

FEATURE

Couples share families, faith, wisdom of years

By Liz Swain
Catholic News Service

SAN DIEGO — A marriage after age 60 is often a remarriage, where the wedding brings together not just the couple but children and grandchildren from two families as well.

And the issues for these newlyweds are slightly different than for a younger couple. Bearing children is not an issue, but finances, housing and health may loom larger.

Through its "Awareness for Remarriage" program, the Diocese of San Diego's Office for Marriage and Family Life helps Catholics prepare for the sacrament of matrimony for the second time in their lives.



In interviews with *The Southern Cross*, newspaper of the San Diego Diocese, four older couples heartily endorsed the course and described the joys associated with remarrying later in life.

Ruth Clark and Wayne Guthrie knew each other as parishioners with spouses and children at St. Therese Church in San Diego. Two years after his wife's death and 18 years after her husband's death, Wayne called Ruth for a date.

They shared a strong faith and similar interests. However, when he proposed marriage, she took 11 months before giving an answer, because she had been on her own for so long.

"I appreciated it, that's why I didn't run away," said Wayne, a retired engineer.

When they decided to marry, the couple signed up for the remarriage preparation weekend offered by the diocese. "We were the oldest couple," said Ruth, a secretarial assistant in the diocesan Office



CNS photo
Ruth Clark and Wayne Guthrie married later in life following the deaths of their first spouses. To help them prepare for marriage a second time, they sought out the "Awareness for Remarriage" program in the Diocese of San Diego, Calif.

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Although topics like the number of children desired did not apply, the couple said they learned about housing from the discussions and also shared with other couples.

"At our age, we've had a lot of experience, good and bad," said Wayne.

Rosemary Lohlein and Gerry Bobby married last Dec. 28, the day before the feast of the Holy Family.

They hadn't deliberately planned their wedding to coincide with the feast day; the scheduling simply allowed families liv-

ing in other parts of the country to attend the ceremony. However, it seemed to mark the blending of families that has taken place with their marriage.

Rosemary's four sons and Gerry's two daughters were the witnesses at the ceremony at Sacred Heart Church in Coronado. Before the couple recited their vows, their children promised to love and accept their new relatives and to grow as a holy family.

The newlyweds met at Beginning Experiences, a retreat for divorced, widowed

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