

## **Communication of New Guidelines for Married Couples Attending a Weekend**

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In January 2016, the CEC Weekend Steering Committee reexamined the policy for Married Couples Attending the Weekend. Discussion was not brought to conclusion and was carried over to the first meeting of the CEC Archdiocesan Coordinating Council (the ACC) on August 20, 2016.

After extensive dialogue and discussion about the purpose and goals of this policy, the ACC recommended a new policy for married couples. It will be piloted for the CEC Weekends in 2017.

The new ***Guidelines for Married Couples Attending the Weekend*** are:

- A. Couples who are married are both encouraged to attend the weekend.
- B. Both spouses are to be registered at the same time. Spouses are encouraged to attend the same set of weekends, or preferably within one year of one another.
- C. If one of the spouses does not or cannot register to attend a weekend, then a request for an exception to this policy will be submitted to the urban or rural Spiritual Director. The Spiritual Director will consult with the pastor and/or sponsor of the couple to determine if an exception is appropriate. If an exception is approved, the registration will be processed.

One positive result of this change is that the new policy will focus on the marriage relationship of ***both*** spouses. It will encourage both the husband ***and*** the wife to attend the weekend so as to.....

- .....strengthen the marriage
- .....promote a faith based relationship
- .....maintain unity in the sacramental marriage, ***and***
- .....strengthen the family.

Another positive feature of the new policy is that it acknowledges situations when there are valid reasons to make an exception for the wife *or* for the husband who wants to attend the weekend when their spouse cannot or will not ever make a weekend. This opens the door to support the spiritual growth of the spouse who attends the weekend. The attending spouse's experience and example may then influence the desire of their spouse to attend at a later date.

The revised policy will be successful when.....

- .....both spouses in a marriage are registered to attend a weekend.
- .....one married spouse can participate in a CEC Weekend if an exception is approved by the rural or urban Spiritual Director.

**Here is what is needed from all sponsors:** If your candidate is married, talk to both and strongly encourage each to attend a CEC weekend. Invite and register both spouses to attend the same set of weekends, or preferably within one year of one another. If both spouses do not or cannot register to attend a weekend, contact the Registrar and/or the Spiritual Director to request an exception. We want CEC weekends to be filled with candidates who feel called by God. Together, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and our prayers, we can make this happen!

### **Conclusion:**

This revised policy will be reexamined by the CEC Archdiocesan Coordinating Council in 2018.