

Violence ...

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avoid the temptation to simply rent these buildings for income rather than putting them to work as the embodiment of the parish's charity.

3. Working together in such ministries has been shown to be one of the most effective ways of building parish community. Although each of these ministries is a difficult one, the concentration of a parish's efforts in doing one thing well prevents a community from being spread too thin.

B ISSUE: Advocacy for Healthier Entertainment We recommend that: Parishes, with the help of the diocesan Social Ministry Offices, implement a letter-writing campaign and boycott aimed at entertainment and advertising corporations asking for the reduction of the portrayal of violence and sexual promiscuity in all media and assist parishioners in developing viewer discretion.

We make this recommendation because:

1. There are sufficient studies to support a connection between the increase of violence and sex in the media and the alarming increase of violence, sexual abuse, and sexual promiscuity in our society.

2. By targeting both the consumers and the sponsors of these programs, this campaign will attempt to warn consumers to be more wary of their entertainment and convince producers through economic pressure to be more responsible in their portrayals.

3. Since studies have shown us to be so influenced by what we see, media executives should be induced to produce quality programs which appeal to entire families and which promote positive values.

C ISSUE: Death and Dying Education — We recommend that: Parishes with the help of the diocesan Social Ministry Offices, the hospice movement, and other resources, create a program which will be repeated regularly to educate parishioners on the physiological, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the dying process, as well as the experience of loss and bereavement.

We make this recommendation because:

1. According to many parish recommendations, there is a great need for factual information about the process of dying, its psychological implications and spiritual components, and what assistance care-givers can and should offer.

2. There is a need for information and guidance on what is ethically and morally permitted for a Christian, and help in sorting out advance directives (health care proxies), organ donation and other such issues which face Catholics.

3. Many parishioners would be willing to help those who are dying, as a concrete connection to the larger caring parish community, but do not feel qualified to help.

D ISSUE: Effective Social Ministry Communications We recommend that: Diocesan Social Ministry Offices and the Parishes, with the help of the Office of Communications, develop a more effective communications plan for informing the parishes of the diocese and the Catholic public at large of all programs and services, whether church-sponsored or not.

We make this recommendation because:

1. Over three-quarters of the parishes submitted recommendations which in one way or another spoke of a lack of knowledge of what programs and services the diocesan Social Ministry agencies were offering.

2. By not communicating clearly about existing programs, Social Ministry makes it harder for people to take advantage of its services, for the Diocese to raise money to support its efforts, and for volunteers to involve themselves in support of its programs.

3. Few parishes make use of their bulletins, bulletin boards, monthly newsletters or local newspapers to advertise phone numbers, contact people, or appropriate agencies where parishioners might find crisis help.

E ISSUE: Help for a Burdensome Pregnancy — We recommend that: The diocesan Social Ministry Offices and parish communities, publicly promise immediate and practical help as long as is needed to anyone facing a burdensome pregnancy and to provide the network and support system to counsel and bring healing to those dealing with the after-effects of abortion.

We make this recommendation because:

1. The mere condemnation of the evil of abortion is not an adequate response from the Church.

2. Many women say they seek abortions

because they have nowhere else to turn.

3. Many of the pre-natal social services — resources for food, shelter and clothing, support groups — are already in place and many others could be readied with volunteer support. The guaranteed post-natal support can be raised through the development of voluntary "adopt-a-family" programs and fundraising.

F ISSUE: Identify Needs — We recommend that: The diocesan Social Ministry Offices, with the help of the Parish Support Ministries and the Parishes, offer a process and an instrument to help parishes periodically assess the social needs of their parishioners and the surrounding community and analyze those needs with a view to identifying possible solutions not already offered and appropriate for a faith community.

We make this recommendation because:

1. There are many who feel that periodically each parish should take a thorough look at the needs of its parishioners in order to refocus its ministry efforts and discover new needs arising out of new social situations.

2. Justice and charity require that we help those in need but often the needs are hidden or misunderstood.

Theme 4: Youth, Young Adults, the Elderly and Their Caregivers

A ISSUE: Campus Ministry — We recommend that: The Diocese of Rochester strengthen its support for Campus Ministry by developing new approaches to training and updating specialized ministers, stabilizing the allocation of personnel and financial support, and coordinating more effectively the overall campus ministry program.

We make this recommendation because:

1. The campus parishes are perennially understaffed and underfunded and suffer from the lack of ability to plan programs from year-to-year; their diocesan subsidies have been reduced annually for the past three years.

2. Because working with young adults is a specialized ministry, greater care should be taken to recruit potential candidates early, supporting them with tuition grants in exchange for a term of service, and providing internships for those interested in pursuing such a ministry.

3. Campus ministers are one of the most important ways that the Church shows its concern for young people at one of their most vulnerable times in life, when spiritual support is essential and support in discerning vocations (including to ordained and lay ministry) is strongly needed.

B ISSUE: Caregiver Support — We recommend that: Parishes, clusters or groups of parishes, in cooperation with the diocesan Social Ministry Offices, Parish Support Ministries, and community professions, offer education, emotional support, and spiritual programs for caregivers of the elderly as well as practical assistance needed to help them carry out their roles and responsibilities more easily.

We make this recommendation because:

1. Information sessions should provide caregivers with knowledge and assistance about available services as well as financial and legal information.

2. Many caregivers find themselves isolated from the understanding of family and friends and are in need of support from those who share similar burdens.

3. Caregiver stress can lead to elder abuse. Respite care is often the most overlooked need that the Church community could provide to caregivers to give them much needed support.

C ISSUE: Intergenerational Programming — We recommend that: Parishes, clusters or groups of parishes, with the help of Parish Support Ministries and Faith Development Ministry, develop opportunities for significant interaction and community building between various age groups, allowing for a sharing of life, faith and service.

We make this recommendation because:

1. Studies show that family life suffers today from the lack of wisdom, experience and support that older adults can provide, while many older adults find themselves isolated and alone. Our faith communities can address both problems by encouraging families to adopt grandparents and older adults to adopt families.

2. Many youth and young adults have skills that they can share with older people and vice versa. The more interaction that occurs, the less isolated both groups will feel.

3. Before mobilizing a volunteer force, a parish must be clear about what needs to be done, who is already working on the problem, which approaches work and which do not, and which solutions are more appropriate for a Catholic community.

G ISSUE: Parish Volunteer Coordinator — We recommend that: Parishes or groups of parishes, with the help of the diocesan Social Ministry offices and parish support ministries, recruit, train and maintain a network of volunteers to identify needs and minister to individuals and families in need, by initiating peer ministries or creating a staff position of volunteer coordinator.

We make this recommendation because:

1. There would be someone in every parish who will connect people in need with volunteers who can be of help. In smaller parishes, a team of volunteers might accomplish the same function.

2. A volunteer network is a powerful mechanism for helping those in need while building parish community and aiding parishioners to fulfill their obligation to take care of one another.

3. Since specialized initial training and in-service training could be offered by parish

professionals, Pastoral Center staff, or volunteers from throughout the diocese, the support costs of such a program could be minimal while the impact could be tremendous.

H ISSUE: Preaching on Social Issues — We recommend that: The diocesan Offices of Liturgy and Social Ministry create a program for helping homilists to address contemporary social issues in a way that will communicate the Church's teaching, and touch the lives of a diverse congregation, while respecting the Sunday readings.

We make this recommendation because:

1. More and more Catholics are facing issues of social justice, materialism, sexuality, violence, medical ethics and the environment with little help from those who preach.

2. Sometimes it appears as if the Church is only concerned with a few moral issues and a very narrow sense of the "right to life." There is a need to apply Biblical teaching to all the questions that Catholics face today, in every aspect of our lives.

3. Preachers can help people learn and reflect on issues prior to a time of crisis when it is often difficult to see the issues clearly.



their parish and this special outreach will reconnect them to the mainstream of parish life.

2. Many youth, young adults, elderly and their caregivers — particularly those in rural settings, those who are deaf or those not fluent in English — are unaware of existing programs and activities.

3. Some people are able to meet their own needs once they learn about available programs and services.

G ISSUE: Young Adult Ministry — We recommend that: Parishes, clusters, or groups of parishes, with the support of the diocesan Faith Development Ministry, establish Young Adult Ministry for those 18-35 which will provide opportunities for educational and spiritual growth, interpersonal support, service and recreational programming.

We make this recommendation because:

1. Young adults need to bond to the larger parish and to the Church in general and often this is best done with the help of peers.

2. During the period of transition, young adults, whether single or married, are very much in need of a safe place to dialogue about faith, relationships, moral choices, parenting, and adult spirituality.

3. An active, welcoming program needs to be in place to make contact with Catholics in the 18-35 age range so as to enable them to be full, participating members of the Church.

H ISSUE: Youth and Young Adult Involvement in Liturgy — We recommend that: Parish or Campus Ministry liturgy planners, with the help of the diocesan Office of Liturgy and Youth Ministry Coordinator, work with youth, young adults, parish or campus youth ministry coordinators and young adult parish contacts to involve youth and young adults in the planning and execution of weekend parish liturgies and in the planning of special liturgies that focus on contemporary issues which affect their lives, needs and faith.

We make this recommendation because:

1. There is a need to provide opportunities for youth and young adults to feel a part of the parish community. They need to have a role in the planning, decision making and execution of parish liturgies of which they have a part.

2. In special liturgies, the language of the readings can be adapted, homilies can be made more relevant, and music chosen more compatible to the spirituality and culture of youth and young adults.

3. Youth and young adults need experiences that expose them to the differences among their peers. Sensitivity to these needs through liturgical celebrations can help to heighten their awareness of the racial, cultural and ethnic diversity of our diocesan church.

3. Each of these unique groups — youth, young adults, and elderly — needs to be encouraged to be involved together in religious education and sacramental preparation programs, day care and after-school care programs, and social ministry projects.

D ISSUE: Needs Assessment and Talent Survey — We recommend that: Parishes, clusters, or groups of parishes with the help of Parish Support Ministries and Faith Development Ministry, develop 1) an assessment process to survey the needs of the parish, especially the needs of those at risk among youth, young adults, and the elderly; 2) a talent inventory to discover those parishioners, particularly among these populations themselves, who can best meet those needs; and 3) a plan of implementation.

We make this recommendation because:

1. Meeting the sacramental needs of youth, young adults and the elderly cannot be the extent of the parish's ministry.

2. The sharing of gifts and talents responds to the call of the Gospel, enhances self-worth, increases ownership and deepens our commitment to church.

3. Needs must be clearly identified before they can be responded to effectively.

E ISSUE: Parish Youth Ministry Coordinator — We recommend that: The Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator work to expand the number of parish youth ministry coordinators so that each parish, cluster, or group of parishes will have a paid professional (or at least a certified volunteer), whose ministry is to develop and support a holistic program to strengthen youth's relationship with God, family and community.

We make this recommendation because:

1. Every parish, cluster or group of parishes needs to have a support group for youth in which they can develop their faith, their sense of belonging, and their moral and social consciences while participating in a variety of activities in a healthy environment where they can both learn and socialize safely.

2. Each parish community or cluster of communities needs volunteer ministers — youth, young adults and adults alike — supported by the parish youth ministry coordinator, who understand the process of faith formation and adolescent development and are able to offer moral and spiritual guidance as needed.

3. Parishes need to offer a full variety of youth activities: retreats, Bible study, lock-ins, field trips, service projects, religious education modules, movies, dances, peer-ministry groups, sporting and social events, liturgy planning and celebrating, parent-teen programs, intergenerational activities, etc.

F ISSUE: Publicizing Existing Programs and Services — We recommend that: Parishes, clusters, groups of parishes and the Diocese of Rochester research on a county-wide basis and make available relevant information about existing programs and services for youth, young adults, the elderly and their caregivers through special newsletters and bulletin inserts, public service announcements, the *Catholic Courier* and local newspapers.

We make this recommendation because:

1. Many in these groups feel neglected by