

FORUM

Diocesan Activity Report

Vol. 11, No. 3 & 4, Summer/Fall 2000

Why Natural Family Planning Differs From Contraception

Pope John Paul II

In our not too distant past—1998—the Holy Father wrote an important letter to Dr. Anna Cappella, director of the Center for Research and Study on the Natural Regulation of Fertility at Rome's Catholic University of the Sacred Heart. The occasion was a convention commemorating Humanae vitae, Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical. The letter provides NFP promoters with a timeless encouragement to persevere in providing this most important service in the Church. Excerpts from the translation by L'Osservatore Romano of the letter in Italian follows.

I hope that everyone will benefit from a closer study of the Church's teaching on the "truth" of the act of love in which spouses become sharers in God's creative action.

The truth of this act stems from its being an expression of the spouses' reciprocal personal giving, a giving that can only be total since the person is one and indivisible. In the act that expresses their love, spouses are called to make a reciprocal gift of themselves to each other in the totality of their person: nothing that is part of their being can be excluded from this gift. This is the reason for the intrinsic unlawfulness of contraception: it introduces a substantial limitation into this reciprocal giving, breaking that "inseparable connection" between the two meanings of the conjugal act, the unitive and the procreative, which, as Pope Paul VI pointed out, are

written by God himself into the nature of the human being (No. 12).

Continuing in this vein, the great pontiff rightly emphasized the "essential difference" between contraception and the use of natural methods in exercising "responsible procreation." It is an anthropological difference because in the final analysis it involves two irreconcilable concepts of the person and of human sexuality (cf. *Familiaris consortio*, 32).

It is not uncommon in current thinking for the natural methods of fertility regulation to be separated from their proper ethical dimension and to be considered in their merely functional aspect. It is not surprising then that people no longer perceive the profound difference between these and the artificial methods. As a result, they go so far as to speak of them as if they were another

In this issue . . .

As we continue celebrating the Jubilee Year, we again feature articles from our NFP past, present and future. We hope they will encourage you to continue the "good fight" as we move NFP ministry forward into the new millennium.

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form of contraception. But this is certainly not the way they should be viewed or applied.

On the contrary, it is only in the logic of the reciprocal gift between man and women that the natural regulation of fertility can be correctly understood and authentically lived as the proper expression of a real and mutual communion of love and life. It is worth repeating here that "the person can never be considered as a means to an end, above all never a means of 'pleasure.' The person is and must be nothing other than the end of every act. Only then does the action correspond to the true dignity of the person." (cf. *Letter to Families*, 12).

The Church is aware of the various difficulties married couples can encounter, especially in the present social context, not only in following but also in the very understanding of the moral norm that concerns them. Like a mother, the Church draws close to couples in difficulty to help them; but she does so by reminding them that the way to finding a solution to their problems must come through full respect for the truth of their love. "It is an outstanding manifestation of charity toward souls to omit nothing from the saving doctrine of Christ," Paul VI admonished (*Humanae vitae*, 29).

.. it is only in the logic of the reciprocal gift between man and women that the natural regulation of fertility can be correctly understood and authentically lived as the proper expression of a real and mutual communion of love and life.

The Church makes available to spouses the means of grace which Christ offers in redemption and invites them to have recourse to them with ever renewed confidence. She exhorts them in particular to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is poured out in their hearts through the efficacy of their distinctive sacrament: this grace is the source of the interior energy they need to fulfill the many duties of their state, starting with that of being consistent with the truth of conjugal love. At the same time, the Church urgently requests the commitment of scientists, doctors, health-care personnel and pastoral workers to make available to married couples all those aids which prove an effective support for helping them fully to live their vocation (cf. *HV*, 23-27).

It is from this standpoint that we view the valuable work which is the concern

of centers like the one you, professor, have encouraged and continue to support with praiseworthy effort. As I note with appreciation the center's activity of increasing public awareness by organizing conferences, seminars, conventions and courses at both national and international levels, I would like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of the study and research which are part of the institution's purpose, as appears from its very name. Indeed, it is necessary on the one hand to be committed in the medical field to disseminating knowledge of the scientific basis for the natural methods of fertility regulation and on the other, to promoting study and research on the nature of the biochemical and biophysical events that accompany and indicate periods of fertility, leading to an easier and more reliable exercise of responsible parenthood. ■

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The DDP's brochures "NFP" and "Myths & Realities" are now available in Spanish! Prices are the same as for the English versions: 25 cents each; \$15.00 for 100; or \$120.00 for 1,000.

Postage and handling are also charged.

Contact the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, 202-541-3070; FAX 202-541-3054.

BISHOPS TEACH

Living Together

Questions and Answers Regarding Cohabitation and the Church's Moral Teaching.

The Bishops of Pennsylvania

The following document is a watershed of Catholic moral teaching on the issue of cohabitation. Published in September 1999, this ten page document follows a simple question and answer format. It also provides eight questions for reflection and prayer which any priest, deacon, religious, or lay minister may use in marriage preparation sessions. The document opens with a letter to engaged couples from the bishops of Pennsylvania. In it the bishops urge couples living together before marriage to "separate" because while "many in our society may see no problem with this . . . living together and having sexual relations before marriage can never be reconciled with what God expects of us." "Living chastely during your remaining months of engagement," said the bishops, "will teach you many things about one another." "It will help you to grow in the virtues of generous love, sacrificial giving, self-restraint and good communication—virtues which are essential for a good and lasting marriage," said the bishops. Following are excerpts.

Why is cohabitation such a concern for the Church?

. . . the Church is particularly concerned about cohabitation because the practice is so common today and because, in the long run, it is causing great unhappiness for families in the Church. This is true, above all, because—even though society may approve of the practice—cohabitation simply cannot be squared with God's plan for marriage. This may be why most couples who live together before marriage find married life difficult to sustain for very long.

The Church does not invent laws. It passes on and interprets what God has revealed through the ages. No one in the Church has the right to change what Jesus has taught. To do so would be to deprive people of saving truths that were meant for all time. Our Christian faith teaches that a sexual relationship belongs only in marriage. Sex outside of marriage shows disrespect for the sacrament of marriage, the sacredness of sex, and human dignity.

"We have good reasons for living together before our wedding. Why can't the Church just accept that?"

The Church cares for you as a parent cares for a beloved son or daughter. Knowing that cohabitation increases a couple's chance of marital failure, the Church wants to protect you and preserve your happiness. Besides, most couples don't really evaluate the reasons they give to justify their decision. Think about it:

Reason 1: "It's more convenient for us."

"Convenience" is a good thing, but it's not the best basis for making a decision that will affect your entire life. Married life is sometimes inconvenient and even demanding. Cohabitation for convenience is poor preparation for that kind of commitment. Research bears this out. Studies show that those who live together . . . tend to prefer "change," "experimentation" and open-ended lifestyles—all of which could lead to instability in marriage. . . .

Reason 2: "We're trying to save money for the wedding, so living together is more economical."

Sure, you might save the price of monthly rent, but you're sacrificing something more valuable. Engagement is more than just time to plan the party. It is a time for deeper discussion and more thorough reflection, which are best carried out in a detached way. . . .

Reason 3: "Because of the high divorce rate, we want to see if things work out first."

Studies consistently show that couples who live together score significantly lower in both marital communication and overall satisfaction Couples who live together before marriage actually have a 50% greater chance of divorce than those who don't. And about 60% of couples who cohabit break up without marrying. . . .

Reason 4: "We need to get to know one another first. Later we'll start having kids."

Cohabitation is actually the worst way to get to know another person, because it shortcuts the true development of lasting friendship. Those who live together before marriage often report an over-reliance on sexual expression and less emphasis on conversation and other ways of communication

"Why does the Church interfere in the sex lives of couples? It's really just a private matter between us."

Sex is intensely private and personal, but it also has deep moral and social dimensions. Sex works as a primary bonding agent in families and the family is the building block of society. Sexual rights and wrongs influence the health and happiness of individuals, families and neighborhoods. That's why sexual behavior has always been the subject of

many civil laws. The Church, of course, wishes to safeguard the family and society. But, more than that, the Church wishes to safeguard your relationship with your future spouse and with God. Sex is the act that seals and renews the couple's marriage covenant before God. Sexual sins, then, are not just between a man and a woman, but between the couple and God. And that's the Church's responsibility. Sex is not simply a private matter. If it's between you and God, it's between you and the Church. You need to ask yourself: "When do I stop being a Christian? When I close the bedroom door? When does my relationship with God cease to matter?"

"But, really, how does what we do with our own bodies affect our relationship with each other and our spiritual relationship with God?"

The gift of your body in sexual intercourse is a profound symbol of the giving of your whole self. In making love, the husband and wife are saying to one another in "body language" what they said to each other at the altar on their wedding day: "I am yours, for life!" God created sex to be physically pleasurable and emotionally fulfilling. But it is even greater than all that. It is, above all, the deepest sign of the complete gift of self

No

Before giving your body to another person, you need to give your whole life, and you need to receive your spouse's whole life in return—and that can only happen in marriage.

that a husband and wife pledge to each other. This mutual gift empowers the couple to become co-creators with God in giving life to a new person, a baby. According to God's design, the gift of sexual union has two primary purposes: strengthening married love and sharing that love with children.

The only "place" where this total self-giving between a man and a woman is to take place is in marriage. It is the only "place" where children can be raised with the secure, committed love of a mother and a father. So sexual intimacy belongs only in marriage. Outside of marriage, sex is a lie. The action says: "I give you my whole self"—but the man and the woman are really holding back their commitment, their fertility, and their relationship with God. Before giving your body to another person, you need to

give your whole life, and you need to receive your spouse's whole life in return—and that can only happen in marriage.

"Why should we need to separate now? It's just an arbitrary rule of the Church."

The Church's teaching on cohabitation is not an "arbitrary" rule. Living together before marriage is a sin because it violates God's commandments and the law of the Church. St. Paul lists this sin—technically called "fornication"—among the sins . . . that can keep a person from reaching heaven (see 1 Corinthians 6:9). Cohabitation works against the heart's deepest desires and greatly increases the chances of a failed marriage.

If you are honest with yourself, every practical consideration will tell you that separating before marriage is the right thing to do. It is a decision to turn away from sin and to follow Christ and His teaching. That is always the right decision. ■

The full text can be obtained from Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, 223 North Street, Box 2835, Harrisburg, PA 17105; 717-238-9613; FAX 717-238-1473; www.pacatholic.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

FOR THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO AUGUST 15-18, 2001

The Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities and the Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth are co-sponsoring a symposium which will explore the four classic themes of the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*. The themes are: forming an intimate community of persons; serving life; participating in the development of society; and sharing in the life and mission of the Church.

One day prior to the symposium, a meeting will be held for diocesan NFP coordinators.

Watch for a registration and information flyer in the mail this Fall!

No Rest From "Mischief"

Theresa Notare

On my way home one Saturday evening after an energetic day of taking care of my friend's three small children—hiking, diaper changes, story telling, movies, more diaper changes and burgers—I stopped at a local parish for the vigil Mass. I had always wanted to stop in this Church because it seemed so serene from the outside. As I walked into this refuge of peace and Presence, I was looking forward to taking a spiritual "rest." Something happened, however, that disturbed my peace. Shortly after the Liturgy began, I noticed a busy cameraman rolling his equipment up and down a side aisle. The local news station was getting footage to cover the latest controversy—the District of Columbia's City Council vs. the Catholic Church. Immediately, my soul was on fire with the cry to battle!

A few days earlier, on July 11, the D.C. City Council passed "The Health Insurance Coverage for Contraceptives Act of 2000" (Bill 13-399). This bill requires all employers to pay for contraceptives in their prescription drug plans. Religious organizations are not exempt—all are forced to provide all types of contraceptives. In its present state, this bill is a flagrant attack on religious freedom. What makes it all the more horrifying is that it is happening in the capital of the United States of America.

After pressure from the Archdiocese of Washington and members of Congress, Mayor Anthony Williams, a Catholic, pocket vetoed the bill on August 4. However, the D.C. City Council may introduce a new bill in the Fall and there is no indication that the Church can rest easy. They may try to use different language to get at the same issue. If a similar bill is proposed and becomes law, it will mean that in our nation's capital all religious institutions must comply regardless of their beliefs. For the Catholic Church this includes all

parishes, elementary and high schools, hospitals, numerous houses of religious communities which have employees (e.g., Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, etc.), the Catholic University of America, Georgetown University, and even the National Conference of Catholic Bishops!

What was even more reprehensible when this bill became public was the fact that blatant anti-Catholic bigotry took center stage as Council members debated its terms. So vulgar was the debate that, as the National Review re-

ported, it revealed "some of the worst nativist tendencies of olden days." Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, Most Rev. William Lori, who attended the hearing, said that four Council members were especially virulent in their expressions concerning the Church. Member Jim Graham (Ward 1) said "I've spent years fighting Church dogma." Graham glared at Bishop Lori as he warned against a "homophobic Church" that will now "determine people's medical care, if Catholic institutions are allowed a conscience exemption." If the Council were to accept any such exemption, he said, "we are permitting religious principles to dictate public health policy." Another Council member said that any employer who does not provide contraceptive coverage is guilty of "employee discrimination." Still another warned of the "slippery slope" that a conscience clause might create—if churches are allowed to bow out, citing moral objections to contraception and abortion, who's to say they won't try to opt out of mandatory benefits for same-sex "do-

mestic partners" down the road?

Toleration, is often the battle cry for defenders of our First Amendment rights. The self-styled champion of these rights, the ACLU, should have been on the scene helping to save the day. NOT! They not only turned the other way, but their usual commitment to freedom of speech and religion melted in the light of their advocacy for "reproductive rights." A member of the ACLU's Reproductive Freedom Project commented

that this type of "contraceptive equity legislation" is only fair; religious freedom needs no protection.

There were some voices of reason, however. The *Washington Times* reported that "congressional leaders reprimanded the

D.C. Council." Rep. Ernest Istook (R-Ok) criticized the Council members' "bigotry" and introduced an amendment to block the D.C. law. Rep. Thomas M. Davis III (R-VA), chair of the House Government Reform subcommittee on the District, said "the House will amend the . . . legislation rather than pass it whole." This sentiment, he noted, comes from both Democrats as well as Republicans.

Why did this happen in a city where democracy is practically a religion? My colleague Richard Doerflinger's assessment is that abortion advocates "have been losing the political battle over abortion. So they see a need to switch to something more appealing." Regardless of the reasons, this effort belittles and runs roughshod over the religious beliefs of millions of Americans. Clearly these efforts must be stopped. All Catholics need to be aware of such activity. There is no rest from such mischief! ■

This article was originally printed in Life Issues Forum, a nationally syndicated column.

Why did this happen in a city where democracy is practically a religion? . . . Regardless of the reasons, this effort belittles and runs roughshod over the religious beliefs of millions of Americans.

A Pastoral Response to Infertility

Steven Bozza, M.A.

Infertility is a growing phenomenon. At the beginning of the new millennium, roughly 20% of couples of childbearing age will experience difficulty conceiving. There are a number of reasons for this situation. Some cases arise from the choices couples make to marry later in life and to delay childbirth. Other cases are the direct result from sexually transmitted diseases. Sometimes environmental hazards will wreak havoc on the reproductive system. And still other cases may stem from physiological problems (e.g., endometriosis). Approximately 14% of infertility cases are simply unexplained. Regardless of the causes of infertility, the percentages of couples with this problem is higher today than in the past.

A Devastating Reality

Sexuality is a part of human personhood, an inseparable component of the intellect. It is also a spiritual reality expressed through the body. When the reality of infertility hits, it shakes the inner core of the human person. Masculinity and "fatherhood," and femininity and "motherhood" are not merely descriptive words. They are often intertwined realities which mean the same thing to many people. Human sexuality, as a gift given by God, allows the human person to share in God's life.

**ATTENTION
All Diocesan NFP
Coordinators**

**A SPECIAL NFP
MEETING WILL BE HELD
ON AUGUST 15, 2001**

Mark your calendars for a one day NFP meeting to take place on August 15 in Virginia prior to the *Familiaris consortio* Symposium.

Details will be mailed to diocesan NFP leaders in the Fall.

It is therefore oriented to "relationship"—it is a gift to be given and to be received. Infertility therefore strikes not only at a person's self image, but also at the couple's relationship.

As if the emotional and social consequences of infertility are not heavy enough, couples facing this problem are also pressured by the medical community which holds up a vast array of reproductive technologies which are not always in accord with God's plan for love. Most Catholic couples are uninformed regarding the Church's teachings on these issues, they typically don't understand the medical treatments offered to them and are often at the mercy of health care professionals. To complicate matters, there are a myriad of subjective realities per each couple which make even the morally acceptable procedures unacceptable. And so, the pastoral care of couples experiencing infertility must be holistic. It must not only concern itself with the morality of the biological procedures, it must also concern itself with the psychological, social and spiritual issues which couples face.

A Pastoral Solution

As Church, we oftentimes react to problems instead of anticipating them. Ministry to couples facing infertility must be both reactive and proactive. There are a variety of ways in which to

handle this issue. A major vehicle which we should not overlook is that of marriage preparation programs. We can anticipate the problem of infertility by appropriately discussing it in these programs. In our diocese, we produced a series for marriage preparation entitled *The Christian Married Life* (published by Benzinger). It addresses infertility in all three of its volumes. For those not using *Christian Married Life* as a text, the outlines from the responsible parenthood and sexuality talks can easily be adapted to other formats if the following three points are maintained:

- "20% of couples in this room will have a problem conceiving."
- "Fertility specialists will first ask a couple to chart their fertility signs for three months which will help in the diagnosis of infertility."
- "The presentation on Natural Family Planning is extremely important because it will help you to know your fertility signs and may help you to achieve pregnancy."

Priests, deacons and pastoral care workers working with infertile couples have a daunting task balancing the healing of the heart and the articulation of Church teachings. In order to prepare this core group of laborers we have also developed a manual entitled *Begotten Not Made: A Guide for the Pastoral Care of Couples Experiencing Infertility*.

Instead of addressing the objective morality and processes of reproductive technologies first, *Begotten Not Made* gives the pastoral care worker a glimpse of what is in the couple's heart. Issues of dignity, shattered dreams and vocation are explored in the context of the Theology of the Body, Pope John Paul II's beautifully poetic catechesis on life, love and the human person. This builds a trusting relationship between the couple and the pastoral care giver. Once this trust is established, the objective moral issues are more easily

and effectively addressed.

In helping couples come to terms with infertility we carefully walk with them through each of the emotional stages they may move through—denial, anger, frustration, pain, jealousy and confusion. We then build within them a sense of their vocation as individuals and as couples. The next step is to help them understand that having a child is not a right, it is a privilege. Lastly, we must review with them all the techniques which are available and help them understand why some are moral and some are not.

Infertile couples intimately know the sorrows and difficulty which sometimes accompany married life. In the scheme of negative things that can plague a marriage, infertility may not seem as severe as issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence or a life threatening illness. However, it is no less devastating, and if not handled carefully, it can destroy a marriage. In extending the Church's healing hand to such couples our first words should be "Do not be afraid!" In all of our work, we strive to communicate the message that "God has not abandoned you." We are careful to help couples understand that they do not have to face this difficulty on their own. The Church is ready to guide, support, and provide. But before we can do this good work, we as pastoral leaders must prepare ourselves as best we can. ■

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The resource Begotten Not Made can be obtained from: Family Life Institute, 7502 Diplomat Dr., Suite B, Manassas, VA 20109; 703-365-7285. The resource Christian Married Life can be obtained from Benzinger, 21600 Oxnard St., Suite 500, Woodland Hills, CA 91367

NFP & THE NOW GENERATION

As the first generation of NFP pioneers moves into their later years, it is encouraging to find young adults willing to take up the banner. The following piece is by a student from Marquette University. Beth Dietrich offers an undergraduate's thoughts on making NFP "relevant" to the computer generation.

High Tech Ways to Naturally Plan a Family, A Generation Xer's Perspective

Beth Dietrich

For many people the idea of Natural Family Planning is bizarre. The mere mention of not relying on artificial birth control is enough to make many people give you an odd look. NFP is seen as a strange way to prevent unintentional pregnancy. In reality this is far from the truth!

One of the problems with NFP's lack of appeal to the younger generation is that generation Xers have grown up knowing birth control. By the time they were in their 20s they were keenly aware of AIDS and had more or less accepted condoms as a means of "protection." Growing up as children of the baby boomers this generation as a whole does not have strong negative or positive feelings about premarital sex or contraception. Consider the fact that as of 1995 almost one third of the women aged 40-45 in the United States were sterilized (Fehring, 1999). These women are the Xers mothers! That's the role model for this new generation. Since a role model in the family will not work in this regard, we need to find new ways to promote the philosophy and teach the methods of NFP.

I believe that education in NFP will result in a rise in its use. In an informal opinion poll that I conducted on friends, family, and nursing students, family planning methods in general were rated anywhere from 30-70% effective. When asked if they would use NFP, the resounding answer was NO! Even more

interesting is that not a single person was able to tell me correctly how NFP worked. The answers ranged from "Isn't that when you can't have sex the week after your period?" to "That's when you pull out before you finish." Clearly education is key!

An important avenue for NFP education is through the internet. Today, people (especially young people) go to the internet to get information on just about any subject imaginable—including information on methods of preventing or achieving pregnancy. To raise awareness about NFP the information needs to be readily accessible. If NFP is promoted as an effective method for spacing or limiting births and can be found in links to birth control sites, people will become more aware of the idea of NFP. Getting people to use NFP is a bit more of a challenge. However, awareness is a beginning.

I wanted to investigate the internet for NFP information and see what was available. I spent time examining the ways that people are able to access and chart their fertility signs via their computers. The following is my report. I discovered that there are three basic ways that NFP sites offer their services online. First is by offering charts to print out and to fill in by hand. The second is to offer computer programs to download. And third is offering support through e-mail addresses for advice and information.

Charts

Several sites that I found offer NFP charts. The first I found to be useful was one published by Harpnet. The strength of this site is that the chart could be printed directly from the web and downloading was not needed. The weakness of this site is that it presumes NFP knowledge on the part of the user and the chart only allows the basal body temperature (BBT) to be recorded. No space is given to record mucus, cervical changes, or miscellaneous notes. In addition, the chart cannot be completed online. The site only allows the user to print a copy and then fill it in by hand.

There is a similar, yet I think better website put out by the Couple to Couple League (CCL) where the user can get a copy of their chart. I saw two weaknesses to this site. First, after downloading the file, the user has to print out and complete the chart by hand (those of us who are computer users from birth would rather input our data directly.) Second, it was slightly inconvenient in

that downloading a small file had to be done first rather than printing straight from the web. However, once downloaded the chart contained all of the components necessary for charting STM.

There were no differences between the above sites and others I had discovered. If a person is simply looking for a quick place to print up a chart and fill it in by hand there are ample supplies to be found online.

Downloading NFP Programs

These sites allow the user to type all personal information into the computer and the program will do the hard part (calculations). There are a variety of versions and programs.

There is the *Fertility Forecaster* (Micro-Processor Services, Inc., 1995), a program run through DOS. With advancements in computer technology DOS run programs are not as sophisticated as most people like, so it was a bit "outdated." Also, the download option for



*Internet users
need to be sure
the person who is
advising them is
a qualified
NFP expert.*

this program is only a demonstration. It does not allow the user to put in personal information to get a feel for how the program would be used on a daily basis. The program allows the user to enter their BBT data, display the BBT charts, and print out. Using this program each day, the user must enter her BBT, the time at which it was taken, and the date. In addition, the user must give each day a code. The codes identify categories such as: period, wet mucus, sick, sex, disturbed night, drugs/alcohol, PMS, staining, and normal. This leaves limited options for the user because there is no category for "other" symptoms. Also, the user is only allowed to choose one of the codes each day, which can make for confusion when several items need charting. Other difficulties with this program had to do with terminology-e.g., what was meant by "normal?" On the positive side, this program allows the user to chart the most common symptoms used to determine fertility. The *Fertility Forecaster* will also "forecast" the user's fertility for that particular day by analyzing data from previous charts. Last but not least, the program also displays the date of the user's last period and ovulation.

A second program I found is called *CycleWatch 2.0* (Wimoweh, 1999). This is brand new and runs through Windows. Unfortunately there is no way to download this program, but it can be purchased for \$39.95. The program al-

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lows the user to chart BBT, mucus, cervical changes, and miscellaneous information. *CycleWatch* accurately charts, analyzes, and predicts fertility cycles. It appears to be simple to use. The reviews of this program are excellent and from the information provided it seems like a good choice of software.

Besides *CycleWatch*, there is another program available for Windows users called *LifeCycle* (LifeCycle Software, 1999). The biggest advantage of this program over *CycleWatch* is that it is available for a 30-day trial period through a download. After the trial period, the user has to purchase the program if they want to continue to use it. The program offers many special features which make computer charting easy. The user simply clicks the day on the calendar to chart symptoms. A click to the symptom window opens a screen to chart the date, time, and BBT. The user next charts if there was menses, spotting, or coitus. There is even a spot to chart whether there was ovulation as detected by a urinary LH test. The second box asks for mucus signs, which are charted as slippery, not dry, and dry. The user can also chart the color and stretchiness of the mucus. In addition internal cervical signs can be recorded. The last box allows for the user to make "daily notes" which can account for anything that was missed in the other boxes.

Another nice feature is "The Chart." This is used to plot BBT and fertility on a graph. The chart easily shows where the user is in her cycle. *LifeCycle* also boasts "The Fertility Advisor." This makes the program especially simple to use. It provides detailed explanations about a user's current fertility, how it was determined, alerts the user to what symptoms should be tracked, and also explains what is happening in the user's body with regard to the menstrual cycle. Another fun and interesting option on the program is "The Pregnancy Forecaster." This keeps track of all coitus dates during a cycle and determines the user's fertility and chances of concep-

tion with each date. If pregnant, the program can predict the baby's due date as accurately than any doctor—maybe even more accurately. At any point during each cycle the user can print out reports that detail the events of that particular cycle or of the preceding cycle. The reports include BBT graphs, summary of coitus, and a detailed summary. The detailed summary includes information about the length of a cycle, the average cycle length, longest and shortest cycles, average luteal length, coitus summary, and ovulation date. Last but not least, the *LifeCycle* program allows the user to print a bedside log. This journal allows the user to chart signs and symptoms at the bedside for later entry into the computer.

Support

A final service that the internet can offer to NFP couples is that of support. Many of the same sites listed above not only provide ways to do charting on the computer, but also provide advice to those using NFP. CCL, for example, has an e-mail address for questions. Another site I found allowed its users to attach a copy of their charts and send them in via e-mail to be analyzed and interpreted. This would be especially useful to people who are having a little

bit of trouble doing it on their own. These types of sites could prove to be of unbelievable value if people use them.

STOP

With NFP information and e-mail addresses available for advice, the internet user does have to use caution. Internet users need to be sure the person who is advising them is a qualified NFP expert. A user should go through the web site of a reputable institution such as CCL or the Families of the America's Foundation.

The Future

The future of just about everything lies in the hands of technology. NFP is no different. With a computer, charting is made easier and couples have more resources and information. Technology is going to be a way to make NFP more appealing to young people in the United States in general.

Today, all NFP centers and educators need to get online and build a web site. Anyone can learn to use a computer! Bringing NFP into the new millennium has already begun. Now we just need to push it farther! ■

Beth Dietrich is a senior nursing student at Marquette University, College of Nursing.

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www.lifecyclesoft.com/download.html
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www.mpsinc.com/indexfrt.html
- Wimoweh Software Inc. *Helping You Manage Your Fertility*.
www.cyclewatch.com

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Oh Where, Oh Where Have My Files Gone? *The Importance of Record Keeping*

Janet L. Kistler

In twenty-five minutes you have to pick up the children from school. The baby has been fussy all day long and demanding your attention. You're trying to put the finishing touches on the budget proposal you have to present tonight at the home and school meeting. Just as you're getting ready to go out the door, the phone rings...it's an NFP client with some questions. You scramble to find the notes from your last conversation with her. Is her file on top of the refrigerator, on the night stand, in with your papers for the budget meeting? Finally, you locate her records, take a deep breath and respond to her concerns.

This is not an unfamiliar scenario for many NFP teachers who are "juggling" family life, often working outside the home, involved with their parish and children's school and teaching NFP!

Yet, we are all aware that to be effective as teachers, a common sense, affirmative, professional approach must be maintained continuously and consistently for every person taught. So how do we do this?

Accurate record keeping and personal follow-up are essential elements of a quality natural family planning client education program. Follow-up is the process through which NFP instruction is personalized. It usually is structured, involving a certain discipline so that the teacher can move through the issues with the client, answering specific questions and discussing the individual problems. Follow-up also provides the

teacher with the opportunity to assess the client/couple's knowledge of NFP: how well the guidelines are being applied, whether or not there are any misunderstandings of the observations of fertility, if the stated family planning intention has changed and so on. But, follow-up is more than mere chart review; it allows the teacher to have an intimate look at a marriage. At its very core, NFP instruction should create a feeling of trust, so that open communication exists between the teacher and client, providing the teacher with the opportunity to evaluate the client's understanding and perception of the information. Each person will learn at their own pace and progress differently. Follow-up is the forum for the teacher to assess not only the menstrual cycle, but the level of comprehension and then adjust the instruction accordingly. This leads to the important issue of record keeping.

When client/couples seek instruction on Natural Family Planning, it's fair to assume that they already have some information about other methods and have made a choice to integrate NFP into their marriage. This is important to the NFP teacher because it indicates that the client has some appreciation of the method and wants to learn. It's important to preserve what information has been given to the client, when it was given, what referrals if any have been made, what their contraceptive history (if any) has been, what reproductive category they are in (postpill, achieving,

postpartum, typical, etc.) and when that client has reached autonomy. Equally important is to make record of the client's understanding of what has been taught.

In a recent conversation with Stella Kitchen, NFP Coordinator for the Diocese of Harrisburg, she shared with me the procedures followed in her diocese. "Our forms are all in triplicate, so it makes it easy for the client to have a copy, the teacher to have a copy and after autonomy is reached, for me to have a copy for the diocesan files." Stella urges her teachers to keep all client records in a secure place. The files are kept by the teachers for one year and then their copies are destroyed and the diocesan files are kept for three years before being shredded. A client assessment form is completed by the teacher and follow-up notes are kept with that form. The diocese also uses a consent form that each client is asked to sign which is basically a "hold harmless agreement" between the NFP program and the client. Clients are provided six follow-up sessions over a period of six months or longer if necessary until autonomy is reached. I asked Stella about the issue of ownership of records and she stated that "the diocese owns the client records."

In speaking with Robert Laird, Director of Family Life and NFP Coordinator for the Diocese of Arlington, I discovered that the NFP teachers in his diocese keep all their client records for an indefinite period of time. The primary NFP methodology taught is through the Couple to Couple League and the format is standardized regarding follow-up and record keeping. There is an initial contact at which time an intake form is completed. Four classes are offered over three months and chart review takes place during the classes. At six months after entry into the program, a follow-up form is sent through the mail to the client from the teacher in the form of a survey. At both nine and twelve months, CCL Central mails a

survey form to the client. While Bob doesn't keep the client files at the diocese, each teacher is responsible for providing him with client information on a quarterly basis. The Arlington program uses no consent or waiver form.

When I was both teaching NFP and directing the Phoenix NFP Center, the follow-up form we used provided all the information needed for the teacher's assessment of the client's integration of NFP, for data collection and for the protection of the program's integrity. The teacher was able to indicate on the form itself what rules had been taught in a particular class (there were four classes in a series), how well the client understood the information, any unusual circumstances, a change in reproductive category and very importantly, the couple's attitudes toward NFP. The form also included questions treating with previous contraceptive usage, medications, surgeries and vitamins. The teacher could also indicate on the follow-up form whether or not the client completed the instruction, became autonomous, conceived, dropped out of the class, moved with no forwarding address, etc. There was also a supplemental log to record phone conversations. We too had a client consent form which both the teacher and client/couple signed. The form stated that NFP was being taught to the exclusion of all other methods, that participation was voluntary and no guarantees of 100% effectiveness were being offered. The client received the original and a copy was kept in their file. Teachers kept client records through the class series and for the first long-term follow-up, one month after completion of the classes. At that time, all records were returned to the Center and all continuing long-term follow-up was managed by Center staff. Records were kept indefinitely.

The advantage of a structured follow-up form is to insure accuracy of record keeping. All teachers in a given program will be asking the same ques-

tions, making their notations on the same form which truly becomes the business record. When teachers document everything they have done and why they have done it, they actually are protecting themselves and their program and insuring that the NFP instruction they have provided has been done in a professional manner.

What of those dioceses who have several NFP methods available? Should

up is being provided, that accurate information is recorded, and that the diocesan NFP program can account for this activity.

This last point brings me to a very serious reality. Record keeping has legal implications. A classic article in the Winter 1983 issue of the International Review of NFP by attorney Thomas J. Prebil, is worth revisiting. Mr. Prebil emphasized the importance of showing



Strong record keeping is multifaceted. It not only ensures quality teaching, but it can also be used in the periodic assessment of diocesan NFP teachers.

there be a standardized method of record keeping and follow-up for the diocesan program? In some dioceses this is a non-issue because forms and procedures in use by the various teachers may already meet local diocesan NFP standards. But in the dioceses where there are great differences, something must be done to ensure consistency of NFP services. At the very least, a NFP advisory board should be able to craft a policy on record keeping that meets the needs of the diocese while also considering the methods provided by their NFP teachers. In some circumstances, this may involve the creation of a separate form that can be used by all the teachers, regardless of the school of NFP offered.

Strong record keeping is multifaceted. It not only ensures quality teaching, but it can also be used in the periodic assessment of diocesan NFP teachers. If a teacher is not making good notes, has not completed the intake forms or follow-up forms, the diocesan NFP coordinator can use this information in an evaluation to help the teacher improve. Record keeping ensures that the client is being well taught, that follow-

"reasonable conduct according to community standards" as a key to protection from potential litigation. This would include, according to Prebil, making "handwritten, dated, and initialed notes of what transpired between teacher and client. Taking the time to make a notation that a fact has been explained; that questions have been solicited or answered; that a prior instruction was reviewed; that a suggestion was made." "If a teacher has taken time to develop a procedure of routine documentation," he said, "it becomes more difficult for anyone to seriously challenge the instruction."

What about ownership of records and charts? Stella Kitchen stated that the Diocese of Harrisburg owned the NFP client files. Again, quoting from Prebil's 1983 article, "The file that is compiled in the course of instruction becomes the property of the NFP program, much as a medical record is the property of the treating physician or the hospital." He went on to write that "clients are entitled to a copy of the record, but not the original." Prebil made it clear that the exception to the "original record" would

be the chart itself. Since it was blank when given to the client and all entries and notations were made by the client, it is considered the client's property. However, the teacher would be entitled to a copy of the chart for the file. This is a very important issue, since several NFP programs are housed in hospitals, but are not official departments of the hospitals. Who then owns the records? The hospital or the NFP program? Clearly, for those programs in that situation, it becomes important to understand the hospital's policy on record keeping and record ownership and to have a clear policy concerning client files.

NFP education is certainly a serious responsibility. If you haven't already done so, take an honest look at your approach to record keeping—both in terms of your individual teachers as well as your diocesan programs. This is a complex issue, and it is becoming more complex as information technology opens the door to new forms of communication. Follow-up through e-mail is already a reality for some NFP teachers. Discussing charts in a "chat room," teaching through the internet, are already happening. What implications will these advancements have for the personal follow-up so integral to the successful teaching and living of NFP? Will new procedures need to be developed for record keeping? How much information and of what nature should be placed in a data base and how do we control access to that information? All of these issues need to be addressed, both from the perspective of protecting the client's right of privacy and the integrity of the NFP programs. For the time being however, let's all start with ourselves and ensure that the next time the phone rings at an inopportune time, we will know where the client's charts are! ■

Janet L. Kistler has been an NFP teacher and educator of teachers for more than twenty five years. Before moving to Virginia with her husband Ron, Janet directed the Phoenix NFP Center; today she provides invaluable help to the DDP/NFP as an administrative assistant.

The Bishops' Standards and NFP Record Keeping

Each diocesan NFP program should establish its own policy for record keeping. That policy should reflect the philosophy and needs of the diocesan NFP program. The policy should also meet, but may exceed, the minimum requirements of the *National Standards*.

In several places the *Standards* speak of record keeping as it applies to the teacher.

- Under the heading of what is required of a diocesan NFP teacher, the *Standards* say that

"... confidential client records (emphasis added) concerning personal background, instruction, and follow-up, in accord with the local diocesan NFP program" must be kept (Section II, P.2, p. 16).

- Record keeping is also mentioned under the heading of what diocesan NFP teachers should do in couple/client follow-up:

"At least two personal chart reviews with appropriate program record keeping (emphasis added)" (Section III, B. 1, p. 20).

- Under the heading of what an NFP teacher training program should teach with regard to "Program Management" the *Standards* say:

"Rationales and instruction for record keeping (emphasis added) confidentiality, and program management" (Section IV, E.2, p. 23).

The sections in the *Standards* where the words "record keeping" are mentioned must be read in context. It is

important to distinguish between what the teacher must record in his/her client records for the purpose of teaching effectively, from what the diocesan NFP central office needs to record in order to have an efficient program. Three facets should be common to both for good record keeping: confidentiality, management, and data.

1. Confidentiality

The *Standards* define confidentiality as,

"A professional ethic that protects the privacy of clients. Confidentiality prevents the disclosure of personal information to any third party outside the realm of NFP instruction without the client's prior written authorization." (Standards, Glossary, p. 26)

Pertinent client information that is recorded by an NFP teacher and passed onto the diocesan NFP coordinator is confidential. This means that if the diocesan NFP program were to participate in a research project, only non-identifying data can be released. Consent forms may also be required for participation in different types of studies.

2. Management

All client records should be stored in a secure place. Diocesan NFP programs should establish its own policy with regard to the amount of data collected from clients, the place where data is to be stored, and the length of time records should be kept. This should be different from the teacher's

records which should keep track of couple/client contacts and follow-up.

3. Data

The *Standards* describe broad areas of client record content as including the "personal background, instruction, and follow-up," of the couple/client "in accord with the local diocesan NFP program" (Section II, P.2, p. 16). The *Standards* also treat the basic elements of couple/client follow-up where additional pertinent information is required to be recorded (see Section III, B.1-5, p. 20).

The following are examples of typical content areas which may be considered when determining what the diocesan NFP central office should keep:

- a) Basic information for both the man and the woman including:

Full name

Address and phone

For engaged couples, date of wedding/for married couples, date of marriage

Age and education

Religious affiliation

Number of children

- b) Family planning intention and history (if applicable).

- c) Medical history, especially conditions and/or prescriptions which will have a bearing on the signs of fertility.

- d) Referral (Church, medical, NFP couple, other; NB, this is the information which the DDP/NFP collects from dioceses annually.)

- e) Evaluation of the couple/client's progress in understanding the method and use of method. Record of the clients understanding and incorporation of the method into their lifestyle. (This record would indicate readiness for autonomy.)■

NFP AROUND THE WORLD

Our Friends to the North—NFP in Canada

SERENA

Claire Charbonneau

The name SERENA, chosen in 1962, comes from the first two letters of three words: SERvice de REGulation des NAIssances (SERvice for REGulation of NATality).

Serena teaches the Sympto-Thermal Method. Clients are taught to observe and chart naturally occurring signs of fertility in a woman's menstrual cycle. The main signs charted are changes in the BBT and changes in cervical mucus that are observable at the vagina. A woman can also be taught to observe changes in the cervix that indicate fertility, as well as other signs. The more subjective signs, mucus and cervical changes, tell the couple when the woman is fertile. The objective sign, BBT, confirms that ovulation has occurred because the woman's temperature will shift up after she ovulates and remain slightly elevated until her next menstrual cycle. With this knowledge couples alter their sexual behavior to abstain from intercourse at the fertile time if they are not seeking a pregnancy, or to use this time to maximize their chances of conceiving a child.

Serena has chosen the couple-to-couple approach for teaching and learning this method. A couple will derive the maximum benefits from STM if they are taught by a trained couple. Serena sees great benefit in involving the male partner in the whole process of family planning. The man is instructed to chart the objective sign, temperature, while the woman charts her more subjective signs, such as mucus. In this way both partners look at the chart regularly and know if they are fertile as a couple or not. They make the decision together as to how they will use their knowledge of the natural processes for family planning.

Mission & Values Statement of Serena Canada

Our mission statement sums up who we are:

To provide a national organization to enable and support the delivery of Natural Family Planning services across Canada.

Serena respects the natural fertility cycle and is committed to the empowerment and support of couples, on a couple-to-couple basis. The respect for individuals and for human life from conception is central to our philosophy.

Objectives

In order to implement our mission and values, Serena has the following strategy:

To provide information concerning human reproduction to enable couples to know and to assume responsibility for their own fertility.

To provide information conducive to the development of conjugal love and harmony of the family unit.

To contribute to research and education of the public in matters of family life.

To foster respect for the value of human life at all stages of development.

Serena is a registered charity and is both a movement and a service. It is a movement because the group brings together individuals who share the same values concerning fertility and birth regulation. It is a service because its work is geared to people outside the group.

Natural methods of family planning feature widespread dissemination of fertility information, and a support network to help couples adapt their sexual behavior to their family planning goals. When this service is organized by and with users of the method it works very well.

Serena's main programs fall into the following categories:

1. To teach a natural method of family planning to couples (*usually done couple-to-couple*).
2. To provide information on fertility and family planning to couples (*usually done in the form of group presentations made by a trained teacher/couple*).
3. To provide sex education and fertility awareness to young people, complimentary to what is provided by the school system.
4. To provide information and support to couples in special situations (*e.g. subfertility, pre-menopause, breast-feeding, post-partum*).

Historical Highlights of Serena's Expansion in Canada

- 1955 Service established by Gilles and Rita Breault in Lachine, Quebec. Couples are taught in their home. The first team of teacher couples is trained.
- 1962 The name SERENA is chosen. The first public information sessions are held. Two teams outside Montreal are trained.
- 1963 Publication of "La Régulation des Naissances" by J. and H. Baillargeon, 65,000 copies sold.
- 1964 30 teams begin working throughout Quebec.
- 1966 The first teams are formed in Ontario and New Brunswick.
- 1968 Quebec secretariat is opened.
- 1969 Serena is incorporated in Quebec.
- 1971 Serena is incorporated in Ontario.
- 1972 Serena is incorporated in Alberta, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.
- 1973 First National Conference; eight provinces represented.
- 1974 National Federation established under the name SERENA CANADA.

Serena is incorporated in Saskatchewan.

First publication of *Love and Life* by Dr. Suzanne Parenteau-Carreau.

Serena is a founding member of the International Federation for Family Life Promotion (IFFLP).

1975 Serena is incorporated in British Columbia and Nova Scotia.

First publication of *Planning Your Family the ST Way* by Dr. Suzanne Parenteau-Carreau.

1977 Serena is incorporated in Manitoba.

1977 First publication of *The Menstrual Cycle - Knowledge and Self Observation* by Dr. Suzanne Parenteau-Carreau.

1992 Dr. Suzanne Parenteau-Carreau develops guidelines to introduce the Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM) as a conception prevention method for breast-feeding mothers.

1997 Establishment of Serena web site.

Serena's services are provided by trained, qualified volunteers. Published materials are also available. All of Serena's services and publications are available in French and English, and are updated periodically. The book, *Planning Your Family the ST Way*, has also been translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

Members of Serena come together at three levels: local teams, provincial corporations and the national corporation. Each level has its own responsibilities and is directed by a Board of Directors. Serena has over 300 trained volunteers across Canada who can provide service to our clients. All our accredited teacher couples have undergone approximately 30 hours of training followed by an exam that covers theory and chart interpretation. Ongoing training is provided at provincial or regional training sessions, and by way of newsletters and information sharing. ■

SERENA Canada has a bilingual (French/English) Website:

www.serena.ca

SERENA Canada can be reached at the following locations:

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NEWS

BRIEFS



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Archdiocese of Boston's NFP Coordinator Retires. Nancy Keaveney, Coordinator for NFP ministry in the Archdiocese of Boston for nineteen and a half years is retiring. Under Nancy's guidance the archdiocesan NFP services were strengthened with the achieving of Endorsement according to the bishops' Standards. Nancy also helped to establish a Sympto-Thermal teacher training program which also achieved Approval according to the bishops' Standards. Nancy will take up the responsibilities of a parish nurse. Mary Finnigan will succeed Nancy as NFP coordinator.

Archdiocese of Santa Fe NFP Coordinator Retires. Shirley Hoefler, a Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System teacher, retired in June 2000 after 25 years as archdiocesan NFP coordinator. Shirley provided NFP services out of St. Joseph's FertilityCare™ Center in Albuquerque. Among her many NFP activities, Shirley was also responsible for the St. Joseph Hospital Creighton Model NFP teacher training program. Shirley has conducted many other training programs throughout the U.S. and in other countries as diverse as Mexico and Ireland. The sixth president of the American Academy of NFP, Shirley has also been involved in teen chastity education, notably through developing the program "The Wonder of Myself."

Shirley recognizes that she could not have done so much in NFP without the support of her husband and six children. She now plans on spending her retirement home schooling some of her 11 grandchildren. However, she will still be active in NFP—after all, as her husband notes, "you can take the teacher out of NFP, but you can't take the NFP out of the teacher!" Shirley is succeeded in the archdiocese by Angelique Garcia, CNFPE.

The Marquette University Institute for NFP is seeking abstracts for poster presentations at a conference to be held March 22-24, 2001 in Milwaukee. Conference themes are: "Hi to Lo NFP Technology" and "Familiaris Consortio 20 Years Later." **Deadline for submission: October 1, 2000.** Contact: Richard J. Fehring, DNSc, RN, College of Nursing, Marquette University, P.O. Box, 1881, Milwaukee, WI, 53201-1881; 414-288-3838; FAX, 414-288-1939; E-Mail, Richard.Fehring@Marquette.Edu.

St. Augustine Foundation has begun work on a new book that it hopes will encourage and enable priests to speak on the teaching on *Humanae vitae*. Priests actively involved in promoting NFP or those who are willing to share their preaching experiences are asked to submit articles. Contact: The St. Augustine Foundation, 538 Riverdale Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10705; 914-476-4858, or toll free 877-554-4637.



EVENTS

September 29-October 1, 2000, the GIFT Foundation's conference "Pandora's Pillbox 2," Rosemont, IL. This conference also features a special half-day session entitled "Answering the Call to Marital Chastity: A Symposium on Natural Family Planning." Contact: GIFT Foundation, P.O. Box 95, Carpentersville, IL 60110; 847-844-1167; info@giftfoundation.org.

October 12-18, 2000, the Third International Meeting of the Holy Father with Families in celebration of the Jubilee Year 2000, Rome. The theme chosen by the Holy Father, is "Children, The Springtime of the Family and of Society." Topics include: the relationships of children to parents and the social environment; analysis of problems of abuse, exploitation and violence against minors. For travel information contact: Peter's Way International, Ltd., 25 South Service Road #240, Jericho, NY 11753; 800/225-7662. Information on the agenda, contact: Rick McCord, Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women & Youth, 3211 Fourth St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017; 202-541-3040.

October 14, 2000, A Jubilee Conference on Marriage, Family Life & Aging. Sponsored by the Archdiocese of Portland Oregon. Among the speakers are: Robin Maas, Ph.D., John Paul II Institute for the Study of the Family, W.D.C., and Wesley J. Smith, J.D., (author of *Forced Exit—The Slippery Slope from Assisted Suicide to Legalized Murder*). Contact: Ruth

Hayes-Barba, LCSW, MTS, Director, Office for Ministry to the Aging, 2838 Burnside St., Portland, OR 97214-1895; 503-233-8394; FAX 503-234-2545.

November 15-19, 2000, Billings Ovulation Method Association will hold a teacher training in the diocese of Memphis. Contact: Kay Ek, President, Office of NFP, 316 North 7th Street, St. Cloud, MN 56303; 888-637-6371; 320-252-2877 FAX; kek@gw.stcdio.org.

Lecture Cruise—January 5-12, 2001. Dr. Janet Smith, University of Dallas, and Rev. Daniel McCaffrey, will give a lecture series on the Seven Virtues aboard one of Holland America's newest ships. Departing from San Juan, Puerto Rico, the ports-of-call will include Barbados, Martinique, St. Martin and St. Thomas. Excellent group rates! Contact: Karen at Bursch Travel in St. Cloud, MN, 1-800-742-2331.

February 26- March 2, 2001. Northwest Family Services will hold a Sympto-Thermal teacher training program in Portland, Oregon. Contact: Rose Fuller, Executive Director, 4805 N.E. Glisan St., Portland, OR 97213; 503-215-6377; 503-215-6940 FAX; nfs@teleport.com; Website: www.nwfs.org.



RESOURCES

Archdiocese of Boston, Office of Natural Family Planning, has a 16 minute video entitled "Planning Your Family Together" which could be used with engaged couples as an introduction to NFP. Contact: Mary Finnigan, Coordinator, Archdiocese of Boston NFP Program, 2121 Commonwealth Avenue, Brighton, MA 02135; 617-783-2451.

Aware Center has available the booklet, "Making the Ovulation Method Work for You" for \$1.00 each. In addition, an audio tape entitled "Learning Your Cycle of Fertility" which discusses the Billings Ovulation Method is also available for \$3.00 each. Contact: Merrilee Underhill, Aware Inc., c/o St. Anthony's Medical Cen-

ter, 10010 Kennerly Road, St. Louis, MO 63128; 314-525-1622.

Diocese of Memphis NFP Center has available the booklet *Catholic Church Teaching on Human Sexuality, Marriage & Family Life, Conjugal Love, Responsible Parenthood and The Formation of Conscience* by Rev. Richard Hogan. Contact: Mary Pat Van Epps, Director, Diocese of Memphis NFP Center, 5825 Shelby Oaks Drive, Memphis, TN 38124; 901-373-1285.

Gift Foundation has available the audio series by Christopher West, Family Life Director, Archdiocese of Denver, "Naked without Shame—Sex and the Christian Mystery." Contact: GIFT Foundation, P.O. Box 95, Carpentersville, IL 60110; 847-844-1167; info@giftfoundation.org.

Breastfeeding and Natural Child Spacing, the fourth edition, by Sheila Kippley, now available. Contact: CCL, P.O. Box 111184, Cincinnati, OH 45211; www.ccli.org.

New Mercury Free Basal Thermometer. R.G. Enterprises, Inc. has available a new mercury free basal thermometer. The company was established in 1996 to introduce safe, mercury-free fever thermometers to families in the U.S. and Canada. The Geratherm Basal Thermometer functions like the standard mercury basal thermometer. A special

metal alloy called galinstan is used instead of mercury. Galinstan is non-toxic and safe for both the user and the environment. The thermometer is slightly larger than the standard mercury basal thermometer and comes complete with instructions for use. Contact: R.G. Enterprises, Inc. 2000 Town Center, Ste. 1900, Southfield, MI 48075-1152; 248-351-6237; FAX 248-351-2645; Web site: www.1thermometer.com; E-mail: rgenterprises@msn.com.

Women Affirming Life has two new resources available: a study guide on *The Theology of the Body*, written by Mary Shivanandan, STD.; and the audio tapes from the conference "The Feminine Genius & The Culture of Life," Washington, D.C., March 24 & 25, 2000. Contact: Women Affirming Life, P.O. Box 35532, Brighton, MA 02135; 617-254-2277.

Vitae Corporation is a unique company founded by a young Catholic family (NFP teachers). They are dedicated to promoting the culture of life, especially marital chastity and NFP. They have two programs in place, the culture of life credit card (a Visa), and the culture of life long distance (not AT&T). Vitae gives 100%+ of all profits to assist worthy groups. Contact: 1-888-883-LIFE, or Email vitaecorp@aol.com Their mailing address is PO Box 219 New Lenox, IL. 60451.



NFP Forum • (Diocesan Activity Report)

Vol. 11/Nos. 3 & 4 • Summer/Fall 2000

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

Most Rev. James T. McHugh, Director • Theresa Notare, Editor

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

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

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