

Natural Family Planning



Diocesan Activity Report

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HUMANAE VITAE—25 Years

Most Rev. James T. McHugh, S.T.D.

On July 29, 1993, we celebrate the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the encyclical *Humanae vitae* in which Pope Paul VI reaffirmed the Church's teaching on the transmission of human life. The encyclical ran into a firestorm of rejection and dissent, often by persons who had not even read it. With the passage of time perhaps we can look now at the encyclical with greater objectivity.

Paul VI, as John XXIII before him, was concerned with the erosion of the values that supported marriage, children, family life, and sexual responsibility. The Pope understood the impact of the sexual revolution of the 1950's, which destroyed the inherent link between sexual intimacy and parenthood. He heard the propaganda about the so-called population explosion, which fostered negative attitudes toward children and stifled the openness to parenthood. He was aware of its shortcomings and complications. And he knew of the expectation among many Catholics that the Church would change its teaching in the interest of modernity. Nonetheless, after much consultation and study, Paul VI spoke clearly and authoritatively in favor of the Church's traditional teaching opposing artificial contraception.

Pope Paul based the encyclical on the Church's teaching on marriage, which he described as "the wise institution of the Creator to realize in humanity His design of love" (HV, #8). Drawing on Vatican II,

Paul VI explained the principles of conjugal love and responsible parenthood. Conjugal love is a very human and deeply personal experience. Through this love, couples come to know one another and forge a unity that withstands all challenges and dangers. From this love comes the desire to share with God in the creation of new life and to transmit to children the heritage, qualities, and vision of their parents. At the same time, in the exercise of parenthood, couples must responsibly decide on the spacing of births and size of the family in light of their responsibilities to God, to each other, to the family they already have, and to society. They draw insight from the nature of marriage and its acts as instituted by a loving God. Paul VI exalted Christian marriage and human love. He emphasized the inseparable nature of the unitive and procreative dimensions of sexual intercourse within marriage, concluding that every such act must remain open to life.

A quarter century of sexual chaos reminds us of the fundamental truth of *Humanae vitae*. Paul VI, in one of his last public audiences spoke of his tranquility about issuing the encyclical and his strong conviction that in doing so he fulfilled his responsibility as Vicar of Christ and successor to St. Peter. As we celebrate this twenty-fifth anniversary, we pray for the courage, perseverance and wisdom to continue the Church's teaching mission in regard to human love, marriage and family life. ■

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we begin our year long celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the encyclical Humanae vitae with a reflection from our director, Most Rev. James T. McHugh (p. 1). Continuing this theme of celebration is a story of a conversion which led to a deeper understanding of marital love from Jennie Latta (p. 2). Also featured in this issue is the complete text of the final declaration of the NFP summit, Rome, December 9-11, 1992 (p. 6), as well as our usual features.

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NB: Due to the growing number of articles submitted to the editor, Science Notes will no longer be a standard column in the newsletter. Please look for coverage of the latest in NFP and fertility related research in Current Medical Research Supplement.

NEW LIFE

Jennie D. Latta, Esq.

The truth transforms life. That is Christ's message. This is the story of how the truth transformed and is transforming my life.

I was born into the Presbyterian Church and married a Presbyterian pastor. At the time that we were married, the official position of the Presbyterian Church in the United States on abortion was,

*There are situations where existing life and relationships are so endangered by the birth of a child that abortion may become a responsible step to take.*¹

My husband and I both accepted the deceit that in the area of abortion, responsible moral choices must be made in a legal vacuum, i.e., we were solidly "pro-choice."

During my final year of law school I became pregnant with our third child. It was the most inconvenient time for pregnancy because I was under a tremendous amount of pressure to secure a high-paying job with the "right" law firm. To my shame, I must confess that I intentionally concealed the pregnancy during the interview process in order to better my chances of securing an offer. I did secure employment, but at about six months gestation realized that I had not felt any movement of the fetus for more than a day. Thus, one Sunday afternoon in January my husband and I made a trip to the hospital to discover that I was the bearer of not one fetus, but two, not unexplainably, but tragically dead.

During the hours in which we awaited the completion of labor, my husband and I tried to console each other with the explanations that they were only "masses of tissue" and that we had two healthy sons at home. Then as the first child emerged, my doctor asked me if I wanted to hold my baby. As I looked upon the tiny face and caressed the now lifeless hand, the truth flooded over me, and I was never the same.

Time passed. Another son was born to us. My career developed beyond my wildest imagination and occupied increasing amounts of my time and thoughts. Yet, through it all, I continued to function as the pastor's wife, singing in the church choir, and teaching Sunday School.

During Lent of 1989, my husband invited pastors from other churches to be speakers at the church we were then serving. Among them was a Catholic priest who spoke about the tradition of Western mysticism. At the time I had no idea what he was talking about. I considered myself a fairly well-educated Presbyterian layperson; I had studied the Scriptures for years, but I had little, if any, knowledge of the saints.

Later that year, I again became pregnant. As my husband and I discussed it with my doctor, we determined that this should be the last child. Five pregnancies in ten years had taken their toll on my body, and besides, it was time to focus even more attention on my career. I was sterilized. I am not aware of any teaching by the Presbyterian Church concerning sterilization. I knew only that it was so generally accepted that I never considered a moral choice was being made. If I had, I'm sure I would have thought I was acting responsibly in limiting the size of our "large" family.

After our fourth son was born in 1990, while on a business trip in Chicago, I decided to look for something to read in my free time. A quick look at the Yellow Pages revealed that the only Christian bookstore within walking distance of my hotel was Catholic. I'd never been to a Catholic bookstore and I didn't recognize many of the titles when I got there. Among the books I selected was *The Way of Perfection* by St. Teresa of Avila. It was still several more months before I was actually able to read St. Teresa,

but when I did, I discovered a woman of intelligence overflowing with love for the Lord. She taught me that prayer, as an expression of love, is a matter of the will, not the emotions. She gave me a new glimpse of the truth.

I began to read more and more in the area of spirituality, especially the other Carmelites, St. John of the Cross and St. Therese of Lisieux, but I could find no one to talk to. I sympathized with St. Teresa who searched fourteen years before finding a confessor who understood her. I tried to talk to one Presbyterian pastor who admired my

"spiritual-mindedness," but I didn't want to be admired. I wanted to be understood and to understand.

During the summer of 1991, my oldest son underwent a

*For this I was born,
and for this I came into the
world, to testify to the truth.
And you shall know
the truth and the truth
will make you free.*

(John 18:37; 8:32)

test at a local Catholic hospital. While we were waiting for my husband to bring the car around for the trip home, I noticed a picture of the Catholic bishop and pointed it out to my son. As we were talking, a woman came up to us and started telling us about the bishop. In the midst of the conversation, she said that perhaps my son would become a priest! I was startled but explained that my son would not become a priest because his father is a Presbyterian minister. She smiled and left. About that time my husband walked up and asked if I realized that I had been talking to Rita Schroeder, the president of the hospital.

I continued to do more and more reading in the area of Catholic spirituality and consequently learned more about the Catholic Church. My purpose was to incorporate what I was learning into my own religious experience. I never considered leaving the church of my birth. Then on the morning of December 14, 1991 (incidentally the Feast of St. John of the Cross, companion of St. Teresa), I read Sheldon

Vanauken's essay, *Crossing the English Channel*, which records his journey from the Episcopal Church to the Church of Rome. In the midst of reading, the truth about the Catholic Church dawned on me as if in the form of an invitation from the Lord. I will never forget the sense of joy I felt as I read about a friend of Vanauken's who had written to assure him that in accepting the Lord's call to His Church, Vanauken should not fear that would lose his friends, "for God will not be outdone in generosity." Then on the same page I discovered (or rediscovered) Francis Thompson's haunting poem, "The Hound of Heaven." Later that same day, I began reading St. Francis Desales' *Introduction to the Devout Life*. St. Francis advises everyone who wishes to undertake the life of devotion to first submit to the instruction of a spiritual director. This was somewhat of a new concept for me, but it sounded very much like the advice that St. Teresa had given. I prayed, "Lord, who do you want me to talk to?" The response was, "Call Tom Kirk," the priest who spoke at your church.

I called Fr. Kirk's office the following Monday. I said, "Hello Father, this is Jennie Latta." He asked if I were Jim Latta's wife. I said yes and that I needed to talk to him about the sermon he had given at our church. He thought a minute and then said, "That seed had been germinating a long time." I said, "Yes, and it has borne much fruit."

I was also prompted to write a note to the hospital president, Rita Schroeder, to tell her that her chance comment had come back to haunt me. At her invitation, I began attending daily Mass on January 1, the Feast of Mary, Mother of God.

I continued to read and study and to talk with Fr. Kirk. I read some of the documents of Vatican II and some of the post-conciliar documents. I read about the meaning and sanctity of marriage and the family. I read *Humanae vitae*, Pope Paul VI's landmark encyclical on the regulation of birth, and for the first time realized the terrible mistake my husband and I had made in becoming sterilized.

Perhaps the truest indicator of my husband's love for me is that in the midst of all these changes, he tried as best he could to love and support me. He had been divorced prior to our marriage, so before I could be received into the Catholic Church, it was necessary to seek the annulment of that attempted marriage. It was a painful process for the both of us, but so important for preparing us for sacramental marriage. Just as important in the preparation was our decision that we would attempt to have the sterilization reversed. This was not required by the Church, but was something that we were convinced would be necessary before both of us could fully participate in the renewal of our marriage. It was an agonizing decision for me. It meant letting go of the control I had attempted to assert over my body. It meant a much deeper commitment to and trust in my husband. And, it tested whether I was really willing to accept Christ as the Lord of my life.

The surgery was completed, we think successfully on August 25, 1992. The

annulment was finally granted on September 25. And on October 15, the Feast of St. Teresa, I was Confirmed and received first Holy Communion. Rita Schroeder was my sponsor.

Vanauken's friend had been right. The Church was filled with new friends, three priests concelebrated, the choir and organist performed, all at a 6:15 a.m. Mass! On October 16, Jim and I, together with Fr. Kirk and other friends, celebrated the renewal of our marriage in the sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Many people have asked, but no, Jim has not become Catholic. We do attend Mass together as a family each week, and I continue to support Jim in his new ministry as a full-time pastoral counselor. We do not understand why the Lord has called us to this rather unusual ecumenical marriage, but then, in truth, we are not called to understanding, but to obedience. ■

¹ "Summary" of the 1970 Statement of the General Assembly quoted in "The Nature and Value of Human Life," A Paper Adopted by the 121st General Assembly and Commended to the Church for the Study, Office of the Stated Clerk, The Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1981.

NFP Summit 1992—Rome

Hanna Klaus, M.D.

DDP director, Most Rev. James T. McHugh and Medical Consultant, Hanna Klaus, M.D., attended the NFP Summit in Rome, December 9-11, 1992. For your information Dr. Klaus has provided us with an overview of the meeting's agenda and a select summary of several of the presentations.

The summit meeting "The Natural Regulation of Fertility" was sponsored by the Pontifical Council for the Family at Vatican City, December 9-11, 1992. This special summit was a closed meeting for experts in the field of NFP. The purpose of the summit was to encourage an exchange of research and foster greater collaboration among NFP experts at the international level. Forty-five conference participants representing expertise in fertility research, NFP methodology, program management, and theology attended. Attendees came from countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, North and

South America. Presentations covered three central areas of concern: NFP science and methodology; program development (including teacher training); and Church teachings. The following overview of the agenda will only cover those papers presented under program development and Church teaching. For an overview of the papers presented under the heading of NFP Science and Methodology see *Current Medical Research* (Winter 1993). Copies of the formal proceedings of the conference will be available from the Pontifical Council for the Family sometime during 1993.

NFP Program Management

Dr. Claude Lanctot, Executive Director of IFFLP, reviewed not only the applications of STM throughout IFFLP Programs, but added notes on program development and evaluation. He cited NFP programs as commonly moving through 1) demonstration, 2) implementation, and 3) expansion phases. Standards for teaching and delivery of services are essential, as is program evaluation. Supervision and retention of teachers are important aspects for program maintenance and expansion, as well as sustainability. Programs must be credible and be able to document their services to obtain and retain funding support from private or public sector. The organizational structure of IFFLP was also presented, as was their NGO relationship with WHO.

A review of the contributions towards strengthening the family as well as learning STM was presented by Drs. Michelle and Francois Guy of Grenoble, France, long-time collaborators with C.L.E.R. in Paris; a Status Report of the Association PROVIE of France was presented by Angela de Malherbe, President, who reviewed not only the Congresses on the Family but the contribution of their 400 Billings Ovulation Method teachers and the beginnings of the French Teen STAR Program. The Federation of French Families and the National Confederation of Catholic Family Associations are increasingly aware of the urgency of promoting NFP and responsible sexual education for adolescents.

Fr. Pedro Richards presented the program of the Institute for Family Science in Montevideo, Uruguay. Bishop James T. McHugh presented the Diocesan Development Program for NFP in the United States, as well as the Vatican contribution to the recent Conference on Population and Environment in Rio de Janeiro. William N. Corey repre-

sented the Couple to Couple League in the United States. Dr. Romana Widhalm presented the program for the Institute of Marriage and the Family, Vienna, Austria. Dr. Wanda Poltawska and Dr. Hanna Ceransha-Goszczyński presented the extensive programs in preparation for marriage and NFP in Poland. Sr. Dr. Anna Capella presented a paper on training of teachers as the key of success in the methods of NFP from the Center for the Study and Research in Regulation of Natural Methods of Fertility at the Sacred Heart University in Rome.

Other countries reporting their programs included Slovakia - Dr. Stefan Horvath and Miroslav Mikolasic and Dr. Guenther Freundl from Germany. Studies of the effectiveness of various monitors and computer programs were presented by Dr. Anna Flynn of Birmingham, England; Dr. Sergio Cortese from Vicenza,

Italy; Fr. Zimmermann and the inventor, Mr. Kinji Nishimura from Japan presented their L-Sophia Calendar Thermal Monitor; and New Computer Program for Charting the Ovulation Method was shown by Mrs. Mercedes Wilson.

In addition to the above, shorter program reports were given by Dr. Achille Dede on fruitful collaboration in the Italian NFP Centers, a National Program in Rwanda by Fr. Henry Hoser, SAC; the Teen STAR Program by Hanna Klaus, M.D.; The Teacher Training Format of the Creighton Model by Thomas Hilgers, M.D.; Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture, Sr. Dr. Catherine Bernard of India.

Church Teachings

The opening address was given by Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, President, Pontifical Council for the Family. The Cardinal noted that the methods of natural regulation of fertility require responsibility and an exercise of freedom

which should ensure women their right to peace and happiness. This is contrasted with the "anti-life mentality" referred to in *Familiaris consortio* (#30) and the separation within the conjugal act of the unitive from the procreative meanings (*Humanae Vitae*, #12) which debases love itself. The Cardinal continued to show that only the natural methods can serve both the unitive and procreative ends of marriage. He next shared the history of his own pastoral experience in Medellin, Colombia prior to assuming his post in Rome. Since then he has visited NFP providers in several parts of the world, and convened the conference in order to establish what is already known and accepted about the natural methods of family planning in preparation for next steps for the future.

Bishop Elio Sgreccia spoke on "Responsible Procreation and the Natural Methods for the Regulation of Fertility: Theological Aspects." A former Professor of Moral Theology at the Lateran University in Rome, Bishop Sgreccia is currently the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Family. Bishop Sgreccia pointed to the biological nature of persons as being "safeguarded" through the use of only natural means to regulate fertility (the "ecological" argument). He said that the psychological relational values are persuasive because of the shared responsibility involved; the anthropological meaning of human procreation is expressed authentically in the personal union of the married couple by including the language of the body and their spousal union integrally. But all of these arguments do not yet satisfy the theological meaning of the act.

Using scripture, Bishop Sgreccia examined the "divine vision of the union of man and woman" reminding us of the creation of man and woman to image God. The duality and fidelity which stem from the unity of the creation are exemplified in the communion of marriage. The image and likeness of man and woman refers not only to their spiritual nature but to their whole personal

"... the creative work of God is always the principle cause of life ..."

being and complementarity. When marital love is graced with conception, there is a twofold movement: the outpouring of the human generative power within the creative power of God; and the self-humbling of God, who from the very beginning, makes His creation dependent on a process placed in the hands of the same creature. Even if the cooperation of the couple is present, the creative work of God is always the principal cause of the life of the creature and the only cause of the spiritual soul." The link between the spousal act and the creational act of God is real and vital. Their union is realized more completely in the total gift and the chaste openness to welcome either the life of the husband or wife, or eventually the life of the child. Hence, contraception is wrong because it impoverishes the meaning of the union, prevents God from creating, and a couple from procreating. A couple therefore assumes the role of final arbiter of when life shall come.

Beyond this, there is also the imaging of the spousal union of Christ with the Church, of which the couple are meant to be a reflection. The couple are called into transformation into likeness to Christ through the agency of the Sacrament. Through Christ in the Church the creational plan is joined to the mystery of the Trinity in which the family, as the unit of society, finds its ultimate sense and meaning. The Trinity is a communion of life and love in eternal self-donation which is fruitful and infinite, holding nothing back. Couples are called to image this in their lives. When married life is blessed with fruitfulness it becomes a type of "created trinity" which reflects the uncreated Trinity.

Fr. Lino Cicconi, C.M. spoke on the two phases which are an essential part of responsible procreation. The planning-deliberative phase was discussed in Vatican II's document *Gaudium et spes* (# 51 & 52), while *Humanae vitae* dealt with the executatory nature. The first phase has led to a view which divides humanity into the North and the South. The North is the developed

world with very low fertility rates. The South is the developing world with high fertility rates. The North has attempted to limit the fertility of the South by using contraception—temporary and permanent—as population control. Some utilize NFP along purely natural lines; hence, there is a risk of reducing the natural methods to new techniques to avoid having children. This makes a terrible and damaging caricature of the natural regulation of fertility in its full anthropological and theological scope. Even the various monitors for the determination of the fertile phase and the introduction of a commercial element can lead to the reduction of NFP into a technique.

In order to serve the diverse cultures and needs integrally, it is not possible to adopt one single way of helping persons and couples to discover and accept the natural methods. In the North, the culture is materialistic and atheistic; hence requires a reconstruction of the human person in his/her full dignity and openness to the transcendent. This is usually not the case in the South. In the North, sexuality is largely trivialized and privatized through a

playful and libertarian concept. Procreation then becomes reduced to a purely biological phenomenon or to mere reproduction. On the other hand, in the South, the dimension of mystery is still largely perceived with regard to sexuality and procreation is seen as something into which God's action enters. Every child is still seen as a gift and blessing.

Also presenting was, Dr. Janet Smith who submitted a paper on the moral use of NFP. She summarized what she had already written in her book *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later* (reviewed in NFP—Diocesan Activity Report, Spring 1992).

The last day of the Conference was highlighted by an audience with the Holy Father. He reminded the attendees that the title of the Summit indicated

not an alternative to contraception, abortion, and sterilization, but rather a promotion of a true "humanization" of God's wonderful gift of procreation. The authentic alternative of which the Summit spoke is profoundly rooted in the truth about the human person. The Holy Father went on to recognize the problems which modern couples face, even when clearly open to life, reminding them that there must be serious reasons for delaying or avoiding births.

In keeping with *Humanae vitae* and *Familiaris consortio* (#35), the Pope encouraged doctors, marriage counselors, teachers, couples, and especially the Church's pastors, to promote a "broader and more systematic effort to make the natural methods of regulating fertility known," not only in their scientific, but in their anthropological, moral, and theological aspects. The difference between contraception and recourse to the rhythm of the cycle is a wider and

deeper one than usually thought because it involves two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality. (FC, #32) Artificial contraception often expresses a utilitarian approach to human sexuality which

easily leads to dissociating its physical aspect from the full context of married love as commitment, faithful, responsible, and open to the mystery of life. The holy approach is marked by constant dialogue and enriched by the tenderness and affection which constitute the heart of human sexuality. These methods (NFP) with their corresponding way of living, free the couples from the cultural, economic, and political conditioning imposed by the programs of family planning. They liberate the person, above all women, from pharmaceutical and other forms of interference in the natural processes connected with the transmission of life, and have proved to be practical for groups in every walk of life. ■

"The link between the spousal act and the creational act of God is real and vital."

FINAL DECLARATION OF THE NFP SUMMIT: "Natural Methods Respect Divine Gift of Procreation."

The international Summit on NFP held in Rome from 9-11 December 1992, gathered some 45 experts from various countries around the world. The following is the Final Declaration of the Summit convened under the auspices of the Pontifical Council for the Family.

Gathered to study the latest developments in the natural methods of regulating fertility, as 45 scientific experts, social workers and moralists, we wish to speak to the women and men of the world.

The regulation of human fertility is a delicate matter involving serious choices and decisions. Many problems have arisen in this important area of human experience. We confidently propose the authentic way of the true humanization of God's wonderful gift of procreation. It allows the achievement of "natural family planning."

We want to emphasize that the natural methods imply a specific lifestyle and ethical behavior, which appeals to the responsibility of spouses, and which is based on unconditional respect for the dignity of the person, the true nature of marriage, the primary and fundamental value of life, and the appreciation of sexuality as a gift of God.

Over the past 60 years, the study of the symptoms which accompany the cycle of a woman's fertility has revolutionized knowledge of them and has allowed people to decide responsibly about the natural spacing of childbirth. Having moved far beyond the calendar method, "rhythm," the modern methods are reliable and precise ways of trying to achieve or postpone pregnancy. These natural methods rest on a

sound scientific foundation. Today, rapid advances in scientific research and technology are enhancing the use of these methods. But public opinion about natural methods is often deficient and sometimes erroneous.

Therefore, we affirm the value of the natural regulation of fertility.

- The natural methods are easy to teach and understand. They can be used in any social context and do not require literacy.
- The health of mothers and infants is furthered through spacing childbirth in a natural way which harms neither the mother nor her baby. Natural methods do not harm the health of couples.
- The freedom and rights of the wife and husband are respected through these methods which center around the woman and are based on the integrity of her body.
- Because they indicate the time of fertility, the natural methods can help couples to achieve pregnancy. These methods have brought joy to couples facing problems of apparent infertility.
- The natural methods can develop a deeper interpersonal relationship between a wife and husband, based on communication, shared decisions, and mutual respect.

The use of these methods reinforces marriage and hence strengthens family life.

- The natural methods promote a positive attitude to the child and maintain reverence for human life at all stages of development.
- The natural methods are compatible with all cultures and all religions.
- Development of sexual responsibility, understood as chastity before marriage and fidelity in marriage, is fostered by knowledge of our fertility. The teaching of natural family planning is therefore of primary importance in preserving reproductive health, including the prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- These methods do not place a financial burden on families; hence they are welcomed by many women and men in developing countries.

Recommendations:

In the light of the benefits of natural methods and firmly believing that every woman has the right to understand her fertility:

1. We recommend that the Church significantly increase efforts to teach the religious and human values contained in her tradition, specifically in *Humanae vitae* and *Familiaris consortio*, in the catechesis of Pope John Paul II, "On Human Love in the Divine Plan," and in other magisterial documents.
2. We recommend that the natural methods should be available to all couples everywhere. We call on governments and private organizations to positively assist and support couples in this task.

3. We recommend that the natural methods should be taught in all medical faculties. We call on the medical profession to study and promote the scientific methods of natural family planning as responsible parenthood and to make them available to women and men.
4. We recommend that the natural methods be gradually taught to young women and men before they enter married life.
5. We support breastfeeding for the good of the family, the child and the mother and as a way of spacing childbirth. We encourage public policy which will enable mothers to breastfeed their children.
6. We recommend that there be more multidisciplinary research to assist couples in achieving respon-

sible parenthood through natural means.

7. We recommend that the natural methods receive appropriate funds for research and promotion of the regulation of human fertility.
8. We recommend that national associations be established in all countries, so that promoters of the different natural methods can collaborate, support one another, and exchange information.

We ask pastors to give effective attention to the pastoral directives formulated in *Humanae vitae* and *Familiaris consortio* and to give concrete support to initiatives for research and teaching the natural methods.

Coming together from different nations, cultures and religious tra-

ditions, we express our gratitude to the Catholic Church which has strongly encouraged responsible parenthood through the use of natural methods of regulating fertility. In 1993, the Church celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Encyclical *Humanae vitae*. As we remember the prophetic teaching of Pope Paul VI, we thank Pope John Paul II for his teaching in *Familiaris consortio* and for his continuing support and encouragement. We also thank Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo and the Pontifical Council for the Family for making this meeting in Rome possible.

As we look to the future in hope and confidence, we thank all those couples throughout the world who have chosen the natural methods as the authentic alternative and the dedicated teachers who help and inspire them. ■

The Participants of the 1992 Summit on NFP:

Australia: Drs. John & Lyn Billings.

Austria: Dr. Josef Roetzer and Dr. Romana Widhalm.

Belgium: Dr. Andre Devos.

Chile: Dr. Alfredo Perez.

France: Mme. Angela De Malherbe; and Drs. Francois & Michele Guy.

Germany: Prof. Dr. Gunther Freundl.

Great Britain: Dr. Anna Flynn.

Guatemala: Sr. Francesca Kearns, C.C.V.I.

India: Sr. Catherine Bernard.

Italy: Dr. Anna Capella; Dr. Elena Ciacci; Fr. Lino Ciccone, C.M.; Prof. Sergio Cortesi; Dr. Achille Dede; and Dr. Salvatore Manucuso.

Japan: Mr. Kinji Nishimura.

Netherlands: Fr. Bonifacio Honings, O.C.D.

Poland: Dr. Hanna Goszczynska and Dr. Wanda Poltawski.

Rwanda: Fr. Henryk Hoser, S.A.C.

Slovakia: Dr. Stefan Horvath and Dr. Miroslav Mikolasik.

Spain: Msgr. Ignacio Carrasco de Paula; Prof. Joaquin Fernandez-Crehuet; Rev. Prof. Ramon Garcia de Haro; and Prof. Enrique Gomez Garcia.

Switzerland: Fr. Georges Marie Martin Cottier, O.P.

USA: Mrs. Mercedes Arzu Wilson; Mr. William N. Corey; Rev. Dr. William Gibbons; Dr. Thomas Hilgers; Dr. Victoria Jennings; Dr. Hanna Klaus; Dr. Miriam Labbok; Dr. Claude Lanctot; Fr. Daniel McCaffrey; Bishop James T. McHugh; Fr. Denis L. St. Marie; Dr. Janet E. Smith; and Dr. H. William Taylor.

Uruguay: Fr. Pedro Richards, C.P.

"A Special Request"

How many of you have been asked such questions as: "Can NFP work for women with irregular cycles?"; or, "What's the difference between NFP and contraception?"

These and so many more questions are commonly asked in the context of NFP classroom instruction. Understandably, experienced NFP teachers have found a variety of ways to answer their clients. Experienced NFP teachers

know what type of language, i.e., imagery, phrases, pieces of information, analogies, etc., open the adult student's mind and heart to hearing the messages which they have to offer. However, these pearls of wisdom are not easily shared among NFP teachers. This is mostly due to the fact that NFP teachers have limited opportunities in which to share their experiences. Events of collaboration are usually provided in the

NFP teacher's immediate region, through the meetings of one or two organizations to which an NFP teacher may belong, or at special national conferences. Although these events are invaluable and eagerly awaited, NFP teachers need more regular vehicles of communication.

The DDP would like to help NFP teachers share their expertise with others in the country. We have a special request: **"Won't you share your wisdom with your colleagues and others by sending in your answers to commonly asked questions?"**

THE NFP TEACHER'S MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Church Teachings (The moral/spiritual questions):

1. "Is there really any difference between NFP and contraception?" "Isn't NFP just another form of birth control?"
2. "The Bible says we should be 'fruitful and multiply,' why should we try to control births?"
3. "I would never support promiscuity, but if a couple is truly in love, isn't intercourse a natural expression of that love even before marriage?"
4. "Who thinks that God is present during intercourse? Isn't that an obsession of religious fanatics?"
5. "How can a couple use NFP if one spouse is opposed to it?"
6. "Couples should have intercourse any time they want, it can only strengthen a marriage. Wouldn't abstinence cause stress in a marriage and ultimately hurt it?"
7. "But what about the woman whose husband is abusive, shouldn't she be protected by artificial contraception all the time?" "How could NFP help her in that type of situation?"
8. "Only people who are afraid of sexuality follow the Church's teachings and use NFP."

NFP (the "method of family planning" questions):

9. "Oh, I heard of NFP, isn't that the 'Rhythm' thing?"
10. "How effective is NFP in postponing a pregnancy?"
11. "Can NFP help me get pregnant?"
12. "Aren't the woman's fertile signs too difficult to learn to recognize?"
13. "Only educated, literate women can learn STM and OM."
14. "How long are the periods of abstinence?"
15. "My husband could never abstain, that's not natural."
16. "Isn't it 'unnatural' to take a temperature, do a cervical self check, and observe one's mucus every day? Or, 'Isn't it unnatural to chart one's fertility every day?"
17. "If these are such 'couple oriented' methods, why does it look like the woman has to 'do it all'?" "I mean, does the man have any role in NFP?"
18. "Too many things affect my cycle. Between medication and stress I'm much too irregular to use NFP."
19. "I know a woman who got pregnant and soon afterward had her period. If things like that can happen, I don't believe that the fertile signs can be trusted in general!"
20. "Can post-partum, non-breastfeeding women use NFP?"
21. "Can post-partum, breastfeeding women use NFP?"
22. "Can premenopausal women use NFP?"

We have spelled out several commonly asked questions and negative statements with regard to NFP and the Church's teachings on conjugal love and responsible parenthood, and we would like you to respond to them. The questions and statements are grouped into the categories of Church teachings (the moral and spiritual); and NFP as a method of family planning. We have tried to express the question or statement in a manner which is typical for the client. If you can say it better, or have other commonly asked questions not listed on page 8, please write them down, include your response, and send them to us.

There are no deadlines to this request. Simply send in your response when you have the time. Please type or print clearly and make sure to include your:

1. Name & address;
2. Day time telephone number;
3. Method of NFP you teach and school of NFP in which you were trained.

Responses will be printed in subsequent issues of the newsletter.

Depending upon the amount and type of responses we receive in a year's time, the DDP will try to choose the best and publish them in a format which you will be able to easily reproduce and use as a resource in the classroom. In essence, these future *NFP Talking Points*, will have been written by you, the NFP teachers. The DDP would see to their distribution to the dioceses (through the NFP coordinator) and to other appropriate groups within the Church.

Now is the time to share your wisdom! Please take a close look at the questions and statements on page 8. Choose two or three questions (or as many as you like) that either "hit home", or which you have had to answer many times. Try to write your response as succinctly as possible. You may get several NFP teachers together and write a joint response. We only ask you to make sure all authors include their names on the responses. We look forward to hearing from you! ■

COORDINATORS' CORNER

NFP in Arlington: Striving for Responsible Parenthood

Robert E. Laird

Assistant Director for Family Life
Diocese of Arlington, Virginia

The Diocese of Arlington comprises Northern Virginia and has about 260,000 Catholics in a total population of about 2 million people. In the past three years Bishop John R. Keating has ordained 20 diocesan priests and currently has 50 seminarians for this 60-parish diocese. Last year the diocese had about 1,900 weddings and taught NFP to 277 couples. The NFP coordination is within the Office for Family Life. Currently, the sole provider of NFP in the diocese is the Couple to Couple League who has about 20 volunteer couples teaching in parishes around the diocese.

The diocesan NFP program was not created overnight. It began in 1975 when our former bishop asked the Couple to Couple League (CCL) to establish a program. In the early years, the number of teachers and the number of students rose and fell until 1986. Since then, there has been a steady rise. For example, in 1986, 136 couples were taught, and in 1992 that number has more than doubled. Because of our growth, we are often asked the question, "WHY?"

One of our answers to that question rests with our clergy. Our greatest promoters of NFP are our clergy! We are blessed with a tremendous number of vocations for a diocese of this size, and our young priests are well-grounded in our faith. The Arlington clergy understand the importance of married couples living as responsible parents. They see the impact that the NFP teachers and users make in their parishes in terms of role modeling Christian parenting, and they wish to pass that gift onto other couples!

This enthusiasm of our clergy is also supported by diocesan policy. For example, the diocesan marriage preparation manual highly encourages priests to recommend that each engaged couple takes a complete NFP course prior to marriage. We see the fruit of this policy working in the 70% or so, of engaged couples attending our classes.

There are other elements which make up the answer to our success. They are:

Keeping NFP Instruction Focused

Within this context, there have been several specific areas that this office focuses on to ensure a quality program.

1) NFP is taught only within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church on Christian marriage.

We teach NFP as the "exception," not the "norm." By this we mean that the "norm" is children. Within the sacrament of marriage we know that the unitive and procreative aspects of conjugal relations cannot exist apart from each other. Only for important reasons should couples consciously avoid conception in a given month, then they may use NFP. All of our teachers understand and live this principle.

It is true that many of the couples taking our classes do so to avoid pregnancy. However, on a recent survey taken several months after a class, one of our NFP teaching couples found a substantial change in attitude among their students. Currently those clients who had wanted to avoid pregnancy were now saying that children were to be wanted. In fact, several of those couples were either expecting, recently had a child, or were trying to achieve pregnancy. Without exception they were all excited about it! This shift in attitude reaffirmed our belief that before we can teach couples NFP, they must first understand and believe what the Church

teaches regarding sexuality and children within the sacrament of marriage. Only then will they be able to prayerfully and unselfishly apply NFP.

2) We teach NFP in the parishes as part of the parish adult education programs.

In order for us to be consistent in our programming we do not teach NFP as a form of "Catholic birth control". We teach and preach it within the context of Christian marriage and with the truths as explained to us in *Humanae vitae* and *Familiaris consortio*. In bringing NFP to the people in the parishes, we strive to communicate this philosophy. It is therefore important for us to use couples who are living examples of this teaching.

We have a goal to place at least one NFP teaching couple in each parish working for the pastor. This means that the teachers may have to do more than NFP. Some of our teachers are also involved with CCD, RCIA, Baptism classes, youth ministry, and marriage preparation. This shows the parish priests that the NFP teaching couple understands the big picture of Christian marriage and, although competent to teach NFP, is not focused on a single issue.

3) The presenters in the diocesan marriage preparation program are also the role models of marital chastity.

We have a diocesan two-day Conference for the Engaged that is one element

of a couple's marriage preparation. Ten years ago, during this conference, an NFP teacher came in and gave a one-hour presentation on NFP. That was basically the only time during the weekend that the subject was discussed. Now, NFP is an integral part of the Conferences. How can we talk about communication without mentioning the most intimate form of communication of sexual intercourse? How can we talk about Christian decision making without discussing one of the ultimate decisions in marriage; i.e., to postpone trying to conceive a child? NFP teachers are now part of each of the weekend conferences routinely participating in several of the topics discussed by the Conference team.

A very important element of our program is that all of the presenting couples in the Conference for the Engaged Program (not just the NFP presenters) must be living out the teachings of the Church with regard to marital chastity. All presenters must be in a valid marriage recognized by the Church and agree that only NFP is the appropriate means for married couples to live out their parenthood responsibly.

We normally recruit teachers only from couples who have taken NFP classes or by the personal recommendation of a member of the clergy. We see these couples as holding the future of our diocese. By their example, both within the Conference for the Engaged classes, and in their visibility in their

parishes, they model Christian parenting. While they may not be NFP teachers, they are strong NFP witnesses within the faith community.

4) We meet with transitional deacons and the new priests.

To ensure the continued support of our clergy we meet with all new clergy in order to help them understand what is available with regard to the marriage preparation and enrichment programs in the diocese. NFP has a place in all of these discussions.

Prior to the ordination of new priests, and in coordination with the Diocesan Vocations Director, we meet with the transitional deacons to explain the marriage preparation program within the diocese and the role that NFP has in this program. We actively encourage the newer priests to participate in the diocesan Conference for the Engaged program. There they can see first hand how the Conference interfaces with the individual parish marriage preparation programs. This program has caused us to work well with new priests regarding this entire subject of chastity and Church teachings.

We have also found that whenever we have the opportunity to meet with large groups of priests on NFP, the number of students in our classes goes up.

Personal Holiness

While public speaking is an important attribute in identifying a potential NFP teacher, it is not so important as personal holiness. The ability to witness to the conviction by which our presenters live the truths of their vocation is central to effective communication. We know that we are not experts on marriage, but are all striving to glorify God through our families. We hope to intercept marriage problems before they become insurmountable. These can best be done by turning to Christ and His Church for guidance!

For further information on the NFP program of the Diocese of Arlington, VA, contact: Bob Laird, Assistant Director, Office for Family Life, 200 North Glebe Road, #700, Arlington, VA 22203; 703-841-2550. ■

ERRATUM—FALL 1992 NEWSLETTER

The article, *Friendly Collaboration and Fruitful Achievement*, by Dr. Zhang De-wei (Fall 1992) contained an error (second paragraph, p.3.) in the reported statistics on effectiveness. It was also missing an important part of the same sentence. The correct sentence should read as follows:

The effectiveness rate was 98.82% Woman Year and the continuation rate was 93.04% Woman Year at the end of the 12 months.

In addition to this error, you should know that in trying to serve the interests of brevity we omitted in the introduction to the report details of the history of NFP in China. Family of the Americas was gracious enough to indicate that Mercedes Wilson, Fr. Denis St. Marie, and Dr. Francisca Kearns were the originators of the work in China and initiated the whole teacher training programs, expanding it to six other regions, including Shanghai and Beijing. Family of the Americas was the sole sponsor of this study.

We apologize for these errors.

NEWS BRIEFS

★★★★★★ DDP ANNOUNCEMENTS

The DDP would like to congratulate the following diocesan NFP programs for achieving Endorsement according to the National Standards:

New Jersey
Archdiocese of Newark
Pennsylvania
Diocese of Harrisburg
Arizona
Diocese of Phoenix

The DDP would like to congratulate NFP of the Alleghnies (PA) for achieving Approval as a comprehensive NFP teacher training program according to the National Standards.

At this time we would like to welcome the Archdiocese of St. Paul, MN to the Endorsement process.

The DDP joyfully announces the birth of Silvia and Felipe Juarez second daughter, Gabriella, on February 9, 1993. *Congratulations to the proud parents and big sister Evelyn!*

★★★★★★ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bishop Eugene Gerber, Diocese of Wichita, KS designated the week of October 18-25, 1992 as NFP week in his diocese and published a letter concerning NFP in *The Catholic Advance* (the diocesan paper) a week before. On Sunday, Oct. 18, 1992 NFP brochures were inserted in all parish bulletins. Homilies on NFP were given to all pastors for their use on that day. The Prayers for the Faithful during Mass reflected NFP concerns. And NFP teachers and/or users were on hand after Masses in most

of the parishes to answer questions. This activity was followed by an informational article on NFP in the next issue of the diocesan paper.

NFP coordinator, Ruth S. Taylor, M.D., and co-coordinator, Charmaine Campanini, CNFPP, are most grateful for Bishop Gerber's leadership. And so are all of us! The DDP would like to encourage our readers to send a "thank you" note to Bishop Gerber for such a beautiful expression of support. Send cards to: Diocese of Wichita, 424 N. Broadway, Wichita, KS 67202. (For those of you who have never written to a bishop, simply address the card with "Most Rev. Eugene J. Gerber," and address him as either "Bishop Gerber," or "Your Excellency.")

THANK YOU BISHOP GERBER !!!!!

Two long time NFP promoters were honored by being asked to give presentations to the bishops at their annual national workshop (continuing education) in Texas, February 2, 1993. Under the section entitled "Success Stories," Kay Ek, Diocese of St. Cloud, MN, spoke on "NFP", and Rose Fuller, Northwest Family Services, spoke on "Teaching the Christian Vision of Sexuality to the Young." Congratulations ladies!

If you know of any other "NFP troopers" who have been spreading the message, please tell us their stories!

The American Academy of NFP is calling for professional papers for its Annual Meeting, Omaha, NE, July 22-24, 1993. Abstracts must be submitted on or before April 23, 1993. Presenters of selected papers will be notified by May 28, 1993. Contact: Lorna Cvetkovich, M.D., Chairperson, Science and Research Committee, AANFP, 1035 North Emporia, Suite 290, Wichita, KS 67214.

We sadly announce the passing of Dr. James Furlong, Diocese of Albany, N.Y. Dr. Furlong along with his wife, Margaret, have been NFP pioneers in New York for many years.

We ask for your prayers for the repose of Dr. Furlong's soul and for the comfort of his family and friends who miss him so much.

★★★★★★ UPCOMING EVENTS

March 8-11, 1993. The Billings Ovulation Method Association will hold an NFP Teacher Training Workshop in San Francisco, CA for new teachers. Drs. Lyn and John Billings will be among the faculty. Contact: BOMA, c/o NFP Center of W.D.C., Inc., P.O. Box 30239, Bethesda, MD 20824; 301-897-9323.

March 25, 1993. The American Academy of NFP invites all promoters of NFP to mark their calendars for the day/week of March 25th, 1993 to celebrate National NFP Day. Initiated in 1991, the event received wide media attention and proved to be an excellent vehicle for promotion of NFP programs at the local level. Brochures are available. Contact: Kathy Rivet, Chairperson, Public Relations, AANFP, 4 Winter Circle, RFD #3, Manchester, NH, 03013; 603-424-5191.

★★★★★★ MATERIALS

Diocese of St. Cloud, MN has available a new video. The first in a series of two videos on NFP and breastfeeding. Entitled, *Breastfeeding and NFP*, this 15 minute video features interviews with

physicians, lactation experts, and NFP-user couples. It is a dynamic vehicle which spreads the good news of NFP in a soft-sell approach.

Written with the new parent in mind, this is a high quality, informative, and inspiring video. It is ideal for use in a hospital setting. It can also be used in parishes during sessions for Marriage or Baptism preparation. *Contact: Kay Ek, Office of NFP, 316 North 7th Ave., St. Cloud, MN 56303; 612-252-2100.*

Sacred Heart Medical Center, Spokane, WA completed a series of bulletin inserts on the Church's teachings on human sexuality, conjugal love, responsible parenthood, and NFP. The 8x10 loose-leaf format of the inserts is also appropriate for NFP classroom use. The text of the inserts is available in booklet form and can easily be used for marriage preparation or even as a catechetical tool. *Contact: Joy DeFelice, R.N., NFP Program, Dept. of Educational Services, Sacred Heart Medical Center, West 101 Eighth Ave., TAF-C9, Spokane, WA 99204; 509-455-3131.*

NFP — Diocesan Activity Report
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Diocesan Development Program
for Natural Family Planning

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.

The activities of the DDP for NFP are generously funded by a grant from the Knights of Columbus

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF HUMANAE VITAE

Celebrations Around the Country

"*Humanae Vitae*— Celebrating the 25th Anniversary" Georgetown, IL March 26-28, 1993

Illinois NFP Association

Heading the list of speakers for the thirteenth annual conference of INFPA are: Bishop John J. Myers, Peoria; Bishop Roger Kaffer, Joliet; Daniel C. Hauser, Ph.D, College of St. Francis; and Donna Dausman, Family Life Director, Springfield. *Contact: Mary Ann Heinz, Catholic Social Service, 413 N. Monroe, Peoria, IL 61603; 309-671-5720.*

"*International Humanae Vitae Conference*" Omaha, NE July 25-30, 1993

*Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study
of Human Reproduction*

This special celebration will bring together internationally known experts in NFP. Conference topics will emphasize scientific contributions to NFP. In addition, many theological as well as inspirational presentations will be offered. *Contact: Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, 6901 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68106-2604; 402-390-6600.*

"*Humanae Vitae: The Gift, The Vision, The Promise*"

Santa Clara, CA

March 5-6, 1993

California Association of NFP

The California Association of NFP (CANFP) was established to promote and support the use of NFP. CANFP seeks to unite users, providers, and supporters of NFP in the state of California. CANFP respects the differences in NFP methodologies, and focuses upon common goals in a multi-cultural and non-sectarian context.

Conference speakers include noted family therapist, Clayton Barbeau and the Drs. John and Evelyn Billings. Conference topics will be offered in English and Spanish. Topics will cover the relationship of NFP and premenopause and the "authenticity of abstinence."

Please note: The Billings Ovulation Method Association of the United States (BOMA) will hold its continuing education and recertification sessions in tandem with the CANFP conference. Dates are March 5-7, 1993. *Contact: CANFP, Diocese of San Jose, P.O. Box 58008, Santa Clara, CA 95052; 408-983-0200. For BOMA sessions, contact: Hanna Klaus, M.D. NFP Center of W.D.C., Inc., P.O. Box 30239, Bethesda, MD 20824; 301-897-9323.*

"*Celebrating 25 Years of Diocesan NFP Ministry— A National Banquet*" Omaha, NE July 24, 1993

*The Diocesan Development
Program for NFP*

In lieu of the DDP's biennial conference a banquet will be held for diocesan NFP coordinators, teachers, and their spouses in Omaha, NE, on Saturday, July 24, 1993. Following the dinner, presentations to be made will focus upon the unique nature of NFP services offered under the auspices of the Church. For those who cannot attend this banquet, audio tapes will be available upon request.

Please note: The DDP will not hold its biennial national conference in order to encourage all diocesan NFP personnel and their clients to attend the week long celebration sponsored by the Pope Paul VI Institute. *Contact: DDP, 3211 4th St., N.E., W.D.C. 20017; 202-541-3240.*