

FORUM

Diocesan Activity Report

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National NFP Awareness Week - July 23 - 29, 2006

Despite record heat during the summer, dioceses and NFP promoters around the country planned and took part in promoting National NFP Awareness Week.

This year's poster featured multiple images of couples and families designed around the theme, "Love, Naturally." The catchy slogan was the result of the first time national "call for slogans" issued to the dioceses and national NFP providers. Diocesan NFP coordinators and NFP providers in turn, sent the request to their teachers and friends. We received e-mails with suggested slogans from NFP couples, teachers, promoters, and even theologians. Staff of the USCCB's Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities considered all suggestions. The winning slogan was created by Tom and Patty Strunck from the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

In this issue . . .

National NFP Awareness Week	1
Call for Slogans	3
Diocesan NFP Profile 2005 Report - Summary <i>Rev. Robert Cannon, JCL</i>	4
The Hidden Costs of Planned Parenthood's Freebies <i>Susan E. Wills</i>	5
Openness In All Things- An Olympian's Journey In Natural Family Planning <i>Rebecca Dussault</i>	7
After 40 Years of Feminism, What Next? <i>Terry Polakovic</i>	8
I have a Dream <i>Jennifer Roback Morse, PhD</i> ...	10
How the discovery of NFP brought me back to my core beliefs. <i>A Witness Story</i> <i>Marnie McAllister</i>	11
What song are you singing? NFP, Marriage Preparation and the Importance of Consistency <i>Stella Kitchen</i>	12
COORDINATORS' CORNER	
NFP and the Diocese of Dallas Marriage Preparation Workshops <i>Diane Daniels</i>	14
NEWS BRIEFS	15

(Continued from p. 1)

We know that NFPers promote NFP every week in the year, but with the anniversary of *Humanae vitae* (July 25) and the feast of Saints Anne and Joachim (July 26), National NFP Awareness Week is an appropriate time to step up NFP education in a month when most Americans have a slower pace of life. Here is a sample of some NFP activities:

Archdiocese of Denver

Each parish received the 2006 poster and DDP/NFP resources.

Archdiocese of San Francisco

The archdiocesan newspaper featured an interview with Rev. Xavier Lavagetto, OP, a priest who offers NFP classes in his parish of St. Dominic, San Francisco. Fr. Lavagetto is proud to have a Creighton Model FertilityCare™ practitioner on site. Among his engaging comments is this: "The sex portrayed in our media is not about relationships—it's about fantasy. A conversation about NFP is about a different kind of sex. It's about the whole person as a sexual being—not a sexual object."

Diocese of Kalamazoo

Diocesan NFP Coordinator, Mary Culp, mailed an informational letter with homily notes, intercessions, witness articles, and other NFP materials to all priests, deacons and pastoral administrators.

Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend

Diocesan NFP Coordinator, Lisa Everett, published a 10-part series called, "Faith and Fertility: What the Church Teaches and Why" in the diocesan newspaper. Three of the articles were testimonies that Lisa solicited from others on various aspects of the subject. One article featured a couple who had been sterilized, repented of it and had it reversed. Another witness article featured a physician who had prescribed contraceptives and even referred for in vitro fertilization but has ceased doing so and has become certified to provide NaProTechnology. The

series ended in mid-July shortly before NFP week.

Diocese of Harrisburg

Parishes and women's health clinics received the 2006 NFP poster and DDP/NFP resources. A double page spread on NFP was featured in the diocesan newspaper.

Diocese of Lacrosse

NFP posters were distributed to any parish requesting them and were hung in the birthing centers of each of the 10 Catholic hospitals. NFP inserts were placed in every parish bulletin throughout the diocese on the book-end weekends (July 23 and July 30th). All priests received the DDP/NFP's homily notes and intercessions. The diocesan newspaper featured an article on three NFP couples who have teenagers explaining how marital chastity makes it easier to raise happy, healthy and holy children. The Catholic Radio station ran public service announcement spots on NFP week from July 17-30.

Diocese of Phoenix

All priests received a letter from Bishop Thomas Olmsted with other resources including information on the 2006 NFP posters. On July 25th the diocese celebrated Mass and hosted a reception with Katrina Zeno as guest speaker

Diocese of Scranton

Family Life director, Mary Ann Paulukonis, sent a letter of encouragement to each parish together with the 2006 NFP poster, homily notes, general intercessions, bulletin announcement and NACFLM's resource, *Linking Parish and Home: NFP*.

Diocese of Springfield, IL

The 2006 NFP poster and resources were sent to all parishes. Articles were featured in the diocesan newspaper.

Diocese of Wichita

Bishop Michael Jackels sent a letter to all priests which included DDP/NFP resources. A "Mass of Thanks-

giving" and a dinner for teachers and promoters of NFP was held. This event featured Janet Smith, PhD who spoke on "How to talk and teach NFP to the reluctant."

One More Soul (OMS), encouraged "NFP Awareness" in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati by designing and publishing a full page (14x10) color ad in the archdiocesan newspaper. The ad was created from OMS's "Dandelion & Rose" poster that portrays the root of the dandelion as contraception feeding the leaves and flowers representing the many harms caused by contraception. The "Rose" half of the poster depicts the harmony and health that are natural to lives lived chastely according to God's plan. The remainder of the ad contrasted the health harms associated with contraception to the benefits that couples receive when using NFP. Contact information for the national NFP providers was listed.

One More Soul collaborated with the Couple to Couple League, Family of the Americas Foundation, and FertilityCare™ professionals to offer parishes free quantities of CDs and other resources for acquainting parishioners with the NFP and fertility care resources available in the Archdiocese. Close to twenty parishes accepted this offer and displayed the materials during "NFP Awareness Week."

**Your DDP/ NFP
orders can be
placed at:**

1-866-582-0943;

Order fax: 301-779-8596

or e-mail:

customerservice@ifcweb.com

A Call for Slogans

Did you like the 2006 NFP slogan? Do you think you can create as good a slogan? Would you like to create the slogan for the 2007 National NFP Awareness Week poster?

If you have some good ideas, please e-mail them to nfp@uscgb.org or mail them to the address listed below by January 5, 2006.

When you send us your ideas, please provide: your name, mailing address, e-mail, phone number, name of your diocese, and name of the NFP method you teach/use/promote.

You can send as many slogans as your creativity generates!

The staff of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, will review all suggestions and either select one or build upon the best slogan. The creative winner will be contacted and acknowledged in the text on the bottom of the poster. The electronic edition of the Winter/Spring 2007 issue of the *NFP Forum* will carry the announcement.

The following can help you in this creative process

About the Poster

The slogan should catch the attention of the viewer.

The slogan should be brief and not “churchy.”

We are trying to “plant some seeds” in the mind of the viewer or “tweak” the curiosity of the viewer who does not know about the Church’s teachings or NFP.

The slogan will be strong if it uses active words; e.g., “Capture the Romance!”

The words “Natural Family Planning” do not have to be in the slogan.

The words, “Natural Family Planning” typically appear in the standard text of the poster. In addition, the designer can work “NFP” into the graphics of the design as needed.

Standard text on the poster includes:

- The name of the educational campaign, “National Natural Family Planning Awareness Week - date”
- Quote from the U.S. bishops’ address on the 25th Anniversary of *Humanae vitae*:

“. . . a call to celebrate and reverence God’s vision of human sexuality.”

Basic Information

National NFP Awareness Week will be celebrated on **July 22- 28, 2007**

The purpose of the week is to raise awareness about the Catholic Church’s teachings on conjugal love and responsible parenthood and the methods of Natural Family Planning.

This educational campaign is accomplished through a variety of activities in the Catholic dioceses of the USA. The poster acts as a marketing brand of the campaign.

The target audience of the campaign is engaged and married Catholic couples.

The main people who develop the programming in the dioceses are the diocesan NFP coordinators and the NFP teachers.

The sponsor of the campaign is the Diocesan Development Program for NFP, Pro-Life Secretariat, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

DEADLINE: January 5, 2007

Send your ideas to:

nfp@uscgb.org via E-MAIL or MAIL your ideas to: Theresa Notare, MA, Assistant Director, Diocesan Development Program for NFP, Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 4th St., NE, Washington, DC 20017

Diocesan NFP Profile 2005 Report - Summary

Rev. Robert Cannon, JCL

On January 31, 2006, 205 dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *NFP Program National Profile* survey of diocesan natural family programs. This was the second year that participants could complete the *Profile* online. The cumulative data base will assist the DDP/NFP office to more effectively analyze NFP program trends throughout the United States. Eighty-two or 40% of the dioceses submitted data. As in previous years, the following data “snapshot” indicates that certain aspects of NFP programs remain relatively unchanged but with slight improvement in some key areas.

- Most dioceses (90%) include NFP in their programs of marriage preparation. However, the majority of newly married couples failed to take full advantage of natural family planning in their conjugal life. This assumption is based on the comparison between the total number of marriages in the Church (212,456¹) and the total number of individuals (17,257²) reported in the survey that enrolled in a full course of instruction in NFP. Obviously, more must be done to inspire couples to fully understand and embrace the Church’s teaching on human sexuality within marriage.

Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses for participating in the 2005 Profile survey

Allentown, Amarillo, Arlington, Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Bridgeport, Brooklyn, Brownsville, Camden, Charleston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Corpus Christi, Crookston, Denver, Des Moines, Detroit, Erie, Evansville, Fargo, Galveston-Houston, Great Falls-Billings, Green Bay, Harrisburg, Hartford, Houma-Thibodaux, Jefferson City, Joliet, Juneau, Kalamazoo, Knoxville, La Crosse, Lansing, Laredo, Las Cruces, Lincoln, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Marquette, Memphis, Milwaukee, Nashville, New Ulm, Newark, Norwich, Ogdensburg, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Orlando, Palm Beach, Paterson, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Peoria, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Providence, Rapid City, Richmond, Rochester, Rockford, Rockville Centre, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, Scranton, Springfield in Illinois, St. Augustine, St. Cloud, St. Louis, St. Paul-Minneapolis, Superior, Tulsa, Washington, DC, Wichita, Winona, Worcester, Yakima, Youngstown.

- Several dioceses and an increasing number of individual priests require engaged couples to take a full NFP course of instruction before marriage. Some dioceses are strongly considering requiring an introduction to a full NFP course of instruction as part of marriage preparation. There is diversity of opinion from diocese to diocese on the merits of requiring a full course of NFP instruction for engaged couples.
- When viewed nationally, diocesan NFP programs vary from comprehensive to nonexistent. Some dioceses have very strong educational programs that integrate NFP into all educational efforts on human sexuality, marriage, and family life. Through hard work and dedication, many dioceses have made tremendous strides in improving the quality of their NFP programs in order to meet the *Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry*. But viewed nationally, as one diocese improves its NFP program, another may experience a reduction in program size due to teacher loss, budget cuts, and/or diocesan restructuring.
- Diocesan funding of NFP programs vary greatly from diocese to diocese. A total of fifty-seven percent of all NFP diocesan programs operate on less than \$10,000 per year. Only eighteen percent of dioceses spend \$30,000 to more than \$70,000 for their NFP programs. In most dioceses, NFP programs share funding, materials, and staff support of an umbrella department, e.g., Marriage and Family Life Office.
- NFP efforts go largely unnoticed. Only sixty-four percent of diocesan NFP programs submit an annual report on their activities. Typically, NFP funding is so meager that it is not identified as a specific line item in diocesan budgets.
- Volunteers are the unsung heroes of diocesan NFP programs. A large number of diocesan programs (46%) depend largely on volunteers to sustain their programs. Many dioceses (41%) offer modest stipends to cover the personal costs of volunteers; e.g., transportation, NFP materials, baby sitting, meals, etc.
- There has been a slight improvement in the amount of scheduled time dedicated to NFP in marriage preparation programs. The time given to NFP

is short; e.g., in seventy-four percent of Pre-Cana programs it is less than one hour. The majority of diocesan marriage preparation programs provide at least rudimentary NFP information with special attention directed toward couples preparing for marriage; e.g., booklets, fact sheets, witness couple talks, and NFP courses of instruction. Through NFP introductory sessions more than 96,887 individuals received basic information on NFP in 2005.

Finally, the fundamental pastoral question that must be faced when analyzing diocesan NFP programs 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.

- 1 (2006), *The Official Catholic Directory*.
- 2 See, 2005 Profile, Q.22.

Rev. Robert R. Cannon, MA, JCL, Diocese of Venice, is currently on active duty as a chaplain with the US Air Force.

Program Resources

The following documents are useful in strengthening diocesan NFP programs.

Diocesan Plan for Natural Family Planning Program Development. Washington, D.C.: Diocesan Development Program for NFP, 1981. (Available from the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities; 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 from USCCB Publishing: 1-800-235-8722; #5-357.)

USCCB NFP web resources: <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/index.shtml>

The Hidden Costs of Planned Parenthood's Freebies

Susan E. Wills, Esq.

Everybody loves free stuff, like those "buy one, get one free" deals and "free" trips with frequent flier miles. But sometimes the stuff given out free as a marketing tool actually harms people.

For decades, Planned Parenthood has been handing out free condoms at their clinics, at "health fairs," and any place else they can attract new clients. What's wrong with that? Setting aside the moral issues, Planned Parenthood's freebies rank *dead last* among the 23 brands tested by *Consumer Reports* for strength and reliability. In fact, the two Planned Parenthood brands are the only two rated "poor." Overall, condoms carry a 15% risk of pregnancy with typical use over 12 months. Imagine how much greater the risk is in using the worst brands, available from Planned Parenthood! And if you pick up an STD or become pregnant using their ineffective condoms, they'll welcome you back as a repeat customer for abortions and STD treatments.

In disaster relief efforts, Planned Parenthood has been Johnny-on-the-spot with offers of free abortions in three New York boroughs (following the 9/11 terrorist attack) and in southern states (to Katrina survivors). Lost a loved one, your home, possessions, everything? Planned Parenthood will help you lose one more member of the family.

The latest promotional handout, courtesy of Planned Parenthood of the Rockies, was a June 30 give-away of Plan B "emergency contraceptives" at all 24 Planned Parenthood clinics in Colorado. This publicity stunt was to protest Governor Owens' earlier veto of a bill to make Plan B the only prescription drug in Colorado available at pharmacies without a doctor's prescription. Governor Owens objected to the bill because it made it easy for minors to get a potent drug without the guidance of a doctor, and could have violated the conscience rights of pharmacists opposed to dispensing a potentially abortifacient drug.

An Associated Press article on Planned Parenthood's Plan B handout poo-poos Governor Owens' concerns: Plan B is not abortifacient, we're told, because "under Colorado law, pregnancy begins once a fertilized egg has been implanted." But the crux of abortion is not that it ends a "pregnancy," however oddly one chooses to define it. The crux of abortion is that it directly takes a human life. Colorado could define life as "beginning at 50 or when the kids move out, whichever comes first," but it would not change the fact that every new human life begins at conception, a full week before implantation.

As this issue was going to layout, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved over-the-counter status for Plan B for women 18 and older. Girls under 18 will still need a prescription. The FDA assures the public that the drug will not be sold in gas stations and convenience stores, but the agency still does not explain why a megadose of a drug equal to 40 times the daily dose (Plan B is equivalent to taking 40 daily Ovrette pills) should NOT require a prescription when the daily pack DOES.

The FDA's press release and "Plan B: Questions and Answers" perpetuate what feminist icon Germaine Greer has called the "cynical deception of women by selling abortifacients as if they were contraceptives." FDA refers to the drug as "contraception" and claims it "safely and effectively prevents pregnancy." Buried in the fine print of FDA-approved Plan B packaging, we

(Continued on p. 6)

(Continued from p. 5)

learn “it may inhibit implantation (by altering the endometrium)” leaving the developing human embryo without the nutrition needed to survive and causing an early abortion.

It is more than ever imperative that we are armed with the facts and research citations on Plan B, and take every opportunity to educate young women of its action and risks now that it will be widely available.

Can Plan B Cause an Early Abortion?

As to the dual contraceptive and abortifacient effects of Plan B, the American Pharmaceutical Association’s Continuing Education Program Special Report “Emergency Contraception: The Pharmacist’s Role” (p. 3) states in part:

Like oral contraceptives that are taken on a daily basis, emergency contraceptives might prevent pregnancy by inhibiting any of the events necessary for pregnancy to become established ...:

1. *Ovulation ...;*
2. *Fertilization ...;*
3. *Transport of the fertilized egg to the uterus; or*
4. *Implantation of the blastocyst in the endometrium (by creating changes in the endometrium unreceptive to implantation).*

Note: the “fertilized egg” referred to in point 3 and the “blastocyst” in point 4 are in reality a newly conceived human being who will die in the first week of life if she is prevented from traveling to, and implanting in, her mother’s endometrium (lining of the womb) to be nourished for further growth and development. Inhibiting transport to the uterus also may result in an ectopic pregnancy that is potentially fatal for the mother as well as the embryo.

Need more information about the human embryo’s life before implantation? Not long after conception a new embryo signals his presence to his mother. Only 36-48 hours after conception, the immunosuppressive protein Early Pregnancy Factor can be measured in the mother’s blood. The protein tells her immune system not to attack the embryo.

So regardless of whether you define “pregnancy” as beginning at conception, implantation or even quickening (when the mother feels her unborn child’s movements), life begins at conception and, unlike pregnancy - which typically ends after nine months - it ought to continue unabated until natural death.

Safety Issues

The safety of repeatedly taking emergency contraception (EC) has not been proved. It is misleading to claim EC is safe.

David A. Grimes, MD, for example, an abortionist and champion of Plan B, testified in favor of making the drug available “over-the-counter” before the FDA in 2003 on behalf of Plan B’s manufacturer. Yet he stated in a 2002 interview: “Repeated use of EC wreaks havoc on a woman’s cycle, so the resulting menstrual chaos acts as a powerful deterrent to using this method too often” (Laurie Barclay, MD interview with Dr. Grimes for Medscape General Medicine, available at www.medscape.com/viewarticle/442258).

Dr. Carol Ben-Maimon, testifying on behalf of Plan B’s manufacturer before the FDA, conceded that with “repeat use, ... intermenstrual bleeding occurs in about 40 percent of women ... [and] there’s a whole host of bleeding disorders when used initially “ (Dec. 16, 2003 transcript, p. 299; available at www.fda.gov/ohrms/dockets/ac/03/transcripts/4015T1.pdf).

The United Kingdom’s Department of Health has warned doctors of a “significantly increased risk” of ectopic pregnancy following use of emergency contraception containing levonorgestrel (the active ingredient in Plan B). Twelve out of 201 “unintended pregnancies” were ectopic following the failure of Levonelle (a brand equivalent to Plan B). This represents a 6% risk of ectopic pregnancy, three times higher than would normally occur. The Plan B packaging fine print cites an ectopic pregnancy risk up to five times greater than normal.

The sole active ingredient in Plan B, levonorgestrel, is also the same active ingredient in Norplant - the implantable long-term contraceptive identified by the FDA as a “suspect drug” as early as 1995, and later pulled from the market due to mounting “adverse event” reports and class action law suits.

Especially in light of these risks, it is unconscionable that promoters of Plan B recommend it for every act of unprotected intercourse and every condom failure when a woman is normally infertile for all but a week out of each monthly cycle. A study reported in *International Family Planning Perspectives* found that fewer than half of the women seeking emergency contraception in the Netherlands had had unprotected intercourse at midcycle. This suggests that many, perhaps most, women seek and take such drugs unnecessarily.

Does easy access to Plan B reduce abortions?

Studies in Scotland, Sweden, the U.K., California and Washington state all show no reduction in abortion rates from greater access to emergency contraception.

Anna Glasier, a leading researcher-advocate for emergency contraception, gave 5 packets each of EC to 17,800 sexually active women in one health district in Scotland. The women shared these with almost 5,000 friends; the

drug thus reached 27% of all 16- to 29-year-old sexually active women in the district. After 16 months she compared abortion rates in that district to rates in three health districts where there was no advance provision of EC. Rates were the same. (Glasier, A. *et al.* "Advanced Provision of Emergency Contraception does not Reduce Abortion Rates," *Contraception*, 69, 5:361-366.) She concludes her article on this "down note":

[It] is possible that EC may be less effective than we believe [sic]. Estimates of efficacy are unsubstantiated by randomized trials. Efficacy is based on rather unreliable data and a great many assumptions and have been questioned both in the past and more recently. ... While advanced provision of EC probably prevents some pregnancies for some women some of the time, the strategy did not produce the public health breakthrough hoped for.

Tina Raine randomly assigned 2,117 California women aged 15 to 24 to one of three groups. Women in one group were given 3 packets of EC to take home. A second group received instructions on a card explaining how to obtain EC without a prescription, free of charge from a local pharmacy. A third, the control group, had to return to the clinic for EC. Results: In the 6 month study period, there was no significant reduction in pregnancy rates among the three groups - and this in spite of the fact that the first group was nearly twice as likely to use EC. The pregnancy rate was 8% in the first group, 7.1% in the second, and 8.7% in the third. And all but 18% of the women were also using another method of contraception. Also noteworthy - about 12% of women in each group got an STD during the 6-month study period. (Raine, T. *et al.*, "Direct Access to Emergency Contraception Through Pharmacies and Effect on Unintended Pregnancy and STIs." *JAMA* (2005) 293: 54-62.)

Jacqueline Gardner summarizes the inconclusive results of the Washington State Pilot Project which allowed pharmacists to dispense EC without a prescription from February 1998 to June 1999. Abortions in Washington dropped 5% between 1997 and 1998 (before increasing again in 1999). However, as she concedes, "national abortion rates were also declining during this period. ..." The Alan Guttmacher Institute reports that while the national abortion rate dropped 5 percent between 1996 and 2000, it declined only 3 percent in Washington.

Sourafel Girma and David Paton, after examining the impact of free, over-the-counter EC on teenage pregnancy rates, concluded: "We find little evidence that pharmacy [EC] schemes have led to lower under-18 pregnancy rates in England."

The title of T. Tyden's 2002 article in the medical journal *Lakartidningen* on Sweden's experience with EC is clear enough: "No reduced number of abortions despite easily available emergency contraceptive pills."

Kirsten Moore, president and CEO of Reproductive

Health Technologies Project (Plan B advocates) told an audience at the National Press Club (December 2005) that "the experts had estimated that we would see a drop by up to half in the rates of unintended pregnancy and the rates of abortion. And in fact in the real world we're not seeing that" (quoted in A.W. Schachter, "'Plan B': What Science Can't Tell Us," *New York Post Online Edition*, Aug. 11, 2006).

If Plan B doesn't work in "the real world," maybe it shouldn't be made available over-the-counter in "the real world." Let's confine it to hypothetical use where it is always effective in the imaginations of its advocates.

And the next time your local Planned Parenthood offers freebies, let your local media know that the hidden cost of Planned Parenthood handouts is just too high.

Susan E. Wills, Esq., is the Associate Director for Education, Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Openness In All Things—An Olympian's Journey In Natural Family Planning

Rebecca Dussault

It's late at night in the fall of 1999 and I am cracking my home study course on Natural Family Planning before dozing off to sleep. This has become my nightly ritual as my wedding date draws nearer and nearer. Ideally, I would love to be in a class with my fiancé learning from a great teaching couple, but regrettably my diocese was not offering instruction then in the only acceptable means of achieving, postponing or avoiding pregnancy. No, for me it's the nightly grind of self-study to gain knowledge of the most wonderful blessing to marriage and family life.

My spouse and I were home schooled together through middle and high school by his mother. During this time we received many graces for our future marriage. Our young friendship blossomed and was supported by the close involvement with each other's family. Our families

helped us learn about chastity and its different applications through life and fostered a general love for God and sexual responsibility before Him. In our schooling we were required to read literature to help us understand God's call for us to be responsible stewards of the body and to fulfill his divine design for human sexuality. One of the earliest patrons of our sexuality was St. Maria Goretti, the young Italian virgin and martyr. These and other such virgins inspired us to live heroic chastity. I wouldn't say that it was easy to live perfect sexual purity, but it was crucial to surround myself with people of like mind, faith, and love for the Church and her teachings.

Thanks to a wonderful exposure to the Church's teachings by my fiancée's family, both my spouse to be and I knew that we would accept joyfully the Church's teachings in this new area of marriage as we had in every other area of our lives. My mother-in-law and older sister-in-law both actively practiced the Sympto-Thermal Method and Ecological Breast-Feeding in their marriages and were very instrumental during these formative years in helping us learn the truth about NFP. To see by these two wonderful examples that marriage is really supported by both spouses through increased communication, involvement, and openness to life was itself a huge testimony.

Upon our engagement, our eagerness to learn and later practice NFP was met with some opposition. My mother loved to tell the stories of how she and my father had never used contraception either, but instead had three children in 2 1/2 years with the Rhythm Method. She cautioned me not to believe it was possible to know your times of fertility and infertility! My father just laughed when I told him we weren't going to be using artificial birth control and quickly calculated a due date exactly 9 months after our wedding night. There I was already teaching the truth about NFP within my own home at 18 years old!

Looking back on the last 6 1/2 years of my life as a happily married woman, I can know with assurance that God is continually blessing us because of our faithfulness to His awesome designs. We are now expecting our second child and everyone in our two child community thinks we're banking on having a girl because our first was a boy. I let them know this is far from our last chance at having a girl. We look forward to the blessings of family for the rest of our lives and hope to give our children as much of an example and motivation to live the Church's teachings as did our mentors! So, the next time you are shopping for a wedding gift for that engaged couple, think about ordering them an NFP home study course and sending it six months early. It will be the best gift you can give them!

Rebecca Dussault is a 2006 Winter Olympian in cross country skiing. She and her husband, Sharbel, have two children; dussaultskis@mac.com.

After 40 Years of Feminism, What Next?

Terry Polakovic

In his 1995 *Letter to Women*, Pope John Paul II acknowledged that when one looks at the great process of women's liberation, "the journey has been a difficult and complicated one, and at times, not without its share of mistakes. But it has been substantially a positive one, even if it is still unfinished due to the many obstacles which, in various parts of the world, still prevent women from being acknowledged, respected and appreciated in their own special dignity." He continued, "The journey must go on..." He appealed to women to wage an intelligent *campaign for the promotion of women*, concentrating on all areas of a woman's life and beginning with a *universal recognition of the dignity of women*. (*Letter to Women* #6)

John Paul II drew a clear distinction between the feminism of the 60s, 70s and 80s and what he calls "The New Feminism." The feminism of these decades defines women just by "what they do," which has resulted in the

belief that what we do is who we are. This is one reason we stay so busy. It gives us credibility.

This type of thinking offends our inherent dignity, which is much more than "what we do." Therefore, John Paul II dismissed this idea. He maintained that our dignity comes not from what we do, but from who we are. He taught that the Catholic Church is a faithful beacon of truth in defining who we are. As the Executive Director of ENDOW (Educating on the Nature and Dignity of Women), I appreciate that Catholic women are the heirs of a beautiful and rich tapestry of intellectual and spiritual tradition. Unfortunately, as of yet, most of us don't even realize it.

It is for this reason and for so many others that we are called to introduce women to the truths found in the Catholic faith. As John Paul II requested, ENDOW is waging an intelligent campaign for the promotion of

women, which concentrates on all areas of a woman's life and begins with a universal recognition of the dignity of women. To do this, ENDOW uses a small group setting and well-developed study curriculum. The curriculum is based on Pope John Paul II's writings regarding the dignity of women, Sacred Scripture, *the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and other Catholic thinkers, philosophers and saints. We like to say that "ENDOW engages the intellect of the women in the pew."

The ENDOW curriculum is written for the heart of a woman. Current events are taken into consideration so that the participants will have a clear understanding of how the Church interacts with the contemporary world. ENDOW encourages a dialogue between our Catholic faith and the culture of today. Participants read the actual writings of the Church and ENDOW study guides help women understand their richness and fall in love with their beauty. ENDOW currently offers study guides on Pope John Paul II's *Letter to Women* and *Mulieris dignitatem*; Pope Paul VI's *Humanae vitae*; *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*; and *An Introduction to the Life and Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Several other study guides, including *Women's Dignity: What the Stages of Our Life Teach Us About God's Design* (which includes a section on regulation of fertility according to Church teaching), *A Study of Vocations*, John Paul II's *Redemptoris mater* and *Salvifici doloris*, Vatican II's *Lumen gentium*, and *The Witness of Women Saints* are currently in various stages of development.

ENDOW began in the Archdiocese of Denver in 2003 and has spread in only three years to neighboring dioceses and even to dioceses in far distant states, through small study groups in which members of one group become facilitators of another. Presently there are groups meeting to study the Church teachings about the dignity of women in the dioceses of Denver, Colorado Springs, Cheyenne, Detroit, Lansing, Omaha and Phoenix. There are ENDOW groups meeting in parishes, in pastoral centers, in universities, in Legatus organizations, and in family homes.

Many Catholic philosophers believe that for a person to experience a complete and integrated conversion there needs to be a conversion of the mind to understand the truth, a conversion of the will to choose the true good and a conversion of the heart to love the true good.



However, these three elements don't necessarily always coincide. For example, a woman might understand the truth, but she will choose otherwise. Another woman might choose the true good, but she resents it, so there is no conversion of heart. Another woman might love the true good, but she is unable to explain it. There is a place for each of these women in ENDOW. ENDOW attracts women from all walks of life, women from all spiritualities recognized by the Church and women who are on their own faith journey. ENDOW facilitators, for the

most part, are like the participants: they too are on their own faith journey.

In an ENDOW group, the participants are free to question, to share and to embrace the truths on the vocation and dignity of women found in the Catholic faith. In a speech he gave in October 2003, Archbishop Charles Chaput suggested, "No movement, ideology, political party or institution *anywhere*, in *any country*, can match the Catholic faith in promoting the dignity of women. Women should always turn to the Church as their mother and defender, because in her arms, in her strength, they can begin to re-humanize the world."

I would like to add that our culture today is crying out for an authentic feminine presence in every aspect of life and society. John Paul II recognized this lack when he wrote, "Perhaps more than men, women acknowledge the person because they see persons with their hearts. They see them independently of various ideological or political systems. They see others in their greatness and limitations; they try to go out to them and help them. In this way the basic plan of the Creator takes flesh in the history of humanity and there is constantly revealed, in the variety of vocations, that beauty - not merely physical, but above all spiritual - which God bestowed from the very beginning on all, and in a particular way on women." (*Letter to Women* #12)

Terry Polakovic is the Executive Director of ENDOW. To begin an ENDOW group in your diocese, ENDOW must have a letter of permission from the local bishop. To learn more about ENDOW, please visit www.endowonline.com or call 303-715-3224.



 *A World Class NFP Pioneer* 

Please pray for the soul of Rev. Anthony Zimmerman, SJ, who died on May 23, 2006.

Fr. Zimmerman was a great NFP pioneer who promoted NFP in Japan and globally. He had a sharp intellect, infectious sense of humor, and youthful zeal that inspired all who met him. Up until he became very ill, Fr. Zimmerman actively took part in NFP internet discussions and even worked on a chastity curriculum.

Although Fr. Zimmerman will be greatly missed, we have another strong advocate for NFP in heaven!

Eternal rest grant unto him Oh Lord!

I have a Dream

women's rights and freedoms

Jennifer Roback Morse, PhD

The following verse was written by author and speaker, Jennifer Roback Morse, PhD, during an e-conversation with a pro-abortion/pro-contraception woman. Dr. Morse, who was discussing the negative effects of contraception and abortion on women's personal lives and society in general, was accused by her opponent of wanting to do away with "women's rights and freedoms." Dr. Morse's response is a type of poem to which all NFP promoters can relate.

I have a dream that some day, every child will be conceived from an act of true love between parents who love each other, are married to each other, and eagerly welcome him.

I have a dream that every child will spend his childhood with those parents who brought him into being. Parents see the value of the small society they have created between themselves and their children, and do everything humanly possible to sustain that society.

I have a dream that children can be children, take joy in their childhood innocence, and not become sexualized before puberty.

I have a dream that all of society recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children, instead of regarding parents as impediments to formal sex education. Parents take seriously their responsibility to provide their children with accurate and complete information about sexuality, including the social and moral significance of sex, rather than acquiesce in whatever the school provides. Instead of the school deciding when children are ready for sexual information, parents monitor their child's maturity level, and make a considered judgment about when their child is ready. Parents feel themselves negligent if they fail in this. I have a dream that when parents elect to remove their children from public school sex ed classes, the parents no longer feel like interlopers and the children like outcasts.

I have a dream that Corporate America takes some responsibility for preserving the innocence of the young, and monitors the sexual images they place into the public square. Advertisers think it disreputable to market to children using sexual images. Retailers think it irresponsible to place erotic material at check-out counters and other places where children might stumble across them. The entertainment industry takes responsibility for limiting the sexual content of its programming to appropriate venues.

I have a dream that the market accommodates the needs of the family, rather than the family adapting itself to the needs of the market. We create an economy in which people are prepared to earn a living before the age of twenty-five or thirty. Young people graduate from

college without crushing debt, and without the prospect of unmanageable housing costs and tax burdens. Families can support themselves on one income, at least for a while. Mothers can return to the labor market and find a place where they can use their talents and earn some money.

I have a dream that young women find a way to embrace their desire for motherhood as well as their desire for meaningful work outside the home. At some time in their lives, most women have the opportunity to give themselves over completely to caring for their children and making their home. Women make sensible life plans for themselves, that take into account the possibility that their children may be too needy to be in day care and may need to be with their mothers. I have a dream that mothers not feel that they are wasting themselves if they stay home with their children.

I have a dream that fathers and mothers are husbands and wives. Men and women learn to cooperate with each other, respect each other's differences, appreciate each other's unique gifts. Women can trust their husbands not to abandon them, and men can trust their wives not to eject them from the family home.

I have a dream that if a woman chooses a lifetime of barrier-free, chemical-free intimacy with her husband, she not be made to feel like a freak. A family with many children can appear in public, without having to endure rude remarks. People might even show some gratitude to those who are investing their lives and their bodies in building the future of society.

And if any of these things are not possible for a young couple, I have a dream that friends and family will step up to help them. We find a way to accommodate and assist people who are unable to live up to the social norms, without destroying or dissipating those norms. Neighbors will help see them through their difficulties. And if it must be that they rely on the kindness of strangers, these strangers become friends.

I have a dream that we recognize that we have been trying to do something that no society in the history of the human race has ever attempted: create a society that has no norms at all about the proper context for sexual

activity or childbearing. We come to recognize how unlikely this is to succeed.

I am not turning the clock back to the 1950's. I have no desire to go backwards. If we are going to go back to any place, it might as well be the Garden of Eden. That is where we are all trying to go anyway. No, I do not want to go back anywhere. I want us to go forward, to become what we should have been from the beginning.

Jennifer Roback Morse, PhD, is the author of [Smart Sex, Finding Life Long Love in a Hook-Up World](#). Dr. Morse is available for conferences and seminars. Contact: jrobackmorse@sbcglobal.net.

How the discovery of NFP brought me back to my core beliefs.

A Witness Story

Marnie McAllister

Sexuality was never a taboo topic in my childhood - at least between my mom, sister and me. From an early age, we talked about the gift of chastity and God's role in the marital relationship. God was inextricably intertwined with my idea of romantic love and, as I became older, my image of sex always included God as a third - though invisible presence. As a result, by the time I was 14 or so, the idea of casual sex seemed to me as absurd as it was sinful akin to taking the Eucharist to a keg party.

In my small South Georgia town, where some of the local churches preached vehemently against Catholics, virginity often didn't survive past age 14. Being Catholic and remaining chaste, sometimes felt like a cultural betrayal of close friends. Thanks to my mother's guidance though, swimming against such a tide didn't seem like work. There were tears and even some lost friends, but the beauty of the truth never faded from my eyes.

My mother was my constant teacher. From bedtime talks to CCD, she shaped my convictions which have always been rooted in Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae vitae*. I didn't know about the document at age 12, but its message has always been deeply imbedded in my view of the world and of humanity.

Faith told me from my first reflections on life and society that the workings of nature must operate as a unified force, each part being integral to the whole. To hinder or destroy one component was to destroy the integrity of the whole (a concept long accepted in study of the physical world). For a young girl whose entire peer group seemed to be having sex, this concept hit home on a spiritual level. As friend after friend was rejected, lied to, disappointed or cast-off by a boy - each in her turn wondering why - I saw more and more clearly how sexuality could not be exempt from that rule anymore than gravity could be taken away from the earth.

At 26, I met and married my husband and quickly discovered that sex wasn't quite as ethereal as I had imagined. In fact, it was pretty earthy. I didn't hear any angels singing on our wedding night and I found no cherubs flanking the bed. More than anything else, sex reminded me how very grounded we are on earth, despite our more heavenly aspirations. Gradually, though, I did begin to rediscover God's role in our marriage and I love the new relationship that's developed between my husband, myself and God.

An unlikely source that highlighted how earthly we really are happened just before my marriage. In a visit to my allergist just before the wedding, I was told that my unpredictably strong reactions to allergy shots could endanger a baby if I were to become pregnant. And, personally, I felt that if I didn't continue allergy shots, the pregnancy could be endangered by my severe allergy and asthma attacks. My mom and dad used the Rhythm Method to plan their family, and we always joked that with five pregnancies it didn't really work! When I thought about marriage, I always assumed my husband and I would simply allow nature to take its course - no planning, let God decide. So I didn't have a plan or know of any viable alternative when my doctor prescribed the Pill. I naively took the Pill and the prescription bothered me. At the same time, I was at a loss as to what to do. I started taking the Pill just before our wedding, but soon after our marriage, I began wanting to avoid intercourse - as if abstaining would neutralize the Pill. Obviously, that wasn't a healthy alternative.

After a few months of this anxiety, I sought help from our Archdiocesan Catholic Family Office. To be honest, I didn't have any real expectations regarding alternatives. I expected to hear about the Rhythm Method. You can imagine my surprise when I was introduced to the world of Natural Family Planning. It was like coming home to my childhood where every conviction I held was affirmed by the truths I saw in the world around me. Here was a way to work with nature and have a healthy body and marriage. Of course God equipped our bodies with a perfect system of signs and functions that tell us exactly what's happening with our fertility. Why had I doubted?

(Continued on p. 12)

(Continued from p. 11)

Our Archdiocese was short on NFP instructors, so eventually I was asked to become an instructor. I have been teaching for nearly a year now-and what a joy it is to share this knowledge with other couples! My first class included an engaged couple who both were chaste (very unusual). It was a gift to be invited by them to share in their journey toward marriage and in the months after their marriage as they used the method and began to plan their family.

In addition to feeling joy, I have also been frustrated that so many women aren't educated about these signs of fertility. In the sixth-grade, boys and girls together were forced to watch videos of "Captain Condom" in PE class. I can remember my sixth-grade biology teacher rattling off a list of the various slang words used for the term "erection." Why, I now thought, didn't she tell us that women have changes in body temperature and vaginal fluids that are indicators of fertility? That lesson would have been appropriate in a science classroom. In truth, she probably didn't know about these fertility indicators.

Such prevalent ignorance in the scientific community is astounding. My sister's internist (a woman) offered to prescribe medicine to "dry-up" her "annoying vaginal discharge." That was before my sister and I had learned that cervical mucus played an important role in our bodies. In fact, when we were young, we both thought we were the only girls who had vaginal discharge. We thought it was abnormal. Our new NFP knowledge has given us a reason to appreciate the little annoyances of the menstrual cycle and I've come to appreciate what I use to dread each month.

My husband and I just celebrated our second anniversary and are expecting our first child. NFP helped us to avoid conception as my allergies were being treated. But the practice of NFP, which calls on a couple to consider daily if they are ready to start a family, kept parenthood on our minds. By the time we were ready to start a family, I knew the method too well. So, as a way of "letting go of controls" a little, we actually stopped recording my fertility symptoms and opened our minds to conception. We also took comfort knowing that if conception didn't come easily, NFP gave us the tools to help us conceive. Within three months I was pregnant. Thanks to NFP, we knew about our developing baby almost immediately!

NFP has been a gift in our marriage. My husband isn't Catholic or even religious, but he does have faith in nature; that is "that nature knows best." So he was very open to using a natural method. NFP has given us the opportunity for an open dialogue about our family and our sexual relationship. As I pray about God's plan for our family, my husband and I also discuss it, and our discussions unconsciously become a part of the prayer.

I am so grateful that NFP is coming into the consciousness of more and more women. I have both Catholic and non-Catholic friends who e-mail me regularly trying to learn more about NFP. I pray that it will spread as more

couples become aware of its gifts. I pray, too, that the scientific community becomes more aware of the benefits of the Sympto-Thermal Method. What a boon it would be to their patients!

Marnie McAllister is an NFP teacher and reporter for the Archdiocese of Louisville's newspaper.

What song are you singing?

NFP, Marriage Preparation and the Importance of Consistency

Stella Kitchen

Do you have NFP in your marriage preparation program? A simple question that has many answers.

"Yes we do." you respond.

"We include a talk from the NFP teacher, she has 20 minutes to present, and she shows slides of charts and talks about her experience in her own marriage."

"We also have a whole session on NFP given by a witness couple, they talk for an hour, or we show a video and then the couples can sign up for a class."

The above may look good on paper but my question to the directors of diocesan marriage and family life offices is, "Do you really know what song is being sung by your marriage preparation volunteers?"

The popular strategy of inserting an NFP expert or witness couple into a larger program will work only if all members of the marriage prep. team are singing the same song - communicating the teachings of the Church on the Sacrament of Marriage.

Comprehensive education and formation in Church teachings

Educating marriage prep. volunteers in the key elements of Church teachings on human sexuality, conjugal love and responsible parenthood, marriage and family life is essential if your goal is to prepare couples for Catholic marriage. Marriage prep. volunteers must speak as the Church speaks. Programming should be developed where volunteers are given the opportunity to fine tune their understanding of the key Church teachings.

We know that most of our marriage preparation volunteers use contraception or have in the past and feel uncomfortable about even bringing up the issue at all.

They either avoid it completely or challenge it, citing their own negative experiences. These couples need to be lovingly challenged to change that behavior. Do not leave the proverbial “elephant” sitting in the middle of your training sessions. Speak clearly on Catholic teaching, challenging them to model Church teaching on the issue of birth control. If they are unable or unwilling to change their lifestyle or their talks they will decide on their own that this is not the ministry for them and will bow out gracefully. New teams will form as like-minded couples will come forward feeling more at home working with a fresh approach.

Offer training that enables your volunteers to use words and phrases of Church teachings so that they can incorporate them into their already formed presentations. How much do your marriage preparation volunteers know about John Paul II’s Theology of the Body? Do they talk about the couple giving themselves to each other completely? How will they address openness to life? Will they talk about responsible parenthood? Can marriage prep. volunteers quote *Humanae vitae*’s four categories that a couple should look at when planning their family - God, spouses, existing family and society? Or, will they simply say, for example, that they wished they had waited to have their first child until they were financially stable?

On the importance of providing up-dates

There is much going on in our world that has an impact on marriage and families. It is important to keep marriage preparation volunteers up to date with current information. Here is a sampling of some such issues:

“Trends Challenging Faithfulness”

When marriage preparation volunteers talk about faithfulness, will they consider that they should mention an issue that assaults faithfulness and is affecting marriages in epidemic fashion? The use of pornography on the web is a current and very real problem. Do your marriage prep. volunteers know about this issue? Would they be able to speak about it in their programs? The need to stay current with regard to assaults on marriage is essential. If they don’t have the time to read and study in the privacy of their homes, design meetings where you provide the necessary education.

“The Facts about Procreation”

Once we were told the world was overpopulated (it really never was). Now most industrialized nations are below population replacement levels. Numerous countries are encouraging their people to have more children as the balance of young and old has been upended. Despite this reality, many couples who argue against

having a large family often point to “overpopulation.” They don’t know the facts. Marriage prep. volunteers should integrate such information into their programs.

The modern trend to delay having children is hurting many couples. Most people do not realize that a woman’s fertility dramatically drops after age 35. Most couples, in fact, take their fertility for granted - they think it will always be there when they want to get pregnant. They don’t know that they could be setting themselves up for the anguish of infertility - based purely on age. Marriage prep. volunteers need to alert couples to this reality. Equip your teams with factual information so that they can, in turn, educate the engaged and urge them to not delay starting their families.

“Build your House on Stone”

Many sociological studies indicate that the divorce rate drops for those couples who share the same values. In fact, studies show that couples who pray together and attend a religious service together once a week are most likely to have a life-long marriage. The need for prayer and growth in holiness, as a couple, is essential. Training your marriage prep. teams to understand how to encourage couple spirituality is the foundation on which their marriages should be built.

Conclusion

During marriage preparation we want to present to the engaged the best we have to help them to love God, each other and their families. We want the engaged to become vital members of the Church. All of us want to see them succeed in having life-long marriages. In order to provide our best, we must ensure that the programming is consistent and that the people directing it are, too. How can we expect an engaged couple to respond positively to the “guest NFP expert” in a marriage prep. program when they have already bonded with a mentor couple? More than likely, the mentor couple has shared so much with them and in some cases formed a relationship of trust and respect. What happens if the mentor couple is practicing contraception? What if all the marriage team leaders in a program were doing the same?

It is not my intention to tell you to abandon the “NFP expert” - it is vital that the information on the methodology of NFP be addressed by someone knowledgeable. It is, however, my suggestion that the engaged couple hear the same song from all who prepare them for the Sacrament of Marriage. All the elements of the marriage preparation program should compliment each other. All the elements of the marriage preparation program should uphold Church teachings. And, an essential ingredient: all those who lead and/or teach the engaged should be supportive of the Church’s teachings on conjugal love

(Continued on p. 14)

(Continued from p. 13)

and responsible parenthood. The engaged should be serenaded by a chorus of harmonious people singing from the same hymnals!

Stella Kitchen is the director of the STM teacher training program, The Southern Star NFP Program. Stella is the former Associate Director of NFP and marriage preparation for the Diocese of Harrisburg. Stella is available for diocesan NFP program consultation, marriage preparation programming and teacher training. Contact: stella494@hotmail.com.

COORDINATORS' CORNER

NFP and the Diocese of Dallas Marriage Preparation Workshops

Diane Daniels

Church teaching regarding Natural Family Planning (NFP) was incorporated into two of the marriage preparation programs for the Diocese of Dallas over eight years ago. It is incorporated in the Marital Sexuality segment in the Engaged Encounter Weekend and Encuentro para Comprometidos. The parish-based sponsor couple programs, *In Faithful Love* and *Viviendo Su Matrimonio Como Sacramento*, for which the Diocesan Marriage Ministries Office is also responsible, are being revised and updated to include the teaching as well.

The engaged or discerning couples who participate in the workshops are informed that the Catholic Church teaches and believes that couples are co-creators of new life with God and that the Church also believes in responsible parenthood. It is clearly stated that the Church does not endorse all methods of family planning and that any artificial methods are objectively wrong in that they violate natural law and allow the possibility for sin to enter into the lives of the couples.

In addition to the above, all engaged couples are invited to open themselves to the gift that NFP could be in their marriages. Presently, we are blessed with a team of married couples who facilitate this portion of the presentation and practice NFP. The members of the teams speak in a positive and inviting way. They introduce NFP in a non-threatening and pastoral manner with the result that many couples seek more information and enroll in NFP classes. We believe that many of these couples were not open to exploring NFP prior to participating in the weekend.

Most of the Engaged Encounter process is facilitated with a Power Point presentation, NFP included. The Engaged Encounter Weekend is presently being revised and updated, and beginning in 2007, will include a presentation by a Creighton Model System FertilityCare™ practitioner.

The Encuentro Para Comprometidos process includes a video presentation in addition to the witness of a Spanish speaking couple who practice NFP. The video, though an older one, was produced by Couple to Couple League. At this time, Encuentro Para Comprometidos, is being revised and an updated video will be incorporated.

In addition to the personal teaching, witness, and media presentations mentioned, the Diocese of Dallas provides all couples with NFP information and resources.

Diane Daniels is the Director For Marriage Ministries for the Diocese of Dallas. She can be contacted at: 3725 Blackburn Street, P.O. Box 190507, Dallas TX 75219; e-mail, ddaniels@cathedral.org; Tel. 1-214-528-2360.

Of interest . . .

Chastity educators and youth ministers may want to investigate a new group called Singles of the Eucharist (SOTE). SOTE is an Apostolate for unmarried Catholics who love the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. This new apostolate was formed by young Catholic singles who want to be Christ's witnesses as well as to support each other in the Catholic faith. Their primary mission is to provide an organized effort from which to evangelize people about Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist - to be "sentinels of the morning."

A simple but central way SOTE members evangelize is the wearing of an image of the Eucharist. The image is the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance. When people they come in contact with in their daily lives see the image, a conversation can then begin. Christ, who in the Blessed Sacrament can affect the distance between two persons, can draw His children together.

Although SOTE members do not take vows, they do pledge chastity as a sign of their commitment to Christ in the Eucharist and they talk about this important virtue in their work of evangelization. They also hope to assist the Church in educating and inspiring Catholics to approach the Sacrament with a reverent awareness and the same personal love they all share for Jesus in the Eucharist. See: www.SinglesoftheEucharist.org.

News Briefs

Announcements

Gail Quinn, Executive Director of the USCCB's Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, retires on August 31, 2006, after forty years of dedicated service. Gail arrived at the Bishops' Conference shortly after high school. She first worked with Msgr. James T. McHugh in the Family Life Bureau and saw the creation of the Bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities. Gail helped to build the Church's national Pro-Life activities in the United States. Among the many projects which Gail has created, probably the Respect Life Program is the most well known because of its use in the parishes. A major highlight of Gail's service was to represent the Holy See at the United Nations' conferences on population (Cairo, 1994) and on women (Beijing, 1995). Congratulations, Gail, on a job well done! *Contact: prolife@usccb.org; 3211 4th St., NE, Washington, DC 20017.*

Bev Malona, former NFP Coordinator for the Diocese of Buffalo, is asking for your prayers for the health of her husband, John. *Contact: jkonm@worldnet.att.net.*

Kay Ek, Executive Director of BOMA, former NFP Coordinator, Diocese of St. Cloud, has had cancer surgery and is currently recovering. Please pray for Kay's health. *Contact: daveandkay@usfamily.net.*

Henrietta O'Connor, NFP Coordinator, Archdiocese of San Antonio, continues to need prayers while she recovers from cancer surgery. *Contact: roconnor@satx.rr.com.*

Janet Kistler, former diocesan NFP coordinator, Archdiocese of Washington, has moved to Florida. She is available for private consultation on diocesan NFP programming, STM teacher training, and Catholic mar-

riage preparation programming. *Contact: Janet Kistler, 3405 High Cliff Road, Southport, FL 32409; janetkistler@bellsouth.net; 1-850-265-8224.*

Diocese of St. Augustine job opening. Applications are being accepted for the position of Marriage and Family Program Coordinator. Principal responsibilities are administering the diocesan Pre-Cana marriage preparation program and managing and developing the Marriage Sponsor Couple program. Applicants must have at least a BA in theology or equivalent. *Contact: Diocesan Center for Family Life, 1-904-308-7474; or www.dcfli.org/employment.htm.*

The Diocese of San Bernardino held its first NFP teacher training on June 9-13, 2006. The Diocese offered the Billings Ovulation Method to teacher candidates. The training was conducted in both English and Spanish. *Contact: Marie Widmann, Director, NFP, Pro-Life Catholic Ministries, Diocese of San Bernardino, 1-909-393-9498.*

California Association of NFP (CANFP) announced plans to spread the Good News of NFP to the people of the Diocese of San Bernardino by 2008. Over the last several months the CANFP has been working with Pro-Life Ministries of the Diocese of San Bernardino to plan a 2008 NFP study day for priests and deacons, followed by the 2008 annual CANFP statewide conference to be hosted by the diocese. *Contact: CANFP, Sheila St. John, Executive Director, 1-877-33-CANFP; www.canfp.org; or Marie Widmann, Director, NFP, Pro-Life Catholic Ministries, Diocese of San Bernardino, 1-909-393-9498.*

One More Soul, in conjunction with Family of the Americas Foundation, held a four-day OM teacher training program in June and August. Master

Teacher, Janet Bettcher, RN, MSN, provided the training. *Contact: One More Soul, Inc., 1846 North Main Street Dayton, OH 45405; 1-800-307-7685.*

NFP Events

July

July 19-22, the American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals (AAFCP) held its 25th Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Among the presenters were: Thomas Hilgers, MD, Senior Medical Consultant, obstetrics, gynecology, reproductive medicine and surgery, Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction; Joseph Stanford, MD, Assoc. Professor and Researcher, Dept. of Family & Preventive Medicine, University of Utah School of Medicine; Fletcher Doyle, author; and Rev. Richard Hogan, NFP Outreach. *Contact: Becky Knapp RN, BSN, CFCP; President, AAFCP; 24 Terrace Drive; 1515 Clifton, Suite 400, Wichita, KS 67218; 1-316-685-6776; knapphouse1367@aol.com.*

July 23-29, 2006, National NFP Awareness Week.

August

August 11-12, 2006, "Human Fertility-Where Faith and Science Meet," a national conference, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. Co-sponsored by: Diocesan Development Program for NFP, USCCB; Catholic University, School of Philosophy and the School of Theology & Religious Studies; Marquette University, College of Nursing, Institute of NFP; and co-sponsoring the day of science, Georgetown University, Institute for Reproductive Health. The papers from this conference will be published by Marquette University Press. Watch for an e-announcement in Winter 2007. *Contact: nfp@usccb.org.*

(Continued on p. 16)

September

September 22-23, 2006, the Pro-Life Action League hosts "Contraception is Not the Answer," a conference treating the many ways that contraception has harmed society. Among the presenters are: Janet Smith, PhD, Jennifer Roback More, PhD, author of *Smart Sex*, Finding Life-long Love in a Hook-Up World and Damon Clarke Owens, Diocesan NFP Coordinator, Archdiocese of Newark, founder, Joy-Filled Marriage. *Contact: Pro-Life Action League, 6160 N. Cicero Ave., Chicago, IL 60646; 1-773-777-2900; info@prolifeaction.org.*

September 30, 2006, the Diocese of Youngstown, Office of Pro-Life, Marriage & Family Ministry's "NFP Day of Recollection." The day includes contemplative prayer, spiritual talks, celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Mass. *Contact: Daniel Thimons, Office of Pro-Life, Marriage and Family Ministry, Diocese of Youngstown, 1-330-744-8451.*

October

October 2-5, 2006, Billings Ovulation Method Association-USA's teacher training, Minneapolis, MN. *Contact: BOMA-USA, P.O. Box 2135, St. Cloud, MN 56302; 1-615-699-8139; FAX, 1-320-654-6486; e-mail, boma-usa@msn.com.*

October 6-7, 2006, BOMA-USA's national conference, Minneapolis, MN. *Contact: BOMA-USA, P.O. Box 2135, St. Cloud, MN 56302; 1-615-699-8139; FAX, 1-320-654-6486; e-mail, boma-usa@msn.com.*

October 7, 2006, Standish, Maine, Women Affirming Life, Catholic Charities, Family Life Institute, Diocese of Portland and St. Joseph's College co-sponsor the one-day conference, "The New Evangelization: John Paul II's Theology of the Body, Teachings in Life, Love and Human Sexuality." The program features Katrina Zeno and Christopher West. *Contact: Women Affirming Life, 23 Ocean Side Lane, New Harbor, ME 04554; 1-207-878-8871; trheaume@verizon.net.*

November

November 4-11, 2006, FertilityCare™ practitioner training in Fresno, CA. *Contact Katrina, 1-559-435-4700.*

Resources

On-Line Directory of NFP Professionals in California, provided by CANFP. NFP professionals are: teachers, NFP only physicians, NFP only health care providers and NFP knowledgeable clergy. View it at: <http://www.canfp.org/directory.php>. *Contact: CANFP, Sheila St. John, Executive Director, 1-877-33-CANFP.*

Servant Books has available *Natural Family Planning Blessed Our Marriage*, 19 True Stories, by Fletcher Doyle. As the nineteen couples in this book make clear, NFP not only helped them plan their families, it improved their marriages. Many speak of a renewed grace in their lives when they made the switch from contraceptives to NFP. *Contact: Servant Books, 28 W. Liberty Street Cincinnati, OH 45202; 1-800-488-0488.*

New Audio Series by Janet Smith entitled *Sexual Common Sense* includes 11 talks on the Church's teaching on sexuality along with an updated *Contraception: Why Not?* The up-dated version of *Contraception: Why Not?* provides the latest studies on population, divorce, the physiological and psychological effects of hormones while maintaining the

humorous, anecdotal style of the original to show how contraception has contributed to the erosion of Western culture. Among the titles in the new series are: *Reproductive Technologies: Why Not?; The Culture of Life vs. Culture of Death; Overpopulation: the Facts; Theology of the Body: The Nuptial Meaning of Our Bodies; Natural Family Planning: Is it Moral?; Contraception: The History of the Church's Teaching; and The Family: A Path to Holiness.* *Contact: mycatholicfaith.org.*

Villa Maria Guadalupe, an international retreat center of the Knights of Columbus and operated by the Sisters of Life in Stamford, CT, provides a full range of retreats and lectures especially focused on the life issues. The Fall 2006 schedule includes:

September 13, "Evening of Recollection for Married Couples," Rev. Brian Mullady, OP September 23, "Meditations on Love and Justice," Rev. Richard Neuhaus

October 8, "Life and the Role of Virtue," Donald DeMarco, PhD

October 27-29, "The Dignity of Man and Woman," Rev. Francis Martin

Contact: Sisters of Life, Villa Maria Guadalupe, 159 Sky Meadow Dr., Stamford, CT 06903; 1-203-329-1492; www.sisteroflife.org.



NFP Forum

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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.

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