

CHURCH IN US TO STUDY "MARRIAGE BUILDING"

Conference Will Look at Successful Parish Models

WASHINGTON, D.C., APRIL 23, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Catholic Church in the United States has defined "marriage building" as one of its priorities. In order to make the priority a reality, a group of Catholic leaders will gather to study what makes a parish a marriage-builder.

Hundreds of Catholic leaders are expected for a June 23-26 conference in Cincinnati, on "Marriage-Building Parishes: Blueprints and Building Plans."

Participants will "learn ways to form our youth for responsible sexuality, better prepare couples for sacramental marriage, enrich and strengthen those who are married, provide marriage care for those in need, and heal the pain of divorce for both the spouses and the kids," said Lorrie Gramer, conference chair of the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers.

That association and two other national groups are partnering with the U.S. bishops' Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth to sponsor the event.

Archbishop Roger Schwietz of Anchorage, Alaska, chairman of the committee, will speak at the conference. So will Archbishop Joseph Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, chairman of the bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Defense of Marriage.

"So much can be done to strengthen marriage within the normal scope of parish life and ministry," observed Richard McCord, director of the Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth. "The resources, beginning with the witness of married couples themselves, just need to be called forth and utilized. The conference is an important step in this direction."

There will be 15 keynote presentations and more than 60 workshops on topics including marriage mentoring, couple prayer, Catholic parenting, marriage retreats and divorce recovery. Before the conference, there will be 20 training sessions.