

Resurrection parishioner guided by faith, life experience

Speak with Lynn Cassella-Kapusinski for just moments and you'll immediately understand why the Church of the Resurrection, Ellicott City, parishioner has achieved such success with her foundation dedicated to supporting young people with separated or divorced parents.

As founder of the nonprofit organization, Faith Journeys Foundation Inc., Ms. Cassella-Kapusinski draws upon her own experiences as she embraces the challenge to help young people overcome obstacles they face as the children of separated or divorced parents.

Through Faith Journeys, which she started in Pittsburgh and brought to Baltimore in 2001, Ms. Cassella-Kapusinski leads groups and retreats for children involved with divorce. Her work spans many populations as she ministers on behalf of dioceses, schools, and parishes, and conducts educational workshops and training programs for parents, guidance counselors, teachers and clergy. Her sessions vary in length depending on the specific needs of the group and her curriculum is based on Catholic teachings and counseling concepts. Involving the parents is also a critical component within Ms. Cassella-Kapusinski's curriculum.

Her most recent book, "Now What Do I Do? A Guide to Help Teenagers with Their Parents' Separation or Divorce," won an award from the Catholic Press Association last year. Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien also endorsed the book with the following statement: "This book is a unique weaving of spirituality, psychological insight, and the author's personal triumph as a child of divorced parents. I cannot think of another resource for adolescents on this important topic that is so well done."

The accolades that Ms. Cassella-Kapusinski has received do not stop with Archbishop O'Brien. During a recent trip to Rome for an international conference, "Oil on the Wounds: A Response to the Aftermath of Divorce and Abortion," held at the Pontifical Lateran University and co-sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, Ms. Cassella-

Kapusinski spoke along with a panel of international authorities.

During the Conference, Ms. Cassella-Kapusinski and the other speakers were granted a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI. Applauding the initiatives of loving mercy to help those harmed, Pope Benedict said: "I express deep appreciation for all those social and pastoral initiatives being taken for the reconciliation and treatment of people injured by the drama of abortion and divorce."

Already motivated by her personal faith and unyielding passion for her foundation, Ms. Cassella-Kapusinski's enthusiasm was taken to a new level by Pope Benedict's words of praise and encouragement.

"I've always been very fulfilled by knowing that the kids see me as a symbol of hope," she said. "I've risen above the challenges of growing up with divorced parents and am now happily married. My time spent with the pope is something I'll never forget and clearly reinforces my calling within this ministry."

Ms. Cassella-Kapusinski is currently pursuing a master's degree in pastoral counseling at Loyola College in Maryland, Baltimore. She holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and a master's degree in fine arts from Vermont College. Married for 7 years, she and her husband George reside in Catonsville.

To learn more about Ms. Cassella-Kapusinski's personal journey, her books, and her foundation, visit www.faithjourneys.org.