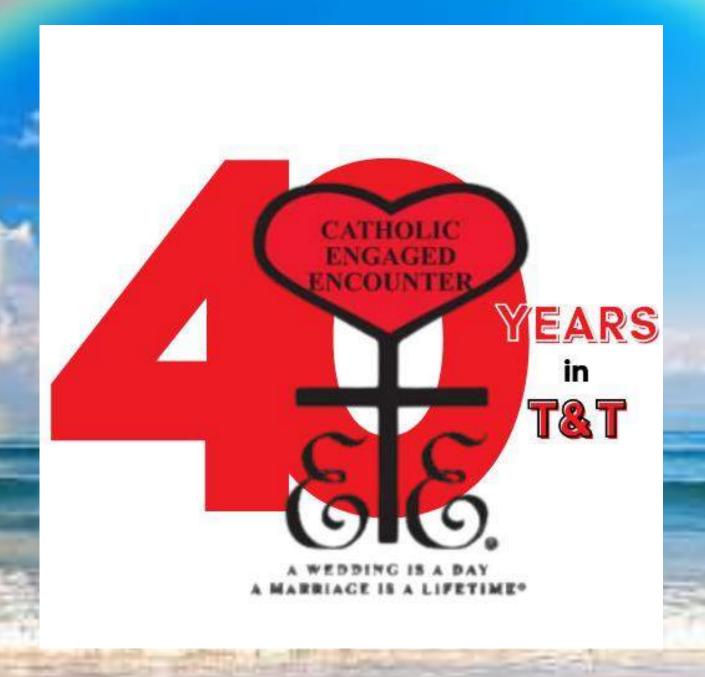
The Lord is good and His Love endures forever....
His faithfulness to all generations
Psalm 100:5









The Lord is good and His Love endures forever.... His faithfulness to all generations Psalm 100:5

The theme of our celebrations is taken from Psalm 100, a song of praise and thanksgiving...and indeed we have much to be thankful for! What started off with a few faithful souls has grown into a ministry which has ministered to thousands of couples and is now 40 years old.....and going...... Some of founders have gone to meet the Lord and while it has been a cause of sadness for us, they have left us a rich legacy of fidelity, faith, service and most of all, joy in doing the Lord's work. Others have had to leave due to infirmity, illness, having to fulfill other responsibilities and others have graciously stepped back from the "frontline", continuing to be loyal supporters and prayer warriors for our ministry; even so, the Lord has provided new labourers for His vineyard, in a new age.

Early participants in the weekends, now have children who have also experienced Catholic Engaged Encounter weekends. The words of the Psalmist are therefore for us not simply a praise, but a lived experience of the faithfulness of God, literally, as the Psalmist intones "....generation to generation". Indeed "... this Scripture is being fulfilled in y(our) hearing" Luke 4:21.

Greetings from International Catholic Engaged Encounter (ICEE), International Executive Team (IET)

Hello Friends from Trinidad and Tobago,

Congratulations on 40 years for CEE in your country and of your service of love. We are really happy for you. You have positively impacted the lives of so many young couples. Keep up the good work and congratulations my friends! Yovanny and Belkis Javier and Fr. Nelson ICEE IET (2022-2024)



We continue to pray for you and we keep you close to us in our hearts. We wish you another 40 years of service, testimony and generosity. Congratulations Trinidad and Tobago!

Macedonio and Sandra Garza and Fr. Luis Monroy outgoing ICEE IET



Congratulations to the Catholic Engaged Encounter community of Trinidad and Tobago on the achievement of yet another milestone. We thank God for showing us His favour and may He continue to be with us as we forge forward. Thank you to the married couples and families who willingly share of their time, talent and treasure for the enrichment of those preparing for marriage. May God bless us all.

Kendell and Latoya Celestine National Coordinators Catholic Engaged Encounter Trinidad and Tobago

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Catholic Engaged Encounter, Caribbean, congratulates the community of CEETT on the 40th anniver-



sary of their ministry. Through the relentless and prayerful dedication of its members, generations have now been given the opportunity to serve in, and to experience, this church grown program, which continues to assist and provide couples

with the tools necessary to grow in sacramental marriages. May the Lord continue to bless you all.

Anthony and Angela Mitchell CEE Caribbean Coordinators





Building Your Spiritual Life as a Couple

Sometimes we have to remind ourselves that those little quirks that made our spouse so endearing to us when we first met him/her, are those same habits that drive us crazy now. What does having the fan on or off have to do with our spiritual growth as a couple together?

He likes to sleep with the fan on high. I like the room still and perfectly quiet. He is a thinking type, who needs to gather all the facts before making a decision. I like to wing it! My spouse and I are very different and those differences have been an essential part of our spiritual journey together.

Spiritual union takes place in the flesh

On our wedding day we listened to the nuptial blessing that we "no longer be two, but one flesh." I thought that meant we would be united in making love and making babies. Shortly after our first disagreement about the fan, I began to realize that the greater challenge of becoming "one flesh" in our

first years together, had to do with joining our minds and hearts as well as our bodies. The Christian tradition of marriage invites couples into a deeply spiritual communion with one another and with God. That sounds pretty lofty and you may think that long hours of prayer would be the only pathway to that kind of experience of God. True, prayer is important. Recent research shows that shared prayer is a major predictor of stability and satisfaction for couples. But what could the deeply spiritual union of two lovers with God have to do with whether the fan is on or off? Everything.

Merging of "me" into "we" takes time

A couple's spiritual life has to do with daily efforts at negotiating differences, celebrating successes, and sacrificing selfish desires for the "us" that is gradually becoming. It is not separate from the routines and joys

of everyday life. A couple's spiritual life has to do as much with making love as it does with making

the bed. Spouses are formed spiritually in daily invitations to be more generous, patient and forgiving with one another. Our differences call us to conversion on a regular basis. Sometimes that spiritual discipline is as simple as picking up clothes off the floor. Other times it is as



heroic as moving to another city to benefit a spouse's career. Random acts of love and care for

one another are steps into God's presence. Every forgiven failing provides a glimpse of Divine mercy. God is love and every mundane effort to love, moves us toward the deep spiritual connection promised in the nuptial blessing. No two couples will experience the mystery of God's presence in the same way. Some will find

it watching a sunset, or taking long walks together. Others will experience it while in service to others, or at the time of a loved one's illness or death. Gradually over the years, an "us" emerges. A deep appreciation develops around the experience of belonging to each other, not in the sense of owning one another, but in being accepted as part of the other. This profound experience of communion is a window through which one can see the face of God. Below are some questions to help you explore and deepen the unique spiritual connection developing between you:

Questions for Discussion:

- In what ways are you becoming one in mind and heart?
- What have your differences taught you about vourselves?
- When and where are you most aware of God's presence in and around you?
- Which of you would be more likely to initiate a common prayer time? When would it be best to do that?

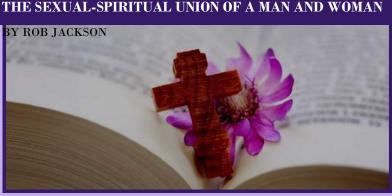
Adapted from https://www.aod.org/building-your-spiritual-life-as-a-couple







Marriages suffer from many wounds: power struggles, abusive situations, emotional distance, selfishness, immaturity and addictions are some of the more easily identifiable aspects of a wounded relationship. Many marriages, however (even the seemingly



The spiritual romance

between Christ and the

Church, is our best source

of inspiration for a great

marriage here.

healthy ones), often suffer from something far less easily recognized: a profound ignorance of the very nature of marriage itself. That is, couples understand neither what marriage truly is, nor what it represents eternally. Without this deeper, intrinsic understanding of the marital union, these relationships labor under low standards and mistaken expectations.

 $A\ good\ marriage\ is\ a\ mystery\ on\ many\ different\ levels.$

The Apostle Paul writes of the profound nature of marriage in Ephesians 5. In verse 32, Paul wraps up his treatment of marriage by writing, "This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church." What he means to tell us about this profound mystery, is that our

marriages are icons of the sacred union between Christ and the church. This truly is a mystery and you might be having a hard time comprehending what it means. For starters, Paul's analogy is a means of teaching men how to be a type of Christ and women how to be a type of the Church. Husbands are taught by the Greatest Lover how to live sacrificially toward their wives. Wives are inspired by God's love, to yield themselves in safety, treasured by both the One they await, and the one who holds them in this life.



As we anticipate Christ's return—the marriage that will end all marriages—the spiritual romance between Christ and the Church, is our best source of inspiration for a great marriage here. Here's an especially comforting aspect of this truth. Even though our earthly marriage ends when death parts us, since we are also brother and sister,

our spiritual union will not only continue in heaven, but will be perfect and complete. But this idea also changes how we look at the here and now. The next time you're frustrated with your spouse, ask yourself, "Am I more (earthly) marriage or our forever relationship?" How would things change if you were treating each other like a brother or sister in Christ instead of "the old ball and chain?" That may be a humorous stereotype, but it also begs the question: "Could or should things be different between

focused on our temporal

me and my spouse?"

Let's look at what this marriage analogy means on every level. Each of us — male and female — are created with a trinity of our own — like our Creator. Our trinity consists of three levels: body, mind and spirit. Our relationship to Christ informs each level, making us not only more like Him, but more like the spouse we were created to be. Of course, a damaged or distant relationship with Jesus, also informs how each of these aspects operates.

Often the physical part of us, including our behaviors, is the place we start our evaluation for the simple reason that it's the part that "shows." Like an iceberg with most of its bulk underwater, the tip is the part that first tells us it's there. This physical part,

our body, is what Christ called His temple. The physical union of our bodies was planned to be a picture of the joy we will have when finally joined with Christ at his return, our spiritual marriage. This is not to say our union with Christ will be sexual, but that our earthly expressions of sexuality in marriage, are the closest approximation to the unity, joy and pleasurable fulfillment we will experience in heaven. But, other, immediate applications

include being a good steward of our temple, as an act of gratitude and obedience. This spiritual/physical discipline will certainly build the enjoyment of our sexual relationship with our spouse.



Now let's dive underwater and look at the bigger parts of us we can't see. Our minds are constantly thinking, feeling, analyzing information and experiencing deep emotions. Christ says to renew our minds, which is a big process, constantly taking place as new and old thoughts and feelings collide and come to the surface. When two people are tending to this chore in their own minds, it can be the difference between a marriage that thrives, and one that flounders. Specific to our sexual union, two

(Continued on page 5)





renewed minds lead to thoughtful, sensitive lovers, who are more likely to find sexual fulfillment, rather than just going through the motions. If we really get down to the unseen bulk of who we are we find the spirit. Even now, this part of our being is most like God. Here is our core, the very essence of who we are, and who we're becoming. This part influences and directs our minds and bodies. How much more, then, do we need to nurture and maintain ourselves at this level than any other? And how much better lovers will we be if our spirits make us pure, loving and trustworthy? These qualities would bless our sexual union at the deepest level possible.

CATHOLIC ENGAGED ENCOUNTER OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Most people reading this article likely haven't ever given thought to their marriages (or future marriages) as a model of the inner love of the Trinity. Words like faithfulness, sacrifice and service take on a new and powerful meaning in our relationships, when we begin to realize this is precisely how God loves us. Despite any past mistakes or wounds, our marriages have the potential to be-

come what they were intended to be. Jumpstarting this transformation process requires realizing what we were intended to experi-

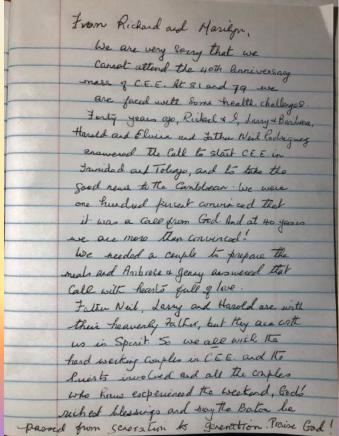
Your marriages is a model of the inner love of the Trinity.

ence, and then reforming where we have failed to match up. The Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes provides a timeless picture of marriage. Here we see two designed to function as one – with the help of God working behind it all. Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. — Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/the-sexual-spiritual-union-of-a-man-and-woman/



Richard and Marylin Webster









Can Dating Websites Help You Find a Spouse?

Christian

With almost 40 million of the U.S. population having tried internet dating, it has become one of the largest online industries, grossing almost two billion dollars in 2011. eHarmony and Match.com have over 30 million users combined, and the sites that focus mainly on Catholics—Catholicmingle.com, Catholicmatch.com and Avemariasingles.com—account for well over 200,000 individuals.

Given these numbers, it is fair to ask how helpful these sites are for finding successful relationships, including marital ones.

How do these websites help?

- These sites enable you to overcome many geographical limitations. Online sites expand the range of people you might meet. You can contact others of similar interests that are beyond where you work, live, and worship.
- You have a better chance of meeting people with similar beliefs. The websites either match you with people based on your preferences, or provide tools that enable you to do the searching yourself. The Catholic sites have the added advantage of emphasizing a person's faith. This enables people to discuss their beliefs up front, in the first few interactions, instead of after several conversations or dates. As shared values are essential for successful relationships and marriage, it is helpful to discuss them as you get to know someone, and before you move forward in a relationship.



• The sites make it easier to meet people in-person, the best way to evaluate the potential for a relationship. They help you draw from a large pool of individuals, to find those who might be of

interest to you. After a few interactions online, the sites often suggest a short meeting in a public place, like a coffee shop, to see if you want to continue getting to know the other person. (Three or four online interactions seem to be ideal, as by then you know if you are interested, and you have found out most of what you can without meeting in person.) Many of the sites even sponsor events for users to facilitate these face-to-face meetings. Match.com, for example, has an initiative called "The Stir" where they sponsor events for users to meet each other.



Each site takes several precautions to ensure the safety of its users. All of the companies said they screen profiles before posting them, and continually check them for any violations of the company's decency standards. Users are able to report any inappropriate material on profiles.

The sites also recommend that you delay sharing your phone number and email address, until after a few inperson meetings. You still must be cau- CATHOLIC tious and responsible for your own safe- SINGLES ty, but there are several mechanisms in place to help protect users.

What are their limitations?

- Different sites focus on different types of relationships. Match.com is geared to provide users with a full range of relationship options, from casual encounters, to finding potential spouses. eHarmony emphasizes serious relationships, utilizing a 400 question personality inventory to pair users. The Catholic sites focus on serious relationships through a two-fold process of self-selection. First, by targeting Catholics, these sites attract Catholics, and Catholics typically value marriage. Second, each Catholic site further indicates what kind of emphasis it places on marriage. Avemariasingles.com, for example, is for those "practicing Catholics who are serious about marriage, not window shoppers looking for a date." Catholic mingle.com, on the other hand, is for those seeking a faith community "for friendship, dating or marriage."
- Be wary of any distinct, special, or "scientific" claims for matching people. What research has been done on these methods indicates, at best, that they are not as effective as in-person assessments and, at worst, that they are flawed in their approach.

What these "matching" options are good at is eliminating those who are least compatible. In other words, the sites are better at indicating what two people would NOT have a good relationship, rather than what two people will have a good relationship.



• Too many matches can become overwhelming. Imagine looking at a menu in a restaurant that has 1,000 possible meals on it. It is difficult to choose. Typically, what people do in these situations is break it down into easier choices ("Do I want chicken or fish?"), and elimi-

(Continued on page 7)







Reasons to Celebrate Wedding Anniversaries

Another reason to celebrate anniversaries is because it is a day, the only day that is just between the two of you. Sure, others may have been married this same day. But this is the day that the two you stood across from one another, in front of God, friends, and family and outwardly admitted



your love for one another. You stood there with wild optimism, hopes, and dreams that were strung from your heart straight to your partner's, and believed...as a child believes in Santa, that it all would come true. And hopefully it will. There are few times in life when the human spirit and heart are so passionately connected to another, that they are willing to thrash aside reason, warnings and common sense to take a leap of faith with another human being, like you did the day you got married.



CHERISH, TIL DEATH

Adapted from https://www.professorshouse.com/reasons-to-celebrate-wedding-anniversaries/

(Continued from page 6)

nate huge portions of the menu. The problem is that this usually allow you to regprocess can easily eliminate some of the best options. This approach is often what people end up doing on dating websites. When faced with a large number of matches, people choose some characteristic, like hair color or height, and eliminate those who do not have that characteristic. They do this to make the choosing manageable, but it does not guarantee the best outcomes. In short, more does not necessarily mean better.

• The sites tend to overly emphasize personal preference or fulfillment. Obviously, your own choice and preferences matter a great deal in choosing a spouse. Yet, marriage for Catholics is not just about what you want, but how you will love and care for others. Another way to think about this is that dating websites often make the process feel like shopping, like a person is picking

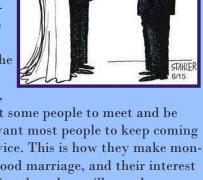


2018 Jeff Stahler/Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication

out a new coffee machine, golf clubs, or clothes. The result is that trying to figure out who is a good match often stops with "what makes you happy." It forgets to ask: "Is this person good and loving to others as well as to me?"

• Finally, no one should forget that the goal of these sites is

to make money. They ister and browse for free, and do not require payment (typically around \$20 a month for 6 months), until you want to contact someone. This money provides you a service, a useful and often quality service, one that can even help you to find a spouse. Yet, the goal of the company is still, first and foremost,



profit. While they want some people to meet and be happy together, they want most people to keep coming back and using the service. This is how they make money. Your interest in a good marriage, and their interest in a good profit may align, but they will not always or necessarily do so.

Do they help you to find a spouse?

They can. In fact, in 2011 almost 20% of marriages began online. Just be clear that these dating websites help, not by finding the perfect match for you, but by expanding the number of people you can meet. These sites complement meeting people in-person, or through family, friends, or church groups. If you approach the sites this way, you should feel comfortable and even hopeful using them

Adapted from https://www.foryourmarriage.org/can-dating- websites-help-you-find-a-spouse/







Why Get Married – 5 Reasons Why It's Still Important Today

By Rachael Pace

What is the first thought that comes to your mind when you hear the word marriage? Is it the sanctity of the wedding in your religion, or the legality of being married by law that makes it more valuable?

Or, are you someone who still values the formality of being married to the person who you chose to love forever?

You might also wonder why get married these days? Is it still as important nowadays, when divorce rates are soaring high?

How people view marriage today

Today, seeing happily married couples may seem like an unbelievable sight.

Nowadays, we see men who have a hard time deciding if they will marry or not. It is because men who marry, look like they're on their way to suffering a life of jail time with their wives.

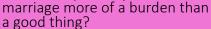
Today, even women feel that marriage can sometimes just be a formality, and will only cause more problems when they want to end the relationship. Today, couples would anticipate the impact of a divorce when you're married, rather than the good reasons to get married.

This inhibition, in turn, gives rise to questions like 'why is marriage important' or 'why do people get married in the first place'.

Some may think that if they disregard legal reasons to get married, and just live in together, it would make them cooler or more independent and realistic, but does it?

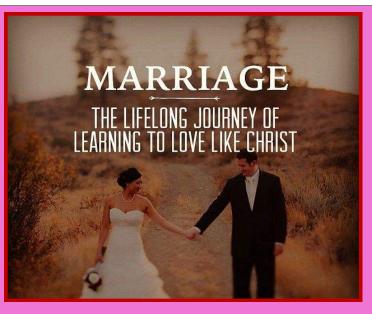
Before you rush to any conclusion, you need to figure out why do you want to get married.

Ask yourself questions like- don't you wish to get married to the person you love? Is





Believe it or not, the true meaning of marriage may have changed today, but there are still couples that still value and know the importance of getting married, and that's always a good thing. This is because being married to your partner, is ultimately way better than being single your whole life.



Why is marriage important in life?

Before understanding the reasons for getting married, it is crucial to realize why people fear getting married. There are a lot of counter questions to marriage as follows.

Why get married today when you can just live together? Why get married when it only gives you a hard time when you want to get divorced?

These are just some of the reasons why people nowadays see marriage as a burden, rather than something to be proud of. By definition, marriage isn't just a term

that you can easily disregard. To get an answer to why get married, read along.

Marriage is the sacred union of the two people in love committed to the nurturing of a new life together.

Still today, our society flourishes and recognizes the importance of marriage, and puts conditions in places and situations that ultimately safeguard the union of a family by law and by religion.

However, for those who still believe in the importance of getting married to seal the union of two people, here are some more reasons to reaffirm your belief in the institution of marriage.

Six reasons to get married

For those who are married, or those who are planning to get married, you might find yourself relating to the following positive reasons for getting married.

1. Marriage will give you the legal rights of a spouse

On the worldly side, it is important to be the legal spouse, not just because you want your children to bring the legitimacy of their birthright, but also plays a vital role in your assets and all kinds of **marital rights**,

RRIAGE IS ABOUT



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including retirement funds and alike.

Still wondering why it is important to get married, read on!

2. Marriage is the beginning of your new life together

Marriage is not just a legal union. It is both a physical, spiritual, and emotional alliance, as you and your

spouse will now decide together and will no longer think selfishly but rather for the benefit of your family.

It gives you and your partner a legitimate chance to commit to your relationship.

3. Marriage teaches you the importance of commitment

Though many marriages indeed lead to divorce because of affairs, there are also many couples who have successfully defeated the temptation to do this.

If you're married, wouldn't you treasure what you have with your spouse? Wouldn't you think twice about ruining your marriage just because of temptations?

So, why get married- to understand what commitment is and how wonderful it is to live such!



4. Marriage will strengthen your union as a family for your children

Let's face it – it is easier to abandon your partner and your child when you're not bound by marriage.

Statistics show an alarming rate of an absentee parent, which will then cause significant mental and behavioral effects on a child.

When you are married, and you have kids, even if you're

Marriage is the sacred union of the two people in love committed to

the nurturing of a

new life together.

facing problems, there's more than enough reasons for you to rethink your priorities and your life.

So, why get married- It's still one of the building blocks of a healthy family. And, you ought to strengthen your relationships, for a happy and fulfilling life.

5. It is the ultimate act of love for your partner

If you truly **love someone**, won't you imagine your future with them? Won't you dream of building a family with your partner and bind it with marriage? Would there be any other reason why you won't marry the person you love?

It's one of the strongest glue that any couple can have aside from commitment, respect, and of course, love.

6. Marriage is not the last step for a happy ending

Marriage doesn't work for some; but, there are still people who know how sacred marriage is, and know the importance of getting married.

A marriage, of course, isn't the last step for that happy ending, but rather the first step in making your own love story, which will require lots of patience, understanding, commitment, love, and respect. There are still some people today that do not feel the need to be married — and we are not here to judge or to tell them what they need to do with their lives.

The truth is, we just all want our happily-ever-after, and marriage is still one way to show to your partner that you are willing to spend the rest of your lives with them, for better or for worst – till death do you part.

Now when somebody as you- why get married, you know what to say.

Adapted from https://www.marriage.com/advice/pre-marriage/why-get-married/













CEETT THROUGH THE YEARS











































MEMORIAM

- Reliable and honest to all whom you have met R-
- Admirable and kind with a soul no one can forget A-
- Y-Young at heart with a smile to brighten one's day
- M-Modest and caring in each and every way
- 0-Optimistic and passionate with a heart so pure
- N-Noble and dedicated that is for sure
- D-Devoted to friends and family and to your Lord up high.

It is time you meet the Angels.

It is time to say Goodbye.

Raymond Garcia

Our memories of Ray is a man who loved God, enjoyed life, loved his wife dearly, always had an engaging smile, liked a lime, and was always willing to go the extra step to give a hand, committed to his word and his duties. Ray's work with CEETT goes back to the original founders; he was part of building the foundation which we stand on today; in retrospect, in spite of his physically small stature, he was a giant among us, with a heart that overflowed with generosity and showed us how to serve with honour, dedication, pride and most of all, love.

RIP Ray....a good and faithful servant.

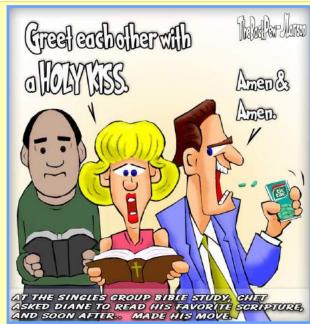




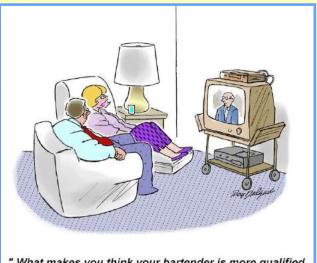












" What makes you think your bartender is more qualified than my hairdresser to solve our marital problems?"





Catholic News Supplement Sunday 27th March, 2022 CEETT 40th Anniversary



"The Lord is good, and His love endures forever…his faithfulness to all generations." Ps 100:5



The importance of Catholic Engaged Encounter







International Catho Engaged Encounter





Contact CEETT

CATHOLIC NEWS | Sunday March 27, 2022 Congrats from the Archdiocesan

Family Life Commission

Our past, our future



A ministry of families

A TESTIMONY



Reigniting our call to serve





Our experience of CEE – the early years

CATHOLIC NEWS | Surday, March 27, 2002 Remaining resilient in the midst of the pandemic





We remember Ray

