



ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND

IN OREGON

Office of the Vicar General

6 June 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

The Marriage in Christ seminar is a fine program that can help to meet a significant need in the Catholic Church today. It holds great promise for enriching almost all marriages. I have worked in the archdiocesan marriage tribunal for eight years. In my estimation this program offers the kind of practical, at home activities of prayer, conversation and actions that could have helped many couples avoid drifting apart. The Church is in great need of practical programs like this that offer not only insightful talks, but even more so, at home follow-up activities to deepen the couples unity and commitment. Above all it is very clearly Christ-centered.

The seminar is theologically sound and consistent with the rich Catholic teaching on marriage. Most importantly, it's realistic. The authors don't just tell couples that they should pray and make Christ the center of their marriage, the seminar offers them a simple ten-minute format for daily prayer as a couple. The couples are not only reminded to talk to each other personally, they are given daily, simple, engaging conversation starters that couples who've been together for many years find helpful. The Marriage in Christ seminar also offers couples an opportunity to commit or recommit their marriage to Christ and ask the Holy Spirit to fill them with the grace to do so.

In, *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*, the bishops say, "By the power of the Holy Spirit, spouses become willing to do the acts and courtesies of love toward each other, regardless of the feelings of the moment." The Marriage in Christ seminar provides each couple with a five week manual filled with simple suggestions for daily actions that become habits of love. It encourages couples to invite the Holy Spirit to fill them as individuals and as a couple in a new way so they can actually form those habits. Couples also receive a six week follow-up manual with additional suggestions for prayer, conversation and action.

I know the principal authors of the Marriage in Christ seminar well. They are deeply committed to their faith and to the Church. Their theological background and extensive pastoral experience has enabled them to produce what I believe is a very helpful tool to enrich marriage. This seminar is not for seriously troubled marriages; rather it offers an enrichment for just about any married couple from two years to fifty years.

I strongly encourage you to review the materials and consider making the Marriage in Christ Seminar part of your ongoing marriage enrichment programs for your parish.

In Christ,

Most Rev. Peter L. Smith
Auxiliary bishop and Vicar-General