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Fluctuations in the business world, trends in the women's movement and new and improved theories of child-rearing will all affect today's marriages, the priest concluded.

Maturity — "Wait till your late 20s to get married," Father Collins advised, because in this country, childhood is "prolonged."

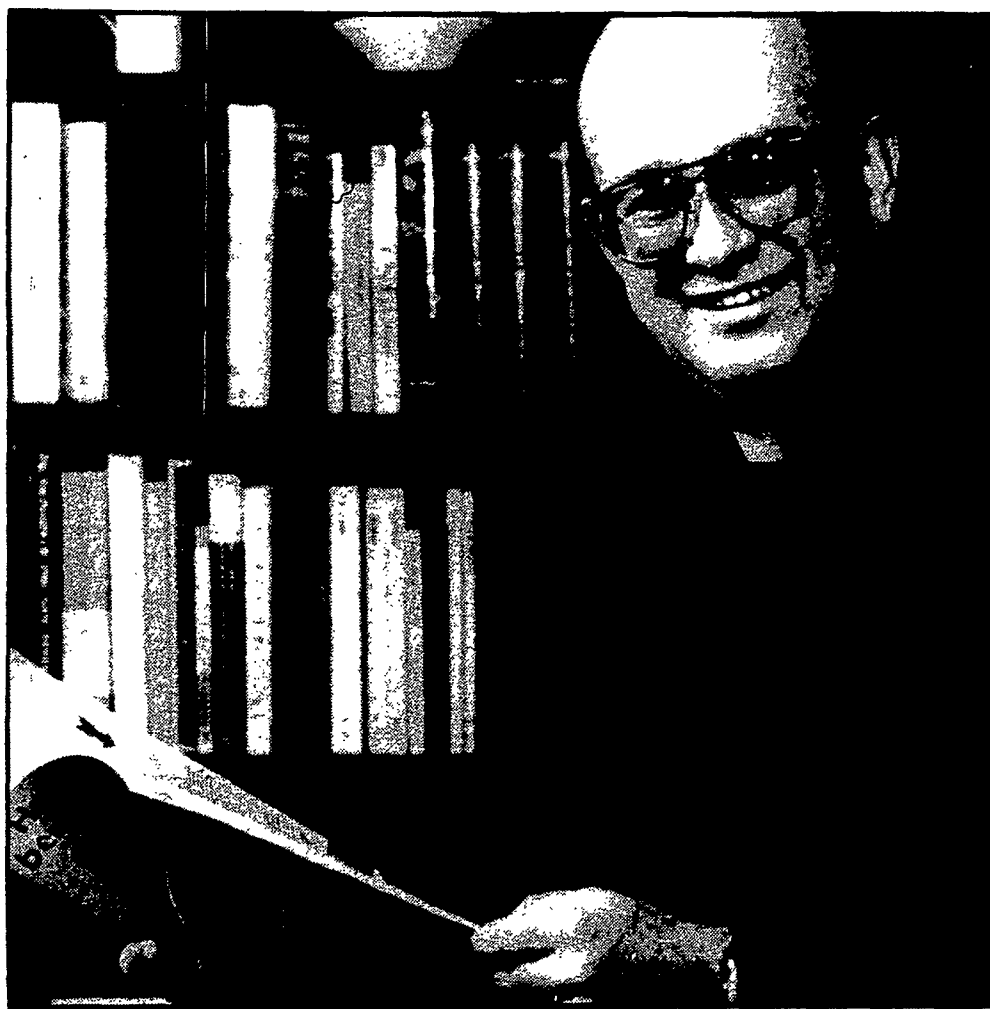
The pastor pointed out, for example, that many parents counsel their children today to get a college education as the only way to achieve financial security. Hence, even when they are adults, many young people may not be ready for the responsibility a marriage entails while they are pursuing a degree.

Marrying later also ensures that both partners will have had opportunities to develop friendships with people of the opposite sex, and spouses will have had to learn how to cooperate with other people in order to accomplish goals.

Constant communication will allow married partners to accomplish their goals, the priest continued.

"I'm firmly convinced every couple needs to spend 10 or 15 minutes a day in basic communication with each other," Father Collins said. Today's busy world often disallows time for genuine conversation, he said, stressing that couples need to set aside time to talk to each other without such distractions as the morning paper and the evening news.

Money: And when couples talk, one of the most important subjects they need to discuss on a regular basis is how they plan to spend their income, Father Collins emphasized. Budgeting



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available funds now can save headaches and arguments later, he added.

"Stress comes from not being able to handle money correctly, and having the money handle you instead," the pastor opined.

In addition, especially in light of the current recession, couples shouldn't hesitate to avail themselves of any counseling or support services that are available, he said.

Sex: "It doesn't necessarily come naturally," Father Collins said, adding that good sex requires conversation about the subject. He also noted that couples need to have a sense of humor about their sexual relationship. Modern media images of sex make it look like a dramatic, grim performance, and may subtly influence spouses' perceptions of each other in the bedroom. However, a couple's sex life need not be compared to any other's — on or off the screen, he concluded.

Religion: More women than men attend church on a regular basis, Father Collins said, noting that "it's a real strain when one is going to church and the other isn't." Couples need to be honest about their religious values and feelings, especially since religion can become a contentious issue after a child is born.

In all his points, Father Collins stressed that to find peace in a marriage, couples can't be afraid to risk a little war. But each fight will end on better note if spouses spend a lot of time communicating with each other so they understand exactly what it is they're arguing about.

And such constant communication may head off many arguments in the first place, he concluded.

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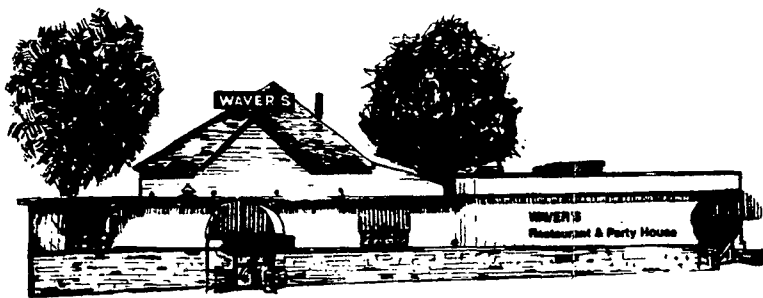


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