



Natural Family Planning

Diocesan Activity Report

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Humanae Vitae After 25 Years: is There Anything to Celebrate?

Charles Balsam, M.A.

Background

On July 25, the Church commemorates the 25th anniversary of Pope Paul VI issuing his encyclical *Humanae vitae* (On Human Life, 1968). An encyclical is a formal letter issued by a Pope to the universal Church on a matter of great importance. As you know, the encyclical and its teaching on "birth control," has not been well received. Some have attributed this to a crisis in the legitimacy of the teaching authority of Rome, (especially in matters of marriage and sexuality), to the message, style, and reasoning used in the document. So, what is there to celebrate?

Strengths of the Teaching

The teaching first of all affirms the value and gift of life, as rooted in God's love and creativity. The gift of transmitting life is entrusted to spouses. The encyclical gives a clear and positive view of marriage and marital love as a special form of human friendship.

It also provides us with a description of "responsible parenthood" as: 1) knowledge and respect of human fertility as a personal, not merely biological power; 2) exercising of reason and will in engaging in sexual intercourse, including the use of periods of fertility or infertility; 3) spacing of conception according to physical, economic, psychological, and social conditions; and 4) a humble and docile conscience formed in

relationship to the goodness of God's design, and to these aspects of responsible parenthood.

There is a strong affirmation of the procreative and unitive meanings of marriage and marital intercourse. This is combined with a prophetic concern about the fragile bond of intimacy which needs to form between a husband and wife. Because of these values, the Pope expressed grave concern about contraception.

The teaching spurred some Catholic physicians to further study fertility in order to perfect natural methods of conception control. Couples can now practice safe, reliable, and cooperative methods of family planning with proper motivation, accurate understanding and application in the context of a growing, covenant relationship.

The Teaching Generates Controversy

Many have criticized that the reasoning used in the encyclical is not explicit so that all the points which the Pope makes can be more fully understood or debated. This is perhaps best illustrated in the most quoted statement of the document, "Each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life." This could be misleading.

Since God did not design every act to be fertile (capable of conception), the

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we continue our year long celebration of the 25th anniversary of the encyclical Humanae vitae with a special reflection by Charles Balsam, Director of the Office of Family Life Ministry, Diocese of Beaumont, TX, (p. 1ff.). In addition, we offer you the fourth in our series on the history of the various NFP pioneers in the country, with a look at the development of the Couple to Couple League (p. 8ff.).

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statement seems to misrepresent the reality of fertility (periods of infertility and fertility). The statement further risks implying that marital sexual morality is derived from biology, rather than from personal values, which include our bodily dimension. In the encyclical, Paul VI is asserting two things: a) marriage and intercourse have two interwoven meanings - unitive and procreative; and b) couples should not intentionally alter God's design, to render acts of intercourse infertile or sterile, since this can harm both meanings.

Further Development of the Teaching

Since 1968, many have written critiques. Others have attempted further development in service to the teaching about responsible parenthood. In *Familiaris Consortio* (On the Family, 1981), Pope John Paul II brought a personalist focus to the teaching. For example, regarding sexuality and fertility he states:

As an incarnate spirit, that is, a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit, man is called to love in his unified totality. Love includes the human body and the body is made a sharer in spiritual love....Consequently, sexuality, by means of which a man and woman give themselves to one another through acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is by no means

something purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such....The total physical self-giving would be a lie if it were not the sign and fruit of a total personal self-giving, in which the whole person...is present: If the person were to withhold something or reserve the possibility of deciding otherwise in the future, by this very fact he or she would not be giving totally.

This totality which is required by conjugal love also corresponds to the demands of responsible fertility. This fertility is directed to the generation of a human being and so by its nature surpasses the purely biological order and involves a whole series of personal values. (FC, #11)

I made my first attempt to explain the teaching in *Family Planning: A Guide for Exploring the Issues* (Liguori Publications, 1985). I later wrote an article entitled "Fertility: An Interpersonal Gift" (*Ethics and Medics*, May, 1989. Pope John Center, Braintree, MA). In the article, I asserted four points, regarding marital sexuality and fertility from the perspective of a Catholic theology of marriage.

1. Pope John Paul II, in his writings on Genesis 1 and 2, asserts that the Adam and Eve myth is about "original unity" and "original innocence." In marriage, couples are called to recreate this sexual unity, naked

without shame, in their reciprocal self-donation ("bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh"). This is expressed in our embodied sexuality, masculine and feminine. Spouses' combined fertility has the capacity to continue the ultimate creativity of God in transmitting human life. Fertility therefore is not merely a physical process. It is imbued with personal values of marital love, imaging God in sexual unity.

2. Sacramental marriage is rooted in the Old Covenant (unconditional love) and the New Covenant (self-surrendering love). A covenant, by definition, is open-ended; it is a pledge of commitment, vulnerability, and reconciliation in advance. Spousal fertility is to be mutually accepted unconditionally as one expression of God's covenant with humanity, embodied and lived in each couple's marital covenant.
3. Marriage is to be "an intimate partnership of life and love." The documents of Vatican II echo the Genesis story citing our need for a "suitable partner," implying our radical equality as God's children, male and female. In marriage, intimate partnership means intersubjectivity, i.e. the mutual revealing of our innermost selves and accepting all there is to receive about our spouse in his or her totality. This includes fertility.
4. Fertility needs to be integrated into personal sexual awareness so that our self-gift in marriage is not just genitally competent, but holistically sexual. In contraception, fertility is isolated outside awareness - it is impersonal. But fertility is an "inter-person-all" capacity, exchanged along with other aspects of marital sexuality - emotions, spirit, intellect and body.

These four points can be summarized as follows:

1992 DIOCESAN NFP PROFILE REPORT

In the Fall of 1990, the Diocesan Development Program (DDP) initiated an annual national survey. Diocesan NFP coordinators or contact persons were asked to complete a "Profile Sheet" that would:

- 1) provide the DDP with a clearer understanding of diocesan NFP efforts, by focusing on the unique needs of individual dioceses; and
- 2) enable the DDP to provide the diocesan bishops and NFP coordinators with a national "picture" of diocesan NFP program activity.

The information on page 7 is the report of the 1992 Diocesan NFP program activity.

(See page 7.)

The Church teaches that, through knowledge and self-mastery fertility is to be integrated into a covenant relationship of self-giving, honoring the unitive and procreative meanings of marriage, intercourse, fertility, and child-rearing. Each act of intercourse celebrates marital intimacy, just as the Liturgy of the Eucharist celebrates the story told in the Liturgy of the Word.

Mutuality and Equality

Responsible parenthood is not the treating of fertility as a disease (through chemicals or devices) in order to control the procreative effects of intercourse. It is the ability to respond to the truth of God's design for love and fertility, and to refrain from intercourse; utilize infertile phases; or seek to achieve conception. All three decisions need to reflect responsible parenthood. Keeping in mind the description of responsible parenthood cited in the introductory section of this article, to integrate fertility into marital love is a form of "dominion" or "stewardship", not of domination or manipulation. This has implications for the contemporary questions of women's equality in marriage as well as society.

Because of the esteem which it holds for marriage and the integrity of marital intercourse, the teaching office of the Church proclaims contraception as a danger to marital intimacy, to its unitive as well as procreative meanings. Contraception alters human sexuality at the personal, not just the biological level. It deprives the couple of their reciprocal, total gift of self and tempts them to become objects of manipulation. It deminishes total self-gift through an attempt to eliminate the procreative meaning and effect of marital intercourse. It creates an unequal partnership in a fragile area of marital intimacy and the potential for cooperating with the summit of God's creativity.

In its chauvinism, contraception is a conditional "yes, but" to covenant values. Granted, with contraception, women can avoid the caricature "barefoot and pregnant." But is the contraception-era product the Playboy "playmate" - always available and contraceptively

sterilized - a more dignified image for women? Many feminists seem to miss this subtle point. In the name of liberation, feminists endorsing contraception and abortion reinforce one of the roots of the inequality they wish to eradicate. (I refer the reader to the article "Men on Abortion" in the March 1990 issue of *Esquire*, which clearly reveals the residual sexism of American males in this era of a woman's right to "control her body.")

Fertility Acceptance and Contraception Compared

It is because of the concerns and values I have been addressing thus far that I propose the following comparison of contraception and modern methods of fertility acceptance (natural family planning).

FERTILITY ACCEPTANCE (NFP)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accepts fertility integrating it into mutual self-giving. 2. Body as incarnate person; act through it. 3. Accepts God's design by exercising dominion (stewardship). 4. Mutual. 5. Behaviorally procreative or non-procreative. 6. Self-mastery develops virtue.
CONTRACEPTION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nonacceptance by altering or destroying fertility; non-integration. 2. Body as sub-personal; act upon it. 3. Re-design creation through manipulation (domination). 4. Chauvinistic or sexist. 5. Behaviorally anti-procreative. 6. Controls physical processes, creates dependency.

Contraception: Is There Anything to Celebrate?

If you believe technology always assists human values and human living, then you might consider contraception a blessing. Some have believed, evidence to the contrary, that contraception will make abortion rare.

As Malcolm Potts, the former medical director of the International Planned Parenthood Federation accurately predicted in 1973:

'As people turn to contraception, there will be a rise not a fall in the abortion rate'....Japanese research had shown that women who use contraception have six times as many abortions as other women....In England...in 1949 the number of procured abortions was 8.7 times higher among couples who habitually practiced contraception than among those who did not....In Switzerland, where contraception was almost unrestricted, abortions were alleged to equal or outnumber live births by 1955.... (In My Mother's Womb, DeMarco, pp. 77-79.)

Further, concerning the alleged social benefits of contraception, DeMarco notes

...a pervasive and unchecked contraceptive mentality creates a wider clientele that is susceptible to sexual experimentation and all the ills such activity produces: unwanted pregnancies; illegitimacy; abortions; venereal disease; promiscuity; cervical cancer; reproduction problems; sterilization; sexual exploitation; and so on....Thus the widespread use of contraceptives leads to more and not less abortion....The contraceptive mentality is not the cure but the cause of the abortion mentality. (Ibid, pg. 77.)

Prophetically, Pope Paul VI predicted similar problems in 1968 (*Humanae vitae* #17). Maybe he didn't say enough about the contraceptive mentality. I often wonder what he would say today about 1.6 million abortions per year in our country alone?

The "Greenness" of Fertility Acceptance

Contraception has also had an effect on a human "ecology" of the body, such as the side effects of the contraceptive pill or the intrauterine device. Feminists and population control environmentalists who propose mandatory contraception, sterilization, and abortion services for the human community need to heed a wake-up call: the same masculine domination

approach to the pillaging of the earth and its "benefits" to men (power and wealth) parallels the exploitation of women's fertility and the accompanying "benefits" to men (sexual license, irresponsibility, escape from intimacy, and sexual immaturity). This is why Stratford Caldecott, in an article entitled "The Greenness of Catholicism" can write:

If the Pope had accepted artificial contraception he would have encouraged couples to import the profane technological mentality into the most sacred and private spheres. On the other hand, Natural Family Planning, by means of cyclic abstinence, respects the sacred, respects woman, and respects nature. It's as "green" as can be. It treats sex as a path to wholeness, because wholeness is achieved by self-giving, and self-giving depends on self-possession. NFP can be used as a way of taking possession of our sexuality, whereas contraception is a way of avoiding consequences. The two paths lead in different directions.

(New Oxford Review, December 1989.)

Fertility and the Marriage Covenant: What's Required?

This article is largely concerned with couples of normal fertility. The issue of the therapeutic use of contraceptive agents or surgery is not addressed here,

since it is covered by a different set of moral principles. However, given the testimony of many couples who live modern methods of NFP, the following seem to be required common virtues: mutual agreement; motivation, com-

mitment, and cooperation; patience; reciprocal and mutual self-giving; self-mastery; integrity; communication; generativity, sacrifice, responsibility, and mutual support; Gospel values, prayer,

and worship. In other words, what seems to be required in order to use NFP is the same as what's required for a Christian marriage. NFP is not always easy, yet, rooting our love in God can help to transcend the tough times in any aspect of marital growth. Most Christian couples have to embrace the Cross during periods of learning, adjustment, and ongoing progress toward couple autonomy in applying the knowledge. Most couples, in a recent study (cited below), concede the effort and the benefits are worth whatever struggles they periodically might encounter. More specifically, I assert the following qualities: a husband and wife who do not believe intercourse is a constitutional right but rather a gift freely given; a couple who are mature enough to postpone intercourse during their fertile phase and rely on other forms of intimacy and affection; a couple who do not bring a contraceptive mentality to intercourse and would not abort a surprise pregnancy; a husband who accepts his wife in her totality and does not ask her to change herself viz her fertility; a wife who loves herself and her husband enough to honor her's and their combined fertility as a central aspect of their covenant promise to image God and receive each other in their totality; a couple who pray and rely on God to direct and support their lifetime partnership of marriage and parenthood.

"Evangelization is difficult when people do not understand the foundation of our teachings."

Humanae Vitae: A Prophetic Voice

I concur with Church teaching on marital sexuality and fertility. I think it is a radical, prophetic word in the face of a spectrum of increasing violence - from violence done to one's fertility and life in the womb, to the violence of assisted suicide. One evocative reflection on this teaching comes from Juli Loesch Wiley, a peace and justice activist. In the October 18, 1985 issue of *Commonweal*, she wrote:

Pope Paul VI asserted...that the human design is not arbitrary but providential. In particular our sexual design, (with its pleurability, and its fertility, and its bond-ability) is not sick. We don't need to be cured of it....our sexual powers are O.K. They don't need to be fixed.

If (he) had been a politician, he would have O.K.'ed contraception. Virtually every social, political, scientific, and religious institution on earth was for it. Any politician can tell which way the wind is blowing; and any religious charlatan can get the drift and call it the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit isn't just anything that's blowing in the wind. And Paul VI was not a politician.

This I hold to be decisive for the history of the human race. We must either perfect our wholeness, or repudiate it. If we repudiate it, there is little to prevent us from erasing ourselves finally, function by function, line by line. But if we perfect our wholeness, we will hold up before the eyes of the world the image and likeness of God.

A Pastoral Challenge to Our Bishops

In spite of the assertion that *Humanae vitae* is a prophetic document, I wish our bishops, at home and abroad, would in some way open up a new "dialogue" on birth control. A dialogue, not seeking to change the teachings, but to foster a mature understanding of them. A dialogue between some of our most insightful theologians, NFP couples, NFP

providers, and bishops. I wish such a dialogue would take place for reasons of 1) formation; 2) evangelization; and 3) service.

Healthy, holy, and consistent formation in human sexuality is needed for all who minister in the Church today (both lay and ordained.) Pope John Paul II is a gifted teacher. He makes use of language which is positive and inviting when he teaches us about God's vision of human sexuality. However, there is a real break down between his positive teaching and that of many leaders in the local church who are called to bring this message to the people. Great ambivalence and even hostility reign in the minds of many clergy and lay professionals on this issue. It should be clear that it is unacceptable for our religious leaders to be silent on these issues. As Archbishop Quinn of San Francisco requested during the 1980 Synod on the Family, "we need a better and more thorough presentation of Church teaching". This is not an easy task, since many criticisms of the teaching need to be refuted in a way which is accessible to clergy and lay professionals. There is also no "popularized" version of the teaching available to ordinary Catholics. Specific and creative programming which should seek to form our religious leaders and faithful alike in a mature, authentically Catholic understanding of human sexuality is needed from our bishops. And this programming could be the fruit of the type of dialogue described above.

Evangelization is difficult when people do not understand the foundation of our teachings. This is certainly the case with regard to conjugal fertility. Many of our people do not know what is meant by "natural law." Some of our theologians have charged that the Church's use of natural law to explain our moral teachings on birth control is "outdated", or that our teachings are overly "physicalistic." We must ask if any of these charges are true? Or, more importantly, has an acceptance of

these charges biased the minds and hearts of the people? And if they have, where are the compelling arguments countering dissenting positions? It is my guess that there is a lack of a common conceptual base, especially regarding personhood and incarnate love.

If I am correct in identifying one aspect of the problem, a dialogue which is fruitful could help us find the stronger avenues of communication which will help to plant the seeds of conversion. But in order to uncover a solution we must be ready to ask the hard questions: e.g., "Do our people really know what it means to be an embodied person?"; "How are we communicating what it means to live a sacramental marriage while addressing the Catholic perspective on fertility?"; "Are our beliefs with regard to marital chastity attainable?"; "What can we learn from those couples who are living NFP?";

"How can we help interfaith unions reap the fruits of a sacramental marriage while addressing the Catholic perspective on fertility?"; "How do we address the infertile couple?", etc. Also, there are apparently many Catholic spouses who resort to contraception and do not seem to suffer all the evils which DeMarco cites above. Where do these couples fit into the theological scheme and at the same time, how do we convey to them that practicing contraception will negatively effect their marriages? Maybe couples in these situations can contribute to a dialogue.

These are the kinds of issues which could be respectfully discussed and debated for the purpose of identifying the common foundation which can enable the contemporary Catholic to understand and accept the values of these teachings. In the event that the teaching became more widely accepted, many dioceses lack a viable program in NFP, some

even lack a full time office of Family Life. Our structures need to reflect our espoused values. I am not so naive as to believe that I have completely addressed the problem, much less identified a solution. Perhaps a well constructed dialogue on the values expressed in *Humanae vitae* may be able to challenge us to strengthen marriage and family ministry, and thus our efforts of formation, evangelization, and services.

A Challenge to Couples

Frequently, many couples who come to NFP after using contraceptives will say they wished that they had learned this before their marriages. Because of

this common feedback in NFP circles, and because many healthcare professionals and popular magazines mislead people about modern NFP, I believe many Catholic spouses need to take another look at

... the same masculine domination approach to the pillaging of the earth. . .parallels the exploitation of women's fertility. . ."

the evidence about NFP. For example, they need to know that the phrase "Rhythm Method" is used by healthcare professionals and journalists alike, and is usually quoted as 75-80% effective. That is because most studies of contraceptives, which are the source of such data, do not include studies about modern, up-to-date fertility acceptance methods (Billings/OM and STM). Or, it is asserted that men won't cooperate with NFP (i.e., men are "too immature" and therefore women shouldn't bother to learn about their own fertility).

In the avoidance of pregnancy, all methods have two effectiveness rates: theoretical (usually higher) and user-variable (somewhat lower). For example, the Billings/OM has a theoretical method effectiveness rate of 98-99%, but a user-variable rate of 85-90%. What does this mean? A couple who become pregnant may not have adequately learned NFP or received

poor teaching; they could have been negligent in applying the knowledge; or they could have been achieving a pregnancy (for which most family planning studies exhibit a bias by including it as a "method failure"). Thus, when user-variable rates are all that are published, usually meaning the old calendar "Rhythm Method," couples are misled about the effectiveness of NFP.

With NFP an "unexpected" pregnancy is not due to the failure of some external agent (e.g., condom, diaphragm, etc.) but due to the behavior of the couple. In reality, NFP is not so much a method, but a body of knowledge about fertility that, when learned and applied properly, is as effective in pregnancy avoidance as a contraceptive pill. This is true even for women with "irregular" cycles.

Some supportive data came in 1987. The American Bishops' Diocesan Development Program for NFP commissioned a study of over 3,300 NFP users. The study discovered that over 70% of couples are satisfied with NFP and 78% of wives/85% of husbands believe there should be mutual responsi-

bility for fertility in marriage. In addition, NFP users have high levels of agreement on various non-genital forms of intimacy.

Can couples practice NFP with a contraceptive mentality? Sure. But they will one day have to deal with their discordant motif - being closed to conception but behaving as if open to it (since they are not chemically or mechanically altering their fertility or acts of intercourse).

Conclusion

I believe the Holy Spirit has the power to speak through celibate males (i.e. Bishops), including the Bishop of Rome. For many, this is an act of faith. But we can celebrate a Pope who, in the face of much opposition, tried to hold up the integrity of God's design for marriage and human life. This article, and the values and concerns it has addressed, is but one effort to illuminate key issues which form the foundation for Church teaching.

I urge couples, married or engaged, to look honestly at their knowledge and understanding of an issue which is so closely connected to the fragile bond of

intimacy required for sacramental marriage. Many dioceses have NFP offices or professionals who can provide up-to-date information. In addition, NFP instruction is available in a private or small group setting. If you know couples who have not fully explored fertility acceptance methods of family planning, invite them to do so.

And, please pray that the Holy Spirit will further inspire the teaching charism of the Church and couples (pastors of the Domestic Church) to a better resolution of this teaching. ■

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A GOOD IDEA FOR NFP PROMOTION

Want to help "get the word out" that the Church's teachings on conjugal love and responsible parenthood are worth living?

Want to share the "good news" about NFP with other couples?

*Want to show some public support for the teachings expressed in **Humanae vitae**?*

Why not write a letter of support of our beliefs to the editor of your diocesan newspaper?

You, the NFP couples who strive to live the Church's teachings in this area of life are the Church's best witnesses! Why not tell the editor of your diocesan newspapers (and/or other Catholic publications) the reasons why you think our teachings are of value? Tell them your story: how you came to discover the truth of the Church's teachings; how you struggled to live marital chastity; how NFP has created a positive effect in your marital lives; how you are able to speak beautifully and clearly to your children on human sexuality; etc.

Sadly, in our Catholic press we don't hear enough of the positive stories from our people who value our teachings on conjugal love and responsible parenthood. Why not consider writing a positive letter and mailing it to coincide with the anniversary of *Humanae vitae*? You could mail your letters during the week before July 25 or after. If every NFP couple did this, we could "flood" our press with a message that there are people who care! So, what's stopping you? Let's all make a united effort to get the word out!

1992 Diocesan NFP Profile Report

Overview of Findings

In November of 1992 187 Profile Sheets were mailed to the dioceses. Sixty-seven or 36% completed and returned their Profile Sheets. Some critical trends continue to hold constant when we compare the 1992 survey to the 1991 survey. These include:

a) The majority of dioceses do not have a full time NFP coordinator.

In the majority of dioceses coordinating NFP activities is one of many other responsibilities held by one person; e.g., the Family Life director.

b) Few NFP programs receive adequate financial support from their dioceses.

A common financial arrangement is for the NFP program to "share" the resources of its umbrella department; e.g., the budget of Family Life; or the facilities of the education department of a Catholic Hospital. The majority of dioceses contribute less than \$5,000. per year to help subsidize NFP programming.

c) The majority of the diocesan NFP teachers are volunteers.

A few dioceses give their teachers a stipend.

d) Although NFP is officially supported in diocesan marriage preparation programs, it is given limited attention.

The average time allotted for NFP education in marriage preparation in 1992 was roughly thirty minutes.

e) Many clients instructed in NFP in the dioceses are non-Catholics.

f) Both the Ovulation Method and the Sympto-thermal Method of NFP are evenly distributed among the majority of the responding dioceses.

In the 1992 Profile Sheet three subjective questions were asked in order to elicit further direction of the efforts of the DDP to aid the diocesan NFP programs. Below is a summary of the responding dioceses' comments and suggestions.

Question #27: What are the three major obstacles limiting the further growth of your program?

The most common responses to this question were:

(Listed in order of frequency mentioned.)

- 1.) The clergy in the dioceses, on the whole, do not support the efforts of the NFP programs.
- 2.) Laity, religious, and clergy are woefully ignorant of the existence of and benefits of NFP.
- 3.) Limited budgets hinder program development; e.g., training for new teachers.
- 4.) Small numbers of NFP teachers per program, along with the transience of trained teachers, and the lack of new teacher recruits make it difficult to both teach and attract larger numbers of clients.

Question #28: Please describe how the DDP can better assist you in your efforts?

The answer to this question expressed the individual needs and concerns of each responding diocesan NFP program. Specific requests such as aid in the implementation of the *National Standards* or assistance with the development of an NFP Advisory Board, reflected the various levels of development of the responding programs. Among the most common suggestions for the DDP were:

- 1.) Initiation and oversight of a national outreach campaign to clergy and Catholic physicians.
- 2.) Development and dissemination of free or low cost NFP education materials, such as generic booklets, brochures, promotional articles for newspapers, clip art, visual teaching aids, posters, etc.
- 3.) Provide information on where to look for and how to write for grants.

Question #29: Please include additional information not covered by this questionnaire which you feel the DDP/NFP should know regarding your diocesan NFP program.

In their many comments, the diocesan NFP coordinators revealed that they were assisting in many related projects in their dioceses. For example, some serve as members of:

- 1.) Diocesan committees of chastity education;
- 2.) Special diocesan task forces seeking to strengthen the Pre-Cana and Marriage Preparation programs; and
- 3.) Steering committees for the formation of state wide NFP associations.

From their personal comments and suggestions, the responding dioceses reveal a group of diocesan professionals who are committed, enterprising, creative, and enthusiastic. Working most often with limited resources, the diocesan NFP coordinators are among the strongest assets to their own programs and indeed, to the diocesan bishop himself. ■

NFP PIONEERS: "CCL Formed in the Aftermath of *Humanae Vitae*"

John F. Kippley

July 25, 1968 was and is an important date within the Catholic Church, for on that day Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical, *Humanae vitae*. This summer marks the 25th anniversary of that document, and it is definitely being noticed. In CCL we celebrated the 20th anniversary at our 1988 bi-annual conference coordinated with the Diocese of Peoria. This summer we plan to do a special commemorative issue of our newsletter, but we do not plan a special national conference because there are already such conferences, and we want to be available to help with any local conferences.

In line with the commemoration of this event, I've been asked to write something about the history of the Couple to Couple League for Natural Family Planning.

The remote foundations go back to the middle Sixties when I was doing parish outreach work to the uncommitted and explaining the Catholic faith in a regular series of classes. It was my responsibility to explain the Church's teaching on sexuality, and it was in this context that I developed the covenant theology of sex, publishing my first article in February, 1967. In 1967-1968 my wife Sheila researched and wrote *Breastfeeding and Natural Child Spacing*. In the immediate aftermath of *Humanae vitae* I was appalled by what was passing for theology in favor of contraception. It was essentially saying that since the Church's teaching would involve the daily cross of sexual restraint at some times for some couples, the teaching was erroneous. Therefore I wrote a book titled *Birth Control and the Marriage Cov-*

*enant, the forerunner of our current *Sex and the Marriage Covenant*.*

Luke 11:46

For me personally, the publication of that book in 1970 was the beginning of CCL. I had reaffirmed the teaching of the Church showing both the errors of the dissenters and providing a somewhat new and positive theology to support it. I felt I had gone out of my way to affirm this difficult and unpopular teaching of the Church and it was then I felt very much the force of Luke 11:46:

And He said, "Woe to you lawyers also! for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers."

Having affirmed the "burden" of marital chastity, I felt obliged (and still do) to do as much as I can to provide the practical help to make that teaching both more livable and therefore, to some, more believable.

My wife and I had taught ourselves the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP through a "Child and Family" article by Dr. Konald A. Prem. Thus, the next summer when we moved to the Twin Cities, we made personal contact with Dr. Prem. We learned he was a professor of OB/ GYN at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine and a long time teacher and promoter of the STM. He was delighted to help us get an organization started, for he had become con-

vinced that an organization such as CCL was necessary for the proper teaching and support of client couples.

The three of us started our first four-meeting course in the fall of 1971 at St. Odilia's Church in Shoreview, a suburb north of St. Paul. From that course and the next one that started in February, we got the nucleus of our Twin Cities chapter including Jim and Mary Glover who are still active in this apostolate.

A chance to teach college theology brought us to Cincinnati the summer of 1972, and within two years it was apparent that I had two full-time jobs on my hands—college and CCL. Two year start-up grants from the Archdioceses of Cincinnati and St. Paul-Minneapolis enabled me to work full-time for CCL beginning in July 1974.

The first few years were fun. Expansion was rapid; there was lots of interest; classes were large; the pains were growing pains.

Our first office was in the uninsulated third floor of the 100-year-old Kippley home. It never got above 62 on cold

days in winter, and that was by mid-afternoon. Of our first two employees, Donna Kneip is still with us and Marguerite Gehrum retired just last year and still comes in to help with special jobs. They would

"Having affirmed the 'burden' of marital chastity, I felt obliged . . . to provide the practical help to make that teaching . . . more livable. . . ."

get the inventory from the basement, carry it up to the third floor for processing, and then carry it down to the main floor for shipping. Better than belonging to a health club! I cannot verify this,

but they tell me they had to bring their own pencils.

CCL in the Eighties

International expansion started in mid-1979 with the certification of Gerard and Hilde Loriaux in Belgium; they had attended a course I taught in upstate New York while they were on temporary military duty in the U.S., and they wanted to bring CCL back home. The next step in international development was the 1980 move of a Virginia teaching couple, Tom and Olivia McFadden, to Ireland; they worked full-time for over a decade to establish the CCL apostolate in Ireland and England where it continues on its own now that they are back in the States. Service to a gradually increasing number in other countries was the brightest spot of the Eighties, just as the development of interest and service to Eastern European countries has been the brightest spot thus far in the Nineties. CCL currently serves by teaching in 15 countries on four continents, and we support members in all six populated continents and even in such places as Greenland. One staff person, Bill Corey, spends most of his time and energies in serving international development.

The great challenge of the Eighties was dealing with the decreasing interest in NFP. When CCL started in 1971, there were still a great many people who had formed their consciences according to the teaching of the Church—because the teaching was taught. Increasingly in the Eighties, the teaching of the Church was not consistently taught; indeed, young people were often taught to dissent from it. This was reflected in a significant reduction in the numbers of new clients taught by CCL and by every

other NFP program.

We faced the problem of disappointed volunteer teachers by increasing our Central staff to be in closer touch with our volunteer teachers in the field and with cooperative diocesan personnel.

Recognizing the need for education, we published a tidy list of books, booklets, brochures, and audio-visual programs dealing with NFP and chastity issues during the Eighties.

Facing the need for complete and understandable education in NFP in areas not served

by resident volunteer teachers, we developed the CCL Home Study Course, and experience has demonstrated that it does very well what it was intended to do.

The Nineties

The publication of a revised edition of *Breastfeeding and Natural Child Spacing* in 1989 closed out the Eighties, and the publication of Marilyn Shannon's *Fertility, Cycles, and Nutrition* the next summer opened the Nineties. This was followed by the publication of *Sex and the Marriage Covenant* in the summer of 1991, and we are looking forward to the publication this spring or summer of *Marriage Is for Keeps*, a small book on preparation for marriage.

We believe it is not a matter of "if" but only "when" that responsible authorities in the Church and other Christian bodies start to take those actions which will make it obvious to any observer that they are serious about teaching the traditional norms of marital chastity and providing the best of practical help. A number of such actions are described in Chapter 9 of *Sex and the Marriage Covenant*.

We believe that our regular course

on NFP and our new book, *Marriage Is for Keeps*, offer an unprecedented supplement to whatever concerned priests and family life ministers are doing to prepare couples for Christian marriage.

We believe that is worthy of note that when we started CCL in the fall of 1971, we were teaching the three signs of mucus, cervix, and temperature; we were teaching ecological breastfeeding; we were teaching basic marital morality; and we were doing this in a series of four two-hour meetings spaced a month apart. The first two meetings now take about 2 1/2 hours since we started doing some workbook exercises and added a bit more material, but aside from that the basics are the same. We have been reaffirmed repeatedly over the past 21 1/2 years that our original plan was and remains a good one that serves well the needs of families today! ■

John F. Kippley is the President of the Couple to Couple League. The above article, with minor changes, first appeared in CCL Family Foundations, March-April 1993. It is reprinted with permission.

ERRATUM

We discovered an error under "Coordinator's Corner," Winter 1993. Please note the following correction on page 9, right column, last sentence in the first paragraph:

"We see the fruit of this policy working in the 10% or so, of engaged couples attending our classes."

We apologize for this editorial error.

Generating Support for NFP

Rev. Robert R. Cannon, M.A., J.C.L.

In the recently completed 1992 **National Diocesan NFP Profile Report**, diocesan NFP coordinators were asked to identify those factors inhibiting their NFP efforts. The three most troublesome areas mentioned repeatedly were: 1) clergy support; 2) misinformation/ignorance with regard to NFP itself, coupled with the need for a full range of educational efforts "on all levels"; and 3) program funding. As a priest familiar with Church structure and as one supportive of NFP, I'd like to offer a few concrete suggestions to strengthen the NFP efforts of diocesan coordinators.

1. Clergy Support:

When reflecting on how to elicit strong clergy support, it might help to begin with some background. Generally speaking, most lay persons involved in any apostolate in the Church when asked if they receive adequate support from their clergy, commonly note that their clergy offer only "limited" encouragement. You should know that the majority of clergy are genuinely thankful for every sacrifice of service which people make. However, I must admit, that it is very easy to allow the opportunities for praise of people to pass by. Both bishops and priests are not exempt from the human weakness of "taking people for granted". Everyone involved in ministry in the Church has a responsibility to become more mindful of the need to learn how to affirm and support each other.

Part of the difficulty facing all clergy is attending to the ever increasing multiplicity of pastoral demands and needs. This is further aggravated by limited resources and the amount of time that can be devoted to any single ministry. It is important for all those who labor in the Church to understand that there are a full range of ministries, a variety of groups, and a list of priorities which

must be balanced. The question, then, is not one of good will and support, but rather one of perception. Part of your challenge will be to convince both bishop and priests that NFP is not only needed in the diocese but also how you can help satisfy that same need.

No where else in the Church do the clergy face more formidable challenges than in the area of our teaching on human sexuality. We all know how misunderstood the Church's teachings are on this topic. Yet, the clergy must teach God's people and provide resources for his people to understand and to live these teachings. People who are knowledgeable of the Church's teachings on conjugal love and responsible parenthood, users of NFP, as well as teachers of any of the methods of NFP offer a partial solution to this pressing pastoral need in a diocese. Your expertise is a real blessing.

We know that about half of the dioceses in our country have an identifiable NFP program. The other half has programs at all levels of development, with a good amount having only "contact persons" (those diocesan staff who refer clients to the local NFP independent teachers). Diocesan NFP coordinators will have a structure to work through which is different from that of the independent NFP teacher who has minimal diocesan support. Yet, certain activities can be engaged in which would benefit both. I would only caution the independent NFP teachers to consider working on strengthening their connections with the diocesan NFP contact person in order to work toward fuller participation of the diocese in this ministry (this work is too hard to not have a network of support). In addition, when you are new to NFP ministry, be sure to check with your chancery to see if an NFP program already exists and if there is a diocesan policy or guidelines for teaching human

sexuality, fertility appreciation or chastity education. You don't want your good efforts to be perceived as trying to "usurp" the structure which is already in place.

In order to draw out stronger support from your clergy I would suggest that diocesan NFP coordinators try the following:

A) *Know "who's who" in your diocese.* Then, talk with as many key personnel as possible; e.g., Bishop, Superintendent of Schools, Religious Education Director, Vicar General, Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Vicar for Social Services, Director of the Family Life Office, Head of Cursillo, Marriage Encounter, etc. People have to know who you are and what you are trying to do. Ask them about any concerns that they may have. Ask them for their advice in having your efforts be successful. For the diocesan NFP Coordinator, consider inviting anyone of these people to join your Advisory Board.

B) *Talk with each Dean.* A Dean is a pastor who is responsible to the bishop for the ministerial efforts of a cluster of parishes in the diocese. Ask each dean for the opportunity to address their deanery clergy. You can do a basic NFP promotional presentation, answer questions, and look for pastors who seem willing to have you come to their parish. This is an excellent format to educate the clergy on the most recent Church teaching and scientific information on NFP. Most dioceses have this deanery format. Your diocese may have episcopal vicars who exercise pastoral responsibility to the bishop over an area of the diocese. Talk to all of them if need be.

C) *Meet with pastors personally.* Explain what your program can do for the married, engaged, and the young people in the parish. The pastor will be concerned about your competency, cost, time required for his involvement, use of facilities, materials, etc. Have a plan of action and some concrete answers before you meet with him. But the support of your pastor is only one step in gathering parish support for NFP. Offer to address the other clergy in the parish, the parish staff (e.g., DRE, Youth Minister, and Principal) and parish council. All you have to do is have one parish become supportive of your NFP efforts and you could meet many of the needs of an entire area.

2. *Misinformation and Education:*

It is common knowledge that there continues to be a tremendous amount of misinformation about NFP. NFP methods are still being linked to "rhythm" in the average American "reproductive" cultural mind. In addition, there remains a serious lack of sophistication of our Catholic understanding of the gift of human sexuality, conjugal love, and responsible parenting. Therefore; wherever possible, "Educate!", "Educate!", "Educate!" There are a plethora of avenues for you to explore and utilize, for example:

A) *Guest speaker.* Organizations are always looking for speakers to fill-out the agenda for meetings or to provide continuing education. Be willing to speak to organizations both on a diocesan level and parish level to promote NFP and to gather support for your efforts; e.g., women's and men's groups, those involved in Engaged Encounter Weekends, Marriage Encounter weekends, Cursillo Ultreya's, Knights of Columbus, Parish Guilds, Youth Groups, CCD teachers, Catholic high school teachers, Parent groups, etc. Determine for yourself if you need to reach out beyond the Catholic community in your area.

B) *Media relations.* Sitdown with your diocesan communications director to discuss what avenues of educating the public are available through: the diocesan paper; bulletin inserts; TV, or radio programs, etc. The commercial media, be it T.V., radio, or print, are often open to presentations or articles on NFP. In secular papers, the editor of the "Religion" section of the Sunday edition is always looking for new articles. You might become a regular columnist.

3. *Finances:*

Regardless of the ministry, money is tight for everyone both on the diocesan and the parish level. There never has been enough money to go around for all the good things that we would like to do. The most successful NFP programs rely on a variety of sources for program funding. The most common funding sources are diocesan subsidies, donations from individuals/organizations, and/or client fees to subsidize NFP efforts. Therefore, work to avoid relying completely on any single source of funding. Money can be found:

A) *Parishes.* Most pastors will part with a small amount to donate to promoting NFP (especially if you are willing to help them, they'll be willing to help you).

B) *Donations.* When you address different groups, ask them for a donation to support the NFP effort. Even better, ask for an annual donation of some amount. The amount doesn't matter as much as encouraging continued support for your efforts. You can reciprocate by being willing to return to the groups and give an NFP update.

C) *Mailing list/Newsletter.* Develop a mailing list of supportive individuals, organizations, and individuals. Through it, you can ask for donations directly. Many programs have a newsletter for keeping contact with their NFP supporters. A newsletter is really essential for developing an NFP support network in a diocese.

D) *Identify supportive groups.* There are groups who are attracted to supporting NFP because it supports Church teaching on human sexuality. Local councils of the Daughters of Isabella; Catholic Daughters; Knights of Columbus; Holy Name Society; Diocesan Council of Catholic Women; any type of interfaith alliance for Chastity promotion; various Pro-Life groups, etc., may be willing to help in a variety of ways. Draw them into your efforts.

E) *Non-profit groups.* Investigate non-profit groups as potential sources of funding. Depending upon your NFP status, some non-profit groups, e.g., United Way or even Protestant churches, might contribute to your NFP program. In some instances, it is possible to tap into Title X money.

Promoting and establishing clergy support both on the diocesan and the parish level, continuing education, and finding sources of funding must be seen as part and parcel of your ongoing work to strengthen NFP in your diocese.

Finally and most importantly, I must underscore the need for a united front. For the new NFP Coordinator or new NFP teacher, before you try any of the suggestions offered:

- 1) Know what NFP efforts are already operative and ongoing in your diocese;
- 2) Learn the history of NFP in your diocese;
- 3) Get to know the other individuals who are involved in NFP services in the diocese;
- 4) Know where teachers have received their training.

A little investigation can help you link up your efforts with those who support NFP, avoid past mistakes, and ensure a great return on your time and effort. ■

Rev. Robert R. Cannon, M.A., J.C.L., is Vicar for Marriage Matters in the Diocese of Venice, FL. Fr. Cannon assists the DDP in different projects, especially through overseeing the data collection of the annual National Diocesan NFP Program Profile Report.

INFPA Conference 1993—Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*

Donna Dausman

"How do you celebrate a battle?", asked Donna Dausman, Director of Family Life, Diocese of Springfield, IL, as she quoted Fr. Ron Lawler (Pope John XXIII Institute, Braintree, MA) in her opening talk during the Illinois NFP Association's (INFPA) 1993 continuing education conference. "You celebrate carefully", continued Mrs. Dausman, for this battle is not "a noble or glorious battle, like that of the crossing of the Red Sea, but one in which brother was fighting brother, causing much pain and confusion within the Church." Dausman noted that we have to "Give credit to God who through Paul VI gave us beautiful words and much compassion and the many heroic people who led us through a difficult time." Thus the Illinois Natural Family Planning conference carefully but joyfully celebrated this anniversary on March 26-28, 1993.

Conference sessions spoke to specific sections of *Humanae vitae*. Each session

addressed both the theology of the document and its lived experience. Using the works of both Paul VI and John Paul II, Bishop John Myers of Peoria spoke eloquently of "life-giving life." Daniel Hauser, a philosophy professor at the College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL, spoke of conjugal love, both from the document's theoretical perspective and his own life experience as husband, father, and teacher. NFP teaching couples shared their experience of living out married love that is human, total, fruitful, and faithful. Others addressed the mission of responsible parenthood and the joys and challenges of living that out with children of various ages.

Bishop Roger Kaffer, Auxiliary Bishop of Joliet, IL, spoke of the section of the document which addressed the Church "as guardian and authentic interpreter of all moral law." Using his antidotal stories recently acquired from his Ad Limina Visit to Rome, Bishop Kaffer

spoke about Paul VI and the birth control commission of the 1960's. In relating a conversation which he had with Cardinal Gagnon, who had acted as a researcher for the birth control commission, Bishop Kaffer said that as to the charge that Paul VI was later tormented about his decision to uphold the traditional teaching of the Church after the promulgation of *Humanae vitae*, "that is absolutely false." Gagnon said that one day, after he was named president of the Pontifical Council on the Family, Pope Paul VI told him that eventually humanity will be thankful that we saved society from a very great danger but, "It will take time." Gagnon said the pope was not tormented, but rather Gagnon had the impression he had been divinely inspired. "He [Paul VI] had the greatest tranquility."

The intent of the INFPA conference was to celebrate the vision of human life articulated in *Humanae vitae*. The encyclical was explored not only for its own value, but also to underscore its relevance in the '90's. One of the particular goals of the conference was to look beyond *Humanae vitae* to other documents of the Church. In doing so, conference faculty and participants helped each other realize that our NFP ministry is an integral part of the fabric of the Church and not just a remnant as some would have us believe. It was exciting both to hear the faculty address this interconnectedness through the social justice, respect-life, and family life documents. Equally important was the workshop where conference participants discussed their views and experiences on related church documents.

The entire weekend addressed both the positive teaching proclaimed in *Humanae vitae* and lived through NFP, and the problems and confusion caused by the dissent from the document. The question commonly asked was what can be learned from this which is applicable to our NFP ministry? Using a second quote from Fr. Lawler, conference participants saw an attempt at an answer.



Participants at the 1993 INFPA Conference.

The lesson to be learned is from the document itself. It is a gentle document, which is a witness to faith. It never orders or commands, but teaches, exhorts, and encourages people to do what is good. It doesn't begin with tough rules, but by how wonderful it is to have a vocation to create children who belong to God forever and who belong to parents who need to love and care for them. Pope Paul VI spoke with compassion to a Church that is clearly hurting. (R. Lawler, Seminar—*Humanae vitae*, Diocese of Peoria, March 1993.)

If there is a lesson to be learned through this celebration and conference, it is to follow Paul VI's example, to speak with compassion to a Church and a world that is clearly hurting by a confusion of morals, values, and life. ■

For those of you interested in purchasing tapes of the conference, contact: R.B. Media, Inc., 154 Doral, Springfield, Il. 62704; 217-546-5261.

Donna Dausman, the Director of the Office of Family Life, Diocese of Springfield, IL, is also a member of the Board of Directors of the INFPA and the NCCB's National NFP Advisory Board.



Donna Dausman and Mary Therese Egizio address the participants of the 1993 INFPA Conference.

COORDINATORS' CORNER

"NFP Week in Wichita Diocese"

Ruth S. Taylor, M.D.

The diocese of Wichita consists of the 25 south-eastern counties of the state of Kansas. In a population of approximately one million, some 100,000 are Catholic (about 10%). In the last issue of our newsletter (see "News Briefs", Winter 1993), we reported on the designation of an NFP week by Bishop Eugene Gerber of the diocese of Wichita. Because of the interest this event has sparked in several dioceses, Dr. Taylor has graciously provided the following article in order to give our readers a fuller picture of this activity.

Other dioceses may have at sometime designated an "NFP Sunday" in their dioceses in the past. When our project in Wichita was decided upon, Bishop Gerber designated one entire week. He thought it would be more appropriate to use a week during Respect Life Month. And so, October 18-25, 1992, was chosen as "Natural Family Planning Week."

After considerable discussion and consideration as to what would be the best course of action, the following format was implemented:

1. Sunday, October 18, 1992: Bishop Gerber published a special article on the front page of the Diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Advance*.

2. Special NFP brochures were printed presenting information about the three main types of schools of NFP in the diocese: Ovulation Method (Creighton Model); Billings Ovulation Method; and Couple to Couple League (Sympto-Thermal). These brochures gave accurate information about each of the twenty active teachers in the diocese. The brochures were sent to all the pastors in the diocese with the request that they be stapled to the Sunday bulletins on October 25th.
3. The following week, a detailed article by the diocesan coordinator appeared in the diocesan newspaper further explaining the reasons why NFP is the best family planning method. The article described

the various NFP programs represented in the diocese, together with names and telephone numbers of each NFP teacher for information on instruction. In addition, parishes not heretofore served by NFP were encouraged to call the larger centers or nearby centers for arrangements for outreach programs.

4. Each pastor in the diocese received a sample homily on NFP as well as suggested "Prayers for the Faithful" from Bishop Gerber for use on Sunday, October 25.
5. NFP teachers and users were on hand after all Masses at the larger churches in the diocese giving out additional brochures with specific information concerning one or more of the NFP centers including schedules of classes.

Many people have asked us if we "have seen a significant response to the NFP week?" I would not say that the response was "overwhelming", but in comparing the first quarters of 1992-1993 data (from our records of the Quarterly Data survey) I would estimate the percentage of new clients is about 75%. So, attendance in NFP classes as well as requests for information have noticeably increased. This increase has no doubt reflected an increased awareness on the part of our people in the diocese.

The increase may also reflect the active referrals by the pastors, particularly of engaged couples to NFP teachers.

Most importantly, there has been a recognizable elevation of enthusiasm among our NFP teachers. Triggered mostly by NFP Week but also supplemented by several other events which occurred around the same time. For example, we are now blessed to have Dr. Lorna Cvetkovich, an OB/Gyn. specializing in infertility, who has relocated to Wichita within the past year. Dr. Cvetkovich is a NFP practitioner and medical consultant as well. In her practice she makes great use of the

NFP centers by referring her patients for instruction. Dr. Cvetkovich has also made herself available for consultation and treatment of difficult cases.

The second boost to moral has been the appointment of a diocesan NFP Coordinator and the formation of the diocesan NFP Advisory Board. The main NFP programs in the Wichita diocese have existed as departments in the two large Catholic Hospitals in Wichita; St. Francis Regional Medical Center and St. Joseph Medical Center. The centers have been supported by the two hospitals and staffed with NFP practitioners who are nurses. Initiating the process of DDP

Endorsement required the appointment of the diocesan NFP coordinator and the formation of the Advisory Board. Rather than this being a burden for us, it has had a positive effect on the NFP community because it represents a strong commitment of the diocese to NFP activity.

A third boost to moral has been the diocesan NFP Advisory Board itself. The members of Advisory Board have defined the needs to expand NFP in the diocese, especially in outlying parishes. They have initiated a process whereby their goals can be realized. The most important of these goals are:

- a) NFP educational seminars for clergy;
- b) Expanded Engaged Encounter presentations;
- c) Increased visibility through more publicity of NFP;
- d) Teacher recruitment and training.

A fourth element which we can celebrate is the new energy we see in our two hospitals mentioned above. They have demonstrated a renewed interest in finding additional ways to advertise NFP and serve more NFP clients. Outreach programs to other communities are therefore in the planning.

Probably our most happy turn of events is a policy change in Marriage preparation which Bishop Gerber has recently established. Bishop Gerber has created a requirement that all Engaged Encounter presenter couples be NFP users! We are very grateful for Bishop Gerber's insight into the importance of that witness.

With all that has happened since NFP Week 1992, we are definitely hoping that this event will be repeated annually in the diocese. Although we know that we still have much work ahead of us, we are sure that with the type of support we are receiving from our bishop, we can meet the future with a little more confidence! ■

Dr. Ruth Taylor, M.D., is the NFP coordinator for the Diocese of Wichita, KS.

Letter of Bishop Gerber on NFP Week

Published under the title, "Bishop Proclaims Next Week as NFP Week", the following is a reprint of Bishop Gerber's letter for his people which was published in his diocesan paper The Catholic Standard, October 16, 1992.

My Dear People,

I am seldom as awestruck as when a man and a woman, on their day of marriage, come before God in the presence of family and friends and solemnly promise: "I will love you and honor you all the days of my life."

This promise of fidelity is both a giving kind of action and a receiving kind of action in which unity is the most profound craving and sexual intercourse the most profound expression.

Unhappily, what is an expression of unity can become divisive. What is a blessing can become a burden. What is love-increasing can become love-diminishing and eventually death-dealing.

Artificial contraception is one of the most subtle, often unrecognized, culprits. It establishes a barrier in this giving-receiving, donation-returning expression of love in sexual intercourse and runs a high risk of undermining other dimensions of the marital interpersonal relationship, including the relationship with God.

The giving-receiving kind of action which began as a total gift to God and to each other on the day of marriage gradually becomes a qualified gift on the part of husband and wife and eventually sexual intercourse is entered into for selfish pleasure alone.

It seems to me that the dynamic which I have sketched here is one of the natural reasons for the consistent teaching of the Church that artificial contraception, including sterilization, is gravely immoral.

Increasingly, couples are identifying artificial contraception for the culprit that it often is in undermining their marital relationship. A goodly number of these couples are investigating NFP for its contributions to their individual lives, their life in common, and their life in union with God.

In an effort to heighten the awareness of the benefits of this built-in natural conception regulation method, I have designated next week as NFP week. Homilies will be preached and brochures will be distributed this weekend at parish Masses. *The Catholic Advance* will devote a special section to NFP in next week's edition.

*in Christ,
Eugene J. Gerber,
Bishop of Wichita*

NEWS BRIEFS



DDP ANNOUNCEMENTS

NFP Video Directory. Please note the following changes and corrections in the NFP Video Directory:

p. 4, #11, Natural Family Planning, Sacred Heart Medical Center, Spokane, WA. The full title of the video should read: *NFP; An Alternative For You*. The correct prices are: \$29.95 plus \$3.50 S & H; Rental \$10.00; or contact Sheed and Ward Publishing Co., P.O. Box 419492, Kansas City, MO 64141.

p. 8, #24, *The Truth Will Set You Free*, St. Cloud, MN. This video was not produced by the Office of NFP. Please delete.

p. 10, #28, *Breastfeeding and NFP*, St. Cloud, MN. Please delete "Family Life Bureau" and substitute with "The Office of NFP." This video was produced by the "Office of NFP."

Implementation of the National Standards. At this time we would like to welcome the Dioceses of Allentown, PA, and San Antonio, TX to the Endorsement process. Also we welcome the NFP teacher training program of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J. to the Approval process.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The American Academy of NFP is calling for professional papers for its Annual Meeting, Omaha, NE, July 22-24, 1993. Abstracts must be submitted on or before April 23, 1993. Presenters

of selected papers will be notified by May 28, 1993. Contact: Lorna Cvetkovich, M.D., Chairperson, Science and Research Committee, AANFP, 1035 North Emporia, Suite 290, Wichita, KS 67214.

National Coalition of NFP was formed as a result of meetings held during the IV International Symposium in Washington, D.C. in 1985. The common goal of the steering committee was to promote NFP both publicly and privately regardless of methodology. The Coalition invites all promoters of NFP to join. Membership for individuals is \$15.00, organizations, \$50.00. Contact: Bobbie Connors, National Coalition of NFP, c/o Birthing and Care Program, 817 Varnum Street, N.E., Suite 260, Washington, D.C. 20017.

Newborn Care Cable Channel. Did you know that there is now a television network for maternity patients? It is

called the "Newborn Channel" and it is aired free of charge in 75 hospitals across the nation. The channel offers a 24-hour educational programming on the essentials of newborn care, postpartum care, and child development. The DDP has minimal information on this new service; however, it may prove to be a good avenue for NFP and breastfeeding promotion. If you have any success in using this avenue for NFP education please let us know. Contact: *The Newborn Channel*, 500 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y., 10110.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Teen Star Workshops will be held: June 14-18, Pittsburgh, PA; June 20-24, Philadelphia, PA; June 25-28, Beaumont, TX; July 1-4, Paris, France; July 17-21, Karachi, Pakistan (prov.); August 2-6,



NFP Director Kay Ek and husband Dave with Bishop Jerome Hanus at 20 year NFP celebration, St. Cloud Country Club.

The NFP Program of the Diocese of St. Cloud, MN celebrated its 20th anniversary on February 13, 1993. Diocesan NFP coordinator, Kay Ek and her staff are to be congratulated for working over the years to build one of the strongest diocesan NFP programs in the country! Much gratitude is also extended to the bishops of St. Cloud during the past 20 years who have consistently supported this ministry. A special "thank you" to current Bishop Jerome Hanus for shepherding the NFP community of St. Cloud! **Congratulations!**

Bethesda, MD; and November 8-11, Vancouver, BC (prov.). Contact: *Hanna Klaus, M.D., NFP Center of Washington, D.C., Inc., 8514 Bradmoor Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817-3810; 301-897-9323.*

Creighton Model NFP Education Programs will begin October 16-24, 1993 with "Education Phase I," a total immersion course. Contact: *Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, 6901 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68106-2604; 402-390-6600.*



MATERIALS

Diocese of St. Cloud, has available through the Office of Natural Family Planning a new video. Entitled *NFP—The Spiritual Link*, this video is geared to clergy. 19 minutes in length, its \$29.95 price includes shipping. Contact: *Office of NFP, 316 North 7th Ave, St. Cloud, MN 56303; 612-252-2100.*

St. John's Mercy Medical Center, St. Louis, MO has available a new film on NFP. Entitled, "Where is it Written?" *Understanding Contemporary Methods of NFP*, this 7 1/2 minute video offers an introduction to three methods of NFP: STM, Billings OM, and the Creighton Model of OM. Price of \$29.95 includes shipping and handling. Contact: *St. John's Mercy Medical Center, Dept. of NFP, 615 South New Ballas Road, St. Louis, MO 63141-8277; 314-569-6495.*

HUMANAE VITAE Celebrations

July 24, 1993, "Celebrating 25 Years of Diocesan NFP Ministry—A National Banquet." The Diocesan Development Program for NFP, Omaha, NE. In lieu of the DDP's biennial conference a banquet will be held for diocesan NFP coordinators, teachers, and their spouses in Omaha, NE, on Saturday, July 24, 1993. Following the dinner, presentations to be made will focus upon the unique nature of NFP services offered under the auspices of the Church. For those who cannot attend this banquet, audio tapes will be available upon request. Contact: *DDP, 3211 4th St., N.E., W.D.C. 20017; 202-541-3240.*

International Humanae Vitae Conference, Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, Omaha, NE July 25-30, 1993, will bring together internationally known experts in NFP. Contact: *Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, 6901 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68106-2604; 402-390-6600.*

Archdiocese of New York will sponsor a celebration of the 25th Anniversary of *Humanae vitae* on June 26, 1993, at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y. Among the featured speakers will be John Cardinal O'Connor; Janet Smith, Ph. D.; and Msgr. William Smith. Contact: *Sheila Potter, Associate Director for NFP Apostolate, Archdiocese of New York, 1011 First Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022; 212-371-1000.*

The Diocese of Worcester and Assumption College will host an all day academic conference celebrating the **Twentyfifth Anniversary of *Humanae vitae*** and **The Fifteenth Anniversary of Pope John Paul II's Installation** on Saturday, September 18, 1993. Among the speakers will be: Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D.; Janet Smith, Ph.D.; and Mr. Virgil Dechant, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus. Contact: *Rev. Stephen F. Torracco, Assumption College, 500 Salisbury St., Worcester, MA 01615; or call Office for Academic Affairs, 508-752-5615, x312.*

AANFP's Annual Meeting, entitled "*Humanae Vitae, Responding to the Challenge*", will be held in Omaha, NE, July 22-24, 1993. Contact: *Sr. Julianna Jervis, CNFP, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, 235 West Sixth St., Reno, NV 89520-0108; 702-789-3079; FAX 702-789-3679.*

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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. *The activities of the DDP for NFP are generously funded by a grant from the Knights of Columbus*