



Rowena and Angel Penano are parents to Anwen, Owen and Gwen. The couple renewed their wedding vows on their 10th anniversary.

Faith brings Angel and Rowena closer to God and each other

Angel and Rowena Penano

More than 12 years ago, we willingly entered into matrimony with little certainty about what would unfold.

All we really knew was that we loved each other deeply, we had fun together, we complemented each other's personalities and we had a tiny inkling that God had plans for us.

We continued to mature and develop in many aspects of life – as individuals, as a couple, in our careers and in life experiences.

We considered ourselves fortunate that our spiritual life also continued to grow, even if it may not have kept pace with the other aspects of life.

We credit our involvement to an ecclesial community called Verbum Dei, whose members have accompanied us in our journey to seek a more meaningful life, the existential aspects of life – faith, truth, God and purpose.

Our faith became more 'real' in our lives; it became bigger than concepts and ideology and took on a deeper meaning and significance.

Our relationship with our Trinitarian God and Mother Mary has become deeper through prayer and the Bible.

As we each became closer to God, we found ourselves being closer to each

other too. This is a testament of what faith can do.

Our marriage continues to evolve and we try to create more space for God to be part of it, to try and listen more for His will and to discern His plan for us.

On our 10th wedding anniversary we decided to renew our wedding vows; to celebrate the love that continues. The same words, the same hearts but somehow wiser, the same vows, the same faith but somehow profoundly deeper.

We are slowly realising some of the truths of what a Catholic marriage means, and the potential and ideals that Jesus intended for married couples as a true union where we continue to strive to be 'one' with each other.

We are firm believers in the grace God gives to married couples. We have used it many times to survive gridlocks and serious challenges throughout our marriage!

This grace enables us to go beyond what we're capable of individually and allows us to look beyond our differences and see the dignity in each other and in our children.

We feel our marriage is similar to when Jesus sends His followers in pairs (*Luke 10:1-2*).

Together we have been forging a

bond to love each other as Christ loves His Church and raising our three beautiful children in faith.

Our hope is to be able to serve the Lord and give testimony to all the blessings He has given us, together with our children, in our ordinary everyday life.

For us, being pre-marriage educators with CatholicCare Parramatta is one concrete way to respond to the experiences of God's love in our lives.

When we see or hear about broken relationships, or broken families, whether in the media or people we encounter, we feel a call to action – it doesn't have to be so.

Pre-marriage education presents us with an avenue to share the good news of hope, love and joy that Jesus revealed in the Bible and our Catholic tradition, as well as to continually enrich our own faith and marriage as we journey and learn from other couples.

* Angel and Rowena Penano have been married for 12 years. They are parents to Anwen, Owen and Gwen and are parishioners at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Greystanes.

They are involved with Verbum Dei Community, St Vincent de Paul Society, CatholicCare Social Services Diocese of Parramatta and the Institute for Mission.