

Natural Family Planning

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Thinking About Human Sexuality

Most Rev. Norman F. McFarland, Bishop of Orange, CA

To ask people to direct an occasional thought toward sex might strike one as rather strange in an age so obviously sex-obsessed that we can rightly wonder if much else is ever thought about. But that is precisely the point; the typical modern person hardly ever thinks about sex: "He dreams of it, of course, by day and night; craves for it; pictures it; is stimulated or depressed by it, drools over it. But this frothing, steaming activity is not thinking . . . Thinking means bringing the power of the mind to bear: thinking about sex means striving to see sex in its innermost reality and in the function it is meant to serve."

This observation by Frank J. Sheed, made some forty-five years ago in *Society and Sanity* deserves to be repeated as we mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Humanae vitae*. In this encyclical—to my mind one of the great and prophetic religious happenings of the Twentieth Century—Paul VI does what most people do not do: he *thinks* about sex and, within the total vision of the person, gives due consideration to the role sex plays in the all-encompassing, interpersonal dynamic of conjugal love. For it is only conjugal love, that special and unique and many faceted love of husband and wife, that gives true meaning to the sex act as one of its components. In that context, sex shines with splendor, not as an isolated biological phenomenon designed solely for self-gratification, but as an expression of the innermost being of human persons seeking their role and purpose in human life,

with its origin, as the Second Vatican Council said in "God who is love." For it is the plan of God that has to be the key consideration no less in sexuality than in all other aspects of existence. "What does God have in mind here?" is at least the implicit question that should guide the course of every human action.

"A Communion of Life and Love"

Given the nature of sex in all of its physiological and psychological reality, it does not take great genius to ascertain what nature's God had in mind when fashioning the faculty and implanting the sexual instinct in humans. It has something to do with carrying on the human race, right? And not just coincidentally or as an afterthought. Moreover, since parenthood is hardly limited solely to the act of generation, but calls for sustained care and nurturing in a communion of life and love, in a context of commitment, responsibility and sacrifice, and looks to a unity that withstands all challenges and dangers, the sex act that is naturally directed toward generating new life is also meant to bolster and strengthen the bond of marital love that succors that life.

Humanae vitae situated in the context of the Second Vatican Council and drawing upon the Council's deliberations, was a summary statement and reaffirmation of this vision of the Church regarding marriage, family life, human sexuality, and responsible parenthood. As such, and within that entire vision, it emphasized the inseparable nature of

these unitive and procreative dimensions of sexual intercourse within marriage, a connection to be perceived and respected, the rejection of which can be only an invitation to disaster. Paul VI viewed God-designed sex for what it is and therefore could clearly recognize its

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In This Issue . . .

we conclude our year long celebration of the 25th anniversary of the encyclical *Humanae vitae* with an article from Bishop Norman F. McFarland of the Diocese of Orange, CA (p. 1). Continuing our look at the pioneers of NFP in the United States, two articles are offered in the fifth of this series: "The Story of Northwest Family Services" (p. 3); and "A Life Time of Service, Edward F. Keefe, M.D." (p. 4). Due to the length of these articles, Coordinators' Corner will not be featured in this issue.

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aberrations: whether as the attitude that interprets "responsible sex" as hassle free sex, in terms of how to enjoy it more while "suffering" its consequences less; or the stance that sees the function *in toto* as merely biological generation, in isolation from its image of God's all-encompassing love. Both are distortions of the reality of sex, much as one would have only a distorted understanding of the human eye if he had examined it solely on a platter and never in the human face.

In the light of all this and when you think about it (there's *that word* again), it should not really have surprised anyone that *Humanae vitae* reaffirmed the constant and unambiguous teaching of the Church on the wrongness of contraception in all situations,

... which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible. (HV, #14)

The problem, however, is that it was *not* thought about, especially in the rich and carefully reasoned context of the encyclical which was not even read before it was subjected to a firestorm of criticism and rejection. And that is a fact. It is also a fact that it has not been widely read since (I have rarely encountered anyone who has read it), and most people under the age of forty have never even heard of it—or the teaching it espouses.

A further fact is the saddest of all. If there was ever a prophecy fulfilled, it was Pope Paul's warning that the isolation of sex from its designed unitive and procreative roles, and sought for its own pleasurable sake, can only lead to the savaging of our culture and undermine the stability of society itself. Welcome to the end of the Twentieth Century and its revered logo the condom! Or would

Erratum: In the Summer 1993 issue of the newsletter, Don Kramer's name was omitted from the list of attendees on p. 12, in the article "Striving for Unity." Don is the Director of Twin Cities NFP Center, Inc., MN. We are sorry for this oversight.

anyone wish to argue that today's sexual "liberation," unleashed by the easy availability of contraceptives and their unrelenting promotion, including most recently in our schools, has led to truth and happiness, to full and rich lives, strong families, wholesome communities—in short, to the enhanced dignity of men and women? If so, let it be argued

in the light of how far we have progressed over the past thirty years; illegitimate births have gone from 5.3% to 28%, children with single mothers from 8% to 28.6%, children on welfare from 3.5% to 12.5%, the teenage suicide rate from 3.6% to 11.3%, SAT

scores have dropped from 975 to 899, violent crimes (per 100,000) have risen from 16.1 to 75.8. We also have today the highest teenage pregnancy rate in American history, the AIDS epidemic, the highest abortion rate in the Western World, record child abuse, rape and incest.

"Television Programming Saturated with Sex"

Television programming is saturated with sex. We are treated to the sexual exploits of high school students by tongue-clucking media people, who at the same time argue for tax dollars going to the raunchiest "artistic" productions in the name of freedom of expression. "Spur Posse" parents boast of their sons as "virile specimens" and shrug off their sexual fun and games with "boys will be boys," while the fun-loving kids rack up their scores with such explanations as "Sex to us is like taking vitamins. Because if you don't have sex, you're not going to grow up right." I presume they just as conscientiously drink their milk and eat Wonder Bread in their pursuit of proper growth.

Students in our schools are given explicit instruction in the use of condoms (which are supplied to them), and their educators tell us that by no means are they thus encouraging them to engage in sex ("Just because a condom is avail-

able doesn't mean kids are suddenly going to develop a sexual interest and use it.") They also teach driver-education in order to keep the kids off the road, right?

And then, if there has been a consistent theme precipitously, and almost compulsively, pursued over the years by those insisting that the Church must

change its teaching on artificial contraception, it has been that such change is necessary for the stability of marriage itself. For example, the Catholic Theological Society of America's report, *Human Sexuality*, some years ago noted "the overwhelming num-

ber and authority of sincere, respected, and experienced people" who contend that use of contraceptives can serve to

deepen the mutual love and respect of spouses, bring peace and healing, and raise the whole level of moral responsibility of the marriage partners.

My question: if the use of contraceptives promotes the family good and strengthens marriage, and if more people are using contraceptives than ever before (as indeed statistics establish), why are more marriages breaking up than ever before? We have today the highest divorce rate in American history. Could it just possibly be that artificial contraception is not all that beneficial to the stability and happiness of marriage after all?

Yes, I really do believe we might usefully spend some time thinking about sex, and suggest that it would help to have a copy of *Humanae vitae* on hand when we do.

This article appeared in an abbreviated version in the July 30, 1993, issue of Newsday under the title, "As Contraception Increases, Society Falls." It was first published in its entirety in the July 1993 issue of The Diocese of Orange Bulletin (Vol. 17, No. 7) under the title, "About Sex." It is reprinted here in its entirety with minor edits and with the permission of the Diocese of Orange. ■

"... thinking about sex means striving to see sex in its innermost reality...."

NFP PIONEERS: "The Story of Northwest Family Services"

Beth Wells

The fundamental thing that strikes one in reviewing the roots and history of Northwest Family Services is the interplay of time, serendipity, and grace. The threads first began to draw together in a Lenten study group. That gathering brought Mike and Rose Fuller and Fr. Richard Huneger together in a meeting that was to change the lives and paths of both the Fullers and Fr. Huneger. Mike and Rose had been searching for answers to their questions about NFP and the Church's teachings on married love. The 1970s were times of upheaval and confusion and the Fullers, like so many other couples during those years, had been met with a great variety of conflicting responses to their questions. In the course of discussion, Fr. Huneger was asked to explain the Church's teaching on birth control. Rose remembers that "his answer was the first that seemed intelligent and comprehensive. It made sense." They were beginning to find some answers. Out of acquiring the skills and developing the structure to provide NFP services for their parish, St. John the Baptist in Milwaukie, Oregon, Rose and Mike helped to establish a parish team dedicated to learning more about NFP and the Church's teachings. Fr. Huneger, impressed by the commitment of these couples to the Church and to good scholarship, felt impelled to lend whatever support and assistance he could to their efforts.

The tracings that brought these people together actually began years earlier. Fr. Huneger had studied theology at Innsbruck, Austria. In 1968 he took a course titled "The Medical Foundations of Marital and Sexual Ethics," from Dr. Josef Roetzer. Of those years Fr. Huneger says, "We were arrogant, full of self-importance, sure that we were theologians, and what after all, could some layman tell us? We had never read

Humanae vitae and everything seemed open to debate. The significance of this teaching never really entered our consciousness. It all seemed terribly inconsequential and theoretical, not nearly as interesting as the theological fads of the times. I took notes copiously, but it was all water off a duck's back." It took many years for the significance of Dr. Roetzer's work to fully strike home.

As the parish team reviewed existing programs and materials they found Dr. Roetzer's research and methodology to be eminently clear and comprehensive, and his synthesis of the symptoms of fertility a breakthrough. Tutoring and collaboration began with the parish team when Dr. Roetzer visited Oregon in order to oversee Fr. Huneger's translation of his book, *Family Planning the Natural Way*. This collaboration is the foundation that Northwest Family Services is built upon.

In 1980, Mike and Rose completed the Human Life Foundation regional teacher training process. From the beginning, Northwest's philosophy was to create a learning environment that was open and invitational. They wished to teach all the signs of fertility in a positive manner, to uphold the dignity of married love, and to present the teaching of the Church in a way that people could hear and understand. The instructional approach was to be interactive, with couples applying the Sympto-Thermal principles to a variety of charting situations, including the provision of follow-up support. The instructional approach was reviewed and approved by a respected team evaluating theology, methodology, medical accuracy, and pedagogical approach. Throughout the process of development Dr. Roetzer reviewed and approved the methodology. This working relationship continues to this day.

In 1983 Northwest Natural Family

Planning Services incorporated and became an affiliate of Providence Hospital in Portland, Oregon. What had been envisioned originally as a parish program began to grow and began to offer classes in NFP for the entire community.

Simultaneously, increased requests for teacher education were made by people who wished to utilize Northwest's approach. This launched the second tier of services. Northwest developed a teacher education program that integrated lecture, diagnostic learning, and a supervised practicum with review of client files. In 1991 Northwest Family Services teacher education program was approved as a comprehensive NFP teacher training program through the Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning. Northwest has trained approximately 300 teachers in 22 states.

The movement into a second educational area, teen chastity, began in 1987. In doing NFP presentation to teens in schools and church groups, it became apparent that there was a tremendous need on the part of young people for formation in sexual ethics and morals. Development of "The Bob Squad" - a peer education program was enthusiastically received. The Squad are young people committed to abstinence, able and willing to talk with their peers about it. These are real flesh and blood teens from the front lines of the culture. They laugh and tell stories, fall in and out of love and crisis, listen to alternative rock, play Chopin and the drums, and know the monologues of Monty Python. They are living proof that chastity is possible in the lives of the average teenager.

In 1989, Northwest was awarded a Federal grant for a demonstration project to teach and evaluate a values based, family-centered abstinence education program. FACTS (*Family Accountability Communicating Teen Sexuality*) was born. FACTS is based on research findings in sexuality education, and particularly those of Stan Weed, Ph.D., Director of the Institute for Research and Evaluation. Dr. Weed's research provides a wealth of information about what works and what doesn't in the field of sexuality education. Now in its fourth year,

FACTS has reached over 6,000 parents and teens in Oregon. Curriculum and workbooks for junior and senior high students and parents, along with teaching aids are available nationally. NW Family Services also provides inservice presentations on teaching sexual abstinence to both public and private schools. In 1990, the name of the agency was changed from Northwest Natural Family Planning Services to Northwest Family Services to reflect the broader scope of services offered.

Northwest is currently piloting a new program, *Keys to Sexual Freedom*. This is a Catholic teen abstinence program that integrates the fruit of Dr. Weed's research with Catholic teaching in a positive setting that involves and empowers

parents and teens to live the gospel message.

The third educational effort began in 1991. Working with teens and married couples, it seemed only natural to complete the continuum by addressing the needs of adults preparing for marriage. Piloted in the Archdiocese of Portland, *Always Faithful* utilizes the Rite of Marriage to "unpack" both the theology of marriage and practical issues. In five sessions, couples become familiar with the Catholic theology of marriage, the wedding liturgy itself, and examine issues such as family of origin, communication styles, conflict resolution, financial realities, sexuality, and NFP. Over the course of the series, participants meet five couples who share strong faith, a deep commitment to the Church's

teaching on marriage and family life along with a great sense of humor. *Always Faithful* works in partnership with parishes and pastors.

Paul VI in *Humanae vitae* speaks of married couples and says,

To them the Lord entrusts the task of making visible to men the holiness and sweetness of the law which unites the mutual love of the husband and wife with their cooperation with the love of God, the author of human life. (HV, #25)

This is the mandate the staff of Northwest Family Services seek to live out and the truth they seek to illuminate.

Beth Wells is the Youth Coordinator for Northwest Family Services. ■

NFP PIONEERS: "A Life Time of Service, Edward F. Keefe, M.D."

Edward F. Keefe, M.D. with Theresa Notare

Several months back DDP Special Assistant, Theresa Notare, gave me a call and asked if I would write on my years of teaching selective continence for fertility control. Something she said particularly struck me; she asked, "How did you become a pioneer in natural family planning?" My astonishment was not unlike the character who learned he had been speaking prose all his life when he thought it was just simple talk—a "pioneer?"—"me?" That said, I will try to give you an idea of how I became involved in the NFP movement.

My story goes back more than half a century; City College and Cornell Medical School. As a medical student I learned about Latz's *The Rhythm* (1933) and while interning in 1937, I coached a couple in "periodic continence" guided by Latz's book. But it wasn't only science which concerned me, I was also guided by the encyclical letter of Pius XI, *Casti connubii* (1931). A later Pope said the indications for responsible parenthood were indeed broad; and another said that he hoped scientists would improve our ability to spot the woman's fertile days. That was

what I wanted to do even then. Later, when the Pill came onto the scene, some began to question the Church, I never did.

On returning from service with the Armed Forces in WWII, and resuming my practice as a gynecologist, I read how the woman's waking temperatures rose 0.6F after ovulation and fell at menses. While most women could see if a fever-thermometer registered in the black or in the red part of the scale, to read it in numbers and to graph the daily reading was beyond some. So I designed a special open-scale thermometer graduated in tenths Fahrenheit (0.1F) instead of fifths (0.2F) and helped produce it in the industry. Thus was born the Ovulindex Thermometer. I described it in 1948 in the medical literature. I next designed (in 1951) a form on which a woman circled a number each day. On that form I emphasized that changes in the mucus from the cervix were to be observed to supplement the temperatures. Having studied a few less practical accompaniments of approaching ovulation, I had settled on rheology; i.e., the study of the properties of flow of the cervical

mucus as reported by A.F. Clift [*In Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 39:1 (1945)] as the most convenient guide. Their changes, along with the temperature and some other signs, indicated the days for continence to avoid pregnancy (or those on which to concentrate to assist pregnancy.)

At this point I would like to interject that it was never my intention to design a "method" of family planning. I had simply wanted to help Catholic couples live the Church's teachings. It was always my aim to conform to the teaching of the Church; and yet I did want to make things easier for couples. In my experience with practicing medicine, I had had many patients complain that the period of continence for postponing a pregnancy was "too long." I wanted to "cut" the number of days of continence. At that time I wasn't even interested in method successes. It was, and is my opinion, that a method which burdens the user excessively is soon sighted. In my practice I had also seen the extreme of continence; e.g., "We're going to live like brother and sister." (Yes, I used to hear that!) Such an approach to family planning while 100% effective in avoiding a pregnancy was subject to an eventual failure. And so, I attempted to teach what I called "timely continence" based upon the observation of a variety

of the signs of fertility. I simply left it up to the wife and her husband to decide which signs to chart.

In the second edition of the handbook I wrote for my thermometer (1953) I went into details, now well known, about the changes in the mucus. I illustrated with a drawing "Spinnbarkeit", that is, the capacity of mucus to form threads (which Clift's paper had put me on to.) My patients confirmed the findings for me. I was also encouraged by a book by the Dutch gynecologist J.G.H. Holt, *Marriage and Periodic Continence*, a real pioneer in the field of "natural fertility control" (he later was made a Knight of St. Gregory.)

Because the source of the mucus we were following was the cervix, at that time it seemed reasonable for the woman we were studying to gather it directly from the cervix. Because of this practice, the women discovered that the cervix went through changes along with the mucus. I began to study that change. In addition, I began to take medical photographs of these changes. I described in a paper how women followed these changes "to distinguish potentially fertile days" for continence, always *along with* the changes in the mucus and the temperature. Some important medical journals turned this paper down—one editor even said to me that the procedure was "of no value now that the pill was available." At last the *Bulletin of Sloane Hospital*, my alma mater, published it in 1962. I distributed 6,000 reprints of it and they became so popular that I decided to copy the important parts of it into the guide that went along with the Ovulindex Thermometer.

Since my early work, how often have I read, or heard, that the Sympto-Thermal method "combines the Billings ovulation and temperature methods." Not really! Sympto-Thermal, as a natural method of family planning has its own rules backed by its own research. STM was in use and named before the

Drs. Billings or OM became well known. Dr. John Billings wrote his book, *The Ovulation Method* with the subtitle, *The Rhythm Method, the Temperatures and Midcycle Symptoms*, in 1964. He kindly had sent me a copy in 1965 after he visited St. Vincent's Hospital in New York. I recall how some of our OB/Gyn staff turned around to smile at me (they weren't very encouraging) while he (un-



Edward F. Keefe, M.D.

wittingly apparently?) was confirming my own observations about the value of mucus at the vulva as a guide to what even he called at the time "the safe period." He favored the mucus sign that I had already described as valuable in 1953. By the time of his visit I had published (1962) as well

about the signs in the cervix itself mentioned above. Ten years later the Doctors Billings concentrated exclusively on the mucus symptom and turned away from the temperature check. Today, the Billings Ovulation method clearly teaches that temperature charting is not needed, and certainly that self examination of the cervix is not to be done, nor is cervical mucus ever to be collected from the cervix itself.

In promoting understanding and interpretation of all the signs of fertility, it was never my intention to exclusively focus upon any one sign. I always insisted that primary signs like the type and volume of mucus, and the changes in temperature should be considered along with secondary signs, such as breast tenderness, and even mood changes. Adding the physical signs in the cervix to all the others reduces uncertainty regarding timing of fertility. Despite my own thoughts, I have also found that most women will eventually settle on a favorite sign of fertility. Some will glance at the calendar, others will obsessively chart their temperatures, and still others will rely upon mucus only. I always left it up to the patient which sign(s) she should observe and how seriously she should apply them.

And yes, I have often heard the crude but practical question, "Is it safe today?", even though I had given all the information I could offer to a patient. It takes a great deal of time to help people look beyond their immediate concerns.

In a 1962 paper I suggested that knowledge of the changes in the cervix, its mucus and self-examination might become universal. Reflecting back upon these 30 years, it pleases me greatly to know that because of my efforts and those of other prominent physicians, the cervical signs have become known world-wide. These signs are part of the ST methodology in the manuals of John Kippley and Paul Thyma (Fr. Jan Mucharski) in the USA, Josef Roetzer, MD, in Austria, Sr. Paulette in India, Fr. Frank Richards in Australia, and Suzanne Parenteau-Carreau, MD, in Canada. We also know that in addition to the work of the Billings, Odeblad, and Hilgers on cervical mucus, today other researchers are studying the "validity" of the cervical signs; e.g., Loewit et al., reported in "Geburtshilfe und Frauenheilkunde," ("Obstetricians and Therapeutics for Women," 1987) on a "Selbstbeobachtungs methoden (SBM) der Familienplanung" (self observation method of family planning). I can't help but be proud of my colleagues who, like myself, have persevered

... in promoting on every occasion the discovery of solutions inspired by faith and right reason, let them strive to arouse this conviction and this respect in their associates. (HV, #27)

What do I now look forward to? It is my hope that others in my profession will take up the challenge to continue the work to refine the signs of the fertile time; and that all Catholic physicians will eventually promote these methods which truly uphold the laws of the Divine.

Edward F. Keefe, M.D. contributor to the ST method of NFP and inventor of the Ovulindex Thermometer, is now retired and lives in Greenwich, Connecticut. The Ovulindex Thermometer is made by Linacre Laboratories. NFP programs can purchase it directly from Linacre Laboratories or through wholesale and retail drugists. ■

The Pope's Countercultural Case Against Contraception

Philip F. Lawler

During the Summer of 1993 many articles were written on the Catholic Church in the United States due to the visit of the Holy Father to Denver for World Youth Day, and the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Humanae vitae*. As you may have noticed, most reports in the secular press on the Church and its teachings on sexuality were negative. The following article was published in the midst of the publicity on World Youth Day and provided a very refreshing support of the Church's teachings on birth control and human sexuality. It appeared in the August 13, 1993, issue of the *Wall Street Journal*. Written by Philip F. Lawler, editor of *Catholic World Report* an international monthly magazine, it's message is so clear that we have decided to reproduce it in its entirety for you. It is reprinted here with the permission of the *Wall Street Journal*, Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved, 1993.

Gathering in Denver this week, they will sing, dance, and—what's this?—pray, as they greet Pope John Paul II on his third trip to the United States.

If the Pope's "Youth Day" appearance looks like an innocuous pageant, do not be deceived. This, too, is the gathering of a counterculture, and many of these teenagers will return from the Rockies with plans as subversive as those their parent's generation brought home from upstate New York. Of course the social pendulum has swung, and the moral principles this counterculture will undermine are, roughly speaking, those that gained prominence during the Age of Aquarius.

Nowhere is this clash more obvious than on the question of human sexuality, and in particular in the Catholic opposition to artificial forms of birth control. This year the Catholic Church celebrates the 25th anniversary of *Humanae vitae*, the encyclical letter in which Pope Paul VI reaffirmed the traditional Christian belief that artificial contraception is immoral. John Paul II has frequently reinforced that message. He will indubitably repeat it to his young American audience this week.

Although the secular world does not ordinarily pay much attention to a papal encyclical, *Humanae vitae* is an exception. From the time of its appearance—

in the summer of 1968, when the shock waves from that earlier cultural revolution were reverberating around the world—to today, it has been a lightning rod for controversy. With the possible exception of *Das Kapital*, no other publication is so hotly disputed by people who have not read it.

Like *Das Kapital*, *Humanae vitae* contains a host of prophecies about social questions. Unlike Marx, Pope Paul has proven an accurate prophet. Secular critics will not be surprised to learn that Paul VI predicted that the widespread acceptance of contraception would "lead to conjugal infidelity and the general decline of morality." But *Humanae vitae* offered other, more intriguing predictions. Specifically, Paul VI foresaw the rapid rise in abortion, the growth of a movement to legalize euthanasia, the use of forcible sterilization by totalitarian governments, and the frightening surge in violence against women. Twenty-five years later, can anyone doubt that these prophecies were accurate?

The harsh criticism of *Humanae vitae* is odd, since the encyclical merely repeats what the Christian churches had taught from the earliest days of the Christian era, through the time of Calvin and Luther (who both unreservedly condemned contraception), until this century, when at the 1931 Lambeth Con-

ference, the Anglican communion became the first major Christian denomination to change its mind. Yet, at the same time the controversy is eminently understandable, because in *Humanae vitae*, and in the subsequent statements of John Paul II, the popes lay bare the fatal weakness of contemporary American culture.

A year ago in these pages, in the wake of the Los Angeles riots, William Bennett argued persuasively that the "root cause" of our nation's most troublesome social problems is the breakdown of the family. That argument is thoroughly compelling. Today 70% of the juvenile offenders in long-term correctional facilities grew up without a father in the household. And the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights argues that divorce and illegitimacy "are responsible for essentially all of the growth in poverty since 1970."

If family breakdown is the single greatest cause of poverty, crime, and drug abuse, then American society is clearly galloping in the wrong direction. Divorce now ends half of all marriages, and the rate of illegitimacy has increased by 57% in the past decade. More alarming still, the rise in out-of-wedlock births is most dramatic among educated, affluent women—the Murphy Brown syndrome—suggesting that the social stigma on illegitimacy is disappearing.

But if family breakdown is the "root cause" of our trouble, where is the taproot? Proponents of "traditional family values" are skating on thin ice as long as they avoid this central issue. Their arguments for chastity outside marriage can be reduced to a purely arbitrary statement that sex outside marriage is somehow "unseemly"—for reasons that older people (formed in pre-pill morality) take for granted, and that their children cannot understand, much less accept.

Traditionally, society has revered the family, formed by marriage, as the exclusive forum for both sexual intimacy and the rearing of children. When marital love is open to procreation, it links those two vital roles. Sever the link, make sex a recreational activity, and marriage—and consequently the family—is no longer unique. If sex is a form

of recreation, how can we plausibly deny teenagers the pleasure that their parents enjoy? If marriage is simply an emotional commitment, why should homosexual unions be denied legal recognition?

If the apostles of "free love" had delivered on their promises, this argument might be moot. But while contraceptive technology has expanded and social inhibitions have shriveled, today's sexual adventurers seem joyless and mechanical: beleaguered by the fear of disease, mistrustful of emotional commitments, incapable of true intimacy. In the last years of the decaying Roman Empire, epicures would vomit up one sumptuous feast to make room for another. In the long run, the epicures suffered from indigestion, and our modern-day sybarites have unearthed a whole new assortment of previously obscure sexual dysfunctions.

Against that grim hedonism, the Catholic counterculture offers an idealistic prescription for romantic married love. When the marital act involves a total "gift of self"—unencumbered by latex devices and hormone pills—the popes promise a stronger, deeper, and more lasting mutual love. So while the vast majority plunge headlong in the opposite direction, thousands of dedicated couples practice the self-mastery that is essential to natural family planning (NFP). The ideal is admittedly difficult to achieve, but the results justify the effort. (Doctors have told my own wife that another pregnancy might kill her. They did not tell her—because they probably did not know—how much our mutual forbearance would enrich our marriage.) Among married couples who eschew artificial contraception, and rely exclusively on natural family planning,

the rate of divorce is almost trivial; estimates range from a high of 3% to below 1%.*

Skeptics might point out that those estimates are misleading. The couples who use NFP are not a typical cross section of Americans; they are much more likely to be motivated by a strong religious faith. Is their eye-opening rate of marital success a tribute to NFP, or to the religious commitment that so often precedes it? For Pope John Paul, for his young fans in Denver—and perhaps for American society as a whole—either answer would be welcome.

**NB: Information regarding the relationship between NFP use and divorce in marriage is mostly anecdotal. Serious study needs to be done on this topic. Ed. ■*

Cardinal Says Teachings on Birth Control Defend the Dignity of the Poor

Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

Church teaching on birth control defends the dignity of the poor against aid programs which threaten their right to decide what is best for their families, said Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo. The cardinal, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, said programs promoting birth control as a requirement for international aid are a form of "contraceptive colonialism." Cardinal Lopez Trujillo made his remarks in a written message to participants in a late August pan-African conference marking the 25th anniversary of *Humanae vitae*. Conference organizers in Nairobi, Kenya, released in mid-September the cardinal's talk and resolutions passed by the participants.

"The myth of overpopulation is the greatest hoax and lie of the century," the resolutions said. Africa is rich in natural resources and "can easily sustain far more people than at present." The conference documents said African governments should stop spending money on

population control and start spending it on projects that help people: building roads, procuring clean water, improving medical care, buying books for libraries, and improving education. "The government misjudges the situation by attacking babies instead of its own mismanagement, ineptitude, corruption (and) greed," one of the resolutions said.

The resolutions also said large families are a precious treasure. "Health, joy, love, holiness are nurtured especially in beautiful large families, enriched by God's special graces and his protecting providence." "People should not believe the population myths piously mouthed by population controllers," they said. "By controlling population these deceptive propagandists try to cheat Africans of their future."

The conference participants asked pastors throughout Africa to explain clearly and forcefully the church's teaching on the regulation of births, the sacredness of human life and the voca-

tion of marriage. "We request that contraceptive imperialism by countries and international agencies be stopped immediately, and that this new form of colonialism be buried," they said.

The participants asked Catholics in the United States and other countries which heavily fund development programs to protest against the use of their tax dollars to promote "disgusting and immoral anti-life and pro-death activities." "Poor people see in *Humanae vitae* a defense of their dignity against unjust and abusive demographic policies," Cardinal Lopez Trujillo said in his message to the meeting. The cardinal said the encyclical's opposition to artificial birth control and contraceptive sterilization were "not arbitrary impositions. They are rooted in the creational project of God." ■

WELCOME!

The DDP welcomes the dioceses of El Paso, TX, Jackson, MS, and Pittsburgh, PA, to the Endorsement process of the National Standards.

NEWS BRIEFS



DDP Announcements

During the Spring of 1993 the DDP had asked you to take part in writing Congress to uphold the Hyde Amendment. At this time we'd like to thank you for your support. The vote to uphold Hyde was the first critical abortion-related vote in this Congress, and the respect life side won decisively! Please continue to pray for conversion of hearts through all people turning back to an acceptance of the sacredness of human life.

Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation, and World challenges Catholics and others to engage in a "spiritual and social reawakening to the moral and human cost of neglecting our children." In November, 1991, the bishops of the United States issued this statement which calls for renewed attention to children and families in our homes, parishes, communities, nation, and world. Two years after the issuance of this document, the dioceses are continuing to seek ways to creatively and effectively implement it. As a means of assisting and supporting the dioceses in these efforts, grants ranging from \$500-\$1,500 will be awarded on a one-time basis towards new diocesan initiatives which will implement the Campaign and serve as model projects for other dioceses.

The DDP knows that many diocesan NFP coordinators are involved in chastity education and fertility appreciation education. Some of you may have projects which could qualify for one of these grants. To be eligible for a small grant, a project must satisfy the following criteria:

1. It must be undertaken within the auspices of a Catholic Diocese and approved by the local ordinary;
2. It should undertake a new and creative initiative in seeking to share the message of the Catholic Campaign for Children and Families; and,
3. It should lend itself to replication or adaptation in other dioceses.

Deadline for applications is: January 1, 1994. Contact: USCC Department of Social Development and World Peace, 3211 4th Street, N.E., W.D.C. 20017; 202-541-3195.



Upcoming Events

December 2-4, 1993. The Sixth National and International Symposium on NFP will take place. Entitled, "Expanding NFP into the 21st Century," the symposium will be held at the Holiday Inn Georgetown, W.D.C. Sponsored by the National Coalition of NFP topics will include: "Innovative Approaches in the Expansion of NFP"; "LAM/NFP Interface"; and "Management Information System." Contact: National Coalition of NFP, c/o LA Regional Family Planning Council, 3600 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 600, Los Angeles, CA 90010; 213-386-5614; FAX, 213-368-4410.

January 22-30, 1994. The St. Joseph Healthcare System NFP Teacher Education Center, Albuquerque, NM, announces its new class for the Creighton Model of the Ovulation Method, Education Phase I (Phase II to take place June 4-10, 1994). The St. Joseph Healthcare System of Albuquerque is accredited by the American Academy of NFP. Contact: Shirley Hoefler, CNFPE, Director, NFP, St. Joseph Northeast Heights Hospital, P.O. Box 25555, Albuquerque, NM 87125; 505-888-7882.

January 29-February 5, 1994. Cruise the Caribbean with Clayton Barbeau! The well-known author, lecturer, and family therapist from San Francisco will offer several talks during the seven day cruise. Contact: Kay Ek, 1402 Kilian Blvd., St. Cloud, MN 56304; 612-252-7719.

February 4-6, 1994. BOMA will hold an OM teacher training session in the Diocese of Corpus Christi, TX. The session will be conducted in English and Spanish. A special feature will be the participation of the Drs. Billings in the training. Contact: Marge Harrigan, R.N., NFP Clinic, 4639 Corona—Suite 313 B, Corpus Christi, TX 78411; 512-852-0222.

HUMANAE VITAE Celebrations

October 9, 1993. The Diocese of Kalamazoo, MI will hold a conference commemorating the 25th anniversary of *Humanae vitae*. Entitled, "Love By Divine Design," the one day event will feature Lisa Everett, Co-Director, Family Life Office, Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend and Member of the NCCB Committee for the document, *Human Sexuality*. Contact: NFP Center, 65 East Emmett St., Battle Creek, MI 49017; 616-964-9474.

November 20, 1993. The Archdiocese of Newark, N.J. will hold an evening celebration of *Humanae vitae* with a Mass celebrated by Archbishop T. McCarrick followed by a special presentation by Rev. Benedict Groeschel. Contact: Karen Doyle, NFP, Holy Name Hospital, 718 Teaneck Road, Teaneck, N.J. 07666; 201-833-3121.

December 9-12, 1993. The Second International Congress on NFP will be held in Milan, Italy. Entitled, "NFP: Science, Culture, Experience, Towards the XXI Century," the program will feature advances in medical research and NFP program development. Presenters include: Dr. A. Flynn, England, Dr. M. Guy, France, Dr. V. Jennings, U.S.A., Dr. A. Capella, Italy, and Dr. S. Parentau-Carreau, Canada. Contact: Organizing Secretariat, Mrs. Mariella Lobefalo, C.A.Me.N., Via San Antonio 5, 20122 Milano, Italia.

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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