



Retrouvaille

Ireland

A Lifeline for Married Couples

World Meeting of Families 2018 Panels



Retrouvaille was trusted to share their work as part of two panels at the World Meeting of Families 2018 in Dublin, Ireland. Representatives included, Steve and Leigh Baumann, USA, Stephen Conway, South Africa and Torbjorn and Sallyann Huss, Ireland.

For information about Steve and Leigh's presentation on the panel *'When Plates Fly: Pope Francis on the Reality of Love in Family Life'*, please see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2nCtYJ1HS8>, presentation starts just before the 34 minute mark, and an article on: <http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/news/2018/coniugi-baumann--retrouvaille-international---matrimonio-e-proce.html>

For information about Torbjorn and Sallyann's presentation on the panel *'Coping with Crises and Hurt in Marriage'*, please see article on:

<http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/news/2018/coniugi-huss--il-perdono-per-salvare-il-nostro-matrimonio.html>

Festival of Families – 25 August 2018
Retrouvaille couples and priests from all over the world celebrating marriage and family life together at a special lunch gathering during the World Meeting of Families.



Retrouvaille Family Gathering

Special guests were Nick and Virginia O'Shea, Detroit USA, who brought the

Retrouvaille programme to Ireland in 1996.

Retrouvaille couples also had a special time in the evening at the family celebration in Croke Park, with world class entertainment and the presence and wisdom of Pope Francis.



Croke Park Celebration



Retrouvaille – Stand for Hope

P

astoral Congress 22-25 August 2018

Many thanks to our many visitors, laypeople, religious, clergy and married couples. We really enjoyed meeting everyone and discussing marriage and family life and why it is so important to support it and why we are passionate about it. We hope that many more couples will discover the treasure of their own marriages and that new seeds were sown across the world. Please help us to spread the word about Retrouvaille, your support is what allows married couples to hear about us and can save many marriages.





'To show understanding in the face of exceptional situations never implies dimming the light of the fuller ideal, or proposing less than what Jesus offers to the human being. Today, more important than the pastoral care of failures is the pastoral effort to strengthen marriages and thus to prevent their breakdown' [Amoris Laetitia 307]

Radio Maria at the World Meeting of Families

This text is a short summary of an interview with Retrouvaille volunteers talking about their own experience of marriage and life, before and after attending the Retrouvaille Programme. The original interview took place at the Retrouvaille stand at the World Meeting of Families 2018 and was conducted by **Father Eamonn McCarthy of Radio Maria Ireland** and has been aired on Radio Maria a number of times.

Steve and Leigh, USA, shared how they had slowly drifted apart, pursuing their own friendships and hobbies, to the verge of separation. They started to live a 'married singles' lifestyle with little time for each other and more frequent arguments. Retrouvaille helped them to find the person they married 27 years ago. Steve recognised the need to soften his heart towards Leigh and while they still disagree and sometimes argue, they have now learnt not to fight like gladiators anymore. Their lives are now better than ever before and their extended family in Retrouvaille is a place to go to in their time of need with solid support, and some great friendships built up over time.

Father Jerry, South Africa, shared that he sees that family difficulties often start as marriage difficulties. He had been tasked to find support for families in his Diocese in South Africa and came across Retrouvaille. After attending a programme, he learnt as a priest to understand his own inner life and this experience is now a great gift to him in his ministry and priesthood and he recommends all priests to attend the programme for themselves. He recognises Retrouvaille as the best ministry he's seen in his 25 years of priesthood. He describes how in the honeymoon phase of anything, you act with your heart, then later in life, with your head. The head loves problems and things can easily become a battleground and he recognised how Retrouvaille moves you back to your heart again, as a person, and for couples in their marriage.

Stephen and Sandra, South Africa, shared how they had reached a stage where Stephen had more or less moved out of their marriage and was planning a new life. Their daughter intervened and Stephen explains that he attended Retrouvaille to keep his daughter happy, a decision that he has never regretted once. Stephen and Sandra now continue to grow as a couple through giving back to others and they receive as much as they give every time they present, which is now over fifty weekends. Stephen also emphasised the importance of receiving support from the Church and priests to get this ministry known to other hurting couples.

Chris and Rosemarie, USA shared how they in Retrouvaille found that forgiveness and thankfulness in everyday life, as Pope Francis frequently speaks of, is possible and necessary. Having received the gift of love and mercy through healing in their own marriage, the only response possible was joy. They now passionately share this joy with other married couples in this peer ministry. They see many couples afraid to share how their marriage really is, afraid that they are alone in their struggles. The witness and support of other couples helped them heal from that fear and shame and begin to understand that every marriage will have its struggles. They recommend everyone not to be afraid to get help. They are happy that their own children now have the chance to live healthy lives with stable relationships and families thanks to their own healing.

Torbjorn and Sallyann, Ireland, described how they found out about Retrouvaille by chance at the International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 2012, when they were going through a difficult time in their own marriage. The presentation with personal testimonies gave them hope for their own future. They attended the programme, which was a lifeline for their marriage and it helped them to communicate without attacking or blaming each other. The support of others was a great help and they realised that it is normal to have difficulties in your marriage, and that there is no need to feel ashamed about it and that there is help available. Through their own involvement in this ministry, they recognise how important it is to get help early; the build-up of hurt over the years can act as a barrier to healing and openness in your marriage, but they have also seen that it is never too late.

Julie and Gearoid, England, described how a friend of Julie's had attended a course to improve their relationship and she could see the amazing friendship and love they had for each other and she wanted that for herself too. Julie had heard about Retrouvaille but it wasn't until they hit a little rock in their own marriage that they realised it was time to go. Gearoid described how learning the tools, including effective communication in their marriage were important but the eye opener for him was to explore himself and who he was as a person and as a husband, and this impression has stayed with him. They describe that they learnt that love is a decision and not just how you feel at a particular time. They are grateful that they went to Retrouvaille before it got worse with more hurts built up.

Fr Jerry concluded by giving thanks and praying for couples not to be afraid to seek help, so that they receive healing in their marriages and joy in their lives again.



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