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daily nebraskan

Group helps growing number of divorced Catholics

The group's purpose is to promote human development in spiritual, educational, friendship and social aspects of life.

Bette Riegel and Dick Wiese, co-founders of the group, Divorced Catholics of Lincoln, think that sums it up well.

"Too many divorced Catholics end up leaving the church," Wiese said.

Wiese and Riegel say they are hopeful Pope John Paul I will liberalize the church's views on divorce, but, Wiese said he doesn't think "the pope governs our life that much."

In the United States, "the American Council of Bishops and the individual bishops will decide how to apply the pope's words in the U.S.," he said.

Wiese said that while divorced people are "welcome in the sacraments", the church takes the position that they still are married. Unless a Catholic couple is divorced with the permission of the church (an anullment), then they are not allowed to remarry within the church structure, she said. An anullment is only granted for certain reasons, she said, such as non-consumation of the marriage; refusal, prior to the marriage, of either partner to have children; a close blood relationship, and in some cases, a psychological inability to fulfill the marriage role.

"Our church encourages marriage and the family, but after marriage, everything is separated by age and sex," Riegel said.

Divorced Catholics of Lincoln began in October 1977 and has about 36 members. Riegel said members talk among themselves about problems they may be having, sometimes have a guest priest speak to them, or do things with their children.

One problem all Christians have, Wiese said, is that "Christ talked about what marriage should be, not what happens if a marriage breaks up."

"We (divorced Catholics) are a growing dilemma, by our numbers, to the church.' Riegel said. She quoted the U.S. Catholic, a church magazine, which said that there are

6 million divorced Catholics in the United States. Also, according to U.S. Catholic, more than 300 divorced Catholic's groups exist, most were formed after 1973. Riegel said that Divorced Catholics of

Lincoln has become more able to help members in the year since it's founding. "We've been going for a year now, and have had time to homogenize the group before we could reach out to others," she

said

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Wiese said that the Catholic Church recognizes that "the institution isn't as solid as it once was," and plans family retreats and parents' education programs to keep the family together.

"Still," he said, "I think Christ's charity really should come through, and allow a divorced person to re-establish a family again."

Van Gogh

Renoir

Vermeer

Lautrec

Wyeth

Kandinsky

Gauguin

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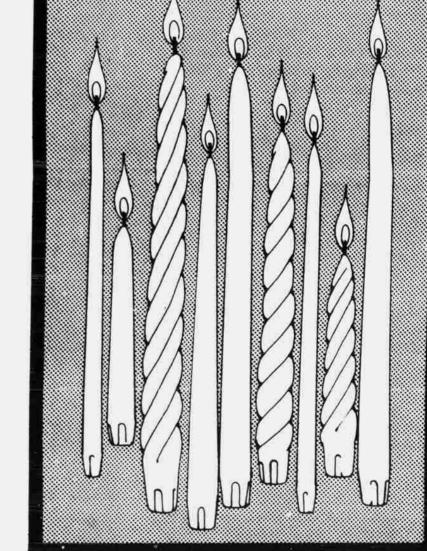
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