la natalidad,” expresó.

“La perspectiva de los legisladores es que si el aborto ya no es una opción, entonces se debe brindar más acceso a los métodos anticonceptivos.

“Ahora es muy buen momento para hablar de la planificación familiar natural en Indiana y en la Iglesia. Así como también para difundir el mensaje de que el curso existe, que es accesible y que tenemos opciones en inglés y en español.

“Debemos cambiar la narrativa y demostrar que ya no existe un vacío en cuanto a la planificación familiar natural en español.”

(Para más información sobre la planificación familiar natural, visite www.archindy.org/nfp o www.archindy.org/nfp-espanol. El próximo curso de cuatro sesiones de PFN en español se llevará a cabo en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Greenwood, 335 S. Meridian St., en Greenwood, de 7:00 a 9:30 p.m. los días 4, 11, 18 y 25 de octubre. El precio es \$75 por pareja. Para inscribirse, llame o envíe un mensaje de texto a Claudia Corona al 317-800-9306 o envíe un correo electrónico a ccorona@archindy.org.) †



Detrás de sus alumnos, los facilitadores del curso de planificación familiar natural (PFN), Georgina Villaseñor (izquierda), Ernesto Villaseñor y Mireya Ramírez, instruyen a José Pérez (izquierda), Carolina Pérez, María García y Alberto Ambrosio durante el primer curso de planificación familiar natural en español de la Arquidiócesis en la Parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Greenwood en abril. (Foto enviada)

God calls married couples to be more than just roommates

By Marcy Renken

Special to *The Criterion*

Have you ever heard the phrase “living like roommates?” Specifically, I’m referring to this phrase used to describe the way my husband and I were living earlier in our marriage.



Tom had his first job as a software engineer after college, and I was finishing my degree in economics. Our closest family was 900 miles away. We were busy with our toddler, college, work, home remodeling, church choir, and I was playing trumpet in three music groups. We were too busy to live our marriage as one, the way

God intended in Genesis 2:24.

We kept track of who did more and when. “I’m not doing the laundry one more time until I see Tom put his own clothes in the hamper.” It’s supposed to be fair, right? We would each give our 50% and it would all work out. We treated our marriage like a contract.

A big life change was just what we needed to have a better marriage, a better life.

After we had been married for about five years, we moved closer to my family. We became angry more often and bitter toward each other. Relocating seemed

to highlight our challenges even more and brought in new tensions we had never experienced.

We had been married in the Catholic Church, had a sponsor couple and attended a Tobit weekend. But we still missed the point. We had a relationship, but we weren’t being vulnerable to each other. We couldn’t even have a conversation about faith or money without being at odds, so we rarely tried. We either weren’t comfortable sharing all our struggles or we didn’t quite remember how to share in a healthy way, the way we were shown during marriage prep.

I grew tired of the tension and stumbled upon a weekend retreat called Worldwide Marriage Encounter. During that weekend, Tom shared his flaws and weaknesses and allowed me to accept all of him. I took off my disguises and he accepted me, too.

In the moments of our own weakness, we were each accepted and loved completely for being our broken selves—the way Christ loves. This is the *agape* love mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13 and read aloud at many weddings. It’s a selfless love, the love that gives and doesn’t keep score.

The secrets, loneliness, struggles, depression and excuses we had been carrying were exposed. We found a healthy way to communicate through dialogue. We began to heal from wounds that many couples end their marriage over. God was very clearly calling us to put HIM at the center, to live our marriage as one, to live

the covenant he created with us.

The transformation in our marriage lit a spark within us. We began to understand our marriage as a vocation which impacts others around us. In our marriage, we can bring others to Christ.

Pope Francis once said, “Few human joys are as deep and thrilling as those experienced by two people who love one another and have achieved something as a result of a great, shared effort.”

We’ve now been married 20 years and have five wonderful children, so far. Do we still have struggles? Absolutely, and that’s OK! “I can do all things in him who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). God continues to transform us.

When he was associate pastor at Our Lady of the Greenwood Parish, Father Michael Keucher said in one of his homilies, “If you’re not growing, you’re dying.”

Take time to nurture your marriage and watch it grow! Attend a marriage retreat or conference. Start a couples’ Bible study. Do something to enrich your marriage. If you need more suggestions, let Tom and me know. We are on fire for marriage!

(Marcy Renken, a parishioner of Our Lady of the Greenwood in Greenwood, leads the Celebrate Marriage ministry with her husband Tom. The annual Celebrate Marriage Conference the ministry presents will be held on Aug. 27. Learn more at CelebrateMarriageMinistry.com.) †

Couples may announce engagement or marriage next spring in *The Criterion*

Engagement announcements will be published in a February 2023 issue of *The Criterion* for couples who are planning to wed between Feb. 1 and July 14, 2023, in a marriage that is recognized by the Church as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage.

Couples who wed between July 1, 2022, and Jan. 30, 2023, in a marriage that is recognized by the

Church as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage may also submit an announcement if their engagement announcement was not published in *The Criterion*.

The wedding announcement form is available online at www.criteriononline.com by selecting “Send Us Information” from the menu on the left side of the screen, then choosing “Wedding Announcements.”

An engagement or wedding photo may be submitted by e-mail to alewis@archindy.org. Digital photos must be clear, high-resolution images with the couple close together. Photos can also be mailed to Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN, 46202. To receive the photo back, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Due to print quality, Xerox copies of photos will not be accepted. †

Retreats prepare engaged couples for marriage, website helps with planning Catholic weddings

Three marriage preparation programs offered in the archdiocese—the Pre-Cana Conference, Tobit Weekend and One in Christ—help prepare engaged couples for the sacrament of marriage as well as the challenges of married life.

Early registration is recommended for all programs, as each fills up quickly.

Pre-Cana Conferences cover skills for marriage, a catechesis on the sacrament of marriage and an introduction to the science and morals behind natural family planning. Except for in the New Albany Deanery, Pre-Cana Conferences are ordinarily offered in English and Spanish and take place on two consecutive Saturdays from 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. each day on the campus of a host parish. The cost is \$135 per couple. Register at www.archindy.org/precana. The schedule for 2022-2023 outside of the New Albany Deanery is:

- Sept. 17 and 24, 2022, in English, at Holy Name of Jesus Parish, 89 N. 17th St., Beech Grove.

- April 15 and 22, 2023, in English, at Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ Parish, 7225 Southeastern Ave., Indianapolis.

In the New Albany Deanery, Pre-Cana Conferences are one Saturday from 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. at Mount St. Francis Center for Spirituality, 100 St. Anthony Dr., in Mt. St. Francis. The cost is \$125 per couple. Register at catalystcatholic.org/precana. The schedule for 2022-2023 is Oct. 22, 2022; Feb. 4, 2023; and Oct. 21, 2023.

For more information about the program, call the archdiocesan Marriage and Family Life Office at 317-236-1521.

Tobit Weekend retreats take place at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5353 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis, and

are offered in English. The cost is \$298, which includes program materials, meals, snacks and two rooms for two nights.

The next retreat is on Sept. 16-18. The 2023 schedule is Jan. 13-15, April 28-30, June 23-25 and Sept. 15-17.

To register, go to cutt.ly/TobitRetreat. For questions about registering, contact Jennifer Burger at jburger@archindy.org or 317-545-7681. For more information about the program and its contents, contact Cheryl McSweeney at cmcsweeney@archindy.org or 317-545-7681, ext. 106.

One in Christ marriage preparation, which includes a medical panel to address questions on reproduction and fertility, is a three-day program spanning a weekend and the following Saturday. The first day of the program is 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., the second day is 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and the third day is 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. The cost is \$250 per couple, which covers meals and materials.

The next retreat is scheduled for Oct. 8, 9 and 15 at St. Malachy Parish, 7410 N. County Road 1000 East, in Brownsburg.

To register, go to oicindy.com/seminar-registration. For more information call 317-600-5629, e-mail info@OICIndy.com or go to www.OICIndy.com.

To help engaged couples marrying in the Catholic Church, the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life website offers links in English and Spanish to a site that answers questions and offers tips for planning a Catholic wedding.

From budgeting advice to ideas for keeping a wedding faith-focused, the site helps engaged couples marrying in the Church to plan a wedding that keeps God, faith and love at the center of the big day.

To access the site, go to cutt.ly/CatholicWeddings. †

Un conocido líder de la evangelización ofrecerá una charla en español en Indianápolis el 29 de agosto

El Dr. Marlon De La Torre presentará el tema ‘Encontrando a Dios en la Eucaristía’ en español en la Parroquia del Espíritu Santo ubicada en 7243 E. 10th St., en Indianápolis, de 7 a 9 p.m. el 29 de agosto.

De La Torre es un consumado orador, escritor y líder de la Iglesia que actualmente trabaja en evangelización y discipulado para la Arquidiócesis de Detroit. La ponencia se centrará en la experiencia de la presencia de Jesús en la Sagrada Eucaristía.

El evento, patrocinado por el Ministerio Hispano de la Arquidiócesis y la Oficina de Catequesis, incluirá un refrigerio liviano. Los asistentes también tendrán la oportunidad de recibir una medalla bendecida y un catecismo actual.

La presentación es gratuita, pero se aceptan donaciones voluntarias.

Para obtener más información, comuníquese con Saúl Llaca, coordinador arquidiocesano del Ministerio Hispano, en el 317-236-1443 o en sllaca@archindy.org. †

Well-known evangelization leader will offer talk in Spanish in Indy on Aug. 29

Dr. Marlon De La Torre will present on “Encountering God in the Eucharist” in Spanish at Holy Spirit Parish, 7243 E. 10th St., in Indianapolis, from 7-9 p.m. on Aug. 29.

De La Torre is an accomplished speaker, writer and Church leader currently working in evangelization and discipleship for the Archdiocese of Detroit. She will focus on experiencing Jesus in the holy Eucharist.

The event, sponsored by the archdiocese’s Hispanic Ministry and Office of Catechesis, will include light refreshments. Attendees will also have an opportunity to receive a blessed medal and a current catechism.

There is no cost for the presentation; but a freewill offering will be accepted.

For more information, contact Saul Llaca at 317-236-1443 or sllaca@archindy.org. †

Hispanic young adult retreat will take place in Beech Grove on Aug. 26-28

A retreat for Hispanic young adults ages 18-35 will take place at the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center, 1402 Southern Ave., in Beech Grove, from 6 p.m. on Aug. 26 through 6 p.m. on Aug. 28.

The retreat will be lead by Iskali, a national organization that seeks to help Hispanic young adults grow in faith and encounter God in community.

The bilingual retreat is open to all

Hispanic young adults ages 18-35, whether single, married, divorced, widowed or single-parenting.

The cost is \$75, which includes lodging for two nights and meals.

The deadline to register is Aug. 24. To register, contact Saul Llaca, archdiocesan coordinator of Hispanic Ministry, at 347-997-2474 or sllaca@archindy.org. †