

Natural Family Planning



Diocesan Activity Report

Vol. 2, No. 3 Summer 1991

"QUALITY AND COLLABORATION"

The Implementation of the National Standards, Fifth Biennial National Conference of Diocesan NFP Coordinators, June 26-29, 1991

The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

A SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The 1991 Fifth Biennial National Conference of Diocesan NFP Coordinators initiated the formal implementation of the **National Standards**. The **Certification Project**, launched in 1987 (see **Diocesan Activity Report**, Winter '91, Spring '90, Dec. '89, Ap.'89, Dec. '88, Sept. '88, Ap. '88), was established to create a network of strong diocesan NFP programs. The project was designed to be implemented in three phases: 1) the writing of the **Standards** document; 2) the construction of the document's implementation process; and 3) the formal implementation of the **Standards**. The 1989 DDP conference dealt with the first

phase of the project. A draft of the **Standards** document was presented at that conference. Recommendations were solicited from the 1989 conference participants to further refine the document. Their major recommendation, to remove those sections in the document which dealt with implementation, rewrite them, and present the implementation as a separate support to the document, was accepted by the then Certification Committee (now NFP National Advisory Board). What followed was the Certification Committee's work of refining the actual implementation process.

Work on the implementation process for the **Standards** continued through-

out 1990. Part of this process included a period of testing in five demonstration sites represented by the Board (see p. 7). This was completed in May of 1991. The June 1991 conference represents the completion of phase two of the Certification Project. Its central theme was the implementation of the **National Standards**. Phase three, the ongoing work of implementing the **Standards**, is now underway.

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our special feature is the Fifth Biennial National Conference of Diocesan NFP Coordinators. The 1991 DDP conference was important because it represents a formal commitment on the part of the DDP and the individual diocese to systematically strengthen diocesan NFP efforts through the implementation of the National Standards.

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*Due to space constraints two of our usual columns *Science Notes* and *Coordinator's Corner* are not in this issue. They will return in the Fall '91 issue.

NCCB Special Announcement—New Executive Director of Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities Named

Gail Quinn has been named Executive Director of the Pro-Life Secretariat. Gail Quinn is the first woman and the first layperson to hold this position. She succeeds Rev. John Gouldrick, C.M., who was recently named director of the Central Association of the Miraculous Medal, in Philadelphia, PA.

A long time laborer in the Pro-Life movement, many of you know Gail as the director of the NCCB's Respect Life Program. Gail first joined the Bishops' Conference in 1966 working in the Family Life office under Fr. James T. McHugh. Among her many accomplishments, she is a founding member of Women Affirming Life, Inc., an organization of professional Catholic women who work to impact the nation's current debate on abortion. Through her work within the Pro-Life movement Gail has also been supportive of NFP efforts in the U.S.

Endings and new beginnings bring a mixture of emotions to any situation. The DDP wishes to express its gratitude to Fr. Gouldrick for his support of its efforts throughout his tenure. We ask you to keep him and his new work in your prayers. At the same time the DDP is also pleased to continue work under the supervision of Ms. Quinn.

We ask all within the NFP family to pray that the Lord continue to guide Gail in her work and give her the gifts of the Spirit which she will need to direct this most challenging Apostolate.



Members of the National Advisory Board (NAB), and DDP Special Assistant (center), address questions from the participants.

Most of the architects of the implementation process were members of the original Certification Committee. They represented various regions in the nation, as well as different NFP methodologies and schools of training. Two of the original members of the Board, Fr. Phil Kraus, S.J. and Dr. Mary Catherine Martin, left the Board in 1990 and 1991 respectively. Both the DDP and the Board are thankful for their contributions to the development of the implementation process.

Present members of the NFP National Advisory Board are: Most Rev. James T. McHugh, Director, DDP; Theresa Notare, M.A., Special Assistant, DDP; Stephen Burke, M.S.W., Director of Family Life and NFP Coordinator, Diocese of Providence, RI; Carmela Cavero, M.S., C.N.M., Nurse Clinical Specialist, Dept. of Family and Community Medicine, U. of CA, San Diego; Donna Dausman, NFP Coordinator, Diocese of Springfield, IL; Rose Fuller, Director, Northwest Family Services, Portland, OR; Robert Kambic, M.S.H., Research Associate, Department of Population Dynamics, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD; Jay Paulukonis, Director of Family Ministry, Sioux Falls, SD; Mary Ann Stanton, NFP Coordinator, Diocese of Cleveland, OH; C. James Statt, M.D., Instructor and Medical Consultant in NFP, Diocese of Phoenix, AZ; Walter Sweeney, Associate Director, Family Life/Pro-Life Office, Archdiocese of New York, and Mary Pat Van Epps, Director of the Diocese of Memphis NFP Center, Memphis, TN.

Approximately 126 participants attended the conference. Of the 187 dioceses in the country, 63 were represented. In addition, representatives from various distinguished NFP organizations attended. Among them were: Couple to Couple League, Family of the Americas, Pope Paul VI Institute, American Academy of NFP, International Federation for Family Life Promotion, Georgetown Institute for Reproductive Health, NFP Center of Washington, D.C., Inc., Illinois NFP Association, Kansas State NFP Association, and the Istituto per La Regolazione Naturale Della Fertilita, Verona, Italy. The remaining numbers took in a good sampling of the many NFP teachers and supporters.

As in the 1989 National Conference, this was a working conference. The participants' primary task was to learn the implementation process and to seek needed clarification with the architects of the process. After a key note on the "National Picture of Diocesan NFP Services", by Theresa Notare and Robert Kambic, the schedule of the conference was set by the process itself: Diocesan NFP Program Endorsement; Diocesan NFP Teacher Certification; and NFP Teacher Training Program Approval. Each plenary session addressed one component of the

implementation process and had a common format: two presenters who led the discussion, followed by small group work and reports. The small group work and reporting provided time for sharing insights, concerns, problems, or raising questions pertinent to the unique character of a given diocesan program. An especially creative presentation was given on the topic of NFP Teacher Training Approval. Conference participants were treated to hearty laughs as they watched their colleagues play out the new concept of "Contracted Teacher Training Program".

Following the morning plenary sessions on Diocesan Program Endorsement (Thursday, June 27), and Diocesan NFP Teacher Certification (Friday, June 28), five workshops were offered concurrently in the afternoon to support and highlight the various concerns of the Standards document. Thursday's workshops were concerned with the diocesan NFP program. They included: "Integrating NFP into the Family Life Ministries", by Deacon Walter and Kathleen Sweeney, Archdiocese of New York and Don Paglia, Archdiocese of Hartford, CT, and President elect, National Association of Family Life Ministry; "Skills for Recruiting and Nurturing Volunteers" by James Lindsay, Director, Volunteer Clearing House of D.C.; and an inspiring talk on the sacrament of Marriage by Rev. Robert Fuhrman, Archdiocese of Newark, N.J.

Among Friday's workshops were: "Stepping Stones to Effective Teaching" by Ursula Poetzchke, Catholic University; "Cross Cultural Implications for NFP" by Carmela Cavero, and "The Standards and NFP Counseling" by Steve and Sheila Burke. (These and the remaining workshops are available on audio cassette, see **News Briefs**.)

Friday evening the participants gathered in the center of Centennial Village for a family barbeque. Despite the heat, all enjoyed the time to visit with each other.

A highlight of Saturday's plenary was a panel discussion entitled, "Looking Toward the Future, Our Children



Luz-Elena Shearer, Diocese of Tucson, AZ.

and Healthy, Holy Sexuality". The panel consisted of: Lisa Everett, Co-Director, Family Life, Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend, IN, and member of the NCCB task force for the document **Human Sexuality**, Rose Fuller, Director of Northwest Family Services, Portland, OR, Hanna Klaus, M.D., Director, NFP Center of Washington, D.C., Mary Pat Van Epps, Director of Memphis NFP Center, Diocese of Memphis, TN, and Mercedes Wilson, Director of the Family of the Americas Foundation, Inc. Thanks to the efforts of Board member Donna Dausman, the panel proved to be a solid vehicle to encourage participants to think about NFP programs and their relation to the issues of sex education, fertility appreciation, and chastity education for our children.

One of the most inspiring outcomes of the 1991 conference was the production of a "Letter of Affirmation of NFP" (see p. 5 for full text) by the conference participants. Prior to the June conference, NFP had once more been under attack (see *America*, Feb. 23, 1991, pp. 206-207; and media reports on the NCCB Nov. 1990 meeting). Once again, many Catholic publications and the secular press displayed their ignorance of the viability of NFP as a method of family planning and the ability of a couple to follow the Church's teachings in this area of life. Tired of this misinformation, conference participants decided to set the record straight. Using a draft letter by Rose Fuller, a task force came together during the conference to construct a letter. The draft letter was read to conference participants on Friday afternoon. It was accepted Saturday during the final plenary session. Conference participants agreed to have DDP Special Assistant, Theresa Notare, edit the letter in conjunction with Rose Fuller, task force chair. Responsibility for publicizing the letter was left to the DDP.

The enthusiasm generated by the letter of affirmation characterized the desire among conference participants to unite their efforts. For many participants the conference was an important event because the implementation process of the **National Standards** was viewed as a practical tool through which they could strengthen their efforts individually, and corporately. ■



Participants of the 1991 DDP Conference.

"Diocesan NFP Programs— A National Picture"—Excerpts

*Theresa Notare, Special Assistant,
DDP/NFP*

In the Fall of 1990 a new form, **The Diocesan NFP Program Profile Sheet**, was mailed to the NFP coordinators in each of the dioceses in the United States. The intent of the project was: 1) to enable the national office (DDP) to achieve a better understanding of diocesan NFP efforts and thereby focus its energy more systematically on the unique needs of individual programs; and 2) to draw a national picture of Roman Catholic diocesan NFP efforts for the bishops of the United States and the diocesan NFP coordinators. Of the 187 dioceses, 94 (50%) completed and returned the form. This national picture is drawn from those dioceses who responded.

Organizational Problems— "The Tool"

Drawing a national picture is somewhat difficult on one level because of the status of the Profile Sheet as a new tool. A variety of instrument weaknesses surfaced, including: ambiguities in certain questions; misplacement of questions within a section; and the type of information sought by the mixture of questions. In addition, be-

cause of the unique history of NFP services in each diocese, there were varying definitions of terms, as well as varying diocesan structures which caused some coordinators to leave an item unanswered (**this last point accounts for an imbalance in totals of responses per item**). All of these points contributed to a certain amount of ambiguity regarding the true national picture. Despite the problems with the instrument, the Profile Sheet did fulfill its primary purpose; i.e., to aid in the DDP's responsibility in assisting individual diocesan consultation.

Summary of Findings

The first section of the Profile Sheet asked questions regarding program management. In response to the question, "Do you have an appointed diocesan NFP Coordinator (designated by the bishop)?" 83% answered "Yes", and 17% answered "No". Some respondents had difficulty answering this question due to the fact that although their bishops made use of their services, they often were not "officially" appointed. To complicate matters, some of these people were hired to do one job in a diocesan office and attended to NFP matters as a secondary duty. Finally,

dioceses which made exclusive use of an NFP provider, named that organization as the "diocesan program" even though the bishop may have not designated that group as such.

The second section of the form dealt with financial concerns. 71% of the respondents said they had a budget. Among these respondents the following distributions can be made:

Budget in the Thousands

0 - 9	43
10 - 29	11
30 - 49	10
5 - 69	1
70 - 89	0
> 90	2

Within the above distribution, 20 programs noted that 100% of their budget came from diocesan funds, while 39 said less than 50% came from diocesan funds. The top three sources of non-diocesan funding were cited as: private donations; client fees; and government agencies.

The third section of the form dealt with how the diocesan NFP program was structured. Of those responding to the question, 47% identified themselves as part of the diocesan Marriage and Family Life office; 9% were part of a Catholic hospital; 8% were a specific office within the chancery; 6% described themselves as part of Catholic Charities; 4% Pro-Life; the remaining did not respond.

With regard to where diocesan NFP teachers are educated, 27% of the dioceses noted they have their own programs; and 56% said they use a provider. The top three provider programs among the respondents were: CCL, Creighton, and Family of the Americas. Due to a weakness in this section, it was not clear if the diocese's geographic location, the fees charged, or methodology taught by the provider, factored in the diocese's choice. Future clarification of this section will enable the national office to advise both dioceses and providers with regard to needs and choice.

The final section was on program outreach. To the question, "Is there a diocesan policy which requires an engaged couple to attend an entire NFP instruction program?", 93% of the re-

spondents said "No". A similar question which was less emphatic stated: "Is there a diocesan policy which strongly encourages participation in an entire NFP instruction program?", 38% of the respondents said "yes", and 49% said "no"; 12 did not answer.

The most common outreach for NFP within the diocese was cited as the marriage preparation programs. 80% of the respondents said that NFP is included in their diocesan marriage preparation programs. The distribution of time given to NFP in such programs fell between as high as one hour to as low as fifteen minutes.

**The Philosophical Issues—
Concluding Reflection**

Various issues became obvious while trying to draw a national picture of diocesan NFP services. These issues can be clustered around the concept of "identity", e.g., internal identity (within the NFP community), and external identity (how the diocesan NFP community relates to and is perceived by diocesan personnel).

"Internal identity"

"How does the diocesan NFP community perceive itself and relate to each other?" This question arose because of the various ways in which the coordinators defined terms and described structures in the Profile Sheet. Each NFP school of thought has its own language, organizational structure, particular accents given to method rules, and so on. This self-identity can contribute to crafting a rich national portrait of diocesan NFP services. However, this self-identity can also present basic problems in communication. If an individual diocesan NFP teacher does not understand



Rev. Robert Fuhrman, Archdioceses of Newark, N.J. speaking during a workshop.

the school/method language of his/her colleague this presents obvious problems in cooperation and coordination. Furthermore, if the diocesan NFP coordinator has the same limitation, then a true integration among diocesan NFP staff will be difficult, if not, impossible to achieve.

Striving to understand the particular language and perspective of your colleague's school/method within a diocesan NFP program, and striving to appreciate that perspective is essential to a strong unified program.

"External Identity"

Upon completion of the first summary of the Profile Sheet other difficult issues remained unanswered. Why was it that more than half of the responding dioceses had between \$0-\$9,000.00 as their budget? Or, why to the question of "having a diocesan policy which strongly encourages an engaged couple to attend an entire NFP instruction program", did half of the responding dioceses say "no"? Practical or even cynical answers could be offered. However, the main point is to ask oneself "how the diocesan NFP community relates to and is perceived by the diocese itself?" If a faulty image exists, or inconsistencies are apparent, ways must be found to correct these problems.

"The Hope and Challenge"

Real hope resides within you, whether you are an NFP couple, teacher, provider, or supporter. Couples who live the Church's teachings

An Affirmation of Natural Family Planning

*Participants of the Fifth Biennial National Conference of
Diocesan NFP Coordinators*

June 26-29, 1991

through the use of NFP are "irresistible". They embody the passion, beauty, and truth about spousal conjugal life and love. Through their visible witness good seed is planted. Eventually the harvest will be great.

But what are some practical ways that can be used to strengthen diocesan efforts? I offer four suggestions:

1) The Diocesan NFP Coordinator must be present to his/her bishop. Be patient, be persistent, but persevere! Send him information on what you are doing; talk with him; clarify issues that he may not be well informed on—remember you are his expert in terms of NFP; and thank him for his support. This also applies to your diocesan colleagues. Build the bridges of support within your house, collaborate!

2) Be present to each other. Use the DDP to connect with other dioceses. A community of support can help you gather fresh ideas; guard against burn-out; share tasks; and combat large problems.

3) Implement the Standards. We have a tool which is tailored to the diocesan experience. It can help us build consistently strong diocesan NFP programs of quality. Let's use it!

4) Finally, be rooted in prayer. With patient perseverance, a good sense of humor, and trust that God will bring into completion any good work, we must (as one wise coordinator said) pick up the threads of the tapestry which we are weaving, do our part, and all in God's time His Will, will be done. ■

We wish to express our appreciation to the Catholic bishops of the United States for their continuing support concerning the Church's teachings on conjugal love and responsible parenthood. Their support and encouragement have helped to realize and promote the gift of Natural Family Planning (NFP) for married couples throughout the nation.

Our numbers include married couples, single laity, priests, religious, and deacons; we represent many disciplines—education, family life, medicine, nursing, social work, law, psychology, and theology. As NFP promoters and educators, we have witnessed the common benefits of NFP in our own lives and in the lives of the numerous couples we reach. By our shared testimony we hope to provide a response to those who question the value and effectiveness of natural family planning both as a method of family planning and as a way of life through which married couples can follow the teachings of the Church on conjugal love and responsible parenthood.

NFP: An Effective Method of Family Planning

Modern NFP assists couples to fully understand their combined fertility. They learn to pinpoint the most opportune time to achieve as well as postpone pregnancy. The natural methods can be used at any time during the reproductive life of the woman. They do not depend on regular menstrual cycles; they treat each woman as unique and each cycle as unique. Instruction in NFP provides people with information about their bodies that is specific and observable, information that can be learned by literate and illiterate alike.

As a method of family planning NFP

- calls for mutual responsibility with regard to family planning by husband and wife;

- has no harmful side effects;
- is highly effective for those wanting to postpone or achieve pregnancy (temporarily or long-term); and
- is inexpensive.

As a method of family planning, NFP is unique among other methods because it empowers its users to work with the body rather than against it. Fertility is viewed as a reality to live, not a problem to be solved.

Often critics insist that Natural Family Planning is simply "rhythm" and not an effective method of family planning. Such critics either misunderstand or they deliberately choose to ignore the facts. Others make invalid assumptions based on statistical studies that do not provide details about the groups studied (i.e., whether subjects were trying to space or limit births, whether they were trained by certified teachers or self-taught, whether they were coming off a birth control chemical, etc.). Through our own knowledge and experience as NFP instructors and users, we can attest to NFP's effectiveness. When couples are taught by certified instructors, when they are motivated to use the method, and when they faithfully apply what they have learned, Natural Family Planning can be as high as 97-98 percent effective. This figure is based on studies by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and by the World Health Organization.¹

Some critics dismiss NFP as a method of family planning because it utilizes periodic abstinence. Yet periodic abstinence is part of the method's technique for working with the body rather than against it. It is a way of cooperating with one's fertility.

Because we know that love, especially married love, requires expression, we are aware that abstinence is difficult and that couples struggle with it. We too



A sleepy Quin McLaughlin rests during a Plenary Session.



Deacon Walter Sweeney and wife Kathleen lead a worship.

struggle with the sacrifice which periodic abstinence entails. Many NFP couples speak of meeting the challenge of abstinence through a "renewed courtship" where non-genital ways are sought to express love for one another. Such a perspective helps couples to view abstinence as a way of expressing their love holistically. We know that this is not easy, but we also know that periodic abstinence leads partners within marriage to deeper levels of communication with one another. As in other areas of life, the road less traveled is often the better choice.

NFP as Ministry

NFP, however, is more than a method of family planning. It encourages growth in the lives of the couples who live it. It is a ministry in the life of the Church.

Natural Family Planning is in harmony with our humanity, as male and female, born and unborn, created in God's image. There is no dualism here, but only the ancient belief that God created us as a totality of body, mind, and soul. NFP respects this totality. It works with our fertility. It encourages us to be thinking creatures. It challenges us to mirror God's love.²

God's love is total, permanent, and an unlimited gift of Himself to His children. As Catholics, this understanding of God's love is the basis of our teachings on marriage as a sacrament. We believe that the love spouses have for one another, including the sexual expression of that love, mirrors God's love.

NFP supports couples in their desire to love one another generously, as God loves them. It helps them to give themselves to each other selflessly, permanently and without limit, holding nothing back. Through NFP couples have the opportunity to grow in chastity. Chastity, as described by John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio*, is that virtue which signifies "spiritual energy capable of defending love from the perils of selfishness and aggressiveness and able to advance it towards its full realization."³ Marital

chastity expressed through Natural Family Planning encourages spousal love to be mutual, exclusive, life-giving and permanent.

The desire for children is part of the love which husbands and wives experience. Couples seeking to love as God loves strive to be generous and welcoming toward children, while prayerfully considering their family obligations, physical and psychological health, finances, and social responsibilities.⁴ NFP allows married couples to express their love for one another and to make free and informed decisions concerning the frequency of births and the size of their family.⁵

Many couples who practice Natural Family Planning experience a healing in their married relationships and discover a deeper love for each other and for God. Others, once alienated from the Church, discover the wisdom and compassion of the Church's teachings. Many non-Catholic couples who come to NFP programs acquire a new appreciation of the Church because of its teachings on responsible parenthood and conjugal love. The values which NFP support are compatible with many faith communities and have the potential to enrich the spiritual lives of those who practice it.

Diocesan Support for Natural Family Planning

Quality NFP programs, grounded in sound theological, educational, medical, and sociological principles need to be available in every diocese.⁶ And such programs need diocesan recognition

and support. Bridges need to be built between diocesan NFP programs and other appropriate diocesan offices. Those who witness to the Church's teaching on sexuality, marriage and family life, can assist other diocesan efforts by sharing their commitment, knowledge and expertise.

Natural Family Planning is a ministry that potentially touches all aspects of family life, and it is especially important for adolescents and young adults.

We need more programs in parishes, schools, and catechetical programs that support and teach the virtue of chastity without apology, programs that present fertility appreciation and natural family planning in an understandable and positive manner.

We continue to encourage scientific experts to seek moral and humane ways to assist couples to deal with infertility and to help women overcome medical conditions which make the practice of NFP more difficult.⁷

Through our ministry as NFP promoters and educators, we have seen couples delight in the joy of their new found freedom to love well. We have shared in their joy and have encouraged them. We have wept with couples unable to have children, and supported others during difficult times of abstinence. We have not compromised the truth of what we strive to live, yet we hope we have always been compassionate.

We are a pilgrim people who believe that change and growth are possible. As NFP professionals, we will continue to do all in our power to advance this vital mission to families in the Church. We ask only the opportunity to serve. ■

1. *Natural Family Planning*. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Public Health Service. DHEW Publication Vo. (HSA) 79-5621. GPO: 1979 0-295-880

2. *Familiaris Consortio*#11; John Paul II, *Original Unity of Man and Women*, (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1981) pp. 128-134.

3. *Familiaris Consortio* #33.

4. *Humanae Vitae* #16.

5. *Ibid.* See also *Gadium et Spes* #50 and 51; *Familiaris Consortio*#32; and Pope John Paul II, *Reflections on Humanae Vitae*, (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1984) pp. 46-47.

6. *Familiaris Consortio*#33 and 66.

7. *Humanae Vitae* #24.

Report From A Demo. Site

Mary Ann Stanton,
Diocese of Cleveland

When the opportunity presented itself to become a pilot diocese in the testing process for diocesan NFP program endorsement under the DDP, I volunteered, with encouragement from my Bishop. Knowing the endorsement application and self-study forms, I felt confident that we had most, if not all, of the "standards" in place. Having heard from the other pilot dioceses that a very minimal amount of time was necessary to complete the self-study and forms, I was anxious to begin.

After several delays starting the process because of the press of other and immediate assignments, I finally set aside a few days to tackle the project. It did take a little longer than others had reported, but it was well worth the time spent.

I discovered many things about our program through the discipline of updating our statistics, gathering the data required and documenting our vision and goals. It was a great experience, and finally everything was neat and orderly

and in the files. I felt very good about our program. As I was putting together all of the pieces, I could finally see the larger picture of what we had accomplished.

One of the things that I discovered and that surprised me was the bottom line on our service statistics. Finally assembled and updated, I realized that our numbers fell far short of client couples taught per year compared to other dioceses. This had to become a development area for our teaching community to look at together and do something about! The teachers immediately began a study project by contacting other diocesan programs to learn about their successes in reaching large numbers of clients. We have, in fact, decided to make this a focus for our growth for the next three years.

We needed also to improve our advisory system, and immediately took steps to do so. One or two other areas need attention and will receive it. It is truly a benefit to know exactly your pro-

gram strengths and weaknesses, and this becomes very clear when working through the endorsement process.

The site visit was also a very good experience for me, personally, and for our Cleveland NFP community. Our Bishop, the director and staff of my department (Marriage and Family), the Secretary of Education all met personally with our site visitor, Dr. Mary Catherine Martin. They were all strongly supportive of our NFP program. It was a good feeling to experience their open approval of the program we have built in this diocese.

The site visit was an opportunity to consult with all of our teachers, faculty, and advisors on the present and future direction for our program. It was also an opportunity for celebrating and we enjoyed that.

In reflection, I can say that I found the endorsement process affirming, helpful and enlightening. We now know where we have been and have a vision for the future. I would recommend the experience. Want to try it?

Mary Ann Stanton in addition to directing the NFP Program for the Diocese of Cleveland is also a member of the NFP National Advisory Board. ■

"Response", Evaluation of Conf. '91 by Participants

Sixty-nine evaluation sheets were returned by the participants of the 1991 DDP Conference. Overall, the DDP Conference was rated by 90% of the respondents as being good to excellent. There seemed to be something of value for everyone, whether they were new or old conference participants. The professional nature in which the conference was organized and run was appreciated by all.

The very helpful suggestions and constructive criticisms offered by the respondents will be extremely useful in planning future conferences; e.g., topics for major talks, names of speakers, scheduling proposals, grouping possibilities, speaker critiques, suggestions as to how material might be better pre-

sented and delivered, and a myriad of other good ideas.

The topics most often suggested by respondents for the next DDP Conference include: methods of funding programs both through public and private sources, theological presentations on Church teaching pertinent to NFP related issues, and recent scientific developments in NFP. Also, there was expressed a great desire by many in improving ways to share information, resources, and ideas from diocese to diocese, program to program, i.e. ways of networking.

Laudatory comments were offered to the DDP staff and the National Board for their hard work in putting the conference together and for their work on the Standards. A job well done! ■



Workshop participants listen attentively.

The Processes of Implementation

Endorsement

Diocesan Development Program
for
National Family Planning
A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
Diocesan NFP Program Endorsement

Endorsement Process

- The Ordinary, with the aid of appropriate or confidential to the DDP, names the Diocesan Coordinator and appoints Endorsement.
- DDP makes necessary materials of the Diocese, which include:
 - Diocesan NFP Program Endorsement Application
 - Diocesan NFP Program Self Study (Form A)
 - Diocesan NFP Program, Contraceptive Education Assessment (Form B)
- Diocese completes and returns Application, Form A, and Form B.
- DDP reviews Form.
- DDP issues certificate of approval.
- Diocese responds in writing.
- Review by DDP and response.
- See: Visit (on request of the Diocese or the DDP).
- Reviewers give a report to the DDP and to the Diocese.
- DDP grants one of the following:
 - Endorsement: Five years (Diocese meets all of the Standards).
 - Conditional Endorsement: Three years (Diocese meets all of the following standards in Section I, pp 912, A, B, C, E, F, H, I, J, O, and P, and has a plan in place for meeting the remaining standards).

1.4 If the Diocese does not meet the standards for Conditional Endorsement, the Diocese may request assistance from the DDP for preparation of a plan to achieve endorsement.

Certification

Diocesan Development Program
for
National Family Planning
A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
Interim Process for the DDP Certification of Diocesan NFP Teachers
January 1, 1991 to December 31, 1993

Interim Process

- There will be an Interim Process for Certification during the period of January 1, 1991 through December 31, 1993. Teachers will not use the interim process prior to January 1, 1991 and will be certified by the process. The interim NFP Endorsement will continue and document the complete process and without an application to the DDP.
- The Ordinary, with the aid of appropriate or confidential to the DDP, names the Diocesan Coordinator and appoints Endorsement from the DDP.
- The Diocesan NFP coordinator names all NFP teachers in the Diocese, in full, prior to the interim certification process and requests that it with the National Standards.
- The Diocesan NFP coordinator submits the following information to the DDP:
 - Diocesan NFP Teacher Self Assessment (Form C)
 - Diocesan NFP Teacher Observation and Evaluation (Form D)
- The Diocesan NFP coordinator provides a file for each teacher which contains:
 - Appropriate documentation of the teacher's training and/or certification
 - one of both of the following:
 - Diocesan NFP Teacher Self Assessment (Form C)
 - Diocesan NFP Teacher Observation and Evaluation (Form D)
- The Diocesan NFP coordinator meets with the teacher and returns a teacher file.
- The Diocesan NFP coordinator submits to the DDP the teacher's application for certification.
- The DDP reviews the application.
- Upon approval, the Diocesan NFP teacher is an added certification by the DDP, through the diocesan coordinator.
- Records of all teachers in NFP exist in a file for the DDP.

Approval

Diocesan Development Program
for
National Family Planning
A PROGRAM OF THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
NFP Teacher Training Program

Approval Process

- NFP Teacher Training Program forms used as a "Comprehensive Teacher Training Program" or a "Contracted Teacher Training Program" and require approval from the DDP.
- The DDP reviews and approves the Application and the following information from:
 - "Comprehensive Teacher Training Program"
 - NFP Teacher Training Self-Study (Form E)
 - "Contracted Teacher Training Program Approval of Instruction"
 - Application for Contracted Teacher Training (Form F)
 - Contracted Teacher Training (Form G)
- The NFP Teacher Training Program completes and returns Application with appropriate documentation.
- The DDP reviews Form.
- The DDP issues the Certificate of Approval.
- Teacher Training Program in writing.
- Standards by the DDP.
- DDP grants one of the following:
 - Approval as a Comprehensive Teacher Training Program which meets all of the Standards.
 - If a Comprehensive Teacher Training Program does not meet all of the Standards, it will be given the appropriate "Contracted Teacher Training Program Approval."
 - Approval as a Contracted Teacher Training Program which meets all of the Standards.
 - Rejection of the DDP NFP Teacher Training Program Approval if the Comprehensive and Contracted Teacher Training Program, will occur on a four-year basis.



Thursday evening's creative presentation on "Contracted Teacher Training."

The process of implementation involves these three components. For copies of the summary of each component please contact the DDP (202-541-3240).

SPECIAL SUMMER FEATURE, SELECTED READINGS IN THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

Reviewer: Mary Shivanandan

THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE

Elliott, Peter J. *What God Has Joined . . . The Sacramentality of Marriage*. New York: Alba House, 1990.

This is a comprehensive treatment of the Sacrament of Marriage. The first

chapter focuses on marriage as "mystery," manifesting both the mystery of the Christian life as well as the "great mystery" of Marriage and Christ and His Church. The role of Jesus as bridegroom, prophet and king both in the Old and New Testaments reveals sim-

ilar roles in marriage. Calvary was proof of the love of Christ as bridegroom of the Church and model for the sacrificial love of spouses.

Marriage "in Christ" is seen as based on the Baptismal covenant and while it does not impart an "indelible character" on the soul like Baptism, nevertheless "the baptized man and woman who enter Marriage are agents of Christ, already raised to the supernatural order and empowered to act for a supernatural end."

They are consecrated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit and their sexuality is "re-directed, refined and elevated, because it is made to serve the three goods of matrimony . . . : the shared procreation of children, the mutual fidelity of the spouses and the unbreakable bond of the sacrament."

Elliott gives a short history of the Church's development of doctrine on what constitutes marriage, dealing with such issues as consent and consummation. Two final chapters discuss sacramental problems and the sacrament of the family. It is the little everyday actions that have a sacramental quality. Quoting John Paul II, Elliott notes, "The future of humanity passes by way of the family."

Doyle, Thomas P. *The Theology of Christian Marriage*. Leesburg, VA: The Catholic Home Study Institute, 1991.

This is a home study course leading to college or graduate-level credit if desired. It is a course in the developing doctrine of Christian marriage from biblical times, through the patristic period, and to the present day. As a canon lawyer, Doyle focuses on the juridical aspects of marriage; i.e., what constitutes a marriage both in the natural order and the order of grace. Two chapters are devoted to the New Code of Canon Law.

Each of the well-designed lessons contains self-quizzes and discussion questions based on the content of the lesson as well as on the assigned readings. Among the assigned readings are such Church teachings as *Familiaris Consortio* and *Gaudium et Spes*. Theological readings include, *Theology of Christian Marriage*, Walter Kasper, and *What is Marriage? Marriage in the Catholic Church*, Theodore Mackin.

Sever, Rita Christiansen. "Beyond the Breaking Point." *Marriage & Family* 70 (August 1988): 8-10.

The author distinguishes between marriage as contract and as covenant and illustrates the difference with concrete situations in the lives of couples. She describes how three couples came to the brink of divorce but "awareness of a deep commitment kept these marriages together." Christians do not enter just a legal contract but are "called to a sacrament of covenant; and we invite God to support us in the living of it."

Unlike a contract which encourages sameness, a covenant gives room for the couple to grow. When one grows faster than the other, each is challenged not just to "stick it out," but to understand the process and to respond. Community is a vital part of covenant and can be most supportive during a marital crisis. Marriage is to a commitment to a specific person not just to an altered way of life. The love between husband and wife reflects God's love and the couple are so aware that God's love is nourishing them. It is this mutual love of God that

is at the basis of the marriage commitment.

Sever offers a provocative point; that "choice is the key" to covenant, and this decision must be made on a daily basis "through the everyday troubles and fiery difficulties that sometimes strike."

United States Catholic Conference. *The Marriage is a Sacrament Series*. Washington, D.C.: USCC Publishing Co., 1990.

This series encompasses five 40-to-60-page booklets on marriage preparation and various aspects of married life. All are written in an easily-understood style and address contemporary issues candidly.

The first, "**Our Future Together**," addresses issues of cohabitation, alienation because of a troubled family background, as well as interreligious marriages. It also gives the Church's basic teaching on marriage as a sacramental commitment.

"**Planning Your Wedding Ceremony**" is a practical guide to the many details of a Church wedding from choosing the music to arranging the seating of guests. "Parenthood" gives the Church's teaching on responsible parenthood. It recognizes both the "beauty and burden of childbearing and childrearing" and once again includes a section on alienation, which can hinder intimate relationships.

"**Making Your Marriage Work**," notes the challenges couples meet with at different stages from the early years through the childrearing years and beyond. It addresses such issues as abortion and sterilization, the pastoral care of infertile couples, divorce and remarriage. Finally "Growing Together in Spirit," shows how the Christian married couple share in the Church's mission through their roles as prophets, priests and kings. Readings from Scripture outline the mission. This is an excellent series of booklets, not just for engaged couples but for all.

SPIRITUALITY

Harris, Maria. "Themes in Women's Spirituality." In "Studies in Formative Spirituality," *Journal of Ongoing Formation*. XI (May 1990): 169-183.

The author, who works in the field of religious education, has developed a process of awakening women's spirituality both in the United States and overseas. She has found that six names describe the process: awakening, discovering, creating, dwelling, nourishing, traditioning, and transforming. The strength of the names is that they are rich and translatable into the experience of those who receive them.

While the names were developed for empowering women, they could have much to say to couples practicing natural family planning, especially as awareness and discovery are important aspects of NFP. Quoting Meister Eckhart, Harris describes spirituality as "waking up." This process begins with "the senses waking up . . . ready to be receptive to the universe." The second stage is the discovery of power, community, and divinity. It means finding a voice. (This section is strongly feminist and the reader needs to be alert to some doubtful feminist theological interpretations).

The third stage, creating, recalls three biblical images of creating: building, nurturing, and of being present. It is "not so much as having a spirituality, but *being* a spirituality. The apex of the process is dwelling or going apart and resting. Dwelling is the heart of spirituality. It means being present to the moment and is represented by the Jewish and Christian sabbath. It reminds us of our relationship to God and the universe. There are various kinds of dwelling. In a garden we are present to nature and the seasons; in the city, to people and the world; in the home, to dailiness and community; and in the desert, to emptiness, endings and sorrow.

The fifth stage is nourishing through asceticism or spiritual discipline. No spiritual life can flourish without ascetic practices which nourish both body and spirit. This leads to generativity or traditioning, which includes "communicating ways of knowing, being and doing from one generation to the next," through loving, teaching, mentoring and modeling. The process ends in transforming the "renewal in our own lives which has the further effect of renewing—of transforming—the face of the earth."

Keating, James. "Spirituality and the Moral Life." *Spiritual Life*. 36 (Spring 1990):32-38.

Historically, Keating notes, there has been a certain separation between theology and morality. A legalistic approach was adopted partly to train priests for discernment in the confessional, but as the author Michael Duffey states, "The spiritual and moral life are about God's self-gift: the encounter with love and the enactment of love."

Keating, who now teaches religious studies at Mt. Aloysius Junior College in Cresson, Pa, received a spiritual insight that "the purpose of life was to accept and live out that humans were 'loved nothings' . . . if God did not love us we would be nothing." This means that we are dependent beings, totally poor. As a result of this insight, Keating's ethics changed from a kind of obedience to authority, or form of self interest, to the understanding that "in Christ's presence is love and in love is moral responsibility." Prayer, then becomes essential for ethical life and authentic social action. The primary relationship to God can only be expressed "through just and at times passionate relationships with people." So arises both the desire to be good and the reason to be good.

ETHICS

Grisez, Germain. "Legalism, Moral Truth and Pastoral Practice." *Anthropos* 1(1990):111-121.

Legalism which overstresses obedience to authority, has caused confusion over moral norms for the average Catholic as well as pastors. This article by Germain Grisez gives a clear exposition of the difference between legalism, a "view that moral norms are like positive laws", and the view that norms flow "from intelligible requirements of a wise plan for realizing the good."

In the legalistic view, actions can be more or less good for human nature but God proscribes certain actions arbitrarily. There is then, a presumption in favor of liberty. What is not forbidden is permitted. There are no inherent harmful consequences of bad actions only legalistic penalties. This attitude encourages minimalism as only the obvious transgressions are liable to pun-

ishment. Also since people do not transgress if they do not know the law, it is better to leave the people in good faith even if what they do is wrong.

Legalism is widespread in Catholic circles because the Old Testament mixes moral norms with positive law; children learn moral norms legalistically; and Catholic moral teaching appears legalistic because it makes fine distinctions. This is accentuated by the secular media, which talks of the Church banning birth control or in vitro fertilization. Sin is not taken seriously if it is only about breaking a law.

In the nonlegalistic approach, God's "eternal law, His plan for creating and governing creation flows from his wisdom and goodness." This eternal law is the basis for all moral norms and positive law. Since man is made in God's image he can have some knowledge of God's plan. This is called 'natural law' from which all moral norms flow and through which we are directed to what will fulfil us. There is, in reality, no choice about morality because God wants what is best for us.

God does not wish us harm or punishment but continually calls us back to his healing love. We have freedom to choose but we cannot both love our neighbor and steal from him. With God's help we continue to create ourselves by our good acts. If we choose bad acts we automatically suffer the consequences.

Pastors operating in a legalistic mode stressed obedience to authority and did not teach the inherent reasonableness of moral requirements. Only the minimum was expected of the laity, while the maximum was reserved for religious and clergy. Pastors also preferred to keep penitents in ignorance. Dissenters continue to argue legalistically, that Church rules can be changed and that doubtful laws, which are contested, do not have to be obeyed. This ignores the possibility that the contested norms may be truths. Pastors loyal to the Church also use a legalistic approach, telling people to obey the Church if they *must* or else follow their conscience.

Grisez recommends a new pastoral approach of stressing God's love and "how good actions are grounded in love and are inherently related to human well being." Even if done in ignorance

wrong actions are contrary to love. The pastor will not stress so much obedience to Church authority as God's wise and loving plan. He will proclaim that while sin makes it difficult sometimes to see the wisdom of moral norms and follow them, God offers forgiveness and the help of grace.

Ernst, Siegfried. *Is Humanae Vitae Outdated?* Gaithersburg, Md: Human Life International, 1990.

The author of this spirited defense of *Humanae Vitae* is a medical doctor, vice-president of the World Federation of Doctors Who Respect Human Life, and former president of the Lutheran Baden-Wurtemberg Synod. Dr. Ernst calls the ethic put forth in *Humanae Vitae* as "no more reactionary than, . . . the law of gravity in our age of aeroplanes and rockets." Just as there are laws in physics which govern the cooperation of molecules in chemistry, so there are moral and spiritual laws which enable people to live in communities in justice, peace and freedom.

Physical laws are absolute, but according to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, their application is not since not every part is absolutely obedient to the whole. Similarly traffic laws are absolute but not everyone obeys the law. It makes no sense to abolish standards in the sexual relationship between men and women and insist, at the same time, on behavioral norms in the larger society.

Dr. Ernst cites the four basic norms of Moral Rearmament founder, Dr. Frank N. Buchman, for people to live in harmony, the absolute standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.

They are also the norms for Humanity's relationship with God. Therefore, when couples exclude the child from their relationship they are, at the same time, excluding the Creator of life. ■

NEWS BRIEFS



Taking care of "housekeeping" DDP Special Assistant, Theresa Notare.



DDP ANNOUNCEMENTS

Conf. '91 Audio Tapes of the Key-note, Fertility Education Panel, and all workshops can be obtained from: Chesapeake Audio/Video Communications, 6330 Howard Lane, Elkridge, MD 21227; 301-796-0040; FAX 301-379-0812.

The National Standards document can be obtained from: United States Catholic Conference Publishing Co., 3211 4th St., N.E., W.D.C. 20017. Discounts are given to diocesan programs.

NFP Video List. The DDP has compiled a list of NFP videos with annotations. Copies are available upon request.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Pope Paul VI Institute will hold Creighton Model NFP Education Pro-

grams beginning November 2-10, 1991. Contact: Creighton Model Programs, Pope Paul VI Institute, 6901 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68106; 402-390-9168.

NCCB's Committee on the Laity has invited the ecumenical community of Taize, France, to organize a gathering of young adults for four days of prayer and reflection on their role in the modern world. The gathering, which will bring together persons from different backgrounds, regions, and Christian traditions will be hosted by the University of Dayton, OH, May 21-25, 1992.

The meeting will be open to young adults from 18-30. A particular effort will be made to reach those already active in peer ministry. For NFP coordinators involved in teen chastity education, or young adult fertility appreciation outreach further information may be of interest to your groups. Contact: NCCB Secretariat for Laity and Family Life, 3211 4th St., N.E., W.D.C., 20017; 202-541-3040

Couple to Couple League's 1992 National Convention will be held at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI., July 5-9, 1992. Contact: Jerry and Lee Zimmer, 616-363-1046, registration couple.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Diocese of St. Cloud, MN informed the DDP that legislation passed by the Minnesota House of Representatives during the week of May 13, 1991 was favorable to NFP. In addition, their Senate passed the bill during the week of May 27. Following is the "conscience clause" which was under debate and accepted:

"The funding for family planning special project grants shall be awarded through the criteria established in Minnesota Rules. Notwithstanding any rule to the contrary, an organization shall not be excluded or reduced in priority for funding be-



DDP Staff, Karen Notare Archer and Silvia Juarez (left to right) attend to conference business.

cause the organization does not make available, directly or through referral, all methods of contraceptives for reasons of conscience. The commissioner of health shall develop procedures for establishing a conscience clause in the grant application process." *Contact: Kay Ek, Diocese of St. Cloud, 305 7th Ave., N. Suite 102, St. Cloud, MN 56303; 612-252-4721.*

**Please watch for the Fall '91 Diocesan Activity Report which will feature*

special articles on government funding for NFP programs.



MATERIALS

The film "Ultrasound: A Window to the Womb", can be obtained from: Sound Wave Images, Inc., 2422 Harness, Union Lake, Michigan 48387; 313-360-0743, or 313-347-1601.

The book, "Human Ecology, A Physician's Advice for Human Life",

by Robert L. Jackson, M.D., is now available from St. Bede's Publications. Situating his remarks within the context of human ecology, Dr. Jackson offers sage advice on the good and natural use of our God given gift of sexuality. *Contact: St. Bede's Publications, P.O. Box 545, Petersham, MA 01366. ■*



NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING Diocesan Activity Report



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Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning
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The **Natural Family Planning Diocesan Activity Report** is published quarterly. Its purpose is to serve the Roman Catholic diocesan NFP programs of the United States through offering: national and international news of NFP activity; articles on significant Church teachings, NFP methodology and related topics; and by 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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