

## NFP Pioneer—Dr. John Billings (1918-2007)

WOOMB International

John James Billings AM, KCSG, MD, FRCP, FRACP, was born in Melbourne on 5 March 1918 and educated at Xavier College and the University of Melbourne. Married to Dr. Evelyn L. Billings in 1943, John saw service as an army doctor with the AIF during WWII. In 1947 Dr. Billings was awarded a Nuffield Fellowship for post-graduate studies in London. Specialising in neurology, he returned to Australia where he was subsequently appointed Head of the Department of Neurology at St Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, and Dean of the Undergraduate Medical School within the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Melbourne.

In 1953, at the invitation of the late Fr Maurice Catarinich of the Catholic Marriage Guidance Bureau, John Billings began work on a method of natural fertility regulation, which was originally called the Ovulation Method. For the following 50+ years Drs John and Evelyn Billings researched, developed and perfected the Method which now bears their name.

John Billings maintained a professional career as Consulting Neurologist to St Vincent's Hospital and also from the late 1960s until recent years, spent a large part of each year traveling with his wife to many countries throughout the world, training teachers in the Billings Ovulation Method, establishing teaching centres, and lecturing to doctors, medical students, nurses and others. Most notably in the past decade, the Billings Ovulation Method has been successfully introduced into China, where it is now the only government-approved method of Natural Family Planning. The Billings Ovulation Method has also proved to be singularly effective in assisting couples, who had previously been considered to be infertile, to achieve pregnancy.

Dr. John Billings' work for the family was recognized with a Papal Knighthood, an AM in 1991, Honorary Doctorates from multiple international universities and with his wife, the joint award of International Catholic Physicians of the Year in 2002.

Dr John Billings is survived by his beloved wife, Lyn and his large and loving family: his children, grandchildren and many great-grandchildren, in his view, his greatest achievement. His life will be celebrated and his passing mourned by his family, legions of friends, supporters and professional colleagues around the world.

Excerpted from WOOMB International's press release; thebillingsmethod@woomb.org; www.woomb.org

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# Remembering John Billings

Kay Ek

*As many of you may know, John Billings, MD embarked on his research as the result of a request by a priest, Fr. Maurice Catarinich. Fr. Maurice came from a family of medical doctors and almost became one himself. He was deeply concerned about couples attempting to live the Church's teachings on conjugal love and responsible parenthood but who had difficulties with the Rhythm Method. He turned to Dr. John and asked him to do some research. They agreed that Dr. John would give only three months of his time to the work because of his busy medical practice and large family of nine. The rest, as they say, is "history." Soon his wife Evelyn (Lyn), also a physician, would work with him and they would develop the Billings Ovulation Method. It is now part of history that John and Evelyn Billings did what Pope Paul VI requested of them early on – to continue their work for the rest of their lives! Remembering John Billings is a privilege and joy for me. My years of personal correspondences with Dr. John Billings capture this privilege.*

My first letter in 1974, was professional, considerate and signed, "Yours sincerely, John Billings, MD." Fast forward to 2006, and a clear growth in a true friendship in Christ can be seen in our correspondences. Along side of discussing the growth of the Billings Ovulation Method throughout the world, Dr. Billings always mentioned how delighted he was to hear from us and also affirmed our mission in the Natural Family Planning apostolate. His humility, ever present, revealed itself when I addressed him as "Dr. Billings," he eventually admonished me saying that if I called him "Dr. Billings" he would call me "Mrs. Ek," so it was "John" from then on. In our correspondences no question was left unanswered. The rationale behind his answers were meticulously developed while he never lost the human element – he punctuated his thoughts with news of his family and queries of ours, often ending with either a biblical quote or that of some well known poet.

John Billings was a man of great faith, one who loved the Church and his fellow man. He

had also had a wonderful sense of humor. I recall him laughing while telling the story of when outside of a Church there was an advertisement for an evening lecture that he and Lyn were to deliver, he overheard someone say "The Drs. Billings? Are they still alive?" He loved the laughter we shared.

As scientists and apostles of the Gospel of Life, both John and Evelyn traveled the world imparting their knowledge about the Ovulation Method (the abbreviated name for "The Billings Ovulation Method" or BOM). They long ago realized the tremendous benefit it had for couples and their families. John's concern was always for the Apostolate of the Family. From India, where Mother Teresa asked him to train all her sisters as certified BOM teachers, to Africa, North and South America, the Soviet Union, Europe, Asia and beyond, couples from over 100 countries are now the benefactors of their labor of love.

One can imagine that it was not always easy to leave home in Melbourne, to return home for a

short period of time only to be off to some more distant and far reaching part of the world. Commitments were made and kept and we in the United States were so honored and blessed to have them with us on several occasions. The Billings always said they were not tourists, they did not want to be shown the sights but wherever they went they wanted to be fruitful. Seldom did their travels include down times. Although one exception was a trip my husband Dave, daughter, Sue and I took with several other NFP enthusiasts on a cruise to Alaska. Even then, lectures were given on board ship and in Anchorage as well.

To those who were critical or even jealous of the Billings, John said. "Above all, let everyone who teaches Natural Family Planning within the context of the official teaching of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church support all other people working in the same Apostolate, with friendship, support, goodwill and their prayers. If there is to be competition at all, let it be confined to striving to

*(Continued on page 3.)*

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outdo each other in charity.” He went on to say, “As Pope John Paul II told us, “Peace is born in the human heart and it dies in the human heart.”

Sadly this kind of charity was not always extended to Dr. Billings. My early experience in proclaiming this good news of the Billings Method was that there was great skepticism especially among the medical community that something so simple and so well defined could have come from “Down Under.” As always, John was always charitable, always forgiving of the unkind words and actions. He knew he was right, he had his scientific data, the experience of thousands and now millions around the world affirming that the four rules of the Billings Method are correct. I never heard him utter an uncharitable word. It was always just “speak the truth.” I always knew when I was with him that I was in the presence of a man of immense integrity. And, he never once disappointed me. I cherish my memories of meetings with John and his beloved Lyn in New York, Portland, Los Angeles, St. Lewis, St. Cloud, Washington, DC, San Antonio, Memphis, New Orleans, Guatemala, India, Acapulco and Rome. I often wondered what life would have been without the meeting and ongoing support of Dr. Billings. I believe I speak for many, many in the U.S.A. and beyond who were so affected, so inspired by the humble and kind man he was, and that he and Lyn would spend years of their lives spreading the Billings Ovulation Method.

John Billings received many awards in his lifetime but, he was particularly fond of being a Papal Knight and he often wore the small red pin on his lapel. In 1966 Pope Paul VI gave him the honor of Commander of St. Gregory the Great. In 2003 at the 50th Anniversary of the Billings Method, this honor was again bestowed on him by Pope John Paul II and at the same time, Dr. Evelyn Billings was given the honor of Dame Commander. John was also a member of the Pontifical Academy for Science, the Pontifical Academy for Life, and the Pontifical Academy for the Family. In the message from Pope Benedict XVI read at his funeral Mass, the Holy Father, Benedict XVI expressed his “deep appreciation for his outstanding contribution to countless couples throughout the world helping them to live fully their vocation as faithful spouses and parents.”

Dr. John Billings died at the age of 89 on Passion Sunday, April 1, 2007, never faltering in his promise to the Holy Father. He was a scientist through and through, never accepting what was anecdotal or theoretical, scientific proof was essential in his work. He and his wife Lyn taught the world how to live, how to love and how to serve. We will be forever grateful!

*Kay Ek is president of BOMA, USA and a member of the DDP/NFP's NFP National Advisory Board. Below, the Drs. Billings are pictured with the Eks.*



## **Letter of Pope Benedict XVI to Dr. Evelyn Billings**

Dr Evelyn Billings,

Having learned with sorrow of the death of your husband I offer my heartfelt condolences to you and your family and to all who mourn his passing. I recall with a sense of deep appreciation the creative witness borne by Dr. Billings to the relationship between faith and scientific knowledge, and his outstanding contribution to family life by helping countless couples throughout the world live fully their vocation as faithful spouses and parents. I join with you in praying that, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, God our merciful Father will grant him the reward of his labours and welcome his noble soul into the joy and peace of heaven.

To all assembled for the solemn Mass of Christian burial I cordially impart my Apostolic blessing as a pledge of consolation and strength in the risen Lord.

*Benedictus PP. XVI*

## **World-Wide Response to the Legacy of John Billings, MD**

### ***Excerpts of e-mails remembering Dr. Billings***

. . . Teen STAR began as a request from Dr. John to me, to “have a look at the teenagers. No one is doing anything for them.” We all know how much we owe to the Billings for our program, its spread, and its inspiration. We won’t begrudge him Heaven, and believe in faith that he has already attained to it . . . and pray for Dr. Lyn who will have to cope with a huge hole in her life after 60+ years of marriage, his children, and for all this spiritual children- including us, that we may continue to develop the great gift begun by John and Lyn, Jim Brown and Erik Odeblad.

Hanna Klaus, MD  
Natural Family Planning Center of Washington, DC  
and Teen STAR Program  
United States

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I would like to add yet one more voice to those who praise Dr. Billings and recognize the significance of his life. On behalf of the Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health, we appreciatively recognize Dr. Billings’ leadership and contribution to the field of Natural Family Planning, and indeed to the entire field of reproductive health. He was a true innovator, and probably one of the leading figures to recognize the process of research-to-practice. His dedication to improving the lives of the poor, to creating options for women and couples, and offering opportunities and respect to the poorest among us is a legacy on which we will humbly attempt to build.

My personal recollection of Dr. John—at a meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Science, held in Rome in the late 1990s . . . embodies his ability to be a gentleman, a scholar, and just a wonderful human being. We had completed a rather contentious day, quibbling over what now seems like trifles about NFP. He was often on one side and I on the other. At the end of the day, in true Vatican fashion, a Mass was celebrated. I was seated next to him, and he certainly knew that I was not Catholic. He sensed my discomfort, which he

gracefully interpreted as lack of understanding of ritual, and guided me through the service as if I were the dignitary and he the servant. We all know the reverse was the case. Such was he, and I am grateful. We walk with him and his family at this difficult time and know he is at peace.

Victoria Jennings  
Institute for Reproductive Health,  
Georgetown University  
United States

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I wish to join all of you in remembering John Billings. . . . I met him in 1974 at WHO and with Jeff Spieler we initiated the first independent, multi-centre study of the Ovulation Method. I still remember those who coordinated the study and in particular Maclyn Wade, who also passed away. I would like to join all of you in sending to his wife our deepest condolences.

Pino Benagiano  
Italy

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. . . I met John and Evelyn in 1974, when we invited them to the World Health Organization in Geneva to tell us about the Billings Method and the results of two research projects that they had published in *The Lancet* in 1972 - Billings, Brown and Burger, “Symptoms and Hormonal Changes Accompanying Ovulation.” It was the first paper to demonstrate the scientific rationale for the Billings Method, and Weissman and Billings, which was the first trial of the Ovulation Method of Family Planning in Tonga.

John was always a gentleman and motivated to make the world a better place. I always enjoyed the friendly banter between John Billing and John Marshall (UK leader in the BBT method who was also, coincidentally, a neurologist) at WHO meetings, and will remember John Billings with great affection.

Jeff Spieler  
Office of Population and Reproductive Health,  
Bureau for Global Health, Washington, DC,  
United States

We honor the memory of Dr. John Billings as a great man who showed us in very real terms, the marriage of science and religion. For the last 30 odd years or so, he has inspired us with his constancy and dedication to the empowerment of women through a knowledge of our fertility.

We are eternally grateful to both Drs. John and Lyn for providing the world with a family planning option, by simply relying on our bodies and our partners, for the children we begot, who are now parents themselves and who continue to rely on the signs of fertility and infertility they taught the world about. More than this, for having made it easier for couples to understand that by managing fertility the natural way, mature sexuality and happiness in marriage is quite achievable.

I for one, among the many NFP teachers in the country and in the world, am grateful for the opportunity to have served as a teacher in a Billings Center in the inner city of Sydney for a couple of years. Life indeed is short for one so accomplished. With prayers and loving thoughts,

Mitos Rivera

Institute for Reproductive Health

Philippines

*(In the Philippines Drs. John and Lyn Billings were first invited to orient groups on the Ovulation Method in 1973, under the auspices of the Responsible Parenthood Council headed by Conrado Navarro, and the Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction under the Directorship of Dr. Vicente Rosales.)*

## **Dioceses Promote 2007 National NFP Awareness Week**

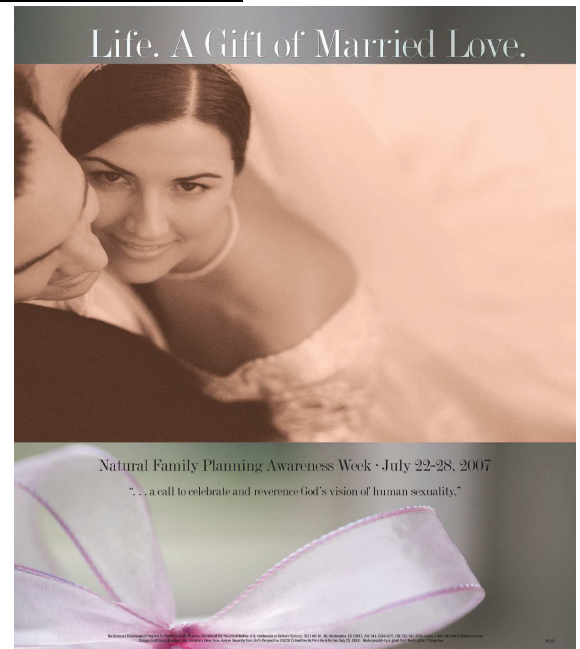
**Diocese of Bridgeport** The Family Life Office sent all pastors the 2007 NFP poster, USCCB resources, the Novena to Saints Anne and Joachim and list of diocesan NFP teachers. The parish of artist, Adrienne Keogler (the artist who made the mosaic of Saints Anne and Joachim that is featured in the novena card), held a Novena Mass in anticipation of NFP Week.

**Diocese of Columbus** Diocesan NFP Coordinator, Jennifer Fullin reports that an informational talk entitled “Enhance the Romance” was held at a parish. The talk provided an opportunity to share with participants information on the relational benefits as well as the effectiveness of modern NFP. In addition, an “Ice Cream Social” was scheduled at a parish to provide an opportunity to celebrate National NFP Awareness Week with NFP couples, their families and those who support the Church’s teachings on life and love.

**Diocese of Colorado Springs** Marriage and Family Life Director, Christian Meert forwarded the USCCB National NFP Awareness Week resources to all priests and deacons. Many priests used the homily notes for their Sunday sermons.

**Diocese of Corpus Christi** Diocesan NFP Coordinator, Jane Garza reports that an NFP panel discussion was offered. Panelists included a priest, nurse, married deacon as well as a married couple. Time was given for audience participation. A lunch was also served at the event.

**Diocese of Erie** NFP Director, Barbara Burkett reports that all priests were sent a mailing including the poster, liturgical aids, supply of NFP brochures for their parishes, copy of the document *Married Love and the Gift of Life*, order form for additional materials and bulletin announcement which included Bishop Donald Trautman’s encouragement of





celebrating NFP week in the diocese. They also hosted NFP information gatherings in five locations in the diocese as well as provided social activities for NFP couples.

**Diocese of Green Bay** Diocesan NFP Coordinator, Jeannie Hannemann reports that during NFP Awareness Week they held a planning session with their current NFP Teachers. They spent the week in media efforts to recruit couples using NFP to gather for an event on August 7<sup>th</sup> that will kick off a new year of NFP Information Nights and an NFP Support Group.

**Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee** Louise Ritz, Director of Marriage and Family Life Ministries, had the week's information posted to the diocesan web page. A joint flyer was issued by her and the Director of Liturgy encouraging priests to use the USCCB liturgical aides. The flyer also provided useful suggestions on how best the individual parishes could celebrate the week. The diocesan newspaper also featured an article by an NFP teaching couple.

**Diocese of Rapid City** Family Life Ministries Director, Jill Sowers-Legner produced an NFP parish bulleting article to announce the week. She also sent posters to the parishes which requested them.

**Diocese of Scranton** Family Life Director, Mary Ann Paulukonis, reports that they provided a poster for every parish and included samples of: their diocesan NFP brochure; *Married Love and the Gift of Life*; and a CD of *Contraception: Why Not?* with an order card. They also provided the USCCB resources and order information for the one-page bulletin insert for *Married Love and the Gift of Life*. The diocesan newspaper published an NFP article which featured the 2007 poster.

**Diocese of St. Augustine** Family Life Director, Steve Patton reports that every pastor was sent the 2007 poster along with the homily notes, Prayers of the Faithful and a copy of the document *Married Love and the Gift of Life*. Some NFP diocesan teachers offered information nights at their parishes while other NFP teachers were asked by their pastors to give a brief NFP talk from the pulpit at Sunday Mass.

**Archdiocese of Seattle** Archbishop Alex J. Brunett celebrated Mass and spoke at a brunch reception during NFP Awareness Week. The archdiocesan newspaper featured an interview of an NFP couple, Monica and Michael Bernstein, whose parents are long-time NFP ministers, Joe and Cinda DeVet (Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston).

**Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis** NFP Facilitator, Megan Noll reports that a celebratory event for married and engaged couples was held on a boat. They have been hosting this event for about two years and saw their numbers double in 2007. They also work with Relevant Radio to promote NFP education during the week. This year, DDP/NFP Assistant Director, Theresa Notare was one of the radio show guests.

**Diocese of Tulsa** Offered a free one day conference entitled, "Married Love and the Gift of Life," on July 28. Bishop Edward Slattery gave the opening address. Mary Martin, MD, a member of the medical board for the Billings Ovulation Method—USA, gave a talk on the "Church and Contraception—a Medical Perspective." Introductory NFP method classes were provided by CCL and BOMA.

**Diocese of Wichita:** Family Life Director, Judith Leonard reports that they urged all NFP teachers, liaison couples and advisory board members to attend the conference of the American Academy of FertilityCare Professionals. They also hosted a lecture given by their bishop, Most Rev. Michael O. Jackels on July 18 at the Hyatt Regency, Wichita. A reception followed the presentation.

*Many thanks to all non-diocesan NFP teachers, organizations and supporters who also celebrated National NFP Awareness Week!  
In the future, we hope to hear from you as well!*

# Diocesan NFP Ministry National Profile, 2006 Report

## Overview

Rev. Robert R. Cannon

On January 2006, the Catholic dioceses of the United States were invited to participate in the annual Diocesan NFP Ministry National Profile (Profile). This was the third year that participants completed the Profile survey online. This cumulative data base assists the Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning (DDP/NFP) in analyzing diocesan NFP ministry's short and long term trends throughout the United States. Ninety dioceses submitted data. As in previous years, the following data "snapshot" indicates that NFP programs remain largely unchanged from 2005.

- When viewed nationally, diocesan NFP programs vary from comprehensive to nonexistent. Some dioceses have strong educational programs that integrate NFP into all educational efforts on human sexuality, marriage, and family life. Through hard work and dedication, more dioceses have made strides in improving the quality of their NFP programs in order to meet the *Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry*. But, as one diocese improves its NFP program, another diocese experiences a reduction in program size due to teacher loss, budget cuts, and/or diocesan restructuring.
- The majority of dioceses include NFP in their marriage preparation guidelines (83%). However, most newly married couples fail to take full advantage of Natural Family Planning methods in their conjugal life. This assumption is strongly suggested when the total number of marriages in the Church (199,805<sup>1</sup>) are compared with the total number of individuals (13,181)<sup>2</sup> reported in the survey that took a class/instruction in NFP. Obviously, more must be done to inspire couples to fully understand and embrace the Church's teaching on human sexuality, conjugal love and responsible parenthood within marriage.
- Among the reporting dioceses, four<sup>3</sup> require engaged couples to take a full NFP course of instruction before marriage. Diocesan NFP coordinators report that increasing numbers of individual priests/parishes are requiring full NFP instruction of engaged couples. It is still too early to tell if this is a national trend. Based on *Profile* respondent comments, more dioceses have considered requiring an introduction or even a full NFP course of instruction as part of their marriage preparation policies. There is a wide diversity of comments on the merits and feasibility of requiring a full course of NFP instruction for engaged couples.
- The majority of diocesan marriage preparation programs make some effort to provide basic NFP information to various groups, with special attention directed toward couples preparing for marriage, e.g., booklets, fact-sheets, witness couple talks and NFP course instruction. More than 67,611 individuals received basic information/instruction on NFP.
- Nationally, diocesan funding for NFP programs is meager at best. Fifty-three percent of the dioceses surveyed budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs in 2006. Sixty-five percent of all reporting NFP

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Catholic Directory (2007). The 2007 numbers reflect the totals from 2006.

<sup>2</sup>See, 2006 *Profile*, Q.22.

<sup>3</sup>Currently, there are seven dioceses that require a full course of NFP instruction for the engaged: Amarillo, Colorado Springs, Denver, Fargo, Larado, and Phoenix (to be implemented by 2009), and most recently, Richmond.

diocesan programs operate on less than \$10,000 per year. Only seven percent of all reporting diocesan programs spend more than \$30,000.

- Most dioceses rely on both part time paid and volunteer staffs. In most dioceses, NFP programs share funding, materials, and staff support of an umbrella department, e.g., Marriage and Family Life Office. Volunteers are the unsung heroes of diocesan NFP programs. A few dioceses have full time paid NFP coordinators. The majority of diocesan NFP programs depend on volunteers to sustain their programs (84%). Of these, a little less than a third (31%) of the dioceses offer modest stipends to teachers to cover personal costs, e.g., transportation, baby sitters, materials, etc.
- In most dioceses NFP efforts go largely unnoticed. Less than half (42%) of diocesan NFP programs are asked to submit an annual report of their activities. Often, NFP funding is so limited that it is not identified as a specific line item in diocesan budgets. It may be helpful for Bishops to request an annual NFP report.

In conclusion, the fundamental pastoral question that must be faced each year, when examining each diocesan NFP program, is: *Can couples who wish to be faithful to Church teaching on responsible parenthood readily get the NFP support they need?* The answer to this question will determine how best to plan and support local diocesan NFP ministry.

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*Rev. Robert R. Cannon, MA, MTh, JCL, is from the Diocese of Venice.*

## **Program Resources**

*The following documents are useful in strengthening diocesan NFP programs.*

*Diocesan Plan for Natural Family Planning Program Development.* Washington, DC: Diocesan Development Program for NFP, 1981. (Available at [http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/NFP\\_DiocesanPlan--\\_1981.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/NFP_DiocesanPlan--_1981.pdf); Orders, 1-866-582-0943.)

*Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry.* Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 2000. (Available at <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/standard.shtml>)

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### **Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses for participating in the 2006 Profile survey**

Albany, Allentown, Amarillo, Atlanta, Austin, Baker, Baltimore, Biloxi, Bismarck, Bridgeport, Buffalo, Burlington, Camden, Charleston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Colorado Springs, Corpus Christi, Detroit, Dubuque, Erie, Evansville, Fall River, Fargo, Fort Wayne-South Bend, Forth Worth, Gary, Great-Fall-Billings, Green Bay, Greensburg, Hartford, Honolulu, Indianapolis, Jefferson City, Joliet, Kalamazoo, Kansas City, Knoxville, La Crosse, Lafayette in Indiana, Lake Charles, Lansing, Las Cruces, Lexington, Lincoln, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Madison, Marquette, Memphis, Metuchen, Miami, Milwaukee, New Ulm, Newark, Oakland, Ogdensburg, Omaha, Orlando, Palm Beach, Paterson, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Peoria, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Portland in Maine, Providence, Raleigh, Rapid City, Rochester, Rockford, Sacramento, Saginaw, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Savannah, Scranton, Sioux City, Springfield in Illinois, St. Augustine, St. Cloud, St. Louis, St. Paul-Minneapolis, Superior, Wichita, Wilmington, Worcester, Youngstown.



# ***Humanae Vitae*, A Witness to Christ's Faithfulness**



**Jesus Caritas**  
Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted

As the 39th anniversary of Pope Paul VI's prophetic encyclical *Humanae vitae* approaches, a new study by the Pew Research Center informs us that a significant sampling of Americans considers children to be eighth in importance on a list of nine "Components of Marital Success."

According to the study, "Sharing household chores" (3rd), "Good housing" (5th) and "Shared tastes and interests" (7th) all rank higher in importance to a marriage than having children. This is a fairly radical shift. As recently as 1990, a similar study had shown that children were much higher up on the priority list for couples in America.

## **The missing link between marriage and children**

What is happening here? It should be natural to link a successful marriage and children. The Catechism of the Catholic Church simply points out what was once obvious when it teaches (#2366), "*Fecundity is a gift, an end of marriage, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment.*" Sadly, the average person, less and less, assumes this natural link between marriage and children.

*Humanae vitae* did not explicitly predict that the logical link between marriage and children would unravel in the late 20th century. But Paul VI gave grounds for understanding this unraveling with his four remarkable predictions. In section 17, he claimed that widespread acceptance of contraception would:

1. Cause an increase in marital infidelity;
2. Result in a general lowering of morality, especially affecting the young;
3. Reduce men's respect for women, who would be treated more commonly as objects; and
4. Risk giving power to government officials who would impose contraceptive methods on entire groups of their citizens.

Can these predictions now be disputed? Have we not seen precisely these foreshadowed disasters come to pass? Have not our young people inherited a culture immersed in the contraceptive mentality and the unnatural disconnect between sexual behavior and children? Have not China, the United Nations, and even our own government in the 1990s used contraception to manipulate nations and peoples? The argument for *Humanae vitae*'s prophetic accuracy has become self-evident.

## **Witnesses from other faiths**

A person does not have to be Catholic to understand the truth of this teaching. Natural law and common sense have sufficed to make this clear to many well-known non-Catholics. Well before Pope Paul VI published his prophetic document the great Hindu humanist Mohandas Gandhi, who led the 20th century liberation of India through nonviolent action, said, "*If [contraceptive] methods become the order of the day, nothing but moral degradation can be the result... As it is, man has sufficiently degraded woman for his lust, and contraception, no matter how well meaning the advocates may be, will still further degrade her.*"

American President Theodore Roosevelt, a Protestant, spoke even more strongly, calling contraception, "*the one sin for which the penalty is national death, race death; a sin for which there is no atonement.*"

Many early American feminists, such as the first woman physician in the United States, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, opposed contraception even as they opposed affronts to the equal dignity of married women by their husbands. It was clear to them that contraception was an assault on the dignity of women and that the relationship between men and women would only be degraded by its widespread use.

In *Humanae Vitae* (#11), the Church holds that “each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life.” Is this teaching simply an inability to keep up with the changing morals of our times? Or is it the Church standing strong against these times’ confusion and mistakes?

### ***Humanae Vitae’s* Converts**

The fallout of the sexual revolution has many thoughtful people searching and asking what has gone wrong. Not a few of our young people discerning a call to the priesthood or religious life find precisely in the Church’s unwavering teaching on the meaning of sexuality something meaningful and attractive. For them it is a confirmation that this indeed is the Church about which Jesus Himself said (Mt 16:18), “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

There are also many prominent converts. Scott Hahn, once a Presbyterian minister with prejudices against the Church, is now a passionate Catholic scholar and apologist. God worked through his wife, Kimberly, who in college joined a discussion group on contraception. There she discovered the fact that up until 1930, all Christian denominations unanimously condemned the use of contraception — and defended their positions biblically. Her studies, shared with Scott, moved him to investigate this matter further. Particularly persuasive to him was that Scripture refers to the marital act of intercourse as a spiritual, not merely physical,

reality. Malcolm Muggeridge, the famous British author and journalist, who after an admittedly Bohemian past became Catholic in 1982, said, “*It was the Catholic Church’s firm stand against contraception and abortion which finally made me decide to become a Catholic... The Church’s stand is absolutely correct. It is to its eternal honor that it opposed contraception... I think, historically, people will say it was a very gallant effort to prevent a moral disaster.*” (*Confessions of a Twentieth Century Pilgrim*, p. 140)

### **Natural Family Planning: ‘Keeping it real’**

In July of each year, we celebrate Natural Family Planning week in our country. It is an occasion to thank God for our Church’s teaching on marriage and family and a time for the many couples who practice NFP to tell others how blessed they have been in understanding their fertility in this medically sound way, and how it fosters real joy and a sense of freedom in their marriages.

This freedom is a true freedom, rooted in persons’ ability to acquire the virtue of marital chastity. As some couples tell me, NFP literally “keeps it real.” The integrity of the body and of the marital embrace, and the link between marriage and children are all kept intact.

Such witnessing from couples may seem paradoxical, since NFP of necessity requires sacrifice. Periodic abstinence is part of the NFP program if a couple has responsibly decided to avoid pregnancy. But the freeing nature of sacrifice is no surprise to followers of Christ, who promises us a share in His cross and a share in His risen life.

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*Most Rev. Thomas Olmsted is the bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix. The above article was published on July 19, 2007 in the Diocese of Phoenix’s newspaper, The Catholic Sun. It is reprinted here with permission.*

# Diocese of Richmond Requires NFP Classes for the Engaged

Misty Mealey

*Slowly, more and more dioceses are moving toward requiring a full course of NFP for engaged couples as part of marriage preparation. With the publishing of this newsletter, seven dioceses have already implemented this requirement and at least five more are “looking into it.” Currently the DDP/NFP is surveying these dioceses to compile a report on this new programming. Please watch for the published report in Fall’07.*

**B**ishop Francis X. DiLorenzo approved a new diocesan-wide program recommended by a committee formed to review and recommend enhancements to the diocese’s existing marriage preparation process.

Engaged couples will still begin their marriage preparation process with the important initial meeting with their parish priest or deacon. Under the new structure, however, that meeting will be followed by a pre-marital inventory to assess the couple’s strengths, as well as areas that need further exploration. Additional components of the marriage prep process will provide engaged couples with a compelling and thorough catechesis on marriage and sexuality through a new program based on John Paul II’s *“Theology of the Body,”* as well as a full course in Natural Family Planning.

These new additions will supplement and round out the marriage preparation gained through existing programs such as Engaged Encounter, Unitas, Christian Marriage Formation, and Catholic Charities.

A new curriculum to help standardize these programs also

was approved by the Bishop. These curricular concepts and components will serve as a yardstick for the various programs to ensure quality preparation for the engaged couple. “Marriage preparation was an area in our diocese that needed to be strengthened and updated, and this program does that,” Bishop DiLorenzo said in late July.

## **A Four-Step Process**

The Bishop convened a committee of marriage prep leaders, laity, and clergy in January 2006 after several people approached him about the need to update and standardize marriage preparation in the diocese. At the initial meeting, the Bishop asked committee members to accomplish four tasks:

- 1) create a demographic, psychological, sociological portrait of modern engaged couples;
- 2) develop a standardized but flexible marriage preparation curriculum appropriate for that group;
- 3) recruit, train, and certify competent marriage prep facilitators;

- 4) implement the program across the diocese.

Charged with presenting a portrait of modern engaged couples seeking marriage in the Church, the Committee found that today’s culture dominates much of their perspectives. When it comes to faith, they are more likely to describe themselves as “spiritual” rather than “religious.”

“Young people today have no problem cutting out the ‘middle man’ when it comes to faith, and we’re the middle man,” says Bishop DiLorenzo. As a result, many of them feel little connection to the institutional Church and lack of attention to the sacraments is common.

In addition, an alarmingly high number of engaged couples are living at odds with the faith before they approach the altar. Premarital sexual activity, cohabitation, and contraception are normative for many couples.

After studying this portrait of engaged couples, committee members decided to take a multi-disciplinary approach and include theological, interpersonal, and practical training. “We wanted to prepare couples

not just for marriage, but for a sacramental, Catholic marriage,” said Jim and Sandy Dyk, from Richmond and with Catholic Engaged Encounter.

### New Additions

The FOCCUS pre-marital inventory out of Omaha, was recommended as the tool to help couples learn more about themselves and their unique relationship. Already in use by many parishes in our diocese, this inventory is administered by a facilitator who then guides the couple through a process of identifying issues that may need to be addressed prior to marriage.

To ensure couples are catechized thoroughly in the Church’s rich teachings on sacramental marriage and sexuality, committee members also recommended that every couple attend a new program titled “*God’s Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage.*” The program, developed by author and speaker Christopher West and a team of marriage preparation leaders, is comprised of two sessions. The first part, “*Catholic Faith & Your Marriage,*” provides an overview of Biblical teaching on marriage and explains the meaning and importance of the commitments made in the exchange of vows. The second part, “*Sacramental Sexuality,*” draws from the scriptural foundation already laid to present the beauty and goodness of God’s plan for sexual union, explaining the “whys behind the what’s” of Catholic teaching.

The information gleaned from the God’s Plan program will prepare couples for another new marriage prep component: Natural Family Planning (NFP) instruction. Under the new program structure, engaged couples will receive instruction in one of the many NFP methods taught in the diocese. Committee members recommended a full NFP course as a way to ensure couples have the tools they need to exercise responsible parenthood when they find it necessary to space their children.

wanted other couples to experience the benefits of NFP that my wife and I have, such as drawing closer to the Lord, experiencing increased communication and cooperation, and enjoying an increased awareness of our children as God’s gift to us.”

### More time required

The new marriage prep structure will obviously require more time on the part of couples, but committee members pointed out that preparation for any sacrament requires a significant investment of time and resources. “It may be a challenge for some couples to fit marriage prep into their schedule, but once they’ve completed this program they will better understand the value of being so well-prepared for their lives together,” Sandy Dyk said.

Committee members designed the program to be user-friendly for parishes. The committee is currently working on a brochure that will outline the steps for marriage preparation and include referral and schedule information for the various components. “We wanted to offer as much support as possible for our priests and deacons,” says Jim Dyk.

### Seven steps for diocesan Marriage Prep

Under the new program, engaged couples will be asked to complete seven steps to prepare for marriage:

1. Meet initially with their pastor or deacon.
2. Complete a FOCCUS premarital inventory.
3. Complete an educational component to fine-tune practical and interpersonal skills.
4. Attend a “God’s Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage” seminar.
5. Complete a natural family planning course.
6. Obtain the Sacrament of Reconciliation (encouraged).
7. Meet last time with their pastor or deacon to plan the wedding liturgy.

Committee member Jamie Walker, an NFP instructor, was pleased that marriage prep leaders from across the diocese recognized the value of making NFP instruction normative for engaged couples. “When they see that NFP is not the Rhythm Method,” but is healthy and effective, I’m certain more of them will choose to use NFP over contraception,” he says. “I

Some components are already in place, while others will take time to implement. The committee foresees a three-year time line for full implementation of the program. In the months ahead, the diocese will begin recruiting individuals and couples to help implement the new program.

Facilitators for “*God’s Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage*,” as well as NFP instructors, will be needed. Couples or individuals to administer and facilitate the FOCCUS inventories also will be needed in parishes or regions where it is currently unavailable.

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*Misty Mealy is the Diocesan NFP Coordinator for the Diocese of Richmond. Misty is stepping down from her position at the end of the Summer’07. This article was published in the Catholic Virginian, it is reprinted here with permission.*

## **“In Your Hands” – Archdiocese of St. Louis Infertility Support Group**

*K. Diane Daly, RN, CFCE*

In February, 2004, Katie and Kathy, who were experiencing infertility, contacted me separately about starting a group in the Archdiocese that would educate and support couples who choose to follow the Catholic Church teaching on reproduction relevant to infer-

tility. I saw the benefits of this group and thought it was a good idea ... if we had the right person to lead it. Months later, a Licensed Professional Counselor, Katie had contacted about the idea, called the Archdiocesan Office. The counselor, Donna, agreed to lead the group and our program, “In Your Hands,” became a reality.

### **Infertility**

You may wonder why a support group is needed for infertile couples. Infertility is defined as the inability of a couple to achieve a pregnancy after 1 year of random sexual intercourse without contraception. According to the National Center for Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 12 percent of women (7.3 million in the United States aged 15-44) had difficulty getting pregnant or carrying a baby to term in 2002.

Many believe that infertility is rising in America due to the increased stress that couples experience in today’s culture and the growth in the incidence of STD’s which can damage the woman’s fallopian tubes, often as a result of pelvic inflammatory disease. Add to this the fact that many couples delay attempting to begin their families until careers and financial goals are achieved, many discover they are at an advanced reproductive age when ready to start their families.

Infertility is one of the greatest heartaches that a couple can experience. Each day we see the pain of couples yearning for a child. There are millions of couples who deal with infertility and many solutions are offered to the couple—some moral and some immoral; some effective and some ineffective. Most have no diagnosis for the cause of their infertility and have been through various medical procedures and followed “everyone’s” advice to conceive, still with no baby. Couples with this deep desire for a baby are lured by what our culture offers and will sometimes go to any lengths for a pregnancy. Many, therefore, pursue in vitro fertilization (IVF) without ever intending to go down that road. It is so important to offer couples an alternative to the culture’s seducing message: “Have a baby at any cost – it is your right.” The woman is desperate for a pregnancy, has gone to IVF, and now is facing decisions she never expected - such as how many embryos to implant, how many to discard, how many to “selectively reduce,” how many to cryopreserve and what to do with the remaining frozen embryos, her children. Her husband is just as desperate not knowing how to support his wife, seeing the physical impact of the procedures she has endured, and wondering how he has trusted medical science to help them and now is facing a decision involving the destruction of life in order to create life. Unfortunately, since the first IVF baby was born in England, in



1978 (ironically 10 years after *Humanae vitae*), IVF has become *the* course of treatment for infertile couples. Many couples are looking for an alternative to this and support for their morally acceptable choice.

The following comments can provide an insight into the thinking of the couples who come to our Infertility group, rather than pursuing IVF:

“It is immoral to create a child outside of the loving embrace of the mother and father in a Petrie dish, separating the love and life aspects of the conjugal union.”

“The child is not a commodity to be purchased, but a gift from God.”

“A couple does not have the right to get a baby at any price...such as at the expense of freezing and/or destruction of his or her brothers and sisters.”

“The baby at this early stage of life no matter how small has the same dignity as every human being. He/she is made in the image and likeness of God deserving all of the rights of an older human being who is born.”

“Big expense, big business, big heartache.”

Some day, we may need a program similar to Project Rachel geared to the women and couples who have been through IVF and realize the outcome of their unborn Chil-

dren... a program to help these couples in the healing process. Meanwhile we reach out to our infertile couples offering them support from the Church and from one another.

### **Archdiocesan Infertility Group—Format**

Understanding that there are many issues and emotions to talk about when attempting to cope with infertility, couples or individuals are invited to attend the monthly infertility discussion groups. These meetings are held in an informal setting to allow the attendees a chance to talk and share their insights and experiences. The gatherings are moderated by Donna, a Licensed Professional Counselor. The group meets on the second Wednesday of most months at 4:30 p.m., St. John’s Mercy Medical Building, 11700 Studt Avenue, Suite C.

The group has been meeting for almost four years and some incredible stories have emerged. Everyone on the planning committee has become a parent! Most through birthing their own children and one through adopting two babies. The attendance at the monthly discussion group meetings is ever changing with many becoming pregnant and all are reaching out to one another to give, as well as to receive, support. When a member becomes pregnant she shares their news very sensitively and is congratulated warmly and sincerely by the group.

It is heartwarming to see a

hurting woman or couple come to the group and be fully embraced by the others attending the session. Each member has experienced the pain of infertility whether for one year or several years. They understand one another. It is amazing to see them move from their own pain to reaching out to the others. If someone is having surgery, a bad month, a difficult procedure, the group prays for them, often with a novena. Special intercessors are: Sts. Joachim and Ann, St. Gerard, St. David, St. Colette, and finally, St. Gianna, a favorite of our Archbishop.

Archbishop Burke has a special devotion to St. Gianna and has been so kind to lend her relic for a prayer service led by one of our deacons. He also celebrated Mass with the infertility group this year at the first Annual Valentine’s Day Mass at the Cardinal Rigali Pastoral Center. After the celebration of Mass, he offered the opportunity to venerate the relic and provided prayer cards to each of the individuals attending. Following this a reception was held where he greeted each of the guests. The second annual Valentine’s Day Mass for infertile couples is scheduled for February 14, 2008.

Besides the monthly discussion groups, special Mass, and prayer service, other activities include periodic seminars: a talk on SPICE (Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Communicative and Emotional expressions of sexuality), a

panel on adoption, infertile couples sharing their stories, a priest speaking on Church teaching and physicians speaking about aspects of infertility such as “When Is Enough, Enough?”.

A unique feature for the group includes the opportunity for each couple to be prayed for by name by a seminarian. Early in the planning phase, a student from the Pro Life Club at Kenrick Glennon Seminary contacted the Archdiocesan Office of Natural Family Planning offering the treasured gift of individual prayer for the infertile couples. The process is easy – cards have been developed and distributed to infertile couples. If they wish to be prayed for by name or if they prefer to be prayed for anonymously, they return the card to the Pro Life Club with their request. The moderator then selects a seminarian to pray for the couple. Special relationships have developed and couples are even praying for their seminarian as well. Letters have been exchanged and some have met in person. Mary, a member of the group with six and one half years of infertility became pregnant and has just had her “miracle” son baptized by the priest who referred her to a Fertility Care program with resulting NaPro Technology. At the baptism party she shared a letter of support and encouragement from four years earlier that came from the seminarian who had prayed for them. The letter was still hanging on her refrigerator!

“Come to me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest.” (*Matthew 11:28*)

This is the reflection on which the group is based. All in the group realize not everyone will become pregnant. Donna and the group help each member realize that it is really about following God’s plan for them that will bring true joy. This may be through adoption, becoming pregnant and having a child or parenting in other ways through social works of mercy through the parish and larger Church. Each individual has so much to give and is chosen from all eternity for a special purpose in life. Talking with others, sharing and supporting through the group, and friendships developing has made this a reality in each precious life.

*Diane Dailey, CNFPE, is the director of the Office of Natural Family Planning, Archdiocese of St. Louis; 11700 Studt Rd, Ste C, St. Louis, MO 63141; 314-997-7576; e-mail, dalydk @stlo.mercy.net*

## **COORDINATORS’ CORNER**

### **Called to Serve—Reflections from the Diocese of Phoenix**

*Peggy Frei*

The year 2007 has finally seen my time to retire from diocesan NFP ministry. Back in 1998, I had assumed I was going to retire then because I had 25 years of involvement in NFP as an instructor in LA and then in Phoenix, and had acted as a board member for the Phoenix NFP Center for some years. In addition, my husband had recently retired and a new stage in our lives was about to begin. But all of that changed in a blink of an eye.

In 1998, the director of the Phoenix NFP Center (PNFPC), Janet Kistler announced she was about to move. Janet had labored for over 23 years as director of the PNFPC. She had built a well established, very stable and respected NFP program. Under her leadership, the NFP needs of the local diocese were more than adequately met. In addition, financial support from the diocese was above average nationally. In retrospect, I suppose the fact that we had a “comfort level” for our NFP ministry should have been a clue that change was imminent!

Janet’s husband had received a job transfer to Virginia and losing her meant that a huge hole would be left in the PNFPC. As a board member, I knew that searching for a new director would be, and was, difficult.

We met with obstacles. From among some of the obvious choices among the then current NFP teachers who possessed both leadership and administrative skills, most were not in a position to take on a full-time position. Many of the teachers were stay-at-home moms who would make wonderful directors but had chosen to fulfill their primary vocations as wife and mother. As for me, I hadn't worked full-time since before our eight children were born! But now that my children were raised, it seemed a realistic possibility that I could "step in," at least for a time. After discussion with our Board, I agreed to take the job "until we found a replacement." As one very wise sister once remarked, "Don't volunteer for the job dearie, you'll have it for life!" Well, almost, I have held the position of director from 1998 until now. Little did I know then what an exciting and rewarding ride I was about to begin! In this brief reflection, I'd like to tell you about the PNFPC and offer a few thoughts on NFP ministry.

The PNFPC is an independent non-profit corporation which exists primarily to serve the Diocese of Phoenix in providing NFP education but is open to serve anyone seeking NFP instruction. Since the early 1980s this diocese has required an NFP introduction (overview without instruction in NFP method use) for all couples preparing for marriage. This necessitated a yearly schedule of both introductions as well as instructional classes in the use of NFP at a variety of sites around the diocese. It was also necessary to provide both English and Spanish classes. When I took the position of director, about 10% of the couples taking an introduction would go forward to take a full series of classes. After a very short time on duty, some of the needs I identified were that we needed:

- A more tangible (accountable) connection with diocesan offices.
- A need to recruit and build the instructor cadre as many teachers were nearing a 20-year tenure, some relocating to other cities and some with family commitments which would take them out of the instructor roll. Growth in the Spanish program as well as possible other languages was also needed.
- Development of technology to include digital A/V aides in our classes and procurement of projectors for Power-Point presentations was necessary to become acceptable to the computer-literate generation attending our classes. We also needed to update our administrative office technology.
- With the advent of Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* a need for education for instructors, clients and all couples and parish educators was critical.
- Sufficient staff both paid and volunteer was needed to support the future growth of NFP.

Way down on the list of priorities was a plan to replace myself because each day became an adventure which was developing into a passion for what I was doing. From the beginning of our NFP involvement I saw it as the answer to so much that was wrong in the world. Entering this facet of NFP ministry I found my enthusiasm was increasing daily as I was enabled to make some differences in this work. At the same time I was cognizant of the fact that if I were to be a good leader, I should be grooming a replacement.

In looking back over the past eight years some of the challenges I found were:

- **Financial Responsibility:**  
Often growth is limited by lack of funds. I have always believed that resources are available commensurate with the need. We just needed to pray and ask. This was done through personal letters to all priests accompanying our yearly schedule asking for prayerful, verbal and financial support, grant requests and informing people of our needs. On many occasions an unsolicited donation arrived just when I was a bit discouraged. I saw those as a "love note" from the Lord or an "atta girl" that NFP will continue to be supported.

- **Insufficient Instructors:**

I strongly believe in the concept of a “call to ministry.” Our instructors are in the best possible place to spot “standout couples” among their clients—those who learned to use a method of NFP, are committed to its use, appear to have good intellectual and communicative skills, would be mature (not necessarily having used NFP for a long time but demonstrate maturity in their behavior and in their relationships), are good roll models or public relations persons for NFP, exude enthusiasm and are committed to the moral sexual values of the Church. When this type of couple is seen they should be “invited” to share in this ministry and referred to the director of NFP for possible instructor training.

- **Integration of Multiple NFP Methodologies:**

From my earliest NFP connections I have believed that all mainstream methods of NFP are adequate and meet couples’ needs. Some are better suited to one population or another. We are all trying to accomplish the same goal of making NFP education available to as many people as possible and we accomplish this in a variety of ways. Most people coming for instruction do not know much about the different methods but simply accept whatever method is available to them. Some have researched the methods or have a preference based on what they have heard from a friend. In speaking with other coordinators I learned that dioceses often have a dominate methodology because that is primarily what is taught there. Nevertheless, we have a responsibility to welcome all methods so that those wishing to teach in our dioceses can offer their services. The challenge is how to best integrate a variety of methods and I certainly don’t have all the answers. I can just say that we are attempting to do so. One of the biggest signs of Satan’s attempts to squelch NFP is seen in the disagreements among NFP providers of varying methods. That is so counter-productive. All of us believe so much in whatever we are teaching (or we wouldn’t be teaching it) that we sometimes fail to see the goodness in other ways.

- **NFP provided in both English and Spanish:**

One of my deficiencies as a director is that I do not speak Spanish. I have been blessed with an assistant who does and that has been a huge help. As the number of clients for Spanish classes increased it became apparent that a need to understand not only the language but the culture was most important. Adding a coordinator for Spanish has eased this transition and our Center will continue to be formed along these lines. It is my hope that we can become a model of unity in our operation as we are called to be as Christians.

It is impossible to look back on my time as a director without delighting in the joys of this ministry. Recalling some that stand out are:

- **“Working in the trenches”**

It has been my experience that continued contact with couples through group or private classes is what keeps me focused as to the purpose of our mission. Being totally involved in administrative duties can become a frustrating task. Being reminded of what happens through NFP practice when a relationship is touched and changed is the source of all that is important in this work.

- **Being directly responsible for recruiting and training instructors**

This is a great source of inspiration and joy. Observing teachers who make great sacrifices to go through training and then make themselves available to teach classes is edifying.

- **Attending national conferences for NFP directors**

This is an important source of education, motivation, camaraderie, challenge and friendship. I am a better director for every individual that I have met at these gatherings.

- **Working in the Diocese of Phoenix under the leadership of Bishop Thomas Olmsted**

It has been a privilege and I often refer to working with Bishop Olmsted as the “honeymoon” of my NFP ministry! My perception of his dedication to NFP comes from his own very high values, his shepherd-like care for his people, his close association with Pope John Paul II while he worked in Rome, his mother who was an NFP teacher and his understanding of NFP as a gift to marriage and a way of evangelization. His desire to make the full series of classes a requirement for couples marrying in the Catholic Church in Phoenix has been both a joy and a challenge. We in the NFP community have always longed for strong clerical support and he is making this happen first as a teacher and then by setting policies to insure widespread NFP education. Our newest challenge is to provide sufficient instructors to meet this directive without compromising the training and quality of the classes provided.

As I leave this position to turn it over to a wonderful and most capable woman, Cindy Leonard, I anticipate all that is good that will come from her leadership. The motto that has been mine since I came to this office is from the Canon of the Mass:

“Thank You for counting us worthy to stand in Your Presence and serve You!”

## *Annunciation Novena*

NFP promoters have always loved the Feast of the Annunciation as a reminder to be open to God’s call for new life.

This novena is available in a 4 x 6 inch card and would make a meaningful gift to the people you evangelize.

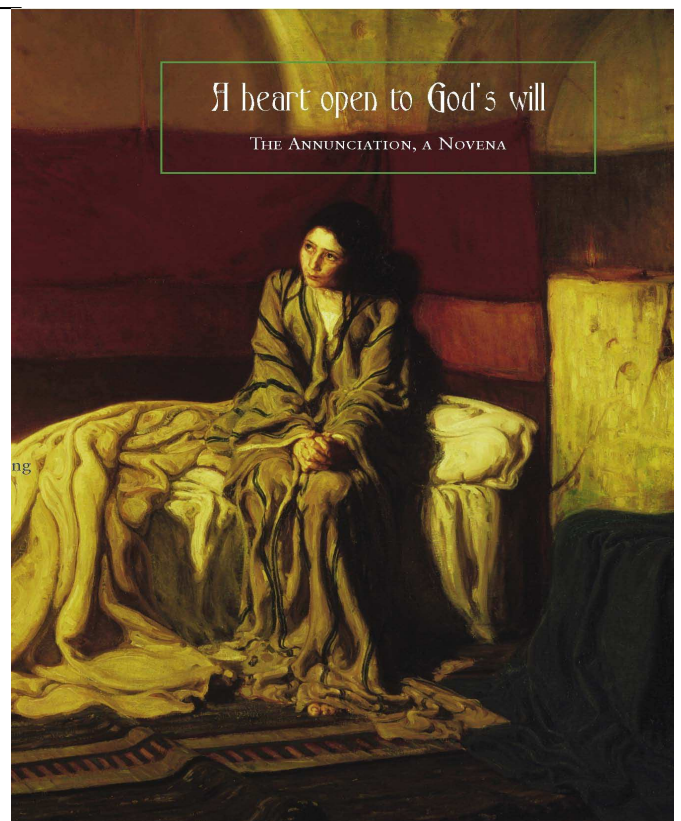
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**Order by calling the toll free number:**

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# NEWS & MORE

## NFP Events

**July 19, 2007** Saint Louis University, Doisy College of Health Science, School of Nursing, teacher training course in the Marquette Model of NFP. *Contact: 314-977-8975; lecuyer@slu.edu.*

**July 27-28, 2007** One More Soul's conference on medical ethics and NFP in Dayton, OH. The program is tailored for medical students and professionals. It is also suitable for seminarians and clergy. *Contact: One More Soul, 1-800-307-7685.*

**September 12-15** Couple to Couple Leagues' Physicians Seminar. Topics include fertility and infertility, breastfeeding, cycle problems, peri-menopause, how to explain NFP to your patients, and much more. CME credit hours are 16.25 prescribed. *Contact: 514-417-2000; www.ccli.org.seminars.*

**October 5-9, 2007** Billings Method teacher training at St. John's University, Collegeville, MN. *Contact: Sue Ek, BOMA-USA, boma-usa@msn.com.*

**October 12, 2007** The Diocese of Memphis (in collaboration with Vox Veritas and Holy Rosary Parish) Theology of the Body Conference. Featured speakers are Fr. Richard Hogan and Fr. Ben Bradshaw. *Information: www.cdom.org*

**October 6-13, 2007** FertilityCare Creighton Model teacher education, Phase I, at the Pope Paul VI Institute, Omaha. *Contact: 402-390-9168; education@popepaulvi.com.*

**October 8-12, 2007** Love & Life Conference, at the Pope Paul VI Institute, Omaha. *Contact: 402-390-9168; education@popepaulvi.com.*

**November 13-15** Couple to Couple League's Clergy Seminar. Presentations by clergy, physicians, and lay faculty. Topics include sessions on how to better explain NFP to engaged and married couples. *Contact: 513-471-2000; www.ccli.org/seminars.*

## Announcements

**2008 Couple to Couple League's biennial conference on June 29-August 2** Ridgecrest Conference Center in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Asheville, North Carolina. *Contact: 513-471-2000.*

**2008 World Youth Day – Sydney, Australia** – will be held on July 15-20.

**NFP Speaker, Beverly Malona, RN, NFPP**, is available for engagements. Beverly Malona served as the diocesan NFP director for the Diocese of Buffalo for seventeen years. She authored nationally published articles in Catholic and secular magazines and newspapers. In her tenure at the Diocese of Buffalo she was a media spokesperson for issues involving adolescent pregnancy, birth regulation, HIV/AIDS, sex education and chastity. Ms. Malona co-hosted the local Catholic radio station's (WLOF FM) program *Seek First*. Running

for three years, the radio show provided a format for discussing current issues within the Church. Ms. Malona has developed courses and seminars on chastity and Catholic morality based on the *Theology of the Body*, and has implemented them for numerous religious education programs, seminaries, and parent groups. She also served on the Federal government's review panel for Abstinence Only Education, co-authored a grant and won the \$2.4 million dollars for Project Truth, a Diocese of Buffalo Catholic Charities program (a Title V abstinence until marriage grant). *Contact: Beverly Malona; 716-688-1537.*

## Resources

***Married Love and the Gift of Life***—audio resources (English and Spanish) are available to download to an MP-3 player from: <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/cathteach.shtml>.

Orders for the document can be taken by USCCB Publishing at the toll free number, 1-800-235-8722. Please note, the document is sold in packets of 10 at \$20.00 per packet. Bulk orders of 1,000 individual copies and more are 80 cents each. Individual copies for \$2.00 a piece can be purchased from the Pro-Life Secretariat at the toll free number 1-866-582-0943 or [customerservice@ifcweb.com](mailto:customerservice@ifcweb.com).

### *Web*

The Archdiocese of Detroit has wonderful audio NFP testimonials on line at:

<http://www.aodonline.org/AODOnline/Offices+and+Ministries+12009/Education+12110/Natural+Family+Planning+2157/Testimonials.htm>

### *For Fun . . .*

Have you viewed the NFP spoof commercials that two seminarians from the Diocese of Saginaw put together? Instead of “Hi, I’m a PC” and “Hi, I’m a Mac” they wrote their commercials to pit NFP against contraception . Pretty clever. To view, go to: <http://www.americanpapist.com/2007/07/videos-nfp-vs-contraception-la-apple.html> or: <http://saginawseminarians.blogspot.com>.

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