

2007 Winner of CDM's James J. Young Ministry Award

Marianne F. Skrobiak, M.S., M.A., LPC



It is with deep appreciation that we announce this year's outstanding leader in Catholic Divorce Ministry. We'd like you to know more about Marianne and her many accomplishments.

Marianne F. Skrobiak is a licensed professional counselor and the owner of Recovery Point, S.C., an out-patient mental health clinic in Hales Corners, Wisconsin. She is a keynote speaker, retreat director and spiritual mentor. She has been a forerunner in the area of *healing ministry* to the separated and divorced in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and beyond since 1996. She earned an M.S. in Educational Psychology from Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and an M.A. in Theology from Sacred Heart School of Theology.

In 1996, several pastoral associates and family life ministers recognized the lack of services through the church for the separated and divorced, and they asked Marianne to develop a series. At that time, she developed and continues to present a **Six-Week Healing Series** for the separated and divorced that attempts to normalize the "grief process" involved by giving them accurate and helpful information, handouts and an opportunity for small group process each week. The unique part of this series is the closing *ritual* that occurs on the sixth night where participants are asked to bring in something (a concrete item) they are ready to "let go of" from their marriage. She holds a prayer service, sets up an altar and allows each person to bring up their item(s) one by one as the rest of the group *witnesses their letting go*. They place what they are bringing on the altar and experience *release and healing* that allows them to heal and move on with their lives. Having this validated by others is key. Over the years hundreds of people have gone through the series and have experienced a deeper sense of healing.

Marianne has also developed a "**Day of Healing: Beyond Divorce**" that incorporates both psychological and spiritual aspects of the healing process to help participants understand how their past (family of origin, etc.) actually plays a role in their choice of a partner and the residual effects of that upbringing on their self-esteem, boundary setting and so on. It focuses on where they came from, where are they now, roadblocks, boundaries, self-care, differentiation, as well as forgiveness and moving on. This is a full day that uses multi-media and small group process as well as ritual closure. She has presented this nationally.

In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Marianne has also led a workshop on the *Healing Power of Annulment* that she has presented alone and with a representative from the local Tribunal to help people better understand the *healing* reasons for seeking a declaration of validity/annulment. This workshop also includes ritual and prayer.

Marianne serves as a Chaplain for the **New Horizons Healing Weekends** for the divorced in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. She introduces each session, adding her love of Scripture, to offer hope and healing to the many who come on these retreats. Marianne offers support to the whole team who give of their time and experience to serve the needs of the participants, is on hand to deal with any problems that arise and during the reconciliation service, she *listens* to those who wish to speak with the Chaplain rather than celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (many are not Catholic).

Marianne has been active as a member of the New Horizons Board which seeks to provide help for the divorced in her archdiocese. She has served as Liaison to the director of Lifelong Faith Formation, the Archdiocesan office that oversees the ministry. Marianne is also divorced and both personally and professionally invested in making sure that this ministry continues to offer help and hope to all in need for years to come.

About five years ago, she began presenting at the NACSDC conferences and continues to do so. Some of the workshops she has presented are "*Ritualizing Our Goodbyes*," "*Rituals for Support Groups*," "*Partnering with God*," and others. In 2005 she was the retreat leader for those participating in the leadership training, offering a retreat called "*Meet Me at the Well*," which was very well received by many national ministry leaders.

Marianne has also developed a booklet entitled, "*Support Group Rituals*" which offers ten different opportunities for support group leaders to use as a tool for group facilitation. This booklet is available for sale at the NACSDC bookstore at the conference or online.

Those wishing to contact Marianne may do so at 414-529-2591 or recoverypoint@aol.com. ■

Rev. James J. Young Award Nominations

Do you know someone who has risen above the rest with contributions to this ministry? For award criteria and a nomination form contact the CDM Central Office or visit our website at www.nacsdc.org/jjy/.