



# Diocese of Brownsville

## Catholic Pastoral Center

Office of the Bishop

August 24, 2009

National Catholic Engaged Encounter  
C/o Steve and Claudia Schultz  
Executive Coordinators  
4609 Ithaca Street  
Metairie, LA 70006

Dear Steve and Claudia,

As Bishop of the Diocese of Brownsville, I endorse your efforts to request recognition by the Pontifical Council for the Laity for the *International Catholic Engaged Encounter*. I applaud the service that our local Catholic Engaged Encounter Program has offered to our diocese for more than twenty five years. The Catholic Engaged Encounter Team works in conjunction with our Diocesan Family Life Office as an integral part of the Marriage Preparation programs of the Diocese. Each year, they organize and conduct eleven retreats for couples preparing for marriage. They serve an average of two hundred and fifty engaged couples yearly.

We find the process and the content of the United States of America National Catholic Engaged Encounter helpful to engaged couples reflecting on their readiness to make a lifelong commitment to the Sacrament of Matrimony. It enables them to discuss topics that will impact their relationship with one another and their relationship with God. The most frequently stated comments in their written evaluations indicate that one of their most important findings during the retreat is their need and desire to have God as an integral part of their marriage and their desire to grow in their spirituality and in their commitment to the Church.

I also commend the education and formation that the national and international leadership offers the local team presenters through their programs and conferences to effectively guide the young couples in their discernment.

Thank you for your service to the Church in our ministry to young couples preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony. May the good Lord bless you and grant you all good things.

Haz todo con amor,

Most Rev. Raymundo J. Peña  
Bishop of Brownsville

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