



**FAMILY GARDEN  
FAMILY COUNSELLING CENTRE**

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES  
JANUARY – DECEMBER 2018

## EDITORIAL

Dear friends, — We are celebrating this year. That's right, and we're truly happy about that. 2018 commemorates the 5th anniversary of the establishment of our FAMILY GARDEN Family Counselling centre. In a way, the pages of this annual report are a glimpse back to everything that has happened over that five-year time period, and especially during the year of 2018. — And there has been a lot happening – many events, activities, get-togethers... We have been enriched by people we've connected with either as our lecturers, individuals offering testimonies about their lives, participants of our educational trainings and marital preparation courses, or clients of our centre. To me, personally, it feels like the time has flown by incredibly fast. You know what I mean – it's as if you snap your fingers and one year of your life is gone. Looking back, I can't help but smile. It was a great year! — When celebrating a milestone birthday, we usually offer our congratulations and well-wishes somewhat more warmly. Allow me to try, then: Happy Birthday, Family Garden! May you continue to thrive and prosper, and to all the people you'll come in contact with, may you continue to offer exactly what they need the most in that particular moment. We're thankful to have you.

KATARÍNA BAGINOVÁ  
CENTRE DIRECTOR



The background of the image is white, filled with numerous streamers of red and orange-red color. These streamers are of varying lengths and are curled and scattered across the entire page, creating a festive and celebratory atmosphere. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

**WHO IS  
FAMILY  
GARDEN**



**TESTIMONIES OF MARRIED COUPLES  
EXPERT LECTURES  
COACHING COURSES  
COACHING DIALOGUES WITH  
A CHRISTIAN COACH  
EXPERT COUNSELLING  
MEETINGS FOR ENGAGED COUPLES  
FERTILITY COUNSELLING CLINIC**



Family Garden is a family counselling centre located on Miletičova Street in Bratislava.

The centre has been operating since 2014 and is staffed by laymen – Salesian co-operators. In addition to Salesian co-operators, many experts are involved in the partnership effort, such as a gynaecologist, psychologist, a priest, a lawyer, financial adviser, married couples, Christian coaches, and the entire Salesian family. Family Garden brings all these Christian specialists under one roof, helping believers seeking high-quality professional help. — Family Garden offers help in two main areas – counselling and prevention. In the area of counselling, those who are interested have the opportunity to arrange an in-person session with an expert in an area they need help with. Regularly offered testimonies, expert lectures, preparation for marriage, educational programmes, etc. serve as

preventive measures. — At the same time, the project builds on previous long-time experiences of married couples trained to provide marriage preparation counselling to engaged couples. Family Garden brings time-proven lectures of married couples from the Gatherings for couples in Banská Bystrica to Bratislava. Testimonies of married couples in Family Garden take place once in every two months. Attending to the meaningfulness of the project is the feedback of the many individuals and couples contacting our centre and finding in themselves the willingness and strength to work on their marital problem or seek expert help. The Family Garden's approach to solving problem situations in marriages or in lives of individual family members is based on consistency and expertise and follows the proven and globally accepted methods of the Salesian preventive system of education.

## CONTACT

We can be found in the Bratislava-Trnávka city district, on the premises of the new Momma Margherita family centre on Pavlovičova Street.

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fb: [www.facebook.com/FAMILYGARDEN.sk](https://www.facebook.com/FAMILYGARDEN.sk)





The Association of Salesian Co-operators (ASC) was founded by Don Bosco on May 9, 1876 in Turin. After founding the Salesian Order (Salesians SDB and Salesian Sisters FMA), he decided to establish an association in the likes of the third orders (that the Franciscans and some other orders have for laity), however, he insisted that the emphasis shouldn't lie only in religious piety, but also in the active life of loving service to others, especially young people – just as he himself has lived. — Today there are approximately 30,000 Salesian co-operators (singles, married couples, and diocesan priests) living and working all over the world. Slovakia is one of the countries with the greatest representation of this part of the Salesian family – there are currently more than 1,000 Salesian co-operators in our country.

## **SALESIAN CO-OPERATORS**



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT  
THE ASC CENTRE ON THE MILETIČOVA STREET  
PLEASE SEE: [WWW.MILETICKA.SK/ASC](http://WWW.MILETICKA.SK/ASC)**



## ELENA ŠTOFIROVÁ

Elena has been part of Family Garden for five years. Her role is mainly administrative and organisational, i.e. designing and distribution of lecture-related flyers, managing orders, invoices, and dealing with grant-related billing issues. She is retired and considers this work an opportunity to continue to be useful outside of her own family. At the same time, it offers her a chance to continue in the active work of a Salesian co-operator, since the centre is a joint effort of Salesian co-operators on Miletičova Street. She has four children. Together with her husband, they take care of their home and garden, and in addition to helping out their own children and their families, occasionally, they try to offer a helping hand in their parish as well.



## MIRIAM NĚMCOVÁ

In 2016, she completed the Christian coach training programme. The participation in the programme piqued her interest not only in the method of Christian coaching, but also in the message behind the Family Garden counselling centre. When she's been offered the opportunity to become a part of this effort at the beginning of 2017, for her, it wasn't a question of if, but how to make it happen.

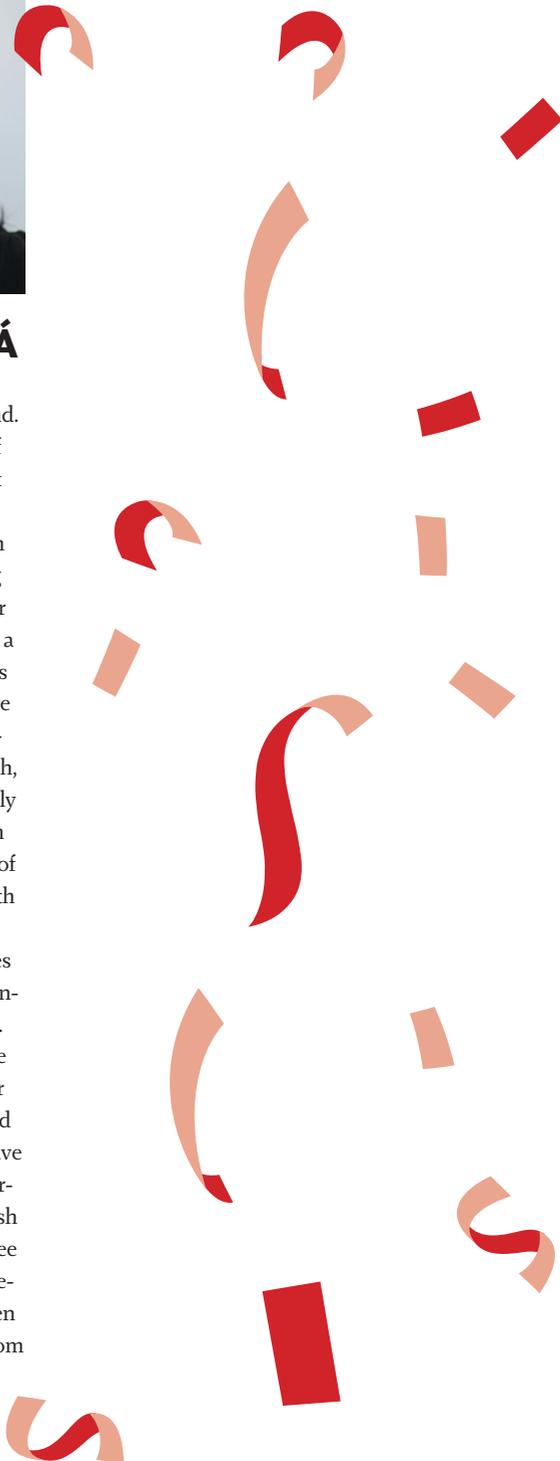
From June 2017, she's been working part-time in Family Garden. In other respects, she has pedagogical background and for the last 20 years, she's been working as an analytical expert and consultant in a software design company. As an accredited Christian coach, she works with individual clients in the centre, and as a lecturer and manager, she is involved in the Christian coach training programme as well. She helps organise regular lectures and testimonies of married couples and experts in various fields. At the same time, she's responsible for preparing source materials for grants supporting the work of the centre. Together with her husband, she maintains the [www.familygarden.sk](http://www.familygarden.sk) webpage and is involved in promoting Family Garden and its activities and managing the daily running of the centre. She's been married for 15 years, is a mother of two sons and a godmother of seven other "children" aged seven to forty-five.



## KATARÍNA BAGINOVÁ

Originally, she has a pedagogical background.

When Karol Maník, the then provincial of Salesians asked her in 2012 if she wouldn't like to play a part in establishing a new centre for families, even though she's been only teaching for five years after spending the previous fifteen years at home with her children, she quit her job and embarked on a new project. — Today, she coordinates all the activities that take place in the centre and manages expert lectures and testimonies of married couples. As a Christian coach, she meets with clients seeking help in Family Garden. She organises the Christian coach training courses, the all-Slovak conference of Christian coaches, as well as spiritual growth seminars for the Christian coaches. As an accredited ICF-accredited coach, she strives to continually further her education by attending the ICF trainings and other activities. She's been living in a sacramental marriage for the past 27 years, and together with her husband Kamil, they have four children and one grandson. For the last ten years, they have been involved in marriage preparation courses for engaged couples in the Salesian parish on Miletičova Street, and for more than three decades, they have been leading the Kremienok children's folklore group which has been home to several hundred children mainly from Christian families over the years..





**EXPERT  
GUARAN-  
TORS**



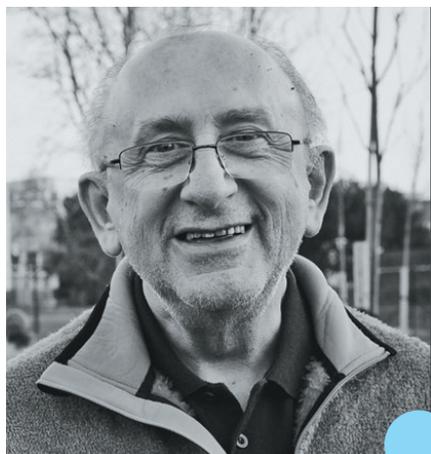
**„EVERYTHING WE HAVE STARTED  
HAS MEANING.“**

MAREK DRÁB



## PHDR. **MARIÁN** **KUBEŠ, CSC., PCC (ICF)**

**You're a well-known psychologist, lecturer, and Christian coach specialising in families and relationships. When thinking about the year of 2018 and your service, what comes to your mind first? What kind of year has it been?** — I feel strongly that there is an ongoing battle for the family. Similar to other years, in 2018, pain has been followed by joy and hope. I'm also feeling thankful. Specifically, I'm glad that over time, the team of the Christian coach training programme I'm responsible for has been formed. It makes me happy to see the determination of my colleagues and their continuous effort to further their qualifications. Of course, I'm glad to see new Christian coaches emerging as well – they are proof that coaching picks up on the needs of today's world as well as the role of Christians in it. Each and every course – those in 2018 included – represents an extraordinary experience and demonstration of our heavenly Father's generosity. The fellowship of Christian coaches in Slovakia is a viable community bursting with original ideas and desire to help people on their journey towards the Truth.



**What are your plans for the following year? What do you have in store?** — Our project is growing which is why I feel it's important to keep looking for optimal ways to support its long-term sustainability in the future. In addition to specialized plans which involve publishing work, and continuing education for the coaches (through webinars, etc.), we also need to educate the general public about what Christian coaching is and what's its place in the life of a Christian. Some plans are still evolving, but God willing, you will be able to read about them in the next year's report.



## DON MARIÁN VALÁBEK, SDB

**Fr. Marián, you've been standing by Family Garden's side from the very beginning in 2015, as an expert guarantor responsible primarily for preventive activities including testimonies of married couples and expert lectures. Alongside our visitors, you've heard almost all of our 70 lectures so far. You open each one of them with a prayer and conclude it by giving the participants your blessing. How do you personally perceive all this?** —

I view all these activities comprehensively as part of Salesian service to the young, because if we manage to create good environment in a family, in a very broad sense, the parents become the best assistants to their children. And if we're able to maintain close cooperation between the parents and the Salesians, this is even more so. The same thing happens when in our centres, kids from the street get to know well-functioning families and this experience stirs up their desire to build a family like that for themselves one day. In short, it's all interconnected and works together in serving others and striving for holiness.

**Family Garden is celebrating its fifth birthday. What would you like to wish us for the future?** — Perseverance and faithfulness in your decision to serve families and through them, to our youth.

**Your support, valuable advice, as well as your personal presence during our testimonials is very important to us.**

**Can we still count on your help in the future?** — This is a question for the God Most High, because we are all in His hands. God willing, I'd like to continue to stand by you in this effort.

## MUDR. MAREK DRÁB, PHD.

Everything we have started has meaning. A lot of feedback we keep getting on a daily basis confirms that we are in a right place. People feel good here, maybe in part because our building used to be a place of worship for the Trnávka residents long before the local church was built. This place is covered by prayer. – At the same time, I appreciate the cooperation with the community of Salesians in Trnávka; they're joyful, enthusiastic folks, able to connect not only with young people, but with people of today's world in general. – I appreciate close cooperation in the community of our medical professionals as well; I think it's very useful to our patients. However, we also have a lot of unused potential in this area, because three of our medical offices are still empty, and that's something that weighs on me. This effort has a much greater potential!



# LECTURES



**„TALKS SUCH AS THESE SHOULD BE HEARD  
BY MANY MORE PEOPLE...“**

PAVOL, OP

**IN 2018, MORE THAN 600 PEOPLE  
ATTENDED OUR LECTURES.**

—

**BETWEEN THE YEARS OF 2014 – 2018,  
FAMILY GARDEN ORGANISED 70 LECTURES.**

—

**FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FAMILY  
GARDEN CENTRE IN JANUARY OF 2014, WHEN  
WE ORGANISED OUR FIRST TALK, MORE THAN  
8,600 PEOPLE CAME TO LISTEN TO EXPERT  
LECTURES OR TESTIMONIES PRESENTED  
BY MARRIED COUPLES.**



## TESTIMONIES

**Ing. Pavol Vojtáš, Mgr. Lenka Vojtášová**

WHAT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN BROUGHT INTO OUR MARRIAGE

**Ing. Jaroslav Funtek, Mgr. Zuzana Funteková**

WE'RE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT; HOW DO WE DEAL WITH IT AND HOW DO OUR KIDS RESPOND TO THAT?

**Stano Tomáš, Alena Tomášová**

HOW DO WE SHOW ATTENTION TO EACH OTHER IN OUR MARRIAGE; DO WE REALLY KNOW HOW TO DO IT?

**MUDr. Michal Paška, Mgr. Dana Pašková**

HOW ARE WE ABLE (OR NOT ABLE) TO MANAGE COMMUNICATION IN OUR MARRIAGE?

**Mgr. Peter Jakubec, Mgr. Andrea Jakubcová**

IS IT POSSIBLE TO FORGIVE IN A RELATIONSHIP, AND IF SO, HOW TO GO ABOUT IT?

**Ing. Jozef Martinkovič,**

**Ing. Elena Martinkovičová**

WHAT HAS NOT EXPRESSING OUR FEELINGS BROUGHT ABOUT IN OUR RELATIONSHIP?

**Ing. Michal Kardoš, Ing. Martina Kardošová**

HOW DID WE MANAGE TO OVERCOME OUR MARITAL CRISIS?

## LECTURES

**PhDr. Marián Kubeš, CSc**

THE SIGNS OF A MARITAL CRISIS, AND HOW TO PREVENT AND OVERCOME IT

**Mgr. Eva Rušinová, FMA**

HOW NOT TO NEGLECT WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IN BRINGING UP CHILDREN AND YOUTH?

**PhDr. Ivan Valkovič**

WHAT IS THE RECIPE FOR A HAPPY MARRIAGE, AND IS THERE EVEN SUCH A THING?

**Ing. Bohumil Víték**

HOW TO GET READY FOR BUYING THE FIRST HOME, OR WHERE ARE WE GOING TO LIVE, HONEY?

## WE'VE HEARD

### IN 2018

**„I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU TO GIVE OUR GREATEST THANKS TO YOUR SPEAKERS FOR THEIR BEAUTIFUL TESTIMONY ABOUT GOD AND EVERYTHING HE CAN DO IN HIS PEOPLE! I WAS SO HAPPY I WANTED TO GET UP AND HUG THE ENTIRE WORLD AROUND ME! THANK YOU FOR THE AMAZEMENT I COULD EXPERIENCE AND FOR ALL THE STRUGGLES THIS COUPLE HAS ALREADY OVERCOME SHOWING THE POWER OF GOD'S GRACE.“**

THANKFUL MR. AND MRS. PLEVA



**„FOR ME  
PERSONALLY, IT WAS  
A VERY PLEASANT  
EXPERIENCE...“**

INTERVIEW WITH THE EXPERT LECTURER BOHUŠ VÍTEK



**The talk titled Where are we going to live, honey? which you gave in our centre from a point of view of a real estate broker has been met with a great response. What made you to accept our invitation to present a talk in our centre?** — I was led by my experience of talking with people, and young people especially, who have been asking me for advice on how to get ready to buy their first place to live. We've figured it might be useful to sum up some of that advice for them in the form of a lecture. I'm glad this topic captured people's attention and we were able to encourage young people this way.

**What has the lecture given to you personally?** — For me, it was a very pleasant experience of a direct interaction with the audience allowing me to respond to people's questions.

**How do you view organising similar preventive lectures or testimonies?** — From my perspective, the lectures that take place in the Family Garden centre are very beneficial. It's truly valuable to be able to attend lectures on real-life topics that are presented in a very authentic way by married couples themselves and are supported by testimonies.

# „YOU CAN HIDE WHAT YOU RECEIVE IN FAMILY GARDEN IN YOUR POCKET AND TAKE IT HOME WITH YOU.“

INTERVIEW WITH THE FUNTEKS

**The Family Garden centre is celebrating its fifth birthday. Historically, you presented the very first talk here. More than 250 people came to the basement hall under the church that night, and we had to add more chairs, because what we had wasn't enough. How do you remember that evening after all these years?** — **JARO:** Five years is a long time, but for us, it was a blessed time. It was time of sharing as well as pondering the differences between us that can often wear us out, but on the other hand, can also be helpful and even bring some humour into our marriage. Being able to talk and have a discussion in such an accepting environment was awesome. We received many interesting questions, at the same time, it was fun, and the fact that there is still a lot of people that make their marriage a priority and are willing to keep working on it made us very happy. — **ZUZKA:** Right, I was expecting a small group of married couples, but to our surprise, there was a very diverse audience in the hall that night – from married and engaged couples, through those that have already been dating for some time, to older couples and even single individuals. We've already had a previous experience with such a large audience, but that was a community that has known us for years. Here, we've

been embraced and given attention from people who have seen us for the very first time. I have no doubt it was also thanks to the great atmosphere the organisers were able to create.

**This year, you accepted the invitation to give a testimonial again. In which ways was this experience different for you?** — **JARO:**

We were a couple of years older. If I recall correctly, the context of our testimony was posed in a different way; this time, we were talking more about how our differences affect our children. It was very interesting for us to be able to ponder and explore this topic more and be able to realise all the positive and negative ways in which these things influence us. — **ZUZKA:** We accepted the invite based on our previous experience, which was very nice. Once again, it wasn't an intimate setting; there were people that have heard us talk before, were familiar with our story and were asking questions based on what they already knew. They wanted to know how things have changed in time. This was a valuable feedback for us, because it showed us where we are on our journey, in which ways we've made headway or where we might have moved backwards.

### What has this experience

**given you?** — **JARO:** It was an opportunity to pause in thought again. We realised how deeply and permanently our differences affect our kids, and what a crucial role the quality of a marital relationship and the environment the parents create for their children plays in forming the future generation. — **ZUZKA:** At first, when you're at home pondering whether to accept the invitation to talk, it feels good knowing that you were able to apply self-denial and step outside of your comfort zone. Most importantly, without a doubt, it has given us the sense of community, the opportunity to share, meet new people, receive fresh insights, inspiration and encouragement... and I'm not going to lie, it feels very good to be accepted.

### Generally speaking, what is your view on the Family Garden project?

— **JARO:** I think it's a great idea. In my mind, the name itself – Family Garden – mirrors both the beauty and the demanding character that comes with diversity. I speak as someone who owns a garden and loves to spend time there, but who also knows from experience that gardening can be very exhausting.

You need to get the soil ready, and then sow, plant, hoe, fertilize, water, weed, care for the plants, and sometimes even cut in order to gain better harvest, more beauty, and wonderful scent. The same applies in marriage. To those that are interested, Family Garden offers knowledge, acceptance, and helping hand through couples and experts willing to serve. I personally know people that have been helped by this project which is something that makes me happy. I wish Family Garden plenty of God's grace and blessings for many years to come.

— **ZUZKA:** Without a doubt, it's a project that responds to the tangible needs of our time and strives to follow God's plan. It



brings people together, and even though it's an effort of the ultimate professional quality, it is still very understandable for ordinary people. Most importantly, you can hide what you receive in Family Garden in your pocket and take it home with you and use it whenever you need. It has long-lasting beneficial effects on everybody.

**„BEING ABLE TO  
TALK AND HAVE  
A DISCUSSION IN  
SUCH AN ACCEPTING  
ENVIRONMENT WAS  
AWESOME.“**

JAROSLAV FUNTEK

**„I'VE BEEN ATTENDING THE LECTURES FOR SEVERAL YEARS. THEY OFFER ME TWO THINGS: THE FIRST ONE IS A COMMUNITY – I CAN SEE THAT PEOPLE GO THROUGH SIMILAR STRUGGLES AS ME, AND THAT MAKES ME FEEL “NORMAL”. ADDITIONAL BENEFIT IS THAT I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE A CERTAIN METHODOLOGY OF SOLVING PROBLEMS WHICH WORKS FOR OTHERS AND WHICH I THEN TRY TO APPLY TO MY OWN RELATIONSHIP.”**

MARTIN FLORIÁN



**„I WAS ABLE TO TAKE AWAY PRACTICAL  
EXAMPLES THAT ARE APPLICABLE NOT ONLY  
IN CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS, BUT IN ALL  
RELATIONSHIPS IN GENERAL.“**

ANDREA



**„IN MY SERVICE AS A PRIEST, I OFTEN  
ENCOUNTER PEOPLE THAT STRUGGLE IN ONE  
WAY OR ANOTHER. HERE, I CAN SEE THOSE  
THAT WERE ABLE TO OVERCOME THEIR CRISES  
AND PROBLEMS AND ARE LEARNING TO SHARE  
THEIR TESTIMONY ABOUT THE PROCESS. THEY  
HAVE DISCOVERED HOPE.“**

PAVOL, OP

The background features a series of overlapping triangles in shades of orange and yellow, arranged in a pattern that resembles a string of bunting or a sunburst. The triangles are scattered across the white background, with some larger and more prominent than others.

# **CHRISTIAN COACH TRAINING PROGRAMME**

A decorative border of orange triangles of various sizes and orientations, arranged in a slightly curved line across the top and bottom of the page. The triangles are solid orange and vary in size, creating a festive or celebratory feel.

**„OFTENTIMES, WE CAN GO THROUGH OUR  
ENTIRE LIVES FEELING NOT HEARD BY OTHERS.  
PEOPLE MIGHT BE LISTENING, BUT THEY DON'T  
REALLY HEAR WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY.“**

ANNA



## OBJECTIVE OF THE PROGRAMME

The goal of the programme entitled “Christian coach – basic principles of coaching for volunteers in helping professions” is to provide the programme graduates with the ability to coach and use the coaching methods when helping individuals, couples, or groups that found themselves in situations they can’t deal with by themselves. Such situation may be a relational crisis, a problem, difficulty, unfulfilled ambition, unexpected life change, lack of determination, unsuccessful vocation quest, difficult decision, etc. A coaching method can prove to be successful, if other methods failed to

bring hoped-for results, or aren’t suitable.

Christian coaching isn’t supposed to replace other forms of work with a client; its role is to supplement them effectively. The programme is based on the Christian concept of a human person: each of us is called to be an instrument in God’s hands in some way, and each of us can be a gift for someone who needs help.

## WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM THIS PROGRAMME?

The programme is intended for individuals who work in various helping professions or

## WHAT WILL A PARTICIPANT LEARN IN THIS PROGRAMME?

feel to be called to such ministry and want to broaden their technique repertoire by adding coaching skills. It is meant for lay people, priests, religious, or married individuals. It can also be of benefit to those who've already had an experience with limitations in life and were forced to revise their attitudes, values, ideals, or perhaps are in such situation right now. This usually happens in middle age. — Graduates trained in Christian coaching can effectively serve in parochial and other settings, family and counselling centres, etc. The need for such services is constantly growing, and possible areas of focus for these activities are inspirationally described also in the Holy Father Francis' post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (2016).

The programme prepares the participants for an independent coaching by teaching them the concept of a coaching dialogue and its techniques, as well as training them on how to apply this form of help in a community. It covers development of all competences required from coaches by the International Coach Federation (ICF). As an example, among other places, a skilled coach will be able to effectively work within a parochial community in close cooperation with priests, who are often approached by people in difficult life circumstances. A coach might be able to take over a certain phase of accompanying/guiding from the priest. This way, a coach complements other helping and personal development professions through the distinctive coaching approach.



## WHY THE TITLE "CHRISTIAN COACH"?

For Christians, God represents the focal point of their lives, and Christian coaching can and wants to respect this fact. It means that if we are helping a Christian, who found themselves in difficulties of any kind, is looking for answers for their various questions, and who wants to follow Christ in their life, this desire to follow Him is what becomes a key value, a foothold the coaching arises from. Subsequently, the coach's role in the framework of coaching dialogues is to help his client to either start out on such journey, or to enable them to walk it better.

Here probably lies the biggest difference between a Christian and secular coaching. Therefore, it is completely natural for the coach to pray for their client, and to keep them in their prayers even outside of their sessions. During each meeting, a Christian coach is conscious of the fact that it's a child of God sitting across the table, and that at the same time, they are both children of God within the Church. If the coach learns to ask the right questions, it will be enough. Then they just need to let the Holy Spirit to do His work, and He'll take care of the rest.



**„I LONG FOR A RELATIONSHIP BASED  
ON PARTNERSHIP AND DIALOGUE, TRUST  
AND MUTUAL CLOSENESS, AS WELL AS  
ACCEPTANCE AND RESPECT. COACHING  
PROVIDES ME EXACTLY THAT.”**

MARCELA KRŠKOVÁ



## **LECTURING TEAM:**

PhDr. Marián Kubeš, CSc., PCC  
(Professional Certified Coach – ICF),  
Mgr. Katarína Baginová, PCC  
(Professional Certified Coach – ICF),  
RNDr. Margita Kubešová,  
Mgr. Miriam Němcová, ACC  
(Accredited Certified Coach – ICF),  
Mgr. Eva Rušínová, FMA,  
Mgr. Zuzana Funteková

# „I GIVE LESS OF MYSELF AND OFFER MORE OF GOD INSTEAD...“

INTERVIEW WITH MILAN HERMANOVSKÝ  
PRIEST



**What led you to sign up for the Christian coach training programme?** — When I left teaching, I decided to look for ways to work on myself, so that I would be able to be more useful to those entrusted to me by the Lord, whether through confessions, lectures, teachings, or mutual dialogues.

I felt that despite my studies and other efforts I wasn't "effective" enough, I wasn't able to communicate God sufficiently or mediate a relationship between a person and God. That's when my Superior, a trained coach himself, told me: 'You're signing up for a coaching course, and that's that.'

**What was the most important thing you gained through the programme?** — There were many such things, but the most important probably would be that I gained myself... the training pushed me forward not only "technically", but many things fell into place for me, and even those that I thought were working fine shifted forward, such as my prayer life, my relationship with God and other people... That's how I know that me being at that training was God's providence at work...

**Which areas in your life are affected by your new-found knowledge? Where does it show the most?** — I talk less and listen more, but when I do talk, people are more willing to listen, so it kind of balances out... I'm able to be more available to my fellow brothers and sisters, I give less of myself and offer more of God instead...

# „THE QUEST OF KNOWING YOURSELF IS NEVER OVER...“

INTERVIEW WITH SISTER MARTA CHRAŠČOVÁ, CSSS

**What led you to sign up for the Christian coach training programme?** — I'd like to modify this question slightly to: 'What made you to persevere in the Christian coach training programme till the end?'

Because in about second session, it dawned on me that this isn't just some communication training and a course aimed at improving communication skills at all, even though this was my initial goal when I was looking to further my education. And since I perceive such "shocks" as God's ways to surprise me which He's fully in charge of, to stay, in my mind, meant to try to understand what He wanted to tell me through this offer and why this tool suddenly somehow became a part of my life.

**What was the most important thing you gained through the programme?** — The realisation that the quest of knowing yourself is never over, it's not a question of reaching certain age, stage, status, or level of success. It's a work that opens up the world of the person coached, but to even larger extent the world of the coach...

It shows them their limitations and holy helplessness which require an absolute devotion and trust that behind every knowledge, every therapy, every counselling session, psychology and spiritual medicine for a person that is weeping, indecisive, seeking, hurt... is God holding everything firmly in His hands.



**Which areas in your life are affected by your new-found knowledge? Where does it show the most?** — After completing the training, I found myself in a completely different situation. In all the places where I originally intended to use the coaching skills, I now won't be able to. I had pretty much four options: First one was to use them in my role of a Mother Superior of a community – I found out after the training that I wouldn't be becoming one. The second one were formative dialogues – I don't need to lead those anymore, because I was transferred from a formative community to a different one. And the two remaining options – to use the skills in our centre for spiritual life or in our parish – my superiors have a different opinion on that... — So, it shows directly on me. It helps me to seek again what God's plan might be for me and accept it. Without changing myself, I can't offer a helping hand to anyone on their journey to change which they long for. Without faith in the Source that I carry inside, I can't help anyone discover the way to the Source hiding in every person. I am continually learning – through coaching, and other ways as well – how not to have things in my own hands.



## „I DON'T PARTICIPATE IN 'REGULAR' DIALOGUES ANYMORE.“

INTERVIEW WITH MONIKA SKALOVÁ  
FMA PROVINCIAL IN SLOVAKIA

**What led you to sign up for the Christian coach training programme?** — I was led by my curiosity and desire to find new approaches in leading dialogues. At the same time, I was motivated by my upcoming role of a Mother Provincial I was soon supposed to undertake. I viewed this training as an excellent investment for this ministry.

**What was the most important thing you gained through the programme?** — I gained a community of Christian coaches, and, of course, the most important thing I received was the conviction that the source of specific decisions, and answers to all the questions that a person might carry inside and ask, can be found inside that person themselves. And this discovery fascinates me every time I meet with my clients. To be able to stand by their side when they're suddenly solving their problems pretty much on their own just thanks to a couple of questions they haven't been able to ask themselves is awesome. Speaking as a coach, it's a very powerful experience.

**Which areas in your life are affected by your new-found knowledge? Where does it show the most?** — As they told us during the first session, after completing the training, not one of our future dialogues would be "normal". They were right, I don't participate in "regular" dialogues anymore. The coach inside is always coming to the fore. I'm more attentive to the person coming to do a coaching dialogue with me, I listen more closely and am more mindful to turn off my own suggestions or solutions. And I'm sure that another contributing factor is the great desire to stand by people and walk beside them on their journey to find what's best for themselves.



In both spring and fall runs of the Christian coach training programme, open-minded individuals with various social status and professional backgrounds sat down to learn in our grey schooling room. Among them, there were teachers, school principals, theologians, an economist, a mom on a maternity leave, college educators, religious people, diocesan priests, a woman physician, personal manager, and a Mother Provincial. — They were all united in their willingness to learn the art of Christian coaching and to be of service to others in this way, and at the same time, they also had a great deal of courage to bend and change themselves on this journey.

**THE YEAR OF 2018  
BROUGHT 35 NEW  
CHRISTIAN COACHES  
TO SLOVAKIA.**

**„IN MY LINE OF WORK AS A PEDAGOGUE AND A SUPERVISOR, I SEE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR USING COACHING ALONG WITH MENTORING. I FEEL IT COULD IMPROVE THE OVERALL ATMOSPHERE IN THE SCHOOL AND RESULT IN A GREATER EXTENT OF INDEPENDENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF MY COLLEAGUES.”**

MÁRIA KARAŠINSKÁ

**„FOR ME, COACHING HAS BECOME ONE OF THE TOOLS TO HELP FACILITATE CHANGE IN MYSELF AND OTHERS.”**

THLIC. MGR. ING. MAROŠ LOVIČ

**„WHEN SIGNING UP FOR THE TRAINING, I HAD ONLY A VAGUE NOTION OF THE DIMENSION I WAS ABOUT TO ENTER. GRADUAL DISCOVERY OF THE ART OF COACHING HAS GIVEN ME HOPE THAT EVEN THAT WHAT REMAINED UNCHANGED FOR YEARS CAN START CHANGING.”**

RENÁTA WEIGERT

**„AFTER ALL, OUR  
GOD IS INFINITE AND  
GENEROUS, AND  
ALWAYS HAS MORE  
IN STORE THAN  
WHAT WE'RE ABLE  
TO IMAGINE.“**

INTERVIEW WITH  
THDR. MGR. LUCIA HIDVÉGHYOVÁ, PHD.

**For the third time already, you'll be preparing the content of the Spiritual growth seminar intended for the graduates of the Christian coach training programme. What made you to say yes to this request?** — For me, to prepare a spiritually-focused programme is an adventure, a gift, and a challenge all rolled into one, and this combo appeals to me.

Each of the seminars is unique and completely new. My last experience was fascinating, and I believe we can make it happen again.

After all, our God is infinite and generous, and always has more in store than what we're able to imagine. That's something I'm looking forward to the most. And that's also one of the reasons why I said "yes".

**This time, you're preparing the seminar content as someone who already graduated from said programme, i.e. as a trained Christian coach. In what ways is this experience different for you?** — I can't say yet if it will be different in this sense. I think it's good for the seminar to have its own dynamics independent of the coaching skills. It's a different type of activity, which is why the coaching programme will affect my seminar

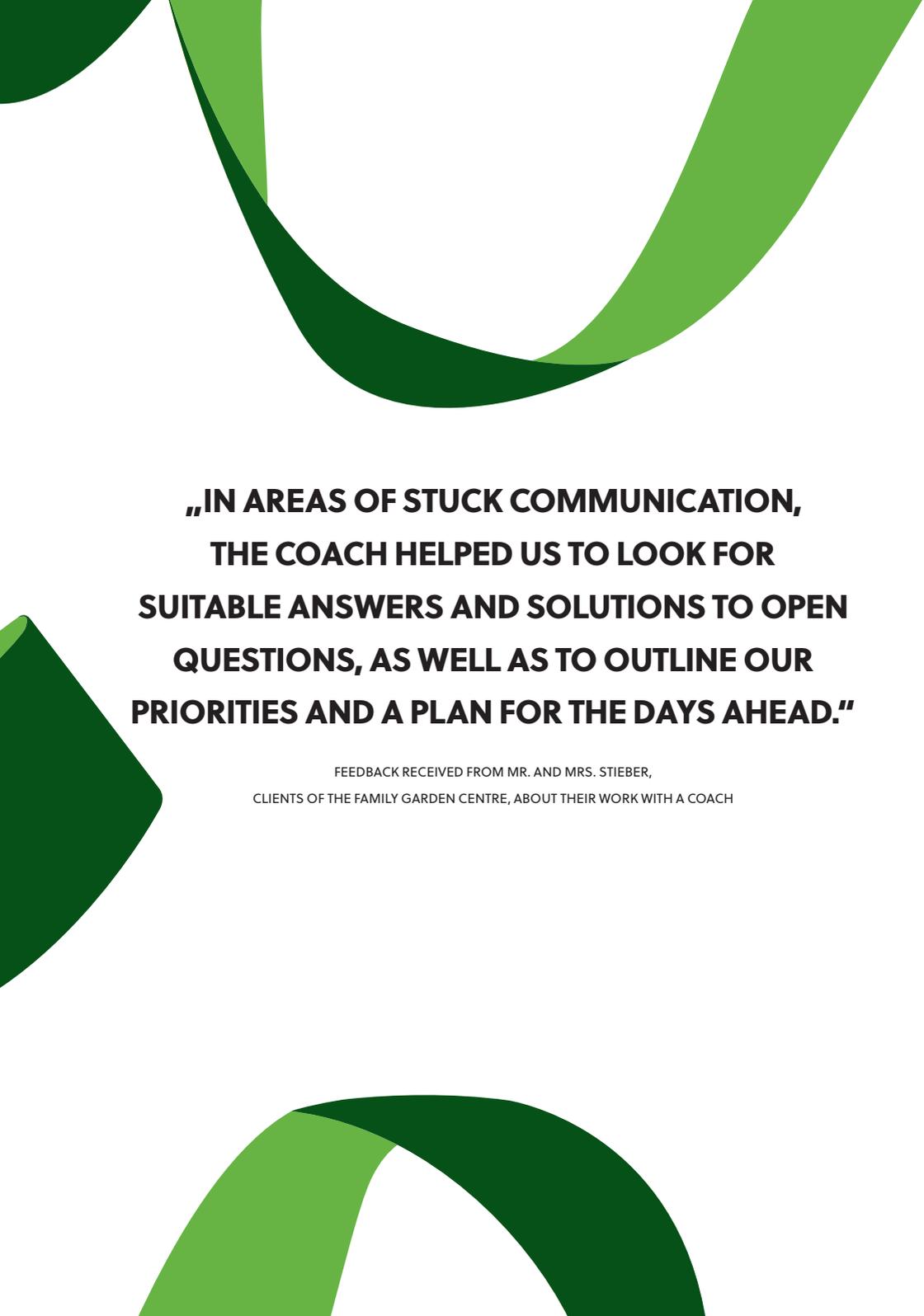


preparation only very little. That said, I'm ready to be surprised by what the partnership with our Augustinian brother will bring. I might revise my opinion later.

**What is your personal view on the existence of counselling centres for families?** — I'm not really familiar with any other counselling centres apart from Family Garden. I think that the work that Family Garden has been doing is much more important than it might seem at first glance. In part, this effort is hidden, and its fruit is visible only after some time has passed. It's a work that's mentally demanding and requires a great deal of personal determination, but the results it brings into the lives of the centre's clients are most certainly worth it.

The image features a white background with several large, overlapping, wavy shapes in two shades of green: a vibrant lime green and a darker forest green. These shapes are arranged in a way that suggests movement and flow, with some shapes appearing to wrap around others. The word "CLIENTS" is centered in the middle of the composition, overlaid on the green shapes.

**CLIENTS**

The page features several large, abstract, overlapping shapes in two shades of green (a darker forest green and a lighter lime green). These shapes are positioned at the top, bottom, and left edges of the page, framing the central text. The top shape is a large, downward-curving arc. The bottom shape is a large, upward-curving arc. The left side has a dark green shape that tapers to a point.

**„IN AREAS OF STUCK COMMUNICATION,  
THE COACH HELPED US TO LOOK FOR  
SUITABLE ANSWERS AND SOLUTIONS TO OPEN  
QUESTIONS, AS WELL AS TO OUTLINE OUR  
PRIORITIES AND A PLAN FOR THE DAYS AHEAD.“**

FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM MR. AND MRS. STIEBER,  
CLIENTS OF THE FAMILY GARDEN CENTRE, ABOUT THEIR WORK WITH A COACH

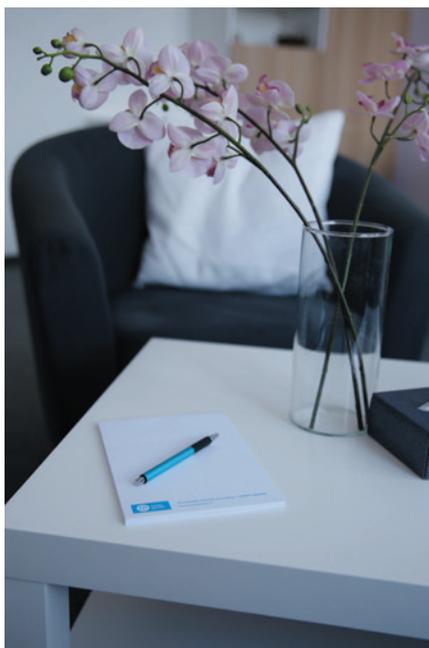
Not every internal problem warrants a visit to a psychologist's office. Often, a session with a professionally educated coach may be enough; thanks to a structured dialogue, the coach is able to accompany the client in naming his problem and looking for a solution. — The clients of the Family Garden centre are not only married couples, but also individuals of varying ages, engaged couples, and young people facing diverse life situations. — The coaches are here for anybody who has some kind of a problem they feel unable to deal with themselves, or they feel misunderstood by the people around. They may face the desire to make a radical life decision, take an important step, but they may be not sure what step should it be and in which direction. — If you are interested in a coaching session, the best way to reach us is via e-mail: [bratislava@familygarden.sk](mailto:bratislava@familygarden.sk).



**„I FELT INCREDIBLE  
PEACE AND A HUGE  
RELIEF. IT WAS A VERY  
INTENSE FEELING THAT  
WAS STILL WITH ME  
TWO DAYS LATER.“**

FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM MRS. NATÁLIA,  
A FAMILY GARDEN CLIENT

I learned about the Christian coaching ministry from a Salesian sister I met at a spiritual seminar in the Lukov Dvor centre in Nitra. — For the last three years, we had been facing a crisis in our marriage that we hadn't been able to overcome, and I was feeling helpless and just very tired in general. — So, when I was coming to meet with Mrs. Baginová for our first session, I was feeling pretty anxious; I had no idea how such dialogue would look like. At the beginning, I was just talking about how I felt, and I had no clue what could come of it all. At the moment when she asked me which point of our dialogue I considered crucial, it suddenly “clicked” for me. In that moment, I suddenly realised what it was I needed to do to be able to move forward in my situation. — And this realisation brought me new strength and hope. I felt incredible peace and a huge relief. It was a very intense feeling that was still with me two days later. So, thank you very much for your help. — Of course, to anyone that might be considering such a dialogue, I recommend it with all my heart. — Hats off to you for offering this ministry! May the Lord bless you and repay you a hundredfold for the hard work associated with this way of serving.







**„ALL OF A SUDDEN,  
I KNEW ANSWERS  
TO QUESTIONS  
I HAD BEEN TRYING  
TO ANSWER FOR  
MYSELF...“**

FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM MRS. MICHAELA

A FAMILY GARDEN CLIENT

I don't even know what I was expecting to gain from my first session, given the amount of confusion and pain I felt as a result of everything that was happening in my life. I don't think I was holding out much hope that you'd be able to help me. — Since I had just come out of a very painful period in my life and I felt that nothing good could ever happen to me anymore, I started questioning why it all played out the way it did, completely different than what I had planned for myself, and why the Lord didn't want to bless me. — The first time I heard about Christian coaching in Family Garden was through the Lux Television Network, and at that time, I started looking into what it actually was. Back then, I closed the website thinking it was nonsense. However, the Lord had other plans and since I felt confused and hurt, my sister suggested to start praying Litany to the Holy Spirit, and sure enough, everything started changing. While pondering how I could help myself and how to bring about change in my life, the thought of Family Garden crossed my mind again, and this time, I wasn't able to shrug it off. So, last year, I scraped up the courage to come to Family Garden for Christian coaching

and now, I'd like to thank the Lord, Family Garden, and especially Mrs. Baginová, from the bottom of my heart. — During my first dialogue with a Christian coach, I felt rather strange. Maybe it was also due to my anxiety... I thought it would be extremely embarrassing to say out loud everything I felt and wanted to say. I'm happy to say everything turned out completely different; suddenly, I knew answers to questions I had been trying to answer for myself. I started to realise that there are solutions to my various problems, I started to be aware of my value as a person, and especially of the fact that God really does love me and does have plans for my life. — Based on what I was able to experience through Christian coaching, I can tell all those considering using this kind of assistance that yes, honestly, for me, it proved to be a huge help. You need to put your feelings of fear, embarrassment, and worry into God's hands and make the first step of writing that e-mail to Family Garden. — My life is tremendously blessed, and I can say that Christian coaching is a God's great gift to all of us. — Thank you for everything, Family Garden.



# **MARRIAGE PREPARATION**



**„THANKS TO POPE FRANCIS' INFLUENCE  
AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE ENTIRE CHURCH  
HAS BEEN RECENTLY FEELING STRONGLY  
THE IMPORTANCE OF DEEP AND LONG-  
LASTING PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE.“**

FR. MARIÁN HUSÁR, SDB  
PARISH ADMINISTRATOR  
OF THE BRATISLAVA – MILETIČOVA PARISH

Marriage preparation is a prerequisite for entering the sacrament of marriage. However, far too often it is being narrowed to only a brief information about the Church position on marriage, even though its objective should be to prepare engaged couples for problems they may be facing and advise them on how to solve them correctly, or how to set right expectations regarding married life. — Family Garden works in close partnership with the Mary, Help of Christians parish located on Miletičova Street 7 which takes patronage over the marriage preparation sessions led by the parish priests along with experienced married couples partnering with Family Garden. The preparation for marriage is intended for engaged couples that have already set their wedding date and is run in the form of group sessions that take place every quarter

during evening hours. An instruction on the natural family planning, led by a qualified lecturer, is also a part of the marriage preparation. — Once again in 2018, the following married couples volunteered to take on the responsibility for the marriage preparation: Monika and Pavel Kotula, Renáta and Jaroslav Mikuš, Katarína and Kamil Bagin, and Jana and Marián Hortváth. All of them are Salesian co-operators involved in the activities of the Miletičova centre and were working side by side with Pavol Seman, Maroš Husár, Ján Krupa and Ivan Žitňanský, Salesian priests from the Mary, Help of Christians parish. — Those interested in marriage preparation with couples from Family Garden can register in person in the parish office of the Mary, Help of Christians parish, Miletičova 7, or via e-mail: [fara.mileticova@gmail.com](mailto:fara.mileticova@gmail.com)

**TOGETHER, THE MARRIED COUPLES LEADING  
THE MARRIAGE PREPARATION WERE WORKING  
WITH 30 ENGAGED COUPLES DIVIDED INTO  
5 GROUPS. IN 57 SESSIONS TOTAL, THEY GAVE  
ENGAGED COUPLES MORE THAN 120 HOURS  
OF THEIR TIME.**

# „EACH COUPLE EMBODIES HOPE.“

FR. MARIÁN HUSÁR, SDB

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

OF THE BRATISLAVA – MILETIČOVA PARISH

For me, being able to accompany engaged couples is a treasured experience. The Bible says that a man was created in God's image as male and female. During the process of accompanying engaged couples, we're able to witness the step-by-step realisation of the dream that God has for them. To see young people embarking on this journey and observe their ideals, desires, and dreams... is something truly beautiful. Young people that are genuine, authentic, and serious about their love are simply lovely. And as Dostoevsky says, "the beauty will save the world".

At night, when I'm coming home from the marriage preparation sessions, I feel uplifted and full of joy inside. Each couple embodies hope. — And in one breath, I have to say that the great encouragement

I'm feeling stems also from witnessing married couples leading the sessions alongside the priest. We're one team. The most authentic testimony about marriage comes from married couples themselves. They're the ones showing that living sacramental marriage is a great adventure. Some of the sessions take place directly in the homes and families of the spouses accompanying the young engaged couples. That way, the engaged couples can enter a sacred place.

They're invited to hearth and home, and can observe the family of the instructor couple from the inside, breathing in the aromas coming from the kitchen, witnessing



evening prayers and putting the little ones to bed... — And since the marriage preparation in our parish lasts several months, the engaged couples divided into small groups (6 couples + the instructor married couple) have the opportunity to create a community. Through their mutual sharing (in pairs as well as within the group) are an enrichment and inspiration to each other. — Thanks to Pope Francis' influence among other things, the entire Church has been recently feeling strongly the importance of deep and long-lasting preparation for marriage. The current post-modernist culture marked by relativism, subjectivism, provisional attitudes, and loss of values doesn't side with marriage and family. We can see many marriages facing crisis and families falling apart. St. John Paul II says that 'for anyone that hasn't made the decision to love forever it will be hard to truly love for even one day'. In the preparation for marriage, the engaged couples deepen their understanding of what it means to genuinely and truly love.

**„A WELL-  
FUNCTIONING  
MARRIAGE IS AN  
OASIS ON OUR  
DAY-TO-DAY  
JOURNEY.“**

MR. AND MRS. PAVOL AND MONIKA KOTULA,  
INSTRUCTOR COUPLE

We feel we've received a great gift in those that have shaped us during our childhood and youth, and it was in part thanks to their efforts that we've chosen the right life partner. We believe that a preparation for marriage is even more important than the need for professional preparation, because love and a positive family environment is able to compensate for many shortcomings, difficulties, and troubles, serving not only the spouses themselves, but their children as well. A well-functioning (not problem-free!) marriage is an oasis on our day-to-day journey. It is our wish for all married couples to be able to look back at their life together and feel grateful to God for the experience. And if we've been given even the tiniest opportunity to serve as a tool in His hands, it is worth every sacrifice of our time and effort to overcome our own selfishness.





We're glad to be able to take part in such an important effort to accompany engaged couples in their preparation for marriage. Marriage is a sacrament of service, and it's our understanding that the Lord has called us into this ministry and we're thankful for that. We realise that just as we serve to the engaged couples, they in turn serve us. It's a mutual ministry. We would be in favour of even longer marriage preparation, especially in the light of so many problematic marriages even among believers. When getting married, these people were in love too, and were determined to give themselves to each other until death would do them part. For various reasons, they found themselves facing times of crisis, and they're not always able to solve the problems on their own. We encourage the engaged couples that paradoxically, these situations can make their relationship a lot stronger, if both of them will still care for that. Of course, prevention is always better, that's why it's so important to talk about potential problems even during the marriage preparation. — In our ministry to engaged couples, it sometimes happens that we come home exhausted from work or other responsibilities and would prefer to just

relax in the evening. But the moment we step into the room with the young couples waiting, our weariness disappears and we're able to be with them fully. A priest once told us: 'Married life and life of priesthood can be lived in two different ways: You can either wear yourself out in serving others, or you can rot away.' And we don't want to rot.

**„WE REALISE THAT  
JUST AS WE SERVE  
TO THE ENGAGED  
COUPLES, THEY IN  
TURN SERVE US.“**

MR. AND MRS. JARO AND RENÁTA MIKUŠ  
INSTRUCTOR COUPLE



**„DURING THE PREPARATION, THE COUPLES  
HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK THROUGH  
MANY ISSUES, AS WELL AS REALISE THAT  
MARRIAGE IS A SACRAMENT.“**

MR. AND MRS. MARIÁN AND JANA HORVÁT,  
INSTRUCTOR COUPLE

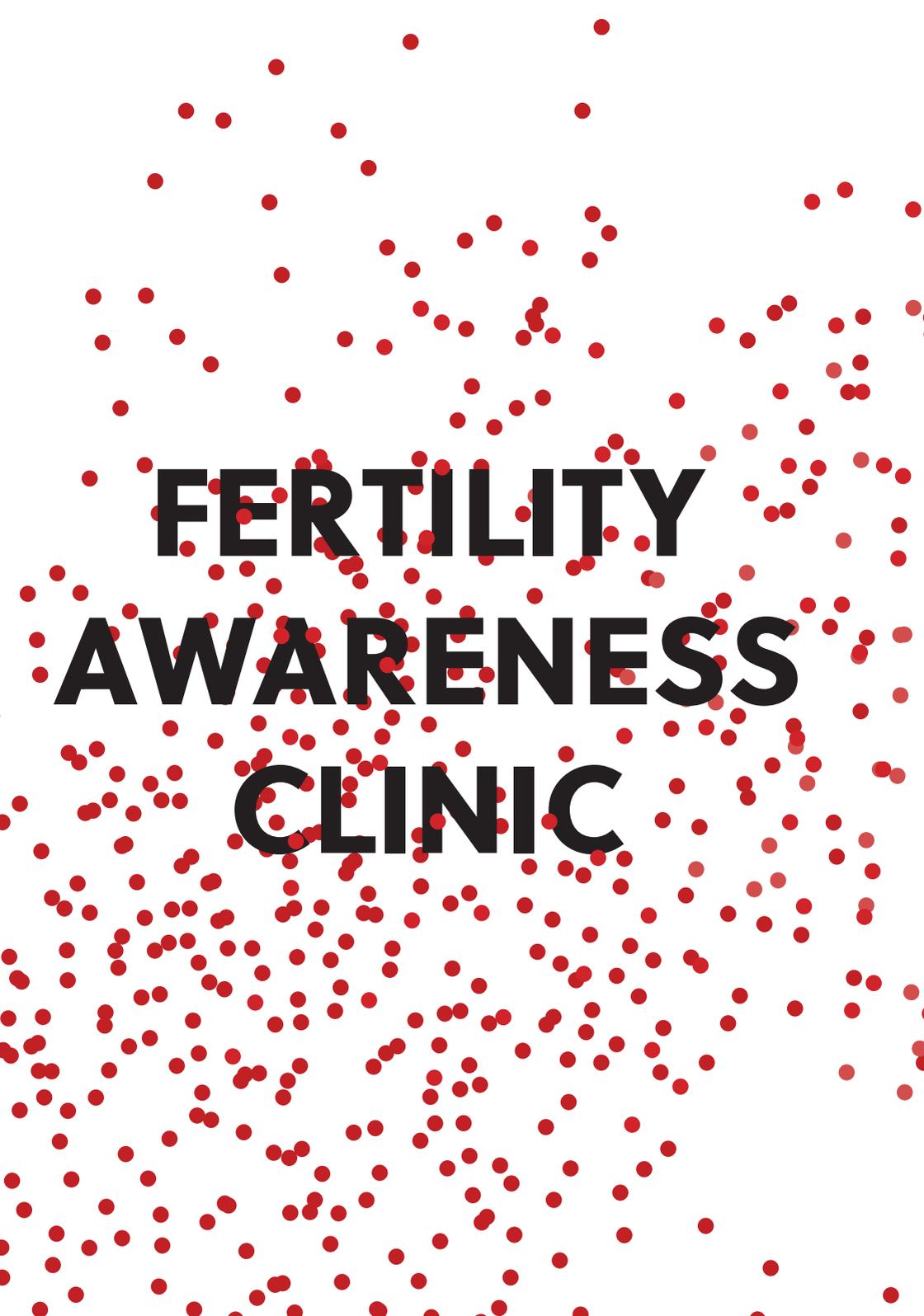


Both my husband Matúš and I wanted to do our best to prepare for our lifelong calling, and that's why we signed up for the marriage preparation in the Mary, Help of Christians parish. — Six engaged couples met regularly one evening a week to go step by step through various important topics together. As for spiritual subjects, we examined them with the help of Fr. Ivan, Salesian priest; he explained to us what the purpose of love between a man and a woman is, as well as what lies at the core of the sacrament of marriage which, supported by other sacraments (Confession, the Eucharist), will provide us strength even during the difficult times every couple is bound to experience. During the remaining sessions, Renátka and Jarino Mikuš, longtime Salesian co-operators and a seasoned married couple, shared with us their experiences, advice, and funny stories. We both feel that during the engagement period, we were able to grow and move forward together, and have been greatly blessed by God through these good people as well as through the sacrament of marriage itself.

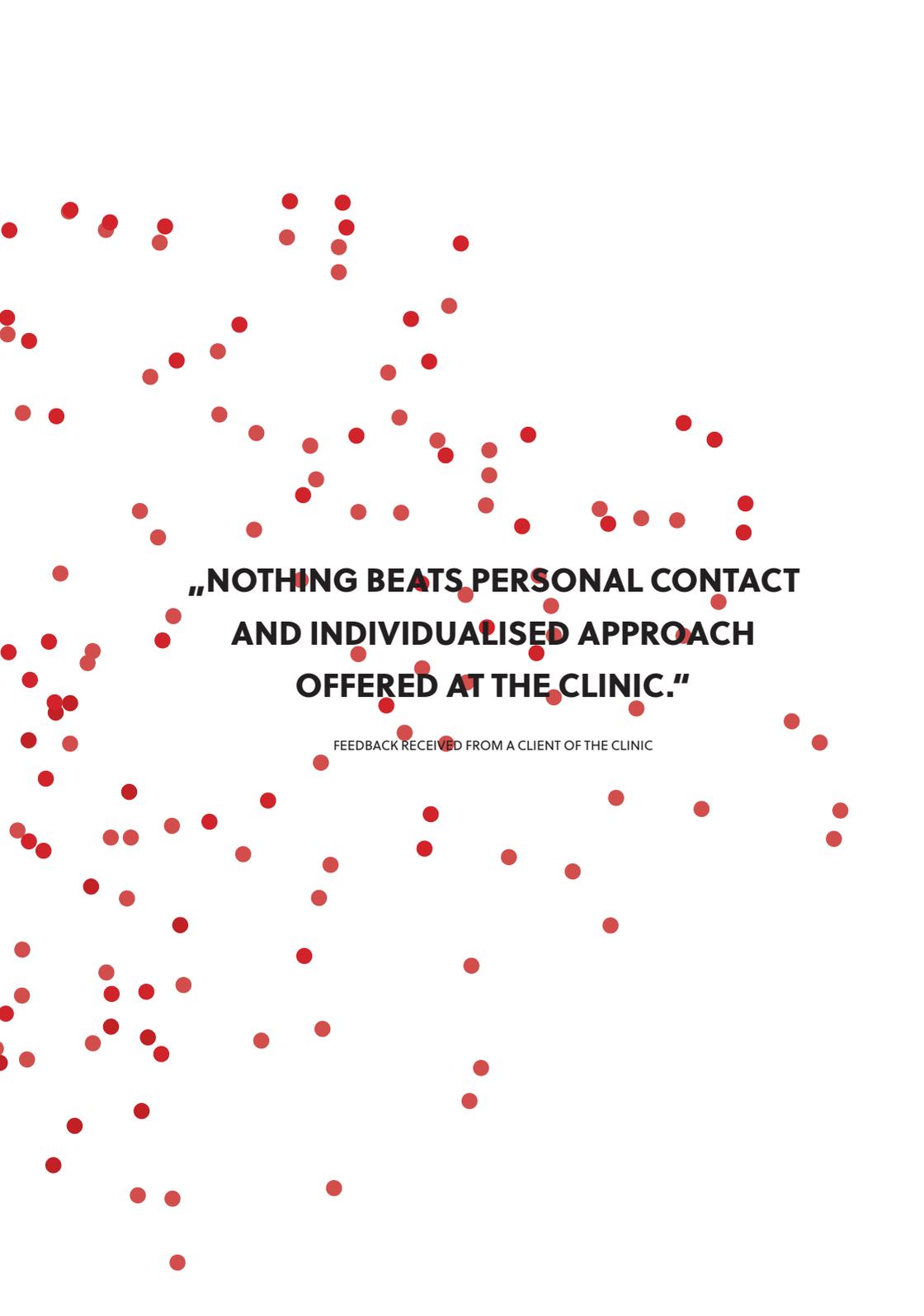
**„WE BOTH FEEL  
THAT DURING  
THE ENGAGEMENT  
PERIOD, WE WERE  
ABLE TO GROW AND  
MOVE FORWARD  
TOGETHER.“**

MIŠKA AND MATUŠ PILARČIK,  
MARRIAGE PREPARATION GRADUATES



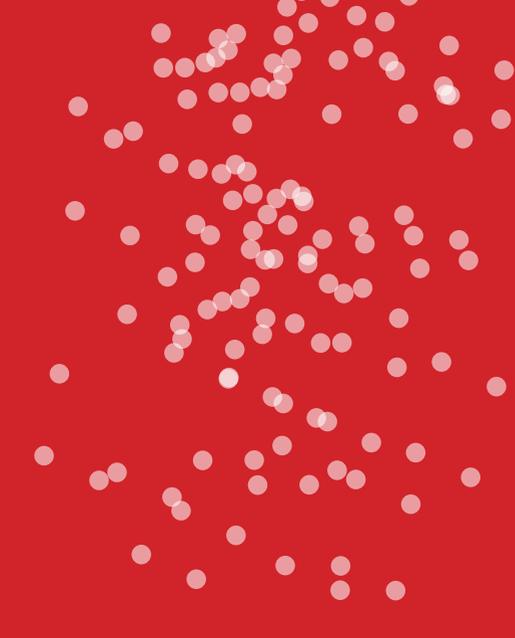
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**FERTILITY  
AWARENESS  
CLINIC**



**„NOTHING BEATS PERSONAL CONTACT  
AND INDIVIDUALISED APPROACH  
OFFERED AT THE CLINIC.“**

FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM A CLIENT OF THE CLINIC



## „IT'S NEVER TOO LATE.“

MUDR. RENÁTA MIKUŠOVÁ,  
CERTIFIED TEACHER OF THE BILLINGS  
OVULATION METHOD AND THE CLINIC MANAGER



Lately at our clinic, I've been meeting more frequently with couples dealing with the issue of potential additional pregnancies. These couples usually have three or more children and in the context of their intimate married life, they are starting to ponder the question of "What's next?". They want to cultivate their intimacy in accordance with God's plan, but they also don't want to abstain. It's time for them to thoroughly learn one of the natural family planning methods in line with their parental responsibilities as well as the teachings of the Catholic church. It must be said that compared to learning to know their fertility before marriage, this path is going to be somewhat more difficult, however, it's never too late. Although mastering the method takes some time and effort, if there is a well-functioning communication between the spouses and they're both aware of the importance of learning this "skill", there is no hindrance for them to thoroughly master one of the natural family planning methods and continue to enjoy the gift of marital sexuality. — The other often-encountered client types are husbands or wives struggling with lack of clarity regarding the issue of contraception in general. Generally speaking, even Christian couples can have quite a lot of either fragmental, or completely incorrect information in this matter. — At lastly, quite often, we see young girls coming to our clinic wanting to learn one of the natural family planning methods, because they've just stopped using contraception, most often coming off the birth control pill. Of course, I'm always happy to support them in this decision. We talk not only about the health-related consequences of using hormonal birth control, but also about how it affects them mentally and relationally and discuss the beauty and depth of marital sexuality according to God's plan.

**„THE CLINIC WITH  
ITS INSTRUCTORS  
WILLING TO HELP  
SINGLE INDIVIDUALS  
AND MARRIED  
COUPLES TO GET TO  
KNOW THEIR CYCLE,  
ANSWER THEIR  
QUESTIONS, AND  
REASSURE THEM ARE  
OF TREMENDOUS  
IMPORTANCE.“**

FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM ONE OF THE CLIENTS  
OF OUR FERTILITY CLINIC



**THE CLINIC OFFERS  
ITS SERVICES TO:**

Pred dvomi rokmi som absolvovala kurz Billingsovej ovulačnej metódy, ešte ako slobodná. Následne som začala s pozorovaniami a objavovaním svojho cyklu. — Ako to s teóriou býva, uvádzaním do praxe sa objavilo veľa nejasností a otázok. Najprv som sa snažila dopátrať k odpovediam na internete, no keď sa ku mne dostal kontakt na pani doktorku Mikušovú, odborníčku na Billingsovu ovulačnú metódu, neváhala som ju osloviť. — Môj záznam sme si prešli a zodpovedala mi na všetky otázky, uistila ma. Po svadbe sme ju navštívili už aj s manželom. — Význam poradne a lektorov, ktorí pomáhajú slobodným alebo párom zorientovať sa v cykle, zodpovedať na otázky, uistiť ich, je obrovský. — Nič nie je nad osobný kontakt a individuálny prístup, ktorý poradňa ponúka. — Som veľmi vďačná za pomoc, ochotu a dodanie istoty na ceste čistoty v manželstve.

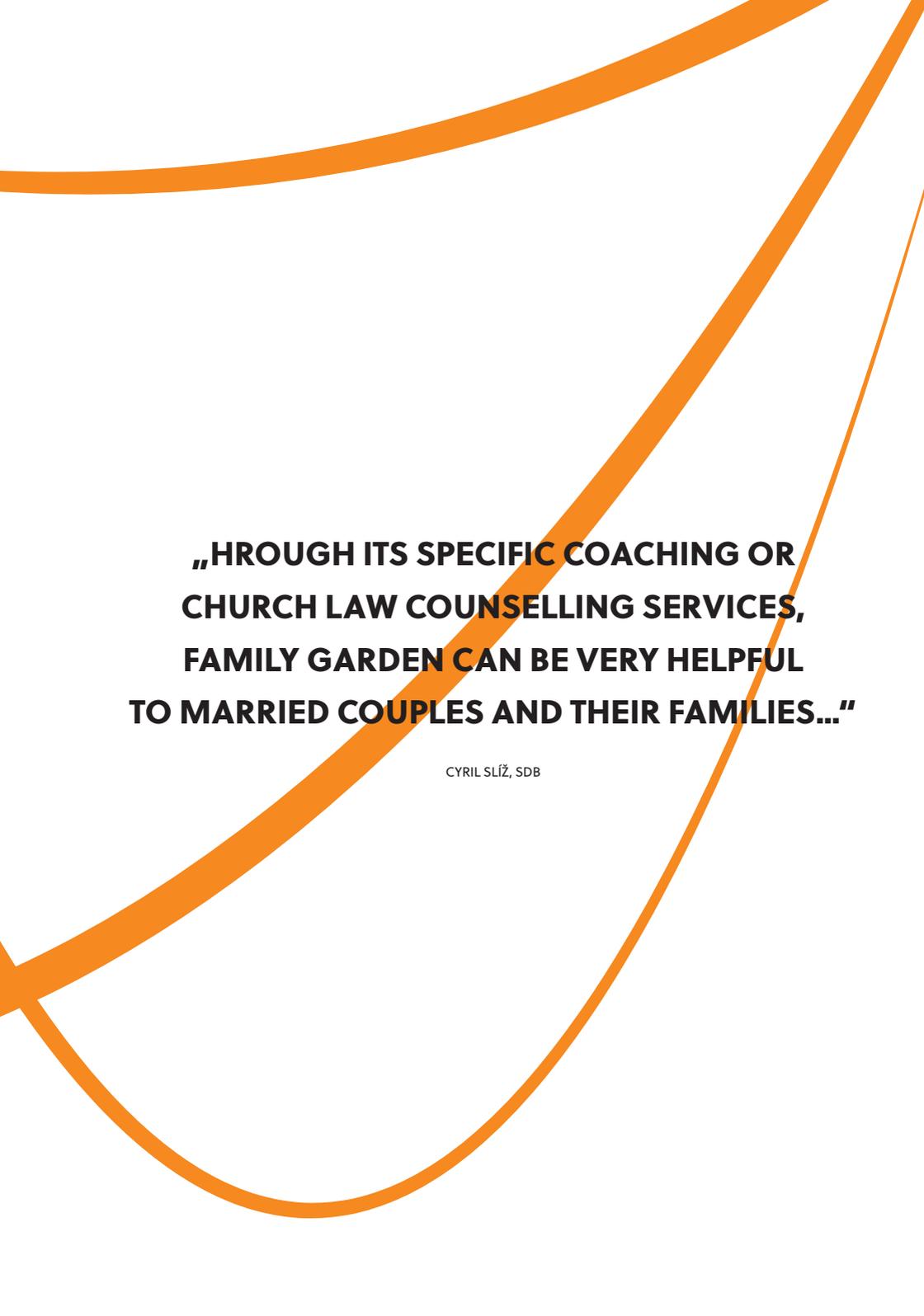
**Girls and young women,**  
interested in learning to know their own fertility, — interested in knowing a natural and reliable alternative to hormonal contraception, — wanting to be prepared for marriage by being familiar with their fertility and natural family planning methods

**Married couples,**  
that live their sexuality with a sense of fear of unwanted pregnancy, — that suffer because they haven't been able to conceive.

**Women that have recently given birth or to nursing mothers,**  
that would like to understand their fertility during this challenging time



**LOOK  
FROM THE  
OUTSIDE IN**



**„THROUGH ITS SPECIFIC COACHING OR  
CHURCH LAW COUNSELLING SERVICES,  
FAMILY GARDEN CAN BE VERY HELPFUL  
TO MARRIED COUPLES AND THEIR FAMILIES...”**

CYRIL SLÍŽ, SDB

# CYRIL SLÍŽ

CYRIL SLÍŽ, SALESIAN AND THE CHRISTIAN  
COACH TRAINING PROGRAMME GRADUATE

**Geographically speaking, as a religious person and a Salesian, the distance separating you from our centre is minimal. Currently, you're a part of the Salesian centre in Trnávka, and we're almost able to look into each other's windows. What is your view on another year of our effort's existence?** — I welcome the Christian coach training programmes happening in the spring and the fall, as well as all the follow-up activities related to Christian coaching, especially those aimed at continuing education of the coaches. I keep receiving a very positive feedback also on the lectures that you organise monthly in your centre on Miletičova Street, as well as on the multi-faceted help offered to married couples facing crisis situations.

**In spring of 2018, you're even completed the Christian coach training programme yourself. What led you to sign up and what you've gained through the programme?** — I knew several people around me that graduated from the Christian coach programme and viewed it positively. My immediate motivation, however, was the need of an effective tool useful in contact with those coming to me with their problems. I believe the training enhanced my ability to listen and understand people and help them search for answers to their questions. At the same time, the training was also helpful to me in my personal growth.

**What do you hope and expect to happen in the next year, maybe looking at the effort of the Momma Margherita Family Centre as a whole, since Family Garden is its part?** — Through its specific coaching or Church law counselling services, Family Garden can be very helpful to married couples and families using the services of the local nursery, centre for mothers and babies, and medical centre, or to members of our parish in general. Through the lectures and workshops offered, it can provide efficient assistance in the confirmands' preparation, and instructors' or animators' education.

Through its specific coaching or Church law counselling services, Family Garden can be very helpful to married couples and families using the services of the local nursery, centre for mothers and babies, and medical centre, or to members of our parish in general. Through the lectures and workshops offered, it can provide efficient assistance in the confirmands' preparation, and instructors' or animators' education.

**„...HELPING  
TO SEARCH FOR  
ANSWERS...“**





**ACTIVITIES  
DURING  
THE YEAR  
OF 2018**



## JANUARY

**NEW WEBSITE** — At the beginning of the 2018, our focus was on redesigning our website, since our old one was starting to resemble a labyrinth. We're glad that by May, we were able to present our new and well-arranged website to the public. We'd like to thank Robo Němec, one of our volunteers, who worked on giving it a new look in the evenings.

## FEBRUARY

**LECTURE GIVEN DURING THE NATIONAL MARRIAGE WEEK** — On 16 February, as part of the National Marriage Week organised by the Ružinov city district, Katka and Kamil Bagin from our centre accepted the invitation to share their testimony titled "How to restore a marriage relationship even after many years?" First, the couples present renewed their marriage vows during mass, which was then followed by their participation in the Stations of the Cross, listening to a testimonial and enjoying small refreshments.

## MARCH

**FAREWELL TO THE BOYS** — At the beginning of March, we said goodbye to Artur and Víťa, the two to us already well-known boys from the Pokrov orphanage in Lviv, Ukraine. The Patane and Jakubec family graciously offered them a temporary home during their two-month internship at a well-known hotel in Bratislava.

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### 2<sup>ND</sup> YEAR OF THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH

#### SEMINAR FOR THE CHRISTIAN COACHES

**IN ČIČMANY** — "Fr. Juraj and Fr. Pavol called us by name; following our 'Here I am' response they anointed our palms with oil and sent us into the world as missionaries



ROBO NĚMEC



ARTUR AND VÍŤA

of joy to serve in our parishes and families through dialogues with all those that need it – people known to us, acquaintances, and strangers alike. You can read more about this experience in the article by Luboš Kotlárík published on our website.

## APRIL

**FR. VILHAN'S VISIT** — After a year, Fr. Dušan Vilhan, responsible for vocational pastoral care, and young men that accepted the invitation to discern their vocational calling during the “Vocational discernment in Salesian style” seminar, once again visited the Family Garden centre. – During their discernment journey, the young men are offered all the options the Lord has for them, including a sacramental married life. As in previous years, Mr. and Mrs. Kamil and Katarína Bagin offered them their testimony about their marriage of almost 30 years and answered their many questions.

**DAN NEWBY** — At the end of April, a world-known American teacher, coach, facilitator and writer, who's been focusing on emotional work for a number of years and is currently living in Barcelona, gave a lecture to about 50 professional coaches, among which there were also several graduates of our Christian coach training programme.

**THE JOHNSONS' VISIT IN OUR CENTRE** — We had the pleasure to welcome lovely visitors in our centre: two great people, Alicia and Mathew, who for the past several years, have been serving those in need accompanying married couples in crisis and helping poverty-stricken young people on their way to education. They wanted to know more about our activities and were intrigued by our annual reports,



DAN NEWBY



JOHNSONS'

which means that from now on, the red umbrella with our logo will be seen cruising the streets of London, as well! Being in their company during their visit to Slovakia, the most awesome thing to witness was their inimitable sense of humour... For all that had the pleasure to meet them, this will be the trait they will remember them by, as evidenced by the pictures.

## MAY

**VOLUNTEERS** — There's no doubt we wouldn't be able to do what we do without them. Our volunteers are mostly young people, who for the past several years, have been selflessly helping our centre. Once again this year, on 23 May, we organised a get-together with them, where we talked, shared our experiences, handed them small gifts, but most importantly, expressed our sincere thanks for everything they've been doing for our centre. — Some of them are distributing flyers with information about our lectures to various parishes (Marta Pospíšilová – parish on Mamateyova St., Silvia Fábryová – parish in the Vrakuňa city district, Jana Urbánková – the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Daliborko) parish, Martin Linhart – the University pastoral centre, Katarína Nagyová – parish in the Trnávka city district and Vincentian community, Pavol Rehák – parish in the Dlhé Diely city district and the suburban town of Senec, Elena Štofirová – parish in the Rača city district, Miriam Němcová – parish in the Lúky city district). Others take care of the lectures (Katarína & Kamil Bagin – planning and moderating the discussions), Patrik Goboňa – sound system, Mária Ondrušová – setting up chairs in the lecture hall, Martin Ondruš – photography).) — Jana Gavalda and Mr. and Mrs. Ján and Lucia Mrázek help us with graphic editing of our printed materials. Róbert Němec keeps our webpage and Facebook page up and running.



VOLUNTEERS



BARBEQUE

## JUNE

**NEW COACHES** — As of 16 June 2018, Slovakia has 17 more Christian coaches. After four months of extensive study, thanks to their efforts as well as new strength they gained at our barbeque get-together the day before, they were able to pass their exams successfully and are ready for their ministry.

## JULY

**TALK ABOUT COACHING ON THE LUMEN RADIO STATION** — If you didn't have a chance to listen to us live, Ján Heriban, host of the *Od ucha k duchu* (From the ear to the spirit) broadcast, was talking to our leading lecturer Marián Kubeš, the director of our centre/coach Katarína Baginová, and two graduates of our Christian coach training programme, Salesian sister Monika Skalová and Augustinian brother Milan Hermanovský. The recording can be found in the radio station archive through the following link: <https://www.lumen.sk/archivplay/99526>

## SEPTEMBER

**COACH GATHERING IN ČASTÁ** — Right after the summer holidays, for the second time, more than 20 coaches from around Slovakia met at an interesting educational and recreational gathering in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kubeš in Častá. The topic of the meeting was "How to deepen our self-awareness"

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### SALESIAN CONFERENCE IN ROME

— In the second half of September, the international congress "Youth and life choices: Educational perspectives" took place at the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS) in Rome. At the invitation of the organisers, ours Katka and Kamil Bagin had the opportunity to present their workshop about



LUMEN RADIO STATION



COACH GATHERING IN ČASTÁ



SALESIAN CONFERENCE IN ROME

the activities and efforts of the Family Garden centre. The participants were intrigued by the last-year report on the Family Garden activities, translated into English, and took its copies all around the world with them.

## OCTOBER

### TALK IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Poverty can be looked at from a different perspective than the one we usually use. The participants of the Poverty and Family Conference organised by the Forum of Christian Institutions were convinced of this by our centre director Katarína Baginová. In her report presented in the National Council of the Slovak Republic, she shifted the view from material poverty to relational poverty which can often be even more painful. She talked about the relational poverty in families, about the need to communicate, listen to each other, and share, as well as about how we've been trying to fight this kind of poverty in our centre. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4HHPW2wQR4>



IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC



LUX TELEVISION NETWORK

**VT LUX** — On October 16, the topic of the Doma je doma (Home is home) live broadcast of the Lux TV was Christian coaching... and we were part of the discussion, too.

**HAVE WE FORGOTTEN HOW TO LOVE? – DISCUSSION IN THE DIVADLO POD KOSTOLOM (UNDERCHURCH) PERFORMANCE ART THEATRE** — We long to be loved, but there is one thing we seem to have forgotten: “Who will be the one to love?” Approximately every third marriage in Slovakia ends in divorce. We say we've given up; we don't feel loved; it's just not working. But what have we done for our relationship to work? And do we even know what we should do?



DISCUSSION IN THE DIVADLO POD KOSTOLOM

The host of the show was Lucia Noskovičová, Lux TV network personality and human resources specialist. The discussion participants were: Jozef Halko, bishop; Daniel Pastirčák, evangelist/poet; and Katarína Baginová, accredited relational coach/director of the Family Garden counselling centre for families.

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**CONTINUING EDUCATION SEMINAR** — At the beginning of October, Mr. and Mrs. Marián and Margita Kubeš offered another continuing education seminar for Christian coaches focused on counselling work with married couples. Once again, their programme “Working with a married couple in crisis” enjoyed great interest among coaches – lay people, religious, and married couples alike – wishing to be as well prepared as possible to serve couples that found themselves facing a crisis.

## NOVEMBER

**GENERAL MEETING** — As in previous years, in November, the members of the Family Garden Counselling Centre for Families citizens’ association met for their general meeting. In addition to sharing information about our activities throughout the year, a presentation about the centre’s external activities abroad, financial management overview, and briefing about grants received has been provided.

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**CONFERENCE IN MODRA** — For Danka Cintulová, a Christian coach, the idea to go on stage during the conference came about spontaneously while the conference was already in full swing. Her words were deeply personal: “I feel great joy in my heart, because if there are two hundred pinheads on the map of Slovakia, representing coaches active just in their immediate personal or professional surroundings, it is a result bringing a great deal of good. And if



CONTINUING EDUCATION SEMINAR



CONFERENCE IN MODRA

they manage to broaden the scope of their activities through expanding into various communities or through participation and ministry in Christian events or their parishes, they'll be weaving another important mesh of a net able to hold, support, catch and protect from a fall." (You can read the entire article on our website.)

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**IN THE MÁRIA RADIO STATION** — Towards the end of 2018, our director Katka Baginová was invited twice to be a guest of live broadcasts of the Mária radio station. The topics discussed included Family Garden various activities, especially Christian coaching in Slovakia.

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**HELLO FROM FR. MANÍK** — I'm sending my warmest greetings to all of you in Slovakia. — According to our calendar, today it is the feast of St. Nicolas, a beloved and highly revered saint in the Eastern world. On this day, St. Nicolas brings presents to people. Our kids are very much looking forward to it and everybody is living in expectation of that. (In this part of the world, the gifts are given only on the Feast of St. Nicolas, people are not used to exchange them on Christmas). So, in this festive atmosphere, I've decided to write to you again to express our sincere thanks in the name of all of us, for everything you've done for our two guys, Roman and Viktor, and the huge gift you've given them. They came home to Lviv on Saturday night bursting with new experiences. — To these two boys, you've brought a little love and light into their lives. We don't know how their lives will turn out, what future awaits them, but what we do know is that they'll never forget loving gestures shown to them. And that's in part what Christmas is all about! So, allow me to wish you all a very blessed Christmas! — With my respect and prayers for all of you, Fr. Maník



VISIT IN THE MÁRIA RADIO STATION



VISIT WITH THE SALESIAN SISTERS

## NÁVŠTEVA U SESTIER SALEZIÁNOK

— 24. novembra 2018 boli Baginovci hosťami sestier saleziánok počas víkendú vo Velkom Bieli s česko – azerbajdžan-  
sko – slovenskými juniorkami, kde vydá-  
vali svedectvo o svojom manželstve, ale aj  
o práci vo Family Garden.

## DECEMBER

**SAUERKRAUT SOUP FEAST** — Once again,  
we concluded the year with a pleasant get-to-  
gether of the Momma Margherita family house  
employees. Our Salesian brothers took on the  
cooking of the traditional soup, and the rest of  
us brought homemade delicacies to the table.

We got to taste some special Salesian wine,  
but what we enjoyed the most was the friendly  
atmosphere and opportunities for sharing and  
getting to know each other better. After all,  
we all work side by side under one roof, each  
contributing in our own unique way to one  
shared endeavour.



SAUERKRAUT SOUP FEAST

# HOW WE'VE MANAGED OUR RESOURCES

JANUARY — DECEMBER 2018

## INCOME

Gifts and contributions	7 437,70 €
Christian coach educational training fees	37 553,00 €
Grants	41 200,00 €
Income from the 2% tax contribution	1 921,76 €

TOTAL: 88 112,46 €

## EXPENSES

Administration	2 947,55 €
Printed materials & Marketing Operations	4 160,27 €
4 920,65 €	
Furnishings & Equipment	4 995,12 €
Wages	13 028,81 €
Education	653,73 €
Christian coach training programme	
— Materials, Lecturers, Refreshments	25 769,37 €
— Rent & Energy	6 899,57 €
— Cleaning	355,00 €

TOTAL: 63 730,07 €

BALANCE – REMAINING GRANT FINANCIAL MEANS  
TO BE USED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2019:

24 382,39 €

# WHAT IS IN STORE FOR 2019

Once a month, we will continue to offer interesting testimonies and expert lectures on current topics related to the needs of marriages and families.

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In partnership with the Mary, Help of Christians parish on Miletičova Street, we plan to be involved in marriage preparation courses; since the need for this ministry is on the rise, we will be inviting additional married couples, especially from the ranks of the ASC, into this service.

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Once again in 2019, we intend to be there for all the people of good will – individuals and couples alike – that approach us with a heartfelt desire and courage to start changing their lives through a transforming dialogue with a Christian coach.

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This year, we plan to make our Register of Christian coaches available to the general public so that people from around Slovakia will be able to find and contact a coach directly according to their preferences, e.g. their geographical region.

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Again, this year, we will organise two runs of the Christian coach educational training with the start dates in the Fall and in the Spring. We intend to continue training new Christian coaches with the goal of fulfilling our vision to have a Christian coach available in every parish.

We plan to continue offering professional and spiritual support to our current coaches.

With this in mind, we're preparing series of professional workshops and seminars to help them in their continuing professional development. Through our Spiritual growth seminar for Christian coaches, we intend to offer our graduates an opportunity to deepen the spiritual dimension of their Christian coaching practice.

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At the same time, we plan to organise thematic workshops and seminars for various specific groups (youth, engaged couples, parents, educators, religious people).

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We'll do our best to make our service offering available to people during those moments when they need it the most. That's why we'll try to make ourselves heard and known, e.g. through joining the database of other portals enabling their audience to look for the available services of helping professions.

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We will promote the idea of setting up new centres for families in other cities around Slovakia. We're open to sharing our experiences with them with the goal of propagating the good work as much as possible.

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We will continue to take good care of our volunteers. We want to listen to what they have to say, paying attention especially to the young people, so that we'd be able to keep improving our activities focusing on the needs of today's families.



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