

Natural Family Planning



Diocesan Activity Report

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NFP PIONEERS: The Story of The Family of the Americas

The daughter of a Guatemalan father and an American mother, Mercedes Wilson, founder of The Family of the Americas, grew up in Guatemala. Although Mrs. Wilson has spent the past twenty years in the United States, she is no stranger to other lands. She also lived in such diverse places as the Middle East, England, and even Australia. This international spirit has contributed to the unique character of the Family of the Americas, a non-profit organization dedicated to the service of the family through NFP education and other fertility appreciation programs.

In 1968, while living in Australia, Mercedes Wilson first learned about the natural signs of fertility. Having read an article in the local paper about a new natural method of family planning, she visited a center where the Ovulation

Method was being taught by Dr. Evelyn Billings. To her amazement, in less than half an hour, she learned this simple and safe method that enables a woman to postpone pregnancy without endangering her physical and emotional health with chemical agents or dangerous devices.

After learning the basic information, Mrs. Wilson wondered why such vital facts had not been brought to the attention of all women. She wanted to share this well kept secret with other couples.

In the beginning Mrs. Wilson worked with the originators of the Ovulation Method during its develop-

mental stages in the 1970's. She was especially interested in simplifying the teaching technique so that it would be easily understood by people of different cultures, especially those in the developing countries. With this in mind, Mrs. Wilson began to design a client record-



Mercedes Wilson, founder of the Family of The Americas.

keeping system which is now used all over the world. These efforts and her continued interest and enthusiasm led her to establish an organization through which she could share her knowledge.

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IN THIS ISSUE . . .

we have the second in our series on the history of the various NFP providers in the country. We also feature a column on NFP outreach to Catholic immigrants which we hope will spark a discussion on this important need.

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Family of the Americas Foundation (FAF) was that organization.

Incorporated in 1977, FAF is guided by a Board of Directors, a Board of Trustees, and an Advisory Board. What started as a small, local teaching center has now developed into an international organization with offices in Maryland, Louisiana, and Guatemala. FAF has a staff of seven full-time, four part-time and several volunteer workers who have extensive experience in carrying out client services,

teacher training, and educational programs in over 100 countries. The FAF office/teaching headquarters is a 3,000 square foot facility located on 20 acres of land in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D.C. Besides offices and conference rooms, the Foundation has a complete audio/visual production facility, comprising 525 square feet, which utilizes broadcast quality color video equipment.

FAF offers various programs, many of which encourage parents to meet their mutual responsibilities to each other and to their children. Fundamental to the purposes of FAF are educational programs on the responsibilities of sexuality and parenting. FAF's education programs have been developed with the input of expert educational consultants and evaluators, and implemented by faculty who are world-renowned for their knowledge and expertise in the fields of pediatrics, genetics, psychiatry, psychology, family and child development, economics/population studies, and natural family planning.

NFP programs have been the Foundation's principal emphasis, with training and materials being offered on a worldwide basis. FAF entered into a Cooperative Agreement with the United

States Agency for International Development (USAID) for \$1.8 million in 1984. FAF has been responsible for preparing over 2,400 teacher trainers in the Ovulation Method from 44 developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Since then, courses have been taught in English, Spanish, French, and Chinese. Materials are also being distributed in Portuguese, Italian, German, Korean, Japanese, Swahili, and Arabic. Three other translations have just been completed and are in the

process of being published in Slovakian, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian.

The Foundation's major goal in providing OM training programs has been to maintain the simplicity of the Ovulation Method while providing teachers with the technical knowledge, the scientific background, and the practical experience necessary for teaching in a standardized simple manner. The training is offered by the finest experts in the Ovulation Method in the U.S. Training programs are held in FAF's Maryland headquarters twice annually. The next training program is scheduled for August 23-28, 1992. This training program is also available as a correspondence course complete with 8 hours of video and a comprehensive manual with teaching slides and posters.

Most recently, the strength of the FAF training program has been evidenced by extremely favorable data from a three-year research study of the effectiveness of the Ovulation Method conducted in Shanghai, the People's Republic of China. Chinese medical personnel who received training from FAF faculty participated in the clinical study. Instruction in OM was received by nearly 700 couples, who were monitored for at least three years. The study reported an

effectiveness rate for OM of 98.9% and a continuation rate of 87.9%.

Family of the Americas has also done special work among adolescents through its "Fertility Appreciation for Families" program, funded by a \$1.2 million dollar grant from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) from 1983 to 1987 under the Adolescent Family Life Act. This program for parents and adolescents promoted family-centered sexuality education, helping parents to assume their role as the principal educators of their children in matters of human sexuality. By the end of the program nearly 2,500 adult participants and over 3,500 adolescents had been reached. Significantly, this program was able to drastically reduce the incidence of pregnancies among unwed teenagers, ages 15-19, to around 5 pregnancies per thousand. This was substantiated by an independent report of two University of New Orleans researchers who compared similar statistics from other sources for the same group and time period. Their report indicated that in similar study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute approximately 96 pregnancies per thousand was typical while a Planned Parenthood program with teens incurred around 113 pregnancies per thousand. This is a clear indication that FAF has an overwhelmingly successful parenting program that helps teens become responsible while lowering out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

FAF has also sponsored International Congresses for the Family to raise awareness of social issues affecting the family. Sixteen such Congresses have been held in various major cities worldwide with thousands of participants of each Congress. Honored guests and participants at the Congresses included the wife of the Prime Minister of France, the Queen of Spain, the King, Queen and Princess of Belgium, Members of Royalty of Austria, Minister of Health in Germany, Princess Diana of England and on several occasions Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

For further information on materials, teacher training sessions, etc., contact: FAF, P.O. Box 1170, Dunkirk, MD 20754; 301-627-3346; FAX 301-741-6019. ■



Diocesan NFP Services—Outreach to Immigrants

Elena Muller Garcia*

The National Standards state that a diocesan NFP program must provide "accessible and affordable NFP services appropriate to the culture and language of the diocesan population." (National Standards, p. 10) This standard addresses a need which has historically presented a challenge to the Church in the United States since the first Catholics arrived on the shores of America: i.e., how to minister to Catholics of diverse ethnic heritages?

In NFP ministry we know that we are not consistently serving the needs of Catholic immigrants in our dioceses. 95% of the couples we had polled in our nation wide survey (completed in 1989) were Anglo-Americans with the remaining five percent comprised of Hispanic (3.5%), and small percentages of Black, Asian, and other ethnic groups. The reasons for this are many: too few NFP teachers with the language skills to teach the non-English speaking groups; lack of knowledge of non-Anglo-American cultures; poor budgets which prohibit establishing specialized teaching sites; insufficient NFP materials that are culturally sensitive or printed in other languages; etc. Despite the difficulties, a diocesan NFP coordinator must realistically look at the ethnic picture of the Catholic population in his/her region, critically evaluate program materials and pedagogy, and strive to meet the unique needs of his/her people.

Among the largest population of new Catholics in the United States are the Hispanics, people from countries whose primary language is Spanish. The following column represents a first hand experience which an NFP teacher in Florida has had with a local group of new immigrants in her area. What Mrs. Garcia writes reflects the challenge of ministering to immigrants of varying backgrounds.

In November of 1988, a parishioner of St. Ignatius Cathedral contacted me. She had been helping out immigrant families in the diocese of Palm Beach and had found out that the Guatemalan women in the area were being pressured into the use of contraceptives and sterilization at the local public health clinics.

We met with a religious sister who headed a center for migrants and with one of the lay leaders of the Guatemalan community who had been a health worker in his country. The Guatemalan leader, who asked to remain anonymous, told us about the situation of the Guatemalan women regarding birth control. "In Guatemala", he said, "both men and women shy away from any type of birth control." "Guatemalans believe children are a blessing and they do not want to go against the teachings of the Catholic

Church." He also noted that the government of Guatemala, under pressure from the United States, promotes contraception, but that the people in general disregard all the birth control propaganda.

Once Guatemalans arrive in the United States, the situation changes. Children become burdens and obstacles. Women feel the pressure to work outside the home, and are no longer able to juggle both work and childbearing. Because of these new socio-economic pressures many turn to contraception. The situation becomes further complicated due to the

fact that the Guatemalans in our region do not trust personnel in the county public health clinics. As a result illegal contraceptives are often imported from Guatemala. Among these drugs are such injectables as depo-provera which is an abortifacient whose side effects may include prolonged bleeding and/or permanent infertility. It is a dangerous drug, even more so when administered without any medical supervision.

Since my initial contact with the Guatemalan community I have heard from a variety of sources the same type of report concerning what goes on in the local public clinics. For example, a Mexican couple who had learned the ovulation method in their native country and who have three children, told me that each time the wife has routine gynecological examinations at the public health clinic she is confronted with the issue of contraception. "Even when I tell them that I am satisfied with the ovulation method, that I do not want to be on any contraceptives, they still give me something—a foam or a jelly, or whatever—to take home," she said.

A sister who works mostly with Mexicans told me that it is very common for pregnant Mexican migrants to return to their country to give birth. They fear that if they give birth in the United States they will be sterilized without their consent. When I asked the sister if she knew of any woman who had been sterilized under those conditions, she

told me that she did not know of any one in particular, but that the rumors abound.

Economic necessity, the legalization of the status of the immigrants, the whole process of becoming transplanted in a new culture, as well as a new language pose enormous

problems for the Guatemalan migrants in our diocese. Ministers from the Church can easily feel overburdened when trying to meet their needs. Conse-

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quently, it is tempting for Church personnel to delegate the whole spectrum of family planning concerns to the public health clinics. But this is exactly what we must not do. What is unique to the Church's provision of family planning through NFP ministry is its life affirming, fertility appreciative message. NFP enables us to live our Catholic beliefs on conjugal love and responsible parenthood. This philosophical foundation is absent in those centers where family planning is achieved by disruptive methods which harm women and ignore the couple's potential for integrating the sexual drive within the commitments of a loving conjugal union.

On the other hand, the clergy and religious sisters ministering to migrants are already overworked. To expect them to take on the added ministry of natural family planning is not only unrealistic but also unfair. I believe that natural family planning outreach to the minorities must be undertaken by specially trained personnel commissioned by the diocese. A concerted effort must be made to make natural family planning instruction available to these people. Although at the beginning someone from outside the community might be needed, the aim should be to find couples within each of the different ethnic communities that will become certified teachers and carry on the ministry.

*Elena Muller Garcia is an STM teacher in the diocese of Palm Beach.

If you have experience with instructing people of different cultures, or have met the challenge in your diocese, please send us your writings. We need to hear from you!

A good, readable source on the history of Catholic immigrants in the United States and the Church's response is: *Immigrants and Their Church*, by Dolores Liptak, R.S.M. (New York: MacMillan Pub. Co.: 1989.) In addition to the history, Part III of the text focuses on the "Postimmigrant Church," which covers 1950 to the present. ■

Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later

Janet E. Smith

Review by Hanna Klaus, M.D.

Written for the 20th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* the text, *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later* attempts to evaluate the impact of the encyclical on the lives of Catholics. An important feature of this scholarly work is its careful explanation of the philosophical basis of natural law. This work also includes an explanation of the arguments which have been mounted for and against the encyclical so that the non-specialist is able to follow and understand the meaning of the debates.

Drawing from scripture and historical sources the author, Janet Smith, a professor of philosophy at the University of Dallas, sets the stage by reviewing the origin of the debates. For example, as part of her discussion Smith offers a critical treatment of the assertions of John T. Noonan in his work *Contraception*. In addition, she also reveals Pius XI's *Casti Connubii* and Pius XII's *Allocutions* as foundational documents for *Humanae Vitae*. Smith's thesis is that *Humanae Vitae* is totally coherent with the Church's teaching on marriage. That teaching speaks of marriage as a relationship which is monogamous, indissoluble, constructed for the care of the family and not merely "one of many possible arrangements concocted by 'Man' to arrange for his sexual needs" (Smith uses "Man" to indicate when the term is generic, i.e., referring to both male and female.) Rather, there is a proper relationship between spouses which is safeguarded and nourished only in marriage. While marriage as an institution is known to many societies, Christian marriages differ from natural marriages because the spouses are called to be a sign or symbol of the union of Christ and the Church.

The marriage contract is more properly termed a "covenant" in the Christian context. Contract is a juridical term. Covenant reflects the love that Christ has for His Church, therefore expressing the couple's unconditional and faithful love for each other. The essence of marriage is captured in the word "bond" which means yoked together and confers on the spouses certain duties and rights. These obligations must be freely and deliberately undertaken by individuals who intend to seek the good of the other and who are prepared to embrace the responsibility of parenthood. Fruitfulness is already intrinsic in other-directed spousal love.

In this book Smith shows that the deliberate withholding of one's fertility, explicitly condemned in *Humanae Vitae*, prevents total mutual self-giving. Smith distinguishes between acceptable forms of family planning (e.g., Natural Family Planning) and unacceptable forms through suppression of fertility. While some theologians claim that fertility must be suppressed to serve the unitive end of marriage, Smith maintains that the personalist value, that is, the total acceptance of both partners *as they are*, truly serves both ends of marriage, which are inseparable.

Personalist values refer to goods that benefit the human person as distinct from values that protect other goods, such as those that benefit society at large or that respect the laws of nature. Personalism focuses on the innate dignity of the individual. Christian personalism holds that human dignity derives from the fact that humanity was created in the image and likeness of God. Natural law provides a foundation for moral precepts, which, can be discerned through human reason apart from special divine revelation. Natural law refers to humanity's inherent desire

to seek the good and to avoid what is evil. It also speaks of the human ability to discern what is good and thus to be sought, and what is evil and to be avoided.

The laws of nature are not the same as natural law. Natural law includes the human ability to reason, whereas laws of nature only include natural inclinations. Nevertheless, the laws of nature are important guides to how people discern the spiritual, psychological, and physical dimensions of life. Nature is an important guide to truth because God is also the author of nature. Nature is not opposed to God. Since the Fall, however, human desires can be inordinate and conflict with human reason. For example, when selfishness becomes a part of sexual desire, a person may then want what is evil. A man may know that adultery is immoral, but commit it anyway, and so on. Since human beings are rational creatures it is natural to act in accord with reason. Whatever violates right reason is unnatural.

Church documents prior to *Humanae Vitae* had placed their emphasis on the structure of the sexual act. For example, *Casti Connubii* noted that contraception was wrong because it violated the nature of the *conjugal act*, not the nature of the sexual organs. The arguments that contraception is artificial, not physiological, have already been shown to be erroneously based. The principle of totality has been invoked by critics of this teaching; but as there is no organic relationship between acts of intercourse, the sum of the acts of intercourse cannot be considered as a whole, except in a very abstract form. Each act is complete in itself and is intended to be an expression of the marriage bond. Some have tried to view contraception as a toleration of the lesser evil, but Pius XII taught that toleration of religious and moral error is in itself immoral. *Humanae Vitae* teaches that the principle of tolerating

the lesser evil does not deliberately choosing to do what is intrinsically immoral; nor is the principle of the double effect applicable.

Smith also reviews the natural law arguments against contraception as contra life, but concludes that the main defect in contraception is its violation of the unitive meaning of the conjugal act. This point is underscored in *Gaudium et Spes* (#51) which states that:

... harmonizing marital love with the responsible transmission of life must consider not only the good intention and evaluation of the motives, but also use objective criteria which are drawn from the nature of the human person and human action, which respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of love.

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NFP NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

The Natural Family Planning National Advisory Board (NAB) serves as a consultative board to provide ongoing support, advice, and guidance to the DDP/NFP on matters relevant to diocesan NFP coordinators and diocesan NFP programs. The NAB also helps to ensure the delivery of quality NFP services throughout the dioceses of the U.S.A through assisting with the implementation of the **National Standards** of the NCCB's DDP/NFP.

NAB members are appointed for three year terms of service by the Director of the DDP/NFP. The NAB meets regularly and consists of ten experienced NFP leaders and/or diocesan NFP coordinators. These members come from a variety of backgrounds reflecting various areas of expertise. They also represent the various regions in the country as well as the different NFP methodologies.

Among the current responsibilities of the NAB are the:

- 1) Review and evaluation of diocesan NFP programs seeking Endorsement;
- 2) Review and evaluation of NFP teacher training programs seeking Approval;
- 3) Oversight of the diocesan NFP teacher certification process;
- 4) Periodic assessment and evaluation of the implementation process.

At this time the DDP would like to thank Carmela Cavero for her many contributions to the NAB since 1988. Carmela is resigning from the NAB but will continue to serve the NCCB through evaluating NFP teacher training portfolios and lending her expertise in NFP outreach to Hispanic Catholics.

The DDP would like to welcome Therese Maes, Associate Family Life Director of the diocese of San Jose and Richard Fehring, DNSc, RN, professor of nursing, Marquette University, who will be replacing Steve Burke and Carmela Cavero on the NFPNAB. We look forward to working with our newest members! ■

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The difference between contraception and Natural Family Planning is clearly shown in Smith's discussion. Not to make use of a good which one could legitimately use is morally neutral. Thus NFP's means of postponing a pregnancy, sexual abstinence, is never immoral. To choose to use the marital act only during periods of infertility, with a view to the needs of the family unit is to use a moral means for a moral end. To refrain from intercourse is not the same as making the sexual act deliberately infertile.

Smith discusses the scriptural and theological foundations for *Humanae Vitae*. Scripture has always stressed fruitfulness and portrayed sterility as a curse. Sexual acts that are not designed to protect the good of procreation are condemned. The bridal relationship of the Church to Christ is always meant to be fruitful:

... scripture does not explicitly condemn contraception ... it does condemn sexual relationships that are not designed to serve the good of procreation ... misuse of sexuality seems to result whenever Man severs his relationship with God. Reestablishing right sexual relationship is part of the work of getting right with God again ... Marriage, procreation, and fruitfulness are values sung in various ways throughout scripture. Sterility and barrenness are not marks of those with God, but of those separated from him.

Smith asks how one can find room for contraception in this picture of God's plan for human sexuality, for marriage, and for his people as a whole. She then reviews the specific foundations in Scripture for natural law arguments and shows that there is no incompatibility. She adds the concept of "*munus*," a Latin

term for service, obligation, sign of office, beauty, gift, etc. The word is found in the opening sentence of *Humanae Vitae*: "*The most serious munus of transmitting human life ...*" Smith explains that this is an invitation to men and women, an integral part of humanity's vocation, mission, and ministry in the world. It is an interior gift which benefits parents, facilitating their growth in the virtue and perfection needed when one is challenged by the tasks of parenting.

Christians participate in Christ's mission to reflect the threefold power of Christ as priest, prophet, and king. In sharing the prophetic munus, spouses work to bring the truth of Christ to the world through evangelization. They share the kingly munus not by ruling over the world, but over themselves. *Familiaris Consortio* speaks specifically about the family's part in the threefold munus of Christ. The life and love of the family constitute the nucleus of the saving mission of the Christian family in the Church and for the Church.

Some individuals, in trying to be supportive, have asserted that the teachings in *Humanae Vitae* are infallible. Smith points out that a Church encyclical is not an infallible teaching. Instead, an encyclical draws the weight of its authority from the changeless teaching of the Church. On the non-supportive side, most of dissenting theologians did not concentrate on the content of the teaching in *Humanae Vitae*. They challenged the authority of the document, e.g., the natural law arguments on which it is

based. Smith analyzes these criticisms carefully and finds that they are inadequate and often based on the very principles which they wish to repudiate.

Smith ends her discussion with an in-depth review of John Paul II's interpretation of *Humanae Vitae* as self-giving and self-mastery. She lucidly shows that a proper understanding of natural law and of personalist values permits no conflict between them. The Church's teaching on marriage is central to its teaching on the meaning of human life because it articulates the meaning of sexuality and of the body. The sexual act is always a personal act — and

... scripture does not explicitly condemn contraception ... it does condemn sexual relationships that are not designed to serve the good of procreation ...

never merely a biological one. Spouses must respect and not use each other. This is the clear teaching of *Humanae Vitae*. Since the sexual drive is an intense one and can cloud one's reason and judgment (due to original sin), self-mastery is necessary in order for spouses to express their loving commitment to each other. This is not merely romantic verbiage, as some of John Paul's retractors assert, but deals with the very essence of being human.

Janet Smith's work is an excellent resource on *Humanae Vitae* and the arguments surrounding it. It should be part of the resources of every diocesan NFP program, and on the shelves of libraries in Catholic health institutions, universities, and seminaries.

(Available from The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C.) ■

Coordinator's Corner

Integrating Church Teaching into NFP Instruction

Elizabeth and Charles Balsam,
Diocese of Beaumont, TX

During a chart review at an NFP follow-up session, a woman asked that a slide from the first class be shown to her fiancé. He had been unable to attend the class and she wanted us to "do the female anatomy slide" for him. We suggested that the same information was in their class materials, but she persisted. "The way you explained it was beautiful," she said, "it was more than anatomy. I especially liked the part about conception. I had never heard it explained that way before."

What does this have to do with integrating Church teaching into NFP instruction? The **National Standards** state that a Diocesan NFP program must accept and promote "the principles contained in *Gaudium et Spes*, *Humanae Vitae*, *Familiaris Consortio*, *Donum Vitae*, and related Church teaching" (p. 9). Likewise, the **Standards** require that an NFP teacher "accept and integrate within his/her teaching the principles" of these same documents (p. 15). Many NFP Coordinators and teachers have responded rather apprehensively to those requirements. They question whether there is appropriate time within NFP instruction to do this. It seems like such an overwhelming task!

The experience of the engaged couple is only one example of how the message that "sexuality . . . is by no means something purely biological" and "fertility is directed to the generation of human being" (*Familiaris Consortio*, #11), became more clear to them without us mentioning or quoting the documents. The

manner in which we taught the material and the reverence and conviction we have about fertility, conception, and marital sexuality served to illustrate the Church's message.

We are convinced that NFP teachers and programs can creatively promote the values and principles of official Church teaching and avoid an overly time consuming or academic treatment of what must be lived out by married couples. The requirements as stated in the **National Standards** can be fulfilled by such an approach to NFP instruction.

One way to grasp our approach is to understand that we focus on the marital context of NFP as well as on NFP methodology. Full understanding of the Church's counter cultural positions on fertility and family planning cannot happen apart from its teaching on marriage. Indeed, the integrity of Church teaching on sexuality, chastity, contraception, artificial reproduction, responsible parenthood, and family as "domestic church" converges in marriage.

Marriage is to be an intimate partnership of mutual self-giving (*Gaudium et Spes*, #48); it is to be faithful, exclusive, and total (*Humanae Vitae*, #9). Marriage is a participation in the creative intentions of God and enables spouses to cooperate with God for giving life to a new human person (*FC*, #14). Through love, fertility, and parenthood, a couple embodies, in the vocation of marriage, one image of God in the world.

Fundamentally, marriage is a covenant. It is cast in the image of Yahweh's unconditional love for Israel, founded

on the covenant with Abraham (*FC*, #12 and 13). This love comes to fulfillment in the self-emptying, sacrificial love of Jesus. Thus, married couples are called to love unconditionally and sacrificially (as God has so loved us). This love is empowered, not by human will alone, but by the Spirit of Jesus. This is why marriage has the dignity of a sacrament.

To live marriage as a sacrament requires certain values, attitudes, and loving behaviors. Not coincidentally, living NFP requires the same values, attitudes, and loving behaviors. It is the concern of *Humanae Vitae* that living with the reality of God's design for fertility be integrated into the marriage covenant. It is the concern of *Donum Vitae* that the unfortunate reality of infertility also be integrated into the couple's relationship. Both teachings challenge couples (and others) to avoid reducing spouses or children to the level

of objects. The two meanings of marriage, unitive and procreative, must be addressed in NFP instruction, so that the central principles of Church teaching have a proper context.

Our diocesan approach to incorporating Church teaching into NFP instruction may be unsatisfactory or too undefined for some. We do not use a "scripted" explanation of Church documents, but rather attempt to weave the language, meanings, and living witness to those values (as described above) into the whole of NFP instruction. We do this in two main ways: 1) by careful recruitment and training of NFP teaching couples; and 2) by helping client couples focus on the

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values, attitudes, and loving behaviors which are necessary for marriage and for NFP use.

Around 1977, the Diocese of Beaumont decided to train married couples to be Billings/Ovulation Method teachers. Such a decision was not unique at that time since the Couple to Couple League and others were training couples to be teachers. Over the years, we have put together our own diocesan teacher training program which includes about 8 to 10 hours of study, reflection, and discussion on Church teaching related to marriage and parenthood.

We strive to help our teachers better understand and own the values of Church teachings. The training is ongoing. It is more than an educational head-trip or a memorization of quotes from *Humanae Vitae*, etc. Our NFP teaching couples are able to have lively discussions about what it means to struggle with and live out Christian values within their marriages. Their ability to embrace the belief that marriage is an "intimate partnership of life and love" and that marriage is an "eminently human love because it embraces the good of the whole person" (GS, #48 and #49) becomes very much part of their overall language of NFP instruction.

We form our teachers to be articulate witnesses to the beauty of Christian marriage as well as competent instructors in core NFP methodology. It isn't always easy to find couples who are capable and willing of such a task! But we believe that Church teaching is best exemplified, and more effectively com-

apologize for the values, attitudes, and behaviors needed for successful NFP use, which happen to be articulated in Catholic teaching on marriage.

NFP is different from contraception. Couples are sometimes baffled or even pleasantly surprised at the dynamics that NFP can reveal in their relationship. We try to help couples learn NFP in two ways: first, by living the discipline of the method (observation, charting, rules, etc.). And second, by acknowledging and living the values which are inherent

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municated and integrated when couples teach other couples.

The second thing we try to accomplish in our diocesan NFP program is to help client couples reflect upon and discuss their relationship (engaged or married). We focus especially on topics that pertain to sexuality, intimacy, fertility, family planning, and parenthood. Couples who participate in NFP instruction often struggle with the contrast between the vision of marriage that NFP upholds (re: Church teaching) and the illusion of intimacy that contraception provides (re: secular society). We have many "ecumenical" couples and a few Protestant couples as clients. We do not proselytize them about fidelity to Catholic teaching. We also do not

in the marital context of the method. If, after all, fertility is more than biology, so must our teaching be more than methodology. It must also address the covenant commitment of marriage. It is through both of these paths (methodology and relationship) that couples begin to live the Christian vision of the integrity of marriage and responsible parenthood.

What follows are examples of a few of the ways that we help couples look at NFP from the angle of relationship:

Teaching couples take a few minutes (about 15 to 20) during the first three class sessions to present and/or discuss various relational issues. Such as, their personal beliefs and experiences with NFP; communication, commitment and intimacy skills which are important to marriage and NFP use; and the physical and interpersonal differences between NFP and contraception.

Client couples are given work sheets to take home which provide them with discussion questions on various topics. These work sheets cover a wide range of subjects such as, family planning goals; marital needs and expectations; couple support and strengths; and intimacy. All of the work sheets are written in such a way as to reflect the language or principles of Church teaching.

1993 25th Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*

As you know 1993 is an important year for us. If your diocese or NFP organization is planning special events during 1993 to celebrate the anniversary of the encyclical, please notify the DDP. We will publicize all special events in the newsletter.

Photographic Essay of the 1992 INFPA Conference

Chart review offers an opportunity for private time with couples to touch on additional issues related to their own situations. Conversation about actual Church documents is not usually part of chart review, although it does come up on occasion. Teachers may draw on the values and principles of Church teaching in order to help couples understand a particular struggle they have encountered or to help shed some light on an experience. One of the most rewarding aspects of chart review is listening to couples talk about their new understanding and appreciation of each other and their marriage.

The description we have offered of our diocesan NFP program is only one example of how Church teaching can be integrated into NFP instruction. There are other creative possibilities and other examples from various NFP programs.

If you are a diocesan NFP coordinator (or in a position of leadership in NFP), examine your NFP program for how it reflects the values in Church teaching. Meet with teachers, and, if necessary, seek enrichment from a priest, teacher, Family Life Director, or anyone who is knowledgeable about Church teachings. Clarify and explore the possibilities for integrating this dimension into NFP instruction.

You will likely discover that you are already doing a number of things to promote the principles of Church teaching. Now could be the time to make those values and principles more conscious and alive for couples learning NFP.

*Beth Balsam has been NFP Coordinator for the Diocese of Beaumont since 1981; she is a certified teacher trainer for W.O.O.M.B International. Charlie Balsam has been Diocesan Family Life Director since 1979; he is currently a Lay Advisor to the N.C.C.B. Committee on Marriage and Family Life. The Balsams are co-authors of **Family Planning: A Guide for Exploring the Issues**, (1986. Revised) Liguori Publications. ■*



The provincial house of the Hospital Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis has been the site of the Illinois NFP Association's Annual Conferences.

Mary Terese, President of INFPA, and husband John Egizio.



Participants of the INFPA 1992 Conference.

"NFP—A Product Worth Marketing"

Jenny Peters speaks on marketing techniques for NFP outreach.



SCIENCE NOTES—Special Editorial:

Hanna Klaus, M.D.

ABORTIFACIENT How Moralists and Medical Scientists “Hear” the Word

Periodically the DDP is asked about the abortifacient character of the birth control pill and the IUD. As many of our readers know, the general public does not commonly understand that all forms of the birth control pill have an abortifacient action. In this special editorial DDP medical consultant, Hanna Klaus, M.D., explains the reasons why the medical profession would not label those contraceptives “abortifacient” despite the fact that they may carry that action.

Natural Family Planners often hear that the oral contraceptive pill or the IUD are abortifacients. These statements are usually made by individuals with training in moral theology who rightly point out that if it is even remotely possible that the agent will act to interrupt a gestation, it must be called an abortifacient. When there is any doubt, the doubt must be resolved on the side of life.

In medical practice however, the predominant action of a drug is usually considered the most important. If a drug or a device acts 95% of the time in a particular way, one has a confidence limit ($p = .05$) that the action of the drug is as described. Thus, the contraceptive action of the oral contraceptive is considered to be far more frequent than a possible abortifacient action.

The higher dose pills, and even the mini pills were alleged to be contraceptive most of the time. Their action was said to be three-fold: 1) to prevent the LH surge, and thus block ovulation; 2) to change the cervical mucus to make it hostile to sperm entry; and 3) to change the endometrium to prevent embedding in case mechanisms #1 and #2 failed. While ectopic pregnancies continue to

be encountered in 1-2% of OC users, one cannot deduce the numbers of intra-uterine pregnancies which were not able to embed simply from knowing that occasionally an ectopic pregnancy was encountered.

The new triphasic pills have been shown to be ovulatory in one out of three cycles. However, this does not imply that one out of three cycles have a pregnancy connected with them because the effect of the pill on cervical mucus to block sperm entry has not been quantitated.

Smart, et al. [*Fertility and Sterility* February 1982 37:201-4] described early pregnancy protein (EPP) as a substance which is secreted by the conceptus prior to embedding, and found that a certain percentage of early IUD users had early pregnancy protein. They concluded that the IUD could act as an abortifacient at least some of the time. Because several workers were unable to repeat this work successfully, the World Health Organization sponsored a study in Chile and Santo Domingo (detailed in *Current Medical Research*, Summer 1991.) The copper IUD's usually acted to kill the sperm and the ova. In the study, candi-

dates for tubal ligation were operated after “peak” and their tubes and uteri irrigated before the tubes were cut. When copper IUDs were used, sperm, dead ova, and one dead early embryo were recovered, while four early pregnancies were “recovered” (actually interrupted) from the comparison group— woman also operated after peak, who had no IUD's.

This experiment is not ethically acceptable to those of us who oppose even risking the interruption of pregnancy let alone acting in a way to ensure it; nevertheless, this study illustrates two points: 1) that the IUD cannot be said to be an abortifacient only, and 2) that even though it has multiple actions, a moralist would still consider it an abortifacient.

It is helpful to realize that “semantics” is at the crux of this issue; while people use the same words they have different meaning to different people. ■

Sources Cited

Smart, et al *Fertility and Sterility* February 1982 37:201-4.

NEWS BRIEFS

DDP ANNOUNCEMENTS

1993—25th Anniversary of Humanae Vitae. As you know 1993 is an important year for us. If your diocese or NFP organization is planning special events during 1993 to celebrate the anniversary of the encyclical, please notify the DDP. We will publicize all special events in the newsletter.

★★★★★ UPCOMING EVENTS

Couple to Couple 1992 Conference will be held July 5-9, 1992, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This biennial event is open to everyone, and will be held at Calvin College. Topics will include NFP, marriage enrichment, openness to children, teen chastity, Christian child-rearing, home schooling, the pro-life movement, and related topics. Confirmed speakers include William Coulson, PhD., John Kippley, Coleen Kelly Mast, and Dr. Janet Smith. *Contact: Jerry & Lee Zimmer, 616-363-1046.*

Family of the Americas Foundation will hold a teacher training program in the Ovulation Method August 23-28, 1992, at Manresa Retreat House, Annapolis, Md. *Contact: FAF, P.O. Box*

1170, Dunkirk, MD 20754; 301-627-3346; FAX 301-741-6019.

The American Academy of NFP will hold their annual conference on July 15-18, 1992 in Wichita, Kansas. Guest speakers include: Dr. Thomas Hilgers, Director of the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction; Msgr. William Smith, Professor of Moral Theology, St. Joseph Seminary, Yonkers, N.Y.; Dr. Dennis O'Hare, Medical Director of NFP Services, Riverside Medical Center, Minnesota; and Phyllis White, Director of Education for NFP, Greater Kansas City, Missouri. *Contact: Sr. Julianna Jervis, CNFP, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, 235 West Sixth Street, Reno, NV 89520-0108; 702-789-3079.*

Billings Ovulation Method Association will hold a meeting at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. on July 30-31, 1992. The agenda includes: recertification; scientific update; organizational business; and the review of the certification program. This will be held prior to the larger meeting of all those who are providing educational programs in Human Sexuality with a value orientation (see next news item). *Contact: NFP Center of W.D.C., Inc. P.O. Box 30239, Bethesda, MD 20824-0239; Tel. & FAX 301-897-9323.*

Teen Sexuality Meeting, July 31-Aug. 2, 1992 sponsored by the NFP Center of Washington, D.C., will be held

at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Entitled "Teen Sexuality and the Prevention of Premature Pregnancy and STD's," guest speakers include: Stan E. Weed, Ph.D., "Effectiveness of Education Programs in Human Sexuality;" Janet Smith, Ph.D., "Philosophical views of the Human Person;" and Msgr. Lorenzo Albacete, "Theology of the Body." *Contact: NFP Center of W.D.C., Inc. P.O. Box 30239, Bethesda, MD 20824-0239; Tel. & FAX 301-897-9323.*

Teen STAR 1992 Workshops will be held:

Beaumont, TX	June 12-15
St. Louis, MO	June 26-29
London, UK	July 20-24
Bethesda, MD	August 3-6
Minneapolis, MN	August 8-11
Philadelphia, PA	August 17-20
Providence, RI	August 28-31

Contact: Hanna Klaus, M.D., Director, Teen STAR program, P.O. Box 30239, Bethesda, MD 20824-0239; Tel. & FAX 301-897-9323.

Northwest Family Services will be conducting a teacher training program in the Sympto-Thermal method of NFP on August 21-24, 1992 in Orange, California. Co-sponsored by the Diocese of Orange, this program will provide the necessary skills enabling participants to teach NFP according to Dr. Roetzer's

STM model as well as utilize the curriculum of the NWFS. *Contact: Mary Dausch, NFP Coordinator, Diocese of Orange, 2811 E. Villa Real Dr., Orange, CA 92667, 714-974-7120; Rose Fuller, Executive Director, Northwest Family Services, Providence Medical Center, 4805 N.E. Glisan Street, Portland, OR 97213, 503-230-6377, FAX 503-232-5967.*

The Creighton Model of NFP will be offering education programs for teachers, doctors, and priests. The dates for the beginning educational phase are Oct. 17-25, 1992. *Contact: Creighton Model NFP Education Programs, Pope Paul VI Institute, 6901 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68106-2604, 402-390-6600.*

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Diocese of St. Cloud, MN NFP coordinator, Kay Ek, is interested in identifying those NFP teachers or coordinators who would like to lobby the Scriptographic booklet company to change some of their text in their booklet on NFP. The booklet, *"What Everyone Should Know About NFP,"* states on p. 12 that in order to "get started on NFP" one should contact "family planning agencies, your physician, and local clinics or hospitals." Because NFP providers know how difficult it is to learn about NFP through such sources, Kay Ek would like to

change that. If you are interested in helping, please contact: *Kay Ek, NFP Office, 305 North 7th Avenue, Suite 102, St. Cloud, MN 56303.*

★★★★★ MATERIALS

The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality, by Fr. Paul Quay has now been translated into Spanish. Entitled, *El Sentido Cristiano de la Sexualidad Humana*, the book costs \$3.50 (US) plus shipping. *Contact: Editorial Salesiana—Padre Vacarello, Avenida Brasil 210, Lima, Peru; Phone, 235-782.*

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING Diocesan Activity Report

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A program of the NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities

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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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