

FORUM

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Marriage: A Communion of Life and Love

A Pastoral Letter – Excerpts

Most Rev. Victor Galeone

Some state legislatures are presently considering bills that would redefine marriage as the stable union of any two adults regardless of gender. Such legislation would equate same-sex unions with traditional marriage. Furthermore, divorces continue to escalate to the point where couples may now get a bona fide divorce online for fees ranging from \$50 to \$300. These latest developments are mere symptoms of a vastly more serious disorder. Until the taproot of that disorder is cut, I fear that we will continue to reap the fruit of failed marriages and worsening sexual behavior at every level of society. The disorder? Contraception. The practice is so widespread that it involves 90% of married couples at some point of their marriage, cutting across all denominational lines. Since one of the chief roles of the bishop is to teach, I invite you to revisit what the Church affirms in this area, and more importantly, why.

God's Plan for Marriage

The vast majority of people today consider contraception a non-issue. So much so that to label it a disorder sounds like a gross exaggeration. And to revisit it seems analogous to studying a treatise from the Flat Earth Society. But contraception is an issue, an absolutely vital issue. To comprehend why it is wrong, it's first necessary to understand what God originally intended marriage to be. In the opening chapters of Genesis we learn that God himself designed marriage for a twofold purpose: to communicate *life and love*.

There are two accounts of creation in the book of Genesis. The first account occurs in chapter one: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). The next verse contains the very first command given by God: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." We thus see that God's first purpose for marriage is that it be *life-giving*. Without the love embrace between husband and wife, human life would cease to exist on this earth. In the second account of creation in Genesis

(Continued on p. 2)

In this issue

we continue our celebration of the 35th anniversary of Humanae vitae.

"Marriage: A Communion of Life and Love" – Excerpts
Most Rev. Victor Galeone 1

2003 Diocesan NFP Ministry National Conference, Phoenix, July 9-12, 2003 4

"*Humanae vitae*: A Theological Watershed," Excerpts
Mark Johnson, Ph.D. 5

"Influencing without Authority"
Andrea Zimmerman, Ed.D. 8

Renewal of Commitment – 35th Anniversary Statement 9

Photo Gallery – 2003 Diocesan NFP Ministry Conference 10

The Situation and Perspectives on the Family – Excerpts 12

BISHOPS TEACH

Humanae vitae, The First 35 Years
Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. 14

NFP Awareness Week – Report 16

COORDINATORS' CORNER

"Thank You Bev!" 18

NEWS BRIEFS 19

(Continued from p. 1)

2, we learn that the other purpose God has for marriage is that it be *love-giving*: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helpmate as his partner" (Gen. 2:18). Yes, God meant husband and wife to be intimate friends, supporting each other in mutual and lasting love. Accordingly, marriage exists to communicate both *life* and *love*.

The two purposes of marriage are so mutually interconnected as to be inseparable. First, recall that Jesus ruled out the possibility of divorce by applying these words to the union of husband and wife: "They are no longer two, but *one* flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let *no one* ever separate" (Mk 10:8,9). In other words, spouses form an *organic* entity, like head and heart—not a *mechanical* one, like lock and key. So the separation of the head or heart from the body—unlike the removal of a key from its lock—entails the death of the organism. So too, with divorce. Likewise, it was God who also combined the love-giving and the life-giving aspects of marriage in one and the same act. Therefore, we can no more separate through *contraception* what God joined together in the marital act than we can separate through *divorce* what God joined together in the marriage union itself.¹

The Body Language of Marital Love

.... According to Pope John Paul II, God designed married love to be expressed in a special language—the body language of the sexual act.²

...[W]e have been created in the image and likeness of God! Jesus revealed God's inner life to us as a Trinity of persons. Accordingly, the body language of the marital union between husband and wife must reflect God's own inner life, namely, the mutual love between the Father and the Son,

which is the person of the Holy Spirit. From the first page to the last, the Bible is a love story. It begins in Genesis with the marriage of Adam and Eve and it ends in the Book of Revelation with the wedding feast of the Lamb—the marriage of Christ and his Bride, the Church. From all eternity God craves to give himself to us in marriage. No one expressed that fact more graphically than the prophet Isaiah:

As a young man marries a maiden,
so will your Maker marry you.
As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
so will your God rejoice over you. (Isaiah 62:5)

St. Paul embellished this theme when he wrote, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25). How did Christ give himself up for the Church? Totally—to the last drop of his blood! He held nothing back. If husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved, can they hold anything back? Not even their fertility?

Contraception: Telling Lies with Our Bodies

Since God fashioned our bodies male and female to communicate both life and love, every time that husband and wife deliberately frustrate this twofold purpose through contraception, they are acting out a lie. The body language of the marital act says, "I'm *all yours*," but the contraceptive device adds, "*except for my fertility*." So in actual fact, they are lying to each other with their bodies. Even worse, they are tacitly usurping the role of God. By thwarting the purpose of the marital love embrace, they are telling God, "You may have designed our bodies to help you transmit life to an immortal soul, but you made a mis-

take—a mistake we intend to correct. You may be Lord of our lives—but not of our fertility."

Thirty-five years ago ... Pope Paul VI said essentially the same thing when he issued his encyclical *Humanae vitae*:

There is an inseparable link between the two meanings of the marriage act: the unitive meaning (*love-giving*) and the procreative meaning (*life-giving*). This connection was established by God himself, and man is not permitted to break it on his own initiative. (no. 12)

Pope Paul went on to condemn every form of contraception as being unworthy of the dignity of the human person. A tidal wave of angry dissent erupted over this teaching.... But the Holy Father was merely restating the unbroken teaching of the Church from the beginning, upheld by all Christian denominations until the Anglican Church made the first break at the Lambeth Conference of 1930. In substance—though not expressed in these exact words—he was declaring: It is not right for man to separate what God has joined together. Attempting to do so would enshrine man in the place of God, and unleash a series of unspeakable evils on society.

Many scoffed at the dire consequences that Pope Paul predicted if the use of contraception escalated. Among his predictions were:

- 1) increased marital infidelity;
- 2) a general lowering of morality, especially among the young;
- 3) husbands viewing their wives as mere sex objects; and
- 4) governments forcing massive birth control programs on their people.

Thirty-five years later the moral landscape is strewn with the following stark reality:

- 1) The divorce rate has more than tripled.
- 2) The number of sexually transmitted diseases has expanded from six to fifty.
- 3) Pornography grosses more than all the receipts from professional sports and legitimate entertainment combined.
- 4) Sterilization is forced on unsuspecting women in third world countries, with China's one-child-per-couple policy in the vanguard. Today, even critics of *Humanae vitae* admit that its teaching was prophetic....

NFP: Speaking the Truth with Our Bodies

...A letter I received from a young father last year is characteristic of many others:

Early in our marriage, Jan and I used artificial contraception like everybody else. Today's culture was telling us that this was the normal thing to do. We knew the 'official' Church teaching was against it, but we were not taught why. We even had priests tell us that it was a personal decision; so if we felt the need to use contraception, it was okay. But couples need to be taught why contraception is wrong. We were never taught that the Pill is an abortifacient that can possibly abort a (newly conceived) child without us knowing it. We were not taught that artificial birth control is a hindrance to building a healthy marriage. We did not know that there is a healthier, Church-approved alternative to artificial birth control.

While contraception is always wrong, there is a morally acceptable way for married couples to space their children—Natural Family Planning

(NFP). Couples may regulate births by abstaining from the marital act during the wife's fertile period. NFP instructors teach couples how to identify the fertile days

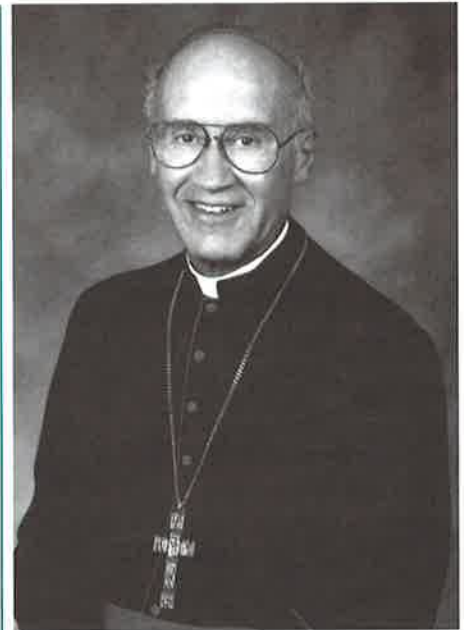
In closing, I would like to quote from an article by Roberta Roane that appeared in the *National Catholic Reporter*.

She began by asserting:

Yes, I was alive and fertile in 1968. I was 19 and I *knew* the Pill was a gift from God and *Humanae vitae* was a real crock. Finally, my husband and I reached a turning point. At a very low point in our marriage, we met some great people who urged us to really give our lives to the Lord and be chaste in our marriage.

That blew our minds. We thought it meant 'give up sex.' That's not what it means. It means respecting bodily union as a sacred act. It meant acting like a couple in love, a couple in awe, not a couple of cats in heat. For my husband and me, it meant NFP...and I won't kid you, it was a difficult discipleship. NFP and a chaste attitude toward sex in marriage opened up a new world for us. It bonded my husband and me in a way that is so deep, so strong, that it's hard to describe. Sometimes it's difficult, but that makes us even closer. We revere each other. And when we do come together, we're like honeymooners.

Sad to say, I was past 35 when I finally realized that the Church was right after all. Not the grab-your-sincerity-and-slide Church ... but ... the Catholic Church. The Church is right about contraception ... right about marriage ... right about human happiness It gave us depth. It opened our hearts to love.³



Roberta Roane is merely echoing what St. Paul said many centuries ago: "Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. You were bought at a great price. Therefore, glorify God with your body!" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20)

End Notes

1. John F. Kippley develops this theme in *Birth Control and Christian Discipleship*, Couple to Couple League, Cincinnati, 1994.
2. Pope John Paul II. Wednesday Audience, March 5, 1980.
3. *National Catholic Reporter*, Oct. 31, 1986.

Most Rev. Victor Galeone is Bishop of St. Augustine. He also serves as Episcopal Consultant for NFP to the Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities. A complete copy of this pastoral can be obtained from One More Soul, 1-800-307-7685.

National Conference 2003 Diocesan NFP Ministry

Phoenix, July 9-12

The Sahuaro cactus begins life from the size of a poppy seed and lives to be hundreds of years old. They don't even develop an arm until they are at least 60 years old. That reminded me of our modern NFP movement—we're not old enough to develop arms yet, but as we stay alive (and faithful) we will last long enough to grow our arms and grow taller. the cactus can go up to two years without water and sometimes it also seems like a long drought in the NFP desert. But, we learn how to use the little we have to our best advantage. That was a good visual image for me to keep persevering (after all, it's against our religion to be pessimistic).

Cecilia LeChevallier, NFP Coordinator, Diocese of Camden

The above quote aptly reflects the spirit of the Diocesan NFP Ministry National Conference. The purpose of the conference was to provide time for continuing education, networking, rest and retreat. These conferences have been held biennially since 1983.

The setting for the 2003 conference could not have been more appropriate—the desert of Phoenix. Over the ages, the desert has become a symbol in the life of the Church for putting all distractions aside as one searches for God. Our Lord himself set the tone at the beginning of his public ministry when he went into the desert to pray right after his baptism. Our gathering place was not, of course, as austere but our intent was the same. Diocesan NFP coordinators, teachers and NFP leaders came together to focus on NFP ministry through learning new information, visiting with old friends, and making new ones, and seeking refreshment in mind, body and soul. An important feature of this conference was the retreat-like atmosphere with daily

Mass and a Eucharistic chapel for silent prayer in the evenings.

The theme of the conference was "The Continuing Importance of The Encyclical *Humanae vitae* on its Thirty-Fifth Anniversary." Conference sessions began with Mark Johnson, Ph.D., Marquette University, speaking on the encyclical as "A Theological Watershed" (see p. 5). Dr. Johnson's theological insights and infectious humor provided a dynamic beginning to the conference. Helen Alvaré, Esq., Columbus School of Law, Catholic University of America, examined the sociological and legal elements of the current cultural problems of premarital sex, cohabitation and divorce. The editor of *Current Medical Research*, Richard Fehring, DNSc, RN, College of Nursing, Marquette University, offered a review of the last five years of NFP research (see *Current Medical Research*, Summer/Fall 2003 Special Edition). The first day was capped off with round table discussions on a variety of topics including: "The Future of Diocesan NFP Ministry"; "Edu-

ating the Health Care Professional"; "NFP Intros. and Marriage Prep."; and "Chastity Programs – what can be done on a shoe-string budget."

Day two opened with a presentation entitled, "The Pope, The Pill and The Theology of the Body," given by John Grabowski, Ph.D., Catholic University of America. Richard Doerflinger, Deputy Director, Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, USCCB, next spoke on cloning and embryo research. A working lunch with mouth-watering Southwestern food, had conference participants listening to what was new in NFP methodology and resources. Representatives of the various NFP Approved teacher training programs took part in the panel. The entire afternoon was filled with a workshop called, "Influencing Without Authority." Educator, corporate trainer and program designer Andrea Zimmerman, Ed.D., led the participants in a variety of activities to examine how to communicate more effectively (see p. 8). Finally, Most Rev. Victor Galeone, Bishop of St. Augustine, ended the



conference on Saturday with a stirring talk on "*Humanae vitae*—Bedrock for the Future." At the end of each day throughout the conference, Rev. Kurt Pritzl, O.P., Dean of the School of Philosophy, Catholic University of America, offered a spiritual reflection and led participants in prayer. A group trip to Sedona, land of the "red rocks" was a fitting end to the conference. (Some participants stayed on to visit the Grand Canyon on Sunday before heading home.)

The one-hundred and twenty participants were enthusiastic with their evaluations. "This was the best conference that I have ever attended!" said most. Overwhelmingly, conference participants appreciated the high level of presentations. Solid suggestions were offered about how to improve the organization of round table discussions in the future. Many good suggestions of topics for skills building workshops for 2005's agenda were also given. Everyone was especially grateful to Bishop Galeone who blessed the conference with his love and shepherding.

Conference tapes are available for purchase. Contact: AVER Assoc., 410-796-8940; FAX, 410-796-8962; E-mail, avertapes@aol.com.

Humanae vitae: A Theological Watershed

Excerpts from the Keynote Address, Diocesan NFP Ministry Conference

Mark Johnson, Ph.D.

The readings from Mass this past Sunday (14th Sunday in ordinary time) all touch upon the lot of the prophet. And each of the readings — Ezekiel (2:2-5), Paul (2 Cor. 12:7-10) and Mark (6:1-6) — present a two-fold message. First, the prophet is in for a tough time, and second, the prophet takes consolation from doing the work of God. I believe that this two-fold message applies to you here, and to the work that you do. For indeed the prophet is not accepted in his own country, and among his own people, for the very good reason that prophets are sent to correct, and to correct in matters of great importance. I believe that the work you do is in fact a corrective to our culture's attitudes on sexuality. And I also believe that your message is not the thunderous proclamation of an early Isaiah or of a Jeremiah; it is rather a quiet argument, the compassionate argument, of a Hosea.

In Our Own Country

Some points to ponder about sexuality today in America and about how we Catholics relate to it. Do you remember in the spring and early summer of 2002 we American Catholics, especially lay Catholics, were doing a lot of finger-pointing towards our bishops and cardinals for their many failures in the sexual abuse scandals? Us versus them, because it had been them versus us — or our children. Now this is understandable, of course, because of the justified anger at the violation of any number of bonds that

tie the Christian community together. But perhaps there were questions that we Catholics didn't ask during those particularly cloudy days As a watcher of TV and of movies, and as someone who speaks regularly with students about attitudes about sexuality and marriage, and as someone who simply observes our fellow-Catholics getting married and divorced and remarried, I'm struck by how, in our attitudes and behaviors, we Catholics are increasingly indistinguishable from our larger American culture on issues of marriage and sexuality. We consume the same entertainment, and are targeted by advertising, I would dare say, in a way that makes no reference to our faith and our faith's teachings. Not that they have to. And the point that I made to colleagues during the scandal was that, maybe in a certain sense, even the Catholic laity has a share in the blame that has been directed towards our pastors, because by our inability to live our Catholic sexuality we help to sustain a highly-sexualized and titillated culture that makes it exceedingly hard if not impossible to cultivate the virtues of chastity — which we should all have — in order to support the virtue of celibacy — which is central to the lives of priests and religious. If our own attitudes and behavior is just like whatever else is going on out there ... then should we really be surprised at *any* Catholic's sexual weakness? Are we Catholics too comfortable in our American culture? Or should we recognize that we

(Continued on p. 6)

(Continued from p. 5)

will always be somewhat foreigners in our own land?

In addition to the punishing social influences, we recently have legal challenges that will surely have an impact upon public thinking regarding sexuality, the ability of Catholic and other religious institutions to function within the legal strictures of our justice system, and the pedagogical effect of criminal and civil law (in other words, law teaches). The recent US Supreme Court case, *Lawrence v. Texas*, in which the Supreme Court overturned a Texas law regarding sodomy will quite likely, by the force of its logic, reshape our public discussion and description of human sexuality and of marriage. The right to privacy that is determined to exist in the 14th Amendment (and elsewhere) has emerged as the primary determinant of legality in sexual matters in our country.

The right to privacy was first applied in the 1965 Supreme Court case *Griswold v. Connecticut*, where the government's intrusion into the sexual lives of its citizens was restrained because the allowance of contraceptives was seen to be protective in some way of marriage. Now, Catholics might disagree with this — indeed, my choice paragraph 17 of *Humanae vitae* does disagree — but it is interesting to note that this right was first applied by the Court relative to a traditional, presumably fertile marriage, in order to protect the viability of that institution; in other words, the right to privacy was contextual and conditioned by its relationship to an essential social institution. It was in 1972 that the notion was applied more widely, in *Eisenstadt v. Baird*, which explicitly allowed contraceptives to be sold to unmarried persons, on the grounds that “the constitutionally protected right of privacy inheres in the individual,” (*Eisenstadt v. Baird* 405 U.S. 438) and it was applied most famously in the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* case, which allowed for

abortion — the common thread being, in these last two cases, that the government's protection of individual liberties in these matters is no longer tied to an institution, such as marriage, but instead resides with the individual person, or to persons who consent, choose, to do something together. Four years later, in *Carey v. Population Services Int'l*, the Court overturned a New York State law that had prohibited the sale of contraceptives to persons under the age of sixteen. Against this forward movement to ever-increasing private autonomy, the Court in 1986's *Bowers v. Hardwick* decided not to establish a fundamental, constitutional right to consensual homosexual activity. But the recent *Lawrence v. Texas* presented a challenge that made it an excellent test case for those interested in supporting gay rights.

The Texas law in question had to do with sodomy, but interestingly it did not ban such behavior altogether, but only between members of the same sex. It therefore directly discriminated against homosexuals as a group. And to do this was to invite a court challenge. The *Lawrence v. Texas* decision not only turned over the Texas law that had been the reason for the challenge, but it also overturned 1986's *Bowers v. Hardwick*, based on the notion that one's decisions about using one's sexuality is a private choice and that, “the Texas statute furthers no legitimate state interest which can justify its intrusion into the personal and private life of the individual” (Supreme Court of The United States, *Lawrence v. Texas* [No. 02-102]). Again the right to privacy had been the overarching principle used to measure the State of Texas's law, and since the plaintiffs in this case had given consent to engage in certain acts — meaning, therefore, that there had been no coercion, no violence — then legislatures were told henceforth simply to stay out of these things.

There are many things that are striking about the ruling, especially from the perspective of legal thinking. From the perspective of legal reasoning one notes that Supreme Court justices make their decisions knowing that their principles and logic will be used by lower courts and state and federal legislatures to fashion and evaluate new law. And once we establish that a person's freely choosing to engage in certain sexual activities is the sole, automatic determinant of its being a constitutionally protected act, we may then understandably ask about all instances in which individuals freely consent to engage in diverse sexual activities. How is polygamy not protected if the husband and his seven wives consent? What about consensual incest? The conservative columnist George Will wonders whether lap-dancing in strip clubs is now a constitutionally-protected act (“Lap Dancing on the Constitution” *The Washington Post*, June 27, 2003, p. A29). For that matter, since the Supreme Court has wisely not ruled for us what are the legitimate conditions for consent, what if two individuals decide to condition their sexual activity on the exchange of money, as happens in prostitution? Today Nevada, and tomorrow the whole country. And what about gay marriage? After all, marriage is legally to be understood as a lasting bond between two individuals that is not strictly related to the having and rearing of children, and is eminently dissoluble Yet if this is the way marriage is understood, and if two gays or lesbians freely wish to have such a lasting bond and the legal and financial protection it provides, and the law nonetheless denies it to them because they are of the same sex, then it sounds like this Texas case all over again, and will surely be judged by the courts as such. The right to privacy, which surely has some small claim to constitutionality, has become a jurisprudential juggernaut.

Now one of the very best features of our Catholic faith is that we are forbidden by God from being pessimists; however bleak things may look to us regarding our culture's and legal system's attitude towards marriage and human sexuality, we must remember that we are the children of a God who took the utter defeat of Christ's cross on Good Friday and converted it to his Empty Tomb on Easter Sunday. There is always hope and the recourse to prayer. But as St. Augustine reminds us, we should pray as though everything depends upon God, but behave as though everything depends upon us ourselves — which means that, at the very least, we need to see things clearly, and for what they are. The recent and quite possibly inevitable developments in American thinking on human sexuality place before us one model of the human sexual person, a model that includes almost any kind of sexual practice, provided that the individuals involved choose to participate. There need be no relationship to children or perpetuity; indeed, even if children are present, that need be no hindrance to ending the relationship at all. Sexual atoms, bumping, bonding, breaking apart.

We Catholics are in possession of the only real alternative view on human sexuality, which stands in sharp contrast at almost every point to the American view. Indeed, at times I am tempted to think that, as the American model of sexuality evolves, there will really only be two models, America's and ours.And with that said, I turn finally and directly to you, our NFP Coordinators, my "prophets with a quiet argument."

You see that times have really changed, and the arguments that worked for me twenty years ago when I was in college, are increasingly less likely to sway people in a culture where academics, peers, media, and the courts, deny the very basis upon



which our Catholic morality is based. For if our vision of human conduct does not start with our stable human natures and "faithfulness to God's design." (HV,13), but instead roots our moral and legal system in the shifting sands of human conventions, appetites and preferences, then it is practically impossible to make convincing arguments on such fundamental matters as marriage and sexuality. Our country and our culture will simply be governed by those who possess power, instead of those who convince us by their reason, and we will turn to concentrated sources of power, like the Supreme Court, to set the moral compass of the nation — which is why the next Supreme Court nomination process will have all the décor of a WWF Smack Down. Might may not make right, but it *will* call the shots.

As I was writing these words, I was struck by how our situation is like that of the early Christians in the city of Rome. All around us, as all around them, everything seems to be working just fine. The water and electricity are running, planes take off and land, taxes are being collected, the courts are doing their business with juries rendering verdicts and other courts and the Supreme Court handing down decisions. The Houses of Congress meet and pass legislation. The violent overthrow of the United States government has not taken place. The Oscars. The Emmys. Everything seems to be humming along just fine. And yet it seems empty, somehow. Doesn't that seem just like first century Rome en-

countered by this funny little band of people — Jews and Gentiles who subscribed to the teaching of a Galilean criminal named Jesus? Rome was powerful, and was the glory of the world, its citizens would tell you. Look at its mighty buildings, its great infrastructure. Be impressed with its legal system. On and on. And yet it seemed empty, somehow, at least to the Christians who lived there, quietly converting their neighbors to "the Way," knowing all along that they and their beliefs were social outcasts, and that, under just the right circumstances, they themselves were criminals, as was the Lord, such that they could suffer his fate, too. "The blood of the martyrs," Tertullian said, "became the seeds of our faith."

Please God, it will not be the same for us in our country, where we live increasingly as outsiders. But we will suffer socially for being out-of-step, not part of the mainstream. And as these changes gain legal force, we will be pressured to change our ways. For that, all faithful Catholics will be as were the early Christians, if not martyrs, then apostles and confessors. But in my heart of hearts I believe that you teachers of NFP are as prophets, being sent into the midst of our culture by your commitment to God and his Church, to teach another way of thinking about ourselves as sexual beings. Where our culture and our law teaches about sex as private self-fulfillment, you teach about sex as other-oriented; indeed, you teach about sex as so other-oriented that it requires a formal lasting, indeed perpetual bond

(Continued on p. 12)

During the July Conference, participants were treated to a skills building workshop on influencing others. Following is a summary of the basic concepts that were discussed.

Definition of Influencing Others

The ability to consistently gain support for views and opinions, and to achieve goals through the work of others.

People with this competency know how to make others listen and persuade them to act in a desired way to reach desired goals. People with this competency are often storytellers—they can easily gain the attention of others and impart something to them in a way they want to hear it. They can take people who know nothing about a subject, get them interested and gain their support.

Five Propaganda Techniques to Influence Others via Advertisements

Bandwagon- Persuading people to do something by letting them know others are doing it.

Testimonial - Using the words of a famous person to persuade another.

Transfer - Using the names or pictures of famous people, but not direct quotes.

Repetition - The product name is repeated at least four times.

Emotional Words - Words that will make you feel strongly about someone or something.

Suggested Practices for Influencing Others

- Prior to presenting an argument
- Organize the points you would like to make.
- Create and utilize an outline when making your presentation.
- Create a clear, concise, and well thought out argument.

When preparing an argument—examine the hard evidence

- Gather the facts, and figures, gain support for your assertions.
- Presenting accurate data is always valuable when attempting to influence others.

Learn about the person or group you are trying to influence

- Observe how they interact with others.
- Note their interests, how they decorate their office/home. Do they have a screen saver? What is it? These hints will help you to learn more about how you might connect with them.

Resistance from an individual/group

- Take a day or two and reframe your view.
- Think about a different way to present your same idea. If you had previously used emotion as the basis for presenting your view/idea, return to the person or group with an unemotional, well-reasoned appeal for why they should support your view/idea.

Develop practical, simple, and non-technical examples

- Know your audience and present examples that are understood by your audience.

Familiarize yourself with the concerns of the individual/group you are working with

- Identify what sources of data would be most influential when attempting to persuade them and use it when presenting your ideas.

Build relationships with influential people inside and outside your diocese/ministry

- You can use their leverage and reputation to support your position.
- Create a network of select individuals that you can rely on to really get behind you and your ideas.
- Think ahead to identify who will be most important in supporting your ideas or initiatives, and create a calendar that prioritizes individual contacts and when you need to communicate with them in order to make your plans a reality.

What to do when you have difficulty seeing the value of another's/group's point of view/idea

- Try reversing sides and coming up with ideas that support the person's/group's position.

Renewal of Commitment on the 35th Anniversary of *Humanae vitae*

Ten years ago, on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of *Humanae vitae*, at the time of the International *Humanae vitae* Conference in Omaha, a group of Natural Family Planning providers from the various non-diocesan national organizations met. Following that meeting, a letter was drafted expressing the providers' unity in the desire to assist the bishops in promoting and providing NFP services. Past president of the American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals (AAFCP), Donna Vondrak, had been instrumental in this effort.

Following Mrs. Vondrak's example, on the occasion of the 35th Anniversary of *Humanae vitae*, a "Renewal of Commitment" statement developed through the AAFCP, has been created and signed by several NFP providers and promoters to celebrate Catholic teaching on life and love and to express their renewed commitment to the bishops.

RENEWAL OF OUR COMMITMENT TO ACTUALIZE THE VISION OF *HUMANAE VITAE* THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF NATURAL MEANS OF REGULATING BIRTH

To the Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States of America on the Occasion of the 35th Anniversary of *Humanae vitae*,

Whereas the Christian vision recognizes that the human person is made in the image and likeness of God, and thus capable of personal loving communion;

Whereas marriage, wisely instituted by the Creator, calls man and woman to live as a communion of persons in the Lord and to collaborate with Him in the begetting and raising of new human life;

Whereas conjugal love, expressed in the mutual, total, self-giving of husband and wife, mirrors the love of God in its totality, fidelity and fruitfulness;

Whereas the conjugal act possesses both a unitive and procreative meaning inseparably connected according to God's design;

Whereas fertility with its procreative potential is part of the human person and part of the total self-gift of spouses to one another in every act of conjugal union;

Whereas the exercise of responsible parenthood requires that spouses know and respect the phases of their fertility, acquire the virtue of marital chastity through the practice of periodic continence, properly form their consciences, and humbly submit their procreative plans to God;

Whereas natural methods of regulating fertility (applied as means of achieving or avoiding pregnancy) maintain total self-giving in each conjugal act and enrich and strengthen the union of spouses by fostering dialogue, mutual respect, shared responsibility and self-control;

Whereas these same natural methods of regulating fertility promote and preserve the bodily health and well-being of husband and wife and can be of great assistance in evaluating and treating infertility and other women's maladies, always safeguarding human life from the moment of conception;

Whereas the practice of natural family planning endows parents with the capacity to cultivate chastity in their children;

Whereas the flourishing of human civilization depends on the stability and vitality of the family, which springs from marriage and is the primary unit of every society;

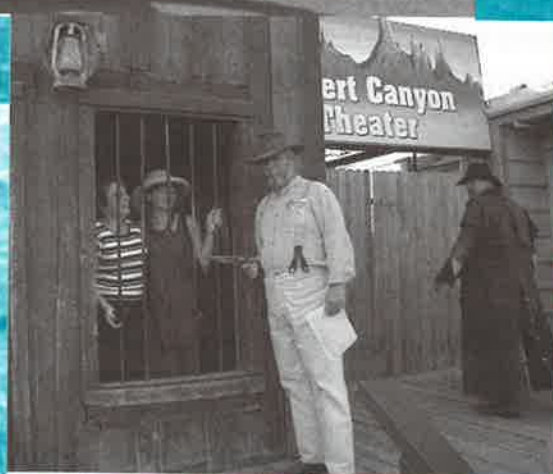
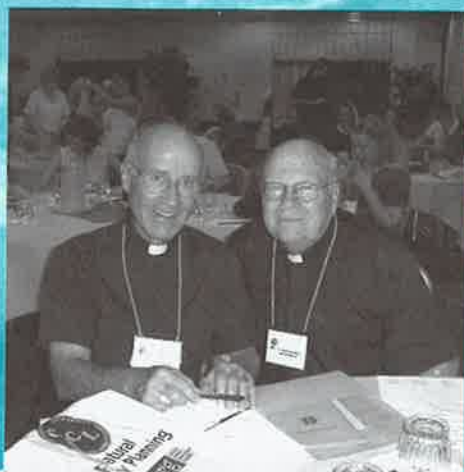
Therefore, on this occasion of the thirty-fifth anniversary of Pope Paul VI's encyclical letter *Humanae vitae*, as leaders and promoters of the various natural methods of regulating fertility, we state that we are united in our efforts to embrace and actualize the vision of *Humanae vitae* on conjugal love and natural means of regulating birth. We are united in providing engaged and married couples with the practical help needed in order that they may live out their marriage covenant with full respect for each other and the Author of marriage.

Recalling that Pope Paul VI invited his brother bishops to "work ardently and incessantly for the safeguarding and the holiness of marriage, so that it may always be lived in its entire human and Christian fullness," we support you in the realization of this great task of building the civilization of life and love.

Respectfully submitted to the Catholic Bishops of the United States of America in July 2003 on the 35th anniversary of the proclamation of *Humanae vitae* by Pope Paul VI.

Leslie A. Chorun, M.D., President, American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals • Sue Ek, Executive Director, Billings Ovulation Method Association, U.S.A. • Richard J. Fehring, DNSc, R.N., Director, Marquette University Institute for NFP • Rose Fuller, M.T.S., Executive Director, Northwest Family Services • Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D., President, FertilityCare™ Centers of America • Andrew B. Alderson, Executive Director, Couple to Couple League • Steve Koob, Director, One More Soul • Rev. Daniel McCaffrey, S.T.D., President, Natural Family Planning Outreach • Mercedes Wilson, President, Family of the Americas Foundation

2003 Photo Gallery



Diocesan NFP



National Conference

(Continued from p. 7)

with another — which of course we call “marriage,” that bond that produces other persons. Yet your teaching may well go unnoticed by most people. It is not “in your face.” It does not begin with the dazzling idea that subscribing to Church teaching on sex and marriage will make you lose weight, be famous, or rich. It is not nasty or mean. The virtues upon which NFP depends — reverence for God, respect for one’s spouse, fidelity, self-restraint, chastity, courage — are not in the vocabulary list of our culture. Yet you, through passing on the truth and technique of NFP, will help to inculcate in young married couples the virtues that will lead to their growth in holiness, the production of happy and stable households, and through that, a stronger environment in which to bring up the next generation of the saints of God. You are the bearers of the message of God, in the profound hope that those who receive it will live it, and in turn, pass it on to others, who receive it and live it, on and on.

My trust — our trust — is that, if all goes well, through your efforts and the blessing of God, our culture may someday be stunned by a recognition that it has been converted to a true understanding of sexuality, much like that stupefying morning in the late third-century when the Roman Empire woke up to find out that, after all these crucifixions, persecutions and suppressions of Christians it was now...Christian! I close therefore not with some sage or tidy “take-home” message, for it is you who are bearers of the message, who hand it on, often unnoticed. I close instead saying what I should say: thank you, for your commitment and efforts, and may God bless you and keep your work close to his heart, always.

Mark Johnson is Associate Professor of Theology at Marquette University. A tape of this talk, as well as others, can be obtained from AVER Assoc., 410-796-8940; FAX, 410-796-8962; E-mail, avertapes@aol.com.

The Situation and Perspectives on the Family

From September 1 - 5, 2002 a meeting was held in Santo Domingo on *The Situation and Perspectives on the Family and Family and Life in America*. The meeting was convened by the Pontifical Council for the Family, the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, and the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM). It involved the presidents of episcopal conferences in America. Bishop William S. Skylstad represented the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The participants of the meeting, which included some married couples and university professors, studied laws and problems concerning the family and life on the Continent in the context of cultural globalization. Two documents were produced at this meeting: *The Santo Domingo Declaration* and a *Report of Pastoral Conclusions*. Both documents urge support for pro-family policies and vigilance as well as vigorous effort to combat threats to the family.

The following are excerpts from the Santo Domingo Declaration:

I. The Situation of the Family

1. In many nations, the truth about the family is threatened as a natural institution Furthermore . . . it might be said that there is an intention to dismantle . . . the structure of the family based on marriage.
2. Using subtle instruments of intellectual and juridical manipulation and ambiguous terminology, a mentality is spreading . . . which under the pretext of progress and modernity, is destroying the basic principles and values of marriage and the family. The loving, reciprocal, human self-giving of the spouses for life, marital fidelity, exclusivity and fruitfulness . . . are made relative and presented as if they were only the result of external agreements and social statistics that are changeable according to the circumstances.
3. [Concern is expressed that the] . . . sovereignty and culture of our peoples will be violated and that a response will not be given to the deep . . . aspirations of our people to see the family protected

II. The Truth about Family and Life

4. [Family is described as the] . . . sanctuary of life and the first and most profound school of love and tenderness
5. A healthy society and culture are reflected in and sustained by the health of the family. . . . The future of humanity will not be possible without

recognition and respect for the values of the natural institution of the family.

Those who have in their hands and are responsible in a certain way for the future of our peoples must be the guardians and promoters of the family and life because their protection is the responsibility of the whole society [especially those in politics].

6. The family based on the free, binding marriage of a husband and wife is, by its very nature, the basic cell of society and the patrimony of humanity
7. We are deeply saddened by the presumption to give legal recognition – with the juridical effects that the tradition of peoples has only applied to marriage . . . to so-called “de facto unions,” It is all the more disturbing when this presumption refers to persons of the same sex. It is inadmissible to let unions of homosexuals and lesbians pass for a legitimate union and even as “marriage,” including their presumed right to adopt children To recognize these other kinds of unions and make them equivalent to the family is to discriminate against and attack the family.
8. The family and life go together. For this reason any lack of recognition and attacks on the family are attacks on life we wish to reaffirm the sacredness of the human person from conception until natural death. Science cannot set itself up as the exclusive criterion on the margin of ethical principles because this would jeopardize the person and society.
9. [Treats humanity’s trend of striving to “be God.” Denunciation of abortion.]
10. The extreme poverty of the great majority of the families on our Continent implores our help. Unbridled capitalism and market dictatorship are causing ever greater inequality among people
11. It is not true that the increase in the number of human beings is the cause of poverty and misery. We know that these are the product of the prevailing injustice which brings about the greater enrichment of the rich and the further impoverishment of the poor In this context, the principal victim is the family

III. The Need to Act

12. By virtue of the very meaning of laws for the sake of the common good, politicians and lawmakers, and not only Catholics, are asked to not give their votes to unjust legislative bills. We urge them to seek creative initiatives in favor of the family and life which, as far as possible, will take the concrete form of organic, positive legislation.
13. In the face of a growing pro-divorce mentality, the Holy Father . . . asks for a coherent attitude and even conscientious objection to unjust laws which, being unjust, are not binding
14. In the name of Jesus Christ . . . we proclaim the Gospel of life

MARKETING CAMPAIGN PROMOTING NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC LAUNCHED BY THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WICHITA NFP OFFICE

(WICHITA, KS) - Promoting Natural Family Planning (NFP) as a healthier and more loving method of family planning, the Catholic Diocese of Wichita NFP office will launch a multi-media campaign in the month of September. Judith Leonard, director of the diocesan office for Natural Family Planning, says the campaign is designed to create awareness and test acceptance of the NFP message for future advertising efforts.

Leonard said that outdoor boards will be posted along Wichita area thoroughfares and that radio commercials will air beginning Sept. 22 promoting the message: 99% Effective. 100% Natural. Your body knows™.

The radio commercials will run on 15 local stations and will be translated into Spanish for airing on a local Spanish station. The current campaign is scheduled to run for three months with follow-up campaigns to be determined. Watch for a report in a future edition of the Forum.

Contact: Judith Leonard, Natural Family Planning; 316-685-6776; or Mercedes Arzú Wilson; Family of the Americas; 301-627-3346.

BISHOPS TEACH

Humanae vitae: The First 35 Years

Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

If you pick up a copy of this month's *Wired* magazine, you may want to read the sad story of the businessman who owns the web site, sex.com. You see, when he took over the site, he assumed it would be a money machine. About half of all web sites around the world are porn-related, and thanks to credit-card encryption, some are very lucrative.

Encryption means that anyone with a credit card and a fast internet connection can log on and buy 10 or 20 or 60 minutes of live pornography. And he can feel quite safe - or anyway, pretty safe - that his credit-card number will remain private.

Of course, as more people use encryption, the price has dropped. And because the internet is decentralized, and web cameras are now very cheap, anybody, anywhere, can open a live pornography site. Thousands of college students and married couples have done exactly that, to add a little extra cushion to their income.

So now the owner of sex.com has millions of competitors, and it puts him under a lot of financial pressure. At the beginning of the *Wired* story, he tells the reporter that he's "judgmental" about bestiality — that's the word he uses, judgmental — so he doesn't allow it on his web site. But by the end of the story, competition forces him to adjust his principles, and he links sex.com to a variety of bestiality sites.

In 1969, less than a year after Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae vitae*, the government started a little program called ARPANET. ARPANET was an acronym. It stood for a computer-networking experiment, sponsored by the Ad-

vanced Research Projects Agency in the Department of Defense. You see, up until that time, the computer industry thought about computers as very fast arithmetic machines: one plus one, equals two; two plus two, equals four. The government wanted to try something new. It wanted to test computers as networks that would crunch information geometrically and logarithmically. It wanted to see how fast the big research centers like Stanford and Princeton could share their knowledge. And it also wanted to find a way to spread out the nation's "command and control" abilities so that a nuclear attack wouldn't wipe out our leadership in one strike.

That was the idea behind ARPANET. ARPANET became the internet. And 35 years later, we have e-mail and videoconferencing and on-line libraries. And we also have sex.com and a million other hard-core porn web sites exactly like it, or worse.

This helps us understand what the scholar Edward Tenner meant when he said that technology has the habit of biting back. It always takes a revenge in unintended consequences. We're never as smart as we think we are. Gutenberg created the printing press to distribute good Catholic art. Luther used it to drive the Protestant Reformation. We invented automobiles to move us around more quickly. And they do. But we also got super-highways, noise pollution and a hole in the ozone as part of the deal.

We created the birth-control pill to space the children within a marriage more "rationally." What we got was a crashing birth rate, gender confusion,

wrecked families and marriages, and a circus of sexual dysfunctions.

We're never as smart as we think we are — and we're rarely as humble as we need to be. And I think the genius of the encyclical *Humanae vitae* is that Paul VI understood this problem earlier than anyone; he had the courage to name it; and he had the love and the hope to call us back to our real identity as Christians - to the vocation of cooperating with God in the creation of new life that renews the face of the earth.

I reread *Humanae vitae* every couple of years. And sometimes I smile, because it clearly wasn't written by an American. The English translation begins by talking about "the most serious duty of transmitting human life." Most of the young people whose marriages I witness don't experience their love as a "duty." Getting married is a vocation, so it does have very serious responsibilities, but it isn't like getting drafted into the army. Young people fall in love, they lose themselves in each other, and they see children as a fruit of that love.

Married love is an enormous joy, and sometimes theologians and scholars can forget that when they talk about these issues. But *Humanae vitae* doesn't need to read perfectly. It only needs to be beautiful and true - and it is. And we don't need to be theologians to see why. We just need to review the record of the last 35 years.

First, in his encyclical, Paul VI warned that the widespread use of contraception would lead to "conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality." Thirty-five years later, we're a long way past being shocked by something as boring as adultery. We live in a country where even the idea of marriage is under assault by legislatures and the courts.

Second, Paul VI warned that contraception would turn women into "mere instrument[s] of selfish enjoy-

ment [who are] no longer [seen as man's] respected and beloved companion." Thirty-five years later the porn industry is out of control and spousal abuse is a national epidemic.

Pornography is not an equal-opportunity addiction. It overwhelmingly exploits women and overwhelmingly appeals to the worst instincts in men. It undermines the fertility at the heart of marriage. And in doing that, contraception has cheapened and coarsened all relationships between men and women.

Third, Paul VI warned that easy contraception would "place a dangerous weapon . . . in the hands of those public authorities who take no heed of moral exigencies." It's no accident that Iranian mobs attacked the offices of Planned Parenthood in Teheran in 1979, even before they sacked the U.S. Embassy. U.S. population-control policies are an arm of our national security interests. They serve the status quo by controlling the poor.

If we want to understand why many Muslims hate America, one good reason is that too many of us don't believe in life. Too many of us can't imagine a future beyond the horizon of our own comfort. We turn abortion and birth control into a form of idolatry. We make these two sins an excuse for our own promiscuity — and then we try to force our infertility onto the peoples of the developing world, so they don't outnumber us.

In less than 100 years, Europe may be a Muslim continent. The reason is very simple. Europeans are contracepting themselves out of existence. But children are not a virus to be contained. God is a God of abundant life, and if Europeans don't want that gift, then others who do believe in new life will inherit the future, because they deserve it.

Fourth and finally, Paul VI warned that contraception would mislead human beings into believing we have unlimited power over our own bod-

Married love is the seed of renewing what it means to be "human" in an age that's forgotten the purpose of human life.

ies. Contraception encourages us to fear our own organic nature. It teaches us to treat our fertility as an infection. It turns the human person into the target of our own tools.

Of course we don't market it that way. We sell the birth-control pill or patch by showing young, thin women doing fun, romantic things. And we talk about the health risks in a very low voice and very fast, the same way we talk about the pills we can buy to treat genital herpes, which is another disease that has grown very rapidly in the last three decades.

When C.S. Lewis wrote *The Abolition of Man*, he worried about the same kind of contempt for the human person we see in the technology of birth control. Lewis wrote that a truly humane science "would not do even to minerals and vegetables what modern science threatens to do to man himself." We advertise science as our savior from illness or inconvenience or "unwanted pregnancy," and of course it is — but it also very easily becomes just the opposite. It can become the enemy of everything we understand as "human." It's common now for biologists and computer scientists to talk about the human body as "wet-ware" — as if our flesh and blood were just the messy outer shell for the pure human software inside.

If you're interested in these issues and want a really good scare, read Ray Kurzweil's *The Age of Spiritual Machines*. Kurzweil is one of the most inventive scientific thinkers alive today. He argues that before the end of the 21st century, the distinctions between human nature and machine nature will essentially disappear. Be-

cause of the rapidly growing intelligence of machines, Kurzweil suggests that, "human beings will no longer be the most intelligent or capable type of entity on the planet . . . [Therefore, the] primary political and philosophical issue of the [coming century] will be the definition of who we are" and what it means to be human.

Whether this really happens or not — whether we really do need to worry about machines making us obsolete — misses the point. The point is, many of our best minds have already forgotten what it means to be human.

Whether we're priests or laypeople, theologians or homemakers, we don't have to work very hard to see the truth of *Humanae vitae*. It's all around us. Paul VI was prophetic. Throughout his encyclical, he was right again, and again, and again. The record of 35 years is irrefutable. Everything he cautioned us about, happened. The only reason more Catholics can't admit that, is because to do so would also mean admitting that 35 years of attacking the Church for her teaching were wrong. And that would require repentance and conversion — and for too many people of my generation, that's just too much work, too late in life. And that's a great sadness.

But it's not a sadness for those of you here today. You're here today because you have a hunger for what's right; because you're trying to live the message *Humanae vitae* embodies. You'll probably never know in this life how your faithfulness touches the priests and people around you. So I want to use the remaining few minutes of my time today to thank you and encourage you to stay the course.

(Continued on p. 16)

(Continued from p. 15)

Your lives make a difference. Your fidelity gives hope to others. So be true to the gift you've been given.

Christian marriage is an echo, in human flesh, of the love within the Trinity itself. That love is active. It creates new life. Married love is the seed of renewing what it means to be "human" in an age that's forgotten the purpose of human life. Every moment of every day, a mother and father are teaching, guiding and sanctifying each other and their children. They're also witnessing about their love to the world beyond their home.

The structure of your marriage - when you live it fruitfully and faithfully — points you outward toward the world, as well as inward toward each other and your children. Augustine once said: "To be faithful in little things is a big thing." Simply by living their vocation, a husband and wife become the most important living cell of society. Marriage is the foundation and guarantee of the family. And the family is the only sure foundation and guarantee of society.

It's within the family that a son knows he is loved and has value. It's in observing her parents that a daughter first learns loyalty, courage and selfless concern for others - the things that give life to our wider society. Truth is always most persuasive, not when we read about it in a book or hear about it in a classroom, but when we see it, firsthand, in the actions of other people.

This is why the family needs to be a "sanctuary of love." We can best witness God's love, when we ourselves are the fruit of our parents' tenderness. We can best model fidelity, when we see it modeled by our father and our mother. Love lived well is the most beautiful argument for God — and it's the irrefutable argument for the sanctity of the human person.

The nature of our human condition is that we're always either growing or dying. We must choose life or death.

There's no middle ground. In Deuteronomy, God says to His people, "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life then, that you and your descendants may live."

Contraception is the choice of refusing life. Deliberately sterilizing and attacking new life for the world is a choice for death. But every marriage that makes an act of trust in God and remains open to children is a powerful choice for life. And it's to the glory of the Church that, in the face of all the hostility of the modern world, she keeps the words of the Creator - choose life — alive in the human heart.

Every vocation is a call to holiness. Marriage and family are perhaps the greatest example of that call. In everyday language, we use the words "good" and "holy" almost interchangeably. And holy people are, of course, also good people. But the two words really don't mean the same thing.

"Holy" comes from the Hebrew word *kadosh*. It means "other than." God is holy because He is "other than" us. His ways are not the ways of the world. This is why St. Paul tells us, in Romans, "Do not be conformed to the world." Choose love not hate. Choose life, not death. Choose self-sacrifice, not self-worship.

In my 32 years as a priest, I've seen again and again that the human heart is made for the truth. People are hungry for the truth - and they'll choose it much of the time, if it's presented clearly and with conviction. And therein lies the need for every Christian marriage to be missionary in its essence. Married couples who model a love for Jesus Christ within their families — who pray and worship together with their children, and read the Scriptures — become beacons for other couples.

But our families also need to recover an outward zeal about family life itself, about spreading the Gospel,

teaching the faith, and doing good apostolic works. Matthew's Gospel tells us to "Go, make disciples of all nations." It doesn't add, "... unless you're married." The Epistle of James tells us that faith without works is a dead faith. It doesn't add, "... unless you have kids."

Our God is the God of life, abundance, deliverance and joy. That's the message of *Humanae vitae* - a defense of the sanctity of human life; a defense of the dignity of human persons as "the free and responsible collaborators of God the Creator." That's why Paul VI called his encyclical *Humanae vitae*. That's what the Latin means — "of human life."

Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). Do we believe Him or not? We're His missionaries — by nature and by mandate. Catholic families will either passionately and joyfully spread their Catholic faith... or we'll have no Catholic faith left to share.

But of course, we're here today because God won't let that happen. We're here because we're part of God's solution. So let's pray for each other — beginning right now - that this conference, this day, this moment of friendship which the Lord has given us as a gift... will become for each of us a new little Pentecost; a new birth of the Church in each of our hearts... for our own salvation, the salvation of our families, and the redemption of the world.

Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. is Archbishop of Denver. This talk was presented at an archdiocesan conference in Denver celebrating the 35th anniversary of Humanae vitae. The conference was sponsored by the Archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. Steve Weidenkopf is the Director. The conference marked the conclusion of Denver's activities for National NFP Awareness week. The talk is printed with permission.



A second year of celebrating NFP Awareness Week has been completed. Dioceses sponsored conferences, ran special articles in the diocesan newspapers, and displayed posters in parishes, Catholic hospitals, and other public places.

This year the poster featured two different images back to back—one, of a married couple playing at a fountain and the other of a married couple on the beach. The two different images appealed to different age-groups providing a choice for displaying the image which would best appeal to individual communities.

The following is a sampling of some NFP Awareness Week activities:

Archdiocese of Baltimore

Archdiocesan paper ran two NFP articles. Alerted parishes through the archdiocesan bulletin and E-mails to parish leaders about the posters. The materials sent by the DDP were helpful in working with news reporters and the local NFP teachers were very active in promoting the week. Inquiries to Lauri Przybysz's office are up since the promotion!

Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Sent letters to all parishes about NFP week and included the DDP homily notes and petitions. The coordinator offered to provide NFP brochures and suggested scheduling an NFP teacher for a parish information session. Also, an NFP couple wrote an article for the Catholic newspaper.

Diocese of Amarillo

In a cover article he wrote for his diocesan newspaper (7/20/03), Most Rev. John W. Yanta, Bishop of Amarillo pledged to "preach on Pope Paul VI's *Humanae vitae* every year on its anniversary."

Diocese of Kalamazoo

Diocesan NFP coordinator, Mary Culp, published articles in the diocesan newspaper, developed prayers

of the faithful and sent the DDP homily hints to all priests.

Diocese of La Crosse

Published NFP articles in the diocesan newspaper featuring the poster.

Diocese of Metuchen

A diocesan celebration was held on July 26th for all interested couples and new or experienced NFP user couples. Evening included prayer, workshops and refreshments.

An Army chaplain in Germany

Ordered several posters for various military base chapels

The Knights of Columbus

The Knights adapted Bishop James T. McHugh's classic piece, *The Continuing Importance of Humanae Vitae* and printed it in the July 2003 issue of *Columbia*. The same issue also featured other NFP articles such as one written by Mary Zurolo, editor of *Four County Catholic*, Diocese of Norwich. Entitled, "A Way to Life," it focused on several families of the Knights of Columbus who live NFP in their marriages.

COORDINATORS' CORNER

Thank you Bev!

Theresa Notare

Spring brought some sad news to the Diocesan Development Program for NFP. Long time NFP New York pioneer and diocesan coordinator for the Diocese of Buffalo, Beverly Malona, RN, had to say goodbye to NFP diocesan ministry. Budget difficulties forced the bishop to cut various ministries in the diocese, and Natural Family Planning was one.

Starting with almost nothing, save a sharp mind, solid NFP training, lots of creativity (and nerve), as well as

boundless enthusiasm, Bev built the diocesan NFP ministry in seventeen years into one of the top diocesan NFP programs in the country. In addition to establishing NFP client instruction, Bev developed creative resources. One



As we all know in NFP ministry, relationships—good relationships—are part of what helps a coordinator build NFP programs.



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such resource is a lively video program where—a la Oprah—Bev discusses the Church's teachings and NFP in a question and answer format. Besides NFP methodology instruction, Bev taught at the diocesan seminary, in the diaconate program and she was involved in chastity education. Bev was also involved in Federal projects for abstinence—until—marriage education (Title V grants) and secured funding for programming in her diocese. She is nationally published and worked closely with Marquette University's Institute for NFP on the development of its system of NFP. A critical achievement—Bev worked to establish NFP in the Catholic hospitals in her diocese. In her own words: "Our Catholic health system now has five NFP centers. There are currently nine active Creighton Model FertilityCare™ Professionals." Over the years, said Bev, the NFP Office also offered full or part tuition for most of the FertilityCare™ practitioners. But lest you think Bev is a "one

team player," she is not. Long known for being supportive of all good NFP systems, Couple to Couple League is now established in the Diocese of Buffalo. So although the diocesan department of NFP is now gone, Bev ensured that NFP itself would continue in these other structures.

As we all know in NFP ministry, relationships—good relationships—are part of what helps a coordinator build NFP programs. Bev's winning ways had her working on projects with the diocesan directors of Respect Life, Family Life, Catechumenate, Central City (African American), Hispanic Apostolate, Youth Ministry, Vocations, and Charismatic Renewal Departments, and of course, the Diocesan Development Program for NFP of the Bishops' Conference. Indeed, in Bev Malona the Diocese of Buffalo has been greatly blessed. "Thank you Bev" — from us all!

Beverly Malona can be reached at bevmalona@worldnet.att.net

News Briefs

Announcements

California Association of NFP (CANFP) named Most Rev. John T. Steinbock, Bishop of Fresno, the 2003 Calegari Award Recipient at its 10th annual conference on March 22, 2003. Fr. Calegari, who died in 1992, was a Jesuit priest known to many California NFP pioneers for his theological grasp of the importance of Church teachings on human sexuality, marriage and family life. The 125 members of CANFP in attendance at the March conference enthusiastically applauded a surprised Bishop Steinbock as he accepted the award from Dr. Gregory Polito, Immediate Past President of CANFP. Bishop Steinbock was recognized for a lifetime of courageous and faithful leadership, and specifically for two significant contributions he has made this past year: a pastoral letter on "Life Giving Love of Husband and Wife in Light of the Teaching of the Church on Marriage and the Family," and a convocation for the clergy entitled "God's Design for Married Love" (in which he engaged the services of CANFP to provide the four days of education).

Resources

BOMA has available two new teaching CDs. The CDs contain Powerpoint presentations on: "The Billings Ovulation Method" - An introductory session on the Billings Method correlating the signs and symptoms of fertility and infertility with the response of the cervix and

vagina to hormones; and "The Continuum" (as termed by Dr. James B. Brown). This presentation shows the variants of ovarian activity and fertility from menarche to menopause. The CDs come with explanatory booklets as well as a list of published references including literature, articles and trials. *Contact: Sue Ek, BOMA-USA; 651-699-8139; FAX, 651-699-8144; 1-888-637-6371; E-mail, boma-usa@msn.com.*

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CONGRATULATIONS to the following dioceses!

Cleveland: Rose Jacobs, NFP Coordinator for successfully completing the process of Renewal for the diocesan NFP teacher training program. Both the Ovulation and Sympto-Thermal Methods are offered in the Diocese of Cleveland's program.

Lansing: Rita Michaels, RN, NFP Coordinator for successfully completing the process to achieve Endorsement. Lansing has the Ovulation Method represented in the diocese.

Philadelphia: Eleanor LeGates, NFP Coordinator for successfully completing the process of Renewal of Endorsement. Eleanor is retiring as NFP Coordinator for the Archdiocese.

St. Petersburg: Sharon Iler, NFP Coordinator for successfully completing the process to obtain Approval for the diocesan NFP teacher training program. St. Petersburg has the FertilityCare™ model in place.

BOMA-USA is offering the following teacher training sessions:

2003

August 15-18
New York City Spanish

September 26
Stone Mountain, GA

October 24-28
St. Cloud, MN

November 7-12
Annapolis, MD

2004

April 30-May 4
Lowell, MA

Contact: Sue Ek, BOMA-USA; 651-699-8139; FAX, 651-699-8144; 1-888-637-6371; E-mail, boma-usa@msn.com.

Couple to Couple League is offering the following teacher training sessions:

2003

October 3-5
Buenos Aires, Argentina Spanish

October 4-5 and November 1-2
Baltimore, MD

October 11-12 and November 8-9
West Palm, FL

October 18-19 and November 15-16
Little Rock, AR

2003-2004 Events

October 25-26 (one weekend only)
Des Moines, IA

2004

January 10-11 and February 21-22
Cincinnati, OH

June 26-27
Romeoville, IL

Physician Seminars

2003

September 19-21

2004

September 17-19

Clergy Seminars

2003

November 4-6

2004

April 13-15

October 26-28

Contact: Couple to Couple League, 513-471-2000; Fax, 513-557-2449; E-mail, ccli@ccli.org.

2004

July 21-24 - The American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals' Annual Conference, to be held in Omaha, NE. Dr. Thomas Hilgers will present his new textbook on NaPro Technology as well as offer a pre-conference seminar on surgical procedures for both physicians and NFP teachers, July 20-21. Contact: American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals, 3680 Grant Drive, Suite "O," Reno, NV 89509; 775-827-5408; FAX, 775-827-5811; E-mail, aafcp@aol.com.

Family Honor is planning a 2nd national conference on Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*. "Sexuality, Marriage and Family in the Third Millennium" will be held in Atlanta, GA. As this newsletter went to press, the dates were not yet set. Contact: Family Honor, 877-208-1353; www.familyhonor.org

Do you need to renew?

Endorsement of diocesan NFP programs is valid for only five years. For those diocesan NFP programs which have reached the end of their Endorsement term, the DDP/NFP has sent renewal forms. Don't delay. Complete your forms today!



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

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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3211 4th St., N.E. • Washington, DC 20017-1194

Phone: 202-541-3240/3070 • Fax: 202-541-3054

Orders: 1-866-582-0943; Order fax: 301-779-8596; E-mail: nfp@usccb.org