

Proposal for Grant from the Catholic Marriage Initiative Fund

Section 1: THE DIOCESE OF SAN BERNARDINO

The Diocese of San Bernardino is a vibrant and diverse community of Roman Catholic believers, numbering 1.7 million throughout San Bernardino and Riverside counties in Southern California. We commit ourselves to bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to all we encounter. We are guided by the core values of hospitality, collaboration, faith sharing, and reconciliation. Through the impact of the Gospel, we seek to fill lives with hope¹.

Currently, about 4.6 million people are residing in this area². According to the US Census Bureau, the population is expected to grow significantly within the next 10 years. The Community Diversity Index indicates that this area is especially racially/ethnically diverse. The median family income compared to the state for this area is somewhat less. Compared to the state, the number of families living in poverty is somewhat above the state average. The racial/ethnic group with the most significant percentage in this area is Hispanic.

Presently, about 66.4% of the population are adults in a relationship. About 18% are single between the ages of 18 and 25. Most families with children in our area are more likely to live in two-parent households; 68.9 % of families to be precise. The school-age population in this area is expected to moderately increase in the next five years. It is currently above 1.1 million. The general level of education of the adults 25 and older is mixed depending on the specific region. However, only about 28.8% of the general population has completed a degree in higher education.

The Diocese of San Bernardino is considered the fifth largest Catholic diocese in terms of population in the United States. In service to the Bishop, the Office of Marriage and Family Life Ministry (OMFLM) provides direction at the diocesan level to six vicariates, including 92 parishes and 12 missions, with respect to the ministry of marriage and family life. The OMFLM strives to encounter, accompany, and integrate leaders and parishes in fruitfully bringing about a renewal of the culture of marriage and family life by strengthening the *Domestic Church* (This means that it is in the context of the family that we first learn who God is and to seek His will for us prayerfully³) through resources, training, and consultations rooted in the teachings of The Catholic Church. We believe that the parish should have a high-quality marriage ministry that encompasses a comprehensive approach to marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, and marriage restoration by balancing vision, skills, and support across all ages and stages of the marital life cycle.

Section 2: OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

2.A) Project period and budget amounts:

2.A-1) The proposed project will have a three-year implementation period. The first year will focus on program development, recruitment, and training. The second year, we will focus on program implementation and replicating it throughout the diocese. In the third year, we will focus on evaluation and sustainability.

2.A-2) The target budget for this project over the course of three years is of \$100,000. We are applying for \$50,000 from The Catholic Marriage Initiative Fund (the CMI Fund) and \$50,000 from the diocese, donors, and campaigns. We will request \$15,000 in year one, \$20,000 in year

¹ www.sbdiocese.org

² US Census Bureau, Synergos Technologies Inc., Experian, DecisionInsite/MissionInsite

³ <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/parents/tools-for-building-a-domestic-church>

2, and \$15,000 in year 3. In years one and three, we anticipate using less funding when compared to year two. Since year 1 will focus on development, most funding will be used for training, marriage campaign materials, and forming teams. We want people and parishes to know we are here to accompany marriages and families. In year 2, we anticipate using the funding to focus on the implementation phase of the project, and we want to make this world-class marriage project accessible to all. Our aim is to saturate the community with communication skills and other marriage education curriculum. In year 3, we hope to put in full motion the sustainability plan and create other funding sources. The funding will be used to continue sponsoring some programs as the project becomes self-sustainable.

2.B) PROJECT SCOPE

2.B-1) We have chosen to implement the following four ministry areas from the USCCB pastoral framework for this project: 1.3- Preparing engaged couples for marriage: immediate preparation; 2.1- Accompany Married Couples in the First Few Five; 2.2- Ongoing Marriage Enrichment; and 2.5- Accompanying Married Couples in Crisis.

2.B-2) In collaboration with key parish marriage and family life ministry leaders, the OMFLM Advisory Board, and the OMFLM staff, we have chosen these four ministerial areas because we agree with the Bishops that our pastoral efforts must “focus on the concrete realities” of family life in our diocese.⁴ As we looked at the Diocesan Needs Assessment (DNA, Table 1), we acknowledge that all ministerial areas require improvement. We discerned that the work proposed in this Request for Proposals for Grants (RPG) must focus on three elements of marriage ministry: marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, and marriage restoration.

	Vision	Skills	Support	Total
1.3 - Immediate Marriage Preparation	9	8	7	22
2.1 - First Few Years	8	6	5	19
2.2 - Ongoing Marriage Enrichment	8	8	8	24
2.5 - Married Couples in Crisis	8	8	8	24
Average	8.25	7.5	7	22.25

Table 1.

First, there is a need to strengthen the marriage ministries that prepare engaged couples for marriage. In our diocese, every parish should offer a suitable form of marriage preparation. However, the reality, especially as we continue with a world health crisis, is that most parishes are struggling to implement a marriage preparation process and recruit a team. We hope to develop and implement a marriage preparation process that includes proximate, immediate, and pastoral care for those seeking the Sacrament of Matrimony.

The Proximate Preparation aims to teach and accompany youth and young adults in their discernment of God’s plan for their lives and their vocation, in particular for the vocation of marriage and family life. The Immediate Preparation, through an appropriate catechesis, helps engaged couples have more in-depth knowledge and understanding of the mystery of Christ and the Church, the grace and the responsibility of Christian Marriage, and practical preparation for taking an active and conscious part in the rites of the marriage liturgy. The pastoral care for couples preparing for marriage must extend to the ongoing education of skills, such as

⁴ USCCB, Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life (2021)

communication and spiritual support, to continue to engage them in the discernment of God's plan for them.

Second, accompanying married couples in the first five years falls under marriage enrichment. Getting married is one of the fundamental personal transitions someone can experience. When they decide to marry, most engaged couples are happy with their relationship and expect to be happy together *until death do them part*. However, these expectations are often not fulfilled.⁵ Most couples say they decide to marry each other based on positive connections such as fun, friendship, and passion. However, when couples divorce, reasons include not enough commitment, too much conflict, infidelity, and growing apart.⁶ We believe that if couples are accompanied during this life transition and are equipped with a comprehensive balance of relevant vision, skills, and support, they will likely preserve a positive connection in their marriage.

Third, ongoing marriage enrichment is essential for a healthy marriage. We believe that marriage enrichment should be available for every married couple at every natural life transition. Natural life transitions occur when a couple transitions from one state or season of life to another. For instance, when a couple has their first child, that child's presence will create changes that will require adjustments. Likewise, with circumstances such as changing jobs or moving to a new home, marriage enrichment can help sustain positive connections.

Finally, accompanying married couples in crisis fits in the marriage restoration category. We believe that there is a difference between marriage restoration and marriage enrichment. Primarily, marriage restoration becomes a need when the spousal relationship is affected by sin. Accompanying married couples in crisis primarily focuses on the theme of forgiveness. With the current state of our families, we are aware of the need for couples to learn how to ask for forgiveness and how to grant forgiveness. Couples are most likely to enter a crisis when high negative communication and low positive affect are perceived in the relationship.

2.B-3) In the first year, we propose placing the most emphasis on ministerial area 2.2, Ongoing Marriage Enrichment. We believe that ongoing marriage enrichment has been neglected and misunderstood. For instance, when a parish has a marriage event, most couples assume that it is for couples in crisis. Hardly has it been said that every marriage needs enrichment at least once a year. We need to establish a culture where marriage enrichment is seen as necessary to adjust to natural life changes, to prevent a crisis. Also, we are confident that by motivating more couples to invest in their marriage, they will be willing to help other couples. Thus, increasing interest in the marriage preparation and marriage restoration portions of the project. We hope to develop and implement a public awareness campaign for the diocesan marriage ministry.

Section 3: FIRST YEAR PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.A) Planning Period.

During the first 90 days of the project period, we have identified seven action steps, see *Table 2* on page 6.

3.B) Ministry Areas implemented during Year 1

3.B-1) The Diocese of San Bernardino offers formation opportunities and resources for parish leaders in the following marriage ministry areas: Marriage Preparation, Marriage and Family

⁵ The Premarital Communication Roots of Marital Distress and Divorce: The First Five Years of Marriage (2010)

⁶ " "

Enrichment, Relationship/Communication Skills, Behavior Health Awareness, Accompaniment to Divorced and Separated Catholics, Parent Formation, Natural Family Planning, Accompaniment to Couples that are in Crisis, Accompaniment to Families of the Incarcerated, and Accompaniment to Caregivers of Ill Family Members.

Through the Office of Marriage and Family Life, the diocese offers a certification course in marriage ministry granted to those who complete the marriage specialization course, an 8-hour communication skills workshop, and a one-day retreat. The course is designed to be taught in eight, 3-hour sessions, delivered over the course of four months. The content of the course includes the following topics: The biblical and theological foundation of marriage; The social and cultural context of Christian marriage in the United States; The mission of the church in our social and cultural context and our baptismal call; Elements of Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment Ministry/Programs; sponsor couple (recruiting, training and sustaining); The catechesis on the rite of marriage; Liturgical celebration of the sacrament; Human sexuality/morality/ natural family planning; Canon law /the right to marry/pastoral issues/interfaith marriage/interchurch marriage/ cohabitating couples/convalidations/ annulments. Evidence-based communication skills programs for youth, singles, engaged, and couples have been central for marriage ministry in the diocese since 2010. Trained facilitators teach the various curricula offered in Spanish and English. It is essential that we continue to select high-quality curricula and offer high-quality training to instructors at the Diocese level. We currently have three approved curriculums that teach communication skills, Adventures in Marriage, Mastering the Mysteries of Sacramental Love, and Ready for Love.

Due to the current world health crisis, participation has been skewed, yet the need to accompany couples and families continues to increase. Our diocesan Needs Assessment reveals that much is needed to improve our ministry, and through this project, we must aim to balance the vision, skills, and support for couples and families. We will continue to use this tool during the planning period.

3.B-2) We will be offering Adventures in Marriage (AIM), Mastering the Mysteries of Love (MML), and The Third Option. We will be offering AIM coaching in year 1 to engaged couples, those in the first five years of marriage, couples seeking marriage enrichment, and those in crisis (excluding those with domestic violence issues). AIM challenges couples to take their relationship to the next level by focusing on the importance of connection and intimacy. This course is based on a biblical view of what marriage is called to be and supports the vision with communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and healthy emotions management. After this course, couples will have a new appreciation for the other and a deep understanding of what it means to love each other through all the adventures that await them.

For those servant leaders and couples who want more after AIM, we will provide MML. MML is a communication skills program that offers quality emotional and relationship education materials which are easy to use, effective, and culturally sensitive. It teaches 10 key communication skills, helping couples speak and listen to each other with greater care and empathy, enhancing their relationship, and successfully addressing and solving problems by working together. This program includes skilled coaches to help couples practice good communication.

We will offer the Third Option to those couples in crisis. The Third Option is a peer ministry. It is an educational and support group where couples may learn and encourage each other along the way. It combines a support group, mentor couples, and workshops about

relationship skills. Each of the 14 sessions stands alone. Couples are welcome to attend indefinite cycles to build their marriage to the level they seek.

3.B-3) We anticipate having a variety of delivery systems. First, we will offer AIM at any parish where the parish pastor has requested the service and guarantee the participation of at least 15 couples. Second, we will identify at least 3 parishes in different vicariates to offer AIM classes year-round. More delivery systems will be determined during the planning period. We aim to saturate and increase demand with marriage enrichment in the community.

3.B-4) In the ministry area of preparing engaged couples for marriage, we will roll out the project in a phased approach. The methodology will be determined during the planning period. However, we anticipate a phase where parishes evaluate their marriage preparation process, a phase that is updated to include communications skills training, and a phase where the OMFLM helps establish at least the minimum suitable form of marriage preparation.

The parish plays a specific role in marriage and family life ministry, being the concrete place closest to families, which can directly know their needs and therefore pay much more direct and adequate attention to them. There will be a mixed approach to rolling out the project in the ongoing marriage enrichment ministry area. The communications skills component of the marriage enrichment will be rolled out diocesan-wide. Once again, we intend to saturate and increase the demand for AIM throughout the diocese. The model of marriage enrichment, which will be developed during the planning phase, most likely will consist of weekly meetings and will be rolled out in phases.

The accompanying married couples in the first five years ministry area will be rolled out in phases. The details will be determined during the planning period. However, we anticipate that each phase would carry out elements of the “culture of encounter” in pastoral care to educate, encourage, and engage newlyweds.

Finally, the accompanying married couples in crisis will be rolled out in a diocesan/vicariate wide approach. Details of the roll out will be determined during the planning phase. However, we anticipate that ongoing Third Option groups will be established in English and Spanish.

3.C) The project will be under the supervision of the OMFLM Co-Directors. The OMFLM advisory board is also willing to commit for the first year with the possibility to renew their commitment on a yearly basis. We will identify couples to form leadership teams for each ministerial area (this task will be completed during the planning period). We anticipate developing and hiring at least two couples to serve as train the trainers for the communication skills curriculum.

The level of commitment will be determined during the planning period. However, for the first three months, the office co-directors will commit about 80% of their workday to completing the planning period in collaboration with the advisory board and other stakeholders interested in marriage ministry.

The co-directors’ primary qualifications are their experience in developing, implementing, and managing marriage ministry. They have been communication skills instructors for more than 12 years, having coached thousands of couples, both married and engaged. Also, they are certified as train the trainers for the AIM curriculum. They have valuable experience developing servant leaders in numerous marriage ministry areas.

3.D) Proposed Project Objectives Timeline

Section 4: ALIGNMENT WITH DIOCESE AND BISHOP

Project Timeline - (*will be fully developed during the planning period)												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Develop and set goals for the Budget/Match.	X											
Review this proposal and identify areas in our project that could be developed and improved, setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time Specific) goals.	X	X										
Create committees of interested stakeholders in all three elements of marriage ministries: marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, and marriage restoration.	X	X	X									
Identify at least 15 couples to be trained as communications skills instructors.		X	X									
Identify at least three pilot parishes in the different vicariates.		X	X									
Schedule AIM classes for the summer, fall, and winter.		X	X									
Setup an Adventures in Marriage and/or Mastering the Mysteries of Love Training for the summer.			X									
Launch the fundraising campaign				X								
Roll out of the initial phase for preparing engaged couples for marriage					X							
Start offering AIM classes in all ministry areas						X						
Roll out of the initial phase for accompanying married couples in the first five years						X						
Evaluation and adjustment of project							X	X	X			
Completed project design								X	X			
Public Awareness Campaign								X	X			
Established coaches for the AIM classes									X			
Launch The Third Option										X	X	
Scheduled the AIM classes for Year 2										X	X	
Have all project phases ready to roll out											X	X

Table 2.

4.A) In the early years of the establishment of the diocese in 1979, Marriage and Family Life Ministry was under the direction of the Ministry of Social Services (Children & Family, and Family Life Commission). In 2001, the Office of Pastoral Ministry held the responsibility for marriage. In 2005, the responsibility was relocated to the Apostolic and Ethnic Affairs Office. In 2007, the bishop gave the Office of Catechetical Ministry (OCM) the responsibility for the immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage and the care for families. In 2019 a diocesan office was established because Marriage and Family Life Ministry had expanded significantly.

Since 2010, the diocese has committed to “Becoming a Marriage-Building Church, so that people’s lives are filled with Hope.” This initiative also sought to respond and support the National Pastoral Initiative on Marriage launched by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops in 2009; which declared, “bringing Catholic belief into dialogue with contemporary needs, the bishops urge the Catholic Church to become a community of hope and help for marriages and to join others in building a culture of marriage.”

The OMFLM carries out the Bishop’s ministry to the families of the diocese, primarily through the structure of the parishes. The office offers support and resources for

preparation to the sacrament of matrimony, enrichment for the vocations of marriage and family, including natural family planning, parenting education, and pastoral support to marriages and families during life transitions. The office provides formation on marriage and family life education at all stages: the remote (children), the proximate (youth and single young adults), the immediate (engaged and cohabitating couples), and the pastoral care (married couples).

Most recently, our diocese has proposed an initiative where ministers nurture collaboration at all levels where the whole community embarks on ongoing long-life formation. The center of this initiative is missionary discipleship and evangelization. We trust this project carries out what we believe as a diocese that “Family is the basic unit of the Church where faith is transmitted. Realizing that these family relationships shape the direction of one’s life more than all other experiences and that one’s experience of God is directly related to one’s family experience, our parishes and faith communities must be committed to nurturing and supporting family life. Because the family provides a foundation experience of God, parishes must make meaningful connections between the reality of family life and the message of the Gospel.”⁷

4.B) Bishop’s letter, please see attachment.

Section 5: THE 3-PART MODEL OF VISION, SKILLS, AND SUPPORT

5.A) Diocesan Needs Assessment (DNA)

5.B) The project’s **vision** is “Becoming a Marriage and Family-Building Church”. We will use the US Bishops pastoral letter *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan*⁸ to strengthen the vision of married life and love. The letter focuses on essential Catholic teachings, such as marriage as a natural gift, a sacrament, and a public commitment between a man and a woman. The teachings will be emphasized through videos, small group discussions, lectures, and social media campaigns.

We will invite the parish priest and the parish leadership to: regularly present the vision of a healthy marriage through homilies and presentations, provide supervision and support for teams who work with couples, and aim for a testimonial life - *Good practices in marriage and family life make a vision a reality*.

5.C) Skills are more than just ideas; they are actions. Skills make things easier, faster, and more pleasurable. When we practice skills, they become habits that are transformed into behaviors over time. Good skills harvest healthy behaviors. The skills we will be teaching are from evidence-based curriculum. In group settings, a basic model for teaching skills have the following steps: (1) present the theory behind the skill, (2) provide step by step instructions, (3) demonstrate/model the skill, (4) process the demo (answer questions, etc.), (5) participants practice the skill while the instructor and coaches observe and give feedback, (6) process the practice and have time for an additional teaching opportunity. The skills, are, but not limited to the Daily Temperature Reading, Dialogue Guide, Heart to Heart, Taking Out the Trash, showing understanding, expression skills, conflict management skills, problem-solving skills, etc.

5.D) The following **support** will be provided to participants: Mentor/Sponsor Couples, Skills Coaches: in class, follow-up, phone; Couple Retreats: enrichment and restoration, Small Group Fellowship: seriously dating, engaged, newlywed, first five years of marriage, and mature couples: Marriage Celebration Events, Emergency Support for Marriages in Crisis, Referrals as needed; and Accompaniment.

⁷ Diocese of San Bernardino, Impact Statement

⁸ USCCB, Marriage: Love and life in the divine plan (2009)

5.E) The aim of this project is to develop a sound and **balanced** marriage ministry between vision, mission, and support. This will be further developed in the planning period. However, in marriage ministry areas mentioned in section 2.B-1 we intend to: a. assist couples to understand and embrace the Catholic vision of marriage, b. encourage couples to “*put love into action with skills!*”, and c. provide support and assistance meeting couples where they are at.

Section 6: BUDGET/MATCH

6.A) We understand that this grant is a matching grant. This grant requires a one-to-one match for all money provided by the CMI Fund for this project.

6.A-1) We anticipate the source of the match to be from private donations and a few major donors. With the assistance of our diocesan Office of Mission Advancement, in the first year we will develop a giving campaign that will include but not be limited to donation envelopes via mail and online giving. In preparation, we have initiated conversations with the Office of Mission Advancement, whose mission is to highlight the awareness of the diocese’s and the parish’s financial needs, and allow the faithful to participate in the call of the Gospel. During the planning period, we will develop a strategic plan that will include three levels of giving: level 1 - parishioners (families, couples, basically anyone and any amount...), Level 2 – constituents (couples and families that were exposed to the project, servant leaders...), Level 3 – stakeholders, major donors, and philanthropists (those that believe we can make a difference).

6.A-2) We understand that the funding from the CMI Fund will be provided after funding from the match arrives. We are confident that the OMFLM will be successful in raising the matching funds. We have a track record of developing and sustaining ME programs. For example, in 2010 the diocese launched a marriage initiative using a generous grant. Since then, the diocese has established an office and increased financial support to all diocesan ME initiatives and projects. Also, we are confident of being successful because of the excellent relationships with marriage and family life ministers, parish pastors and administrators, and stakeholders. Our leadership team is well balanced in vision, skills, and support.

6.B) Proposed Budget Breakout and Description

CONTRACTUAL

Facilitators: Certified facilitators will teach classes/workshops to participants, with responsibilities including participant recruitment, preparation for and teaching of courses, classroom setup, and cleanup.

Child Care Providers: During each class/workshop, a professional Child Care provider may be available for class/workshop participants.

Train the Trainer: there will be a few train the trainer courses for the different programs, including AIM, MML, and The Third Option

Consulting: professional services for marketing strategy and professional consulting

TRAVEL

Local Travel Cost: for diocesan employees to travel through the entire region of the Diocese of San Bernardino: meeting with pastors, facilitators, stakeholders, and event site visits.

SUPPLIES

Participant Workbooks and Materials: Workbooks and class materials for participants and instructors. Also, books, coloring/activity books, videos, and activities for Child Care workers to use with children of relationship and marriage education class participants.

Hospitality for Classes/Workshops: As part of our diocesan values, we will provide hospitality and refreshments for participants in classes/workshops.

Printing/Copying: To print marketing materials including any, posters, and brochures, and to print class packs including sign-in sheets and evaluations.

Office Supplies: basic office supplies, copy paper, name tags, binders, folders, pens, certificates, flash drives, ink cartridges, small office equipment, etc.

Public Awareness Campaign: Target Facebook ads, local newspapers ads, and design and print touch cards and posters. The campaign’s goal is to drive participants to our relationship and marriage education programs across the entire Diocese of San Bernardino.

<i>Proposed Budget - YEAR 1</i>	
Contractual	
<i>Instructor fees</i>	\$1,600.00
<i>Childcare</i>	\$3,500.00
<i>Trainings</i>	\$4,400.00
<i>Consulting</i>	\$5,000.00
Travel	
<i>Local Travel Cost</i>	\$2,000.00
Supplies	
Materials for Class/Workshops	\$3,100.00
Hospitality (lite meals)	\$3,000.00
Printing/Copying	\$600.00
Office Supplies	\$800.00
Public Awareness Campaign	\$5,000.00
TOTAL	\$30,000.00

Table 3.

Section 7: SUSTAINABILITY

Our main objective for sustainability is to embed the project/programs at the parish level. For instance, when a parish pastor makes a request for a Marriage Education (ME) program (such as AIM, MML, TTO) and makes the facilities arrangements, if applicable the OMFLM will provide the program materials, program leader, in-class coaches, lite meals, and childcare to the parish. This will encourage those parishes that have access to many couples to request more classes. We are embedding this valuable program deeply into the parish whose parishioners will receive the benefit from it. With the above approach set up, a parish that supports healthy marriages and families already may start offering ME programs because it is in their community’s best interest to do so. But then they will see the impact that this program has on their couples. So, they will schedule a second class and then a third, until one day they realize that ME programs have become an indispensable part of their core offerings. After a short while, the benefits received from the OMFLM become a secondary reason to offer the program. Once the grant period is over, the parish may begin charging their participants a modest amount to participate in the program, mainly fees for the class books.

By then, it will have such a strong reputation within that parish community that new participants will be willing to pay, with perhaps a scholarship arrangement set up to assist those unable to pay the modest program fees. And since all our parishes will know that this is only a 3-year grant, each parish will have plenty of time to arrange their finances so that these

services can continue after this grant funding has expired.

We also believe that empowering parishes to offer ME programs on their own is possible because they have a ready pool of volunteers who can become trained as Program Leaders and Skills Coaches. Therefore, their cost to offer ME programs may be lower than the diocese, which typically must pay their Program Leaders. And once a Program Leader has been trained to offer any of the ME programs to adult married couples, they will also be qualified to teach variations of ME programs to other target populations such as engaged couples, cohabiting couples, Youth, Young Adults, and Singles.

In summary, our Sustainability Plan, which will be further developed in the planning period, is based on these main factors: 1. Empowering the parishes to offer ME programs themselves; 2. Embedding ME programs into those parish communities in such a way that they see the value in ME programs. By implementing a framework that balances mission, vision, and support; creating teams at the diocesan, vicariate, and parish levels; introducing a mechanism that is continually assessing and monitoring the project; creating target initiatives for sustainability through the project, motivating stakeholders to be involved, and accountability during the first three years of the project.

Section 8: EXPECTED IMPACT AND POTENTIAL REPLICABILITY OF THIS PROJECT.

8.A) We anticipate this project to impact our diocesan community by:

- Increasing resources to continue becoming a “Marriage-Building Church” by advocating for marriage and promoting a comprehensive approach to ongoing education for the vocation to the Sacrament of Marriage at all stages of life;
- Creating a culture in which Christian marriage education is seen as an integral part of people’s lives in becoming the domestic church (evangelization);
- Having greater community outreach to those most marginalized and those living in poverty and promoting and educating on the well-being of marriages and families;
- Empowering couples, to contribute to more just and peaceful communities;
- Reducing the divorce rates in San Bernardino and Riverside County; so that more children can grow up in a healthy married home.

8.B) We strongly believe that many parts of the project can be replicable. For instance, the integration of communication skills classes in all areas of ministry such as preparing engaged couples for marriage, accompanying married couples in the first five years, the ongoing marriage enrichment, and accompanying married couples in crisis. Another part of the project that will be replicable is the team-building strategy. Also, how to recruit, train, and sustain communication skills instructors at the parish level. We believe that transparency and complete reporting are key enablers of replicability. We hope to document all stages of this process to encourage others to replicate. We hope to quarterly add to a report lesson learn and best practices as part of a strategy for replication. This will future be developed during the planning period.

Section 9: LEADERSHIP TRAINING

We would like to request the additional \$5,000 to provide AIM and MML training to 15 to 25 key couples.



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth

Diocesan/Eparchial Marriage and Family Life Inventory

Immediate marriage preparation (couples preparing for marriage) that includes:	At the Diocesan Level (if programs exist only at parish levels, indicate P) Yes/No/ Unsure/In Progress	Name/Description/Comments
Ongoing training and support for pastoral workers who assist with the preparation of couples for marriage (including clergy, seminarians, mentor couples, parish staff, and volunteers)	In Progress	Marriage Specialization Course A basic 32 hour course that equips a pastoral worker to accompany couple.
Training workshops for married couples or individuals who can provide instruction in Natural Family Planning	Yes	We have a council of instructors that do the planning and promoting NFP
Outreach to engaged couples so they are connected with the local parish community, with	No	

the support of a mentor or sponsor couple, who are culturally competent		
Practical and moral support for cohabitating couples to encourage and facilitate a transition into separate housing	No	
Opportunities of prayer for and with engaged couples (such as the blessing of the engaged, adoration, sacrament of penance, etc.)	No	
Premarital inventories to identify the needs of the couple and ensure adequate time for conversations, discernment, and follow up, with appropriate referrals if needed	Yes	FOCCUS Premarital Inventory
Other resources		

Diocesan and/or parish marriage preparation programs that include content on:	Yes/No (indicate D – diocesan or P – parish)	Name of Program/Description/Comments
		*Marriage Preparation in the Diocese of San Bernardino is parish based
The nature of marriage as instituted by God	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Eveninh for the Engeged • Engege Encounter • The Picture of Love
The vocation of marriage and its responsibilities	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Eveninh for the Engeged • Engege Encounter • The Picture of Love
How to pray together as a couple	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Eveninh for the Engeged • Engege Encounter • The Picture of Love
The role of Christian spouses as witnesses to the charity that flows from Christ	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Eveninh for the Engeged • Engege Encounter • The Picture of Love
Living conjugal chastity as a virtue with particular admonition to cohabitating couples	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Eveninh for the Engeged • Engege Encounter • The Picture of Love

Responsibility of Catholic parents to have their parents baptized and raise them in the Catholic faith, building their domestic church as ministers of their home	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Engege Encounter • Eveninh for the Engeged • The Picture of Love
Natural Family Planning as a tool for respecting and living God's design for married love while discerning God's will together	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Engege Encounter • Eveninh for the Engeged • The Picture of Love
Moral teaching of the Church on reproductive technologies and ethical solutions to infertility	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Engege Encounter • Eveninh for the Engeged • The Picture of Love
Sensitive issues such as pornography use and addiction, resolving abortion trauma, sexual and domestic abuse and violence, the experience of separation and divorce as a child, etc.	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Engege Encounter • Eveninh for the Engeged • The Picture of Love
Practical skills such as communication, financial planning, etc.	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Engege Encounter • Adventures in Marriage • Eveninh for the Engeged • The Picture of Love • Mastering the Ministrires of Love
Requirements for marriage in accord with the law of the Church	Yes - P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Better and For Ever • Engege Encounter • Eveninh for the Engeged • The Picture of Love
Other (please specify)		

During Marriage

Efforts to accompany married couples in the first few years that include:	At the Diocesan Level (if programs exist only at parish levels, indicate P) Yes/No/ Unsure/In Progress	Name of Program/Description/Comments
Post-Cana programs with instruction on the vocation of marriage and the call to holiness as a married couple, and the gift of life, including guidance on ethical solutions to infertility, promotion of adoption and foster care options	P	
Mentoring programs that pair the newly married with faithful and mature couples for support and direction	P	
Programs where small groups of the newly married can gather for peer support and faith sharing	P	
First anniversary celebration or retreat hosted for new couples	In Progress	The Office of Marriage and Family Life is developing a process in which couple celebrating milestone anniversary can request a blessing from the bishop through the parish.
Other resources		

Efforts to promote marriage enrichment that include:	At the Diocesan Level (if programs exist only at parish levels, indicate P)	Name of Program/Description/Comments
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	Yes/No/ Unsure/In Progress	
Like-to-like ministries that meet the ongoing needs of married couples	Yes - P	
Communication and conflict resolution programs	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventures in Marriage • Mastering the Ministries of Love
Parenting programs	Yes	
Finance handling and planning programs	P	
Natural Family Planning classes	P	
Couples' retreats	P	
Couples' small groups	P	
Support for marriage and family focused apostolates, organizations, programs, and resources	P	Marriage Enrichment, World Wide Marriage Encounter, Couples for Christ, Family Christian Movement
Other resources		

Efforts to accompany married couples in crisis that include:	At the Diocesan Level (if programs exist only at parish levels, indicate P) Yes/No/ Unsure/In Progress	Name of Program/Description/Comments
A network of mentor couples in the parish who can accompany married couples with prayer, friendship, and other forms of support	No	
Trained marriage coaches at the parish or diocesan levels who can provide professional help to struggling couples	In progress	
Opportunities for renewal and retreats offered by apostolates or organizations dedicated to marriage ministry and renewal	Yes	
Materials and resources that provide guidance and encouragement to couples in crisis	No	
Comprehensive list of vetted marriage counselors in the local area	No	
Collaborative relationships between parishes and counselors with the help of the diocese	No	



DIocese OF SAN BERNARDINO

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February 4, 2022

To The Catholic Marriage Initiative:

I am pleased to write a letter of support for the grant application submitted by our Office of Marriage and Family Life Ministry. I appreciate the opportunity that The Catholic Marriage Initiative Fund (The CMI Fund) provides in funding projects that support the USCCB's Called to the Joy of Love: National Pastoral Framework for Marriage and Family Life Ministry. I strongly support the bishops opening statement that "Catholic marriage and family life ministry serves all married couples and families by proclaiming the love of God to them and helping them embrace their vocation to love and discipleship."

As we continue to endure the effects of the COVID pandemic, we are called more than ever to accompany couples and families in their day-to-day struggles, and in their desire to be authentic Domestic Churches. Since 2010, our diocese has been committed to "Becoming a Marriage-Building Church, so that people's lives are filled with Hope." This initiative has sought to respond and support the National Pastoral Initiative on Marriage launched by the USCCB in 2009, which declared, "bringing Catholic belief into dialogue with contemporary needs, the bishops urge the Catholic Church to become a community of hope and help for marriages and to join others in building a culture of marriage." I am also pleased with the fruit of collaboration between our Office of Marriage and Family Life Ministry, other diocesan offices, parish-based marriage ministries, and apostolic movements.

This project is aligned with our focus on increasing availability and participation in high-quality Catholic Marriage Ministries by promoting and supporting healthy marriage education and relationship skills. I firmly believe the Office of Marriage and Family Life Ministry has the structure and core elements already in place to support and fulfill the main goals of this project and to also fulfill our purpose of Missionary Discipleship and Evangelization.

I look forward to your review and, hopefully, approval! I believe that through this project the Office of Marriage and Family Life will continue to propagate my Episcopal Motto "God's love is all we need". We are excited for the many opportunities this grant will provide, to help strengthen the vocation of marriage and family life, as the foundation of a healthy community, and healthy society.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Alberto Rojas
Diocese of San Bernardino

AR/elp

1201 EAST HIGHLAND AVENUE, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92404

◆ TELEPHONE: (909) 475-5113 ◆ FAX: (909) 475-5109 ◆ EMAIL: BPOFFICE@SBDIOCESE.ORG

Diocesan Needs Assessment				
For: Diocese of San Bernardino				
Completed by: Mario and Paola Martinez				
<i>Scale 1 "Very Weak" - 10 "Very Strong"</i>				
	Vision	Skills	Support	Total
Section 1 - Accompaniment in Marriage Preparation				
1.1 Preparing Children and Youth for Marriage: Remote Marriage Preparation	8	5	6	19
1.2 Preparing Young Adults for Marriage: Proximate Marriage Preparation	8	6	5	19
1.3 Preparing Engaged Couples for Marriage: Immediate Marriage Preparation	9	8	7	24
Section 2 - Accompaniment in Marriage				
2.1 Accompanying Married Couples in the First Few Years	8	6	5	19
2.2 Ongoing Marriage Enrichment	8	8	8	24
2.3 Living Conjugal Chastity	7	5	4	16
2.4 Supporting Married Couples in Welcoming New Life	6	5	4	15
2.5 Accompanying Married Couples in Crisis	8	8	8	24
2.6 Accompanying Couples Who Are Separated or Divorced	8	8	8	24
2.7 Accompanying Couples Toward Marriage in the Church: Convalidation	8	7	6	21
Section 3 - Accompanying Families and Family Members at Every Stage of Life				
3.1 Accompanying Parents as They Raise and Educate Their Children	7	8	7	22
3.2 Accompanying Couples Who Are Unable to Conceive a Child	7	5	5	17
3.3 Accompanying Couples Who Have Lost a Family Member, Especially a Child	8	6	7	21
3.4 Accompanying Single Adults	7	3	6	16
3.5 Accompanying the Widow or Widower	5	2	5	12
3.6 Accompanying Grandparents and the Elderly	5	4	5	14
3.7 Accompanying Caregivers of Family Members	8	6	7	21
Section 4 - Accompanying Families and Family Members in Complex or Difficult Situations				
4.1 Accompanying Families Experiencing Addictions	7	5	6	18
4.2 Accompanying Families Experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse	7	5	6	18
4.3 Accompanying Families with Members Who Have Disabilities, Chronic Illness, or Mental Illness	7	5	6	18
4.4 Accompanying Families with Members Who Experience Same-Sex Attraction or Sexual Identity Incongruence	7	4	6	17
4.5 Accompanying Families with Incarcerated Members	7	4	5	16
4.6 Accompanying Single Parent Families	7	6	6	19
4.7 Accompanying Mixed and Interreligious Marriages and Families	7	6	6	19
4.8 Accompanying Intercultural Families	7	6	5	18
4.9 Accompanying Migrant, Refugee, and Immigrant Families	8	6	7	21
4.10 Accompanying Military Families	7	6	5	18
TOTALS				
	196	153	161	510

CERTIFICATIONS

I, the duly appointed representative of the diocese (or archdiocese) named below, do hereby certify as follows:

- 1) All statements made in the attached application are, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate;
- 2) I have the authority to submit this grant application on behalf of my (arch)diocese;
- 3) We understand and will comply with the stated restrictions concerning the match;
- 4) We will complete and submit quarterly 1-page project progress reports describing plans and objectives for each upcoming quarter as well as the progress made against the plans and objectives set for this quarter in the previous quarterly report.
- 5) We will participate in relevant outcome evaluation studies if available for one or more of the Named Ministry Areas we are applying for;
- 6) We will participate in monthly group training webinars and individual coaching sessions, as appropriate to further the success of our project;
- 7) We understand that even though our grant application describes a multi-year project, the amount of funding that will officially be awarded as a result of this grant application will be the amount requested for the first 12 months of the project, with release of those funds to be contingent upon previous receipt by us of the associated matching funds;
- 8) If our application is selected for funding, we authorize posting of our completed application (either as initially submitted or as revised during the initial 90-day planning period) to the website of the Catholic Marriage Initiatives Fund (the CMI Fund) and/or otherwise distributed to future prospective applicants to assist them in their preparation of applications for future rounds of grants by the CMI Fund, as long as any information deemed sensitive by the (arch)diocese has been redacted from the application.

All of the above statements are hereby agreed to by:



	Mario O. Martinez	Office Co-Director
Signed	Name (Typed or Printed)	Title

On behalf of Diocese or Archdiocese of: Diocese of San Bernardino

Dated: December 10th, 2021