

Leadership Institute



***Forever & Ever
...And Then Some***

‘True Love That Lasts’ webinar series

By ELIZABETH CLYONS

BRIDGEPORT --- Beginning on February 11, many couples joined the “True Love That Lasts Webinar Series,” a collaboration between Dr. Jim Steffen, co-author of “The Secret of Growing True Love That Lasts,” and Dr. Patrick Donovan, Director of the Leadership Institute.

Maria Mullen, who participated in the program with her husband Ted and did not miss a single session, explained that the “method” that both the book and webinar present is clear, concise and easy to use. “Many books on marriage and love come across as self-help books, with ideas, but no set plan,” said Maria. “This book gives a concrete format with an easy to use method. The questions are set, but the answers are numerous.”

Steffen’s book, the webinar, and the accompanying follow-up video series focuses on how couples can grow true love that lasts by asking just a single question a day.

“In their book, Jim and Carol Steffen outline a very simple recipe for a strong and healthy marriage, said Bishop Frank J. Caggiano. “By asking just one question a day, husbands and wives can work together to build a relationship that endures. I invite couples of all ages and experience to take up Jim and Carol’s challenge of growing true love that lasts.”

“It encourages communication and closeness when the question of the day is asked,” explained Mullen. “If you want to bring your marriage to the next level, this is the program with which to do it as it is a gradual unveiling of the ‘masks’ we are all so good at hiding behind.”

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Steffen explains that one can participate as a couple – which is ideal – or as an individual. In the past webinar, about one third – both men and women – participated alone because their spouse was not available. This was the case with Nithya Jacob.

Nithya Jacob, a member of the Catholic Psychotherapy Society, said that she enjoyed sharing with the other webinar participants. “I felt so connected with everyone over this period of five weeks. I learned a lot from each one of my teammates and it was very insightful to share with each other under the direction of Coach Jim.”

Jacob shared that she would encourage others to join in the next webinars to help them live a life of greater joy, understanding and love for their spouse and family. The ages of participants ranged from Jacob – a mother of less than one year – to several having celebrated their fiftieth anniversary years ago, fulfilling the Bishop’s challenge above.

Greg McGinn, former director of deacon training in the Diocese of Manchester, enjoyed the flexible program, finding it helpful but not over-demanding. “I would endorse the program not only for married couples as participants, but for serious consideration by diocesan catechetical leaders looking for a practical program that contributes to life-long faith formation,” he said.

On June 25, 2020, The Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization released a new Directory for Catechesis, providing guidelines for the Church’s mission of proclaiming the Gospel through catechesis and evangelization.

“In the new directory, Pope Francis challenges us to ‘make use of the valuable help of other couples with long-standing experience in marriage,’” said Dr. Patrick Donovan, quoting the New Directory. “The document goes so far as to challenge parishes and dioceses to lose the terminology, ‘marriage prep’ because it undermines the true meaning of marriage formation: an ongoing journey that takes a lifetime. What Jim and Carol have done is to take their own story and put it at the disposal of others. It will be a perfect tie-in to our renewed formation for the sacrament of marriage, which launches in early September.”

Steffen’s book is the culmination of the author’s sixty-year quest to understand how couples can stay together and enjoy marriages that thrive. “The problem has a dual nature,” Steffen says, “the first is to discover what to do to grow true love that lasts and the other is remembering to do it.” In the book and habit builder, Steffen offers a solution to both.

The book provides practical tips for couples to follow and simple questions to ask each day. The included habit builder solves the second part of the equation. With his background in time management, Steffen uses what he calls the QEP method: Quick-to-learn, Easy-to-use, Proven-to-work Method. The True Love That Lasts Kit (book and habit builder) are available at: www.TrueLoveThatLasts.us.

“My relationship with God and my wife has grown,” said John Setear, who participated in the webinar series with his wife JoAnne. “All marriages can benefit from this program,” said JoAnne. “It’s very smart of the Catholic church to embrace this and support couples and marriage today.”

April 2021

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Father Chip O'Neil, pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Brookfield, has watched the development of the True Love That Lasts Movement for a long time. He has encouraged his parishioners to participate in the webinars and was pleased that so many who did came away with life-changing insights.

"I am convinced that the simplicity of asking just one question a day can help the person asking the question live a happier, healthier, holier and even longer life," said Father Chip.

The True Love That Lasts Movement (book, habit builder, webinar and follow-up video series) is a very simple yet powerful process to help couples grow in the enjoyment and love of their spouse *even daily*. Participants in the webinar have experienced benefits as soon as they ask the first question.

In so doing, we hope young people see and are convinced how simple and happy a daily growing married life can be, thereby responding to Pope Francis' concern.

"This movement is unique insofar as there is no diocese that has such an effort," says Donovan, explaining that this is not just a premarital program but a program of continuing formation.

Our diocese created this unique True Love That Lasts Webinar and Follow up Video Series for our own people. However, responding to Pope Francis' concern for *the world crisis of the family*, other dioceses and people of all religions are invited to join. This program has changed people's lives forever," Dr. Patrick Donovan declared.

The Diocese of Bridgeport will offer another True Love That Lasts Webinar Series beginning May 27. Free to all." For detail and to register, go to:

<https://TrueLoveThatLasts.us/register.html>