



Worldwide Marriage Encounter Magazine

February 2015

Marriage Week

7th - 14th February 2015



“Marriage Week is a great annual focus for couples to take time to pause and learn some new skills to take their marriages from good to very good! We believe that the wedding day is only the start and that all marriages can get better and better with each passing year...”

www.marriage-week.org.uk





Editorial

Happy New Year to you all. Hope you had a good Christmas!



Thank you again for all who sent feedback - as we heard yet again on the team day, communication is vital to the movement, and is two way!

For those of you who wanted a 'slimmer' *Spirit*, this one is specially for you! We are hoping to send it out more frequently to make up for it. If it is too brief for your liking have a think about what you could do to contribute. It is a joy to receive an article , comment, letter or photo out of the blue which has not had to be asked for specifically. We are not going to lose all our friends by continually pestering, (too late?) so, over to you!

Don't forget Marriage Week coming up - look out for diocesan events or arrange something for your parish. If you do something this year, let us know and we'll include it in the next issue. How about asking for Mass to be said in your parish for the work of Marriage Encounter, or a Thanksgiving Mass for married life?

God bless you all during 2015,

Richard and Elizabeth

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100 Club Winners

Congratulations to

1st Michael & Amanda Thompson. £200

2nd Mike & Carola Diver. £120

3rd Fr John Naughton. £80

Don't forget easyfundraising.org.uk





Formation from the European Council

Banneaux, Belgium, October 2014



This formation is from the European Council we experienced in May 2014 in Hungary.

It looks at two aspects of dealing with change.

Gospel: John 14, 1-12



'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house there are many places to live in; otherwise I would have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you to myself, so that you may be with me where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'

Jesus said 'I am the Way; I am Truth and Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him.'

Philip said, 'Lord, show us the Father and then we shall be satisfied.'

Jesus said to him 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? What I say to you I do not speak of my own accord: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his works.'

'You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe it on the evidence of these works. In all truth I tell you, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, and will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father.

From the Gospel we have just read, we will focus on the first three verses, in blue above.

It is about the farewell of Jesus. The farewell of Jesus is a difficult time for the disciples. It is time for Jesus to say goodbye. The followers of Jesus are very concerned by the news that Jesus will go to the Father. Their Master Jesus will leave them alone.

We have written about the question: ***What do I experience, listening to this reading?***

Rita wrote: Dear Phil & Andy,

I see this passage as asking me not to be afraid and worried about things. I am to trust in God and that all will be well, and this is what I try to do with varying degrees of success.

It also tells me that I can do God's work in many ways, and that its not just one way of serving the Father. The same can be said for our work within Marriage Encounter. There are many different roles and jobs that need to be done.



At the moment he needs us to be leaders like Jesus was with his disciples. At other times he may need me to work in a different area, somewhere else where my skills can be used.

At this moment in time God needs me to prepare others and lead others to his work. When there are times when we feel alone, I need to remember that Jesus is guiding me and us. I see it as God holding our hands and giving us the courage, strength and wisdom to make the right decisions and choices.

Love Rita. X

Phil wrote: *Dear Rita & Andy,*

When I hear this reading I see Jesus as bringing me and us as a team to this place and time in our lives, as leaders of our community. "Do not let your hearts be troubled", tells me not to be down hearted when our efforts appear to be falling on deaf ears. Rather to trust in God and that he will provide for us and to remain focused and have confidence in what we have been called to do.

If some things we try don't work, don't be despondent and give up, but rather look for alternatives and try again. As usual I need to trust those in who we have placed in a position of leadership. They too are faced with their own challenges in what they have been called to do, and look to us to support and inspire them in the same way as we are, when we attend the European Councils.

All my love, Phil.

Andy wrote: *Dear Phil & Rita*

I am encouraged by the words of Jesus that he is going to prepare a place for us but is coming back to be with us and to take us to where he is going. I see this as a reassurance of the presence of Jesus with me/us in our ongoing journey to be with him in the fullness of life in heaven. We are not simply left to get on with things. He is not simply coming at the end of time to judge the living and the dead. He is with us always, yes, to the end of time. This gives me courage to believe that as leaders we are called to be a means of his presence to one another and to our community. It means being close to him now being aware that we are doing his work, his mission, So we have to have confidence in what we do, believing that he is with us, that he is guiding us. We have to be aware also that he is with the community and so we need to listen to them, to their concerns, their questions, because this is also the way the Lord is with us and speaks to us. So do not let your hearts be troubled - there's no need to be afraid - no need to feel isolated or alone - he is with us in the love we share as couples, as team, as leaders and so on. At all these levels we experience Jesus' love and guidance.

Love, Andy

Q: What do I experience listening to this reading?

Part Two: How to deal with changes.

In our life, in each of us there is a perpetual development of change. How do we look at change?

We are dealing with a lot of change and we (Phil, Rita and Andy) are evoking a lot of changes ourselves:

- about the implementation of the refreshed outline,
- new ways of invitation,
- what are our feelings, thinking of elder weekend givers and work shoppers who will stop their services?

How do we deal with the effect of changes we are responsible for?



In our life there is a continuous development of changes, in society where we live, in the church, in our family and work.

We all have to deal with changes in our life, as couple and as priest, and as couple/priest in leadership.

We wrote to the question: *How do I personally relate to changes? What does that tell me about myself, looking at my feelings, spontaneous thoughts and behaviour?*

Andy wrote: Dear Phil & Rita

Over the years I have experienced quite a lot of changes in where I have been asked to live in community. Now back in UK I am settled for the longest period of time since I left home when I was 17. So I am fairly flexible when it comes to moving. I'm ready to make myself available so that things can happen easily. This fits my behaviour patterns - always ready to help. Sometimes I get the feeling that I am being used, but most of the time I want to be a willing partner in a team effort to make a project work. I can get a bit jealous or angry at those who just do their own thing and leave whatever needs to be done to others. But for the most part I am ready to do my bit. BUT I need encouragement. I'm a great procrastinator, so I need people to badger me to make sure that I'm doing what I committed myself to do. (or maybe a secretary!)

Love,

Andy

Phil wrote: Dear Rita & Andy,

For me personally, I don't welcome change too much in my daily life, I am a creature of habit and routine, comfortable with what I am familiar with. So for example changing the car is always for me a very worrying and stressful time, being fearful of making the wrong choice and wasting money.

I am not a very spontaneous person and have to look at the benefits and not to change things just for the sake of it. In my relationship with Rita, my lack of willingness to look at changes can lead to frustration as I judge Rita wants to experience new things more than me.

An example of this is when we talk about future holidays when I am happier re-visiting places I know rather than the more exotic and far away destinations.

Within Marriage Encounter as leaders it is an expectation that we would have a new vision and with it ideas to change things. Here I need to be more aware of our community and sensitive to how these changes may affect them.

In my working life, dealing with constant change was at times extremely difficult, but I recognise that nothing can stand still and it's only with change that we will develop.

Love Phil

Rita wrote: Dear Phil & Andy,

I don't like change and it can be fearful, whenever I hear that "so and so" has to be changed my first thought and reaction is oh no!?

I recognise where this reaction comes from, that being the constant changes at work over the years, having been pulled from one role to the next, some of which I hated. Now if I can see the need for change I am more willing to accept it.



On a day by day basis I do like my routines, and the stability that it gives me. I used to have a routine for my housework washing Monday, ironing Tuesday etc for example. This really used to help me as I used to know exactly what I needed to do each day. Now its different, and things get done when I can fit them in, and its more haphazard, in the past that would have fazed me but now I am more relaxed about it, realising it doesn't really matter when the jobs get done. Change just for changes sake really does annoy me. Like when I visit the supermarket and they have changed all the aisles around, I can't find things adding another half an hour to my visit.

I am happiest when I have a time and place for everything which is probably why I plan so much, so that nothing changes the routine I have mapped out in my head. I see it as one of my weaknesses, as for the most part I am rigid to stay with the plan, but I would love to be able to be more flexible and spontaneous and maybe surprise myself.

All my love, Rita x

Part Three

Carrying on with the theme of change we wrote to the question:

How do I relate to changes? What does this tell me about my leadership in WWME, looking at my feelings, spontaneous thoughts and behaviour?

Rita wrote: *Dear Phil & Andy,*

Normally as I have already said, I would shy away from change. The changes to the outline were thrust upon us; we had no choice but to run with it. At the start I was fearful of what the changes would entail, but I have been pleasantly surprised by the content. Even the parts that I thought might be watered down like God's Desire for Marriage and The Sacrament talks were not so it was a big relief.

As a team from our very first meeting we all agreed that many changes would have to be made, and we have been slowly trying to change things for the better. Some of the changes that we were excited to implement have not been possible and others have had to go on the back burner until such times as the outline is settled. So much of our leadership role has revolved around the new outline.

As we have just been talking about our leadership and how we can lead better, encourage our regional co-ordinators and team couples to be able to grow and not stand still. We need to enthuse them jolly them along and affirm them for what they are doing already. A little praise goes a long way when people are working for you.

Phil & I have not worked so closely with a priest before our leadership role, I am not certain that I had any expectations before we started out together. It has for me been a great experience, we seem to think alike and have the same outlook on life. We have leant on you Andy in lots of different ways, such as languages as our unofficial translator, in our correspondence when you correct our vocabulary and grammar. I like to think that we have been "good" for you Andy, and enabled you to share some of your more difficult feelings with us.

Love Rita

Andy wrote: *Dear Phil & Rita,*

How do I relate to change in regard to our leadership of ME? I think that it is important to maintain the core values of ME. Perhaps we need to identify what these are. When we think about the issues of gay marriage, unmarried couples, non-Catholic Team, how do we proceed with these issues, remaining open yet faithful to our vision and what we offer to the church?



The vision has to do with relationships, through communication/dialogue. Such relationships have a sacramental foundation. They are not simple human relationships, but a visible sign, making real/present God's love in the world. How does the new outline preserve these values? Does it compromise them? I don't think so. But some of the other issues - openness to gay couples, unmarried couples, etc, might force us or lead us to compromise, to say things that might be considered exclusive or discriminatory.

It is important then to carry the community with us and not push things through that might affect our sense of who we are and what we have to offer.

So our suggestion about a non-residential ME Weekend, how will it be faithful to our values?

Love, Andy

Phil wrote *Dear Rita & Andy,*

When we as a team began our leadership we all I believe accepted that we had gone through a period of little change in England & Wales and that in our term of office we would need to look at many areas. This I don't see as a criticism of our previous leaders but we needed an MOT, to look at priorities and how we can give our community which was ageing, a new lease of life and hope for the future.

As a result we came to the European Councils and were a little overwhelmed at what some countries had done to keep their dream alive by way of change. Bishop John Hine told us at the time that these changes were made for all the right reasons but moved away from our core values and beliefs. Here we listened and I am pleased to say took a step back and reflected. We looked again and are continuing to listen to how we can best adopt change to attract couples to our weekends.

One area that I am keen to explore is that of non- residential parish based Marriage Encounter weekends. As I believe this may well be a path to take more seriously in the future.

That said I am fearful of how it will be received by others.

Love, Phil.

*Q. How do I personally relate to changes?
What does this tell me about myself, looking at my
feelings, spontaneous thoughts and behaviour?*

*“Change will not come if we wait for some other person
or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting
for. We are the change that we seek.”*

Barack Obama



THANK YOU to PAT & JUDY ROGERS



After some thirty years of helping to give Weekends Pat & Judy are standing down from Presenting Team. Many couples have benefited from the Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter Weekends they have helped to present over the years. In addition many team couples have been grateful to them for those times when they have stepped in at short notice when another couple has been prevented from presenting.

They were Spirit editors for a number of years and have been devoted supporters of the Movement in various other ways including helping other team couples and team priests to write their talks. They have been part of the Eastern Region Board and have, more recently been part of the National Board when Co-ordinating the South East Region. They have also organised the Prayer Vigils which accompany each Weekend as well as being a great support to the enrichment group meetings in Meopham, north Kent.

Living on the Isle of Wight any journey to a team meeting, a Board meeting, and enrichment meetings of various types has involved considerable organisation as well as a time commitment because of the need to travel by ferry to and from the Island – they have managed to be at all these meetings with no complaints about the journey time or the difficulties of their travel. Always cheerful and willing and have been stalwart supporters of the Movement as well as being at many celebratory events over the years.

They have been an example of self-less love for the Community and for couples experiencing the Weekends. We wish them well in 'retirement' as they are very much part of their church community in Shanklin and will continue to testify to the importance of the Sacrament of Marriage in their church life.

So a big 'thank you' to you, Pat & Judy for all you've done over the years to bring life to Marriage Encounter.

Gary and Kay Johnson

.... pardon the language:

"People always fall in love with the most perfect aspects of each other's personalities. Who wouldn't? Anybody can love the most wonderful parts of another person. But that's not the clever trick. The really clever trick is this: Can you accept the flaws? Can you look at your partner's faults honestly and say, 'I can work around that. I can make something out of it.'? Because the good stuff is always going to be there, and it's always going to pretty and sparkly, but the crap underneath can ruin you."

Elizabeth Gilbert, *Committed: A Skeptic Makes Peace with Marriage*

A new 'take' on the psalms:

The Lord is my pacesetter, I shall not rush,
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals.
He provides me with images of stillness, which restore my serenity.
He leads me in the ways of efficiency through calmness of mind,
and His guidance is peace.

Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day
I will not fret for his presence is here.
His timelessness, His all-importance will keep me in balance.
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of activity,
by anointing my mind with his oils of tranquillity.

My cup of joyous energy overflows.
Surely harmony and effectiveness
shall be the fruits of my hours,
for I shall walk in the peace of my Lord
and dwell in his house forever.

A psalm for a stressful day.

For the over – busy, strained, stressful times
Lord I praise You.

In the midst of the brain – whirling feeling of overload
and the panic of one more thing remembered which needs
dealing with
Lord I praise You.

When all the worries surface at once
and there is the sick, scared feeling of being out of control,
Lord I praise You.

You are Light in darkness
and Calm in storm.
You are Rest in turmoil
and Strength in weakness.
You are Adequacy in uselessness
and Trust in terror.

How can we know this if we are never scared, alone and useless,
overburdened in the dark and storm?

So Lord, I praise You.



Free to Live Weekend.

Friday 30th October – Sunday 1st November 2015

We are delighted to tell everyone that following the success of the Presence Weekend held at **Yarnfield Park** last year, where we were all looked after so well, we will now be arranging a Free to Live weekend for later this year. John & Brenda Levesley with Fr Teddy O'Brien will again be presenting the weekend.



Yarnfield Park

Do you allow the pressures of life control you? Do you ever dream of being more aware of the issues that tie you down? Do you want to be "Free to Live" then this is a weekend not to be missed.

The weekend looks at relationship in the light of aspects of our lives that most often cause frustration, or give most life. The format of this weekend is slightly different from the original weekend in that, after the dialogue times, couples and priests share together in small groups and presentations include music, pictures, scripture and paintings. The weekend is open to all couples, priests and religious who have experienced the original ME weekend.

We want this weekend to be an experience of Community which as you will have seen from the Advent Edition of the Spirit everyone came together and enjoyed at last year's Presence Weekend. So if you are interested please complete the Booking Form and return it to us and **don't forget to put the date in your diary.**



Last year at Yarnfield, catching up on the news

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Phil and Rita



Booking Form for the Free to Live Weekend

Friday 30th October- 1st November 2015

Yarnfield Park Training & Conference Centre, Yarnfield, Stone, Staffs,
ST15 0NL.

Contact details:

Name

Address

Telephone Number

Mobile

E-mail address

Special Requirements

Disability, Access requirements / If yes, please specify:

Dietary requirements / If yes, please specify:

Please return completed form to:

Phil and Rita Jackson,
76 Leach Heath Lane,
Rubery,
Birmingham,
B45 9DF

01212447762

wackojacko456@hotmail.com



Significant Anniversaries 2015

Congratulations and very best wishes to everyone with a special anniversary at this time

Golden Jubilee

13.3.1965 Rev Fr David Keniry

3.4.1965 Rev Mgr Canon Ed Walker



Silver Wedding

2.2. 1990 Charles & Camilla Drax

7.4.1990 Roger & Tracy Gomes

Don't forget easyfundraising.org.uk M.E. has raised **£234.97** for just a few mouse-clicks, since we enrolled, and we now have **19 members**. How much more could we raise with a few more? Once registered, simply go through the easyfundraising page before online shopping with hundreds of different outlets

HOW MUCH COULD YOU RAISE BOOKING YOUR HOLIDAY THROUGH

EASYFUNDRAISING?



Summary of 2015 dates.



Marriage Encounter

27 th Feb- 1 st Mar	Lydiard, Swindon (New Venue)
8 th -10 th May	Minsteracres, Co Durham
19 th -21 st June	Park Place, Wickham, Hants
3 rd -5 th July	Yarnfield Park, Stone, Staffs (New Venue)
16 th -18 th Oct	St Claret's, Cambridgeshire
27 th -29 th Nov	Ibis, Rugby

**NB If a weekend is 'FULL' further places can always be requested!*

Engaged Encounter.

* Residential Venues

7 th – 8 th Feb	Bamber Bridge near Preston. (CANCELLED)
21 st – 22 nd Feb	St Joseph's, Hendon
7 th – 8 th March	Sheffield
17 th – 19 th April	Park Place, Wickham, Hants*
16 th – 17 th May	St James Priory, Bristol (New Venue)
30 th - 31 st May	St Peter's, Leamington Spa
4 th - 5 th July	Our Lady's, Hemel Hempstead (New Venue)
12 th - 13 th Sept	St Joseph's, Hendon.
10 th - 11 th Oct	St Peter's Leamington Spa
21 st – 22 nd Nov	Hallam Sheffield



Due to the increasing demand for these weekends we are holding two more EE weekends than last year.

25 - 27th Sept **Pilot non-res Marriage Encounter weekend in St Austin's Parish Centre Wakefield (**New Venue**)**

Other Dates.

4 th - 8 th March	European Council Helvoirt, Netherlands
21 st March	N. W. Regional Day, Ottley
28-29 th March	National Board
9 th May	SE Regional Day, Effingham
10 th May	East Regional Day, Hemel
11 th -14 th June	European Council, Maria Bistrica, Croatia
20 th June	Central Regional Day
11 th - 12 th July	National Board
18 th July	SW Regional Day
3 rd October	West Regional Day, Rubery
22 nd - 25 th Oct	European Council, Leipzig, Germany
30 th Oct - 1 st Nov	Free to Live Weekend
8 th Nov	East Regional Day Hemel
14 th - 15 th Nov	National Board

Deadline for April's *Spirit*

13th March

