

Title:	CFM COUPLES: DO YOU HAVE MARITAL BLISS?
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The dictionary defines the word bliss as “complete happiness,” “paradise,” even “heaven.” Can there be marital bliss if a couple has been married for 25, 40 or 60 years? This question was posed to a panel of three couples, one of whom was Jorge and Josie Santamaria who had been married for 61 years and who represented the Christian Family Movement. The forum was the Assembly sponsored by the Family Media Advocacy Foundation in cooperation with the Archdiocese of Manila, Ministry on Healthcare and Doctors for Life. The venue was the Philippine Heart Center and the date was October 19, 2019. The audience was composed of medical practitioners of various specializations, priests, religious, and couples from different family organizations.



According to Jorge and Josie, the answer is a YES if there is true love, God is present in their relationship, and the couple is prayerful. For the past 35 years, Jorge and Josie have been daily Mass attendees and receive Holy Communion. After Mass, and before breakfast, they pray together. They start with thanksgiving followed by reading, meditating, and sharing on the Word of God in the day’s Reading and the Gospel. They share what the message and direction of God is to each of them as individuals, as a couple, and as parents.

They still experience emotional and physical intimacy and romance in their marriage, despite their advanced age.

In the early years of their marriage, they experienced conflicts which led to frequent quarrels because of their different personalities, unmet expectations, and the demands of their separate careers. This brought a lot of stress in their relationship resulting in aggression on the part of Josie and silence on the part of Jorge. Their troublesome marriage ended when they learned the right way of communication and the importance of openness when they took the CFM Marriage Encounter. In fact, they had taken the ME three times, at different stages of their marriage i.e., during their 10th year of marriage, the second was before their 25th year and later before their 40th year of marriage.

The word of God became prominent in their married life when they became members of the Ang Ligaya ng Panginoon Community from which they were able to take part in many formation programs.

During the Family Media Advocacy forum, they shared the following Eight Rules for a Happy Blissful Married Life:

1. Pray together and share your faith life with your spouse
2. Be faithful in word and in deed
3. Express your love to each other. Use the love language of your spouse to him/her. Jorge spends quality time with Josie because this is her love language. Josie serves Jorge because this is his love language. Together, they touch each other through loving embraces and kisses daily.

Jorge has been writing love letters to Josie three times a year for the past 61 years! He has a love letter for her on Valentine's Day, on her birthday, and on their wedding anniversary date! You can imagine the volumes of love letters that Josie has kept and treasured all these years!

4. Affirmation. Be generous with praise and appreciation. "*When you see it, say it.*" "*It*" is the positive behavior of the spouse.
5. Show respect to your spouse in private and in public and this includes in front of your children and grandchildren. Do not rebuke or criticize him/her.
6. Forgive and forget. Do not bury the hurts in your heart. Let go and let God. Reconcile and kiss each other before sleeping.
7. Express your need. Do not expect your spouse to read what you need. Josie reminds Jorge that it is time for their date out. Their date consists of dinner and movie by themselves at least once a month.
8. Accept your spouse as he/she is. Avoid having expectations and never compare your spouse with other spouses.

Both Jorge and Josie believe that God, the Potter, continues to be at work in their life as He molds both of them in preparation for the next level of bliss – HEAVENLY BLISS in eternal life!*