

Future of Marriage and Family

By FRANK AND SUE STAROPOLI
Coordinators,
Office of
Family Life

Climbing divorce rates, continual stresses from social and economic forces of change and alternative life styles have raised questions in many circles about the viability of the family in the future of this society. Some have predicted the death of the family. But as Michael Novak, theological essayist, has written, "Choosing family life today is an act of courage and intelligence... marriage and family still express our highest moral ideals."

We salute you for your courage and intelligence and most of all for your desire to make a commitment to each other, to God and to the Church in an age where such promises are seen as unnecessary, passe. We know the love you have for each other, so vibrant and alive now, is a cherished possession. We also know as you must, that after the honeymoon that love will need to be constantly nourished and reaffirmed because it will be tested.

How will you keep it alive? How will you avoid the humdrum routine you see in so many marriages around you? How will you deal with the kinds of situations that are sure to test this precious love you share?

First, choose your friends

wisely. Seek common friends, hopefully other married couples who share your convictions about commitment, family and faith. Such friends will be your support community in the years ahead. You will be enriched by them and in turn, will inspire them to live the beautifully idealistic life you envision now. This may mean difficult choices about your present friends because you're entering a new life style and old ties can create pressures.

Keep your priorities straight. Your husband or wife and the faith you share must be number one. Build your lives around that relationship and don't allow anything to take precedence — no jobs, or education, or friends, or even in-laws. Celebrate and renew that bond of love often. Work to keep it fresh and alive because when you don't it doesn't stay fresh — it withers, slowly but surely.

Finally know that the Church is always ready to support you and to accept your support. There are programs in many parishes and throughout the diocese to help you discover how to live the sacrament you will celebrate soon. We want to be a source of inspiration, hope, encouragement and healing for you when you need it. We also want you to share with us the freshness and excitement of your marriage. You can be inspirational for so many couples who may have lost some of the glow you radiate.

So keep in touch for our sake, and yours. Become involved from the beginning in your parish. Learn about programs offered by the Office of Family Life (436-5450) and the Catholic Family Center.

The Family Enrichment program of Catholic Family Center was established to strengthen individuals and help families make the commitment to marriage and family life. Programs have been developed to assist individuals and families to cope and resolve the problems they face and to nurture and foster communication skills

The programs are led by family educators and marriage and family counselors from the Catholic Family Center and the Office of Family Life. They assist parish councils or other parish leaders in the designs which are appropriate to the needs of their people.

Programs presented by the Catholic Family Center are in the area of human relations. More specifically they are communication workshops; Human Sexuality; Changing roles; Pre-marriage Relationships; Marriage Communication; Discovery Workshops for Young Married Couples; Separation and Divorce; Family Growth and Relationships; Parent-Child Relationships; Family Life Training for Counselors. Some programs require group participation; some develop skills for group leadership.

The sessions of these programs are held in facilities provided by the parish or sponsoring organization, or they are held at the Catholic Family Center at 50 Chestnut Plaza.

There is a minimum of 12 persons necessary to conduct any of these programs. The fee is generally \$25 a session.

If you wish more information, contact either Thomas L. Hanson or John Barnowski, 546-7720, or Frank and Sue Staropoli at the Office of Family Life, 436-5450.

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