



Retrouvaille

A Lifeline for Married Couples

Ireland

Retrouvaille International Council Meeting 2019

This year's Retrouvaille International Council Meeting (ICM) took place in Nashville, Tennessee. It was attended by several hundreds of Retrouvaille members from across the world, both couples and clergy.



Archbishop of Edmonton, Richard W. Smith shared from Pope Francis letter to the Retrouvaille delegates, which was signed by Cardinal Pietro Parolin.

"His holiness is pleased to learn that a wide range of personal and familial situations will be discussed and he is confident that the great values of marriage in the Christian family will provide an answer to the yearning that is part and parcel of the human existence.

Trusting your deliberations to the maternal care of Our Lady, the Mother of the Church, Pope Francis prays that these will bear fruit and offer the shining example of marriage as the fullness of revelation and restoring God's original plan.

Upon all the participants, the Holy Father invokes the divine blessings and reconciliation and peace, founded on the truth, revealed in Christ Jesus."

Church Community Family Movements Gathering 2019

Retrouvaille members enjoyed a reflective day for the Church Community Family Movements in Curryhills, hosted by the Irish Bishop's Council for Marriage and the Family. The day explored Legacies and Treasures of the World Meeting of Families 2018.

One concept discussed was the potential launch of a digital guidebook of the 'All Island Marriage and Family Movements'. This aims to provide information to people in parishes and dioceses, with the movements in one place for exploring by those in need, or those helping others to find support, including the clergy serving their parishioners.

This initiative is envisaged to build on the theme that we are all building blocks that need to fit together to provide a strong network of support for marriage and family life. Each movement reflected as a flower in the garden of the Church. All with our unique charisms, still more beautiful when we work together, side by side in the flower garden.

Archbishop Smith continued to thank Retrouvaille for the example that they provide to the Church, of the beauty of marriage, the importance of marriage, and the example of dedication and commitment, fashioning and living the unity that marriage is, which is vital to the Church today. It is a witness to the whole Church, that unity is possible and that we need always to look for ways to fashion unity and to show that it is possible.



During the many workshops, the attending couples were reminded that saying 'I do' when we get married does not mean that we will 'magically' get along all the time or have a fulfilling marriage. It is vital to continue to build companionship, vulnerable communication, and tenderness, hold hands, become best friends, embrace each other's strengths, and help each other to become the best person that we can be to complement each other. At the end of the three-day meeting, the attendees were sent out nourished and encouraged to continue to work on their marriages and be a beacon of hope and support for other couples that are in need of support in their marriages and family life.



Love

The *feeling of love* in marriage is often the result of doing loving things for our spouse. It starts with a conscious decision, followed by an action, and is not based on what happened yesterday or on our feelings but on what we want for each other and our marriage today.

The little things we do for our spouse every day, even though we may not always feel like it, are powerful ways of sustaining and nurturing the *feeling of love*.

We may sometimes think that love no longer exists in our marriage. As love starts with a decision, this implies a free will to make a choice to love, even when we don't feel like it. Doing little acts of love can often bring back the feeling of love into our marriage.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness starts with a decision that will allow a process to begin, which can bring the peace back into our marriage and family life.

Forgiveness does not mean that we need to forget the hurt that was caused immediately but it requires a willingness to engage with our spouse.

Then we will begin again, like the dawn of a new day and the opportunities that it brings. We may wait for a long time until we *feel* like forgiving someone, during which time there are no winners.

If you have hurt someone, acknowledgment of the hurt, listening, honesty, kindness, trustworthy behaviour, a sincere heart and patience are keys to forgiveness.

Commitment

Commitment is the glue that keeps us together in times of difficulties. It is saying that we can work things out together and that our spouse is more important than any issues that we may experience.

The commitment that we give to each other each day, like the roots of a tree, must be strong enough to let the storms of life pass through. Without this commitment we cannot resolve in a healthy way the issues and struggles that every marriage goes through during its lifetime.

A strong marriage should be like two pieces of paper stuck together with superglue. You cannot separate them, unlike post it stickers that easily fall apart with time.

Trust

Trust is a firm belief in the honesty, genuineness, and reliability of another person, including our spouse, which can be influenced by our past experiences, from childhood to present day.

Many couples find it difficult to trust again after marriage difficulties, as they feel vulnerable and hurt. Trust is a decision to be responsible for my own trustworthiness and a decision to give our spouse the opportunity to do the same, sometimes despite my own fears.

We must earn trust by behaving trustworthy! It is a two way street where both spouses behave in a trustworthy manner. Honesty is the key to trustworthy behaviour and being open with and receptive to our spouse builds trust in our marriage.



The Four Marks of a Mature Marriage

Love, Forgiveness, Commitment and Trust are based on decisions!

Retrouvaille Interview on Spirit Radio

Listen to the Keenan Spouses discussing their marriage and how Retrouvaille helped them

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxTZ5XkS1XY>

A Journey of Hope for Marriage and Family Life

Retrouvaille's 'Journey of Hope' was successfully launched in Naas, Sallins and Ballycane parishes!

Many thanks to everyone for listening and the parish team for their support.

<https://www.facebook.com/retrouvaille.ie/posts/2331367076982883>

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