

A Dialoguing Community

By Phil & Cathy Gorski

On Jan. 1, 2007, the webmasters for the new Joliet Area WWME website (Section 7 – Illinois) issued a challenge to all of the Communities within the area to see how many couples each Community would get to commit to dialoguing for 90 straight days. At the end of 90 days, the Lisle/Naperville/Woodridge Community won that challenge with the most members making the commitment, and completing that challenge. What follows is a look at that special, dialoguing Community.



The Lisle/Naperville/Woodridge Community (LNW) boasts a very large membership. Over 60 couples are on their email list. The attendance at average meetings is somewhere around 10 – 12 couples. It covers a lot of territory. Nine parishes are included in this Community, including St. Joan of Arc in Lisle, St. Margaret Mary, Sts. Peter and Paul, St. Elizabeth Seton, St. Raphael, St. Thomas and Holy Spirit in Naperville, St. Scholastica in Woodridge, and even Our Lady of Mercy in Aurora.

LNW has its own webpage, at home.comcast.net/~jbugajsky . They are the first Community to have their own web page in the Joliet Area. The webpage lists upcoming hosting/presenting couples for the year and important news and dates for the Community.

Four current presenting team couples come from LNW, and one important presenting priest; Fr. Gerry Riva from St. Scholastica in Woodridge. LNW is also home to a special retired presenting couple; Phil & Paula Crow, who are the unofficial mentors of the Community. Former co-editors for the old Joliet Magazine “The Spirit of Joliet” are also members; John & Theresa Baisden. Two couples from the Joliet Area board are representatives from LNW, including the current Executive Couple, Luis & Lisa Tamez and the webmasters; Phil & Cathy Gorski.

The Current Community Coordinators for LNW are Joe & Jen Bugajski. Joe & Jen were married in 4/96 and were Encountered in 11/01. They attend St. Scholastica, in Woodridge with their three boys, ages 7, 5 & 2. Joe & Jen have been the coordinators since Aug. 2006. They think that one of the best things about their community is the number of active couples that LNW has.



Joe & Jen were nominated as Coordinators in a new method of selecting Coordinators for the Community. The members of the Community were asked to nominate one or two couples and list several attributes that the couples possess that would make them good candidates for the job. Those couples receiving more than 3 nominations were sent a compilation of the accolades and asked if they would consider the job. Joe & Jen say that one of their fondest memories of LNW is the night that their Community expressed why they would be a good choice as Coordinators.

Most members seemed to feel that the best thing about their Community was the interaction with the other members. Some of the comments were that it is filled with “genuine” people. It makes them feel safe that they can be who they are without judgment, like family. The members feel loved every single time they attend a meeting, and are exceptionally supportive outside the meeting setting, such as attending family funerals or showing up at a hospital during procedures on a spouse. The feeling of “family” was used repeatedly. And yet this group welcomes new members with enthusiasm. One member said “Our first Community meeting was an event I will never forget. We had never been involved in such a loving group, not even our own family showed us that much welcome and sincere “I want to get to know you” love and inspiration.”



Community meetings help refocus members on the importance of their marriage. Members mentioned the presentations, group prayer and sharings from the heart as some of the things that boosted their marriage and made them feel uplifted. Attending the meetings made members feel energized, or like a “marital vitamin that helps protect and energize” them. One member said that she likes “being around these positive people who believe they can change the world”.

LNW members listed a number of events they have participated in as being very memorable. Attending conventions together was mentioned a few times, with the added bonus of hanging out by the pool together, sharing snacks and enjoying each other’s company. Last year’s convention was special because it was cancelled due to tornado damage and the Community turned “lemons into lemonade” by going to Springfield as a group and seeing the sights together. The members have also listed as memorable campouts, picnics, hosting “wine and dines” or candlelight inviting dinners, wildly fun dinners out after setting up for a weekend, annual Christmas pot luck dinners with a “white elephant” silent auction fundraiser and a 50’s party.



The practice of “angeling” each other is also a special way of blessing one another with memories. Couples select the name of another couple from a basket before leaving a meeting. For the following month, while angeling another couple special gifts are brought to their door and left in secret, often with dialogue questions attached. Sometimes banners are secretly posted on the house (e.g. Red Hot Lovers) or paper hearts staked all over the front yards in the middle of the night. The angels then reveal themselves at the next month’s meeting. Occasionally the Community has selected names from a basket just to angel one another’s dialogue. For the following month they then support that couple with “one ringers” to encourage their dialogue.

It would seem that Community has had a very big impact in these couples’ lives. “I can’t imagine my life without Community. It is a support group of friends and they all mean a lot to me” states one member. Another lists as inspiring: “Seeing how so many couples are making the effort to make their marriage a priority and positively influence the lives of their children and circle of friends”. Someone else states: “They face struggles just like we do ... we’ve learned something from each of them about commitment and perseverance”. Another agrees; “Community has inspired us to continue with our daily dialogue and supports us in our everyday couple relationship”. And still another states “Our Community challenges us to be the best we can be for the sake of our relationship with each other, with them and with God.”

Lisle/Naperville/Woodridge Community is a Dialoguing Community, and an inspiring Community, one that is filled with the Holy Spirit, and filled with the Spirit of WWME.

