

# FORUM

Diocesan Activity Report

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## The Holy Father to Teachers of NFP

On December 7, 1996, the Holy Father spoke to NFP teacher candidates. The teacher education session was sponsored by the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Rome.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, dear brothers and sisters,

Once again this year the Catholic University's Study and Research Center for Natural Fertility Regulation is offering a course to train teachers in the natural methods. This meeting is particularly significant, because it is being held during the 20th year of this center's activity, an event recently celebrated with a congress of international importance significantly entitled: "At the Sources of Life."

On this occasion I am pleased to renew my sentiments of appreciation and esteem for the work you have done which is better and better understood by the ecclesial community and by medical and scientific circles.

The scientific validity of the methods and their educational effectiveness makes them increasingly appreciated for the human values that they presuppose and strengthen, when they are taught and presented in a suitable anthropological and ethical context, according to the wise directive expressed in Paul VI's encyclical, *Humanae vitae* and so many times explained in subsequent documents of the Magisterium.

Their humanizing character is all the more obvious from the fact that using the natural methods requires and strengthens the harmony of the married couple, it helps and confirms the rediscovery of the marvelous gift of parenthood, it involves respect for nature and demands the responsibility of the individuals. According to many authoritative opinions, they also foster more completely that human ecology which is the harmony between the demands of nature and personal behavior.

At the global level this choice supports the process of freedom and emancipation of women and peoples from unjust family planning programs, which bring in their sad wake the various forms of contraception, abortion and sterilization.

But more immediately, your work each day is valuable and sought after in parish communities and in diocesan centers for the pastoral care of the family and life. In this regard, I wrote in the encyclical, *Evangelium vitae* that "an honest appraisal of

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### In this issue. . . .

we offer articles with a pastoral focus. From the Holy Father, who addressed NFP teacher candidates (p. 1), through the Pontifical Council for the Family's two documents for bishops, priests, and lay ministers in the Church, to Stella Kitchen's advice for NFP teachers (p. 13), there is much to consider as we strive to help families live the faith.

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*The Church is grateful to those who, with personal sacrifice and often unacknowledged dedication, devote themselves to the study and spread of these methods, as well as to the promotion of education in the moral values which they presuppose."*

(EV, #97)

their effectiveness should dispel certain prejudices which are still widely held, and should convince married couples, as well as health-care and social workers, of the importance of proper training in this area. "The Church is grateful to those who, with personal sacrifice and often unacknowledged dedication, devote themselves to the study and spread of these methods, as well as to the promotion of education in the moral values which they presuppose" (EV, #97).

The moment has come for every parish and every structure of consultation and assistance to the family and to the defense of life to have personnel available who can teach married couples how to use the natural methods. For this reason I particularly recommend that bishops, parish priests and those responsible for pastoral care welcome and promote this valuable service.

With this hope, as I ask the Lord to constantly accompany your untiring work, I sincerely bless you and with you, the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, whose faculty of medicine and surgery promotes and supports your work, which is worthy of the highest esteem and well-suited to the tasks and role of a Catholic university. ■

# Care of the Divorced and Remarried (Excerpts)

## The Pontifical Council for the Family

The following are excerpts from a document which was issued by the Pontifical Council for the Family during their plenary assembly, January 22-25, 1997. The assembly's theme was "The Pastoral Care of the Divorced and Remarried." The following document included recommendations for bishops, pastors, and the entire Christian community. A complete copy of the document can be found in the March 13, 1997 (Vol. 26, No. 38) issue of *Origins* (202-541-3290).

We would like to express our faith in the sacrament of marriage: the indissoluble union of a man and a woman baptized in Christ; a union ordered to the procreation and education of children (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, #48).

We note that the sacrament of marriage is a treasure for the couples themselves, for society and for the Church. It involves a maturing process marked by hope for those who wish to strengthen their love in stability and fidelity with the help of God who blesses their union. . . .

In many countries, divorce has become a true social "plague" . . . . This worrying phenomenon leads to a consideration of its many causes, which include: the state's lack of concern for the stability of marriage and the family, permissive divorce laws, the negative influence of the mass media and international organizations, and the inadequate Christian formation of the faithful.

Pastors should . . . care for those who suffer the consequences of divorce, especially the children. . . . At the same time, the Catholic Church cannot remain indifferent to the increasing number of these situations, nor can she surrender in the face of a custom resulting from a mentality that attacks marriage as an exclusive indissoluble commitment, just as she cannot approve of anything that disparages the very nature of marriage.

To help rediscover the value and meaning of Christian marriage and conjugal life, we suggest three objectives and the relative pastoral measures.

### **First Objective: Fidelity**

The whole Christian community should develop ways to support fidelity . . . by a constant commitment to:

- Providing for the preparation and celebration of the sacrament of marriage.
- The preparation of the clergy, particularly, of confessors, so that they will form consciences according to the laws of God . . . .
- Promoting the doctrinal formation of pastoral workers.

### **Second Objective: Support of Families in Difficulty**

Pastors must particularly urge parents, in virtue of the sacrament of marriage they have received, to support their married children; brothers and sisters to surround the couple with their fraternal affection; friends to help their friends.

### **Third Objective: Spiritual Guidance**

When divorced Christians enter a civil union, the Church, faithful to our Lord's teaching (cf. Mk. 10: 2-9), cannot give

any public or private sign that might seem to legitimize the new union.

It is essential for the remarried couple to give priority to the regularization of their situation in the visible ecclesial community and, spurred by the desire to respond to God's love, to prepare themselves for the process of redressing any irregularity.

### **Pastoral Guidelines**

As witness and guardian of the marital sign, the bishop—together with the priests who work with him—in his desire to lead his people to salvation and true happiness will not fail to:

- a) Express the Church's faith in the sacrament . . . and recall the directives for its fruitful preparation and celebration.
- b) Show the Church's suffering over marital failure, especially over the consequences to the children.
- c) Exhort and help the divorced who have been left alone to be faithful to the sacrament of their marriage (cf. *Familiaris consortio*, #83).
- d) Invite the divorced involved in a new union to:
  - Recognize their irregular situation, which involves a state of sin, and ask God for the grace of true conversion.
  - Observe the elementary demands of justice toward their spouse in the sacrament and their children. . . .
- e) Lead the Christian community to a deeper understanding of the importance of eucharistic devotion . . .
- f) Encourage meditation on the sense of sin . . . .
- g) Foster an adequate understanding of contrition and spiritual healing . . . ■

## **Vademecum for Confessors Concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life (Excerpts) Pontifical Council for the Family**

*On Ash Wednesday, February 12, 1997, the Pontifical Council for the Family published the following Vademecum. "Vademecum" in Latin literally means "take along with me," but it is better translated as "handbook." Its content usually pertains to something pastoral, in this case, certain moral issues for priests to consider in the confessional. Upon the publication of this Vademecum on March 1st, a strange flurry of media coverage touted that the "Vatican relaxes" its teachings on birth control. Nothing could be further from the truth. For your convenience we have excerpted the relevant passages of the document. The complete text can be found in the March 13, 1997 (Vol. 26, No. 38), issue of Origins (202-541-3290).*

### **Presentation**

This *Vademecum* traces its origin to the particular pastoral sensitivity of the Holy Father . . . the Pope ascertained the importance of clear and certain guidelines to which the ministers of the Sacrament of Reconciliation can refer in their dialogue with souls. The richness of the doctrine of the Magisterium of the Church on themes of marriage and the family, especially since the Second Vatican Council, has raised the need for a good synthesis regarding *some questions of morality pertaining to conjugal life.*

We are happy to put this document in the hands of priests . . . [it] has been prepared at the request of the Holy Father with the aid of the competent collaboration of professors of theology as well as some pastors. [*The document also included the input of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Apostolic Penitentiary. Ed.*]

### **Introduction**

#### **Aim of the document**

Over recent years, the Church, through the words of the Holy Father and a vast spiritual mobilization of

pastors and lay people, has greatly increased her concern to help the entire community of the faithful to consider with gratitude and fulness of faith, the gifts given by God to men and women united in the sacrament of Marriage, so that they may be able to realize an authentic path of holiness and offer a truly evangelical witness in the concrete situations of life in which they find themselves.

The sacrament of the Eucharist and the sacrament of Penance play a fundamental role in this path toward marital and domestic holiness.

To help married couples be aware of the path of their holiness and to carry out their mission, it is fundamental that their conscience be formed, and that God's will be fulfilled in the specific area of married life, that is, in their conjugal communion and service for life.

. . . this document is addressed specifically to confessors and seeks to offer some practical guidelines for the confession and absolution of the faithful in matters of conjugal chastity. More specifically, this . . . intends also to offer a

*(Continued on p. 4)*

(Continued from p. 3)

reference point for married penitents so that they can draw ever greater advantage from the practice of the sacrament of Reconciliation, and live their vocation to responsible parenthood in keeping with divine law, authoritatively taught by the Church. It will also serve as an aid for those who are preparing for marriage.

The problem of responsible procreation represents a particularly delicate

reference point for married penitents so that they can draw ever greater advantage from the practice of the sacrament of Reconciliation, and live their vocation to responsible parenthood in keeping with divine law, authoritatively taught by the Church. It will also serve as an aid for those who are preparing for marriage.

life . . . . Parents are to consider their mission as an honor and a responsibility, since they become cooperators with the Lord in calling into existence a new human person, made in the image and likeness of God . . . . parenthood is called "responsible" in recent documents of the Church, to emphasize the awareness and generosity of the spouses with regard to their mission of transmitting life . . . . Certainly it is a duty of married couples . . . to deliberate deeply and in a spirit of faith about the size of their family, and to decide the concrete mode of realizing it, with respect for the moral criteria of conjugal life.

The Church has always taught the intrinsic evil of contraception, that is, of every marital act intentionally rendered unfruitful. This teaching is to be held as definitive and irreformable. Contraception is gravely opposed to marital chastity; it is contrary to the good of the transmission of life . . . and to the reciprocal self-giving of the spouses . . . it harms true love and denies the sovereign role of God in the transmission of human life.

A specific and more serious moral evil is present in the use of means which have an abortive effect . . . .

. . . profoundly different from any contraceptive practice is the behavior of married couples, who, always remaining fundamentally open to the gift of life, live their intimacy only in the unfruitful periods, when they are led to this course by serious motives of responsible parenthood. This is true both from the anthropological and moral points of view, because it is rooted in a different conception of the person and of sexuality.

### 3. Pastoral Guidelines for Confessors

In dealing with penitents on the matter of responsible procreation, the confessor should keep four aspects in mind:

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*"To help married couples be aware of the path of their holiness and to carry out their mission, it is fundamental that their conscience be formed."*

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point in Catholic moral teaching relating to conjugal life. This is especially the case with regard to the administration of the sacrament of Reconciliation, in which doctrinal affirmations confront concrete human situations and the spiritual paths of the individual faithful. It has become necessary, in fact, to recall firm points of reference which make it possible to deal pastorally both with new methods of contraception and the aggravation of the entire phenomenon. This document . . . intends] to . . . offer suggestions and guidelines for the spiritual good of the faithful who have recourse to the sacrament of Reconciliation, and to overcome possible discrepancies and uncertainties in the practice of confessors.

### Conjugal Chastity in the Doctrine of the Church

Christian tradition has always upheld the goodness and honesty of the marital union and of the family against

consortio (1981), the Letter to Families, *Gratissimam sane* and the encyclical, *Evangelium vitae* (1995) of John Paul II. Together with these, the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) deserve special mention.

### Guidelines follow:

#### 1. Holiness in Marriage

On the path to holiness, a Christian experiences both human weakness and the benevolence and mercy of the Lord. Therefore, the keystone of the exercise of Christian virtues—and thus also of conjugal chastity—rests on faith which makes us aware of God's mercy . . . .

#### 2. The Teaching of the Church on Responsible Procreation

The spouses are to be strengthened in their view of the inestimable value and preciousness of human life, and aided so that they may commit themselves to making their own family a sanctuary of

a) the example of the Lord who "is capable of reaching down to every prodigal son, to every human misery, and above all to every form of moral misery, to sin"; b) a prudent reserve in inquiring into these sins; c) help and encouragement to the penitents so that they may be able to reach sufficient repentance and accuse themselves fully of grave sins; and d) advice which inspire all, in a gradual way, to embrace the path of holiness.

The minister of Reconciliation should always keep in mind that the sacrament has been instituted for men and women who are sinners. Therefore, barring manifest proof to the contrary, he will receive the penitents who approach the confessional taking for granted

their good will to be reconciled with the merciful God . . . .

When occasional penitents approach the sacrament, those who have not confessed for a long time and manifest a grave general situation, it is necessary, before asking direct and concrete questions with regard to responsible procreation and chastity in general, to enlighten them so that they can understand these duties in a vision of faith. Thus it will be necessary, if the accusation of sins has been too succinct or mechanical, to help the penitents to place their life before God, and, with general questions on various virtues and/or obligations in accordance with their personal conditions, remind them in a positive way of the invitation to the sanctity of love, and of the importance of their duties in the area of procreation and the education of children.

. . . . Frequent relapse into sins of contraception does not in itself consti-

tute a motive for denying absolution; absolution cannot be imparted, however, in the absence of sufficient repentance or of the resolution not to fall again into sin.

Though one must keep in mind that the formation of consciences is to be accomplished above all in catechesis for married couples, both general or specific, it is always necessary to assist the spouses, also in the moment of the sacrament of Reconciliation, to examine themselves on the specific duties of conjugal life. Whenever the confessor considers it necessary to question the penitent, he should do so with discretion and respect.

Christian couples are witnesses of God's love in the world. They must therefore be convinced, with the assistance of faith and even in spite of their experience of human weakness, that it is possible to observe the will of the Lord in conjugal life with a divine grace. . . .

Priests, in their catechesis and in their preparation of couples for marriage, are asked to maintain uniform criteria with regard to the evil of the contraceptive act, both in their teaching and in the area of the sacrament of Reconciliation . . .

### Conclusion

Especially in these times, the Church considers it to be one of her principal duties to proclaim the mystery of mercy, revealed in a supreme degree in the Person of Jesus Christ, and to bring mercy into life.

The preeminent setting for proclaiming and realizing mercy is the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. ■



*Please keep in your prayers the following people, their families, and the souls of their beloved departed*

†

*Gail Quinn, executive director, NCCB's Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities. Gail's mother passed away in May.*

†

*Theresa Notare, special assistant, DDP/NFP. Theresa's father passed away in April.*

†

*Stella Kitchen, member of the NFP National Advisory Board & NFP coordinator, Diocese of Harrisburg. Stella's mother passed away in April.*

†

*Marshall Bickel, former administrative aide, DDP/NFP. Marshall's mother passed away in June.*

†

*Bernadette Travers, former administrative aid, DDP/NFP. Bernadette's father passed away in June.*

# Advice for Confessors

Most Rev. James T. McHugh, S.T.D.

The Pontifical Council for the Family recently published two documents on marriage and sexuality addressed to priests and pastoral ministers (the *Vademecum for Confessors Concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life* and *Pastoral Care for the Divorced and Remarried*, see excerpts above). The news reports of the documents were inaccurate and somewhat distorted by a tendency to interpret them as a possible change in Church teaching. Some clarification may be helpful.

The first document offers advice to priests in regard to hearing the confessions of married couples who are struggling with failures or temptations in the area of marital chastity. The document reminds the priest that he should approach his sacramental ministry in a positive and ennobling way, helping married couples become aware of their own proper path to holiness and enabling them to form their consciences in keeping with the Church's teachings. The sacrament of penance and reconciliation allows each of us to experience

God's mercy in a unique way and to receive the grace to overcome sin and reform our lives.

The pastoral guidelines for confessors reminds priests that the sacrament of penance was instituted for men and women who have sinned. At the same time the priest is to take for granted their good will to be reconciled with God, a good will that is born of a contrite and humbled heart.

The document makes the point that in reconciling those who have not confessed in a long time, the priest should help penitents first of all to understand their duties in the light of faith. If the penitent is embarrassed or floundering as to how to confess, the priest needs to reassure him or her of God's mercy and that confession is a wonderful opportunity to tap into God's grace of reconciliation and renewal. It may at times be necessary to help the penitent understand why certain actions are sinful—not simply as transgressions of a law but as a contradiction of a value or the mutual commitment to grow in holiness.

The document specifically addresses the sinfulness of contraception and reminds priests that "frequent relapse into sins of contraception does not in itself constitute a motive for denying absolution." The document goes on to explain that the penitent must still be sorry for the sin and be willing to make efforts to avoid falling into sin again. In effect, priests must realize that many young couples come to marriage without solid instruction on chastity and increasingly, with a history of sexual relations prior to marriage. The sex-is-for-pleasure mentality that pervades our culture makes it difficult for people to see the inherent link between unity and procreation in the act of intercourse, and the overall permissiveness of our culture makes it difficult to exercise self-discipline and self-restraint. The document acknowledges this in advising the priest to help married couples overcome the errors and patterns of behavior that burden or compromise the moral conscience in matters that contradict the nature of marriage and marital responsibility. Accordingly, the confessor is not to withhold absolution from those who "repentant after having gravely sinned against conjugal chastity, demonstrate the desire to strive to abstain from sinning again, notwithstanding relapses." Rather the priest is advised "to avoid demonstrating lack of trust either in the grace of God or in the dispositions of the penitent by exacting humanly impossible absolute guarantees of irreproachable human conduct."

The priest is also advised to help couples in regard to the sin of abortion. Careful instruction about the nature of abortion as distinct from contraception or sterilization is needed. In absolving from the sin of abortion the confessor should respect the canonical norms in regard to penalties but also make use of the canonical procedures whereby he can absolve the person and restore grace and access to the sacraments.

There is nothing very new in this

## Congratulations !

Rose Fuller, executive director of Northwest Family Services for completing her Masters In Sacred Theology! Rose had been working on her program part time for some three years. "At-a-way-to-go Rose!"

Isabelle Pointer of the diocese of Jackson. The staff of the diocesan NFP program honored Isabelle for her contributions to NFP ministry at a reception in April. Isabelle is a retired faculty member of the University of Mississippi school of Nurse Midwifery. She studied and was certified as a NFP teacher at Creighton University and was the first person to bring NFP to the diocese of Jackson. Isabelle continues to support NFP as a mentor and model to those now teaching (e.g., she has provided childcare, meals, and other family support to the teachers of the diocese). This honoring of Isabelle was part of the diocesan celebrations during National NFP Week. We thank God for treasures like Isabelle Pointer in our dioceses!

document but it can be very helpful to priests as a review of their responsibilities and opportunities in reconciling penitents. It serves to remind us that we must always, both in preaching and in the confessional, separate the evil of the sin from the weakness of the sinner. And we must be patient and understanding as confessors for we too are sinners and all can benefit from union with Christ in prayer, in the Scriptures and in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

The second document counsels priests and pastoral ministers in how to assist divorced and remarried Catholics. Without compromising the Church's teaching on the unity, mutual fidelity and indissolubility of Christian marriage, everything should be done to help couples with their problems prior to breakup and to assist them when it occurs. Some divorced persons will continue to live as single persons and they should be encouraged to live a full Christian and sacramental life. Some divorce and remarry and they should be helped to have their marriage validated and blessed if that is possible. Some, however, are unable to validate their present marriage but they too should be given pastoral care and counseled to seek God's help in prayer, in the Scriptures and in Eucharistic adoration. While they cannot receive the Eucharist, they can deepen their own faith, seek the grace of conversion and participate in the activities of the Christian community.

While these documents are primarily addressed to priests and ministers, all can profit from reading them. Therein we see the Church, and priests, as ministers of God's mercy. As agents of reconciliation and as guides for all on the path to deeper union with Christ. ■

*This article was originally published in the March 28, 1997 issue of the Catholic Star Herald, the official newspaper of the diocese of Camden, N.J. It is reprinted here with permission.*

# A Couple's Witness

*Anonymous*

Recently, I was in the office of my NFP Coordinator for my first annual NFP check-up. She asked me how we liked the Natural Family Planning program and when I explained to her how it had rejuvenated our marriage and improved our feelings about ourselves, she suggested we tell our story. Because our journey here has been painful, we have decided to remain anonymous. However, we are convinced that the Catholic Church has an exciting secret that needs to be shared.

So, let me start with a little background information. We're both in our mid-30s, married 13 years with three young children. Each of us had painful childhoods, filled with rejection. My husband's father was regularly unfaithful to his wife and equally regular in beating her. Being the only boy (he has two sisters), he received the brunt of his father's rage. Each attempt to please was met with humiliation and physical force. His parents divorced during his senior year of high school and the family split up, each setting up their own household.

I am the youngest of a large family. My father was stricken with cancer when I was in 2nd grade and died when I was a teen. I got lost in the crowd of children and illness, and was "found" by a brother who sexually abused me when I was 6 and 7, and a neighbor who sexually abused me from the age of 10 to 14. In my late teens, when I revealed these

things to my mother, she suggested that I was at fault.

We'd been sexually active before marriage and I remained on the Pill for another seven years, keeping our bedroom door firmly shut to God. For several reasons, we never considered NFP as an option for us. No one we knew who'd had sex before marriage practiced NFP. Priests gave us conflict-

ing opinions on artificial birth control. The users of NFP we did know were either dissatisfied with the restraint demanded or pompous and judgmental of those outside their clique, as if their practicing NFP automatically made them

morally superior. We also never heard it promoted at Mass, and we were regular active church-goers, not infrequent guests.

Because of the sexual abuse, marital intimacy was confusing for me and I can see now how I injured my already bruised husband. We were unable to give ourselves to one another. I could not see how God fit in with sexual pleasure. After I received counseling for my increasing thoughts of suicide, we started a family. I thought using my sexuality to bring life would heal me. While being parents to our son was easy and wonderful, by the time our daughter was one, I was out of control. I again went for counseling, determined to find out if I really was to blame for the abuse and face myself. At this point, we also

*"We are convinced that the Catholic Church has an exciting secret that needs to be shared."*

decided to place everything in God's hands and use no birth control.

Three weeks later, we were expecting. While putting things in God's hands was a step in the right direction, using no birth control was not the answer. We weren't being responsible, we were trying to pawn responsibility for our lives over to God. Also, the absence of birth control does not demand mutual respect.

When our third child was weaned, my husband suggested we give NFP a chance, since the Church recommended it. Some friends of ours practiced the method and seemed to have an especially intimate relationship. When we attended a talk on NFP given by several married couples and recommended by our friends, my suspicion that NFP was for the saintly was confirmed. Each couple clearly stated that they were virgins before marriage, as if this was a prerequisite. Had this been my only introduction to the NFP program, I would never have tried it. These talks further isolated us from the Church whose doctrines we were trying hard to embrace.

I was lucky to have a special friend in whom I could confide my feelings of being unfit for the NFP program. With her support, we decided to give NFP a chance. That brought us to the office of

our diocesan NFP Coordinator a year ago. We aren't the same couple now. We've finally achieved that "community of life and love" outlined in *Gaudium et Spes*. The respect for ourselves and each other demanded by NFP has helped each of us heal. This may sound implausible. But just as something as simple as not working on the Lord's Day can enrich family life, so can NFP enrich a marriage. I have come to see the goodness of our sexuality and this change in me has allowed each of us to give ourselves to the other without reservation. This new found mutual respect has opened our hearts to each other and we are no longer two hurting individuals. We are secure in our love, sure that our union is God's plan for us.

We have discovered that sexual intimacy is a central facet of the marriage covenant. Feelings of respect, concern and permanence flow from a healthy and happy sexual union. Conversely, when one feels used and cheap and unworthy in the bedroom, then there is no respect and empathy in the relationship and true union is elusive.

Many people who practice NFP and many who have yet to try it, feel that because a woman abstains from sexual relations during ovulation, that the program is sexist and cruel. But I have found the opposite to be true. Sex on demand seems so empty now. I could not go back. It would be too tempting to use my husband and be used in return. And that week when we abstain is our gift to God. We've truly been given a knowledge that can transform lives.

Please help us spread the word about NFP. Don't be afraid to recommend it just because it demands sexual restraint in our sexually free world. This call to a higher level of responsibility is precisely NFP's core of strength. Let others know that this special program of planning a family is open to everyone, no matter how long they've been married or how many partners they've had. Every marriage deserves this incredible gift. ■

## SPOTLIGHT ON:

# One More Soul

Steve Koob, Ph.D.

*Every now and then a new family will move into an old neighborhood bringing with it gifts that add to the life of the community. It is fairly easy to think of the NFP community as one such neighborhood where everyone pretty much knows everyone else. The organization spotlighted here is in many ways, the "new kid on the block." One More Soul is a relatively new group that has already shared its gifts generously with the NFP community and the Church. We thought that you should get to know them.*

What's in a name? When a friend of mine first heard of One More Soul, he asked, "Steve, do I really need another soul?" I replied, "No, Tom, of course you don't need another soul. You just need to take very good care of the one you have." A potential vendor, hearing of us by phone, wrote to "One Morsel." One More Soul is a "small delicacy," which we pray is, "one that is extremely pleasing" to almighty God.

One More Soul (OMS) was begun in 1993 to "educate and convince people that children are a great blessing from the Lord and that contraception is harmful to women, marriage, and society." Mary Ann Walsh and I, as co-founders, believe that the creation of a single human soul is more awesome than the creation of the entire material universe. Thus if our efforts lead to only one couple being open to new life—one more soul—all our efforts are easily justified.

## Real Love

**The perfect book for anyone whose ministry involves teens or for that matter anyone who spends a lot of time with young people.**

*(See page 15 for further details.)*



In 1994 OMS undertook its first big project. We began distributing the audio and video tapes of Professor Janet E. Smith's presentation "Contraception: Why Not?" In April 1997, 10,000 audio tapes were sent to priests, seminarians, doctors, NFP teachers and advocates, couples, Family Life offices, and pregnancy support centers. We, in turn, received some encouraging feedback. The staff of the NFP Development Office of the Archdiocese of St. Louis (at the St. John's Mercy Medical Center) asked for 600 to give to their priests. They sent a tea bag with the tape, suggesting to the priest that he make a cup of tea, sit, relax, and enjoy the talk. Dr. Kim Hardy, an NFP-only physician from Lafayette, Louisiana, told us that he gives the tape to his growing patient population. Dr. Hardy has often told the story of how the Lord's prodding caused him to abandon a lucrative practice, where contraception and sterilization were the standard-of-care, in favor of a higher standard—totally consistent with Catholic teachings. He says that he has changed from being unhappy, discouraged, and unfulfilled to a new man, reinvigorated with love for his profession, delivering many babies, teaching and evangelizing.

Speaking of Dr. Hardy, he is included in a new directory which comprises our second big effort. With the help of various NFP organizations and the Catholic Medical Association, we have compiled over 150 physicians listed in the first edition of the "NFP-Only Physicians Directory" (soon to be available from OMS). These physicians understand and advocate NFP and reproductive health care that cooperates with nature rather than overwhelming it with artificial contraceptives. They do not prescribe, perform, or refer for contraception, sterilization, abortion, or in-vitro-fertilization. This Directory will help families and doctors find each other, and identify peer support for the doctors whose practice and faith are in harmony.

OMS is always looking for good projects that will help spread the Church's truth on the sanctity of life, human sexuality, conjugal love and responsible parenthood. In our "seminary project" we offered the tape "Contraception: Why Not?" free to all seminarians. To date, about 1,500 tapes have been mailed to seminarians. One response from a student at the national North American College in Rome stated: "Thank you for the 140 tapes. The men have really responded well—you may never know the good you did in getting this into the hands of future priests from across the country." A seminary rector wrote to us saying, "Thank you for this extraordinary tape—it is a full course in one tape." Because of feedback such as this, we feel that these future priests will not shy away from the topic of contraception in their ministry.

Increasingly, we do hear of priests teaching and preaching on contraception and NFP. We have been told that they have received standing ovations,

have long lines of approving parishioners after Mass, and even get very supportive mail. For example, we heard from the chaplain of St. John's Catholic Chapel at the University of Illinois (Champaign, Urbana), who said, "On the weekend of May third and fourth (all homilies were on contraception and NFP) we distributed 2,000 of the tapes by Janet Smith, Ph.D. The immediate feedback has been extremely positive."

We who staff OMS see a deep need for the truth of God's plan regarding our fertility. We are trying to satisfy this need by finding and distributing materials that help people see God's plan. If we can be of better service to you, or, if you can help us, please contact us. The Lord's vineyard is large—we need to work with each other to take in His harvest! ■

Contact: One More Soul, 616 Five Oaks Ave, Dayton, OH 45406; 1-800-307-7685; E-mail, ai645@dayton.wright.edu.



The staff of One More Soul.

Top left: Steve Koob, Renate Shoyer, Regina Froschauer, Bernadette Sacksteder, Glenn Jivden.  
Bottom left: Mary Ann Walsh, Barbara Koob, Ruth Oordt.

# When can we use NFP?

## What the Church teaches on the moral spacing and limiting of births by spouses.

Mary Shivanandan, MA, STD

Catholic spouses who strive to live Church teaching on responsible parenthood, are sometimes confused by what the Church means by “serious” or “grave” reasons for the use of Natural Family Planning (NFP). This article will address that issue.

NFP enables spouses to space births in accordance with the naturally occurring phases of fertility and infertility in the menstrual cycle. The Church has accepted this innovation of the 20th century as a morally acceptable means of spacing and limiting births in married life. *Humanae vitae*, the contemporary Church document which articulated the reasons why NFP is acceptable, uses the words “serious” and “grave” to indicate the distinctions which spouses need to consider as they seek to plan their families according to God’s will. Catholic couples need to understand the meaning behind these words.

### Historical Overview

The Church has always recognized the legitimacy of abstaining from sexual intercourse when both spouses consent for a limited time and for religious reasons (cf. 1 Cor. 7:5). When Pius XI condemned contraception in his encyclical on marriage, *Casti connubii* (Dec 31, 1930), he did not address the licitness of the Rhythm method which had only recently been discovered but did allow married couples the use of their conjugal rights “in the proper manner” when new life could not be brought forth either because of timing or defects of nature. (No. 59) It was not until Pius XII that explicit pronouncements were made. By that time the Basal Body Temperature

method (BBT) was becoming increasingly known and used among Catholics.

Pius XII, in an address to Italian midwives in October 1951, declared licit the use of the sterile period for serious reason, but if the couple was confining intercourse to those days exclusively, their conduct needed to be examined. In that case it was not enough to be ready to accept a pregnancy if one should occur. For the practice to be moral there must be serious reasons independent of the couple’s good will. Otherwise to do so “would be a sin against the very meaning of conjugal life.” At the same time, Pius XII advised midwives to obtain a thorough knowledge of the biological and technical aspects of the theory.

Among the serious reasons for use even for an indefinite period, Pius XII cited “medical, eugenic, economic and social ‘implication.’”<sup>1</sup> Only one month later in another address, the pope affirmed “the legitimacy and, at the same time, the limits—in truth very wide—of a regulation of offspring, which unlike so-called ‘birth control,’ is compatible with the law of God” and he hoped that science would provide a more secure basis for the method.<sup>2</sup>

The advent of the anovulant pill in the 1960’s and pressure from within the Church itself to change its teaching on contraception in the name of enhancing the unitive dimension of marriage led to lively debates in Vatican Council II. While Pope Paul VI reserved the question of whether the anovulant pill was a contraceptive until after the Council, *Gaudium et spes* reaffirmed that “mar-

riage and conjugal love are by their nature ordered to the procreation and education of children,” and that the aim and meaning of conjugal life is to cooperate with the Creator in enlarging God’s family. As cooperators with the Creator they are “interpreters of his love.”

They will thoughtfully take into account both their own welfare and that of their children, those already born and those which may be foreseen. For this accounting they will reckon with both the material and spiritual conditions of the times as well as of their state in life. Finally they will consult the interests of the family group, of temporal society and of the Church herself (GS 50).

### Grave and Serious

Paul VI in his encyclical, *Humanae vitae* (1968), while condemning the use of all contraceptive methods for even grave (*gravia*) reasons declared licit the recourse to the infertile periods if the spouses have good (*just* and *seria*) reasons to postpone even indefinitely another pregnancy. (*HV*, nos. 16, 10) The language here is similar to section ten of *Gaudium et spes*. But first those spouses are commended who, with prudent deliberation and generosity, choose to accept a large family. The spouses are to consider their responsibilities towards God, themselves, the family, and human society. Each of these factors may be taken into account in right order in determining “serious and just reasons.”

In other words the spouses are to discern together first, what is God’s plan for their family here and now, then, their own physical and emotional resources for accepting another child, the needs of other family members, and lastly the good of the human society in which they live. The pope gives special encouragement to scientists to perfect the natural methods (*HV*, no. 24), declaring that the discipline of chastity exercised in periodic continence enhances married life provided the spouses value the true blessings of family. (*HV*, no. 21)

## John Paul II

John Paul II is faithful to the guidelines of *Humanae vitae*. In the Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris consortio*, he calls the fundamental task of the family "to serve life, to actualize in history the original blessing of the Creator—to transmitting by procreation the divine image from person to person." (FC, no. 28) He praises large families.<sup>3</sup> "However," he states,

... the fruitfulness of conjugal love is not restricted solely to the procreation of children...it is enlarged and enriched by all those fruits of moral, spiritual and supernatural life which the father and mother are called to hand on to their children, and through the children to the Church and to the world. (FC, no. 28)

John Paul II takes every opportunity to encourage the development of NFP as a way of spacing births.<sup>4</sup> "When," he says "by means of recourse to the periods of infertility, the couple respect the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of human sexuality, they are acting as 'ministers' of God's plan." (FC, no. 32) He is at pains to counter those who would interpret too narrowly the Church's teaching on the licitness of natural methods, adopting a form of providentialism, citing both section 50 of *Gaudium et spes* and section ten of *Humanae vitae*. "God the Creator invites the spouses not to be passive operators, but rather 'cooperators or almost inter-

preters' of His plan."<sup>5</sup> The spouses are to exercise the virtue of prudence in a considered assessment of the well-being of the whole family. Reason and will are not to be abandoned in favor of a passive submission to physiological processes. Husband and wife are called to stewardship of all their gifts, especially fertility, which concerns the birth of a new human person made in the image of God and destined to union with Him for all eternity.

NFP proponent, Rev. Anthony Zimmerman likens the spouses co-creation to God's creation of the world in Genesis (1:1 to 2:3). After each new creation God "saw that it was good" and paused before a new act of creation. After making man and women on the sixth day, he declared everything "very good" and rested from further creation. In the same way, NFP parents pause between each birth and when their family is complete according to God's plan for them (which is likely to vary with each family), rest from any further work of co-creation.<sup>6</sup>

More than his predecessors John Paul II sees the benefits of natural methods to the couple and family. He appreciates the way they offer spouses the possibility not only to space children but also to identify the most opportune time to conceive a child. In addition they call for dialogue and mutual sensitivity to one another. "Thus," he says, "periodic continence...requires a profound understanding of the person and love.

The way of living which follows from the exercise of periodic continence leads the couple to deepen their knowledge of each other and achieve a harmony of body, mind and spirit which strengthens and encourages them on their journey together through life. It is marked by a constant dialogue and enriched by the tenderness of affection which constitute the heart of human sexuality.<sup>7</sup>

## A Final Word

In summary, all the papal documents addressing the issue of marriage and procreation in the 20th century affirm that marriage and conjugal love are ordered to the procreation and education of children. While contraception cannot be used even in grave circumstances, natural methods of fertility regulation are licit when the couple have serious reasons. Children are not a burden to be endured but a gift to be joyfully received as the crowning glory of family life (GS, no. 48). All the popes have endorsed the development and use of natural methods of family planning as an aid to living responsible parenthood. John Paul II especially sees them as enabling the spouses to become a total gift to one another. ■

Mary Shivanandan, S.T.D., is an instructor at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and the Family in Washington, D.C. This article is also available as a two-page hand-out. Contact: DDP/NFP, 202-541-3240.

<sup>1</sup> Pius XII, *Moral Questions Affecting Married Life: Addresses given October 29, 1951 to the Italian Catholic Union of midwives and November 26, 1951 to the National Congress of the Family Front and the Association of Large Families*, National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, DC.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, "Homily at Capitol Mall, Oct 7, 1979," in *Pilgrim of Peace: Homilies and Addresses of his Holiness, Pope John Paul II on the Occasion of his Visit to the United States*, USCC, 1979: 175-179.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, "Pope to Two International Groups of Researchers," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Weekly Edition) Dec. 3, 1979, and "To Study Group on Natural Regulation of Fertility: The Church is Grateful for the help you offer married couples," *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 12, 1982.

<sup>5</sup> Papal audience to participants of NFP course in Rome, December 14, 1990 *L'Osservatore Romano* (weekly edition) Dec. 17, 1990.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. Anthony Zimmerman, "Newlyweds and NFP," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, October 1986, 21-31.

<sup>7</sup> Address to "The Natural Regulation of Fertility: The Authentic Alternative" conference, Rome Dec. 9-11, 1992.

# NFP AROUND THE WORLD

## NFP Teacher Training in Kenya

The Mater Misericordiae Hospital NFP/FLE teacher training program originated in 1980 when a young Italian Sister applied for a vacancy in the National Post-Registration Course for Public Health. In order to follow any Post-Registration Nursing Course in Kenya one has to complete an eight week course and obtain a certificate in Artificial Family Planning (AFP) prior to the Post-Registration Nursing course (this is an obligatory requirement). During the interview for the above mentioned course in public health, Sister was told she must have the certificate in AFP before the course began. Sister naturally told her interviewers that it was impossible for her to obtain such a certificate. She explained to the panel mem-

bers the reasons why she could not do the AFP certificate. The members of the Panel were very understanding and suggested that Sister go to the Mater Hospital where NFP was taught to find out if a current course was available. The certificate for the Mater course in NFP was deemed to fulfill the obligation necessary for Sister's AFP certificate. By setting this precedent, Sister provided an option for future nurses who felt they could not in conscience apply for the AFP certificate.

Sister immediately came to us. Although we only had a short course in NFP, we immediately drew up a syllabus for a Teacher's course in NFP & FLE which would meet the necessary requirements. Several nurses asked to join

Sister in the course. All participants passed with credits and were awarded a special Hospital certificate in FLE and NFP for teachers. Sister happily completed her Public Health course!

Since that time we have worked on the development of our NFP teacher course. We set criteria, arranged interviews, and made selections for the course which was expanded to eight weeks. We have three such courses offered annually. We usually take small groups of 10 or 11 so that the students may have the opportunity to teach clients under supervision. Outside lecturers are invited to give presentations on related topics. At the end of the course the students complete written, oral, and clinical examinations. Students do not receive their certification for three weeks - to six months after their examinations. We expect their sponsors to send us written reports on their NFP/FLE activity after the course.

This teacher training course is very popular. We are often told in evaluations of the course that it is too short and should be extended to three months!

I would also like to mention that Family Life counseling and Mater have now got NFP included in all cadres of nursing education. We have a post-registration course of one year for the Training of Midwives and they are obliged to study NFP during that time for one week.

We are proud to have trained NFP/FLE teachers from: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Sudan, and other countries.

The following is a sketch of our teacher training course:

Lectures include: the basic science and philosophy of NFP; the mechanism and actions of contraceptives; infertility; development of the human person; medical ethics; and basic counseling.

Church documents studied include:

*Humanae vitae*, *Familiaris consortio*, *Evangelium vitae*, *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, and *Donum vitae*. ■

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Marge Harrigan, NFP coordinator for the diocese of Corpus Christi, TX, is retiring after nearly 23 years of ministry. "Marge is truly an inspiration to all of us in NFP," said Kay Ek, president of BOMA—USA, and director of the NFP program for the diocese of St. Cloud, MN. Kay, who has worked along side of Marge in BOMA for a number of years, also added that Marge will continue to serve as chair of the education committee for BOMA—USA. Kay noted that "Marge has worked tirelessly teaching and promoting NFP. We love her dearly and are grateful for her wonderful dedication to our work." Marge now lives on a lake in Houston, TX where she is close to her children and grandchildren. May the Lord continue to bless Marge and her family!

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

### Characteristics of an NFP Teacher.

Stella Kitchen

NFP teachers need to be well trained in the methodology of their choice. To be confident in understanding NFP science and its practical application to a variety of cycles is central to competent instruction. In addition, the smooth integration of Church teachings in NFP instruction is what separates the NFP instructor from the family planning types. But methodology and Church teachings aside, another important element in the education of NFP teachers is the teacher's awareness of his/her public image. There are some basic characteristics which need to be nurtured in the NFP teacher, characteristics which, I believe, make not only for effective teaching but also "evangelization."

An NFP teacher needs to communicate spirituality, professionalism, competency, realism, enthusiasm, and empathy. In our teacher training manual we note that a good NFP teacher should strive to be a faith-filled person who looks on his/her work as a ministry. "Prayer should most definitely be a part of his/her life. And although he/she should not spend the majority of class time saying 'Alleluia,' the NFP teacher should be able to integrate our faith where appropriate in class and freely share significant insights with clients.

Professionalism means that the NFP teacher maintain the clients privacy and

respects their individual sense of modesty. Professionalism translates not only into confidentiality but also affects the environment where they teach. The

teaching environment needs to be private. That may be easy if an NFP teacher meets a client in an office or a classroom, but what do you do if you teach out of your home? I also suggest that well in advance of any teaching dates, an NFP teacher discuss with his/her

family the importance of Mom or Dad's work for the Church and the concept of confidentiality. It is vital to insist that one's children do not "lurk" or "spy" on you and your clients. Give your children a sense that "their job" for the Church is to help Mom or Dad teach with no disturbance. In any case, wherever you meet with your clients, a private and comfortable environment will communicate a sense of respect for them and encourage them to trust you.

With regard to realism, the NFP teacher must remember that he/she is only human. You will not be able to answer every question of your clients. When you reach the boundaries of your expertise, don't apologize—just simply let the client know that you will have to consult with a specific expert and get back to them. Or, if you realize that your clients need to actually visit a doctor, priest, or counselor, gently refer them to the trusted person. Don't fall into the

trap of thinking you have to be the perfect NFP model.

With regard to enthusiasm: be free—but not goofy—in expressing how much you and your spouse enjoy being NFPers! Witness in client instruction is important but must be handled carefully. There should be a "naturalness" coupled with honesty and sensitivity to your particular clients' ability to get the most out of your witness. Keep in mind that a couple may be overwhelmed with the basic facts of their fertility and methodological rules to a point where your sincere divergence on how you and your spouse have grown in your faith because of NFP use will fall on deaf ears.

Finally, the NFP teacher must express empathy. Whenever preparing for a class, try to remember your first impressions. In this way you will be able to empathize with your clients. More than likely you will also be able to plan better and set a pace that will enhance learning. In addition, when couples express difficulties with abstinence, you will be able to better share your own experiences to help them to persevere.

The NFP teacher must never lose sight of the sacred task she has been given. Our work directly addresses the most important issues which couples need to not only reflect on but also live—their love for each other and the Author of Life. We can only persevere grounded in solid training, aware of the public image which we take into the classroom, and ultimately relying on the goodness of the Lord who will bring our efforts into completion in the lives of the couples we minister to. ■

*Stella Kitchen is the NFP coordinator for the diocese of Harrisburg. Stella also directs the diocesan NFP teacher training program which has achieved Approval according to the National Standards. She is a member of the NFP National Advisory Board and will be on hand to discuss implementing the Standards at the August diocesan NFP coordinators' conference.*

# **The 1997 Biennial Conference of Diocesan NFP Coordinators & Teachers**

**Montreal, Canada,  
August 6-8, 1997**



**Call 202-541-3240  
for further information.**

# NEWS

# BRIEFS



## DDP/NFP ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 8th Biennial Conference of Diocesan NFP Coordinators will be held at the Radisson Hotel des Gouverneurs in Montreal, Canada on August 6-8, 1997. Registrations are now being taken. Contact: Thérèse Bempohl at the DDP/NFP, 3211 4th Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017-1194; 202-541-3240.



## EVENTS

**July 16-19, 1997:** Annual meeting of the American Academy of Natural Family Planning. Contact: AANFP, 615 South Ballas Rd., St. Louis, MO 63141.

**August 6-10, and 12-15, 1997:** The Fifth International Conference on the Family, entitled, "The Family at the Threshold of the Twenty First Century." Post Conference Training Programmes (the dialectics between family and society in the process of development as we move into the 21st century and Teen Star) will be held in Chennai (Madras), India. Contact: Director SERFAC, P. O. Box No. 18, Tambaram, Chennai 600 045, Madras INDIA; tel.: 00-91-44-237-6398 or fax: 00-91-44-237-6149.

**August 12 to August 16, 1997:** The Northwest Family Services, the Diocese of Orange, CA and the Archdiocese of New Orleans, LA will be hosting a Teacher Education and Certification Program in the Sympto-Thermal Method at the Marywood facility in Orange. Contact: Rose Fuller, Executive Director, Northwest Family Services, Providence Portland Medical Center, 4805 N.E. Glisan Street, Portland, OR 97213; 503-215-6377.

**September 24-28, 1997:** The National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers is holding its annual Conference, "Rising Tides, Shifting Sands" at the Marriot Hotel Crocker Center, Boca Raton Florida. Contact: NACFLM, University of Dayton, 300 College Park, Dayton, OH 4569-1514.

**October 4-5, 1997:** A second World Meeting of the Holy Father with Families will take place in Rio de Janero. Contact: Pontificio Consiglio per la Famiglia, Segreteria Generale per il II Incontro Mondiale del Santo Padre con le Famiglie, 00120 Città del Vaticano; (Tel.) 39-6-698-87254; (FAX) 39-6-698-87278; (E-mail) family-rio@family.va.

**February 25 to March 2, 1998** the Northwest Family Services, the Diocese of Orange, CA and the Archdiocese of New Orleans, LA will be hosting a Teacher Education and Certification Program in the Sympto-Thermal Method of Natural Family Planning at the Ave Maria Retreat Center in New Orleans. Contact: Rose Fuller, Executive Director, Northwest Family Services, Providence Portland Medical Center, 4805 N.E. Glisan Street, Portland, OR 97213; 503-215-6377.



## MATERIALS

### Chastity:

Mary Beth Bonacci who received her masters degree in theology from the John Paul II Institute on Marriage and the Family, has been traveling around the United States speaking to teens on marriage, chastity, and relationships since 1986. In her new book, *Real Love*, she published the answers to the questions most frequently asked by her teenage audiences.

This is the perfect book for anyone whose ministry involves teens or for that matter anyone who spends a lot of time with young people. You can carry it around with you and when a teen asks you:

- "If I love my girlfriend, why can't I make love to her?"
- "Exactly how far is too far?"
- "Does premarital sex strengthen a relationship or hurt it? Why?"
- "Can one not be a virgin yet change and be whole again?"
- "Is annulment just Catholic divorce?"
- "Why is it so difficult to live chastity sometimes?"
- "I have heard that the Church is against homosexuality. If so, why are some homosexuals still Catholic?"

You can flip through the pages of *Real Love* and come up with a common sense answer which gives practical advice for living out the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Mary Beth inspires young people with a holistic, enthusiastic message. "Chastity is positive. It is a virtue. It's about understanding and living real love, not just in dating but in every area of life." She has the rare gift of getting to the heart of a serious topic in a poignant and witty style. Her book is well worth the investment.

Mary Beth has also made a new video called, *Sex and Love, What's a Teenager to Do?* It contains essentially the same information as her book. It's light-hearted, scripturally based and easy to watch. To obtain copies contact: Ignatius Press of San Francisco or write to Mary Beth at Original Innocence, 1520 W. Warner Rd., Ste. 106-138, Gilbert, AZ 85233; 602-812-1194.

Growing concern with the high pregnancy rates and rise in sexually transmitted diseases among teens are two good reasons to take a look at Pam Stenzel's video "Sex Has a Price Tag: A Compelling Look at Sex in the 90's." Pam combines her counseling experience with her personal story to motivate young people to think hard about the choices they are about to make. She uses persuasive statistics to send a message to her young audiences that sexual intercourse prior to marriage can be dangerous, even fatal. "Sex is great," she concedes, "but within the boundaries of marriage." Pam's message is simple—if you have sex outside of marriage you will pay. She warns teens that their worst fear should not be pregnancy. People survive pregnancy. Their worst fear should be contracting a sexually transmitted disease, the ramifications of which they will live with for the rest of their lives.

The statistics she uses are compelling. Twelve thousand teens contract STD's on a daily basis and coupled with the adult population that figure rises to 55,000. She addresses the girls directly when she says that more woman died last year of cancer related to Human Papilloma Virus than died of AIDS.

Pam Stenzel is the founder and director of Straight Talk Inc. She earned her degree in Psychology from Liberty University and is the main spokesperson for Youth For Christ USA's abstinence campaign titled "Worth the Wait." To obtain the video contact: *Creative Youth Resources/Youth for Christ, 7670 South Vaughn Court, Englewood, CO 80112.*

**The Couple to Couple League** has available a virtues curriculum entitled, *The New Corinthians.*

The following description are excerpts taken from "New Corinthians Curriculum: What, When, Where, Why, Who and How," by Keith Bower (CCL Family Foundation, Volume XXIII, Number 2, September-October 1996).

#### **What is New Corinthians?**

It is a K-8 supplement to Catholic religious education that teaches the virtues. It is not Sex Ed. It is not Abstinence Ed. It is not even Chastity Ed. *per se.*

*New Corinthians* is an education in the virtues necessary to follow Christ. It is a supplement to Religious Education involving five lessons per grade with activities in the class and at home that help direct learners to the following goal: To enable the learned to develop a relationship with God so that decisions are made on the basis of sound scriptural and catechetical understanding.

#### **When is Chastity presented?**

The virtue of chastity is not brought up at all until the sixth grade, and only after students have been introduced to the facts of life by their parents/guardians.

The short talks are different for boys and girls and discuss subjects such as the changes of puberty, the fertility cycle, the proper use of sex, and the Church's teaching on masturbation, homosexuality, birth control and abortion.

#### **Why is there no Sex Ed in the usual sense?**

The Pontifical Council for the Family has condemned detailed classroom physiology and discussions of sex that are value-neutral. They recommend parents introduce same-sex children to the subject and couch that information in a positive message about chastity.

#### **Who is behind the curriculum?**

Professor Judy Harris of the Thomas More College Education Department assembled a team of seven grade school teachers to develop units for testing in their own parochial schools. Mrs. Harris is a nationally recognized specialist in pedagogy, which studies the appropriate methods for best communicating information to people of different ages and backgrounds.

#### **How was this curriculum tested?**

A pilot study in Fall 1995 was conducted at St. Anthony's School, Taylor Mill, Kentucky, where most of the teacher-writers were employed. Lessons were evaluated by Judy Harris and modified to make them more effective.

#### **How can I preview the curriculum?**

If you are a pastor, principal or Director of Religious Education, a 30-day review copy will be sent for your inspection. Homeschool associations with more than 30 families can also receive review copies. If you are a parent, we will send you a packet of information, including sample lessons, to help in your decision.

### **NFP Forum**

#### **(Diocesan Activity Report)**

**Vol. 8/No. 2 & 3 • Spring/Summer 1997**

Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning.  
A program of the NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities.



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*The NFP Forum* 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; 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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