

# **BECOMING A MARRIAGE BUILDING PARISH ...**

## **Can Your Parish Help Prevent Divorce?**

**How often do you see or hear any reference to hurting marriage in your parish in:**

- General Intercessions at Mass?
- Homilies?
- Bulletin?
- Newsletter?
- Pamphlet rack?
- Parish website?

**How does your parish convince hurting couples that a marriage is worth saving?**

**If you were a married couple in your parish and your marriage was on the rocks:**

- Would you continue attending Mass?
- Would you look to the church for encouragement and direction?
- What would turn you away from your parish?
- What would turn you towards it?

**If you were a hurting married couple and your priest and/or deacon offered to give a blessing to couples struggling in their marriage, would the two of you go?**

- Why or why not?
- If you said no: What would have to change at your parish for you to go?  
What would have to change in your attitude so you would go?

**If you were in a stressed marriage, would you find references in your church bulletin, on the website, etc. as to where you might find:**

- Trustworthy, affordable counseling for marriage problems?
- Retrouvaille weekend information?

**Are those in hurting marriages talked about in the parish gossip grape vine?**

- Are you a part of that gossip?
- What could you say instead when someone gossips about a couple having problems?

**Over =**

**Is there a stigma connected to going for help in your parish?**

- Are you responsible in part for that by the way you talk?
- What can you and your parish do to ease that stigma?

**If a parishioner confided in you about a marriage problem:**

- Would you take his/her side and sympathize?
- Or would you offer your support to them as a couple and encourage your friend to heal the relationship?
- Would you know what to do if your friend was being abused?

**Does your parish educate its members about the Church's non-acceptance of abuse in marriage and the right of the abused to leave?**

- If you were being abused, would you find information you could trust in your parish bulletin, pamphlet rack, on your parish website?
- Would you know about the U.S. Bishops' letter on domestic violence "*When I Call for Help*" and how to access it on the web or get a free copy?
- If you were an abuser, would any literature or references in your parish show you where to access help ?

**These are the questions.**

**To find the answers, your parish might:**

- ⇒ Use this page with the Parish Council.
- ⇒ Form a marriage team to look at the possibilities.
- ⇒ Attend a "*Becoming a Marriage Building Church*" networking session sponsored by the Family Life Office. (see website for details.)
- ⇒ Challenge your Family Life Committee to offer suggestions to your Parish staff and/or Council.
- ⇒ Bring in the Family Life Director for a free consultation.
- ⇒ Consult with the Family Life Office for ideas, resources, speakers.
  
- ⇒ **www.ajdiocese.org** (*click Family Life, see "Becoming a Marriage Building Church"*)  
Check here for up-to-date information, resources, best practices, networking sessions