

FORUM

Diocesan Activity Report

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30th Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*— Message of the Holy Father

An Italian national congress commemorating the 30th anniversary of the encyclical *Humanae vitae* provided the setting for a message of the Holy Father on the importance of study and promotion of the natural methods of family planning.

The message dated February 27 and delivered on March 2, 1998, was directed to Dr. Anna Cappella, Director of the Center for Study and Investigation on the Natural Regulation of Fertility, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Rome. In wishing the participants of the congress a fruitful study regarding the Church's teachings on the "truth of the act of love in which spouses co-participate in the creative action of God," the Holy Father also said that this act is "an expression of the mutual giving of the self of the spouses, a giving that cannot but be total, since the person is one and indivisible." With this in mind, John Paul II also underscored the illicit nature of contraceptives precisely because they break "the inseparable connection between the two meanings of the conjugal act, the unitive

and the procreative, which... is inscribed by God Himself in the nature of the human being."

"The natural regulation of fertility can only be correctly understood within the logic of mutual giving between the man and the woman, and authentically lived as a qualified expression of a real and mutual communion of love and life," said the Holy Father. "It is worth emphasizing," he continued, "that the person can never be considered a means to reach an end; especially, never a means for pleasure. The person is and should be solely the end of every act."

The message concluded by noting that "it is necessary to make an effort, on the one hand, to spread knowledge about the scientific foundations on which natural methods for regulating fertility are based in the field of medicine, and on the other, to develop study and research on the nature of the biochemical and biophysical facts that accompany periods of fertility and make them recognizable, thus making the exercise of responsible parenthood easier and more certain." ■

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With a Little Help from Our Friends—NFP Marriage Prep. & The Bishops

Donna Dausman

At the recent DDP/NFP conference in Montreal, the question arose "Why isn't NFP a part of every marriage prep program?" As a longtime NFP diocesan coordinator and more recent family life director, I would say it definitely should be; but rather than lamenting the negative, perhaps we should celebrate the positive. Those who have been part of the NFP movement for 15 or more years can say that there has been a dramatic change in the acceptance of NFP in general and in marriage preparation programs specifically. In a recent survey of diocesan family life offices done by the NCCB's Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth and the National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers, from a long list of possible ministries of family life offices, the top three chosen were, marriage prep; ministry to the divorced; and NFP. Surprised? I'm sure a lot of us were!

A substantial part of the credit for the fact that NFP is more accepted by family life offices and more readily a part of marriage preparation, certainly goes to the ongoing work of the DDP/NFP with dioceses and a variety of diocesan programs. In our own diocese, Endorsement through the DDP/NFP's *National Standards* was directly responsible for adding credibility to our program and making NFP more acceptable for parish marriage prep programs.

But shouldn't the bishops be strongly recommending NFP as part of marriage prep? They do. In their document, *Faithful to Each Other Forever, A Catholic Handbook of Pastoral Help for Marriage Preparation* issued by the NCCB Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices (1989),

the bishops provide practical ideas and suggestions for fleshing out the concepts of remote, proximate, and immediate marriage preparation from *Familiaris Consortio*. Some recommendations from the document pertinent to our ministry are:

We urge that in each formal premarriage program, a presentation on Natural Family Planning and fertility appreciation be included as integral, not an optional, part of the schedule. This segment, after establishing the awesomeness of both female and male fertility, should contain a simple explanation of nature family planning, its comparable effectiveness, the contribution it can make to a couple's relational growth, testimony by couples practicing this method, and information about available instruction resources.

Indeed, given current cultural conditioning and the fact that vir-

tually all couples begin marriage using some form of family planning, we urge that premarriage programs require a full course of instruction in Natural Family Planning as a necessary component in the couple's effective realization of what they need and have a right to know in order to live in accord with the clear teaching of the Church. NFP instructors often note a change in perception among those required to learn NFP prior to marriage: "We would never have taken this course if it had not been required, but now we're glad we did."

We praise, in a particular way, couples who are sharing their experiences of Natural Family Planning with others preparing for or already married, and we salute those who are teaching this method of responsible parenthood. This is a unique, predominantly "like to like" ministry in the Church today, and persons engaged in instructing others in NFP deserve every possible support in that vital task. ■

Thanks Friends!

Donna Dausman is the Family Life Director for the diocese of Springfield, IL. She also serves on the NCCB's NFP National Advisory Board.

The Gift of NFP

I have taken the plunge and am now giving NFP classes to couples as a wedding gift!

In fact, I have designed gift certificates which programs can use to sell NFP classes as the best of gifts a person could give newlyweds.

All diocesan NFP coordinators should watch for the special mailing during April when we will send out these new designs.

If you have an NFP program, are not diocesan sponsored, and are not on our mailing list, please feel free to contact us for a copy of the wedding packets. The gift of NFP must be shared with all!

Theresa Notare



A Proper Wedding Gift

Theresa Notare

Weddings are usually occasions for great joy. But I confess that for me they often cause anxiety. Naturally, I am happy for the blessings of others. My anxiety is rooted in the dilemma of choosing a proper wedding gift. By "proper," I mean a gift to truly honor the sacramental reality of the event. I want to give something that helps the couple live well their covenant in Christ. Given my interests and responsibilities, that means classes in NFP.

Despite my good intentions, I have not yet had the nerve to do so. [see announcement on p. 2] I hesitate to intrude on the couple's privacy. And so my anxiety—knowing that most newly married couples have a fairly misguided understanding of sexuality. Our culture promotes myths about sexuality, myths capable of wreaking damage upon single people and even tearing apart marriages.

What sexual myths? The central idea is that sexual intercourse is simply a value-free, pleasurable activity (as long as no one is coerced). Sex is portrayed as a need (like breathing), an uncontrollable drive, and even a sport. It is spoken of only as a means to self-fulfillment, instead of being directed toward one's partner.

There are two blemishes in this airbrushed image of sex—fertility and disease. The former is seen as something to suppress, the latter as something to avoid (but not by avoiding sex). Subconsciously accepting these myths, many couples have sexual intercourse without marriage and many approach marriage with a history of several sexual partners. It doesn't register that promiscuity before marriage makes fidelity to one person in marriage difficult.

Today's engaged couples are also often "expert" in the use of contraception (and if they are not, they think they should be). Most couples have so well accepted contraception that to tell them

it's wrong or even unhealthy sounds bizarre. If you qualified the statement by saying that contraception is unhealthy on a psychological and spiritual level, they truly would not know what you are talking about. Yet, they need to know the truth. If couples want to build strong, lasting marriages—and most do—they need to know what will help them. The rich teachings of the Church on human sexuality, conjugal love and responsible parenthood need to be explained and integrated into their lives. Couples should be challenged to see the negative impact of sex without marriage. They need to understand that contraception will adversely affect their relationship with each other and with God.

Contraception does not exist to welcome another person into the world. It is intended to prevent the coming into being of another person. Its action is to separate, or suppress. Contraception is not family planning—it is family avoidance. That is radically different from being a good steward over one's fertility and co-operating with God and His design to space and limit births in a marriage. The latter perspective honors God as author of life, the former does not.

Couples who use contraception might ask themselves if the physical action of avoidance, separation, and suppression exist on other levels (e.g., emotional or spiritual)? And if they do, how does this affect their relationship? This is a very reasonable question. Physical acts express and affect our very being.

When cultural myths deny the strong emotional bond created by sexual relations, what results? When sex is transplanted from the structure of the original human relationship—marriage—where are we heading individually and socially? When the baby is not welcomed, what does that say about the kind of people we are? How can we grow in generosity and selflessness in a vacuum?

Today, the Catholic Church is the

only major Christian body which teaches that contraception is wrong (although only sixty years ago, most Protestant denominations taught the same). The Holy Father speaks of the true nature of human sexuality when he writes that it "manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love" (*Evangelium vitae*, #97). This means that human sexuality has an "other" orientation, a spousal or family meaning. To remove this meaning from sex is to trivialize sex, and contribute to a "contempt for new life" (*EV*, #97). Pope John Paul II underscores the age-old Christian teaching that life must be respected from the conjugal embrace when he writes that, NFP recognizes "all individuals" (including the child) in its methodology and promotes decision making "guided by the ideal of the sincere gift of self" (*EV*, #88). "Only a true love is able to protect life" (*EV*, #97).

NFP allows us to live our beliefs. It encourages a sexual spirituality in married life. In striving to be "open" to new life, spouses choose their mutual goal—to have God be the architect of the design for their family. By practicing periodic abstinence when trying to avoid or postpone pregnancy, couples can take a careful look at how they love each other. They can become conscious of trying to approach every aspect of life without covetousness or domination. There is no room for greed and exploitation when one lives chastely, because chastity consists in the long-term integration of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions in a way that values, esteems, and respects the dignity of the created order, others, and oneself.

This does not just happen after one NFP class! It is a life style that takes a life-time. It is also the approach to married life that helps couples perdure. God's gift of sexuality is a most proper wedding gift. It is what the Church invites us to accept and what the Catholic community should offer to those beginning married life. ■

This article first appeared in Life Issues Forum, a nationally syndicated column of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

To Teach or Not to Teach—NFP and the Unmarried

Dr. Kevin Hume

A recurring question which often faces the NFP teacher is what to do with the couple who comes for NFP instruction and is living together but not married? Do we send them away and tell them to come back when they get married? Or, do we teach them? Dr. Kevin Hume, Secretary of the Worldwide Organization of the Ovulation Method-Billings International Inc. (WOOMB), says by all means "teach these couples!", and here's why

It is one of WOOMB's objectives that every woman in the world should be given the information about her fertility which instruction in NFP provides. In the various international meetings of the UN, that is what our delegates taught in Cairo, Copenhagen, Istanbul, and Rome. At UN headquarters in 1994, I even managed to get the message across in a five minute plenary session slot. We at WOOMB are thus committed to teaching the Billings Ovulation Method (BOM) to anyone who will listen. We will even train them as teachers, but we will only accredit those who accept our philosophy.

Here at Waverley Family Centre (founded in 1969) many of the client couples are in de facto situations—very typical of the Australian situation. Seventy percent of them have been on the Pill and a smorgasbord of other contra-

ceptives. As Dr. Hanna Klaus has said, practicing BOM and absorbing its underlying philosophy will either make them or break them (the de factos that is). They either will decide to marry or their unstable, genitally-based relationships will be blown apart.

In the countries of Central America and the Caribbean, amongst the poorer classes, marriage is the exception. Children are welcomed but they come from a series of fathers. Fr. William Gibbons, MD, Fr. Denis St. Marie, and Sr. Francesca—none of course who were on the method—taught hundreds of these de facto couples who entered the World Health Organization's five country trial of BOM in the late 1970's. They had found, that as a result of their teaching, many of the de facto couples had their natural marriages solemnized (to the surprised delight of the local bishop).

As a bonus, these couples brought their children along to the ceremony to be baptized!

In the international community BOM has its critics (those with a contraceptive mentality), who allege that BOM is "too pro-baby." Certainly we have an increased proportion of couples who are coming to us for help in achieving a pregnancy—praise the Lord! At UN conferences we have rightly claimed that we are not only empowering women but also promoting responsible parenthood, a linchpin of the Church's teachings in this area of life.

Finally, if we take a look at what is happening in China we can see that the BOM has been a stunning success. It has been promoted by the Billings and a team of super-teachers (*note, Family of the Americas has also been involved in teaching OM in China*) who have devised a simplified method of charting suited to the local condition. The Chinese have not challenged our philosophy. Couple motivation to avoid pregnancy is very strong (remember, an unauthorized pregnancy means a forced abortion). The alternative to NFP is sterilization or the abortifacient IUD (in 80% of the cases). BOM has triumphed in effectiveness, safety, and in continuation rates. Some may question the moral licitness of the use of BOM in China as a permanent method of avoiding pregnancy. In my opinion the use of the method in these circumstances is morally licit because the practicing of the method meets the criteria laid down by the Church; i.e., there are serious reasons (already enumerated), for its use. Finally, we have not lost hope that the government's one child policy will change. Meanwhile, the fertility of our couples is preserved intact—ready for at least one more child when the climate changes! ■

BOMA Conference in Denver, CO

August 14 & 15, 1998

Speakers include: Dr. Erik Odeblad, Dr. Kevin Hume, and Rev. Ronald Lawler, O.F.M. Cap.

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Dr. Kevin Hume is the Secretary of WOOMB International, Inc. He will be a guest faculty member at BOMA's August 1998 teacher training session in Colorado.

Nagasaki Archbishop Blasts Birth Control Pill

Rev. Anthony. Zimmerman

The Archbishop of Nagasaki, Japan, where descendants of martyrs practiced their faith secretly during centuries of persecution, advised the Japan Welfare Ministry to not approve the Pill for contraceptive purposes in Japan. The decision about approving or disapproving the Pill should not be based on medical findings alone, he urged. The rule for human behavior, individual and social, is moral rectitude, he pointed out. God has enjoined man to "increase and multiply" in the context of marriage in which man and woman are joined in love. "Whereas using the Pill for contraception, and employing any kind of artificial contraceptive method, expresses an attitude of denial and refusal toward a life which is to be born." Archbishop Shimamoto continued,

The doctrine of the Catholic Church approves neither contraceptive acts, nor abortion, nor euthanasia. The reason is the exciting love for life in each and every human being. Love is the one and only fountain of human life. The love of God for man, the love between man and woman in marriage, their crystallized love in the form of new life come to birth. Parents then love this new life, brothers and sisters provide it with more love, many others envelop it constantly with still more love, and in this context the child grows to maturity. Such is the framework of love in which loving humans develop, and that is how they become independent human beings. Love, then, is the fountain of human life. God does not permit human life to be manipulated outside of a setting of accompanying love. For God is love.

Archbishop Shimamoto published his report in the October 1997 issue of

Pro-Life News, whose editor is Fr. Jerome Novotny, OMI. The monthly News is sent to the parishes and Catholic institutions of Japan, and to a number of non-Christian institutions and doctors. The effects of this sudden trumpeting of the Church's no-compromise ban on contraception may be dramatic in Catholic circles, where a practical "conspiracy of silence" has been the norm. Several telephone calls to the present writer by faithful supporters of the Magisterium were ecstatic in their praise of the article.

The Archbishop noted that the Mainichi newspapers had reported on August 13, 1997 that the Welfare Ministry had postponed a decision about approving the contraceptive Pill; the decision, (which was to be made at the end of 1997), would be conditioned upon the results of a study of possible medical side-effects suffered by Pill users. A report was also to be reviewed at the session of the pertinent Welfare Ministry Committee which was scheduled for the end of October 1997 (no word yet as this article goes to print).

In the meantime Catholic doctor Francis K. Hirata of Nagoya showed to Welfare Ministry members an extensive amount of data on the side effects of the Pill provided by the American pharmacist, Lloyd J. Duplantis, P.D., of Gray, Louisiana. A practicing pharmacist, a sharp critic of the Pill, he and his wife are familiar faces in USA Pro-Life circles. He is President of the over 1,200 member Pharmacists for Life. In his curriculum vitae he states:

During the beginning of my practice, I became acutely aware that there was a problem developing with drugs being promoted as contraceptives that was unique to that category of phar-

maceuticals. Rather than promoting well-being, the women who were taking these chemicals in order to prevent pregnancy were experiencing a myriad of problems both physical and psychological. These were healthy women who were becoming "sick"; yet, the medical community was treating the problem different than the accepted standard.

Any time a person became ill or had untoward side-effects from any other drug, the product was discontinued and the reaction or problem was addressed. In the case of Oral, implant, or injectable contraceptives, most often the chemical was continued and other drugs or pharmaceutical were added in an attempt to alleviate the problem.

This strange clinical practice, unique only to this class of drugs, was the catalyst that caused me to begin my research, interviewing hundreds of women and amassing statistics and studies pertinent to this topic over the last twenty years.

The Ministry of Welfare specialists showed great interest in the data of Dr. Duplantis. They asked for more, especially on a possible connection of the Pill with AIDS. Dr. Duplantis maintains that the Pill abets AIDS in the USA in two ways: oral contraceptives are steroid-base chemicals and therefore create an immune-compromising situation which makes individuals more susceptible to infections of all kinds. OC users have a three-fold increase of HIV infections over non-users. Second, sexual promiscuity exploded in the wake of the Pill in the USA. OC's are promoted to prevent pregnancy among sexually active singles, and among them the incidence of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID) and other sexually communicated diseases has skyrocketed.

Dr. Hirata had in the meantime invited Dr. Duplantis to lecture in Japan on November 30-December 5th, 1997. When the Japan Conference of Bishops

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heard about this through Bishop Nomura of Nagoya, Cardinal Peter S. Shirayanagi of Tokyo and the entire Conference gave full support to this initiative. The Bishops' Committee for the Family, chaired by Archbishop Shimamoto, backed the tour to maximize its visibility and effectiveness in the nation. Dr. Duplantis did a fine job of lecturing here and provided us with first class materials. Dr. Hirata printed these materials, including also data from the book by pharmacist John Wilks of Australia. This data is now in the hands of Welfare Ministry people, the Bishops, many Catholic doctors, and leaders of other religions in Japan. Even if the ban on the pill is lifted, the opposition is now well instructed and motivated against using it.

As this article goes to print, the issue of the birth control pill and Japan is just breaking. The Welfare Ministry Committee postponed its decision about lifting the ban on the Pill until sometime in March 1998. Please keep us in your prayers as we wait for their decision. ■

Fr. Zimmerman has been a missionary in Japan since 1948. He is a retired teacher of moral theology and a long time supporter of NFP.

Federal Grant Awarded to Northwest Family Services

Cindy Bankston

The *Youth Solutions* project of Northwest Family Services received \$200,352 for a one-year project to encourage teen abstinence. The grant was awarded through the federal Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs (OAPP).

The *Youth Solutions* project will work with Oregon schools to implement proven programs. It will include three components: the *FACTS* teen abstinence curriculum, the *Promises* abstinence drama, and peer leadership. The students who learned from the *FACTS* curriculum, developed under a previous OAPP grant, experienced a 45% lower transition rate into sexual activity than their peers who received the conventional sex education program. *Promises*, a 35 minute teen drama, sensitively portrays the consequences of teen sexual activity and models positive ways to handle sexual pressure. Over 5,000 Oregon students saw *Promises* last year. It is enacted by teens who personally believe abstinence is the best choice. As one actor stated, "If I can help one teen make the right choice, my time has been well spent." A teen leader component is the third element of the *Youth Solutions* project.

Rose Fuller, Executive Director, comments, "We are delighted to have the opportunity to assist Oregon students. *Youth Solutions* will be reaching 5,000 to 8,000 students ages 12 to 15 years with effective ways to practice abstinence. More and more teens want to abstain, but they don't feel like they have the support or skills to do so. A current practice is to provide abstinence education for sixth and even seventh graders, but little or no support for other students. In other words, the help seems to stop just when teens need it the most. *Youth Solutions* provides participating schools with the technical support to offer youth the best."

In 1995, 3,294 Oregon teens under 18 years old became pregnant and 2,081 gave birth. Rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among teens are now at epidemic levels. For example, human papillomavirus (HPV), an STD with 500,000 to 1,000,000 new annual cases in the U.S., is present in virtually all cases of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is one of the most common cancers in women, with 4,900 deaths in the United States each year. Will condoms protect teens from HPV? The National Institutes of Health Consensus Development Conference Statement: *Cervical Cancer*, April 1 - 3, 1996 stated, "The data on the use of barrier methods of contraception to prevent the spread of HPV are controversial but do not support this as an effective method of prevention" (*Journal of the National Cancer Institute Monograph*, No. 21, 1996). The emotional pain associated with early teen sexual involvement is yet to be measured. As one brochure states, "There is no condom for the heart."

Youth Solutions provides positive choices so teens can have full lives and keep their options open. In addition to providing assistance to schools, Northwest Family Services provides family education programs for parents and their teens which promote a positive family environment and the support for teen abstinence. ■

Cindy Bankston is the Youth Programs Coordinator of Northwest Family Services; 4805 N.E. Glisan St., Portland, OR 97213; 503-215-6377.

Report from International Teen STAR Federation

Hanna Klaus, MD

Forty-three international and Polish Teen STAR teachers met in Konstancin near Warsaw April 8 - 12, 1997 and founded the International Teen STAR Federation. Representatives came from Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe. Other countries where programs have been implemented but could not send representatives include: Austria, Italy, and Cameroon.

Szymon Grzelak, who heads the Polish Coordinators' team had arranged a solemn opening ceremony which was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Education, mayors of local municipalities where the program is offered, as well as the director of Family Life for the Polish Episcopal Conference. Participants shared their successes and concerns.

The core components of Teen STAR are: self-discovery of the body, together with the values of fertility which lead to norms which govern the responsible use of fertility; involvement of parents, confidentiality, personal interviews, acceptance of the philosophy of the program as a pre-requisite for competent teaching, outcome evaluation, and an integration of the Theology of the Body within Catholic religious settings. The group affirmed the developmental thrust of the program which leads to personal integration, as well as self-discipline.

Problems which surfaced in discussion revolved around poor funding and the enormous competition from contraceptive provider programs. Dr. Gintautas Vaitoska, a Lithuanian psychiatrist from Vilnius and Sr. Nora Dennehy, RGS from CORA Services, Philadelphia, presented their insights on the psychology of abstinence and answered many questions about practical aspects of counseling.

The exchange of experiences was most helpful to all of the teachers who felt very much encouraged and renewed by the meeting. Plans are in process for the next meeting in 1999 with an East European meeting hoped for in 1998. All of us are encouraged to see that no matter where the program is offered, the response of the teenagers is similar and positive. Growth has been enormous in Poland, where over 500 teachers have been trained, and most are active in the programs; in Chile 140 teachers are instructing 2,000 students this year. ■

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Hanna Klaus, MD, is the director of the NFP Center of Washington, D.C.

Teen STAR Workshops

MAY '98

Paris, France,
8-11

Munich, Germany
14-17

Salzburg, Austria,
23-26

JUNE '98

Bethesda, MD,
15-19

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The International Association of Physicians for NFP (IAPNFP)

Heinz Hürzeler

When Dr. Albert Wick of Frauenfeld, Switzerland, attended a speech in his hospital on Natural Conception Regulation (NCR), he became so enthused that he immediately organized an international congress for NCR on June 14, 1986. At the end of that congress, the attending physicians decided to found an organization for NCR. Thus was born the International Association of Physicians for NFP (IAPNFP) on September 20, 1986 in Baar, Switzerland.

From the beginning, IAPNFP was constituted as an informal association of interested doctors. In 1989, they saw the need for a Statement of Principles. Once articulated, the members of IAPNFP realized that they could better spread the principles of their organization if they became a legally registered association. And so, on October 27, 1990, the Swiss Branch of the IAPNFP was founded. Their general assembly (GA) approved bylaws and elected an international Board of Directors in January 1991.

IAPNFP presented itself at the 1991 Congress of the International Federation for Family Life Promotion in Lüttich, Belgium. That participation raised the question of what exactly did it mean to advocate only NCR? Subsequent Board meetings were dedicated to solve that question. After a profound discussion at the GA on October 17, 1992, members unanimously passed the following revision of the bylaws:

The IAPNFP requires the physicians willing to become members to absolutely respect human life from conception, to promote NCR, and not use or prescribe contraceptives and abortifacients.

The above revision of IAPNFP's bylaws has restricted membership; however, the restriction has invaluable advantages. It has removed confusion and ended disputes enabling the group to be more focused. With their testimony the members of the IAPNFP are able to prove that their attitude expresses an ideal which by no means is incompatible with

good physician activity. Thus they might act as an incentive to other colleagues to achieve this ideal as well.

Counseling the couples needs more time than a physician usually can spend in his daily practice. He therefore has to rely on cooperation with NCR teachers. The IAPNFP cooperates in principle with all different methods of NCR. In Switzerland, the NCR groups joined to found an umbrella organization called, the Interessengemeinschaft für Natürliche Familienplanung (IGNFP; see following article). The IGNFP and the IAPNFP have a very fruitful cooperation jointly sharing a scientific session of their general assemblies.

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According to its bylaws, the IAPNFP annually plans scientific meetings and public lectures. On September 25, 1993, Prof. H. Berger and Msg. K. Küng spoke about the encyclical *Humanae vitae* on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. On May 26 - 28, 1994, the IAPNFP and the Association of Swiss Catholic Doctors (VKAS), prepared together a congress entitled "Pregnancy—Birth—the—Child—Ethical Considerations." On October 21, 1995, we examined the role a doctor should play in the teaching of NCR, especially considering the demands of the NCR counselors. The IAPNFP celebrated its 10th anniversary on April 19, 1996, with Dr. J. Rötzer's Institute for Natural Conception Regu-

Announcement

National Abstinence Clearinghouse is a newly formed organization established to facilitate the work of chastity/abstinence educators. Non-sectarian, the group's philosophy is compatible with Catholic teachings on chastity. The Clearinghouse publishes a quarterly newsletter and has just completed its first directory of resources. The Clearinghouse will also hold its first National Abstinence Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota on June 11 - 13, 1998.

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lation Empfangnis (INER). Hundreds of NCR counselors attended. The various groups presented their individual ways of charting and interpreting the women's cycle and compared all the methods on real charts.

The IAPNFP also concerns itself with politics and society. Some of its members attended the 1994 Cairo World Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Women's World Conference in Beijing. In cooperation with other Pro-Life movements they distributed highly appreciated information to participants from all over the world. The IAPNFP publishes declarations on important topics, mostly in the field of human reproduction, writes articles in magazines, etc. It has created a center of documentation which is also open to non-members. To do all this work and to get more political power, the IAPNFP has to rely on support and is looking for new members. You can help it, by spreading this information. ■

Dr. Heinz Hürzeler is co-director of the Interessengemeinschaft für Natürliche Familienplanung (IGNFP)—Switzerland.

For more information on the IAPNFP, contact: Dr. Heinz Hürzeler, NFP Association of Switzerland, CH-8775, Luchsingen, SWITZERLAND; 011-058-84-24-44; FAX: 011-058-84-24-81

In Memory

NFP British pioneer **Anna Flynn, MD** died recently. Please pray for her soul and the NFP community in England. She will be greatly missed.

Joan Goebel, MD, a pillar of the St. Louis NFP community. Dr. Goebel died on April 16, 1997. After her retirement from active practice, Dr. Goebel volunteered with the Medical Missionary Sisters. Dr. Goebel gave much time to the NFP Aware center in St. Louis. Please pray for the repose of her soul and the NFP community of St. Louis.

NFP AROUND THE WORLD

Portrait of the Interessengemeinschaft für Natürliche Familienplanung (IGNFP) Switzerland

Heinz Hürzeler

In March 1985 the Interessengemeinschaft für Natürliche Familienplanung, (Community of Interests for Natural Family Planning; IGNFP), was founded in the Principality of Liechtenstein, Zurich, Switzerland. The Community took for its goal the propagation of NFP to the Swiss and the people of Liechtenstein. It is the parent organization of the four main NFP organizations of Switzerland, AVIFA, CAMEN, INER, and WOOMB. It is responsible for regrouping some 175 NFP teachers and cooperates closely with the International Association of Physicians for NFP (IAPNFP). It seeks to reach its goal by the creation of a coordination office, which:

- promotes contact between organizations, groups and persons knowing and practicing NFP;
- arranges and organizes NFP meetings (e.g., courses preparing the engaged for marriage; teaching youth the physiologic basis of fertility);
- publishes a Bulletin with the latest news about NFP and a calendar of events three times a year (1,500 copies);
- works on public relations by publishing news about NFP in the press, on the radio, etc.
- collects and prepares books, papers, brochures and scripts for courses with NFP themes.

In addition, the Community supports all information centers corresponding with its aims. ■

Further information is available from the coordination office run by Anne and Heinz Hürzeler,

P.O.B. 63, CH-8775 Luchsingen;

Phone: 011-058-84-24-44;

FAX, 011-058-84-24-81;

E-Mail, huerzele@dial.active.ch.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Diocese of St. Cloud Wins Coverage of NFP Services from Blue Cross/Blue Shield

Kay Ek

After four years of negotiations, we are pleased to announce that Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Minnesota has certified our NFP office as a qualified provider.

This means that NFP services provided by our NFP office and for any of our certified NFP instructors throughout the diocese of St. Cloud, are covered under the diocesan Blue Cross/Blue Shield Contract. Employees of diocesan institutions covered under the diocesan BC/BS plan are covered immediately for NFP services. This is important to all diocesan employees, because it represents additional benefits under the plan. It is also a historical event, because this is the first time that a major insurance carrier has covered NFP services anywhere in the country.

Two significant changes in health care insurance have impacted NFP in Minnesota and in particular, the diocese of St. Cloud. After several years of negotiations with BlueCross/BlueShield (BC/BS) of Minnesota, (the health insurance carrier for approximately 500 diocesan employees), NFP has been accepted as a covered procedure. For years the diocese refused to have included in the basic health insurance policy any means of artificial birth control or abortion.

A 1994 Minnesota Statute change was an important factor in the diocese's ability to convince BC/BS to pay for NFP instruction. The Law (62Q.14) simply states that :

No health plan company may restrict the choice of an enrollee as to where the enrollee receives service related to:

1) The voluntary planning of the conception and bearing of children, provided that this clause does not refer to

- abortion services;
- 2) The diagnosis of infertility;
 - 3) The testing and treatment of a sexually transmitted disease; and
 - 4) The testing for AIDS or other HIV-related conditions.

The directive to implement the law was issued jointly by the State Department of Commerce and the Department of Health in September, 1996 and included some very decisive language. For example, the directive states as follows:

Health plan companies cannot use credentialing requirements to restrict where enrollees choose to receive 62Q.14 services. For example, if health plan companies cover family planning services, then health plan companies must pay for NFP services. Therefore, regardless of where or from what type of provider, the enrollee receives natural family planning services, the health plan company

must pay for these services.

Furthermore, "When 62Q.14 services are provided by non-network, non-participating providers, the health plan company must pay billed or actual charges for these services."

The Office of NFP began submitting claims for teaching and follow-up in the Fall of 1996, and have experienced both success and frustration. A large HMO located in St. Cloud and several other insurance companies have responded very positively and promptly. One or two health plan companies have been less than willing to honor the statute and the administrative directive. The file dealing with the situation is five inches thick and growing. The hope for continued success lies with the State Department of Commerce, which has the responsibility of administering the law and following through with agency complaints and which has been very willing to support our efforts.

Diocesan NFP programs should be encouraged to pursue this funding source with their legislators because we are providing a professional family planning service that is cost effective and medically safe compared to contraceptives which most health care insurance policies support. Another point that may or may not be appropriate in other dioceses, is to carefully review the items included or excluded in the health care policies being provided to diocesan employees. Occasionally, the fine print included coverage of medical procedures contrary to Church teaching. ■

Kay Ek is the director of the Office of NFP in the diocese of St. Cloud. Kay is also the Director of BOMA, USA and is a member of the NCCB's NFP Advisory Board.

Questions concerning this topic:

Office of NFP,
Diocese of St. Cloud
316 North 7th Ave.
St. Cloud, MN 56303

NEWS

BRIEFS



DDP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Staff assistant, **Thérèse Bempohl**, has left the DDP/NFP to accept a new challenge as a teacher of religion in a Catholic high school in Maryland. We already miss Thérèse. She not only helped to keep the office operating, but also did super research and writing projects as well as served as our "special events planner." We know you will join us in wishing all the best to Thérèse as she continues to do the Lord's work.



EVENTS

March 7 - 14, 1998, Creighton Model NFP Practitioner Program, Education Phase I will be held in Atlanta, GA and conducted by NFP of Greater Kansas City. *Contact: Phyllis A. White, CNFPE, Director, 1312 Fairway Circle, Blue Springs, MO 64014-2245; 816-229-1473; FAX, 816-229-3390; E-Mail, pwhite@discoverynet.com.*

March 14, 1998, the IL NFP Association will hold their annual conference in Romeoville, IL. *Contact: Christine Blaszak, 1126 South Myrtle, Villa Park, IL 60181; 630-832-6631.*

March 22 - 28, 1998, is Natural Family Planning Week. Sponsored by the AANFP, brochures, flyers, and posters are available. *Contact: Becky Knapp, 316-683-2663.*

March 30 - April 3, 1998, the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, will hold a Catholic leadership conference on human sexuality, family planning, and the health

care of women in Omaha, NE. This conference will also be held on: October 12-16, 1998 and April 12 - 16, 1999. *Contact: Pope Paul VI Institute, 6901 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68106; 402-390-9168; FAX, 402-390-9851.*

April 28 - June 2, 1998, the Diocese of Burlington, VT will hold on Monday nights NFP teacher education. *Contact: Ruth Charlesworth, DMin, CRLE, director, Office of Family Life/Respect Life, 351 North Ave., Burlington, VT 05401; 802-658-6110; FAX, 802-860-0451; E-Mail, rcharle@ibm.net.*

June 28 - July 2, 1998, Couple to Couple League will hold its biennial convention in Colorado Springs, CO. Entitled "Pilgrims of the Absolute: Strengthening the Family for the New Millennium," speakers include: Karl Keating, Archbishop Charles Chaput, and Marilyn Shannon. *Contact: 719-548-8758 (registration and further information).*

July 15-18, 1998, the American Academy of NFP will hold their annual conference. To be held in Marquette, Michigan. *Contact: AANFP.*

October 9 - 17, 1998, the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, will hold a Creighton Model NaProEducation Technology, Education Phase I course, in Omaha, NE. *Contact: Pope Paul VI Institute, 6901 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68106; 402-390-9168; FAX, 402-390-9851.*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please keep in your prayers NFP educator and preacher, **Fr. Daniel McCaffrey**. Fr. McCaffrey has recently

been diagnosed with cancer. Fortunately he is feeling well, and will be fighting hard for his health. He has asked for prayers of healing so that he may continue his NFP missionary work. *Messages of support can be sent to: Rev. D. McCaffrey, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, OK 73123.*

Congratulations are in order for Richard Fehring, DNSc, RN, of Marquette University, who has been awarded a grant of \$300,000.00 + from an anonymous Pro-Life foundation to fund a new institute for NFP. The institute represents a collaborative effort among Marquette University's College of Nursing, select Milwaukee area Catholic Hospitals, and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The Institute has a three-fold purpose: to provide professional NFP services through local Catholic hospitals and area parishes; to train health professionals to become NFP teachers; and to continue research in NFP. *Contact: Dr. Fehring, Marquette University, College of Nursing, Milwaukee, WI 53233.*

NFP for Central Texas, Inc., Diocese of Austin, celebrated its tenth anniversary with a one day conference on February 15. Taking as their theme, NFP's role in restoring the culture of life, guest speakers included Janet Smith, Ph.D., Martha Garza, M.D., and Fr. Bruce Nieli. *Contact: Randy McCaslin, 2026 Guadalupe St., Austin, TX 78705; 512-474-2757.*

The NFP program of the diocese of **Jackson, MS**, has developed a Marriage Enrichment Seminar. The seminar treats the spirituality of human sexuality. Designed with a flexible format, its length can be one hour or longer; speakers include a medical professional, an NFP witness couple and an NFP teacher.

Contact: Gerry Gray-Lewis, RN, 1506 Winchester St., Jackson, MS 39211; 601-981-9530; FAX, 601-936-1416; E-Mail, g-lewis@juno.com.

Bob Kambic (Johns Hopkins, School of Hygiene and Public Health, MD) notes that the Center for Alternate Medicine at the National Institute of Health is open to proposals for funding NFP research. He also notes that they have an interesting newsletter. Contact: E-mail, <http://altmed.od.nih.gov>.



RESOURCES

Articles and Books:

Billings New Book: Drs. John & Lyn Billings have published a new book, *Teaching The Billings Ovulation Method - Variations of the Cycle and Reproductive Health*. Now available in the U.S. through BOMA-USA. Cost is \$15.00 (postage paid) or \$12.00 each for orders of 5 or more. Contact: BOMA-USA, 316 North 7th Avenue, St. Cloud, MN 56303-3631; 320-252-2100 or 1-888-637-6371; FAX, 320-252-2877; E-mail, nfpstc@cloudnet.com.

Dossier—NFP: The entire Sep/Oct 1997 issue of *Dossier*, a magazine published by Ignatius Press, is devoted to contraception, and contains significant articles by such writers as Mother Teresa, Janet Smith, William May, Hanna Klaus, John Kippley and other well known authors. Single copies can be obtained for \$4.50 + \$2.00 s/h. Contact: 1-800-651-1531.

Georgetown NFP: The June/September 1997 issue of *Advances in Contraception* is devoted to the conference sponsored by the Institute for Reproductive Health, Georgetown University Medical Center, April 2-5, 1997 (this will be reviewed in the next issue of *Current Medical Research*). Contact: IRH/GT, Georgetown Center, 6th Floor, 2115 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007; 202-687-1392; FAX, 202-687-6846.

Audio/Video:

NFP Program, Sacred Heart Medical Center, Spokane, WA, has recently produced the video, *NFP, An Alternative for You in closed captioning for the hear-*

ing impaired. Contact: Joy DeFelice, RN, Director, NFP Program, Dept. of Educational Services, Sacred Heart Medical Services, 101 West Eighth Ave., P.O. Box 2555, Spokane, WA 99220; 509-455-3131; FAX, 509-455-4925.

Georgetown NFP: The Institute for Reproductive Health has initiated a new strategy to market NFP to health care professionals. Its basic approach is from a secular family planning perspective: "NFP is a viable method of birth control and should be offered by doctors and family planning clinicians." To launch this program, Georgetown developed a video for public health care policy makers and medical professionals. The video is very professional and features several NFP experts. Because of the video's contraceptive orientation and inclusion of staff from agencies such as the World Health Organization, USAID, and Planned Parenthood, this is not recommended as a promotional tool for the dioceses. We recommend it only "for your information." Contact: IRH/GT, Georgetown Center, 6th Floor, 2115 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007; 202-687-1392; FAX, 202-687-6846.

Internet:

NFPLIST: Designed for professionals who are involved in teaching, promoting, or researching NFP (any method or school). This list is not intended to be a discussion for users of NFP, but rather for those working with NFP. Participants can share ideas and speak with practitioners, physicians, educators, and ethicists. The list is maintained at the University of Utah. List moderators are Suzanne Chisum, PhD, and Joseph Stanford, MD, CNFPMC. To subscribe, send E-Mail to: schisum@inlink.com or to stanford@msscc.med.utah.edu. Briefly describe who you are and your professional involvement or interest in NFP. This description will be forwarded to the list to introduce you to other members of the NFPLIST. Once you are added to the list, you will receive an introductory message and then start receiving E-Mail.

CINNFP: Designed for anyone interested in learning more about NFP, the focus of this list is to promote discussion of the theological and moral issues sur-

rounding the use of NFP. CINNFP also provides a forum for NFP educators and practitioners to exchange ideas, share experiences, and discuss cases. It can serve as an educational resource for couples interested in NFP. Although sponsored by the Catholic Information Network (CIN), the list is open to people of all faiths. Moderated by Pam Beard, RN, NFPP. To subscribe, send E-Mail to: listserv@cin.org. The message should read: SUBSCRIBE CINNFP plus your name (e.g. SUBSCRIBE CINNFP jane Doe). After you are added to the list, you will receive an introductory message and then start receiving E-Mail posted by others.

The Internet and NFP: NFP books can be found through the internet. One reader told us that a listing of over 50 NFP books, including ones by authors such as Kippley, Billings, and Hilgers can be obtained at: <http://www.amazon.com> et. A warning however, in regard to postage: according to the U.S. Post Office, these shipments typically take from 4-8 weeks to be delivered to destinations outside the U.S. Experience suggests that 8 weeks is more likely than 4 for overseas purchases. It is recommended to take the shipping option called WorldMail which costs \$7.00 per-shipment, plus \$5.95 per-book.



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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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