

RAP AROUND

Is Marriage More Than Finding the Right Person?

By Father
James J. Young, CSP
NC News Service

The young people sat casually around the desks and stools and floors of the modern double classroom. Their relaxed manner was a dramatic contrast to the serious looks on their faces.

I asked the 150 high school juniors how many of them had experienced divorce in their immediate families. More than half the hands went up.

I had come to Alaska for a week at the invitation of Archbishop Francis Hurley to speak about the Church's concern for divorced persons and their families. A divorced high school English teacher, Betty Egan, invited me to talk to the juniors and seniors at Kodiak High on "How Not to Get Divorced."

"What do you think is the most important thing you can do not to get divorced?" I asked them.

"Marry the right person!" a number of them piped up, almost as if rehearsed.

"How do you know it's the right person?"

They looked as though the question had never occurred to them before. "You just know," they answered confidently.

It struck me that the romantic tradition is alive and well among America's young people. Despite all the family disruption of the past generation, most of these Alaskan teenagers still believed that somewhere there was the right someone for them, and all they had to do was find that right person, marry him or her and live happily ever after.

These young people seemed to have little awareness of the factors that make building a lasting married relationship so much more possible.

Some researchers today feel that many marriages undergo serious stress and some come apart around rather predictable life passages or stages of adult development that can be recognized. Much has been written about the midlife crisis for men or the transition in their 30s for women, and the effect of these stages upon marriage.

I tried to break the marry-the-right-person bubble by asking the young people what changes occur in married life after eight or 10 years. They stared at me. Personal change and its effect on a marriage relationship seemed beyond their pale picture of marriage.

More education, especially by married people sharing their personal journeys, could be most valuable for them.

I then asked how many in the group had close relatives living nearby — grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins. Their response confirmed my hunch that young Alaskans are an extreme example of the fact that we have become a nation of migrants.

We know today that family members can be a crucial support for married persons, since close relatives pass on and reinforce traditional values about permanence and fidelity in marriage. Relatives often rally around young married couples in trouble and help make divorce much more unthinkable.

When young couples relocate in distant cities, far from family support, tensions frequently mount. How often have close relatives served as

marriage counselors, helped young couples economically, or assisted with early child rearing or at times of sickness.

Next to death of a spouse or divorce, relocation is usually ranked as the third most stressful experience couples can endure.

I asked my Alaskan teenagers what place God has in marriage. Again their response was a sea of blank faces.

I assumed that they liked traditional church weddings with gowns, tuxedos and a church full of friends. Yet I detected little awareness in them that religious faith and commitment can strengthen and enrich a marriage relationship.

Research shows that married couples in the United States who regularly go to a church or synagogue divorce significantly less than the population at large. We conclude then that couples who worship regularly take traditional values about

permanence in marriage more seriously and do not embrace divorce as an early solution to marriage problems.

Second, religious motivation and prayer can bring needed spiritual energy to confront and work through the inevitable problems that come to every marriage.

Further, those who worship regularly are probably better tied into good counselors and other resources, since clergy in the United States are still the No. 1 helpers to whom married persons turn in times of distress.

Religious values and a spiritual commitment can sustain young couples in difficult times and also help them enrich their marriages through involvement in service of others.

The Church community, through its educational programs, its social justice efforts and its family life programs, can make a crucial difference in helping today's young people avoid divorce.

Castle Fund Started at CMHS

The family and friends of Peter Castle, a 1969 graduate of Cardinal Mooney High School who died Jan. 5, have joined with the school and established the Peter Castle/Cardinal Mooney Scholarship Endowment.

According to a school news release, the fund will provide tuition monies for deserving students who would not otherwise be able to attend Cardinal Mooney High School. The scholarship will be awarded on the basis of need and

character, thereby fulfilling one of Peter Castle's dreams — to reach out to needy students.

Those who wish to support the scholarship fund can send their check to the Development Office, Cardinal Mooney High School, 800 Maiden Lane, Rochester, N.Y. 14615. Checks may be made payable to Cardinal Mooney High School/Peter Castle Scholarship.

Earlier School-Age Plan Being Studied in Albany

Last week, as reported by the New York Times, Gordon Ambach, state education commissioner, said that his department was beginning to study a plan to start children in school at age four and have them graduate from high school after completing 11th grade. The plan calls for children entering the first grade at age five and graduating from high school at age 16.

If the plan, which would apply to public and private schools, is enacted it wouldn't begin any sooner than the mid-1980s and would be phased in over the next ten years, the report said.

It was explained that although a radical idea, it might be a way to solve teacher shortages during expected increases in school enrollment by the end of the decade and could save money by eliminating one year of high school. Commissioner Ambach was reported as



Students Diane Casey and Wanda Le Bron examine the ivory dog which is part of the Netsuke collection.

Want a Hobby? Nazareth Has Some Suggestions

January was National Hobby Month and students and faculty at Nazareth Academy noted the fact by displaying their hobbies. The displays, which will continue through February, are in the school library and contain collections of a wide variety of interests.

Senior Barbara Gardner put on display her fossil collection, gathered from vacationing around New York State. It contains plant and sea-animal fossils and Indian arrowheads. Edward Lent, art teacher, has on display his Netsuke collection. Netsuke are small carved ivory figures which

Japanese nobility use to tie on their purse strings to keep them from slipping out of their obis, or sashes.

"This has been the most unusual display we've had," remarked Sister Jeanne Agnes, head librarian.

Also on display are frisbee, patch, unicorn, pitcher, and button collections.

"We want to display the very wide diversity of interests among students and faculty," said Sister Jeanne, "and at the same time perhaps inspire someone to start a hobby."

Art Show to Open

Sibley's has announced the opening of the 41st annual Scholastic Art Awards Show. This year's exhibit, which contains more than 1,200 pieces of art submitted by students from 128 schools in a 10-county region, will be held in Sibley's Ward Gallery on the fourth floor of the downtown store.

Judges from area colleges, art galleries, studios, and corporations are selecting the

prize winners. The award winners will be announced at a ceremony in the Tower Restaurant at 9:15 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 5.

This year's show, which represents schools in the Central Western New York region, will be open to the public during Sibley's regular store hours; Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Winner's Circle

RapAround weekly will run a photo of a group of students taken somewhere in the diocese. One person will be circled and if that person brings the clipping to the Courier-Journal before noon of the Tuesday following our publication date, he or she will receive \$5. This week's photo was taken at Our Lady of Mercy during lunch. The person circled should bring the clipping to Joan M. Smith, Courier-Journal, 114 South Union St., by noon, Tuesday, Feb. 8, to receive \$5.

saying the change would be educationally valid because it would encourage learning at an earlier age and would help students who mature early.

In a follow up article by the Times, it was reported that the plan would stir controversy among educators who disagree widely over the consequence of having children start formal schooling at the age of five instead of six.

Dorothy and Raymond S. Moore of the Hewitt Research Foundation in Michigan have concluded that forcing students into formal learning earlier is counterproductive.

"No matter how bright they are," Mrs. Moore was quoted as saying, "children need time to build a foundation of experience, exploration and knowledge of the real world."

Others, such as Ernest L. Boyer, president of the

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, question whether at a time of widespread unemployment especially among the young people, "society is ready to have a younger population move out into the street."

Ambach acknowledged that this could pose a problem for the job market, but he said a lot could change over the ten-year period in which his plan would be phased in.

FUND RAISING DASH'S
Homemade Fried Cakes
"Make Some Dough"
Uncle Jim's Donut & Dairy Store, Inc.
Call for more information
759 County Line Rd. At Rt. 104 Union Hill, N.Y. (716) 265-0960
256 Webster Ave. Roch. N.Y. 654-8796

CANDIES
FUND RAISING
Immediate Delivery
\$ CALL \$
TOME KELLIHER
HOME:
(716) 328-1438 or 436-3814