

WWME Great Community November 2006

By Dick & Diane Baumbach and Fr. Chris Hoffmann

Community Blooming in Central Florida!

Our Great Community Winners for this month are the lovers in Central Florida. Dick & Diane Baumbach and Fr. Chris Hoffmann are the dynamic ecclesial team for this area.

The Central Florida community has been revitalized over the past 16 months and it's due to the large number of couples who have come forward to accept the radical lifestyle we all believe in. Those same couples are passionate not only about inviting and recruiting, but in forming relationships within the community post weekend.

Monthly community events are held such as ice cream socials, picnics, and barn masses. There are also 21 sharing groups very open to accepting new couples. There is an area board with the key ministry leaders and any other interested couples. The area also has a written inviting and recruiting plan that is continually updated. Central Florida now hosts 7 Weekends a year. They arranged to have free advertisement on the back of any church bulletins with vacant slots!

As a testimony to their commitment to follow up with the Weekend couples, twenty to thirty community couples show up for the sing-out after the Weekends. Often they go out to eat together afterward. There is a wonderful community newsletter that goes out to everyone via email.

They have implemented a one-day enrichment schedule and the first one was held in one of our five geographical areas. The great majority of the events are family friendly including the most recent celebration and renewal of vows plus presentation. The two WWME team priests, Fr. Chris Hoffmann and Fr. Gene Weis, conducted the marriage vow renewal service.

The Central Florida recently conducted a hands-on outreach to WWME couples in the Bahamas. This was accomplished by local couples coordinating a cruise for WWME couples aboard the Sovereign of the Seas. Couples from throughout the country were invited. The Central Florida couples met with the community in the Bahamas for a gathering that included a presentation, dialogue and sharing. A true sense of being a worldwide community was experienced. For the details see http://em matrimony.org/news/20060520_bahamacruise_baumbach.htm

There is an upbeat atmosphere of openness and affirmation in the community. They continue to encourage each other to do their best. They have fun and enjoy working together to further the dream.

As Central Florida transitioned from being a local diocesan Marriage Encounter community to being an active part of Section 5 in Worldwide Marriage Encounter over the past six years, it has blossomed like a rose. Now the community is in full bloom. God has blessed the Central Florida area and we believe the world should know about the success of the community and the couples and priests who are a part of it.