

Natural Family Planning



Diocesan Activity Report

Vol.1 No. 3 Fall 1990

The 1991 National Diocesan NFP Coordinators' Conference

The DDP's biennial conference will be held in Washington, D.C. on June 26-30, 1991. This is a conference for you, the diocesan NFP Coordinator and your staff. For this reason we would like to invite you to share your insights, wisdom, and professional NFP experience.

The DDP's **National Standards** calls for ongoing education in NFP methodology, Church teaching, and family studies. There are many resources we can draw on to aid us in these areas. Often we look for the acknowledged "experts" to bring to our events. However, there is another source of expertise which we often fail to tap, i.e., our own education and professional experience.

Yes, we have experts in our midst! You, the diocesan NFP Coordinator and teachers are experts who have been trained in NFP, developed diocesan programs, instructed couples and clients through joyous and difficult times, labored to dispel the mis-

information, as well as to encourage couples to love each other well. Sharing your wisdom with your colleagues will be an important facet of the 1991 conference.

The DDP is in need of Diocesan NFP Coordinators, or teachers, who can lead workshops during the conference. The specific topics are: 1) NFP Methodology (ST, OM, & BBT), "Their Application in Difficult Cases"; and 2) NFP Outreach, "How to Get the Word Out to Your Community."

If you are interested in leading a workshop, please write a one page proposal which explains the purpose of the workshop, how you intend to develop your topic, and your expertise in this area. Send your proposals to the DDP by January 1, 1991. We will evaluate the proposals and choose the most relevant for the conference. If you have questions, or ideas please feel free to call before

Meeting

Many marriages do not endure precisely because the lovers never really meet. They must meet—deeply and profoundly, at the very heart of each other's being, numinous and mysterious, because that is where God is. When two people truly meet, the spark initially ignited in them turns into an eternal conflagration.

Meeting involves a three-fold dynamic: perceptive appreciation, penetration and interpretation.

When lovers truly meet, they perceive each other's unique being with all their senses, with their whole mind and their whole heart. The other never existed before in the history of the world and never will again! And God arranged this meeting!

In other words, real lovers are utterly grateful. They thank God again and again that this meeting ever occurred. They enjoy the grace of it and accept the challenge to move deeper into that encounter.

True lovers do not remain on the surface but penetrate deeper and deeper into their wedding. They know that love turns sour and dies on the surface where obstacles prevail. Exploration into the depths, into the secret, into the profound Godliness of the other human being makes their life exciting, adventurous and worth living.

Day after day, year after year, through their ups and downs, their joys and sorrows, true lovers penetrate more deeply into their marriage, into their love-bond, into the God who unites them and gathers them into his own being.

As true lovers live unto their love-life together, they learn how to interpret themselves in a wider world. They expand into their united self. The more married they become, the larger the

MARRIAGE: *The Ecstatic Commitment*

William McNamara, O.C.D.

Whenever we celebrate a wedding anniversary, we not only commemorate an event that took place in the past. We also celebrate a wedding that is presently happening and will happen over and over again into the future. "Getting married" is not over and done with one joyful wedding day. A genuinely wed-

ded couple marry each other more and more deeply every day of their lives as they move into the utterly un-nameable mystery of one another and the mystery of God himself.

There are three vital aspects to every authentic marriage: meeting, evoking and celebrating.

world they inhabit. They develop a cosmic consciousness, aware of all the others in the universe: animal, vegetable and mineral.

The entire world is gathered up in their love for one another. There is no isolation. Nothing is left out. Their love is not limited, parochial or selfish.

True lovers interpret the world and whatever happens to them — for good or ill — in terms of their mutual love and the infinite love that gives meaning to their own love and brings it to fruition and joy.

Evocation

True married lovers evoke being from one another. The husband evokes from his wife — the wife evokes from her husband — deeper layers of being that neither one knew beforehand. No one else can evoke such human potential except the spouse. The husband becomes who he is and the wife who she is, and together they become who they are as a married couple. Then God erupts in and through them.

Evocation is possible only through creative tension. Many people give up marriage precisely because of this creative tension. But creative tension is good. In this process, God erupts between two lovers and creates in them a brand new entity: "two-in-one flesh."

Through this newly created being, continually created anew, the Kingdom of God erupts again and again in our world.

Psychological tests show that little children exhibit far greater creativity than average adults. But when adults move into the creative tension of real marriage, they enjoy the same high creativity that characterizes children.

High creativity involves laughter and tears — two of the greatest human experiences. If we are really alive, we laugh and we cry. If we don't, we are already dead.

Celebration

Married lovers truly meet. They evoke from one another the hidden secret of God. And in that discovery, they celebrate together.

We celebrate marriages and anniversaries with wedding cakes. How do we bake this special confection?

"C" stands for commitment — one of life's greatest treasures.

"A" stands for amazement. When married couples cease to be amazed by one another and their love, the marriage dies.

"K" stands for kibble. Kibble is ground grain. In marriage the kibble is the ground ego. By loving one another, living with one another, and raising

children together, a married couple's ego — grasping, craving, dominating and possessive — is generally ground to pieces by the sword of Christ.

"E" stands for ecstasy. Without ecstasy, life is unbearable. If there is no ecstasy in education, our schools fall apart. If there's no ecstasy in worship, our churches are a bore. If there's no ecstasy in marriage, marriage is an agony.

Ecstasy literally means to be swept up and out of where you were. A real marriage is never stale. The truly married couple is constantly moving out of where they were yesterday and the day before.

Ecstatic lovers are always moving into the unknown creative future — for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health — until death unites them together in God for all eternity.

William McNamara, O.C.D. is the founder of the Spiritual Life Institute, and author of several books on contemplation and Christian humanism. This article was reproduced with permission from the Spiritual Life Institute. It first appeared in their publication, Desert Call, Winter 1989, Crestone, Co. ■

Adjusting Technique for Obtaining Accurate BBT Graphs

Laura Padden
Sacred Heart Medical Center,
Spokane, WA.

Many women need only their cervical mucus pattern to monitor their menstrual cycles. By following the OM rules they will be able to achieve or avoid pregnancy as desired. However, for some women, taking the Basal Body Temperature (BBT), while observing cervical mucus, can provide additional information about the specific time of ovulation.

There are disagreements about the value of the temperature in NFP. Some think it too burdensome, and also ques-

tion its accuracy. But, when done correctly, the BBT is quite simple and is a valuable aid when used with mucus charting.

Every woman has her own BBT pattern just as she has her own mucus pattern. Before ovulation, the temperature remains at a lower level. After ovulation, progesterone released from the corpus luteum in the ovary, causes the temperature to rise to a higher level and remain there until time for the menstrual period to begin. This pattern re-

peats itself before and after each ovulation.

Not only does a woman's waking BBT change throughout the menstrual cycle, but a woman's daily temperature curve rises throughout the day and falls throughout the night. Many writings concerning the use of the BBT note that a woman's awakening temperature will vary if taken at different times of the day. Most authors also observe that the BBTs are lower if taken earlier in the morning and higher if taken later. Therefore, even if a woman is in bed asleep, her temperature will rise gradually until it reaches the usual high level for that woman.

Taking the BBT at precisely the same time each day usually is not possible or practical. Confronted with this difficulty, Joy DeFelice, R.N., B.S.N., Ph.N.

and Director of the NFP Program at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Spokane, WA, developed an **Adjusting Technique** in 1967 to compensate for variations in temperature readings due to differences in awakening times. She started using this temperature adjusting technique in her classes in 1976 and published a booklet detailing its use in 1979. This technique has produced excellent results in obtaining accurate and legible graphs of BBT patterns.

The Adjusting Technique:

1. Temperature should be taken when the woman first awakens. One hour of complete rest before taking the BBT is usually sufficient to obtain an accurate graph; however, 3 hours or more of sleep is more desirable.
2. Use the same time of the morning as a BASE time; e.g., if her usual time to awaken is 7:00 a.m. then choose that as her base time.
3. If she sleeps in or awakens earlier than her usual base time:
 - For every half hour earlier than her usual base time, ADD 1/10th of a degree before she records the reading on her temperature graph.
 - For every half hour LATER than her usual base time, SUBTRACT 1/10th of a degree before she records the reading on her temperature graph.
4. If a temperature reading is between 2 lines, always take the lower reading.

A woman will be able to determine for herself whether she needs to adjust or not by:

- a) Taking her BBT daily for three cycles and graphing it.
- b) Marking in her UNADJUSTED temperatures on the graph with an open circle and writing in the different time that the temperature was taken.
- c) Marking in her ADJUSTED temperatures on the graph with a filled-in dot and connecting only the dots.

When graphing her BBT, a woman must watch for the first reading which is HIGHER than the previous five-six readings graphed (this is called the pre-ovulation baseline). During these same five-six days, the woman will notice that her fertile discharge is present. She must obtain an adequate and sustained temperature rise (at least three consecutive highs) from the pre-ovulation baseline to verify ovulation in that cycle.

There are several BBT graph patterns a woman can have. These patterns include a gradual shift, a step-like shift, and a see-saw shift. The procedure to determine the necessary sustained rise in temperature is the same whether the temperature shift is a sudden jump or a slower rise.

When are the BBT graphs helpful?

1. When a woman's cervical mucus pattern is such that peak is unclear to her, (e.g. in patterns of continuous and variable mucus or wetness) the BBT can verify that she has ovulated. She can use this "double-check" until she knows her peak with certainty.
2. The BBT helps identify true menstruation from other bleeding, such as ovulatory bleeding.
3. The BBT helps define actual ovulation during frequent "patches" of mucus as can happen in long cycles, during the breastfeeding/weaning experience, and in many coming off the Pill patterns.

4. The BBT can also be a confidence booster for women whose patterns are easily affected by stress.
5. For couples trying to achieve a pregnancy, the BBT will indicate if ovulation is occurring and if it is in the proper sequence with the fertile mucus.
6. The BBT will tell the premenopausal woman if she is still ovulating.

When are BBT graphs not helpful?

1. **During breastfeeding.** The temperatures tend to be erratic until the woman resumes frequent mucus activity or her menstrual periods return.
2. **During premenopause.** If the woman is NOT ovulating regularly, it is better for her to judge her cycles by her other natural signs.
3. **Post pill.** Depending upon the woman's pattern during the first few cycles, she may find either the mucus sign or the BBT to give her more information.

Taking the BBT and interpreting it is very easy to do. A woman can take the BBT when her mucus starts and until she establishes an adequate and sustained temperature rise (for three days), and the cervical mucus has changed back to infertile characteristics (Peak + 4 days). Once a woman knows this pattern, she may elect to limit the temperature to the fertile period. In this way, the BBT may prove to be surprisingly simple and quite helpful! ■

Are you interested in further information?

There is a detailed instructional booklet which includes sample graphs entitled *A New Technique for Obtaining Accurate Basal Body Temperature Graphs to Determine Ovulation*, by Joy DeFelice, RN, BSN, PHN (\$5.00, includes postage and handling).

Contact:

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The Sixtieth Anniversary of Casti Connubii—

(Continued from Summer 1990)

Part II: "Keeping it Alive"

John F. Kippley

When I give classes or talks on NFP, I usually ask the audience how many are aware that before 1930 no Christian church had given its acceptance to contraception, and almost invariably I find that only a very small percentage have learned this important element of church history. This common ignorance is a real tragedy because *Humanae Vitae* was built upon this constant teaching. In explaining why he had to reject the recommendations of the majority of the birth control commission, Pope Paul VI noted: "...and above all because certain criteria for resolving the question had emerged that departed from the moral teaching on marriage proposed with constant firmness by the Magisterium of the Church" (*HV*, #6). If Christians do not understand this part of our common Christian heritage, then the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* may appear to be a personal decision of the Pope, arbitrary and isolated, instead of a pro-

phetic reaffirmation of a constant teaching of 20 centuries.

Practically, what can we do? Writing, preaching, lectures, letters to editors and whatever else comes to mind. A priest or deacon with pulpit privileges might take advantage of two occasions—the feast of the Assumption (the day after the anniversary of the Lambeth break) and the feast of the Holy Family which, as the last Sunday of the year, is closest to the actual anniversary of *Casti Connubii*. Reprint this article in your diocesan newspaper. Do a bang-up job of promoting a lecture on this topic this fall or winter.

I am not aware of anyone who did anything to commemorate the 50th anniversary of *Casti Connubii* in 1980. It's largely a forgotten item in today's Church, and that is to the disadvantage of everyone. It seems to me that commemorative activity is the sort of thing that we in the NFP movement can do—

and that if we do it well, we can make up for the silence of 1980.

Further Reading

For background reading, you would do well to start with Elasah Drogin's *Margaret Sanger: Father of Modern Society*. I think you will also find helpful my own booklet, *Birth Control and Christian Discipleship*; it's the source of some of the above quotations. A recent addition to the helpful literature is *The Bible and Birth Control*, a small book by an evangelical, Charles Provan. While much of it is his own argumentation against any form of birth control based on his interpretation of Scripture (and not very helpful, in my opinion), he has performed a real service by collecting quotations from 66 Protestant theologians regarding the Onan account (Gn. 38). The total is an impressive witness to the strength and universality of the Christian teaching against unnatural forms of birth control before 1930. John Calvin, for example, regarded Onanism as the murder of future persons, and Martin Luther called it sodomy. (*All the above are available from CCL, Box 111184, Cincinnati, OH 45211, at listed prices plus \$1.75 for first item and .50 for each additional item.*) ■

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

"A Varied Apostolate"

Sheila Power Potter,
Archdiocese of New York

Three years ago, I was appointed coordinator of the NFP Apostolate for the Archdiocese of New York. The Archdiocese includes ten counties, three within the city of New York, and the other seven comprising the lower part of the state. Our geography is varied, ranging from the excitement and tension of the inner city, to comfortable and crowded suburbs, to open and often isolated rural areas. Accordingly our population is as varied as America itself!

Over this great diversity, Msgr. John Woolsey, our Family Life Director, en-

couraged me to run our program with a free hand. Given the challenge, I realized that the first, and still the most important aspect of any NFP diocesan program is the recruiting, training, and sustaining of the volunteers who teach. Given this perspective, I'd like to share some activities with you, which we have tried and which may be helpful to other programs around the country.

In New York, I began publicizing the office by going to each area priests' conference. In about a twenty minute presentation, I emphasized the need of NFP

in the community; outlined the content of the classes; where the center in their area was located; some of the reasons people have chosen NFP, and the concerns that the general public has about using NFP.

About six years ago, we began targeting the Marriage Preparation meetings. Each couple who goes through Marriage Prep. gets a presentation about NFP (by a volunteer NFP couple whenever possible), within the context of the "Sex & Sexuality" talk. This puts a burden on the couples who volunteer, but is a great way for the engaged to hear of NFP.

We send Marriage Prep. kits to every parish in the diocese and include an NFP brochure and schedule of classes for every engaged couple. (There is a special registration form within the Marriage Prep. booklet itself.) We in-

clude pre-printed ads for all the parish bulletins. They are not used as often as I would like, but they are easy for the individual pastor to use if there is space in the Sunday bulletin.

Today, volunteers and I give presentations in the High Schools and Colleges, at the specific request of individual teachers, generated by personal contact. These are invaluable times for the young people. Their questions are wonderful to hear. We need to do more work in this area.

We have regular NFP Information Hours in different areas, usually showing a short NFP video or film and questions fielded by an experienced NFP teaching couple. They are not well attended, so we are considering alternatives for them. Cardinal O'Connor has expressed an interest in using more video in order to reach more people. We could not ask for a more supportive Bishop, or a more dedicated Director of Family Life.

In the early part of this year, the Family Life Office had three "Pro-Life Clergy Days". The keynote of each day was given by John Cardinal O'Connor, followed by four talks by a priest, a moral theologian, a physician, and an NFP coordinator. Audio tapes were made and are available.

Finally, being a coordinator of NFP, (and I suspect the feeling is shared by each one around the country) I believe this is vital work, worthy work, and most of all, God-directed work. The individual leaders, coming together periodically, help each other, not by imitation necessarily, but by the atmosphere of true caring and the sharing of ideas. There is no 'right way' to lead couples to NFP, except to love them toward the truth. Each diocese will take its' own road, guided by the Holy Spirit. Each coordinator must "read" the situation in his or her own diocese in the light of what is the most important need. We need to pray and listen to good input about every decision. Most importantly, we need to trust that the Lord will help direct us when we gather in His name.

"Seeking the Kingdom"

Nancy Jean Davis
Diocese of Great Falls,
Billings, MT

About 18 months ago a young married couple from a local fundamentalist church attended a free "Introduction to NFP" class. This particular couple stayed after the session to speak more privately. While remaining very polite and sincere, the husband asked a number of pointed questions about the "Biblical basis" for NFP. Even though I couldn't cite chapter and verse, I was able to support the idea of sexual self-control within marriage by concentrating on Scripture passages that set forth the positive norms for Christian marriage, rather than detailing a Catholic understanding of what was prohibited. This couple did go on to take the full series of NFP classes and they have happily blended NFP into their daily lives. I share their story and my journey with them because I believe there is more here than just an NFP success.

Coming from a fundamentalist background, this young family had no Church teaching to warn them away from contraception. In fact, they were at that time seeking counsel from their church's pastor, who admitted he had been sterilized years earlier after he and his wife had three children. In our several discussions about NFP, I needed to stress the positive Christian virtues embodied in NFP and the fruits of the Spirit that it can foster. Simply to denigrate contraception and those using or promoting it, would not only have been woefully insufficient, but also antagonistic. It is a minor shift in focus, perhaps, and one well familiar to any experienced NFP promoter. Yet placing the clear emphasis on seeking "God's way" for married love enabled us to share a profound spiritual unity.

One advantage this couple had as they considered NFP was the combination of an unwavering trust in God and an active personal prayer life. I could challenge them to present NFP to the Lord in prayer, knowing a favorable outcome was assured; for God's Spirit does not inspire chastity in Catholics alone! As an eloquent Benedictine

abbot keeps reminding me; "the Spirit of truth will resonate in your soul whenever you encounter it."

This is how this couple came to accept NFP; it resonated in their souls. They embraced NFP because they recognized God within it despite opposition from family, friends, and their pastor. They acknowledged the affinity of the Lord guiding them on the path of holiness.

And what of the time of abstinence? The evangelical approach to prayer has transformed their experience of genital abstinence into a sacred offering. Knowing their values, I suggested using the "space" in their marriage to praise God for his love and mercy, to give thanks to Him for each other and for their children, and to be sorrowful with the Lord over the continuing abortion holocaust. I also asked them to pray for the needs of loved ones and of today's young people. Unlike many Catholic NFP couples who complain about abstinence as the "cost" or "trade-off" for a safe, effective, Church-approved method, this couple anticipates and rejoices in abstinence each cycle as an opportunity for special prayer. It is for them a time of intense marital intimacy and peace. In pursuing God's vision of chastity within marriage, this family has come to understand, defend, and promote the truth as they live it with NFP, a marital experience of encountering the Lord.

My journey with this couple has helped me identify a "key" to the understanding of two persistent problems within the NFP movement in the USA; i.e., interpersonal spirituality is inconsistently present in most of our exchanges with each other. This is the missing link in our NFP programs; and may account for the recurrent tensions among the NFP providers and their trainees.

With regard to Diocesan programs, I am not criticizing the Church's teachings on sexuality, marriage, and family life. Neither am I belittling the role of certain psychological and sociological elements in NFP instruction. These areas must be included, as the DDP Standards appropriately prescribe. I

am, however, concerned over the non-inclusion of education in marital spirituality and prayer life as identifiable fruits from the goals of the NFP apostolate.

Ours is a commission from Jesus to spread the Good News through teaching couples how to live a covenanted love relationship in God. Yes, NFP is an effective way to avoid pregnancy. It can encourage a deepening of overall communication. It is medically safe and morally approved by the Church. And, it can aid couples who are trying to achieve a pregnancy. But what is it that we are trying to do? In promoting NFP, what are we promoting? A technique for selecting the most convenient time for a baby? A "clean" contraceptive? A particular methodology? Or, are we extending an opportunity and a means to an intimate and intense encounter with God?

NFP equally touches the physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of

our lives. Are we being faithful to the full scope of our apostolate if we shy away from affirming the presence, power, and essence of God embraced in marital spirituality? Making a commitment to prayer during abstinence not only keeps that time consecrated to God, but also wonderfully renews and strengthens us, uniting our minds and wills with His and, thereby, with each other.

Introducing couples to the spirituality of sexual self-control within marriage also prepares parents and future parents to witness to their children a fully Christian perspective on chastity before marriage. I agree with the priest who once called NFP the greatest evangelical opportunity of our time. God is the inescapable center of what we are teaching in NFP.

Let us take abstinence beyond the estimable concept of respecting fertility as a blessing and include the vital idea of abstinence as a space and time to

focus on God. Even with the usual assortment of faiths and religious practices among NFP learners, we can offer a variety of prayer possibilities to our couples.

Finally, perhaps we NFP providers may also intercede with our own prayers for mutual respect, peace, and unity in the NFP movement. The central crisis among NFP groups has all too often been that specific methodologies and partisan allegiances overshadow our shared goals and values. The task that God has appointed to us is no different than that of any Christian, "to seek first the Kingdom of God."

Let us never be boastful, or jealous, or challenging toward one another. While respecting the individual characteristics of each program, let us re-discover our profound communion in God's Spirit. Out of love, let us place ourselves at one another's service, that the fruits of the Spirit and the virtues of Christ may be recognized within and among us. ■

SCIENCE NOTES. . . by Hanna Klaus, M.D.

"Risk of ovulation during lactation," R.H. Gray, O.M. Campbell, R. Apelo, S.S. Eslami, H. Zacur, R.M. Ramos, J.C. Gehret, and Labbok. *The Lancet* January 1990, 335:25-29.

A study of 60 nursing mothers from Baltimore and 41 from Manila invited the mothers to keep "nursing diaries" and examined daily urine specimens for estrogen, luteinizing hormone (LH) and progesterone products which would indicate the approach and the occurrence of ovulation. When the women breastfed completely and were not yet menstruating, the probability of ovulation was very low. Women in Baltimore breastfed less often but for longer periods than women in Manila who fed more frequently but for shorter duration. Up to six months postpartum, exclusive breastfeeding reduced the risk of ovulation by 98-99% during amenorrhoea and by 94-97% after anovulatory menses (45% of first menses were anovulatory and 41% of first ovulations had luteal phase defects during the first six months). Beyond six

months the rate of ovulation increased considerably but was reduced by suckling. Indices were: the number and duration of feeds, and breastfeeds as a percentage of all feeds, to distinguish between full and partial lactation. The average length of amenorrhoea was 25 weeks in Baltimore and 31 weeks in Manila, but the average time until the first ovulation was significantly shorter in Baltimore.

"Does Family Interaction Prevent Adolescent Pregnancy?" L.M. Casper, et. *Family Planning Perspectives* May/June 1990, 22:109-114.

Casper examined data from the 1982 National Survey of Family Growth to see whether family interaction can avert sexual activity among adolescents, pregnancy, child bearing, and parenthood. While family interaction may be effective in increasing adolescents' use of contraceptives and selection of abortion or adoption as alternatives to parenthood, it was not associated with forestalling adolescent sexual activity or

with providing for the well-being of the adolescent and her child. Factors which were significant included race, religion, residence, mother's education, the adolescent's age, and family income.

Simple giving of information by the parent to the teen on how pregnancy occurred did not enhance the probability that an adolescent would refrain from intercourse until the age of 19. Generally, black adolescents were more apt to be sexually experienced than whites at a given age level, Catholic adolescents were significantly less likely to be sexually active than Protestants or those expressing no religious affiliation or those of other religions. Teens in the Northeast are less likely to be sexually active than those in the South West or North Central regions. The highest level was in the West. Teens from lower socio-economic status were more likely to be active than those from higher status. Family income was less likely to be reported by those from higher socio-economic levels making that analysis difficult. Older adolescents were more likely to be sexually active and also to use contraceptives, particularly if contraceptive use was encouraged by their family.

"Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia: The Role of Age at First Coitus in Its Etiology." A.A. Edebiri. *Journal of Reproductive Medicine* March 1990, 35: 256-259.

Initiation of intercourse before 18 years was the significant factor for the development of epithelial changes in the cervix which culminate in cancer. One hundred fifteen (115) women with definite cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) were asked about many factors in a matched case-controlled study. The estimated relative risk for developing CIN was 3.64 times higher in those under 18 than in those over 18 at first coitus.

"Vasectomy: An Appraisal for the Obstetrician-Gynecologist." H.B. Peterson, D.H. Huber, A.M. Belker. *Obstetrics and Gynecology* September 1990, 76:568-572.

Vasectomy is reviewed from the perspective of the obstetrician/gynecologist. The efficacy of the three current techniques: tying, coagulating/cauterizing or clipping the vas, is explored to discover which is more likely to lead to failure. If the tied ends of the vas re-open, sperm granulomas can form which can lead to fistulas, which in turn lead to a spontaneous reanastomosis or rejoining of the vas. Such spontaneous reanastomoses may occur within several months after vasectomy, but late reanastomosis up to three years has been reported after both ligation and coagulation methods. Vasectomy failures range from 0 to 2%; most studies report less than 1%.

Because vasectomy is performed under local anesthesia, operative death due to general anesthesia is avoided, hence vasectomy is considered to be superior to tubal ligation, which carries the risk of anesthetic death. Failures after tubal sterilization involve a relative increase in the likelihood of ectopic pregnancy.

Immediate complications of vasectomy are swelling or hematomas of the testis and congestion, i.e., fluid in the epididymis, which usually subsides. Long-term health effects have been looked for and not found. The effects on the development of atherosclerosis

which were found in cynomolgus monkeys have not been found in humans. The authors who initially reported this connection in monkeys have refuted their findings. Isolated studies report some increased risks of kidney stones; another identified an increased risk of prostatic cancer. Both showed a relatively small (less than twofold) increase in risk. Two other studies, one unpublished and one dismissed as biased by the authors, did find an association between vasectomy and testicular cancer. The biased study was restricted to Catholic males. The authors suspect a bias

due to selective underreporting of vasectomies by Catholic controls. (The authors do not report any change in sexual response or enjoyment. Anecdotal reports from vasectomized individuals state otherwise.) The authors caution that even though vasectomy reversal is successful in returning 91% of males to a normal sperm count if reversal was performed less than 10 years after vasectomy, this was true only 35% of the time if the operation was more than 10 years ago. Pregnancy rates after reversal ranged from 30-60%. ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The **Special Report** by Kambic and Klaus in the **Summer 1990** newsletter, was particularly disturbing in the contraceptive language used by Kambic and Klaus under the "Comment" heading, (para. 3, #1); "The rules of the OM for avoiding pregnancy are proven to be accurate, if you break them you get pregnant." In ordinary understanding, punishment follows the breaking of rules. Is it the intent of the authors to convey the attitude that pregnancy is a punishment?

I would prefer that we recognize the autonomy of the user of NFP, making certain that we teach well, personalizing our approach to each client couple so that they are knowledgeable and confident in their ability to recognize their fertility and infertility. Pregnancy can then be seen as the successful use of a recognized day of fertility, not as a punishment for "breaking the rules" to avoid pregnancy. Would it not be more positive to speak in terms of "achieving related behavior," rather than "taking a risk?"

Phyllis A. White, CNFPE
Kansas City, Missouri

Response:

Mrs. White's point about "breaking the rule" is well taken. We could have said "following," but were trying to stay with the authors' terms. The same is true of "risk." We could have said "probability of pregnancy." Risk is shorter!

Mrs. White knows that we do not consider that pregnancy is a punishment, but we do consider it the normal outcome of sexual intercourse in the fertile time. The whole point of our article was that it validated the rules of the Billings Method, that it does indeed work. If you follow the rules for pregnancy avoidance, you avoid pregnancy. If you don't, you don't. One could just as easily discuss a violation of the law of gravity. The injuries resulting from a fall are factual not punitive.

We find it interesting that the criticism, based on differing perceptions of the meaning of words, comes from one associated with the Creighton method of NFP instruction. The Creighton pregnancy designation, "achieving related behavior" is carefully crafted to consider the behavior of the couple at the moment of intercourse, but ignores their motivation for using NFP. Thus, for Creighton teachers, once a client has been under instruction for three months "achieving related behavior" results in a planned pregnancy whether or not the couple actually *intended* to become pregnant. We think that this sidesteps both the ambivalence regarding pregnancy timing, and disagreements about family size often found between spouses. These are complex and difficult issues which require more than semantics to resolve.

Robert Kambic, M.S.H.
and Hanna Klaus, M.D.

NEWS BRIEFS

DDP ANNOUNCEMENTS

DDP welcomes new Administrative Aide, Silvia U. Juarez. Silvia was born in El Salvador and has lived in the USA for 11 years. A graduate of Catholic University, Washington, D.C. (1985), Silvia holds a B.A. in Business Administration. Silvia was first introduced to NFP through the OM method, and will be pursuing training in the ST method. Among her previous experience, Silvia was Financial Counselor for a wholistic, non-profit health clinic, as well as Admin. Aide for the Pro-Life dept. of the NCCB. Silvia and her husband, Felipe have a daughter, Evelyn, who is two and a half years old.

The Implementation of the National Standards Document had been the primary subject of the Fall 1990 NFP National Advisory Board meeting (Sept. 6-9, 1990, Washington, D.C.). Demonstrations of the process have been taking place in five of the dioceses represented by the Board. A final report of this activity will be given to the Board at a November 1990 meeting at NCCB headquarters. The results will be sent to you in a special mailing.

"The Gift of Love", DDP's introduction to NFP video, has been completed. The video was sponsored by OSV Institute and produced by Mark Kolter, Clar-escence Communications. Complimentary copies will be sent to all diocesan NFP Coordinators. Additional copies can be obtained directly from Our Sunday Visitor. Cost, \$19.95 plus \$2.00 for shipping and handling. Contact: OSV, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750; 1-800-348-2440.

Coordinator's Corner can only be written by you the diocesan NFP coordinator. Please don't be shy! You don't have to be a journalist to write. However, you do have to be a diocesan NFP coordinator. Remember, we are waiting for those words of wisdom which only you can share with your colleagues. Please contact the editor if you would like to get involved.

The DDP National Mailing List is in need of additional names. We are especially interested in drawing two groups into our readership: 1) the diocesan NFP teachers; and 2) doctors and health-care professionals.

In addition, you may send us the names of any interested person. Finally, please try to help us in our efforts to compile a national "Medical Mailing List". The health care profession needs to hear from NFP practitioners.



PAST EVENTS

American Academy of NFP held its ninth annual meeting in Milwaukee, WI, July 25-28, 1990. The theme of the meeting was "Entering the Mainstream: A Challenge to Couples, Clergy and Health Professionals". Among the varied presentations was a science and research forum featuring Dr. Thomas W. Hilgers, MD, who discussed pregnancy evaluations. The meeting concluded with the installation of the newly elected officers of the AANFP. Richard Fehring, DNSC, CNFPE, was installed as the president of the Academy for the coming year. The 1991 annual meeting will be held July 17-21, in Charleston, West Virginia.

The Wethersfield Institute sponsored a conference on "The Catholic Woman", Sept. 28, 1990, New York City. The topic focused on feminism and Catholic teaching on women. Several speakers presented their views and were followed by responders. Among the presenters was Dr. Mary Rousseau, associate professor of Philosophy, Marquette University. Dr. Rousseau examined Pope John Paul II's teaching on women. She highlighted "religious equality" as that which is at the heart of the Church's teaching. "This is an equality which is expressed in mutual self-giving...Adam and Eve chose desire over love, which always leads to domination." She observed that "the dynamism of the feminist movement is desire not self-giving love."

Erratum Summer 1990 Newsletter:

Please note that there is an error in Dr. W. P. Roberts' article, p. 7. In the right column, under the heading **Unwillingness to Forgive...**, second paragraph, the line beginning "If there is no..." should read:

If there is no admission of guilt, no expression of sorrow, the wounds fester. With words of sorrow and forgiveness, they are healed.

We apologize for this error.

A second speaker, Dr. Janet Smith, University of Dallas, discussed "The Church's Teaching on Sexuality and the Dignity of Woman". Dr. Smith analyzed the views of several feminist theologians who applauded John Paul II's ideas on male/female equality, but rejected his views on motherhood. As she described, "the four main planks of feminism are in the area of truth, politics, ethics, and symbolism. Ideas are 'true' if they are acceptable to the feminist agenda".

Alice Von Hildebrand, former professor, Hunter College and wife of Dietrich Von Hildebrand, contrasted the lives of Edith Stein & Simone de Beauvoir. Both came from traditional religious backgrounds, yet Edith temporarily rejected religion, and Simone adopted a rebellious attitude from adolescence. Ultimately, Von Hildebrand concluded, "Simone became the slave of Sartre while Stein affirmed that all humans are feminine in their receptivity to God...."

The proceedings will be available from The Wethersfield Institute, 230 Park Ave., #1528, New York, N.Y., 10169.

M. Shivanandan

Pope Paul VI Institute began the start of six **Creighton Model NFP Education Programs** (Education Phase I), on Oct. 12-21, 1990. *Contact: Creighton Model Programs, Pope Paul VI Institute, 6901 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68106; 402-390-9168.*



UPCOMING EVENTS

Diocese of Santa Rosa, CA will host a week long series of NFP special events from April 8 through the 15th, 1991. The purpose of the series is NFP outreach to clergy, health professionals, seminary students and the community of the Bay Area. Guest speakers will be the Drs. Billings. *Contact: Regina Corley, Diocese of Santa Rosa, Family Life Office, P.O. Box 4900, Santa Rosa, CA, 95402; 707-528-1248.*

Institute for International Studies in NFP along with the WHO, is co-sponsoring a conference at Georgetown University on Dec. 10-14, 1990. The theme is "NFP: Current Knowledge and Strategies for the 1990's". The purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for researchers, trainers, program managers, communicators, and educators to share the results of their work and chart new directions for increasing the knowledge, availability, and effectiveness of NFP. This is an invitational conference; however, papers will be published. *Contact: Victoria H. Jennings, Ph.D., IISNFP, Georgetown University School of Medicine, 3800 Reservoir Road, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007; 202-687-1392.*



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown's NFP Office sent a letter to all priests describing the brochures available on NFP. Nothing more was required then for the priests to return an addressed stamped card on which they indicated the number of brochures they wanted. Ten of each were offered with no charge, if larger amounts were requested, a bill would be sent. They were pleased to have a response of 25%.

Archdiocese of Omaha has an NFP Board comprised of two Creighton Model providers, two CCL teachers, two parish priests, and two sisters from the Family Life Office. This board has developed a bi-monthly column on NFP which is published in the Archdiocesan newspaper, "The Catholic Voice". *Contact: Sr. Janice Mengershauser, NFP Coordinator, 3214 North 60th St., Omaha, NE 68104; 402-551-9003.*

Development & Enrichment Programs for Parents and Adolescents (DEPPA) has received a grant from the St. Ann Foundation to produce and distribute a Catholic edition of *The Wonder*

of Me: Fertility Appreciation for Adolescents and Parents (see **News Briefs**, Spring 1990). The Catholic edition will include the theology of the body as understood through the writings of John Paul II and presented for the laity by such authors as Rev. Richard Hogan, Rev. John Levoir (*Covenant of Love*), and others.

According to the terms of the grant, DEPPA of South Carolina and DEPPA of Kansas will cooperate in producing the new edition of the booklet as well as a slide/tape presentation. The booklet will be distributed to each Catholic diocese in the USA, and will be made available for purchase for use in Catholic schools, religious education classes, youth groups, and parenting seminars. *Contact: Iva Jean de Oliveira or Ann Nerbun, DEPPA of South Carolina, P.O. Box 383, Sumter, SC 29151; 803-775-1098.*

Mary Shivanandan is giving a course on "The Principles, Practice and Theology of Natural Family Planning", at the **John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family, Washington, D.C.** The objective of the course is to enable the students to acquire a knowledge of the theological, scientific and behavioral principles on which NFP is based. The Church's teaching on responsible parenthood provides the framework of the course. Divided into two parts, section one covers the scientific basis of the methods; basic rules of both OM and ST, their effectiveness, the historical background of both artificial and natural methods, and the distinction between the two. Section two examines the behavioral aspects of the method, the place of NFP in building the couple's marriage and family life, and aiding them in their spiritual journey. Difficulties in using the method will also be addressed. The course will end with a discussion of some issues in program development. *Contact: Mary Shivanandan c/o John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family, 47 Michigan Ave, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20017; 202-526-3799.*

MATERIALS

Fruitful Industries has developed the "Cycle Minder", a device which keeps the charts for the ST method. The Cycle Minder is a combination alarm/computer. When it rings at the desired time in the morning the thermometer is removed and placed in the woman's mouth to record the BBT. A beep sounds to indicate the end of the temperature taking. By entering a few key strokes, the Cycle Minder can also record the signs of fertility. At the end of the day if you have forgotten to enter your signs, a second alarm will sound as a reminder. The completed chart can be read on the display which holds up to a year of information. Print outs can be done on any IBM PC or compatible com-

puter. Contact: Susan A. Holub, Fruitful Industries, P.O. Box 685, Eufaula, AL 36027; 205-687-8701.

Institute for International Studies in NFP, Georgetown Univ. has for purchase a "Guide for NFP Trainers". The Guide was developed as a resource for trainers who plan, implement and evaluate training courses for NFP instructors. Contact: Kimberly J. Aumack, Director, Training Division, IISNFP, Georgetown University, School of Medicine, Department of Ob/Gyn, 3800 Reservoir Rd., N.W., Washington, D.C., 202-687-1392.

Pope Paul VI Institute has available for purchase a video "Living Proof." This video covers the moment of conception, growth of the baby and birth-

ing event. Priced at \$34.95 plus \$3.00 shipping & handling. Contact: Pope Paul VI Institute, 6901 Mercy Rd., Omaha, NE 68106; 402-390-6600.

Techno International (U.S.), Inc. has available for purchase **L Sophia** a computerized thermometer. This device records the daily temperature and six items, such as bleeding, pain, fever, etc. Combined with the temperature sign, the computer automatically compensates for variations in cycles by using previous personal data with Ogino (calendar calculations) which then sets the findings for the current cycle. Contact: Robert K. Nelson, Techno International Inc., 1320 Ohms Lane, Minneapolis, MN 5535; 612-897-3716. ■



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The Natural Family Planning Diocesan Activity Report is published quarterly. Its purpose is to serve the Roman Catholic diocesan NFP programs of the United States through offering: national and international news of NFP activity; articles on significant Church teachings, NFP methodology and related topics; and by providing a forum for sharing strategies in program development. Contributions are welcomed. All articles may be reproduced unless otherwise noted. For more information contact the editor.

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