

Draft 6-9-2011

PRESENTATION TITLE FOR WORKSHOP 1: ***The Avocado does not fall far from the Tree.***

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTION: The **Vocation** of **Healthy/Holy Marriage** is a life long journey of learning how each of us is shaped by our **Family of Origin** and also learning the **skills** we need for making healthy/holy choices as individuals and as married couples.

THIS IS A WORKSHOP ON **MARITAL SPIRITUALITY**. > (VOCATION = holy way of life
become a saint

IN THE SAME WAY THAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT YOUR PRIESTS, DEACONS, RELIGIOUS, AND BISHOP BARNES TO CONTINUALLY MAKE PROGRESS IN LIVING THEIR **VOCATION OF SERVICE** IN THE CHURCH (YOUR PARISHES)....

...SO YOU WILL WANT TO UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING PROGRESS IN LIVING YOUR **VOCATION OF MARRIAGE** AND FAMILY LIFE...

.....WHICH IS ALSO A **VOCATION OF SERVICE**.

WHILE GOOD AND HOLY LEADERS ARE IMPORTANT, **THE BUILDING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY ADULT CHRISTIAN**. (AND CHILDREN WILL LEARN FROM WATCHING US!)

[NOT just Pray, Pay, Obey] *In the early Church, they assume that every Christian was committed to holiness.....not just the Apostles! Vatican II tried to teach us the original vision of the first teachers.....and the use of the word VOCATION was meant to help us "get it" that EVERYONE is called to holiness (not just priests and nuns).*

I THINK I UNDERSTAND THAT MANY (MAYBE MOST) OF US IN THIS ROOM HAVE BEEN RAISED IN A **FAMILY** AND IN A WIDER **SOCIETY** THAT.....

IN SPITE OF THE WELL INTENDED EFFORTS BY MISSIONARIES TO NORTH AMERICA FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS.....

HAS **NOT** YET EFFECTIVELY TAUGHT **MARITAL SPIRITUALITY**.

WE ARE GETTING CLOSE TO 50 YEARS SINCE VATICAN COUNCIL II ADDRESSED THIS ISSUE.....BUT WE HAVE MADE TOO LITTLE PROGRESS.

WHY DO I SAY THAT? HOW TO PROVE IT?

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT **"HOW TO GROW SPIRITUALLY?"** WHAT COMES TO YOUR MIND? (ROSARY, MASS, VISIT TO BLESSED SACRAMENT, ETC.)

THESE ARE GOOD THINGS AND CAN PLAY A ROLE IN MARRIED SPIRITUALLY, BUT THEY ARE **NOT ENOUGH**.

ANOTHER PIECE OF EVIDENCE IS THIS KIND OF INFORMATION ABOUT OUR LACK OF PROGRESS THAT SEEMS TO SHOW UP MOST EVERY DAY IN THE MEDIA....> **SHOW THE "DEATH OF MARRIAGE" ARTICLE**. EVEN FOLKS WHO ARGUE THAT GLOBAL WARMING MAY NOT BE SOMETHING TO WORRY ABOUT, TEND TO AGREE THAT MARRIAGE IS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE IN OUR SOCIETY. AND IF YOU ARE PARENTS OF ADULT CHILDREN YOU PROBABLY WORRY ABOUT THIS A LOT!

SO I HAVE USED SOME BAD NEWS TO GET YOUR ATTENTION.....

BUT I DID NOT COME HERE TO TRY TO MAKE YOU FEEL BAD OR MORE GUILTY.

I CAME TO PREACH SOME REALLY “GOOD NEWS”.....AND I HOPE TO DO MORE THAN MEREY PREACH AT YOU.

I PLAN TO PROVIDE YOU WITH **KEY INSIGHTS THAT YOU CAN BEGIN USING TODAY.....**

#1 – A **BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF MARRIED SPIRITUALLY**.....SO THAT YOU CAN BE CONFIDENT YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK IN LIVING YOUR VOCATION.....AND IF YOU DO THAT YOU WILL HELP CHANGE THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER AND DO YOUR PART TO BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD. WE WILL NOT DO THIS PERFECTLY, OF COURSE, AND WE WILL NOT COMPLETE THE JOB....BUT WE WILL BE DOING OUR PART AND GOD WILL FINISH THE JOB WITH US IN HEAVEN.

#2 – **RESOURCES AND TOOLS** THAT HAVE PROVEN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN HELPING YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE (AND YOUR CHILDREN) GROW AS HEALTHY AND HOLY PEOPLE OF GOD. (SAINTS!).

1 - The **first and fundamental element** of **marital spirituality** is to develop the value of **service and friendship in relationship to your spouse.**

In Christian marriage, one does not marry to gain a “free cook” or someone to “bring home the bacon.” One marries to share the love, graces and talents that God has given each of us with one’s partner. In Christian marriage there is no basis for claiming a role of “lordship” or “ruler over” one’s partner. Christian marriage is an opportunity for spouses to serve each other in the building of a marriage and a family that will be a credible unit of the Kingdom of God in our world. **This is how all will know you for my disciples: / your love for one another. (John 13:35)** also ***Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest...*** (Mark 10:35)

WHEN PEOPLE ARE GETTING MARRIED THEY TEND TO THINK THIS IS OBVIOUS AND THEY THINK THEY KNOW HOW TO DO THIS.....BECAUSE THEY TYPICALLY SAY THEY ARE “GETTING MARRIED AND WE KNOW WE WILL BE SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE WE REALLY LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”

[Remember your own thinking when you got married!!!!]

HOWEVER....I WANT TO SHARE A STORY WITH YOU.

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT "NANCY" (NOT HER REAL NAME).

I HAVE KNOWN NANCY SINCE SHE WAS BORN AND HER PARENTS ASKED ME TO BAPTIZE HER....LATER I GAVE HER 1ST COMMUNION....AND EVENTUALLY HELPED WITH MARRIAGE PREPARATION.

WHEN SHE MARRIED, I THINK SHE WAS HONEST WITH HERSELF AND WITH HER FIANCE AND WITH ME. THEY SAID THEY WERE GETTING MARRIED **BECAUSE THEY LOVED ONE ANOTHER AND BECAUSE THEY WERE CONFIDENT THEY WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL IN MARRIAGE.** (NANCY'S PARENTS RECENTLY CELEBRATED THEIR 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.)

25 YEARS LATER....NANCY AND HER HUSBAND DIVORCED. RECENTLY SHE CAME TO TALK WITH ME ABOUT GETTING AN ANNULMENT OF HER MARRIAGE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. SHE IS SURE ~ IN HER MIND ~ THAT HER MARRIAGE IS OVER AND THERE IS NO WAY OF PUTTING IT BACK TOGETHER. SHE ALSO KNOWS THE PROCESS WILL TAKE A GOOD BIT OF TIME. THOUGH SHE HAS NO CURRENT PLAN FOR MARRIAGE, SHE IS CONSIDERING A MOVE TO STATE FAR FROM WHERE SHE HAS LIVED ALL HER LIFE AND WANTS TO HAVE THE ANNULMENT PROCESS BEHIND HER IN CASE SHE EVER DECIDES TO MARRY AGAIN.

SO NANCY AND I TALKED FOR A LONG TIMEAND SHE TOLD ME MORE THAN I WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR "MARRIAGE PROBLEMS".....BUT I LISTENED AS CAREFULLY AS I COULD.....

AS MOST PEOPLE DO..... SHE PUT MOST OF THE BLAME ON HER HUSBAND. (*THE OTHER PERSON*)

EVENTUALLY, I SAID: ***I WANT TO HEAR MORE ABOUT YOUR FAMILY WHILE YOU WERE GROWING UP..... I THINK NEITHER YOU NOR YOUR HUSBAND HAD EFFECTIVE SKILLS FOR DEALING WITH ISSUES IN YOUR MARRIAGE.....SO I WANT TO HEAR MORE ABOUT YOUR LIFE IN YOUR FAMILY.***

I LISTENED FOR A WHILE, AND THEN I DECIDED WE HAD TALKED LONG ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY.....I WANTED HER TO DO MORE THINKING ON HER OWN TIME. I GAVE HER *FOR BETTER AND FOR EVER* AND ADVISED HER TO START WORKING HER WAY THROUGH CHAPTERS 2,3,4,5 ON THE “FAMILY OF ORIGIN”. I ASKED HER TO PUT ALL OF THIS IN WRITING BECAUSE IT WILL BE EASIER FOR ME TO STUDY AND EVALUATE.

AFTER SHE DID THIS HOMEWORK, WE GOT BACK TOGETHER AND DISCUSSED WHAT SHE THOUGHT & WROTE ABOUT HER LIFE GROWING UP IN HER FAMILY....IT WAS VERY INFORMATIVE BECAUSE HER GROWING UP YEARS WITH HER PARENTS WERE **VERY DIFFICULT**. A **KEY POINT** WAS THAT SHE WAS NEVER ACCEPTED AS GOOD ENOUGH BY HER MOTHER AND THOUGHT HER FATHER WAS NEVER WILLING TO SUPPORT HER AGAINST WHAT SHE THOUGH WAS UNREASONABLE DEMANDS OF HER MOTHER.....EVENTUALLY SHE SHARED THAT SHE WAS DETERMINED TO GET OUT OF HER PARENTS HOUSE.....AND SAW MARRIAGE AS THE ONLY OPTION THAT WOULD WORK FOR HER. (AND THAT HER PARENTS WOULD AGREE TO!)

1 - NANCY HAS **MORE WORK TO DO**.....SHE NEEDS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HER **OWN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP SKILLS** (LEARNED GROWING UP) THAT SHE **CARRIED OVER INTO MARRIAGE.**

2 - SHE ALSO NEEDS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SAD REALITY THAT BECAUSE NEITHER SHE NOR HER HUSBAND EVER LEARNED **HEALTHY** RELATIONSHIP SKILLS AND ~ WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING IT ~ MADE VERY POOR CHOICES IN TRYING TO DEAL WITH ONE ANOTHER. [SHE KEPT TRYING TO “FIX” HER HUSBAND....AND THAT NEVER WORKED]. **SHE HELPED TO RE-CREATE THE KIND OF FAMILY SHE WAS DETERMINED TO LEAVE BEHIND!**

NANCY COULD BE ANY OF US. SHE IS A **TEACHER BY PROFESSION** – BUT NEVER REALIZED ~ IN MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF MARRIAGE ~ THAT SHE NEEDED TO **LEARN HOW TO LIVE MARRIAGE!** **NOW HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF DOING THAT >**

For Better & For Ever Marriage Preparation Inputs
By Deborah

Introduction

This all began when I decided to learn what I need to do so that our marriage of 26 years could be “validated” in the Catholic Church. I talked with Fr. Rob Ruhnke in confession and learned that it would be easier than I had thought (I would not need to go through the annulment process as I had feared). So Chris and I met with Fr. Rob to talk about what needed to be done, and we had a long conversation about his marriage preparation program, *For Better and For Ever*. Fr. Rob said that he had always thought *For Better and For Ever* would be a wonderful program for couples having their marriage validated because we would likely talk about things we had **never discussed** in all the years of our marriage.

That got my attention....and Chris too was intrigued to find out “what we had not discussed”and ~ to make a long story short ~ we agreed to take home copies of *For Better and For Ever* and then give Fr. Rob some feedback.

As I started reading *For Better and For Ever*, I admit I had some concerns: 1 - my husband and I have been married for 26 years (*What had we **not** talked about?*); 2 - we have an interchurch marriage although we have been attending Catholic Church for the past 5 years (*Would this Catholic program be “too Catholic” for Chris?*); 3 – What if it would **not** reaffirm that I was the good wife that I thought I was ~ or worse ~ confirm that I am **not** a good mother to our three children?; 4 - lastly, I wasn’t sure I could be honest in answering all the questions of the workbook.

However, once I got into the text, I quickly learned that the workbook is an excellent tool to look at **your beginnings** so you can have a better understanding of **who you are today**. Just because I have 26 years of marriage and remain deeply in love doesn’t mean I know it all. Marriages can fall apart at any point and marriages at the 25 plus stage are just as ~ if not more so ~ vulnerable to falling apart. This is the time when kids and work demands are gone and now it is just “us”. This is a great time to “refresh” our marriage and better understand the “until death do us part” commitment. I also believe this would be an excellent tool for couples considering divorce. Counseling may help but when you have to **put pen to paper and then discuss what you wrote with your spouse** a deeper level is reached. [After weeks of delay, we finally got started on the first chapter we agreed to work on.....]

Chapter 2 - Families from Which We Came (***Gut wrenching section!***) [show copy of FB&FE]

The focus of this chapter explores **self**, rather than **our relationship as a couple**. It makes sense that each person needs to know him/herself before you can willingly share yourself for a lifetime. It is an excellent exercise to understand what happened in your childhood or young adulthood without really having you to go too deep. The simple ***complete the sentence exercise*** [starting on page 19] and my spontaneous writing led me to understand why I played

outside all the time or quietly in my room. It was my way to survive but it also made me very strong in the end. I had not realized this until the exercise---***empowering information for me.***

I am a military “brat” so to determine the **home** [See exercise on page 19] that best told my story wasn’t so easy. So I decided to use the home we lived in the longest. It was also a time of my first memories of “family”. Unfortunately, it was also a very tough struggle for our family. I quickly learned that our home really wasn’t a home but just a house. There is a difference--- one I learned from my husband when I referred to our home as a house. The questions are really telling without being so obvious. I learned that the **outside** was my haven. I never realized this fact until I read question #10-favorite place to play. Then the struggle began in Part 2 family patterns of behavior. I answered each question 1 – 37 and then went back to identify the answer as **U**nhealthy or **H**ealthy. To my dismay, every question, except #13, ended with a “**U**”. I know I had a challenging childhood but I never realized how empty it was for me. No help with homework, no political debates, little time with relatives or family vacations, little emotional support; no emphasis on exercise and too many problems: alcoholism, father’s illness, sister’s multiple attempted suicides and so on. But, what I did not realize until going through this section is I really didn’t exist within the family. I looked back and realized that at a very early age I learned to watch what I say, where I am, and to always quietly slip into the background. Although the goal was to identify strengths and weaknesses within my family, it also explained many of my own strengths and weaknesses. **I also realized that I brought many of these “issues” into adulthood and into my marriage.** My husband had to learn about them after marriage and not before marriage. I also learned though that despite my husband’s loss of his Father when he was 6 years old and having a very stern Mother, he only remembers **happy moments** of his **childhood**. He also has a very deep love of family. So we were and in some ways remain different in our approach to family. **It was very healing to discuss this section between the two of us.** One last comment on this section, ***over the years I never really understood why I do or think a certain way but I sure do now.*** I am not my mother nor my father but a blend of how I was raised. I could have landed face down but somehow in that childhood of nothingness I became a very strong woman.

This is section has a wealth of knowledge but it was breath of fresh air to move on.

We have met with Fr. Rob twice more ~ dealing with chapters 3,4,5 ~ the next time we meet we will have covered *Chapter 8 – Money Matters and career Planning*. I know this is a BIG topic for us and I am not exactly looking forward this dialogue with Chris...but I am confident it will be a healthy challenge for both of us.

One more thing. I send an email to Fr. Rob after our second session with him saying how grateful I was for that evening because ~ as I wrote in the email ~ I never really understood **HOW MUCH CHRIS LOVES ME!** The tears I shed that evening were **pure joy!**

SO.....HERE IS WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM NANCY AND DEB & CHRIS.

IN BOTH MARRIAGES, THEY GOT MORE THAN 25 YEARS INTO MARRIAGE AND RAISED CHILDREN TO BECOME ADULTS. IN NANCY'S MARRIAGE IT WENT BADLY AND ENDED IN DIVORCE; DEB AND CHRIS ON THE OTHER HAND DID QUITE WELL.....EVEN ABOVE AVERAGE.

HOWEVER NONE OF THESE FOLKS (NANCY AND HER HUSBAND, DEB & CHRIS) HAD EVERY TAKEN THE TIME TO:

1 - SERIOUSLY INVESTIGATE THEIR FAMILY OF ORIGIN TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY WERE SHAPED BY THEIR FAMILY.

2 – IDENTIFY THE RELATIONSHIP “SKILLS” THEY LEARNED GROWING UP THAT THEY CARRIED OVER INTO MARRIAGE. [THESE MAY WELL BE POOR SKILLS]

BECAUSE THEY HAD NEVER DONE THAT WORK, THEY WERE NEVER ABLE TO ADEQUATELY UNDERSTAND THEIR DIFFERENCES (FOR EXAMPLE, THEIR ATTITUDES ABOUT \$\$\$). AND BECAUSE THEY DID NOT REALLY UNDERSTAND THEIR DIFFERENCES....THEY NEVER KNEW HOW TO DEAL WITH THEIR FINANCES IN A WAY THAT WAS SATISFYING TO BOTH OF THEM.

NANCY KEPT TRYING TO CHANGE HER HUSBAND AND IT NEVER WORKED.

DEB AND CHRIS DID BETTER BECAUSE EACH OF THEM HAD A LOT OF LOVE AND ADMIRATION FOR EACH OTHER....BUT THERE WAS A LOT THEY NEVER SHARED...THEY WERE BOTH VERY BUSY PROFESSIONALS IN THE MILITARY AND THEY WERE BUSY AS PARENTS.....AND IT WAS ONLY AFTER 26 YEARS OF MARRIAGE THAT THEY WERE CONSIDERING A FUTURE IN WHICH THEY WOULD HAVE MUCH MORE TIME TOGETHER...AND THEY WERE ANXIOUS THAT THEY MIGHT NOT KNOW HOW TO DO THAT WELL.

IN ADDITION, NONE OF THEM HAD LEARNED MUCH ABOUT **DIALOGUE** SO AS TO BE REALLY EFFECTIVE IN UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTING AND AFFIRMING ONE ANOTHER. (REMEMBER DEB'S EMAIL TO ME THAT SHE NEVER KNEW IN 26 YEARS OF MARRIAGE HOW MUCH CHRIS LOVED HER!)

SO....I RECOMMEND THAT EVERY COUPLE HERE (AND ME!) HAS MUCH TO LEARN FROM MORE STUDY OF OUR **FAMILY OF ORIGIN**.....SO WE CAN **BETTER UNDERSTAND OURSELVES AND HOW WE FUNCTION** [*E.G. WHY I AM SUCH A PERFECTIONIST....SO THAT I TEND TO DRIVE OTHER FOLKS CRAZY*].....AND THEN CAN LEARN HOW TO USE THAT INFORMATION IN **EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE** WITH ONE ANOTHER.

I AM ALSO CONFIDENT THIS IS GOD'S PLAN FOR US BECAUSE JESUS CLEARLY SAID...."**THIS IS MY COMMANDMENT....LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.**" JESUS GAVE HIMSELF TO US COMPLETELY...IN HIS PASSION AND DEATH...AND IN THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST. **MARRIED COUPLES FOLLOW THIS EXAMPLE OF LOVE BY GIVING THEMSELVES TO ONE ANOTHER IN THE INTIMATE LOVE RELATIONSHIP THAT CAN BE BUILT IN DIALOGUE.**

WHAT DO YOU THINK???? [GET FEEDBACK FROM THE FOLKS]

THEN PROVIDE FAMILY OF ORIGIN HANDOUT FOR THEM TO WORK ON.....GIVE TIME FOR WRITING....AND SHARING (MAYBE DURING LUNCH IF NOT ENOUGH TIME NOW).

[IF THERE IS MORE TIME AVAILABLE...I CAN TALK MORE ABOUT **HENDRIX'S IMAGO THEORY** AND HOW TO ARE **ATTRACTED TO FOLKS WHO HAVE ISSUES LIKE OUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN.**]

MAKE SURE THERE IS TIME TO SHOW HENDRIX'S WEB SITE AND "HOW TO DIALOGUE VIDEOS." <http://gettingtheloveyouwant.com/free-resources>

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PLAN A – THEY WILL BE COMING TO MY AFTERNOON WORKSHOP.

1 – RECOMMEND THEY GET COPIES OF FOR BETTER AND FOR EVER AND PLAN TO USE THEM LIKE DEB AND CHRIS ARE DOING. THEY CAN GET A PACKET FOR A \$10 DONATION (OR COMPLIMENTARY IF THEY CAN'T AFFORD THE DONATION).

2 – WE WILL TALK MORE ABOUT HOW TO USE THE BOOKS IN THE AFTERNOON.

3 – WE WILL ALSO TALK ABOUT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

4 – I WILL ENCOURAGE YOU TO THINK ABOUT OFFERING TO BECOME A SPONSOR COUPLE....AND ANSWER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT THAT.

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PLAN B – IF YOU ARE NOT COMING TO MY AFTERNOON WORKSHOP, BUT WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT WE DID.....THEN YOU CAN CONTACT ME BY EMAIL AND I WILL DIRECT YOU TO RESOURCES THAT I WILL BE PUTTING ON THE WEB SITE [SEE LINK ON HOME PAGE..."FOLLOW UP TO WORKSHOP"]....AND YOU CAN ALSO ASK ME QUESTIONS BY EMAIL.....