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# Stable Homes Safeguard Freedom

A guest editorial writer in a national news magazine declared a while back that "divorce in the United States ought to be as cheap and as easy to obtain as a marriage license."

Although the divorce rate has just about doubled since 1960 and more than 10 per cent of married persons are recorded as having been divorced after their first marriages, such a view is not generally accepted. Let's hope that it may never be.

No country is more stable than the home life of its people. When homes fall apart, morality crumbles and other institutions are endangered. In civilized free countries, as well as among most primitive peoples, the home is the basic establishment. Communism and socialism encourage fidelity to the state, rather than to the home and family.

The Roman Catholic Diocese in Orlando, Fla., has taken note of increases in marriage failures and has set up a "Youthful Marriage Poli-

cy," which provides for a three-month "cooling off period" for those under 19 years of age who wish to marry.

The program was begun when a church committee found that 33 per cent of divorced couples are teen-agers and that seven out of 10 marriages involving teen-agers end in separations.

The priests will try to determine whether the young people are mature enough and financially secure enough to have a good chance of success in marriage. Certainly, maturity is more vital to success than financial security. Millions now happily married would never have been wed if they had waited until they could afford it.

The priests may have a difficult time determining the "degree of infatuation," along with parents' attitudes, family backgrounds, pregnancies and other reasons for marriage.

To whatever degree the project results in avoiding divorce situations, it will be successful. Some ministers

of all denominations have policies of refusing to perform marriage ceremonies where the prospects for success are poor, but it must be admitted that numerous others, as well as public officials, have shown avidity for wedding fees regardless of the outcome.

Placing restrictions upon marriages, particularly the long "cooling off period," presents hazards. With news items, magazine articles, TV programs, movies and peer groups advocating cohabitation without marriage, some couples may resort to this practice.

The procedure nevertheless is a step in the direction of morality and order in society.

Marital instability plainly has negative effects upon personal lives, community living, law and order and national affairs. If home life is destroyed, and qualities of morality, patriotism, constancy, ambition and direction are not passed on to younger generations, freedom and even the desire for freedom may be lost.