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## From 5A

3. An evaluation by a trained marriage counselor, or

4. An indepth evaluation by a team couple who covers the general Pre-Cana material

**INITIATIVES** — Approximately 30 diocesan priests and 150 lay people are involved in the ministry. A part-time coordinator for the program was established in 1974 as an expansion of the Office of Family Life. This person and a secretary coordinate the scheduling, reservations, materials and other practical considerations. The most important initiative recently has been an expansion of the education and enrichment given the people involved in this ministry since it has been recognized more and more as a crucial contact with young people, many of whom are unchurched or lack an adult commitment to their faith. Regular workshops are offered which provide continuing education about available materials, and more importantly, about the sacrament of marriage itself. As Pope Paul said recently, "The modern world doesn't listen to teachers, it listens to witnesses; and if it listens to teachers, it is only because they are witnesses." Thus, the effort to develop Pre-Cana beyond a dry presentation of information to a strong invitation to join the Church in the living of a sacrament, a vocation... thus, the initiative to instill this vision in the lay people and priests involved in this ministry.

**EXPERIENCES** — When presenting teams manifest this vision, the engaged couples find the sessions both informative and inspiring. The couples are able to identify and discuss attitudes and factors about their future relationship which might otherwise go undiscovered and become sources of future strife. In a few instances,

couples have been able to honestly face differences so crucial that they reach a decision to postpone or cancel their marriage.

In general, then, the responses are quite positive in spite of the initial reservations about required participation. Many of the laity involved as teams in the program were led to the involvement as a result of their own very positive experience of it in preparation for their own marriage.

**DIFFICULTIES** — Presently, the formal program coordinated by the Office of Family Life serves only about 60% of the marriages in the Diocese. It is difficult to determine in how many of the remaining instances preparation is provided by a priest and/or couples in programs not connected directly with the Office. Negative attitudes on the part of priests and the uninformed couples keep many from participating in the formal program.

Another practical problem is the amount of lead time between a couple's decision to marry and their wedding date; or a delay on their part or the priest's in contacting the Office to obtain a reservation. This reduces the possibilities for a couple participating in a meaningful way in the program. It would be difficult for them to be open to the possibility of postponing or canceling a marriage; for example, if the wedding is within a few weeks. Most of the problems stem from an underlying attitude of indifference or lack of respect for the importance of marriage as a life-long sacramental commitment. The solution as we see it (and as we are approaching it) is a broad-based educational effort through high schools, and parental and priestly consciousness raising.

## V. THE CLERGY

1. While the Vicariates Forane do exist,

the most practical and the system now in use is that the Diocese is divided into ten regions — each with a Regional Coordinator who represent the Bishop in many matters. De jure there are no territorial or personal parishes or parishes subject to the right of patronage or popular election.

Numerically the number of parishes is sufficient for our diocese but in our larger cities especially the See City of Rochester, we have an over-abundance of real property due to the shifting trend of population.

Ministry to the people in these areas is however a high diocesan, pastoral priority. The section on Parish Councils and other similar bodies is addressed more fully in another section of this report. Reference to statistical notes, indicate there are 90% of our parishes with Parish Councils.

## 2. Diocesan Clergy:

The Ordinary, a native of Rochester and a former seminary rector, knows personally every priest of the Diocese. He consistently attends and participates in the monthly meetings of the Priests' Council. He is active in the Priests' Spirituality Committee and cooperates with them in planning the annual retreats, days of recollection, clergy conferences and the like. He is regularly available for priests' gatherings throughout the Diocese.

The Diocese of Rochester is cooperating with the other dioceses of New York State in making available a three month renewal course for priests at Dunwoodie Seminary, Yonkers, New York. In addition a Continuing Education Department for ministerial training has been established at St. Bernard's Seminary. Some priests have been able to take advantage of the program, offered at the North American College. The Needs Assessment Program pioneered by Rev. Vincent Dwyer of Notre Dame is being introduced to assist priests in developing their own spiritual lives and in forming priestly support groups.

Although many causes are alleged for those leaving the active ministry, celibacy and the perceived slowness of the Church to respond to modern needs seem to be the principal reasons. All have easily found adequate employment and have done well in their new lives. The number of priests available barely meet the present needs of the Diocese, unless more candidates appear, the Diocese of Rochester will be facing serious problems in five years. Some of the clergy are very active in social issues which is heartily endorsed by the Ordinary.

## 3. Permanent Diaconate:

The Bishop had established a task force during the year 1976 consisting of various strata of the diocese to establish the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese and the parameters within which the program would operate. The Task Force reported to the Bishop that their work was nearing completion and received approval of their preliminary report. The Formation Program for the Permanent Diaconate will be underway in September 1978.

## VI RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR INSTITUTES IN DIOCESAN PASTORAL LIFE

Some of our parishes in the diocese are entrusted to religious men. They conduct Retreat Houses and most of them, at least on a part-time basis, offer assistance to our parishes, schools and hospitals. Religious women, besides their traditional role of teaching, have entered into a full role of parish ministry. Some examples are religious women serve as Pastoral Assistants in parishes; religious education coordinators, hospital chaplains, social justice apostolates, as well as assuming important roles in diocesan administration. Every opportunity is used and is offered for the complete involvement of religious women.

## VII COOPERATION WITH THE MISSIONS

### 1. Activity of the Pontifical Missions Works in the Diocese

All parishes, schools and institutions participate in the programs of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies of the Propagation of the Faith, the Holy Childhood Association, the Society of St. Peter the Apostle for the Training of Native Clergy and other mission-oriented projects. The Rochester office of the Mission Aid Societies was opened on April 22, 1926.

The present missionary activity of the Rochester Diocese has been encouraged by Bishop Hogan's Pastoral Letter, "You are Living Stones," issued 28 November 1975. Bishop Hogan stressed the priority of missionary activity by the following: "I want the Church of Rochester to be a missionary Church, for I believe this is central to abundant life in Christ."

The Rochester Diocesan Mission Task Force Report of 1976 again points to the necessity of mission awareness: "The theme of the Church's mission is one of the main doctrinal motifs of Vatican II, the 1974 Roman Synod of Bishops and of Pope Paul's Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, which flowed from the Synod of 1974. The Church of Rochester must react to these challenges in the theology of mission, the spiritual life of mission, the use of personnel and in the field of education and consciousness-raising."

2. Initiatives for including the theology of the missions in the teaching of theology (cf. Decree "Ad Gentes", 1; *Motu Proprio* of 6 August 1966, "Ecclesiae Sanctae," III, 1).

"Mission Society" for special study of mission theology and the practical aspects of missiology at both Seminaries.

Becket Hall — residence for seminarians of the Diocese of Rochester and other dioceses attending St. John Fisher College — four years.

To 7A