



Marriage Encounter (EM) meets forty years in the service of marriages and couples; of priests and religious. Yes, because despite being a meeting specially designed for marriages, also helps to consecrated persons. "We all live in relationship with someone," say the coordinators of EM in Spain and is in the relational aspect of our lives where EM intervenes to fill these gaps of sense.

Josico Mata and Susana Meadow were six years married, had two daughters and their marriage was in apparent good condition when a priest friend invited to participate in the Weekend of Marriage Encounter (EM). "We discussed, but we had no great problems; however, the steps that we have been making after that meeting have made that we have achieved a depth in the marriage that, otherwise, we would not have achieved", emphasizes meadow. But what is the weekend of which they speak with so much enthusiasm? What is the charisma of this public association of the faithful born in Spain and present today in the whole world?

#### Relational beings

All part of the belief that to be married and be happy is possible, is more, "it is the dream that God has for us as a couple - explains kills-, and the difference between being happy in the marriage and not be is to know that, as in many other things, you can learn how to use tools with which to cope with the problems that arise when trying to manage differences".

In origin, this movement part of human fact of marriage and, in the case of consecrated persons and the need to relate. It is in this aspect on which the precursor of EM, Father Gabriel Calvo, noted that there was some lack: in the Church is not addressed, since the faith, the relational aspect of marriage; i.e. it is

not helped the family to take care of your relationship, not offered specific guidelines or tools for communication to guide the spouses to love and to help better.

"Marriage Encounter wants to cover the relational aspect of marriage because, it sometimes happens that married couples join in the routine and the relationship ceases to be the first thing, and, according to our experience, we have discovered another dimension in the relationship. Thanks to that we have learned to communicate our feelings, we have managed to put ourselves in the place of another, think before in our spouse that in ourselves," recognizes is happy couple. For his part, the father Jose Antonio Sanchez, the priest who completes the ecclesial team that coordinates EM in Spain, concludes that "in Christian, this is the conversion: doing things by love for the other which is Christ". For the Father Sánchez, participate, fifteen years ago, in the Weekend was also a transforming experience, as it is for all consecrated as "return to your parish or community with a quality of different relationship," he says. For the priests, it is not easy to identify feelings; nor is communicated, and less if they are negative. Marriage Encounter I facilitates speak from my personal experience. Even when I preach I talk more as a witness".

#### The Weekend of EM

by this source so human and rational, this movement is intended to benefit both couples believers and non-believers; those who have children and those that do not, even those who are not married, "Although our desire, and this has been the case with some couples, is that they raise the Christian marriage," says meadow. The only requirement for participation in the Weekend is that couples have shared a time of life in common on which to work. "The experience of the Weekend is fundamental," insists kills. This takes place from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon in a house of spirituality. The contents of the weekend is to have two or three marriages and a priest members of EM.

The dynamic that develops in the Weekend is to speak from experiential point of view: "From our experience, we work with couples the encounter with oneself, internal communication, the identification of aspects of each one, because if not, it is difficult to relate to the other," explains meadow. The following is found with the spouse or, in the case of priests, "With our parish community; with the person who, as the priest or religious, we have more treatment; with the priest companion of parish", adds the Father Sánchez. Once you have identified the "relationship base", or the person with whom you communicate more directly, it is a question of building with her and help her to rediscover the meaning of marriage or of the priesthood... And, from there, from his vocation, see how each person is called to be a reflection of the love of God.

This process is performed in thirteen experiences that expose together the marriage and the priest, followed by a proposal of work where the couple reflects in private, without putting it in common with the other participants.

Throughout the weekend, the team moved the Gospel teachings of Jesus to the married life because "in him, we see a model of communication, love" and marriages, at the end of the meeting, deduce, by themselves, which, behind it,

there is a love with uppercase. "There are couples who are rediscovering the Church or retrieved, even the faith; know the God from whom part the love and that invites us to be a sign of his love on earth".

A team of three

Josico Mata, Susana Meadow and Father José Antonio Sánchez form the ecclesial team coordinator of EM in Spain. The peculiarity of this team is that the relationship that is established between them is of such privacy and depth that "goes beyond the family itself". The priest will enrich to see the commitment of marriage, how they are working with their children: "It stimulates me in my priestly life, for that is not insignificant". For its part, Josico and Susana admire the charisma of consecration of the Father Jose Antonio. It could be said that the three are witnesses of the love story of each one.

Marriage Encounter was born in Barcelona fruit of Vatican II. It was the "great inspiration" of the Father Gabriel Calvo, who, to note that had marriages that were better than others, began to work with a group of Christian married couples to improve their communication skills. The American Jesuit priest Chuck Gallagher was captivated by the proposal of the Father Calvo and it was he who gave the final form and structure of the weekend to then return to Spain 40 years ago. Since then, the movement has been extended by more than one hundred countries of the world thanks to the commitment and the surrender of persons who discover, in this movement, a true gift for the Church and for their lives.

More information on the web [www.encuentromatrimonial.com](http://www.encuentromatrimonial.com) or email [Info@encuentromatrimonial.com](mailto:Info@encuentromatrimonial.com)

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