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Co- habitation-

*def:
to live
together
as
husband
and wife,
esp. when
not legally
married*

"What I have done is say I will not celebrate Mass for them. It's my way of making a statement, which is my responsibility."

"I truly believe that in God's eyes, the positives ... far outweigh the negatives. It would be one thing if we weren't truly committed."

Diocesan officials grapple with rise of unmarried couples living together

Story by
Mike Latona
Staff writer

In many ways, the relationship between "Mike" and "Diane" would not evoke even a trace of controversy.

Mike and Diane, who asked that their real names not be used, are both 28 years old. They met near the end of college and have dated steadily for more than seven years.

Both have established successful careers. They became engaged in December and have entered a marriage-preparation program at a diocesan parish in the Finger Lakes area. Both say they view their upcoming marriage in June as the ultimate symbol of a serious, loving, life-long commitment.

They also have lived together for three years, and purchased a house together more than a year and a half ago. Not too many years ago, society at large might have

Marriage

Please look for the annual marriage pull-out, beginning after page 8.

viewed their living situation with a dim eye. And many Roman Catholics might have described the arrangement as "living in sin."

Today, however, cohabitation is becoming so commonplace even among Catholics that engaged couples who *don't* live together may soon be the exception rather than

the norm.

According to Barbara Carroll, diocesan coordinator of sacramental catechesis, more than half of the couples who register for marriage preparation in the diocese are living together.

The trend has increased so rapidly in recent years that current diocesan sacramental guidelines — which were last updated in 1981 — shed no light on the subject.

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