

Marriage and Relationship Educators National Conference

Twentieth Anniversary

In a recent conference panel discussion, Dr William Doherty, of the University of Minnesota, challenged 202 participants to get involved with the marriage movement. “We need to dispel the myths about marriage in society today,” he said. Dr Doherty specifically identified five common myths about marriage:

1. It’s foolish to get married without cohabiting.
2. It’s best to wait to get married when you are financially secure.
3. If a marriage gets rotten it never gets ripe again.
4. If your marriage fails your children really want you to find another romantic relationship because they want you to be happy.
5. Men aren’t interested in relationships.

Dr Doherty, an internationally recognised expert on marriage, was one of several international and national speakers and marriage researchers at the twentieth Marriage and Relationship Educators National Conference (MARENC) in Melbourne from August 27-30.

Key note addresses and workshops covered topics such as: Intentional Marriage, Sexuality, Men as Life Partners with Women, Social Change and the Paradox of Choice. Held bi-annually, the event is a joint initiative of the Catholic Society for Marriage Education (CSME) and the Marriage and Relationship Educators Association of Australia (MAREAA). The theme of the conference was *Festival of Learning*.

Prior to the beginning of the conference Catholic marriage educators gathered for a day of prayer, discussion and reflection. The theme for the day was *Celebrating the Extraordinary in the Ordinary*. Facilitated by Rose-Marie Prosser (Centacare Melbourne), 36 educators took time to reflect on images of God and the presence of God in our lives and the lives of couples preparing for marriage. The day concluded with Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Elliott.

The Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Society for Marriage Education was held on the afternoon of Friday, August 28. Outgoing President, Anne Matuszek, thanked Michele Simons and Ray Reid who stepped down from the executive. The new CSME executive elected in Melbourne is:

Derek Boylen (President – Catholic Marriage Education Services, Perth)

Anne Matuszek (Secretary – Centacare, Tasmania)

Robyn Donnelly (Treasurer – Centacare, Newcastle)

Jennifer Mason (Centacare Brisbane)

Ros Lloyd (Newly elected – Centacare Broken Bay)

Francine Pirola (Newly elected – PMRC Australia)

The Catholic Society for Marriage Education (CSME) has formal relations with the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life. Members are organisations, parishes and agencies within the Catholic Church offering marriage and relationship education. For more information about CSME or membership queries visit www.csme.catholic.org.au.

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