

The first of this semester's "Conversations at the Center," where we learn together in a place where we discover what it means to be Church, the theme addressed was CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY. The community, residents and guests welcomed Basia and Tomek Sobolewski, a married couple from Worcester, MA, who just celebrated their 25th Wedding Anniversary, to share their experiences of what being a Christian family means to them.

As parents of two adult daughters, Basia and Tomek, who were immigrants to the U.S. as young adults and met after arriving on our shores, spoke of the importance of respecting differences in each family member, with regard to one's growth in relationships, especially with God through prayer. Whereas Basia grew up in a more traditional expression of faith, Tomek lived his faith as a result of a more personal choice. When they married and became parents, the couple sought out a 'child friendly parish.' Believing in the family as the domestic church, they, along with the support of a parish priest and a few other couples, formed a group who met regularly for prayer, faith sharing, social interaction and retreats. When asked about how they addressed family challenges and problems, they immediately responded with the importance of dealing with such situations prayerfully, humbly and promptly. They further recommended to the young men present, that the best way to prepare and approach marriage and parenthood was to be faithful to prayer and to themselves.

Reflecting on the morning, it was evident that Basia and Tomek gave us a powerful witness to the words of Pope Francis in his Sunday Mass homily, which concluded the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia, September, 2015, when he said, "Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home. Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love. That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life, and life to become faith."

After a brief time of Q & A, the group moved on to enjoy a delicious brunch and the opportunity to continue the discussion.