

# Planning from afar challenges all

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

If you live out of town, but plan to get married at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Hornell, just remember what the pastor said — don't have your mother call to make the arrangements.

"I need to sit down and speak with the couple," said the church's pastor, Father Jeremiah P. Moynihan. "If the people are old enough to get married, they're old enough to call me themselves."

Father Moynihan was one of a handful of pastors who spoke to the *Catholic Courier* about setting up weddings for couples who live apart in different localities.

The pastors noted that more and more men and women who are engaged live far apart from each other because of jobs, military obligations or school.

"It's becoming more common in our mobile society," said Father William B. Leone, pastor of Northern Cayuga Cluster. The cluster consists of St. John's Church, Port Byron; St. Patrick's Church, Cato; and St. Joseph's Church, Weedsport.

"A lot of the kids today are away while their folks are here," said Father Frank J. Falletta, pastor of St. Lawrence Church in Greece, of contemporary couples. In many cases today, he said, one of the partners wants to get married in the parish his or her parents attend, even though he or she

does not attend it.

Pastors must conform to canon law if they are asked to celebrate the marriage of non-parishioners, according to Father Kevin E. McKenna, diocesan chancellor and director of legal services. If a Catholic wishes to be married in a parish other than his or her own, the pastor of such a Catholic's home parish must send a letter of permission to the cleric who will celebrate the wedding. The rule is intended to protect the right of pastors to celebrate the weddings of their own parishioners, Father McKenna said.

All the pastors the *Courier* interviewed stressed that even if engaged people live far apart from each other, they should come together and meet at least once with the priest who will celebrate their wedding, if only to fill out the church's premarital investigation form. The form deals with such issues as whether the couple understands the church's teachings on marriage, the pastors said.

Couples who live far apart from each other must make a greater effort to plan their wedding properly than couples who live in the same town and go to the same church. Just ask U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Mike and Jean (Drury) Huot. They had to balance the time taken away by Mike's military duties with the time needed to prepare their wedding.

The couple's nuptials were celebrated Sept. 20 by Father Leone in St. Joseph's Church, Weedsport, the parish of Jean's parents. The Huots met more than three years ago when Mike was stationed near Syracuse, and Jean was attending LeMoyne College there.

The couple currently lives in Delaware where Mike is stationed at Dover Air Force Base. He noted that he regularly travels to military bases in the Middle East, Europe,

## Jubilee Mass slated

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate a wedding jubilee Mass for couples who have been married 25 or more years Sunday, May 3, at St. Mary's Church, 40 Elizabeth St., Danville.

The Mass will begin at 2 p.m. A reception will follow.

Couples wishing to receive an invitation, or individuals who know of couples who should be invited, should write to Sylvia Mancuso, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, or call her at 1/800-388-7177 or 716/328-3210, ex. 296. Responses for the Mass are due by April 20.

and the Pacific region.

Mike said he must leave the country for one-to-two weeks at a time, coming home for a few days off between each journey. Such a schedule pretty much pulled him out of the wedding planning loop, he said. Jean had to keep it going.

"It was very difficult for me to keep in touch with her when I was gone," he said of the months leading up to their marriage. "She planned the weekend of the wedding. There were a lot of phone calls. We discussed some of the things, but she had most of the stress."

One thing the couple was able to do together was attend a regional Catholic marriage preparation weekend in Auburn, Mike said. However, Father Leone noted that for some couples this may be impossible. In such cases, Father Leone said, a partner can go alone to a marriage preparation program in his or her home diocese. That's a notion seconded by Father Falletta.

"I think it's good for them, even if they're not together, to hear what the church is saying about matrimony," Father Falletta said of couples.

In the case of military duties, a chaplain should be able to provide marriage preparation for the person who cannot participate in a marriage preparation program with his or her partner, Father Leone added.

Father R. Richard Brickler, pastor of St. Boniface Church in Rochester, emphasized that couples living in separate localities should unite, if possible, for a wedding preparation weekend, as the Huots did.

"Some of the (pre-Cana) exercises emphasize communication skills," Father Brickler said. "It would probably be better if (the partners) were to do it together."

Whatever the factors involved, today's society is a place where more and more couples are presenting the church with the challenge of preparing people who live far apart to spend a lifetime together, Father Leone said.

"You've got to take people where they're at, and work with them to try to fulfill the requirements of the diocese," he said.

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