OUR PARISH COUNCIL

Is your parish helping to break the silence about rape?

The great increase in sexual violence in recent years and the growing self-confidence of women is helping to break the silence about a crime that is too often confined to a short item in the newspaper.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates that reported rapes increased 146 per that. cent between 1960 and 1971. There was an added 11 per cent increase last year, when there were 41,890 rapes.

Other criminologists guess that four to 10 times as many rapes are committed as are reported. Also, only a small percentage of reported violations lead to conviction.

Though there may be some spute on the figures, there is little doubt that the trend is upward. The rise of rape is part of a general increase in volent behavior in the United States, according to the 1969 National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.

What can and what should a parish do about rape?

They can get the facts about their own community. Talk to the police and social agencies to try to determine the extent of the local problem.

A parish council committee or one of the parish's women's groups might study the problem further with an idea to educate the larger community and list the resources of the community in preventing rape and in counseling victims.

In the last year a number of rape crisis centers have opened in urban areas. Quite simply, the center is an emergency telephone number for rape victims who just need to talk to someone or who want to find out about legal procedures and health precautions.

A parish shouldn't try to go it alone in establishing such a center, but it should certainly cooperate with an existing center or work with other churches and agencies in the community to get such a program going

Probably the first such emergency line was opened in Washington, D.C., in June, 1972. This group has since published a book on "How To Start A Rape Crisis-Center." It's available for \$1.35 from Rape Crisis Center, P.O. Box 21005; Kalorama St. Sta., Washington, D.C. 20009.

SENIOR CITIZENS

The Holy Family Senior Citizens' group will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 23, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., in the school basement. A representative from RG&E will speak on planning meals for senior citizens. All are welcome.

Bornard Lyons

A parish program of selfdefense for women could be sponsored, but according to the volunteers at the Washington, D.C. crisis center they do not see self-defense as the solution to rape, but "only a step in getting control of our lives. Many rapists would be stopped if women were not socialized to be passive, and discouraged from fighting back."

European Father Joseph

Parish, Fairport



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