



Family Ministry



The Marriage Encounter movement has helped spark renewed interest in family life. It's an example of the power of peer ministry — couples (and priests) helping other couples (and priests) rediscover the joy of an alive relationship. Above, a recent renewal meeting of the Spanish marriage encounter.

NOW...

Recent inquiries at the Office of Family Life.

"What are you planning for Family Year 1980?"

"What is the U.S. Bishops' Plan of Action for Family Ministry all about?"

"How can our parish get involved — without creating another committee?"

"Just what is family ministry anyway?"

Let's start at the end: "family ministry."

The most recent Census figures reveal that households consisting of an employed father, housewife and their children comprise only 11% of total households in the United States. It's estimated that 40% of the current generation of children will live in a single-parent home for at least part of their childhood.

When the U.S. Bishops issued their Pastoral Plan of Action for Family Ministry in 1978, they clearly recognized that the

traditional nuclear family has statistically dwindled. In virtually every parish, the number of non-nuclear households is greater than the number of nuclear households. Whatever the reasons, whatever the implications, the Bishops recognized that a ministry aimed at enriching home life must begin with a broad definition of family. Their Plan conceives "family" as the primary group that supports, affirms and provides the intimacy of friends that people need in their "day-to-day" lives. So many forces are undermining our attempts to be that ideal family: economic pressures, selfishness, poor communication, corporate and government policy, and even, at times, Church policy.

The Bishops' Plan aims at addressing those everyday realities in a way that helps us to cope with, to heal, and to change both ourselves and our world. Their Plan represents a clear recognition by the institutional Church of the reality of the situation of most Catholic families

today: much inner strength amid much turmoil. Their Plan calls us to recognize our strengths and our brokenness as gifts to be shared with each other. We're being called into peer ministry — helping each other to deal with reality, family-to-family, in Christ's name:

— families who have seen their children through teenage years helping other families by sharing their experience.

— married couples helping other married couples to communicate better.

— families, which have dealt with alcoholism helping other families who are living through that hell now.

— families helping other families through temporary emergencies, such as illness, unemployment, fire, etc.

Family Ministry is not intending to be a committee added to the parish council. The Bishops designated 1980 as Family Year, but also called for the Decade of the Family,

stressing the need for all church ministries to seriously examine their impact on family life. Our education, liturgy, human development and finance programs all affect family life, positively or negatively. The intent is that by 1990 all of parish life will be based on a consciousness of families as the primary unit of the parish, and will call forth families to serve other families in concrete ways. This may require a committee to carry the banner at first, but ultimately a major attitudinal shift must occur in our entire life as Church.

Family Ministry, then, will provide the substance for the other recent priorities of the Bishops: evangelization and parish renewal. People are evangelized when the Church is experienced as sensitive to and actively helping in the reality of their day-to-day home lives. Parish renewal takes place as people begin ministering to one another in meaningful Christian service.

SOME CURRENT FAMILY MINISTRIES

1. Ministry for Leadership	Includes assistance and training for Parish Family Life Committees and leadership people in peer-to-peer ministry; orientation session for Parish Councils; parish family education programs; films, etc.	OFFICE OF FAMILY LIFE Marriage and Family Enrichment OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Adult and Family Education
2. Ministry for Families Impacted by Crisis	Includes spiritual, emotional and practical efforts to assist families in pain or crisis caused by a wide spectrum of social problems including divorce, bereavement, aging, physical disability.	OFFICE OF FAMILY LIFE Ministry to Separated, Divorced & Remarried Catholics Beginning Experience CATHOLIC FAMILY CENTER Counseling Unwed Mothers
3. Ministry for Married Couples	Includes spiritual and practical assistance to facilitate deeper growth in the areas of communication, sexuality, spirituality, finance-ability.	MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER CATHOLIC FAMILY CENTER Counseling Adoption OFFICE OF FAMILY LIFE Marriage and Family Enrichment OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Adult and Family Education SPANISH APOSTOLATE
4. Ministry for Singles	Includes programs to deepen the meaning of single life style and its accompanying spirituality and gift to the Church.	SPIRITUAL SINGLES GROUP CHOICE
5. Ministry for Pre-Marrieds	Includes programs for first marriage preparation, and for those marrying after the death of a spouse, or the annulment of a first marriage. Speakers available for High School presentations on Marriage & Family Life.	OFFICE OF FAMILY LIFE Pre-Cana New Horizons Marriage and Family Enrichment SPANISH APOSTOLATE
6. Ministry for Christian Parenting	Includes programs to strengthen Christian parenting skills and understandings directed to two-parent families, single parents, adoptive parents, divorced, separated, and widowed parents.	OFFICE OF FAMILY LIFE Marriage and Family Enrichment OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Adult & Family Education PARENTS OF TROUBLED TEENS CATHOLIC FAMILY CENTER Marriage and Family Enrichment Counseling

For Further Information:

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CATHOLIC FAMILY CENTER
50 Chestnut Street
Rochester, N.Y. 14604
716/546-7220

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING OF ROCHESTER
89 Genesee Street
Rochester, N.Y. 14611
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MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER (WORLDWIDE)
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SPIRITUAL SINGLES GROUPS
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