

(Continued from 2a)

exceptional cases of doubt about their readiness for marriage such as:

- a) immaturity
- b) pregnancy as the prime motive for the marriage
- c) escape from a very poor home situation
- d) lack of faith commitment

and he cannot resolve these doubts himself, he is urged to refer the couple to a marriage counselor and secure the permission of the counselor and the couple for a written report or verbal consultation with the counselor regarding his doubts. If the doubts persist the priest or deacon should submit a written summary of those doubts to the regional bishop's delegate for a final judgment on the couple's readiness for marriage. If the judgment is affirmative the priest or deacon may then proceed with the rest of the marriage preparation procedures. If the judgment is negative, he should communicate this fact to the couple and, if possible, assist them to remove the obstacles which prevent them from being married in the Catholic Church.

Should the parish priest or deacon be satisfied in the course of the interviews that the couple is ready to enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony he then refers them to the Pre-Cana Conference, spending some time explaining the purpose of these conferences and the registration procedure. A Pre-Cana team consists of five married couples, a priest and sometimes a doctor. The team endeavors to stress attitudes, principles and values which govern married life. The methods used are presentations, films, games and discussions. The leader couple helps five engaged couples discover more about themselves and the relationship they can expect to build with their mate. The aim of the team is to show the engaged couple that they are part of God's continuing plan for married couples and how they influence each other, the family, the Church and society.

Pre-Cana presentations explore the areas of communications, adjustment to each other, outside influences, finances, sexuality, spirituality, interfaith marriages, the liturgical and sacramental dimensions of marriage. The chief benefit of a Pre-Cana Conference is the opportunity it gives engaged couples to explore together their readiness for marriage and in some cases to decide on their own that they are not ready for marriage. Recruiting of Pre-Cana

teams is the responsibility of the regional Family Life Coordinator. The Office of Family Life provides training, workshops and resource materials and coordinates scheduling of the conferences throughout the diocese.

The Marriage Encounter movement has developed an alternative to Pre-Cana called the Engaged Encounter. This program is a weekend away with other engaged couples with plenty of time alone together to plan the marriage. It is designed to give couples planning marriage the opportunity to dialogue honestly and intensively about their prospective lives together — their strengths and weaknesses, desires, ambitions, goals, their attitudes about money, sex, children, family, their role in the church and society — in a face-to-face way.

Through a series of ideas presented by a team of two married couples and a priest, the couple is stimulated to dialogue privately with each other on all aspects of married life — always from the viewpoint of their own relationship. Personal reflection and conjugal dialogue are the main thrust of the weekend with communal meals and Sunday liturgy providing group participation. This program is available in both the Rochester area and the Southern Tier.

The Pre-Cana program is available throughout the diocese throughout the year. In the Rochester area the Office of Family Life can arrange for special small group Pre-Cana Conferences in cases where a regularly scheduled Pre-Cana is filled or inconvenient to a particular couple's work schedule. The Office is prepared to offer training programs to Pre-Cana teams to make such a service available throughout the diocese. If no Pre-Cana program of any kind is available, the parish priest or deacon should provide an equivalent Pre-Cana program.

Audio-visual materials to assist him in conducting such a program are listed in the bibliography of the Common Policy.

The priest or deacon may fill out the Marriage Investigation form with the couple either before or after the Pre-Cana Conference. (The Priests' Council has asked that a committee be appointed to revise the investigation.) He should refer the couple to the parish organist or parish liturgy committee for advice on music appropriate to the wedding. He should plan the wedding liturgy with them using booklets such as *Together for Life* by Rev. Joseph Champlin. The Pre-Cana Conference discusses the different options which couples have in designing a wedding which is meaningful and personal. The parish priest or deacon should assist the couple to make their choices in terms of parish tradition and good liturgy.

The procedure outlined above is the standard procedure in dealing with regular cases and the most common exceptional cases. Certain exceptional cases require special treatment.

If either partner is under 18 years of age, the priest or deacon is required to submit a written evaluation of the couple's readiness for marriage as well as the completed Marriage Investigation to the regional bishop's delegate after a sufficient number of interviews to make such an evaluation.

The parish priest or deacon should then interview both sets of parents of the engaged couple to determine their evaluation of the couple's readiness for marriage. He should then submit this form to the regional bishop's delegate along with the completed Marriage Investigation.

The parish priest or deacon should then refer the couple to the pre-marriage counseling sessions offered by the Office of Family

Life in the Rochester area and various social service agencies in other areas of the diocese.

The marriage should not be scheduled until the priest or deacon has received permission from the regional bishop's delegate for the marriage to take place.

Should permission for the marriage not be granted the parish priest or deacon should seek to communicate the reasons for refusal to the couple and direct them to seek professional help to overcome whatever obstacles impede their marriage.

The procedure for interfaith marriages requires that the parish

priest or deacon explain and fill out with the couple the application for dispensation from mixed religion or disparity of worship. The Catholic party is required to sign or give verbal assent to the promises. The non-Catholic party should be informed concerning the meaning of the promises. If the couple wishes to solemnize their marriage in the church of the non-Catholic for a good reason (such as the non-Catholic's relationship with the minister, strong family attachment of the non-Catholic to his church, likelihood of increasing family hostility if marriage took place in the Catholic Church) the priest or deacon should assist them to secure the necessary permissions and dispensations for the ceremony.

Baubles, bangles wedding bands

Before you and your fiancée set out to buy your wedding rings there are some timely tips that will save you lots of leg work, and help you to make a wise choice.

It is important to go to a jeweler you can trust, who will show you a selection of name brand wedding rings in white and yellow gold.

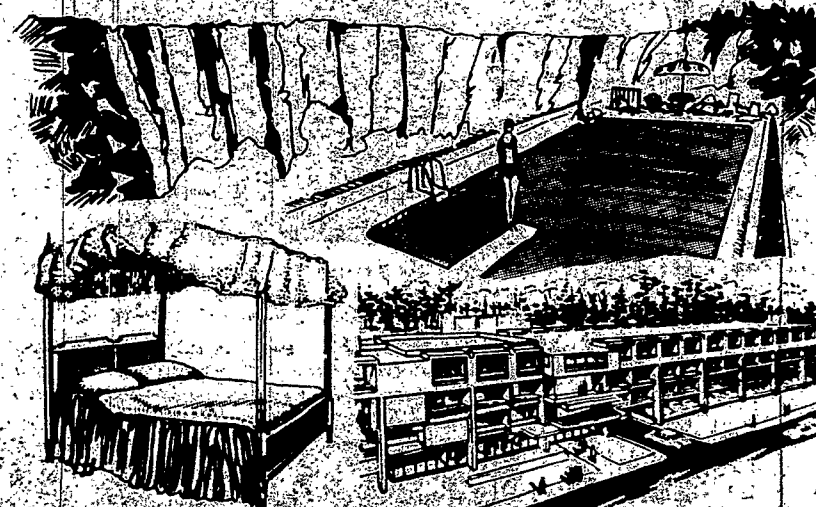
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craftsmanship will last a lifetime; the precious gleam, mellowing with time and loving wear. There is no significant difference in your choice of color of gold... it is a matter of taste. Both offer strength, hardness and resistance to wear, both are equally precious.

Wedding rings should be ordered four to six weeks before the happy event.

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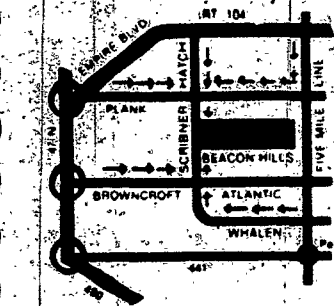
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