

Catholic Marriage Initiatives Fund Grant Application

Diocese of Owensboro, KY

1) Description of the Diocese of Owensboro (5 pts)

Geographically, the Diocese of Owensboro covers 32 counties in the western quarter of Kentucky. Logistically, we are 78 parishes consisting of 51,000 registered Catholics subdivided into 9 deaneries. Our parishes are served by 72 Diocesan priests, 44 permanent deacons, 117 sisters, and 108 lay ministers. Of our 78 parishes, 14 parishes have Hispanic Ministry directors.

Strategically, the Diocese of Owensboro consists of 78 parishes and 17 schools with one mission: to be missionary disciples of Jesus, making present the kingdom of God. Our Bishop, William F. Medley, is very supportive of marriage ministry as a tool for evangelization. He has served as our Bishop for the past 11 years and is 6 years away from retirement age. We are very excited about this CMI Fund opportunity! We are considered a “mission Diocese” (rural) so any financial help we can get to better serve our people is much appreciated.

To help meet that overall mission of evangelization, the Office of Marriage & Family Life is heavily investing in marriages over the next three years (2022-24) in a project we’re calling *Joy in the Journey: Living the Joy of Marriage* in which we as a Diocese will invest money and resources into parish and deanery efforts to invite every married couple in the Diocese to participate in marriage retreats, workshops, and programs that are balanced well between skills, vision, and on-going support.

2) Overview of the Project (10 pts)

A) This CMI grant will help us implement *Living the Joy of Marriage* over the next three years. We intend to apply for the full amount of \$50,000, requesting \$10,000 the first year (2022), \$20,000 in year two (2023) and \$20,000 in year three (2024) from the CMI. With the full match, that brings the total investment in marriages to \$100,000.

B) The four named ministry areas from the Framework we will be implementing are 2.1 (Accompanying married couples in the first few years), 2.2 (Ongoing Marriage Enrichment), 3.3 (Accompanying Couples who have experienced child loss), and 2.6 (Accompanying Couples Who are Separated or Divorced).

We chose these areas because I believe they are where we can make the most impact with the CMI funds. Our Diocesan Needs Assessment showed we are very weak in section 3 and 4 of the DNA, so 3.3 will help us address section 3 better. Section 2 of our DNA showed our strong points, so 2.1 and 2.2 will help us expand existing marriage enrichment opportunities as well as introduce more skills-based enrichment in both English and Spanish.

Below is a subtable of the DNA for the 4 named ministry areas in this project.

	Vision	Skills	Support	Total
2.1 - First Few Years	1	1	1	3
2.2 - Ongoing Marriage Enrichment	8	7	6	21
2.6 – Couples Affected by Divorce	5	5	5	15
3.3 - Couples who have Experienced Child Loss	0	0	0	0
Average	14	13	12	39

Of those four named ministry areas, we will place most emphasis on 2.1 (introducing skills-based enrichment) and 2.2 (enhancing on-going enrichment/support) in both English and Spanish in years one and two. Our efforts in area 2.6 (utilizing Life Giving Wounds) and 3.3 (utilizing Red Bird Ministries) will begin in year one but will grow in year two and be sustainable by year three.

3) First Year Project Description (20) pts

A) To solidify our project plan for *Living the Joy of Marriage*, I would review the entire project with the CMI “coach” during the planning period. One of the first tasks will present this opportunity to my existing Family Life Advisory Committee and reinvigorate it into a working committee so we can have a few point people for each of the major focuses of the project. We will also use the first 90 day planning period to determine which of the three recommended skills-based programs we will implement. My wife and I attended Adventures in Marriage in Destin in October, so I’m already very familiar with AIM. Our Director of Hispanic Ministry, Deacon Chris Gutierrez, and I met with Mario Martinez from the Diocese of San Bernardino on a zoom call about the Spanish version as well. I will also use the planning period to craft a timeline for introducing and launching our new crisis ministries (described later) which can be seen in the timeline on page 3.

Project Timeline

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Review project with CMI grant coach. Further develop committees of interested stakeholders in all three elements of marriage ministries: marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, and marriage restoration.	X	X	X									
Confirm dates and locations for 4 Grace Marriage "Come and See" events in different areas of the Diocese	X	X	X									
Research PREP, MML in comparison to AIM	X	X	X									
Meet with Fr. Lustein & Deacon Chris to book Banquete Retreats	X	X	X									
Identify which skills based program we want to implement & schedule training date/weekend				X								
Host "Come and See" events			X	X	X							
Train parish/deanery teams for Grace Marriage					X	X	X					
First skills based workshop, recruit coaches, train local leaders					X	x	x					
Banquete de Boda Retreats			X			X			X			X
Continue to recruit participation for Life Giving Wounds and Red Bird					X	X	X					
Launch new & existing Grace Marriage parish/deanery groups								X				
First Life Giving Wounds Retreat								X				
Train Life Giving Wounds Diocesan team									X	X		
Begin Red Bird Ministries "flock" (chapter)											X	
Evaluate, plan for expansion year 2												X

B) In Ministry Area 2.1, our only existing effort to accompany newly married couples is Grace Marriage (which falls more directly under Ministry Area 2.2) in English, and Banquete De Boda (which means “The Wedding Banquet”, a one day retreat) in Spanish. So 2.1 is not very balanced at all.

Ministry Area 2.2 is where we are strongest. We currently have 55 couples in Grace Marriage quarterly coaching among 5 parishes (in English). Three of those parishes are located in the

city of Owensboro, which is where we held the pilot in 2019. This year, in 2021, we expanded to 5 parish locations including Holy Name Parish in Henderson, 30 miles west of Owensboro, and St. Mary of the Woods in Whitesville, which is 20 miles east of Owensboro. In 2022, we hope to expand Grace Marriage to include deanery pilots in Union County (consisting of 6 parishes), West Daviess County (6 parishes), possibly a parish cluster in Hancock County (2 parishes), and St. Leo parish in Murray.

I rated Grace Marriage a “8” in vision, an “8” in skills, and an “8” in support.

In Spanish, we have held 4 Banquete de Boda retreats, which are one day marriage enrichment opportunities focused on Theology of the Body. Before Covid, we had around 125 couples total participate in those first 4 retreats, which were held in the towns of Sebree, Bowling Green, and Fancy Farm. We plan to offer those retreats again in 2022, hosting one in each of the 4 regions named in our Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry.

I rated Banquete de Boda a “9” in vision, “5” in skills, and “2” support.

I rated both Giving Wounds and Red Bird Ministries a “9” in vision, “5” in skills, and “8” in support because they are both Catholic programs will built-in community and follow-up support (group gatherings, online community, additional resources, etc).

Expanding Grace Marriage to four new areas of the Diocese and resuming Banquete de Boda retreats in each of the four regions of our Diocese covers 2.2. For 2.1, we will introduce and train a team in a skills based workshop in both English and Spanish (to be decided by March 31st during the grant planning period). For 2.6, we will bring in the team from Life Giving Wounds to hold a retreat for our Diocese and train a local team here following that retreat. For 3.3, we will start a Red Bird Ministries “flock” (chapter.)

***** I attached the sections from the Diocesan Inventory for marriage and Family Life that pertain to these ministry areas at the end of this application. *****

The delivery system for expanding both Grace Marriage and Banquete de Boda is regional/deanery.

The delivery system for the skills-based workshop is also regional/deanery, beginning centrally in the Diocese, and trickling down to the parish level as it grows.

The delivery system for Red Bird Ministries and Life Giving Wounds will begin at the Diocese level.

C) *Living the Joy of Marriage* will be overseen by me as Director of Marriage & Family Life, but I will have support in each area of ministry by volunteers. I have been the director of the Office of Marriage & Family Life for four years. For fifteen years before that, I was director of youth ministry and family life at Our lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Owensboro. Beyond the responsibilities involved in overseeing this project, I am also responsible for marriage preparation, NFP, and overseeing our Catholic Charities counselor network. I am also on the evangelization team that conducts retreats for parish staffs as part of our Diocesan efforts toward discipleship and evangelization. I expect to spend 50% of my time in 2022

coordinating and facilitating this project with the help of lots of other people. I expect to spend 40% of my time on the other responsibilities for the office and the remaining 10% will be spent on Diocesan discipleship and evangelization efforts. 50% is a huge commitment, but I believe this project, *Living the Joy of Marriage*, will lay the foundation and groundwork for the larger 5-year overall focus of my office toward implementing a catechumenal model for marriage formation and strengthening the Domestic Church.

For expanding Grace Marriage, we have an already-established working relationship with the home-office staff at Grace Marriage. Elaine Martin, who serves as “parish support” at Grace Marriage, trains parish/region teams. GM also offers additional support as needed.

For expanding Banquete De Boda, Fr. Lustein Blanco facilitates those retreats and coordinates with a local team to assist with each retreat. I support him through marketing and promotion from the Diocese.

For introducing a skills-based workshop, I will oversee that project until a team and presenters are established with support from my Administrative Assistant in the Office, Charlotte Hedges.

For Red Bird Ministries, three deacons will be assisting with coordinating that ministry, along with volunteers from several parishes who will serve as a core advisory team.

For Life Giving Wounds, we’ve already identified three volunteers from the Diocese who are interested in being trained to be on the presenting team. I have until September ’22 to recruit a priest/deacon to oversee that ministry.

D) *(see timeline in 3A) The Grace Marriage expansion will be phased in via “Come and See” events in March/April ’22 in each of the four new regions. Teams will be trained May-June ’22. Quarterly groups will launch in August ’22.

Banquete de Boda expansion will be rolled out one at a time: one retreat in each region per quarter of the calendar year ’22.

The skills based workshop training will be scheduled in quarter 3 of ’22, with a first workshop presented quarter 4, and roll-out from there in 2023.

Life Giving Wounds and Red Bird Ministries trainings will be in quarter 4 of ’22, with roll-out in 2023.

4) Alignment with other goals of your Bishop and/or Diocese (15)

A) The Diocese of Owensboro is in the midst of a strategic focus on missionary discipleship. For the past four years, under the direction of Bishop William F. Medley, we have focused our evangelization efforts on the movements of “encounter,” “accompany,” “community,” and “send.” Bishop Medley has encouraged each of the directors at the Diocese to see how our offices can re-evaluate everything we do through the lens of discipleship and evangelization. In fact, my first week in the office four years ago Bishop Medley handed me a copy of *Amoris Laetitia* (Pope Francis’ encyclical “*Joy of Love: On Marriage and Family*”) and told me to read it cover to cover. Which I did. Since then, he and I have had regular, on-going short conversations on how our diocese can do a better job of marriage formation (both preparation and enrichment) in light of Pope Francis’ push for a catechumenal model of

marriage formation. At Bishop Medley's invitation, I attended the Priest Council meetings in April and May of '21 to begin that larger conversation with the Priest Council, and they advised me to take that discussion down to the deanery level, which I did throughout August, September, and October of 2021. Those conversations at the Priest Council and Deanery levels were very lively, and there was much discussion and interaction around the topic of marriage formation. All of that, I believe, has laid great groundwork and set the foundation to implement *Living the Joy of Marriage* with support from the CMI fund. The soil is tilled and the tree is planted to now bear tremendous fruit in the next three years.

B) See attached letter from Bishop William F. Medley

5) Alignment with 3-part model of Vision, Skills, and Support (20)

A) See attached Diocesan Needs Assessment.

B) We intend to use the CMI fund to have the most impact on skills because that's where we need to grow most. (See 5C below). When it comes to vision, Grace Marriage is very Biblically based. Scripture is very much incorporated. It is high on virtues and instills the vision for what a God-centered marriage looks like. But it is not high on Catholic vision, so we supplement some Catholic perspective through insert cards we stick in each of the couple's books for each session. Vision is cast in Grace Marriage through a mixture of video teaching, reading the content/chapters, and discussion. Banquete de Boda is very high on vision because it is heavily based on Theology of the Body and the Catholic understanding of marriage. Vision is cast through lecture, couple discussion, and experiential learning. Red Bird Ministries and Life Giving Wounds both ground their healing ministries on Catholic teaching. Vision is cast through reading and discussing content, group discussion, and retreat participation, etc.

C) In the skills workshops we will be incorporating through *Living the Joy of Love*, communication and conflict resolution skills are taught by demonstrations from the facilitators and coaches and practiced by participants during the workshops. First, the theory is explained to participants, then the skill is taught and modeled live in front of the participants. Then the participants immediately get to practice the taught skill with their spouse under the observation of the coaches. Lastly, the practiced skill exercise is processed and discussed in the large group.

Now that I've seen that 6-step model for teaching used in Adventures in Marriage, I plan to incorporate that same 6-step model in other marriage ministry settings, for example PreCana.

In our existing marriage ministries like Grace Marriage and Banquete de Boda, communication and conflict resolution skills are not directly modeled and practiced. This is why we need to incorporate a skills based workshop into our offerings to help balance skills with vision and support through our marriage ministries. Once we implement the skills workshops into our overall plan for marriage ministry, we will have a much more balanced approach between vision, skills, and support. For example, when a couple has gone through the skills workshop and then joins a Grace Marriage group, they will have a much more effective experience of Grace Marriage. If a couple attends a skills workshop in Spanish, and then attends a Banquete

de Boda retreat, or vice versa, they will have a much better experience.

D) When it comes to support, we intend to use the CMI fund to help us strengthen the follow-up support for Banquete de Boda (2.2), which already exists, as well as introduce Red Bird Ministries (3.3) and Life Giving Wounds (2.6). Support comes naturally in Grace Marriage because it is an on-going, quarterly model. (Meaning: It is not a “one and done” event.) Because it is on-going (for at least one year, but couples can keep participating as many years as they choose) community is built among other couples in the group, which I believe is indirect “support” as well. For Banquete de Boda, support is designed to occur through follow up gatherings in each region with the couples *after* the retreat. That reality has not come to fruition yet, but we plan to do a better job of that once retreats start in person again in 2022. Red Bird Ministries is a comprehensive ministry with several components, bringing grief support on several levels, while Life Giving Wounds provides support through follow up support groups and additional resources after the retreat weekend. Both Redbird and Life Giving Wounds offer support groups, social engagement, and online communities for participants to interact as long as they need that community’s support. The skills based workshops offer support in the form of coaching throughout the event as well as follow-up support. There is also the option for participant couples to become coaching couples to stay involved long-term.

E) For those reasons, while our Diocese does not currently have a strong balance between skills, vision, and support, once *Living the Joy of Marriage* is implemented, by the end of the three year CMI fund support, we will have a much better balance between vision, skills, and support throughout the entirety of our marriage ministry. Especially when we look big-picture and envision a couple going through marriage prep and continuing on to enrich their marriage. Our three-phase process of cultivate, invigorate, and rejuvenate encompasses Pope Francis’ emphasis on the catechumenal model for marriage formation. When a couple takes advantage of all three phases (“cultivate” implies preparing well, planting seeds, establishing solid roots, etc in marriage prep; “invigorate” implies new growth, taking flight, next level, etc enrichment phase; and “rejuvenate” implies restoring, bringing back to life, deeper roots to prolong life, including crisis intervention when a couple needs it) they will have had plenty of opportunities to hear and re-hear vision and continually learn skills on deeper levels. And they will have experienced support throughout, ESPECIALLY beyond the Sacrament, when it’s most crucial in the early years but equally available in later years.

6) Budget/Match (10 pts)

A) The match will not be a problem for us. We will secure the \$10,000 match for the year one CMI grant either by a generous private donor who is passionate about marriage ministry, or one of two foundations in western Kentucky who regularly support Diocesan initiatives. Pending approval of this CMI RFP.

B) Cost breakdown of grant allocation:

- \$4,000 to host four Grace Marriage “Come and See” events to kickoff the ministry in four new areas of our Diocese: Bowling Green, Murray, Union County, and west Daviess County. (2.1 & 2.2)
- \$4,000 to conduct four Banquete De Boda retreats to expand to all four regions of Diocese (2.1 & 2.2) and provide snacks and materials for the follow up (support) sessions following each retreat.
- \$1,500 to start a Red Bird Ministries “flock” chapter (3.3)
- \$3,500 for Life Giving Wounds training and first retreat (2.6)
- \$1,000 to help better promote and market existing Retrouvaille retreats (2.5)
- \$3,000 skills based marriage enrichment training in Spanish (to coincide with the “bonus” grant to train couples in English in a skills based workshop)
- \$2,000 support for promotion, marketing materials, social media ads, etc for *Living the Joy of Marriage* project
- \$1,000 – Start a Spanish Grace Marriage pilot by inviting couples who have been to Banquete de Boda in the past.
- Total = \$20,000

7) Sustainability

The Grace Marriage model includes training volunteer teams in each parish/deanery to keep the ministry going. The Grace Marriage home office, located in Owensboro, trains parish teams directly. After each of the 4 “Come and See” events described above, we will gauge interest from the couples in attendance and invite them at the end of the event to be part of a team that will be trained over the summer months in preparation to launch a group in August of ‘22. Groups will then continue to grow and expand in each of the regions/deaneries/parishes in those areas in ‘23, just as the 5 current groups near the city of Owensboro have grown from the pilot in 2019.

Banquete De Boda is coordinated by Fr. Lustein Blanco and Deacon Chris Guitierrez (Director of Hispanic Ministry) in partnership and with support from the Office of Marriage & Family Life. Our goal in 2022 is to recruit more presenting couples and hospitality couples to form a team in each of the four regions of our Diocese to take it from a Diocesan effort to a region/deanery effort. Those team couples will also host and facilitate the follow up gatherings in each region. The Red Bird Ministries model also includes training a team on the Diocesan/deanery level to plug parishioners into the ministry offerings. RBM is a multi-year roll out as the ministry grows organically.

The fee to bring Life Giving Wounds into the Diocese includes training a volunteer team here in our Diocese to participate in the first retreat and then run the retreat themselves the second year, continually recruiting new volunteer team members from each year’s retreat participants. Those volunteers also run the follow up sessions following each retreat.

I have already begun recruiting interested volunteers in Red Bird Ministries (including three deacons) and Life Giving Wounds.

***I also want to explore the possibility of using some of year 2 and 3 CMI fund for staffing or stipending coordinators for marriage enrichment in English and Spanish. We also have a brand new class of permanent deacons. There's a possibility of getting some of them involved in the Office of Marriage & Family Life to oversee certain roles I cover now.

8) Expanded Impact and replicability

A) We currently have 55 couples total in quarterly Grace Marriage coaching in five different parishes in which we have trained parish teams to carry the ministry forward. In 2022, we are on track to double participation to at least 100 couples by expanding to four more locations. With the CMI support, I fully expect it will double each year the next 2-3 years as groups expand in 2023 and 2024. In Spanish, we've held 3 Banquete de Boda retreats before Covid with a total of 125 couples participating. By offering the retreat again in 2022 in each of the four regions of our Diocese, we expect another 100 couples to participate, bringing the total to 225. Using the bonus grant, we will also train a team of presenting couples to present the skills based workshop in English (as well as some of the CMI funds to train a team in Spanish) with roll-out in 2023 and 2024. We will first invite all couples who are actively involved in marriage ministry already in our Diocese to experience it first, meaning Engaged Encounter presenting couples, PreCana presenting couples, Grace Marriage team couples etc. The idea is to influence the influencers first, and let them experience the workshop in several "waves" to build a groundswell. For the first workshop our trained couples present in the Diocese, I plan to invite all deacons and their wives in the "first wave." Wave two will be to invite parish and diocesan employees and their spouses. In wave three we move on to Catholic School employees and spouses in 2023. Then, by the time we roll it out on the parish level in 2024, we will have had several hundred couples across the diocese (deacons, parish staff, school staff) experience the workshop who will have buy-in and will then be excited to invite other couples in their parishes to experience what they experienced since personal invitation is THE BEST way to get couples to show up to marriage enrichment. That wave approach will also allow us to identify plenty of coaching couples and presenting couples so we can begin offering the skills based workshop in deaneries and eventually the parish level. Those first few waves will create a groundswell that will help get more couples to the parish workshops because of personal invitation than we could have ever gotten with parish bulletin announcements. As for Life Giving Wounds and Red Bird Ministries, the impact will begin slowly, but by the end of the roll-out in 2023 and 2024, we will have a vibrant support ministry for couples experiencing child loss, divorce of parents, or other loss that is run by trained volunteers and supported by deacons.

B) As far as replicability, we started Grace Marriage with two pilot groups in Owensboro in 2019 that have since grown into 5 groups meeting at 5 different parishes. We now have 5 examples of how parish Grace Marriage teams can operate – AND – I believe that pilot

approach can be replicated on a deanery/cluster level. Once we expand to these 4 new areas in 2022, then we'll repeat the process in other pockets of the Diocese until we have host locations for Grace Marriage in all 9 deaneries.

Banquete de Boda is already scaled in a sense. All we have to do is offer the retreat in each of the 4 regions in 2022 and repeat each year.

Red Bird Ministries and Life Giving Wounds are both designed to be implemented on the Diocesan level and scaled down to deanery/parish, which is what we'll do. Each will have a core group of volunteers and a community of participants that grows each year where participants can return as leaders.

To implement the skills workshops, we're taking the approach of starting a pilot (first workshop) central to the Diocese as the "groundswell" (waves) is growing, then taking the workshops "out" to each deanery. From the deanery level, as individual parishes have enough coaches and facilitators to conduct the workshops, they can be conducted on individual parish levels.

Additionally, if any other Diocese finds it helpful to see what we've done with *Living the Joy of Love* and how we utilized CMI fund support (if granted), I'd be more than happy to talk with them. If the Diocese of Owensboro can be a model for another Diocese, I'm all for it. Really, what I've done is taken full advantage of opportunities the Lord placed right in front of us and leveraged them the best I possibly could. For example, Grace Marriage is headquartered here in Owensboro. And Father Lustein Blanco, who wrote the Banquete de Boda retreat, was sent to our Diocese from Mexico with a ton of experience in WorldWide Marriage Encounter. He wrote Banquete de Boda from that experience and his knowledge of Theology of the Body and Amoris Laetitia, so it was a no-brainer to run that retreat here. The Diocese of Evansville IN is splitting the cost of bringing in the Life Giving Wounds team to conduct our first retreat that both Dioceses are cross promoting, so that was an easy entry point. And Red Bird Ministries is a way to build on our minimal miscarriage ministry that is already in place. My best advice to any Diocese would be to prayerfully discern where the Spirit is moving around you and get on board! That's what we've done and are doing.

9) Bonus Section: (5 pts)

We absolutely intend to take advantage of the bonus grant. As previously stated, my wife and I attended AIM in Destin in October of '21 to observe the workshop. I also attended an online training from Watermark Church explaining their marriage ministries, including Re:Engage. I will spend the planning period Jan-March to further explore PREP and MML and decide which suits us best.

** Attached documents:

From 3B – Relevant sections of **Diocesan Inventory Marriage and Family Life Ministry Letter of Recommendation** from Bishop Medley
Diocesan Needs Assessment



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth

Diocesan/Eparchial Marriage and Family Life Inventory
 (For CMI Fund RFP)
 Diocese of Owensboro, KY

Accompaniment

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	In Progress	Grace Marriage is now in 5 parishes. On-going marriage enrichment. All the other things mentioned we are building. (2.1, 2.2)

Programs where small groups of the newly married can gather for peer support and faith sharing	In progress	Grace Marriage is an on-going, small group based model (2.1, 2.2) This pertains to support.
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Efforts to promote marriage enrichment 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
Couples' small groups	Yes	But only in the parishes that have Grace Marriage. Or the few parishes that have an intentional small group ministry. (2.1, 2.2)

Efforts to accompany married couples in crisis that include:	At the Diocesan Level (if programs exist only at parish levels, indicate P)	Name of Program/Description/Comments
Comprehensive list of vetted marriage counselors in the local area	Yes	We have a network of counselors through Catholic Charities. This could be an additional support for those involved in Red Bird Ministries or Life Giving Wounds. (2.6, 3.3). Or any married couple for that matter.
Collaborative relationships between parishes and counselors with the help of the diocese	Yes	We have a network of counselors through Catholic Charities. This could be an additional support for those involved in Red Bird Ministries or Life Giving Wounds. (2.6, 3.3). Or any married couple for that matter.

Efforts to support couples who are separated or divorced that include:	At the Diocesan Level (if programs exist only at parish levels, indicate P) Progress	Name of Program/ Description/Comments
Ministries that provide pastoral care for those experiencing separation or divorce as well as for children and adult children affected by divorce and separation	Yes, in progress	DASK – Divorced And Separated Koinonia (2018 & 2019, continuing in 2022) Bringing in Life Giving Wounds fall of 2022 (2.6)

Families at Every Stage of Life

Efforts to accompany couples who have lost a family member, especially a child that include:	At the Diocesan Level (if programs exist only at parish levels, indicate P)	Name of Program/Description/Comments
Training for pastoral staff to assist grieving parents and family members (e.g. the process of planning the Christian funeral and burial, meals and financial help, etc.)		This is included in the comprehensive program of Red Bird Ministries by becoming a “flock” /chapter. (3.3)
Parish and diocesan/eparchial educational events focused on how to cope with death and the stages of grieving		This is included in the comprehensive program of Red Bird Ministries by becoming a “flock” /chapter. (3.3)
Opportunities for grieving families to meet other families who have experienced loss for mutual support and comfort		This is included in the comprehensive program of Red Bird Ministries by becoming a “flock” /chapter. (3.3)
Comprehensive list of counselors for spiritual and emotional support		We have a list of counselors through Catholic Charities. As well as spiritual directors. Either or both could be an additional support for those involved in Red Bird Ministries (3.3)



DIOCESE OF OWENSBORO

McRaith Catholic Center | Office of the Bishop

December 1, 2021

To Catholic Marriage Initiative:

In the Joy of Love (*Amoris Laetitia*), Pope Francis devotes an entire chapter to “Love in Marriage” and the majority of the encyclical is dedicated to love in the family.

Pope Francis reminds us that the married couple is an image of God to the world by their love for each other (AL, 29). For a marriage to stay strong, that love has to continually grow.

In the Diocese of Owensboro, we do a good job of marriage preparation, and we have resources for marriages in crisis, like the Retrouvaille program and marriage counseling through Catholic Charities. But Pope Francis is reminding the church to also support and encourage happily married couples. In other words, it’s equally important to focus on keeping “good” marriages healthy through accompaniment. The Church has long called for marriage formation to be on-going, continuing *after* marriage preparation and the Sacrament of Matrimony, dating back to John Paul II’s encyclical *Familiaris Consortio* in 1981.

The Church, Pope Francis says, is a “family of families” and therefore “the main contribution to the pastoral care of families is offered by the parish, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony” (AL, 202).

In the midst of our constant focus on discipleship and evangelization, the Office of Marriage & Family Life has been mapping a pathway for discipleship using marriage ministry as a tool for evangelization.

In that effort, the CMI fund comes at an ideal time for us. The Diocese of Owensboro is heavily investing in marriages over the next three years (2022-24) in a project we’re calling “Joy in the Journey: Living the Joy of Marriage” in which we as a Diocese will invest money and resources into parish and deanery efforts to invite every married couple in the Diocese to participate in marriage retreats, workshops, and programs that are balanced well between skills, vision, and on-going support.

In 2019, after a pilot group of 22 Catholic couples went through four quarterly sessions of Grace Marriage, I wrote a letter of endorsement in support of Grace Marriage as a means of marriage enrichment for parishes and deaneries to utilize. In the summer of 2021, I also presented our Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry, in which we announced subdividing our Diocese into four regions to focus more intently on the parishes in our Diocese with active Hispanic Ministry. Banquete de Boda is one of the ministry efforts we have seen great results from and great involvement in. As you read this grant application, you will find that expanding Grace Marriage and Banquete de Boda, as well as introducing a skills-based workshop in both English and Spanish, are at the heart the Joy in the Journey project.

As we make preparations to officially launch *Joy in the Journey: Living the Joy of Love* to coincide with National Marriage Week in February of 2022, we ask you to prayerfully consider our application for the CMI fund.

I give my full support to this CMI grant application, and look forward to the fruit it bears, if received. Let us pray for one another!

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend William F. Medley
Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro, KY

Blank Form - Diocesan Needs Assessment (DNA)

For: Diocese or Archdiocese of: Owensboro, Kentucky
 Completed by: Danny May, Director of Marriage & Family Life
 As of: 12/9/21

	Vision	Skills	Support	Total
Section 1 - Accompaniment in Marriage Preparation				
1.1 Preparing Children and Youth for Marriage: Remote Marriage Preparation	3	2	0	5
1.2 Preparing Young Adults for Marriage: Proximate Marriage Preparation	2	2	0	4
1.3 Preparing Engaged Couples for Marriage: Immediate Marriage Preparation	8	6	0	14
Section 2 - Accompaniment in Marriage				
2.1 Accompanying Married Couples in the First Few Years	1	1	1	3
2.2 Ongoing Marriage Enrichment	8	7	6	21
2.3 Living Conjugal Chastity	1	1	1	3
2.4 Supporting Married Couples in Welcoming New Life	6	5	5	16
2.5 Accompanying Married Couples in Crisis	5	5	5	15
2.6 Accompanying Couples Who Are Separated or Divorced	5	5	5	15
2.7 Accompanying Couples Toward Marriage in the Church: Convalidation	5	5	5	15
Section 3 - Accompanying Families and Family Members at Every Stage of Life				
3.1 Accompanying Parents as They Raise and Educate Their Children	0	0	0	0
3.2 Accompanying Couples Who Are Unable to Conceive a Child	0	0	0	0
3.3 Accompanying Couples Who Have Lost a Family Member, Especially a Child	0	0	0	0
3.4 Accompanying Single Adults	3	3	3	9
3.5 Accompanying the Widow or Widower	0	0	0	0
3.6 Accompanying Grandparents and the Elderly	0	0	0	0
3.7 Accompanying Caregivers of Family Members	0	0	0	0
Section 4 - Accompanying Families and Family Members in Complex or Difficult Situations				
4.1 Accompanying Families Experiencing Addictions	5	5	5	15
4.2 Accompanying Families Experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse	0	0	0	0
4.3 Accompanying Families with Members Who Have Disabilities, Chronic Illness, or Mental Illness	0	0	0	0
4.4 Accompanying Families with Members Who Experience Same-Sex Attraction or Sexual Identity Incongruence	1	1	1	3
4.5 Accompanying Families with Incarcerated Members	0	0	0	0
4.6 Accompanying Single Parent Families	0	0	0	0
4.7 Accompanying Mixed and Interreligious Marriages and Families	0	0	0	0
4.8 Accompanying Intercultural Families	0	0	0	0
4.9 Accompanying Migrant, Refugee, and Immigrant Families	7	7	7	21
4.10 Accompanying Military Families	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	60	55	44	159

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:

Daniel J May
Signed

Daniel J May
Name (Typed or Printed)

Director, Marriage + Family Life
Title

On behalf of Diocese or Archdiocese of: Owensboro, KY

Dated: 12/9/21