

On Monday, February 16, 2009, Meg Picciolo, Director of Marketing Communications for St. Dominic Catholic Parish visited Jeff and Glenda Stanlick to learn more about their experience at the Benet Lake (near Kenosha) Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend they attended in October 2008.

*What made you decide to attend or what influenced you?*

The time seemed to be right for them. Jeff and Glenda had talked about going several times earlier. Jeff was definitely in need of taking a break from work and Glenda was not working at the time. Glenda said, "I had been employed at Benet Lake and wanted to see the monastery and the monks again."

*Is there any cost to attend a WWME weekend?*

There is a \$50 registration fee and then everyone is asked to donate above and beyond—if they are able. It is a non-profit organization. The cost for the weekend is about \$300 per couple. Glenda said, "We and the organization do not want any couples NOT to attend because of the cost."

*Did you have any reservations about the weekend?*

Jeff and Glenda were concerned about leaving the kids for a full weekend. Jeff said, "I was concerned about being in a room full of people I didn't know and having to do group sharing." Jeff was reassured by a phone call prior to the weekend that there wasn't group sharing during the weekend, but rather opportunities for couples to spend time talking to each other. Glenda said, "I decided to trust that God wanted us to be there."

*What were you expecting to happen or what were you hoping to gain from this weekend?*

"We were just looking for time to spend together, an opportunity to re-connect and focus on each other instead of work, kids, money, etc.," said Glenda. "Some people have the expectation there will be more prayer and group prayer. It is more about focusing on your relationship to each other and God through dialogue with your spouse," said Jeff.

*Who were the program presenters and how many couples were in attendance?*

The program presenters were a priest and a few couples. Glenda said, "I was moved by the presenter couples who were willing to share very openly, the challenges they faced in their own marriages." Jeff and Glenda were not familiar with any of the presenters. There were 30 couples in attendance in a wide range of ages.

*What surprised you the most?*

At the end of the weekend they were told that there were many people praying for them all weekend. "Hearing that people were specifically prayer for us, was such a wonderful feeling and impressed upon the importance of prayer," said Glenda.

*What was the most challenging or difficult part of the weekend?*

Jeff said, "Some of the topics we were asked to talk about were difficult." Glenda said, "The topics required you to dig down to your emotional core." There also was opportunity for one-on-one confession. Glenda said she was somewhat uncomfortable going in front of another person and sharing such personal information.

*What did you learn from this weekend/program?*

“Little things can end up being big things; if you ignore some of the little things they can build up and create big problems,” said Jeff.

*What will you take away from this experience?*

“Turn toward your spouse in times of trouble. Set time aside for each other each day. And remember that Christ is in the middle of it all; your marriage—marriage is a sacrament,” said Glenda.

*What would you tell other couples considering attending?*

“It is worth it! Everyone has fears and hesitations. If you leave yourself open, you will get a lot out of the weekend, said Jeff. “Your marriage will be renewed. Don’t let cost be an issue or reason for not attending. You deserve it,” said Glenda!

*How has it changed your marriage?*

“We thought we had a good marriage. However we realized there were things we could do to improve our marriage,” said Jeff. Glenda said, “ Couples attending may save their marriage or maybe just strengthen it, but everyone will deepen and enrich their marriage.”

*What has it moved you to do? Where are you going from here?*

We are now involved in a monthly rosary group. We have renewed our desire to make Sunday Mass and meal prayers a priority; to bring Christ into our daily life. They have volunteered to be a house couple for WWME which entails helping with set-up, registration and clean-up for upcoming local WWME weekends. They also would like to encourage other couples to attend and be a resource for those considering.

Weekends are schedule quarterly in southeastern Wisconsin; monthly in the wider local area. For more information visit these websites:

Local: [www.alifetimeoflove.org](http://www.alifetimeoflove.org)

Main: [www.wwme.org](http://www.wwme.org)