



Photo by Susan McKinney

Suzanne and Jerry Jeansonne review Beginning Experience materials with Sister Kathy Kircher.

'Beginning Experience' To Open in the Diocese

By JOHN DASH

Thanks to a \$500 donation from Marriage Encounter, the Diocese of Rochester last week was able to begin work on establishing The Beginning Experience, a weekend program for people in crisis situations, especially those who are recently widowed, separated or divorced.

To that end, Jerry and Suzanne Jeansonne, a Boston-based couple who

were instrumental in founding The Beginning Experience some four years ago, were invited to prepare a "core group" of diocesans who will lead the program in the diocese.

According to Sister Kathy Kircher, a team member of the Office of Family Life, Rochester now becomes the 22nd diocese to have the program.

In an interview last week Jeansonne explained that he

and his wife, while living in the Dallas-Fort Worth area of Texas, had come in contact with a number of people who were ministering to divorced and separated Catholics. A member of that ministry was Sister Josephine Stewart, who now heads the National Beginning Experience Office in Fort Worth.

It was she, he said, who devised the program following a "grief and crisis" workshop in that city, which the Jeansonnes attended.

The Beginning Experience, Suzanne noted, is "geared to individual growth" in a time of separation and alienation.

The weekend program, the couple agrees, is based on both psychological and theological principles. It attempts, they said, to meet the Church's "basic Christian responsibility" to its members in crisis.

Despite the Christian, Catholic, orientation, the program has also agnostics and Jews, Jeansonne said.

His wife noted that such people are attracted by "the universal need of love, and there has been no objection."

While the program aims at easing the crisis of recent divorce, separation or death of a spouse, the Jeansonnes noted that the weekends have also drawn persons experiencing a number of other crises in their lives, most notably those who are involved in job crises.

A pilot program of The Beginning Experience will open in Rochester on April 14. Further information is available by calling the Office of Family Life at (716) 328-6400.

Schoonenberg To Speak Here

Father Piet Schoonenberg, S.J., internationally known theologian will lecture at Nazareth College on Thursday, March 16, at 8 p.m.

The professor of dogmatic theology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, will discuss "God's Presence in Jesus." During his stay in Rochester, Father

Schoonenberg also will deliver two other lectures, at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday and at 11:20 a.m. on Thursday.

Several of Father Schoonenberg's books have been translated into English, including his controversial 1969 book The Christ.

Center Sets New Events

The Prayer Center of the Sisters of St. Joseph on Mt. Vernon Ave. has slated a number of events for Holy Week and opportunities for prayer. On Wednesday, March 22, Sister Christine Lloyd, S.S.J., will speak on "The Cross" following the talk. Father Charles Mulligan will celebrate the Eucharist. On Holy Thursday, the special liturgy for the day will be celebrated by Father Lawrence Murphy at 7:30 p.m. Good Friday services will be conducted at 4:30 p.m. by Father Mulligan.

The center also is available to priests, sisters and lay persons for private prayer and reflection. Persons planning to attend the Holy Week events are asked to call 244-1416.

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THE OPEN WINDOW

Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father Hohman, Recently I heard you talk on the radio against the death penalty. Apparently you have never had murder come very close to your family. I have. A very close and dear relative of mine was killed while being robbed in his store. It was a horrible thing, and the murder was only for relatively few pennies. Can you really believe that these men who did this should not suffer the same fate? Do you really think justice is done if these people are merely put in a relatively comfortable prison, after which they will probably end up on some kind of parole? I don't think you or any other liberals like you have the right slant on this death penalty business. You may say that the death penalty would not deter crime, but I'm sure it would make a lot of people think twice before they did something like what those men did to my uncle.

(Signed) A.O.

Dear A.O., There is nothing wrong with our God-given emotions, but sometimes

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they get in the way of our clear thinking. In the situation which you have experienced you obviously have felt strong if not violent anger which cries out for some kind of release. At least in terms of your feelings, you are experiencing a need for retribution which would alleviate those feelings and put them to rest. But that is not the issue. The issue is this: do two deaths make a real difference; do two wrongs make a right? What would be accomplished by the death of these men who killed your uncle? Would the world be any better for that?

As far as deterrence is concerned, I have not seen a single reputable study which indicates that the death penalty is in any way, shape or manner a deterrent to serious crime. There are plenty of impartial studies which indicate just the opposite. However, even if there were strong evidence that this was true, I do believe that society would have to think twice about getting involved itself in the kind of violence which it is attempting to overcome. If there is one thing that history has taught us it is this — that violence has never overcome violence, but only multiplies it.

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