



# INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENTS

Mission San Jose



## THE TESTIMONY OF THE BEAUTY AND JOY OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

NAME: **Ricardo Leonel and Beatriz Morales**  
PLACE OF RESIDENCE: **Perth, Western Australia**  
MARRIED YEARS: **40 years**  
CHILDREN: 4 children, 1 married  
GRANDCHILDREN: **2 grand children**  
GREAT-GRANCHILDREN: No great-grandchildren



### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE JUST MARRIED LOVE AND THE LOVE YOU FEEL NOW?

At the beginning of our marriage, our family was moving without direction, there was no strong orientation to guide us to a good life. We were deeply in love and we thought that love was more than enough. Back in that time, we did not have a spiritual formation, we definitely lacked of good conjugal advice. We expected that our kids would bring happiness to the family and they were the main reason to be together. We had faith in God but we did not have Christian experience or clear goals. We thought on providing a good education to our kids in a Catholic school would be sufficient. Both of us worked full time and suddenly we realised we did not have time for ourselves as a couple, our communication was broken, we spoke less and less every time. We had arguments for insignificant things that became big issues later on.

The difference in our marriage started the day when we made the decision to participate in a retreat for marriage couples on the 7th and 8th of May 1983, through the Conjugal Encounter Movement (Movimiento de Encuentros Conyugales - MEC) in El Salvador. With the guidance we received during those days, we started to feel that our God was giving us clues for our marriage to be filled with faith, so we started a true Christian marriage having Jesus and Maria as the centre of our lives. Our love that we feel now is becoming more powerful regardless of our defects, embracing the positive qualities that we each have.

### WHAT ARE THE VALUES AND ATTITUDES YOU THINK HAVE KEPT YOU UNITED AND HAPPY FOR SO MANY YEARS?

Through Conjugal Encounter Movement (MEC) together with our perseverance and our service to the movement, we have learned values and attitudes in order to keep us in harmony all these years of marriage. We have learned how to keep a better and healthier conversation as a couple and as a family, teamwork, time dedication, quality time for ourselves, not only to listen to each other but comprehend each other with the expression of our deepest thoughts and feelings. All of these have made us more happy, mature and aware of our responsibilities as a couple.

### MENTION TWO UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS IN YOUR LOVE STORY.

An unforgettable moment is the beginning of our relationship 7 years before our marriage. I was Beatriz's Basketball trainer and we felt an instant attraction the moment we met. Also the births of our four

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*"Let the Holy Spirit guide the mission of proclaiming the Gospel of marriage, family and life in the world"*



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children have been the best gift God have given to us, and educate them to be example of human kindness. It is a great joy today, to look at them grown up and working in their professions.

WHICH HAS BEEN THE MOST STAGE DIFFICULT IN YOUR MARRIAGE AND HOW DID YOU FACED IT? Immigrating to Perth, Western Australia, has been one the most difficult moments in our family Life. Everything changed. This was a beautiful country, with a new language, new people, but without friends in this new place and at the same time, feeling so nostalgic for everything we left behind: our families, our friends, our culture, our country, the marriage movement. We were very concerned about our future. We needed to learn how to speak English in order to adapt to this new society and start working to provide for our family and to learn a new culture... It was not easy! We were much stressed and our marriage started to go backwards. We started having the same discussions we had when we were newlyweds. A lot of disagreements, arguments with no sense, tears...we were pushing ourselves away and apart from God.

One day, having a conversation, we realised we still had the tools God had given us through the Marriage Movement and we came up with the idea of initiating the MEC in Australia. That way we would help other couples but at the same time, help ourselves to solve our problems. Even though we had difficulties to find a place a priest, a parish, logistic help, we entrusted ourselves to the Guadalupe Virgin to find the way. That is how on the 27th and 28th of June 1992, the first Conjugal Encounter Retreat took place in Perth. Since then, there have been a lot of families, including ourselves, who have been blessed with Jesus and Virgin Mary's messages.

SHARE WITH US, WHAT HAVE WORKED TO YOU TO KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE FOR SO MANY YEARS? Applying our perseverance and service on a daily basis, **we have maintained a healthy and fulfilling communication as a couple and as a family. The way we love each other have changed for good**, now is more mature and responsible. If we have problems, we talked and find solution. Definitely our love is different now, compared to when we started our marriage.

THREE RECOMMENDATIONS (ADVICES) THAT YOU WANT TO MAKE TO THE NEWLYWEDS. Our recommendations to the newlyweds are: Mutual respect, communication, pray as a couple and as family, fall in love with each other again and again, look for help whenever needed from the Christians Marriage Movements, persevere by inviting Jesus and the Virgin Mary to your table and applying every day all of those tips and clues you have learned to solve problems and live in harmony.