

Divorce

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Father Laird said that contrary to popular belief, children born of an annulled marriage are not illegitimate because the marriage was valid under civil law.

Further, he noted, an annulment costs only \$300 in the Diocese of Rochester — and that fee is flexible based on a person's ability to pay. The annulment process is complex, he acknowledged, but is not beyond the ability of most people.

And receiving an annulment is not automatic, as some critics have tried to imply, Father Laird said. In 1990 the Rochester tribunal began work on 490 cases and passed 437 sentences, he said. Twenty-nine of those cases were abandoned, largely because insufficient information was available for the tribunal to render a sentence or to declare nullity.

Finally, Father Laird pointed out that the annulment process forces divorced Catholics to examine the root causes that led to the failed marriage, thus helping them to avoid future mistakes.

This process of self-examination does more than simply help the divorced Catholic make better choices in future spouses, however, Kircher observed.

"Overwhelmingly, people say it has a therapeutic value," Kircher said. "It leads to self-growth, self-awareness."

Steve Maggio, who obtained an annulment in January of 1990, likewise observed that the annulment process can help people to learn about themselves.

"The annulment experience allows you to take a real good look at your life and the relationship, and what you did wrong and what you did right," Maggio said. "I guess it's really the church's attempt to help a person get through that self-assessment. I think too many people don't

take that time to look at themselves — That's how people end up in other relationships that fall apart."

Taking a good look at her divorce and the guilt she experienced as a result thereof caused Joyce Ferrante too much pain, so she temporarily abandoned the effort before her 1983 marriage to Richard.

Yet after their wedding, Joyce Ferrante began to feel uncomfortable because she believed she was not following all the rules of the church.

Once she reinstated the annulment process, however, Joyce Ferrante said she "got in touch with a lot of old, ugly anger and to come to terms with a lot of guilt."

Richard Ferrante also found the process helpful because it made him look honestly at his first marriage. "It made me understand that (my first wife and I) were different. It made me feel even better, seeing that we weren't compatible." He added that the process even encouraged his first

wife to seek out the counseling that she needed.

Hanser found the process encouraged her to stop judging her former husband.

"It made me stand back and look at my marriage objectively," Hanser said. "Before that, I was doing a lot of blaming of him. I realized I certainly had a part in it, too."

Gallo noted that on the whole, people who go through the annulment process experience such positive results as those enjoyed by Hanser, Maggio or the Ferrantes.

Further, Gallo observed, because of the availability of annulments and the variety of support systems in the diocese, divorced Catholics need no longer be alienated from the church or fall prey to the myths.

"The church in the diocese," Gallo concluded, "has a tremendous amount of compassion for divorced Catholics, and is out there to help people heal and get back on their feet."

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Priest

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Mother of Sorrows for 27 years, said that the collection does not hinder the priest's work and in some ways it even helps him.

"I've always been very impressed with Father Dave's skills in giving homilies and writing. After being in his office, I can better appreciate how he mastered those skills," said Fitzgibbon.

Father Faraone said his main reason for collecting autographs is that a person's signature represents the uniqueness of God's children.

He realized this on Good Friday, 1982, he said, while at a New Jersey parish. The staff was looking for a contemporary sign to symbolize the magnitude of Christ's death. So they covered a cross with paper and during the solemn Good Friday service, parishioners were invited to come forward and sign the cross as a form of veneration. More than 400 names were penned on the paper.

"Somehow those people were making a commitment to the cross in that way, and somehow writing your name is a little bit of a symbol of who a person is," the priest said.

In relation to his collection, he added, "I don't know if it gets any deeper than that."

Hoop teams

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53-40, on Jan. 4.

In the DeSales Christmas Tournament, the Saints lost in the first round to Waterloo, 61-37, on Dec. 27, and to Romulus in the consolation game, 37-29, on Dec. 29.

DeSales was 4-4 as of Jan. 7.

Wilson whipped Nazareth, 38-30, to earn the title in the Nazareth Holiday Tournament Dec. 28.

To advance to the finals, Nazareth buried Norstar Christian Academy, 35-24, in a first-round game Dec. 27.

The Lasers record was 2-5 entering this week's action.

Over in Section 4, Notre Dame girls' basketball coach Jeff Sobkowski said his team suffered six consecutive losses because the Crusaders are so small and are having trouble with bigger teams.

Hornell triumphed over the Crusaders, 41-34, on Jan. 4, despite Jenny Fagan's 14 points and Bobbie Jo McMail's 12 points.

In the Elmira Christmas Tournament Dec. 27-28, Notre Dame lost both games — the first to Southside, 45-39, and the consolation match to Troy of Pennsylvania, 63-46. McMail registered 15 points and Mary Valeant scored 12 points in the Southside romp. Valeant iced 19 points and Fagan secured 14 points in the Troy game.

Sobkowski said his team will try to improve on its 4-7 record beginning this week.