

The Importance of Marriage Groups for Marriage and Family Life

A Survey of Our Way Marriage Groups

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Summary

Following the Second Vatican Council, which re-evaluated married life in the Church, Jesuit Father Vital Vider founded the first marriage group in the Catholic Church. This occurred in Slovenia in 1972 and was the beginning of the Our Way Marriage Groups, an Apostolic Work of the Society of Jesus. In 2022, when Our Way celebrated its 50th anniversary, there was a total of 65 marriage groups. To mark the occasion, a larger study was conducted on the significance of Our Way to married couples in the form of an on-line survey. The aim of the survey was to establish the manner in which the spouses who participate in these marriage groups perceive their value and importance for themselves personally and for their families, and to what extent the goals for the marriage groups that Our Way has defined are being achieved. Also examined was the extent to which the rules Our Way has set forth for the functioning of the marriage groups are lived out in practice and what, in the experience of the spouses themselves, is most vital for the groups to function well such that they might bear the best possible fruit. This paper consists of four sections as well as an introduction and a conclusion. It presents the results of an analysis of the responses to survey questions. Analysis results have confirmed that marriage groups are valuable for both spouses and their families. They have also confirmed that the rules set forth by Our Way are considerably important for the functioning of marriage groups, and that they bear significant fruit in both marriages and families.

Keywords: spouses; family; marriage groups; spirituality of spouses

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Introduction

After the Second Vatican Council, which re-evaluated married life in the Church,¹ Jesuit Father Vital Vider began giving spiritual exercises to Catholic married couples in Slovenia in 1970. During these retreats, some couples expressed the desire to meet in a similar way once every month rather than only annually on retreat. »Thus, in 1972, the first such marriage group was born, and thereafter an average of one every year and a half« (Najina pot, 2022a). This was also the beginning of the Our Way (“Najina pot”)² Marriage Groups, which is an Apostolic Work of the Society of Jesus.

There are several other types of marriage groups in Slovenia. In 2000, the Family and Life Society (“Družina in življenje”) was founded under the auspices of the Church in Slovenia. Its fundamental mission is to build relationships between spouses that are worth living and passing on to other couples. In 2021, approximately 250 marriage groups were united in this Society. There are also many Catholic parishes in Slovenia which have one or more marriage groups, as well as various spiritual movements, such as Mary’s Work (“Marijino delo”), The Way Movement (“Gibanje pot”), Spouses for Christ (“Zakonci za Kristusa”), and The Emmanuel Community, within which marriage groups also gather. There are therefore many different Catholic marriage groups in Slovenia, working in different ways. Their main purpose is to help spouses to live their married and family life as well as possible. In 2021, there were approximately 500 groups (Mavrič, 2023). In the case that each group had 10 married couples, there would then be a maximum of 5,000 couples, which is still only a small portion of the total number of married couples in Slovenia. Namely, in 2021 Slovenia had a population of 2,107,180 of whom 1,490,535 persons were Catholic (70.68%) (Slovenska škofovska konferenca, 2022, ??).

The Our Way Marriage Groups describes its mission as follows: »Marriage Groups bring together and befriend couples who want to preserve and develop their marriage. The first aim of a marriage group is therefore to help the couple to be the best possible couple they can be, and thus to develop. It is from this development that everything else follows: more successful parenting, more useful involvement in society and more active participation in the parish« (Najina pot, 2022b).

These Marriage Groups consist of seven to ten married couples. A stable group permits friendships to develop and allows open communication on matters that are personal. The marriage group meets monthly, and the encounter is divided into three parts. The first is devoted to sharing what each has received in

1 For a deeper understanding of the effect that the Second Vatican Council has had in increasing our understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage and married life, see De Guzman (1985), O’Loughlin (1985), Strehovec (2013) and Sikorski (2017).

2 The name Najina pot (“Our Way”) for marriage groups has a significant meaning in the Slovenian language because of the use of the dual (grammatical number) *najina* which means the common path of two entities, the wife and the husband.

personal and communal reflection and discussion at home on a chosen Gospel passage. During the meeting, each person is free to share his or her thoughts on the subject.

The second part is devoted to a chosen theme from married or family life. »In this part of the evening, each individual or couple speaks about what they have discovered as their experience during preparation for the meeting. The discussion in the marriage group is based on the principles of group dynamics. So, it is not a debating circle where couples convince each other of something. It is not an educational school, as the general rules can be found in books, but an exchange of marital or family experiences. Experience and the exchange of one's experience are the richness of marriage groups. Everyone has a say, everyone listens, no one contradicts or corrects« (Najina pot, 2022b).

The third part of the evening is reserved for socialising and is optional. Usually, simple refreshments are served. Although this part is optional, everyone usually stays as it allows for relaxation, laughter, informal conversation and mutual support. It also creates a cosy atmosphere in the group and strengthens bonds of friendship between the couples (Vider, 2005).

In 2022, The Our Way Marriage Groups celebrated the 50th anniversary of its foundation. We therefore prepared a survey titled: A Survey on the Importance of Marriage Groups. The aim of the survey was to discover how the spouses involved in these marriage groups perceive their value and importance to themselves personally and to their families, and to what extent the purpose of the marriage groups is being achieved. We also wanted to see to what extent the rules set forth by Our Way for the functioning of the marriage groups come to life in practice and what, in the experience of the spouses themselves, is most important for the groups to function well in order that they might bear the best possible fruit.

In this paper we will present the results of the analysis of the responses to two basic research questions: Are marriage groups important for marriage and family life? How important are the rules set forth by Our Way for the functioning of marriage groups?

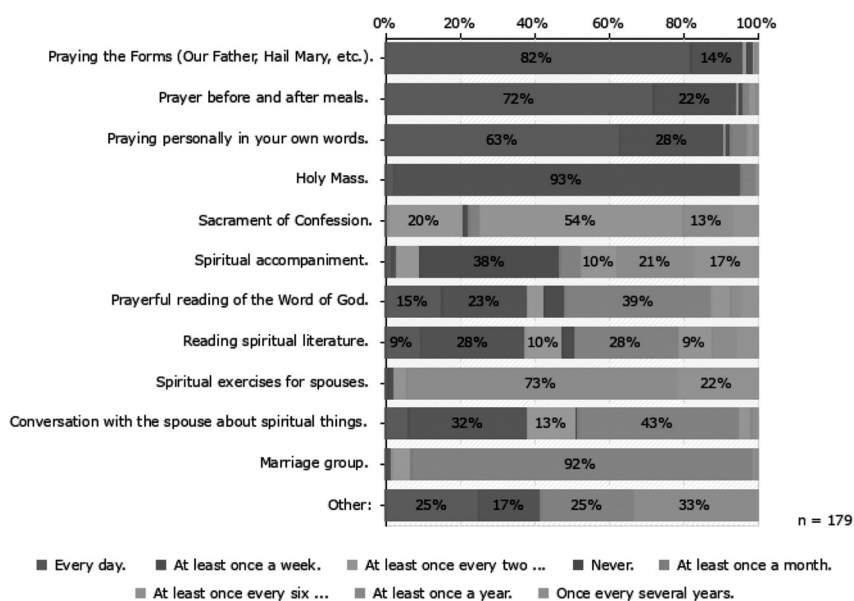
1. Presentation of the survey and respondents

The Survey on the Importance of Marriage Groups was designed by the author of this paper and consists of 14 questions. The survey was published on the website <https://lka.teof.uni-lj.si/> – and was active from 23 August to 10 October 2022. It was addressed to spouses who are members of the Our Way marriage groups. One hundred and eighty respondents completed the survey in full (24 only partially).

59% of wives and 41% of husbands completed it. 38% of them were members of a marriage group for a period of 21–30 years, 36% for 11–20 years, 8% for 31–40 years, 10% for 6–10 years, 7% for up to 5 years and 1% for 41–50 years. 41% were 41–50 years of age, 29% 51–60 years of age, 17% 31–40 years of age, 10% 61+ years of age. Only 3% were aged 21 to 30. 38% had been married for

21 to 30 years, 35% for 11 to 20 years, 8% for 41 to 50 years, 8% for 6 to 10 years, 4% for up to 5 years and 1% for over 51 years.

When asked to indicate how often they had “used” any of the mentioned activities for their spiritual maturation in recent years, 93% indicated that they attended Mass once a week. 82% used the forms to pray daily, 72% prayed daily before and after meals, 63% prayed daily in their own words. 54% went to Holy Confession at least once a year. Only 15% practised daily prayerful reading of the Word of God, 9% read spiritual literature, and 11% had a spiritual conversation between spouses (*Graph 1*). 71% of the spouses surveyed identified themselves as believers, and 22% as strong believers. Only 4% describe themselves as weak believers.



Graph 1. Please indicate how often in recent years you have “used” any of the following activities for your spiritual maturation: (n = 179)³

Grafikon 1. Molimo, navedite koliko ste često u nedavnim godinama “koristili” bilo koju od sljedećih aktivnosti u svrhu svojega duhovnoga sazrijevanja (n = 179)

The on-line survey was sent to 29 Our Way marriage groups, with a total of 189 couples, i.e. 378 spouses. In relation to the number of those who received the survey, a total of 54% (204) completed the survey. In total, Our Way has 65 groups. There are 457 couples, i.e. 914 spouses. The sample represents therefore 22% of those who responded to the survey. It can be said that the sample is a good representation of the Our Way, since it covers all age ranges of those involved in Our Way. At the same time, most of them have been involved in Our Way for 11

3 There were 9 answers under “Other”. Personal spiritual exercises in silence, hymns, religious broadcasts and websites were mentioned twice. Other marriage groups, socializing with spouses and pilgrimages for two were mentioned once each.

to 30 years.⁴ Thus, we have encompassed those who already have considerable experience in the work of Our Way, and thus their answers can be revelatory for all groups to a considerable extent.

2. The importance of marriage groups for the spouses personally and for their marital and family life

In order to discover what the marriage group means to the respondents personally, without influencing them in any way through the answer options given in advance, we asked them only one very open question: “What does the marriage group mean to you personally and to your marriage and family life?” One hundred and eighty-three respondents answered this question, some very briefly, others in somewhat more detail. It is clear from all the answers, at least indirectly, that the marriage group is helpful to them in improving their married life. Here are some longer answers that express this more generally:

»The marriage group is an effective stimulus for personal growth and an aid in the daily work of marriage. Marriage and family life become easier through the group because I am not alone with my joys, needs and difficulties. I see that we are all in the ‘same boat’« (Female, 21–30 years in Our Way).

»Encouragement and direction for our marital growth, a chance to interrupt the daily routine and reconnect with each other. Without the marriage group (and the Spiritual Exercises for married couples) our lives would have been different, not as good, not as full« (Female, 11–20 years in Our Way).

»The marriage group is a support for marital growth, since at the meetings we share our experiences in marriage and family. This helps me to come to the realization that other couples have similar problems, but also similar joys with their spouse and children. The other couples have a calming effect on me and make me realize that my husband and I are not alone in the difficulties that life brings. We are in a society of many spouses and so are better integrated into the Body of Christ« (Female, 21–30 years in Our Way).

Other spouses also see the marriage group as a powerful encouragement and help to develop a deeper relationship by talking about issues they would otherwise avoid:

»Personally, I find it stimulating to talk about a topic that is not exactly commonplace or that I would not otherwise have thought much about. The experiences of other couples also mean a lot to me and they encourage me to grow in our relationship. I think it’s very important for our marriage because it helps us to keep in mind that growth in marriage is not a given and that’s why we are constantly working on our relationship« (Male, up to 5 years in Our Way).

»It means that experiences of married life can be shared. It opens up topics of conversation and perspectives that we would not have thought of on our own.

4 The survey was sent mainly to spouses who have been involved in Our Way for 11 to 30 years.

It offers ideas for dealing with the challenges of marriage. It helps us live a more fulfilling Christian marriage and family life« (Male, 11–20 years in Our Way).

»The marriage group reminds us each month that we need to talk about something deeper than just how to technically get through the day and how to provide for the children. It's a constant that fuels our conversation. Especially when the children were little, we made time for our relationship. With this help, we have always maintained the value that the marriage should come first and only then the children« (Female, 31–40 years in Our Way).

Some spouses also see the marriage group as an encouragement to read the Bible regularly and live their faith more deeply:

»For us, the marriage group is a great blessing. It encourages us to read the Bible regularly, to meditate on it and to further our conversations and belonging. For our family, marriage group means security, because through it we work for our marriage« (Female, 21–30 years in Our Way).

»It means an environment that is a 'home and hearth where you are accepted'. It reminds me that the whole world is not crazy yet. Marriage group means encouragement to talk to my wife, deepen our relationship and read the Bible. For our family, it's a reminder that relationships cannot be taken for granted« (Male, 11–20 years in the Our Way).

»The marriage group is an encouragement to meditate on passages from the Gospel. In this way I live a life of faith, I try to bring the words of Jesus into our life, into the life of our family. The topics we talk about are also topics we probably would not talk about otherwise, but at the same time we hear each other's opinions, we get ideas, it's a rich give and take« (Female, 11–20 years in the Our Way).

Many spouses admit that the marriage group also helps them to be better parents.

»It means security for me, a kind of backbone that helps me stand tall. I can give and receive new ideas to fulfill my relationship with my wife. We are also very good friends with some spouses from our group. Spirituality, prayer, also means a lot to me. We accompany each other ... we set an example for the children and I hope that this helps them on their way in life. The children see that my wife and I work hard on our relationship and that a good relationship is not a given« (Male, 21–30 years in Our Way).

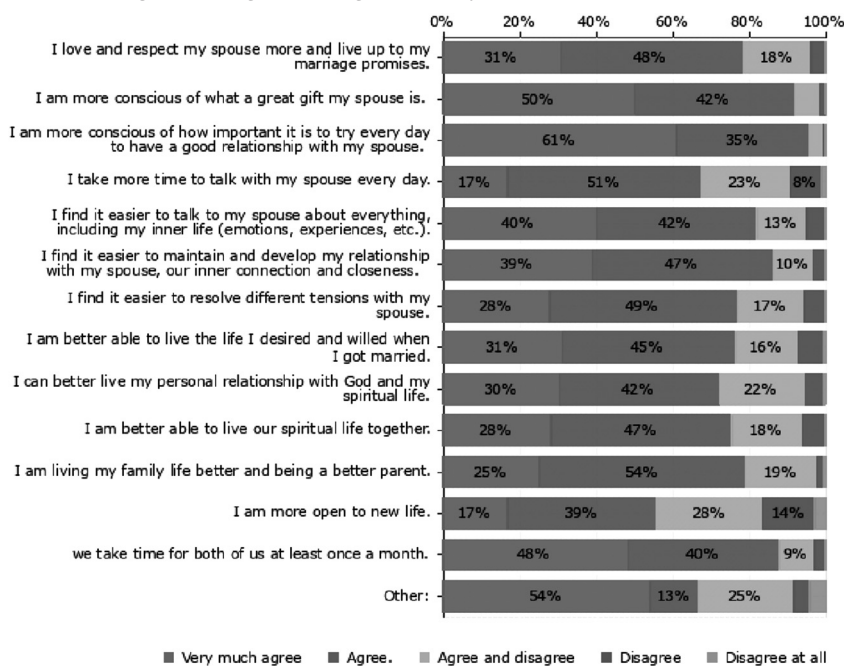
»The marriage group is a place to get to know yourself and your spouse and also meet other spouses who have similar challenges in their marriages. It brings up issues we would not otherwise talk about and it brings us together. It is an affirmation that we are not alone in living a certain Christian way of life in marriage and family. This way we can set an example for our children in the sense that marriage is also something to work at and invest in. I hope this to be their legacy for the future« (Female, 11–20 years in Our Way).

»It means a place and a space where we can talk about things we would otherwise not talk about. It means a group of people to whom I can confide my inner feelings, joys and worries and know that I will not be judged for having a different opinion. In married life, a group is a great asset because there are some

topics that I would not talk about with my spouse, that I would probably listen to, but often would not hear. In family life, the marriage group is also a plus because we are friends with all the couples and families in our group, and the children are also connected« (Female, 21–30 years in Our Way).

3. What is the impact of regular attendance at a marriage group on spouses?

In order to find out how respondents are affected by regular attendance at a marriage group, we designed a quantitative question whereby respondents could choose from twelve pre-made statements, which we obtained from an analysis of texts on the importance of marriage groups within Our Way. They were invited to select one answer for each of the statements that followed the sentence “Because of regular attendance at the marriage group...”: agree very much, agree, agree and disagree, disagree, disagree totally.



Graph 2. Because of regular attendance at the marriage group...

(Please choose one answer for each statement)⁵ (n = 185)

Grafikon 2. Zahvaljujući redovitim dolascima na grupu...

(Molimo, odabirete jedan odgovor za svaku izjavu) (n = 185)

5 There were 14 answers under “Other”. The one that was most evident was that which was not included in the statements from which they could choose. Seven said that they live a more holistic life as a result of attending the group regularly. Three said that they have a better relationship with their spouse; two that effort is important, and two that they regularly read the Word of God together.

In *Graph 2*, we see that the vast majority of respondents strongly agreed that attending a marriage group regularly affects them most in the following ways, downwards in order from most strongly: »I am more conscious of how important it is to make an effort every day to have a good relationship with my spouse« (61%); »I am more conscious of what a great gift my spouse is« (50%); »We take time for both of us at least once a month« (48%); »I find it easier to talk to my spouse about everything, including my inner life (emotions, experiences, etc.)« (40%).

The order of the selected statements clearly shows that attending a marriage group makes the vast majority of spouses more conscious of the need to make an effort every day to have a good relationship with their spouse.⁶ Thus, we can see that these spouses are very much aware that contentment in marriage and quality relationships do not happen on their own, but that it is necessary for each to make an effort to achieve it. So, these spouses are standing on realistic ground and are not lulled into thinking that their love and respect for each other is something that comes of itself.

Equally important is the fact that these spouses agree that, as a result of attending the group regularly, they are becoming more and more conscious of the fact that a spouse is a great gift.⁷ Even though it is clear to them that they have to make an effort every day for a good relationship, they do not see their spouse as a burden or a penance, but as a gift.

Other selected statements also confirm that regular attendance at a marriage group helps them to build deeper and stronger relationships. They strongly agree with the following statements: »I find it easier to maintain and develop my relationship with my spouse, our inner connection and closeness« (39%); »I love and respect my spouse more and keep my marriage promises« (31%); »I find it easier to live the life I desired and willed when I got married« (31%); »I find it easier to resolve different tensions with my spouse« (28%).

The third selected statement, with which they strongly agree is that »we take time for both of us at least once a month« (48%), and it reveals how, although they are aware of the need to make an effort every day for a good relationship, they are not able to find the time to talk every day. This fact is also shown by the result of the choice of the statement »I take more time to talk to my spouse every day because I go to the group regularly«. This statement is the second to last in terms of how strongly they agree with this (17%). However, the fact that 51% of respondents agree shows that, despite difficulties, they do make an effort to do this, and see it as a fruit of attending the group meetings. Only 1% do not agree at all and 8% disagree.

Regular attendance at the group meeting also makes it easier for the spouses to talk to each other about everything, including their inner life (emotions,

6 Significantly, only 1% of respondents disagreed with this statement, while only 4% both agreed and disagreed.

7 Only 2% of respondents disagreed with this statement, while only 6% agreed and disagreed.

experiences, etc.).⁸ This selected statement, which takes fourth place, shows that Father Vider's encouragement (1991, 18–19; 2007, 133–135; 2012, 19–22), who started Our Way and is still its true leader, is bearing real fruit. A study by Logar (2018, 26)⁹ showed that »there are no statistically significant differences between members and non-members of marriage groups on sub-dimensions measuring mutual emotional expression and contact in the relationship«. Of course, this research was not only done among spouses who are in the Our Way marriage groups. However, our survey also shows that even for them this is not the most important result of attending the group, but it is ranked quite high, which is very encouraging.

The survey shows that spouses are not as likely to recognize that regular attendance at the group meetings would make for a better family life and make them better parents. Only 25% strongly agreed with this statement, 1% did not agree at all and 2% disagreed. However, 54% agreed. So, the majority acknowledges the positive impact on their parenting mission as well (Harris, 2022, 124–132). In any case, the primary purpose of the Our Way marriage group is an opportunity to improve the marital relationship. To a lesser degree, it enables them to become better family members and parents.

Couples in marriage groups usually have more children than couples who do not participate. It is interesting to see that only 17% of the respondents thought that attending a group had a great effect on this, while 39% agreed.¹⁰ The survey therefore shows that while the number of children is affected by participation in the group, group participation is not the primary cause.

The survey results also show that regular participation in a marriage group has a significant impact on the spouses' personal relationship with God and their personal spiritual life.¹¹ It also helps them to live their spiritual life together.¹²

4. What is important for functioning and well-being in a marriage group?

In order to discover what respondents consider important for the good functioning and well-being of a marriage group, we designed a quantitative question where they could choose from eleven pre-made statements obtained from the analysis of the Our Way guide to its operation. They were invited to select one answer for each of the statements that was a continuation of the sentence: "It is

8 40% of respondents very much agreed, 42% agreed, 13% agreed and disagreed, 5% disagreed.

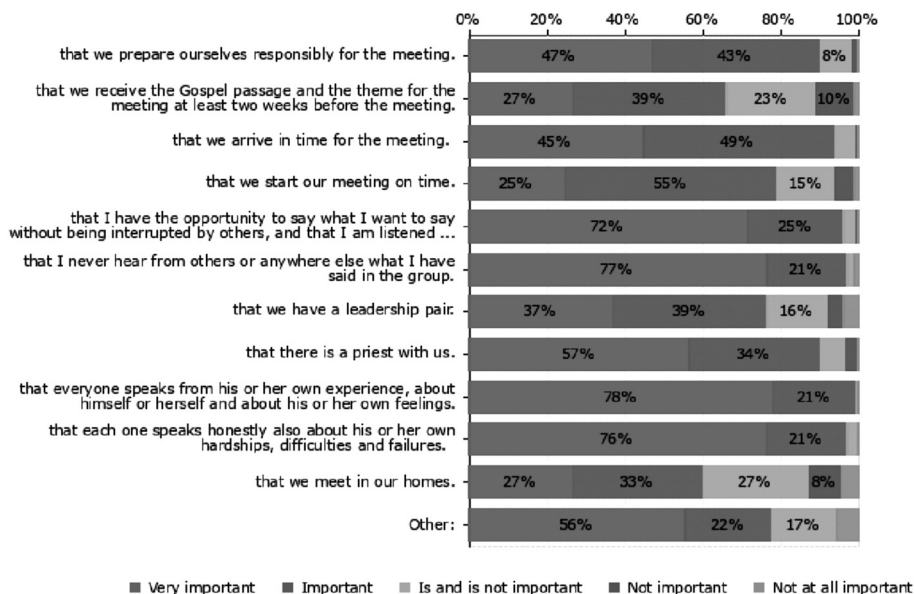
9 This is the only scholarly article we could find that examined the importance of marriage groups to married life. This shows the lack of research in this area.

10 28% of respondents agreed and disagreed, 14% disagreed and 3% disagreed at all.

11 30% of respondents agreed very much, 42% agreed, 22% agreed and disagreed, 5% disagreed and 1% disagreed at all. Without personal faith, the grace of the Sacrament of Marriage cannot be fully effective in the spouses (Turnšek, 2021; Slatinek, 2022; Bošnjaković et al., 2021).

12 28% of respondents agreed very much, 47% agreed, 18% agreed and disagreed, 6% disagreed.

important for the functioning and well-being of the marriage group that...”: very important, important, is and is not important, not important, not at all important.



Graph 3. It is important for the functioning and well-being of the marriage group that... (Choose one answer for each statement)¹³ (n = 183)

Grafikon 3. Važno je za funkcioniranje i dobrobit bračne skupine da... (Odaberite jedan odgovor za svaku izjavu) (n = 183)

Graph 3 reveals that most important for the good functioning and well-being of the marriage group for the spouses surveyed was the fact that »everyone speaks from their own experience, about himself or herself and his or her own experiences« (78%)¹⁴ and, to a lesser extent, that »everyone also speaks honestly about his or her own hardships, difficulties and failures« (76%)¹⁵ and that »I have the opportunity to say what I want to say, without being interrupted by others, and to be listened to attentively and respectfully by others« (72%).¹⁶ The results of the survey therefore confirm how important it is for them to follow the instruction given in *Our Way of Working as a Marriage Group*, that everyone should be completely free to talk about himself or herself as personally and as much

13 There were 13 answers under “Other”. The focus was on what was not included in the statements from which they could choose. Five of them stressed the importance of socializing after the meeting and outside the meetings, and one stressed the importance of spiritual exercises. Others emphasized coming to the group regularly and being sincere at the meetings.

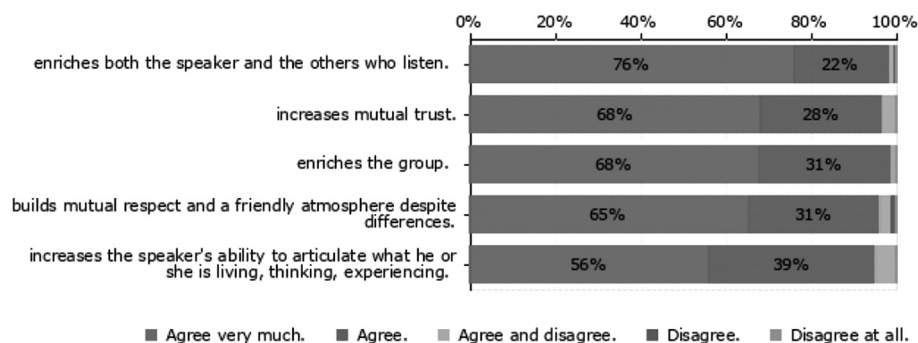
14 This was important for 21% of the spouses surveyed, while it was important and not important for only 1%.

15 For 21% of the spouses surveyed, this was important, but for only 3% of the respondents it was important and not important.

16 For 25% of the spouses surveyed this was important, while only 3% considered it important and not important and 1% did not consider it important.

as he or she wishes (Vider, 2005, 10–11). It is also very important that they talk not only about their successes, but also about their failures, problems and difficulties, and that others listen attentively and respectfully without interrupting.

The importance of participants speaking from their own experience about himself/herself and about his/her own experience is also confirmed by the analysis of the quantitative survey question, whereby the respondents could choose between five prepared statements, obtained from the analysis of Our Way’s instructions on how each spouse should speak in the group. They were invited to mark one answer for each statement that continued the sentence: “That in the group meeting, each person speaks from his or her own experience, about him or herself and about his or her own experience...”: agree very much, agree, agree and disagree, disagree, disagree at all.



Graph 4. That in a group meeting everyone speaks from his or her own experience, about him or herself and about his or her own experience... (Choose one answer for each statement) (n = 184)

Grafikon 4. Da na sastanku skupine svatko govori iz svog vlastitog iskustva o sebi i svom vlastitom iskustvu... (Odaberite jedan odgovor za svaku izjavu) (n = 184)

The survey shows that the vast majority of the spouses surveyed strongly agree that this way of speaking »enriches both the speaker and the others who listen« (76%). It also strongly »increases mutual trust« (68%), »enriches the group« (68%), »builds mutual respect and a friendly atmosphere despite differences« (65%). However, the least strongly agreed statement is that this way of speaking »increases the speaker’s ability to put into words what he or she lives, thinks and experiences« (56%) (Graph 4). However, even this last statement still has a very high level of agreement, with 39% of respondents also agreeing, and 9% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. No one disagrees. The survey thus confirms the importance of repeatedly inviting all the spouses in the group to speak in the first person singular about their own experiences, about themselves and their own feelings. This is the only way to create a space for trust, respect and personal growth in the group.

In Graph 3 we see that spouses also found it very important for the group to function properly that »I never hear from others or anywhere else what I have

said in the group« (77%). Without this trust and security, members cannot be honest and the group cannot enable what it was established to do, as the Our Way rules make clear (Vider, 2005, 8–12).

In most cases, a priest is always present at the meetings of the Our Way marriage groups. Most of the groups are accompanied by Fr. Vital Vider and Fr. Andrej Benda, who is now officially the head of Our Way. Some groups are accompanied by other Jesuits. The survey shows that most of the spouses interviewed do not consider this to be the most important thing for the good functioning of the group. However, for a good half of the respondents, it is very important (57%) and for 34% it is important. It is not important for only 3% and it is both important and not important for 7%. So, we can see that it is good to have a priest present at the meeting. Of course, he too has to take into account the rules of the Our Way marriage groups, as well. This means that he is first and foremost a listener, and that he accompanies the group primarily (Vider, 2005, 8–9).

Each group has a couple acting as senior leader who is in the group as are the others, but who also represents someone who, with more experience, almost invisibly ensures that the group follows group rules. The survey shows that their presence in the group was not as important as the presence of the priest. The presence of the senior couple was very important for 37% of the respondents, and it was important for 39%. For 16% it was important and for 16% it was not important. In any case, it is not at all important for only 4% it is not important for 4%. This reveals that, on the one hand, they are aware of the importance of their presence, but at the same time they are not. It is probably important for the future of these groups that the presence and the role of the leading couples be further evaluated, since there are also increasingly fewer Jesuit priests who can be present regularly at all meetings. Father Vider very much stresses the need to arrive punctually at the group meetings and also to start punctually (Vider, 2005, 12). The survey shows that the spouses of Our Way are conscious of this, but they consider it more important to arrive punctually at the meeting than to start punctually.

Each marriage group meeting has an optional social segment at the end. In the survey there was no specific question to assess the importance of this for group members. From the responses to the open-ended questions, one may conclude that the members also consider the social segment valuable, and that it contributes much to the good functioning and well-being of the marriage group.¹⁷

Conclusion

Research has confirmed that marriage groups are very important for marriage and family life, and that they do indeed help couples to achieve their basic goal: to become the best possible married couple that they can be. It also confir-

¹⁷ See also footnote 13 on the relevance of this.

med that the rules given by Our Way for the functioning of marriage groups are very important for them, and that they bear considerable fruit in their concrete lives of their own marriages and families. Certainly, the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Our Way marriage groups speaks most eloquently of their value and importance.

In any case, one should bear in mind that the impact assessment was made by participants of the Our Way marriage groups themselves, therefore we cannot say that it is actually very high. To know this more precisely, we would need an experimental research design with an experimental and at least a comparable control group of spouses. So, this survey, conducted on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of Our Way, is a call for further research to demonstrate even more precisely how important marriage groups are for the pastoral care of spouses and families.

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Važnost bračnih grupa za bračni i obiteljski život

Istraživanje bračnih grupa Najina pot u Sloveniji

*Ivan Platovnjak**

Sažetak

Nakon Drugoga vatikanskoga koncila, koji je pridao novu vrijednost životu bračnih parova u Crkvi, isusovac Vital Vider osnovao je 1972. prvu bračnu grupu u Crkvi u Sloveniji. To je ujedno bio i početak bračnih grupa Najina pot, koja je apostolsko djelo Družbe Isusove. Godine 2022., kada je Najina pot slavio 50. obljetnicu, u nje-mu je djelovalo 65 bračnih grupa. Tim povodom provedeno je opsežnije istraživanje o važnosti Najina pot za supružnike u obliku mrežne ankete. Cilj ankete bio je saznati: kako supružnici koji su u tim bračnim grupama doživljavaju njihovu vrijednost i važnost za sebe osobno i za svoje obitelji; koliko su ciljevi bračnih grupa koje im Najina pot postavlja za njih ostvareni; u kojoj se mjeri pravila koja Najina pot postavlja za funkcioniranje bračnih grupa provode u praksi; što je, prema iskustvu samih supružnika, najvažnije da grupe dobro funkcioniraju kako bi dale što bolje plodove. Ovaj znanstveni rad predstavlja rezultate analize odgovora na anketna pitanja. Rezultati analize potvrdili su da su bračne grupe važne za supružnike i obitelji. Rezultati su također potvrdili da su pravila Najina pot vrlo važna za funkcioniranje bračnih grupa i da donose bitne plodove u njihovim brakovima i obiteljima.

Ključne riječi: supružnici; obitelj; bračne grupe; duhovnost supružnika

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