



NEWS ARCHIVE:

## Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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### ***Wadena “Marriage Matters” evening Feb. 11, 2011 well-received by 21 couples from across deanery***

The church basement at St. Mary’s parish in Wadena was transformed into a quaint romantic hall a few days before Valentine’s Day 2011, for a marriage enrichment evening organized in conjunction with the diocesan office of Marriage and Family Life.

The “Marriage Matters” banquet Feb. 11 was attended by 21 couples from nearby communities, including Foam Lake, Wishart, Rose Valley, Fosston, Wadena and Tisdale.

The Wadena enrichment event was modeled on the Marriage Appreciation Banquet hosted each year in the diocese of Saskatoon by the diocesan Task Force on Marriage and Worldwide Marriage Encounter. The Saskatoon banquet, held on April 16 this year, generally attracts some 200 participants and is hosted to celebrate marriage and to affirm the ministry of parish-based marriage preparation and enrichment ministries across the diocese.

The office of Marriage and Family Life is actively promoting marriage enrichment suppers like the one held in Wadena as another way to offer marriage enrichment across the diocese, said office coordinator Blake Sittler, acting director of pastoral services at the Catholic Pastoral Centre. A similar event was organized by St. Joseph’s parish in Kindersley last year, he noted.

The Wadena “Marriage Matters” event was coordinated by Lynda and Cal Statchuk, who were assisted by a number of fellow parishioners. Nevin and Royann Halyk of Foam Lake were Masters of Ceremony for the evening.

“It was a very enriching and well presented evening with good food, and drink, good company and good ‘food for thought’ – all ingredients for a loving faith-filled marriage,” said the Statchuks.



Twenty-one couples attended a marriage enrichment banquet at St. Mary’s parish in Wadena Feb. 12.  
- Photo by Lynda Statchuk

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This is the first time a marriage enrichment evening has been hosted in the Wadena deanery, said Lynda, who also serves as diocesan Rural Catechetics coordinator in the area. “Cal and I have had opportunities to attend functions in the city like the Marriage Conference. We wanted to bring a piece of what there is out there to the rural couples,” she said.

At first there were some misunderstandings about what the evening was all about, Lynda noted. “Some people thought this was for troubled marriages, but it was about making a good marriage better,” she said.

“Attending we had one couple, Elsie and Carl Peters from Wadena, who will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in October. Another couple was our daughter Chrysta and her husband Adam Teale, from Tisdale, who were just married in July of 2010. Both these couples took home something from the talk that they felt was helpful and enriching.”

Monsignor Matthew Tuffuor-Amoah also attended the event, and spoke briefly, joking: “The invitation said to bring your spouse. I am married and my spouse is the Church...so I have many wives!”

Guest speakers at the Wadena event were Brooke and Blake Sittler. Their presentation title “*We’ll Make Time (Even When There Ain’t No Time)*” was borrowed from a song of the same name by Canadian songwriter, Hawksley Workman.

Blake described what he called a “contemplative revolution.”

“We need to make time not so we can do more but so that we can do less and do it better,” he said. “The only way that we can make more time is to say ‘no’ to some things... sometimes to even say ‘no’ to good and holy opportunities.”

Brooke expanded the theme by discussing how spouses need to be seen as personal “talents,” based on the parable of the talents recorded in the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

“Blake is my ‘talent’ and I need to return him to God a better man... more loving, more forgiving, more compassionate, more patient. I want God to see Blake and say to me, ‘I like what you’ve done with him’,” said Brooke.



MCs Royann and Nevin Halyk from Foam Lake.

-Photo by Lynda Statchuk

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Blake and Brooke shared several ideas about how to make time with your spouse including dating in your own home, but the concept that most couples in the audience enjoyed was the idea of showering together. “Don’t get me wrong,” laughed Brooke. “Most of time it’s just about getting clean, but the shower is a place where Blake and I can catch up with each other...it’s like this humid, warm cocoon where we can reconnect.”



Blake and Brooke Sittler

Blake pointed out that the liturgical year of the Church has a few lessons to teach those who feel overwhelmed by their schedule.

“We need to learn that there is a season for activity called ordinary time. There are seasons for celebra-tion (Christmas and Easter); and seasons for calm preparation called Advent and Lent. Does anyone notice that there is no season for chaos?” asked Blake. The Sittlers invited couples to reclaim their time, to prioritize their family and community, and to enjoy their marriage, not just endure it.

Comments about the evening were positive. Sandra Keep, who attended with her husband, said: “Wadena parish did a wonderful job of decorating, planning supper and organizing the event.”

Frank and Jeannette Lipinski from St. Mary’s Parish in Fosston agreed. “No one knew what to expect.... but when we walked into the basement room we quickly found out that this wasn’t just an evening of sitting and listening to speakers,” said Jeannette. Enjoying a fine meal and getting to know other couples during the evening was part of the experience.

Tips from speakers Blake and Brooke Sittler about finding ways to connect as a couple were appreciat-ed.

“Several other ideas were shared and many people realized that it didn’t have to be complicated... something as simple as leaving a note of appreciation on a table or pillow, doing something for your spouse that you don’t normally do or getting a babysitter and then going out for the evening together,” said Jeannette.

She described the evening’s message as: “we need to take special time for each other. To remember to say ‘I love you’ or “thanks for doing that,’ to hold hands, to hug each other, to talk about everything, even if it seems unimportant, and most important of all: listen to each other.”

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“Couples left with a renewed spirit of togetherness and love,” said Frank and Jeannette, expressing appreciation to those who organized the “*Marriage Matters*” evening and to the guest speakers. “We would strongly recommend others go to this next time, if it is in their area.”

The evening included the pre-sentation of many prizes donated by local businesses including the Wadena Coop, Wadena Bakery, Wadena Drugs, E and K Trophy Wadena, St. Mary’s Parish, Royal Bank, Viterra, and Humboldt Kentucky Fried Chicken. Temple Garden Spas in Moose Jaw also donated a day pass to one couple.

For those interested in hosting a marriage enrichment event in their parish, information is available from Marriage Task Force chairs Gail and Pat Fitzpatrick. Contact the office of Marriage and Family Life, 242-1500, Ext. 223 or toll free: 1-877-661-5005, Ext 223.

