

FSC Valentine's program celebrates marriage through thick and thin

LA CROSSE – An evening of romance, inspiration and laughter awaits couples at the Franciscan Spirituality Center's 9th annual Valentine's Day marriage retreat.

A candlelit dinner, wine, music, new friends, one-on-one reflection time, giveaways and an opportunity for couples to renew their vows are all part of the program "Celebration of Married Life: Loving Through Thick and Thin," from 3 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 14, at the FSC, 920 Market St.

Guest speakers Mark and Irene Mehlos will share the touching story of a widow they met through their volunteer work with Retrouvaille, an international peer ministry for hurting marriages. The life journey of high school sweethearts Jim and Mary Lou Beers, whose marriage weathered disability, disappointment and financial struggle but also a surprise pregnancy, joy and gratitude, continues to have "a lasting impact on our own marriage," Mark said. "It's an amazing example of loves that endures all things," Irene said.

This popular FSC event continues to draw couples from throughout the region who are looking to renew their romance with food for thought and for the body. One previous guest praised the event for giving her "the opportunity to reconnect with my husband and meet other wonderful couples. We never have uninterrupted time to focus on us, and it was great."

Married for 35 years, the Mehloses live in Merrill, Wisconsin, and have three grown children. Both are former health care professionals and, in retirement, manage a summer cabin rental business together. Mark is in his final year of the FSC Spiritual Direction Preparation Program.

"Celebration of Married Life: Loving Through Thick and Thin" is limited to 20 couples. Cost is \$75 per couple, which includes dinner. Deadline to register is January 30; please call 608-791-5295 or visit www.FSCenter.org.