

Spotlight Couple # 7

Jose & Cecilia Cervantes
ME Class # 19

Happy summer to all! So honored to feature Jose (Bro. Lito) and Cecilia (Sis. Cecile) for our July's spotlight couple from South Ozone Park, NY. They have served our community for years in various positions. They were past president and First Lady of our KFI Ministry. They are both doctors by profession. This interview is titled, "What do you remember?"

The first time you met what did you think of him/her?

L: I thought to myself: "What an attractive lady, full of enthusiasm and life, who moved about in the emergency room like Speedy Gonzalez."

C: We met for the first time in a jeepney bound for Alabang to start our rural training. I was a resident and he was one of the interns, so I considered myself his senior. It was not until he played the original classical Polonaise by Chopin on the piano that I became attracted to him. I only played the simplified version and he played it so beautifully. I was truly impressed!

After your ME Retreat, how did it make you feel?

C: After the ME weekend I felt quite disappointed, because there was no immediate improvement in our relationship. He continued to work very long hours, while I continued to expect more help in parenting and attention from him. As we continued on our deepenings, but more especially when we became shepherds, I learned to be less focused on myself and my happiness as I started to more fully understand the meaning of true love. I realized that when love is given without expecting anything in return, marriage becomes more joyful.

L: I realized we had become disconnected along the way. It was entirely my fault because my thoughts and primary concerns were for my patients. There was some regret for the lost times I could have spent with her and the children. Fortunately, I was not yet too old when I joined the MEW. There was a lot of catching up to do since then.

What made you laugh together?

L: Watching reruns of Three's Company on TV.

C: Recently, we started to watch reruns of Three's Company and we enjoy laughing together. We have always enjoyed more serious films and spiritual shows, but we discovered that laughing together as we watch funny shows brings color and cheer to our tiresome days.

What's the hardest thing you prayed for?

C: We have had many trials as a family and we prayed hard for them, but the hardest one for me was when our youngest daughter had seizures. She had to take long-term anti-convulsants and underwent frequent sleep-deprived EEG's. She also had hearing loss and speech delay. But in His great love and mercy, God heard our prayers and strengthened us through those trials. Our daughter's seizures have not recurred off medications since she was 4 years old. She is now an accomplished data scientist and happily married to a Catholic convert. Praise be to God!

L: That we would grow old together and still have the fire in our hearts and minds.

As a couple, what are you most proud of?

L: Able to plant the seeds and evangelize our children and grandchildren. We hope God will do the rest even when we're gone.

C: We are most proud of our children who have kept their faith in God and continue to go to Church every Sunday. As young adults, they continue to love and care for each other though they live hundreds or even thousands of miles apart. We were most proud when we learned that their oldest brother settled the student loans of his two younger siblings one Christmas day.

What was the most memorable thing you did on your vacation?

C: Our most memorable vacation was the time when our two younger children who were still unmarried joined us on a private pilgrimage to the Holy Land during the Christmas week of 2016. It was truly a gift from God!

L: Jump from the top of a waterfall in the Dominican Republic (with a life vest, of course).

How do you see yourself as a couple in your golden years?

C: I consider ourselves being in our golden years right now. I have been retired for 9 years while Lito is still happily working full time. We are spending part of our golden years working in God's vineyard. We have been active in the Marriage Encounter Ministry for the last 16 years, as well as leading praying meetings and bible studies. We have both been active lay ministers in our parish. What we miss the most is spending time with our grandchildren. Because they live far from us – California, Connecticut, and North Carolina, I wish I could see them more often than twice or three times a year. But we know that that is the cross God has given us to bear. Trusting that God loves them more than we can possibly love them and will take care of them, we humbly submit to His will. He does give us opportunities to reach out to our children and grandchildren. Our third child who is still unmarried lives with us and his technological skills have been an invaluable gift to us in our work of evangelization. We look forward to golden years of traveling with our children and grandchildren. We hope that God has this in store for us!

L: Being active in our local parish, assisting our priests and fellow parishioners, bringing the word of God to our friends and acquaintances; traveling to visit our children and grandchildren, spending vacations with them; traveling and spending vacations with friends and other family members.



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