

# First comes marriage

I am happy to see Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien speak out (CR, April 7) on cohabitation and sex before marriage. My wife and I are a marriage sponsor couple, preparing those who seek the sacrament of marriage in the church. Most couples announce as they enter our home for the first time that they are living together. We use the material supplied by the archdiocese and are surprised that there is now a section devoted to those living together in the material we are to cover.

Besides the moral issue, we warn the couple to be aware of the mindset that living together outside of marriage can produce. Cohabitation causes an idea to be planted in their minds that "we can walk away any time from this arrangement." The danger here is that after marriage, when any problem arises, it is then easy to divorce, rather than working things out. Once the couple are living together, it is difficult to back up. The moral teaching needs to be greater stressed in Catholic education.