



## Chapter

At the first session of the Sisters of St. Joseph 1978-79 Chapter, the sister delegates broke into small group discussions. Co-chairpersons of the event, Sister Marie Brown and Sister Julie LeVeque, confer in the background. A paschal candle and an open Bible remain in place in the midst of the gathering.

## Cenacle Slates Events

Upcoming events at the Cenacle Retreat House, 693 East Ave., Rochester, include an overnight program on New Year's Eve, at which participants will "pray in" the new year.

The program will be conducted by the Cenacle staff and Father Thomas Mull of St. Ambrose Parish. Opening at 7:30 p.m. New Year's Eve and closing at 10:30 a.m. the next day, the schedule will include a

conference, Eucharistic celebration, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a Holy Hour. There is a \$5 deposit, with \$7 balance due at registration. Those interested should contact Sister Shirley Kitagawa, 271-8755.

On the weekend of Feb. 2-4, Father Euclid Marier of the Ogdensburg diocese will conduct a weekend retreat for women and men. Initiated by the St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Churchville, the

retreat will be open to other Christians who wish to spend a weekend of renewal under an expert guide. There is a \$10 deposit, with the balance, \$27, due at registration. Those interested can contact St. Vincent's Parish or the Cenacle at 271-8755.

Information also is available concerning programs that will be offered at the Cenacle during the rest of February. It can be obtained by contacting the Cenacle.

## The Open Window

By FATHER HOHMAN

### 'Lifetime' Commitments Vary in Kind

Dear Father Hohman,

Your column has provided the impetus I needed to get this letter written. I've been thinking about it for a long time.



Background to my questions: Several couples within my immediate and extended family units have been divorced and remarried outside the Church. I have read "Divorce and Remarriage for Catholics?" by Msgr. Kelleher and found it to be enlightening and a limited source of hope.

My questions: Why is it that priests can be laicized and married without ever being refused, while married Catholics have great difficulty getting an annulment and the right to remarry in the Church?

What can we do to help the Church grow toward an acceptance of the death of a marriage when reconciliation is impossible, and the right of individuals to remarry within the Church?

I'd appreciate any insights you can offer, Father. I firmly believe that "What God has joined together..." is an ideal to strive toward — and I cannot believe that the Lord would deny His Sacraments to the victim of

a broken marriage who has come to love and cherish a second marriage partner.

Thank you, Father.

(Signed) M.Y.

Dear M.Y.,

The first thing I want to say is that the Church, within the limits of Her own particular viewpoint, is at present engaged in a ministry to people who are divorced and separated. While this may leave a lot to be desired, it is nevertheless a specific declaration that we do care.

Your first question raises a point which is very easily answered juridically but not very easily from the point of view of the emotions. Marriage is regarded by the Church as a Sacrament of Jesus Christ, who made marriage indissoluble — "What God has joined together let no one tear apart." On the other hand, the obligation to celibacy is a Church regulation which did not appear until several centuries after the beginning of Christianity and has no sacramental validity. In the Western Church it is attached to the Sacrament of Holy Orders as a necessary condition for the reception, but it does not have any relationship to the Sacrament as such. Therefore the two things are not the same. That is the juridical explanation.

However, if you look at the two of them in terms of commitment, there really doesn't seem to be any difference. They are both life commitments to a

particular state. As such, it would seem that they both need to be honored in the same way and to the same degree. However, let it be noted here, when commitments are made there is a very relative kind of knowledge as to what those commitments require. As you pointed out in your letter, Christ may have been asking all Christians to strive for the absolute ideal of indissolubility just as priests are called to strive for the ideal of celibacy in the priesthood until death. Whether or not a particular person making these commitments is capable of understanding them to the point of making them perpetually binding is another question. I go back at this point, however, to the juridical, which states that marriage is, in fact, indissoluble and therefore cannot be broken except by death.

In regard to your second question: A couple of years ago two Bishops from the United States tried to reintroduce the divorced and remarried to the Sacraments. That was vetoed and declared impossible. What you have to say, though, makes a great deal of sense, and the difficulty needs to be prayed about and thought about for a long time until we come to a resolution. It is very obviously going to be opposed violently by those who think in terms of absolutes. I know this column will evoke many reactions from those who want everything in our Church and in our lives to be black and white. But that's simply not the way it is and we need to have a much deeper concern for people who are caught in this trap. I don't know what form that should take, but it is worth thinking about very deeply.

## Arts and Crafts

A new organization, The Mill Works and Gallery, is running an art show and sale through Dec. 24 at The Mill, in the old Edwards Store in downtown Rochester. Artists

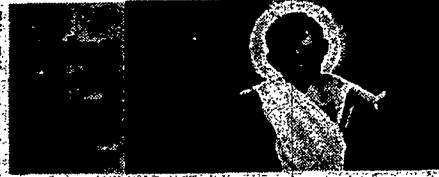
interested in submitting work for approval may call 716-454-6690 for information. Meanwhile, across Main Street, in Lincoln First Bank Concourse, the third annual

holiday arts and crafts show proceeds, through Dec. 23. Hours for this one are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily; noon to 5 Sundays. The Millworks will be open 10-9 weekdays; 10-6 Saturdays; noon-6 Sundays.

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