# Couples Seek Pre-Marital Counsel At Family Center

Perhaps it's the alarming upsurge in the divorce rate throughout the country that is causing young couples contemplating marriage to seek out pre-marital counselling services from qualified social agencies such as the Catholic Family Center in Rochester.

Whatever the reason, it has become quite evident in recent years that young men and women are anxious to use the growing number of resources placed at their disposal. They appreciate the solemnity of the sacrament of marriage; they recognize the pitfalls which can so easily overwhelm the unsuspecting, the unprepared.

By requesting guidance from trained personnel in the field of social work, they are proving their confidence in the potentialities of their respective partners, they are reaffirming the sincerity of their intentions and they are acknowledging openly their faith in the blessings and happiness awaiting them in the state of matrimony.

### Nobody Proud

No man or woman is proud of a failure in marriage, for it is the rare occasion when the accusing finger can be pointed at just one party. Seldom can happiness be enjoyed to the fullest by the young man or woman who defies the well-intended, but sometimes misguided concern of interested parents.

Although parental objections cannot always be resolved, nevertheless there is great satisfaction in store for the prospective bride or groom who shows respect for the feelings of loved ones by conferring with a social worker in order to obtain an objective evaluation of his situation.

Some young couples realize that over and above their deep love for one another, they do have personality differences which need to be uncovered and understood fully before undertaking marriage and the subsequent mutual adjustments involved. When necessary, counselling is also geared toward the solution of issues, such as budgeting, sex instruction, household management, preparation for child care, etc.

### Quits College

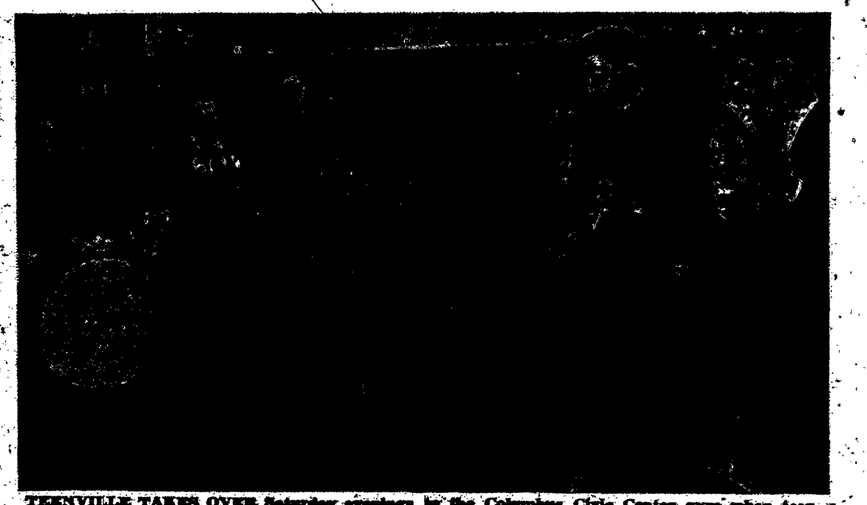
Take, for example, the case of nineteen year old Virginia K. She had left college at the end of her Freshman year to take a job as an apprentice to an assistant buyer in one of Rochester's larger department stores. Rather than to continue her schooling, she had decided to work in order to save money for her approaching marriage to a young man whom she had known since her Senior year in high school. Tom, her fiance, was a Junior in college. He was studying engineering and had another year to go, before he would be able to start earning money. Both were Catholics.

As plans for Ginny's wedding became more imminent in March of last year, the young woman found that her father was becoming increasingly irritable around the home. Although he had always seemed very accepting of Tom, suddenly he began to make sharp criticisms of him. He complained that Ginny's fiance was showing very poor judgment in marrying before finishing school.

The father kept admonishing Ginny about the dangers of financial insecurity to a young married couple. He did not see how the two could manage successfully. Ginny's father was certain that his daughter and prospective son-in-law were doomed from the start by not waiting at least another year.

### Father's Attitude

Although the father's attitude was upsetting to Ginny who felt she and Tom had considered every single angle, still she was even more distressed by her mother's insistence on making all the arrangements for the wedding itself. Ginny was an intelligent young woman; she realized that she was the first girl in her family to marry, and after all her older brother's wedding had been such a rushed affair, because he was in the service at the time.



TEENVILLE TAKES OVER Saturday evenings as the Columbus Civic Center gym when teenagers gather for dancing and social recreation. Organized during the past year, the Teenville program is directed by the Columbus Youth Association.

Still, Ginny had definite ideas about how she wanted her plans carried out and she found that she and her mother were bickering more and more each day about every little detail that came up. Ginny did not like this. She wanted everything to go smoothly; she wanted everyone to view her future through the rose-colored glasses that love had placed over her eyes. But it was not working out that way. Each day, Ginny became somewhat more depressed.

### Family Center

One afternoon, she discussed her plight with a co-worker at the store. The latter suggested that maybe Ginny would feel better if she were to confer with a social worker at the Catholic Family Center about her problem. Ginny thought about it for a day or so, for she was hesitant to confront a stranger with the details of her intimate story.

Then too, she feared that the social worker might consider her difficulties quite trivial in comparison with other young couples facing more serious impediments.

Ginny debated what she should do, but finally decided that she had nothing to lose by approaching the Agency. She stopped in the Catholic Family Center office one day after work and was given an appointment for the following Friday evening.

It had been hard for Ginny to take that first step, but once she made it, she felt a certain peace of mind in knowing that she was trying to do the right thing.

Thereafter, Ginny had a series of interviews with the social worker. She explained in detail the conflicts she was having with her family. She sought advice on issues which had bothered both Tom and her.

### Worker Listens

The social worker listened attentively to what Ginny had to say. She asked questions, made suggestions and advised Ginny on how she might effect a compromise with her mother and father.

Ginny found that the social worker was able to help her clarify her thinking, to make decisions with more assurance and at the same time, to obtain a better appreciation of her parents' point of view.

As for Tom, when he was home on Spring vacation, he, too, had a talk with the social worker. There were a few things which had worried him and he had not mentioned them to Ginny because he knew she had enough to work out herself.

How this young couple finally made out is of little consequence to outsiders. The important factor is that they cared enough about their future to start off by preparing for it properly. They were given thoughtful guidance and thus made aware of what lay before them.

The course of action which they chose to follow was a decision which they had to make, completely on their own—one which would be theirs to live, leading to a life together for which they alone would have to answer.

### Marital Counsel

Any young couple seeking service from the Catholic Family Center is similarly received and helped in every way possible. The men and women, who comprise the staff of marital counsellors within the Agency setting, view such cases as more than just jobs to be done, within their working hours. But rather, they have a further duty determined by the dictates of their own consciences.

Their responsibility is great and they sense this keenly, for they are sharing in God's work in assisting young people to follow a path to a sacrament—not just a legal, barren union that can bear no fruit.

These social workers have been educated and trained to a realization of the vital roles they play in aiding young couples to build the foundations for wholesome family living wherein they can find immeasurable temporal happiness and simultaneously, derive the necessary graces for even greater rewards in a life hereafter.

# St. Mary's Out-Patient Clinic Serves Families

Just about everything and anything can happen at St. Mary's Hospital Clinic. The Clinic, you know, is the Hospital's daily treatment center where those patients come who are able to get to the Hospital by themselves and who have the kinds of illnesses which can be treated without actual bed confinement.

For the past eleven years various members of the Wood family have come to the Clinic. Mrs. Wood is a respectable woman who loves her home and family. She has four daughters and three sons but usually had great difficulty just surviving because her husband was an alcoholic. He was selfish and stubborn and Mrs. Wood, often deeply burdened, sought advice from those at the Clinic who understood a lot about people, more than just why one had pain or sickness.

**ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL**
**89 Genesee Street**

St. Mary's Hospital provides general service for medical, surgical and obstretrical cases through inpatient and out-patient departments. Private rooms, semi-private rooms, and wards are maintained. As determined by financial eligibility of certain patients, the hospital provides free and part-pay care.

The hospital operates an out-patient department and a clinic that are open daily to those unable to pay. a physician. The hospital maintains a 24-hour emergency department, and operates a training school for nurses.

### Looks Back

Some months back Mr. Wood came to the Hospital as a patient. After much praying by Mrs. Wood and many interested people, Mr. Wood received the Sacraments and moreover, resolved to be a better father and husband. While lying quietly on his hospital bed, Mr. Wood was able to look back through the years and see how well his family had been provided for, both through the help of organized social agencies and the Sisters of Charity who direct St. Mary's.

So, Mr. Wood returned home—and he did keep his promises. He has begun working steadily and has a brighter, better adjusted outlook. Mrs. Wood and the children are delighted and Mr. Wood, a little surprised himself, is repentant and grateful for his second chance. Everybody at St. Mary's just keeps praying and saying that wonders never really do cease.

### God's Poor

The staff of St. Mary's Clinic, in dealing with God's poor, meets many needy families. But always stress is placed on the blessing of a united family and the importance of keeping the family together. Poverty, the forerunner of sickness and sorrow, brings many clients to St. Mary's Out-Patient Department. Some need medical care, others food, clothing and often a sympathetic word.

In the early autumn, Mrs. X and her family were of much interest to all of us. Before her marriage she was an attractive girl from an excellent Catholic family. Her husband too, could boast of his parentage, Catholic education and all that makes for success. In the first years of their married life happiness prevailed. Circumstances brought him into service, and he like many others returned an alcoholic. As a result, he lost all interest in his family which now numbers seven.

### Medical Care

Frequently, this mother brought the children to the Clinic. They have had medical care, tonsils and adenoids removed, etc. Midst sickness, sorrow and family difficulties this poor mother was distracted and felt at times desperate, thinking it was all too much for her. Pitying neighbors like-

## Nuns At Hospital Since Civil War

St. Mary's Hospital, a participating agency in the Rochester Community Chest, is in charge of the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul.

This community of Sisters, known as the Charity Sisters has successfully operated the Rochester hospital since Civil War days when their care of the returned wounded gained for them all time acclaim.

wise advised her breaking up the home.

On her visits to the Clinic every effort was made to make her feel what staying together now, will mean for all in the future. Her spirit of faith taught her to see God's will and she recognized it as her cross and determined to carry on. Confidence in her good pastor, in whom she had perfect trust was a big lift for her. He not only gave her advice but many times substantial aid.

The husband continued to be indifferent, not even giving her meager support. To help him, we made appointments with the Alcoholics Anonymous group, feeling this would be of some avail. True to self he never kept the appointments. Is a Matt Talbot needed? Prayer and sacrifice were needed.

### Sisters Advice

The children are a pleasing group. From time to time the Sisters dressed them daintily thus giving them a feeling of security, making them feel they are like other children. The older ones are in the parish school. Whenever they come for treatments, food, etc., the Sisters tried to say a word about being thoughtful of mother, and praying much for daddy, telling them to remind mother to say the daily rosary with her little ones. A reminder was always given to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion frequently, and to ask God to bless their parents and home.

As a result after many efforts the family is still together, with daddy a wee bit more interested, and a happier, holier home.

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL OUTPATIENT DEPARTMENT consisting of 26 active clinics, serves 6,000 patients annually. Here a laboratory technician prepares to take an x-ray of a young patient.

## Catholic Family Center Services To Children In Foster Care

April 1, 1951 — April 1, 1952

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| **Children in St. Joseph's Villa** | **164** |
| New placements | 48 |
| Discharges | 54 |
| **Children in foster boarding homes** | **346** |
| New placements | 128 |
| Discharges | 131 |
| **Children in adoption homes** | **124** |
| New placements | 59 |
| Adoptions legally completed | 53 |


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