

FORUM

Diocesan Activity Report

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"Talking the Talk"

You've heard the comment "walk the talk," haven't you? Usually it's used to indicate the necessity of practicing what one preaches. That concept is certainly true, but more can be said. Not only should we be mindful that our actions speak louder than our words, but we also need to be aware of "how" we communicate with each other. This is especially true in NFP ministry. Our ministry typically involves a combination of "witnessing," or "walking the talk" and speaking publically, or "talking the talk."

NFP ministry counts on the witness of the people who promote it. We understand that both NFP and Church teachings on responsible parenthood are misunderstood by people within and without the Church. It is the witness of the couples who use NFP that speaks so eloquently to those who "don't get it." Witness can be "natural," as in how an NFP husband shows thoughtfulness to his wife. It can be informal, as when an NFP wife shares her experiences with a new friend over a cup of coffee. Witness can also be a combination of informal and formal, such as when a couple is

NFP ministry counts on the witness of the people who promote it.

asked to speak at a Pre-Cana, or marriage encounter. Whatever the format, witness plants good seed that, we pray, will later lead to conversion. In addition to this central way of promoting NFP, it should also be clear to NFP promoters that at one time or another, we will find ourselves speaking in front of a group of people. It is when we are in that setting that we may need some tips to help us put our "best foot forward" and do our utmost to be strong instruments in God's hands.

From time to time all NFP promoters should take a critical look at "how" we communicate the messages under our charge. For example, when you are asked to give a talk be sure you are clear on "what" the task is that you have been asked to do. For example, if the Family Life Director requests that you speak on NFP for 45 minutes at the next Pre-Cana, ask him or her to be more specific. Will an overview of methodology be the topic? Should you look at just the benefits of NFP use in marriage? Or, will a presentation primarily concerned with Church teachings be the focus? The

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In this issue . . .

we take a look at the importance of effective communication for NFP acceptance. There are a variety of ways in which we communicate the good news of NFP and the truth of the Church's teachings which support its use in married life. Some of those ways are formal, as in classroom instruction, and others are informal, as in the daily witness of an NFP couple. No matter what form communication takes, it is always important to put our best foot forward. In line with our focus on communication, be sure to take a look at our new column "Around the World." We think it will be important and fun, to get to know the NFP community internationally. Happy Fall!

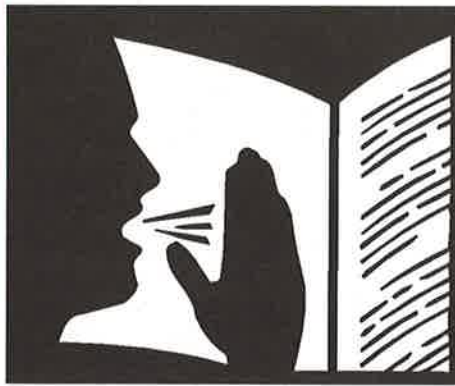
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topic of NFP is complex and can be approached in many ways, so the first step is to define what aspect of the topic you will speak on. Linked to the content of your talk are the essential points you want your audience to remember when they go home. Forty-five minutes is not a long time and usually 15 minutes are saved for questions and answers. You would therefore have to drive home your points in 30 minutes or so. Within that time constraint only two or three points realistically should be offered.

In addition to the content of a talk on NFP, some general tips on public speaking should also be kept in mind. Authors Niki Flacks and Robert W. Rasbery in their book, *Power Talk* (The Free Press, 1982), provide good information which can easily be applied to NFP promoters. They cast their advice in the "do's" and "don'ts" of public speaking. Let's take a look at them:

- Don't tell your audience that you're nervous. They have no idea how little sleep you got the night before, nor whether you had enough time to rehearse. Remember: what you tell the audience is what they will know; and how you act in front of the audience is what they will assess. Therefore, be confident, you have something important to share, so do it!
- Don't apologize. When a speaker begins a talk with, "I'm sorry I'm not an expert on this," or "I'm not really too sure about all this," that establishes audience insecurity. You will be telling them that they are going to be in for either an inaccurate or disorganized speech. Also remember that apologies are made in an effort to get the audience's sympathy; however, good sympathy can be acquired in more positive ways (like an engaging and warm presence). In any case, people do not attend classes or talks in order to feel sorry for someone, they come to learn.



- Don't adjust your clothing throughout your presentation. Dress at home! It is highly distracting to see someone pulling at a sleeve, straightening skirts, and fussing with collars. The experts note one exception to this rule. You may build into the structure of your speech the need to convey such excitement that you loosen your tie, take off your jacket, or roll up your sleeves. That lets the audience know that you are supremely comfortable with your content and with them.
- Don't panic or stare out at the audience for help if your mind goes blank. Believe this— YOUR MIND WILL CLEAR! Even if you can't think of precisely the next word, simply go on to another point. You can always go back later and fill in the blanks. In addition, your listeners will never know you went blank if you don't let them know by a panic reaction. However, if you do succumb and let them know you have forgotten something, a little humor goes a long way. You can let them know that you are human and will "reboot" your mental computer later.
- Do take your time with transitions. Going from one thought to another is the hardest task in the body of the speech. Once you are into your next thought you know what supporting information, illustrations, and anecdotes you can use. The difficulty usually comes in remembering the

next point. By taking a moment to think, you will find your mind will come to the rescue. If you rush yourself, your mind may well disappoint you.

- Do move when you need a moment to refocus your concentration. Movement releases tension for the speaker. Random movement, however, is a nerve enhancer, so don't pace!
- Do sprinkle your smile liberally throughout your speech. When you tell an anecdote, you can enjoy it too. When you smile the audience realizes you're comfortable and that communicates professionalism.
- Do aim for variety in your gesturing. This is a refinement. Watch out for the trap of the catch-all gesture. Some speakers get caught waving their arms in a particular way over and over again, regardless of what they are saying. It begins to look like you are directing a choir.
- Do remember the audience has no idea what you planned for this presentation. They don't have a copy of your outline notes. If you leave something out or bungle some words, they probably won't even know the difference unless you give your error away by stiffening, stopping, or starting over. You are the authority for them as long as you continue to be in control. When you waver, they lose faith in you. Experienced speakers count on being able to think on their feet because they know they can be stimulated by the audience to find new and better ways of communication.

Keeping in mind the above points, along with the advantage of knowing you are engaged in the work of the Church, will prepare you to be your best the next time you are asked to speak on NFP publicly. ■

CONVICTION TO MISSION—

Communicating the Truth of Marital Love

Christopher & Wendy West

In Familiaris consortio, the Apostolic Exhortation on the family, John Paul II speaks on what he calls the "gradualness of conversion." While every person is called to the full truth of love, which he describes as a sincere "gift of self," an educational growth process is necessary for every believer to come to a richer understanding and fuller integration of Christ's mystery in his or her own life. This is certainly the goal of the NFP educator, to help couples on their journey towards a fuller integration of the mystery of Christ in their lives. In this issue of the NFP Forum, we were asked to share with you our "educational growth process," or, as the Holy Father puts it, how we individually and as a couple have come to embrace the fullness of the Church's teaching on marital love.

Christopher's Story

The whole issue of sexuality has been the constant question that has propelled me to grow in my faith, to grow in my understanding of the meaning of life and the mystery of Christ and the Church. As I was gathering my thoughts for writing this article, I realized that even more so.

I used to be tempted to think I was a bit strange or overly preoccupied with the topic of sexuality until I started reading the Holy Father's writings. He stresses that sexuality is not just something biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person. In fact, in *Love and Responsibility* he calls the sexual urge "a vector of aspiration along which our whole existence develops and perfects itself from within" (no wonder we're all so interested in sex).

I was blessed as a boy to have parents that taught me about the birds and the bees rather than hearing it on the street (I think I became the "street" for most of my friends) but, even so, puberty definitely took its toll on me. Chastity was not one of my acquired virtues at that time. I was always interested in what the Church taught about sex, but as a teenager certainly didn't agree with it. As I got older, having experienced the damaging personal effects of unchaste behavior first-hand, I began to see some of the Church's wisdom. My girlfriend of four years finally broke up with me because, among other things, I would no longer sleep with her.

That loss in my life was an opportunity for deep soul searching. The last thing I wanted in life was to lose my girlfriend, but I decided to trust that God knew what he was doing. I realized for the first time, then, the truth of Christ's words, "he who saves his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for my sake will find it." I began to pray for the grace to be chaste in thought and action, because I truly desired it; but I knew I couldn't do it on my own.

It seemed to me at the time that the hormones God gave me had gotten me in a lot of trouble. More and more I wanted to know the truth of why God had created me as a man and what that had to do with his plan for my life. The more I opened my heart to his will, the more I began to understand God's purpose for sexuality and how central it is to a proper understanding of the whole Christian mystery (see the Pope's *Letter to Families* section 19).

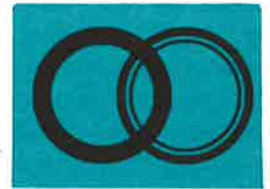
At the time, the Church's teaching on contraception was at the heart of my questioning. I thought—ok, I've given up sex now, but when I get married I should be able to have sex whenever I want. But, at the same time, I really did want to know why the Church taught what it taught and I was searching for answers, but nobody I ever asked seemed to have them. Most of the people I talked to disagreed with the Church's teaching anyway.

In my search for answers I found the book *Catholic Sexual Ethics* by Lawler, Boyle, and May. It presented the first logical, straight forward defense of Catholic teaching against contraception that I had ever seen and its truth hit me like a ton of bricks. What was most convincing for me was coming to an understanding of the difference between contraception and NFP. I saw so clearly that NFP fosters what marriage is supposed to be—an unreserved gift of self, while contraception contradicts this. I also saw that practicing NFP demanded sacrifice and self-possession, both of which are essential to love, while contraception can easily allow a man to reduce his wife to an object for his gratification, something I knew was wrong and was continually fighting against in my own battle for purity.

I was cut to the heart. The Church is right! The Church is right!! I had known that in some way intercourse is meant to symbolize Christ's love for his Church, but I had not realized how contraception directly mars that sacramental symbol. As I had come to see the truth of Christ's words that he who saves his life will lose it, so had I come to see that contraception is a holding on, a refusal to give up oneself, a contradiction of the heart of the gospel.

A whole new world was opened up for me, a whole new understanding of what it means that marriage is a sacrament, a whole new understanding of what it means that the Church is the bride of Christ and that the Eucharist is our consummation with Christ. It seemed a correct understanding of the Church's teaching on marital love was the key that opened the door to a correct understanding of the Church, Christ, the Trinity, the world. I did not yet know, however, that sharing this with others would become my life's work.

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Wendy's Story

As a young Catholic growing up in the suburbs, I was the kind of kid who did well in school, said my prayers, loved my parents, and tried to get along with everyone. I remember sometime around age nine, I happened to discover my mom's temperature charts in the bottom of her night stand drawer. "What's this, Mom?" She explained that she took her temperature to tell when she ovulated, and that she and Daddy used this to space us kids (they actually met in the mid sixties at a debate over Church teaching on contraception). She added that the Church says contraception is wrong and this is the right way to plan a family.

Well! That eye-opening conversation was enough for me as a kid. I was sure then that when I grew up and got married, I would use NFP just like my parents. Their example made a strong impression, but eventually I would have to struggle with my own convictions to make the Church's teaching my own.

It was confusing as a kid, hard as I looked, I didn't find any information about NFP at church. No one mentioned it, no one advertized any classes. Well, if Catholics are supposed to do this, I thought, where are they learning about it? As I grew older, I learned from TV and *The Washington Post* that this is an antiquated Church teaching and modern Catholics don't follow it. This disappointed and confused me.

As a teenager, I recall baby-sitting for different families and coming upon condom wrappers or contraceptive foam. The sight raised all sorts of questions in me. I felt disturbed but didn't know why. Did these parents really have to resort to this? Even though I knew that there are times when parents aren't able to provide for another baby, their actions seemed to imply "babies are bad." Whether the families were Catholic or not, it just seemed wrong.

God was very patient with me as he watched me drift for a while during my college years. As a nursing student I worked summers in health clinics where giving out contraceptives seemed no more shocking than telling people to

brush their teeth. One of my jobs was to put condoms in envelopes as a "complimentary gift" to our patients. The nurses jokingly called me the "condom lady." I laughed but it made me wonder what I was promoting and why. My senses had been dulled by the messages of society and the "values" of the nursing profession.

The next summer I read a great book, *Loving Jesus*, by Mother Teresa. In it she talked about her sisters teaching NFP and what a gift it was to the families who learned it. I was surprised to realize that you didn't have to be married to teach NFP. Nuns teach it! I started training to be an NFP instructor myself and what I learned about my fertility was unbelievably awe-inspiring. Seeing the hand of God in my own body was so affirming of everything good and true. I knew that I hadn't helped my patients by giving them condoms. The significance of the difference between fertility acceptance (NFP) and fertility suppression (contraception), about which God had been whispering to me all my life, finally became clear.

The Truth of Marital Love, Our Vocation and Our Mission

Wendy and I met through a common friend while in college. Although I was unaware of it, she hoped and prayed for three years that if it were God's will one day we would marry. Eventually our friendship deepened during our many long-distance phone conversations (she moved to NJ after graduation, I was in MD). God's will was unfolding.

I had just started studying for my master's degree at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family and Wendy was in the midst of NFP student teaching. Her knowledge of the biology of sex and my knowledge of its theology made for hours of wonderful conversation. The more we shared of ourselves the more we realized that God had been preparing us for each other our whole lives and that he was giving us a

vocation to live and a mission to promote the glorious truth of marital love.

Our courtship and marriage has been our "lab class" so to speak, where we have had to put into practice all that we had learned about the Church's teaching on marriage and sexuality. In our desire to live the truth we have experienced at times a real spiritual battle. It only makes sense that since marriage as a sacrament symbolizes (and accomplishes) Christ's union with his bride, the Church, that the father of lies would want to divide spouses from each other (if the sacrament gets destroyed, it

can no longer communicate the reality it symbolizes).

But, even in the midst of an on-going battle, we know and experience the joy and freedom that the truth brings. The more we seek the way that all of our male and female differences are designed by God to compliment each other, balance one another, and unite us, the more we are able to diffuse the lies that seek to divide us. Our experience as a couple has shown us that what the Church holds out as the truth of conjugal love is not just pie-in-the-sky idealism, but is a practical reality that can be lived (and is a joy to live!) not by our own strength, but by the grace of Christ in us.

We have the privilege of speaking to various audiences about the Church's teaching on marriage and sexuality on a regular basis, and we see people responding with great enthusiasm. I don't think it's because of our credentials in theology and NFP. I really believe it's because people hunger for the truth and they can see the joy in our faces that comes from living it. ■

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The Wests currently live in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., and are active in marriage preparation, chastity education, and NFP instruction. Upon graduation from the JP II Institute, Christopher plans on being a full-time educator, lecturer, and writer in the area of Catholic sexual ethics. The Wests are available for speaking engagements. You can contact them at: 8415 Clay Dr., Fort Washington, MD 20744; 301-839-4949.

Growing-Up in an NFP House

Elizabeth Kitchen

Growing up in a household where NFP has been used and promoted by my parents has given me more insight into sexuality than just the physical aspect. Sure, it's given me a better understanding of my body, but it has a lot more meaning on the spiritual and emotional level.

NFP has brought an openness to my family that many of my friends don't understand. A common statement like, "Dad, would you mind finishing the dishes for me? It's the first day of my period and I'm really tired," couldn't be comprehended by many girls my age. Mind you, it's not our favorite topic of discussion, but when needed we are comfortable in asking questions or discussing our cycles. It also gives a certain stability in a child's life, that they know that their parents are happily married, because they can abstain and show that they love each other through other ways. So it's clear, even when they argue, it doesn't mean that they are going to get a divorce. We all know of the so called "talk" that parents have with their children when they hit puberty. Well, that

always sounded ridiculous to me when my friends talked about theirs. See, I never had "the talk," I never remember learning about sex or NFP, it's almost like I was born knowing it. As questions came up they were answered according to our ages. So, we gradually learned about ourselves, not all at once and not at an age where we would be easily embarrassed. This also came to help in school. Sex Ed. was a breeze and ninth grade religion was the same. I was comfortable when answering and asking questions, when most of my classmates were clueless and embarrassed. So I looked forward to religion class, whereas many others dreaded it.

The most important influence of NFP on my life is the spiritual aspect. It has taught me a greater respect for my body as a unique and beautiful gift from God destined for great things. So in times of

temptation, I have a strength that lies in the love for myself and for my future husband. This brings up chastity, which is so much more than not having sex. It's knowing why sexual intercourse is meant for two people in love sealed with the bond of marriage. It's having respect for sexual intercourse and the unity and procreativity it brings to a marriage. Most importantly, though, it shows sex as more than an act, but as love.

I am very lucky to have friends who share the same values as I do, so I don't have to worry about peer pressure as much. I do realize that not everyone is as lucky as I am to have supportive friends and parents. For them when times get rough they can always use a chastity ring as a sign of

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their strength. For those who don't know, a chastity ring is a ring that symbolizes your desire to stay chaste until you're married. It doesn't have to be showy, or engraved with "I'm Chaste, step back five feet!!" just a simple reminder for you and God. Hey guys, if a ring is too feminine a simple cross and chain can work too. My siblings and I each chose a different piece of jewelry that said something to us. Mine is a simple ring with a cross cut out. It is a great conversation piece that tells a potential date your feelings on the subject and really scores points with his parents! I am most grateful to my parents for bringing me up in such an environment, an environment I hope to pass on to my children. ■

A sophomore at Delone Catholic High School, Elizabeth is the daughter of Roger and Stella Kitchen. Stella is the coordinator of the NFP program for the diocese of Harrisburg, PA. When looking for something to do during a quiet moment at home, Elizabeth decided to write the above article—and we're very glad she did!



The Kitchen Kids, (from left to right) Matthew, Elizabeth, Helen, and Sarah.

Readers' Reviews

John Marshall's *Love One Another: Psychological Aspects of Natural Family Planning*, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1995).

Mary Shivanandan, S.T.D.

We all know that books and articles are important vehicles through which we can spread the NFP message. Sadly, we also know that bad publications keep blocking the light of truth the world so desperately needs. In order to fight the good fight, NFP promoters need to keep track of not only the good resources but also those that are seriously flawed. In the following review one of those "problem" books is reviewed. Our reviewer, Mary Shivanandan, has graciously provided a careful examination of John Marshall's book, Love One Another. Because we expect opponents of the Church's teachings on responsible parenthood to use this text against us, we suggest that you keep the following as an important reference.

This book holds out the promise of being a major contribution to understanding the Church's teaching on responsible parenthood. Written by a distinguished medical researcher in natural family planning (NFP), Dr. John Marshall, it is based on correspondence with 10,000 NFP users in the British Isles and Ireland. Dr. Marshall, Emeritus Professor of Neurology, University of London, confirms through this correspondence that natural family planning is a reliable method of birth control that can be and is used by numerous ordinary couples. (The couples in his correspondence are primarily what we would call blue-collar.) He cites statistics as well as testimonies to show that many couples find the method both effective and beneficial to their marriage. For example he includes such quotes from women

as:

Most months I am quite sure of myself and see the temperature due to ovulation quite clearly. There is the odd time when I am in doubt, but play it safe and take one or two more temperatures... I must say my husband and I find this form of family planning most satisfactory. (p. 28)

and

The temperature method has helped my husband and myself to be happier in our sexual relationship than

we have been at any time previously in our 19 years of marriage, and consequently the whole of our relationship is more loving. (p. 29)

Marshall also confirms and highlights some of the challenges NFP couples experience such as: sex on a schedule with too much intercourse crammed into one week; the problem of expressing love in the fertile phase; the woman's heightened desire in the fertile phase and lack of desire in the post-ovulatory phase; as well as the importance of the husband's cooperation. It is not that NFP practitioners are not aware of these challenges, but Dr. Marshall shows how critical the psychological aspect is. Much attention has been paid to perfecting the physiological aspects of the method and an equal effort expended on a new theological exposition of the Church's teaching but the psychological aspects have, indeed, been neglected.¹ Here the book provides a most valuable service.

Given all this why, then, is the book a major disappointment and likely to damage rather than assist the cause of natural family planning? The last chapter provides the answer. Dr. Marshall, because of negative experiences by a number of the couples, recommends that the Church change its teaching on contraception.

The Author's Ambivalence towards NFP

In order to assess the weight of Dr. Marshall's case, it is important to examine first his own long-standing ambivalence towards the Church's teaching which is evident throughout the book. The author was one of the original six members of the Papal Birth Control Commission established in 1964 to consider the question of family planning which was being promoted by international agencies. Because the issue was seen to cover so many disciplines, the original commission, consisting of two physicians, two sociologists, an economist, and a secretary was expanded. Theologians were among those added and they concluded that from the point of view of natural law, contraception could not be classified as an "intrinsic evil." Dr. Marshall accepted this theological evaluation as is evident in the last chapter on "The Ethics of Contraception." Yet he continued to devote enormous amounts of time to natural family planning through the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council in England, personally answering every one of the 10,000 letters from NFP users over the years himself.

Dr. Marshall's ambivalence towards NFP appears throughout his work. For example, while describing as spurious the inseparability of the unitive and procreative aspects of sexual intercourse because not every act of intercourse is procreative, he also applauds the linking of the unitive and procreative since to separate them has resulted in trivializing sex. Again while he admits that NFP affects the whole person, he cannot see it as a "way of life." Not only is Dr. Marshall ambivalent but he is biased towards the negative and this is evident in the method he employs to present his material.

NFP Method

But first a look at the particular natural method of NFP taught by correspondence. It is referred to throughout the book as the BBT (Basal Body Temperature) method. Dr. Marshall says that it includes mucus but he does not appear

to trust the mucus sign, especially in the preovulatory phase. In fact he gives an erroneous definition of Peak mucus, describing it as "the day on which the mucus is experienced as maximally slippery and lubricative" (p. 15) instead of the last day of fertile-type mucus before the change.² As a result an undue number of couples appear to confine intercourse to the post-ovulatory phase. Certainly negative comments come conspicuously from such couples.

My own experience of the intimate side of marriage has yet to be fully satisfactory, and I put this down to the fact that we must remain virtually aloof for the greater part of the month, and then have to pack a whole month's love-making into the last eight days or so. (p. 62)

One knows that there is just this one week in the month when one can live a normal married life and things always seem to be conspiring to threaten it. (p. 69)

Presentation of Material

Throughout the book, Dr. Marshall gives the negative experiences either equal or greater weight than the positive experiences. This he does despite the fact that he showed otherwise in a summary of a prospective study he had conducted from 1965-68 on the psychological aspects of the BBT method. In that study only 8 to 9% of both men and women felt that the BBT method "had hindered" their marriage, while about 74 to 75% felt it "had helped." As many as 69% of men and 61% of women appreciated intercourse more after the abstinence phase while only 9% of men and 13% of women appreciated it less. When it comes to specific aspects such as effect on spontaneity, the majority—more than 50 percent said it did not affect, while less than a third said that it did. Again three quarters of women and two-thirds of men found the method satisfactory while only 22 percent of men and 17 percent of women did not. In any case, these statistics are interpreted by the majority of NFP users in the study (about three quarters) who found

the method satisfactory and helpful to their marriages. With regard to the letters on which the book is based, Dr. Marshall's method was to extract comments, place them on cards and file in categories. Unlike the prospective study, such a method could not provide any percentages between satisfied and dissatisfied users. Yet he dismisses the significance of percentages and instead gives equal weight to both negative and positive comments. (p. 34)

A further bias in his presentation can be seen from the relative space devoted to negative and positive comments. Negative comments are generally longer with more pages devoted to them. This is particularly noticeable in the chapter on "spiritual aspects." Only one page is devoted to positive comments and five to negative. By placing the negative after the positive in almost all cases, it tends to negate or diminish the impact of the positive comments.

Dr. Marshall's method of extracting comments also means that it is not possible to assess the context in which they were written nor evaluate the general adjustment of the couple's marriage. There seems to have been no follow-up when the couples were having difficulty with their sexual relationship (see page 37-38). While the NFP teacher's role is not to tell the couple how to behave during the abstinence phase, as he says (p. 96), it is appropriate to refer couples who are having sexual or psychological difficulties for additional counseling, just as it would be to refer them for a medical diagnosis if there were an unusual physical discharge.

Inadequacy of Concepts

Nowhere in the book does Dr. Marshall cite other psychosocial studies, such as those by Robert Jonas, Sr. Peter McCusker, Grace Boys, Denise Desmarteaux, Gunter Freundl, Notker Klann, and Thomasina Borkman and Mary Shivanandan. An important aspect of these studies, limited though they may be, is the development of con-

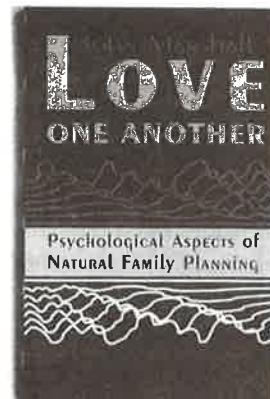
cepts related to the practice of natural family planning. His analysis does not even match that of the primarily descriptive McCusker study in 1976. While some of the testimonies he cites refer to stages in integrating NFP into the couple's relationship, Dr. Marshall makes no attempt to examine this phenomenon. The same couple, as Klann shows, may experience NFP as negative at one phase of their life and positive at another.³

Borkman and Shivanandan found two distinct stages; one the primarily physiological and the other the psychological and relational. Couples who remain at the physiological stage tend to have more negative experiences than those who have reached the relational transformative stage. At the transformative stage, couples often view NFP as a "way of life."⁴ One woman in the book referred to this:

Actually, I still think of it as family planning, when it's really our WAY OF LIFE! Something now, quite naturally integrated into our happy relaxed relationship. (p.29)

Dr. Marshall clearly does not see it as a "way of life." (p. 57) Yet the transformative potential of NFP is one of its greatest assets.

Dr. Marshall's limited approach can best be seen in the chapter on spiritual aspects. The quotes refer mainly to the couples' attitudes towards Church teaching, building up to his own ultimate rejection of that teaching. Three women appear to enjoy spiritual benefits over and beyond obeying the Church's teaching but most of the others are still at the rule stage of religion/spirituality with the majority chafing at the restrictions.



(pp. 84-90) Part of Dr. Marshall's problem may be due to his view of difficulties with abstinence as always a negative experience. Dr. Thomasina Borkman, professor of sociology, George Mason University, faced with her own negative views of sexual abstinence when she first studied the experiences of NFP couples, found herself impelled to re-think her position. How could couples both say that abstinence was difficult and yet describe it as benefiting their marriages? The dictionary gave her the answer, ascribing two meanings to the word, "difficult," one a challenge and the second deprivation. In Dr. Marshall's 1965-68 study about 8-9% found NFP unequivocally a deprivation, the same percentage as the couples in the Shivanandan/Borkman study. Not to make this distinction is seriously to misinterpret the experiences of NFP couples. Every worthwhile venture poses some challenges. While these may not be welcomed at the time, the rewards can outweigh the difficulty of the effort. One has only to think of the struggle involved in mastering any sport.

Experiential Learning

Dr. Marshall places strong stress on experience together with scientific observation as the ultimate arbiter of the validity of the Church's teaching on responsible parenthood. (p. 118) Yet there is no evidence that he understands the process of experiential learning. Experience is, indeed, important in the integration of NFP into the couple's relationship, but it is a dynamic not a static process. In its medical aspects, NFP involves what is called "head knowledge," i.e., the couples must learn the

Dr. Marshall's book, with its overemphasis on negative experiences. . . is likely to discourage couples from ever trying this method. . . .

basics of the method and charting. But in its psychological aspect it calls for behavior modification and this involves experiential learning. Dr. Borkman, one of the leading experiential experts nationally and internationally⁵, describes experiential learning as a process that involves the whole person, spiritual, psychological and physical. It proceeds by way of trial and error with many falls along the way. For example, there are two ways of looking at the tendency of couples to caress each other to orgasm during the abstinence phase, (1) as part of the process of sexual mastery and (2) as a fixed condition. In the one case the couple is striving for sexual integration

and in the other they have settled for a spurious abstinence.⁶

While the basics of NFP can be taught by correspondence, it is much more difficult to teach couples how to integrate it into their marital relationship. A surprising number have succeeded, which says much for the potential of the method itself, but sociological research shows that certain conditions facilitate the integration. One of these is witness by other couples. Sharing their personal story of struggle and reward acts as a spur to couples going through a similar experience. The couple's frame of reference is also important. For example, one couple quoted in the book sees sexual intercourse as a gift from God that should not be restricted, while another is "sufficiently realistic to think that the perfect sexuality described in novels does not exist in reality." Obviously such attitudes affect their experience of a method that requires periods of abstinence. On this score Dr. Marshall's book, with its overemphasis on negative experiences

and an inadequate theological framework, is likely to discourage couples from even trying the method let alone persevering if they run into difficulties.

Ethics of Contraception

Dr. Marshall is not a theologian, let alone a moral theologian. His justification for attempting an ethical appraisal of the Church's teaching is based on his "scientific" understanding of the nature of sexual intercourse and the experience of couples. The first part of this review has shown the danger of basing theology on experience without a full understanding of the nature of experience and experiential learning. It is equally hazardous to base moral theology on a limited physical understanding of sexual intercourse. That, indeed is biologism or physicalism.

First of all it is incorrect to say that the Church did not recognize as early as the 1930s that not every act of intercourse is physically open to generation.⁷ Pius XI did describe contraception as "intrinsically against nature" because it deprives sexual intercourse of its "natural power."⁸ His condemnation was set within the living tradition of the Church from earliest times. Dr. Marshall finds fault with this argument from "against nature," citing several meanings of "nature." First let it be said that NFP proponents do not reject artificial aids for determining the fertile period. Contraception is opposed not because it makes use of science but because it is against (contra) life (conception).

Both Paul VI and John Paul II uphold their predecessor's view of the law of nature as in essence divinely ordered since God is the author of nature and God has linked the generation of life to sexual intercourse.⁹ The third meaning of nature as according to human reason and will is developed both by Paul VI in *Humanae vitae* and John Paul II, especially in *Love and Responsibility*.¹⁰ Their arguments are very different from the limited interpretation of Dr. Marshall.

Reason and will belong to man's spiritual nature and love can only exist when they dominate the physical and psychological drives. Contraception makes the domination of the sexual drive in the service of life and love irrelevant. It elevates the physical side of marriage at the expense of the spiritual. It is physicalist in its truest sense.

Far from neglecting love in the marital relationship, as Dr. Marshall charges, Pius XI in *Casti connubii (On Christian Marriage)* gave a greater recognition to love in the marital relationship than any of his predecessors.¹¹ Paul VI further developed the role of love and John Paul II categorically states that it is love that coordinates the two meanings of marital intercourse, the unitive and procreative.¹² But love is an act of reason and will first, then it finds its expression in sexual intercourse. Periods of abstinence help to ensure the primacy of agapic over erotic love. It facilitates self-mas-

tery. Sexual intercourse is a sign of total self-giving. A person can only make a complete gift of self if he is in full possession of himself including his sexual drive. Dr. Marshall has ignored these more profound insights into the place of love and sexual intercourse in marriage.

Conclusion

Other inadequacies of Dr. Marshall's book could be noted, such as: his neglect of breastfeeding; the role of NFP in achieving pregnancy and in encouraging an openness to children; his superficial historical review of the birth control movement "to safeguard the health of the mother;" and the complete absence of any negative effects of contraception on the woman, the couple's relationship, or society.

But most of all, it is regrettable that a man of Dr. Marshall's stature and

apparent dedication to natural family planning should fail so signally to understand much less promote the Church's teaching on responsible parenthood. The testimonies themselves provide invaluable information on the practice of NFP. No serious NFP advocate can afford to overlook the very real struggles and difficulties of some couples in its practice. In this aspect Dr. Marshall has made a substantial contribution. The danger is that his interpretation and conclusions will be accepted as gospel truth and further undermine the credibility of NFP especially among those who could do most to promote it such as pastors and doctors. ■

Mary Shivanandan, STD, is a well known NFP author and is currently teaching at the John Paul II Institute on the Family in Washington, D.C.

End Notes:

- ¹ Louis P. LaBarber, "Psychosocial Aspects of NFP Instruction: A National Survey," *International Review of Natural Family Planning* 14 (1) (Spring 1990): 34-53.
- ² Professor Erik Odeblad, renowned expert on cervical mucus, says that "it is very important to know that the quantity of mucus is usually not at its maximum on the Peak Day. The quantity and also the stretchiness are greater on the day preceding the Peak." "The Discovery of Different Types of Cervical Mucus and the Billings Ovulation Method," *Bulletin of the Natural Family Planning Council of Victoria* 21 (3) (September 1994): 3-34.
- ³ Notker Klann et al. "Psychological Aspects of NFP Practice," *International Journal of Fertility Supplement* (May 1988): 65-69.
- ⁴ Thomasina Borkman and Mary Shivanandan, "The Impact of Natural Family Planning on Selected Aspects of the Couple Relationship," *International Review of Natural Family Planning* 8 (1) (Spring 1984): 58-66.
- ⁵ Dr. Borkman, professor of Sociology, George Mason University, has studied the process of experiential learning in natural family planning as well as other areas where behavioral change is implicated such as recovery from an addiction. As applied to NFP see especially: "A Social-Science Perspective of Research Issues for Natural Family Planning," *International Review of Natural Family Planning* 3 (4) (Winter 1979): 331-355.
- ⁶ See John Harvey, "Expressing Marital Love during the Fertile Phase," *International Review of Natural Family Planning* 4 (4) (Winter 1980): 279-296.
- ⁷ Ramón García de Haro. *Marriage and the Family in the Documents of the Magisterium: Course in the Theology of Marriage*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 133. See also *Humanae vitae*, no. 11.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.
- ⁹ *Humanae vitae*, no. 12, and *Familiaris consortio*, no. 33.
- ¹⁰ *Humane vitae*, no. 9, and Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 21-24.
- ¹¹ Pius XI, *On Christian Marriage* (Boston, MA: St. Paul Books & Media, n.d.), 14.
- ¹² See especially Paul VI's "Address to the Teams of Our Lady," 1970, in *Good News for Married Love* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1974) and De Haro, *Marriage and the Family*, 342.

The Gift of Cana: A Noble Task for Noble Men

Patrick J. DiVietri, MA

"Parents," we often hear, "are the primary educators of their children." They have a variety of ways in which they teach their children and consequently rely on a variety of sources to support them in their efforts. Effective parent/child communication can be facilitated by Church programming. Parish based or diocesan wide efforts can take many forms. A simple and creative service has been designed by the Knights of Columbus and the Diocese of Peoria. It's called "The Gift of Cana."

With the support of Bishop John J. Meyers, I developed "The Gift of Cana," a program sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. The Knights hope to present each couple with the beginning of a Catholic family library. Within two weeks of the wedding the presentation is made at the end of the parish Mass on Sunday. The couple is introduced to the parish and commended for their decision to form a community of life and love. The Knights join with the parish and family in making the presentation. The presentation may take place at the wedding, but I prefer it to be part of the parish's recognition of the new family. It provides a public statement of the parish support and also serves as a reminder to the congregation of their own needs and responsibilities to pray, study, and to inform their family.

The Gift of Cana is presently composed of books providing a basic foundation. The two most important are the Bible and the *New Catechism of the Catholic Church*. There are two others, *Saints for Now*, published by the Ignatius Press, and *A Handbook on Prayer*, published by Scepter Press.

The lives of the saints has many values but practically speaking couples like to hear stories. A major dynamic in mar-

riage preparation today centers on the stories of married couples who witness to their faith in every day life. We know how much engaged couples value these stories. The lives of the saints provide stories, often unknown to many, of persons who struggled heroically to put their faith into practice. As one engaged person said, "I am very interested in saints, but have little knowledge of them."

Although most individuals pray to some extent (40% daily, 61% 3-4 times/week) a book on prayer is helpful because couples express a need to grow in personal prayer to learn to pray as a couple. Both forms help develop an intimacy with God and with the beloved. There is again great practicality for the couples because they are faced with the demands of modern life which challenge their

ability to make time to be attentive to each other and grow together in intimacy. When standing before God together each day they must examine the manner of their love during that day in light of the Divine love that permeates them. Forgiveness and the efforts to change for the sake of the beloved are the natural outcomes of such an examination of love.

The core of the gift is the Bible and the *Catechism*. The *Catechism* presents a life-

*The Knights
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family library.*

long resource for the couples that is always available to them whenever they desire to enter into a better understanding of the faith within the family.

The Knights also wanted to respect the tradition of the family Bible and not take that prerogative away from the family. The giving of the family Bible at the time of the wedding is a means of expressing the passage of the personal tradition that lives within a particular family. Frequently, families forget this wonderful practice. So instead of presenting every couple with the Bible, the Knights, choosing to honor the family, suggest that the pastor preparing the couple invite the family to be a part of the Gift of Cana by presenting the family Bible in the presentation ceremony. If the families decline, the pastor either asks a group in the parish to make the presentation, or he may choose to do so himself.

Some thought that couples would not use such a gift or not even want it. However, we surveyed several hundred couples in the diocesan Pre-Cana programs and found that 87% of the couples said that they would find such a gift useful, and 91% said that they would use it if they had it. Eighty percent said that they did not already have such books.

What sealed it, however, were the comments by the couples. For example:

- "As a newlywed couple we may need extra guidance and it would be beneficial to have that guidance at our fingertips."
- "It's like the manual of our life."

Non-Catholic partners saw this as a means for them to understand their spouse's faith and to assist in the education of their children. It is important not to overlook the good will of non-Catholics who want to know and assist their spouses but may not know how. Some comments:

- "It will be useful since I will probably convert to Catholicism in the future. Also, we would use it with our children."

- "I am not Catholic and it would help me to understand my future spouse's religion much more."

Many couples saw the Gift of Cana as a way to strengthen their love both as individuals and together as family.

- "The books will help me every day. I would increase my faith by reading."
- "It would allow us to strengthen our relationship and marriage and to continue with the things that we have learned in these preparation sessions."

The Office of Family Life also did some research on the reading habits of Americans, and in particular Catholics, and found that the results are extremely supportive of such a project. However, the great number of comments from couples themselves made such a compelling case that it became a unanimous decision at all levels.

This is a program that benefits everyone. The couple, the parish, the family and the Knights all receive benefits that will continue in time. The Knights of Columbus have had a long tradition of supporting the family, particularly in the education of the family in the faith. This gives them a visible presence in the parish and family with a couple just beginning their adventure in faith and love. Couples need the support of the Christian community and the Knights hope to be a means of ongoing support for the family life of the couples. It is a way for the community to reach out to couples, welcoming them and offering them assistance for life.

The success of the program in the Diocese of Peoria has been due to the commitment and hard work of individual Knights themselves. Bill Langdon who was Chapter president did an excellent job of getting the ball rolling. The Knights, who are committed to many charitable operations within the diocese, considered the factors well. Jim Bednar, who succeeded Langdon as president, took over the reigns of the program, traveled to various councils to answer any questions, and got the unanimous

support that was needed. Dennis Koch, formed a committee to administer the program and began providing the gifts slowly at various parishes to begin the presentations while still working out the kinks.

After one year, we are very proud of the efforts of the Knights. They raised over \$11,000 and now are set to accomplish the desired goal. This is essential for the benefit of other Chapters around the country who are looking to Peoria to see how it is working out. The Peoria Knights have tried to keep a low profile so they could work out the details for the sake of their brothers around the country, but their good efforts are not going unnoticed.

Within the Office of Family Life we have developed forms to aid the operation and record keeping. The preparation and presentation procedures have now been unified by means of these forms. We also have begun to respond to the requests of other offices who are interested in establishing the Gift of Cana in their dioceses around the country.

It is an exciting program because the vision itself excites. We are living in a time when people are hungry for the truth that will set them free. The couples respond positively to the Catholic vision of marriage and family that is presented in their preparation because it offers them hope for the future. It is a

sharps contrast from the cynical view of marriage and family that they see in the culture. If the Good Lord turns their minds toward this vision through our service we must ensure the means for them to continue to cultivate the civilization of love. We are living in a time when the Church has given the world a great treasure in the *New Catechism*. The articulation of the faith in such a form will profoundly effect the course of the future for the family which is so much under attack.

Bishop John J. Meyers asked the Knights of Columbus to take on this task and told them that it was "a noble task for noble men." The Knights responded boldly and proudly. They join with Bishop Myers, who not only respects the parents as primary educators, but provides them with a tangible and dynamic means of assisting that dignity in a spirit of cooperation and assistance and not displacement. I am grateful for the Knights of Columbus and proud of their efforts to provide "The Gift of Cana." ■

Patrick J. DiVietri, MA, is Associate Director, Office of Family Life, Diocese of Peoria, IL. For information about beginning a "Gift of Cana" program in your diocese contact: Sheen Pastoral Center, 412 N.E. Madison Ave., Peoria, IL 61603; 309-671-1550; FAX, 309-671-1595.



During the Sept. '96 BOMA Conference members of the NFP National Advisory Board and friends posed for a picture with Dr. Eric Odeblad. (Dr. Odeblad is 3rd from the left.)

NFP in the "Purple Land"

Pedro Richard, C.P.

In the Beginning

It was W.H. Hudson who named Uruguay "The Purple Land." Enamored with a small undulating country of 3 million inhabitants in 187,000 sq. km., he wrote pages on its fauna and flora. He admired its people, mostly "gauchos" living simple and hardworking lives. Unfortunately in the nineteenth century Uruguay fell under the spell of the French.

As the Church's eldest daughter began to restrict its births, those Latin-American countries which looked to Uruguay for intellectual guidance soon followed suit. Today, with a 0.7% birth-rate, Uruguay is destined (unless some miraculous change is brought about) to extinguish itself. Several factors contribute to this population problem. Uruguay no longer attracts thousands of Europeans as in the last century. Thus,

there was opposition among the people to intermarriage with non-European immigrants. Secondly, the different political parties who share the government do not seem to realize that although 53,000 babies are born, as many more are deprived of life because of contraceptives. And finally, death approaches the nation with every baby killed through abortion.

Early Counter-Action

In the face of these overwhelming problems the Church had been weak. In 1952, some of its members set in motion the Movimiento Familiar Cristiano (MFC). Ever since its inception MFC has faced the problem of "Birth Regulation" (as Pius XII called it in opposition to "Birth Control"). Clerics at large did not take a warm interest in teaching NFP. This was understandable due to their

lack of training in seminary and because their area of study was not "biology." True, the information of Ogino and Knaus was in the air, but that was something pertaining to the married—not celibate priests! *Casti connubii* had put contraception on the table, but Catholics were not then a prey to this sin against the 6th commandment.

As the years went by

The Anglicans' "green light" to separate what God had put together, the unitive and the creative ends of marriage, spread from laboratories to consulting rooms and drug-stores. Those active in the Family Apostolate sought to orient both engaged and married couples to a moral way of spacing children through the Temperature Method. But its artificial, though licit way of alleviating mothers, wasn't understandable for the indigenous and even for many city-folk.

Australia to the rescue!

It was then that the Holy Spirit (without a doubt!) inspired John Bill-



On September 12, 1996 an unprecedented number of cardinals, bishops, ecumenical leaders and faithful gathered on the steps of the Nation's Capitol to pray for a greater respect for human life a week before many members of Congress attempted to over-ride the presidential veto of a ban on partial birth abortion.

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

The Best Intentions: Unintended Pregnancy and the Well Being of Families—A Review

Charles & Sheila Potter

ings to do his bit through helping his parish priest. Delving into medical literature, he came across a Dr. Smith's report from the 1850's, on mucus appearing regularly in women's menstrual cycles. He could have cried "EUREKA!" as did Archimedes in his bath-tub. Ever since, the Billings Method has helped - all through Latin America - to make fecundity in marriage more akin to an intelligent application of the biblical injunction "Be fruitful and Multiply!" And Lyn, John's wife, added the feminine touches.

Training

Within the context of a retreat for NFP couples, we invite them to become teachers. In order to prepare them for this delicate task, teacher trainees are submitted to two Teaching Courses.

- 1) A six-month (twice-a-week) course in which such subjects as the following are developed:
 - Anthropology
 - Psychology
 - Interview techniques
 - Teachings of the Magisterium
 - Moral Theology
 - Anatomy and Physiology
 - NFP: history and development
 - Difficult cases
- 2) Practicum by sitting-in with an experienced instructor.

Yearly, instructors are invited to take a "refreshers course." Added to this, they are constantly being enriched with the literature which our Center receives from foreign organizations.

Our future

We feel very often as young David facing Goliath. Both the IPPF agents and the abortion promoters receive so much help to bring down still further our birth-rate that only God's grace keeps us up. But we know that "It is not for us to ask why but to do or die!"

Pedro Richards, C.P., is the Director of Uruguay's NFP Centers.

Every Marathon runner experiences "The Wall" after running 22 or 23 kilometers. Every muscle in the body aches from exhaustion and discouragement, the psyche, the brain are bereft of energy, the three or four kilometers look impossible to finish.

Natural Family Planning teachers in 1996 are empathetic to this condition. We have worked hard, it seems, forever. The couples we are teaching (still only 5% to 7%) don't understand why, often struggle with the essential abstinence, some even have difficulty with how to use NFP. Then, along comes *The Best Intentions: Unintended Pregnancy and the Well Being of Children and Families*, by the Committee on Unintended Pregnancy, Institute of Medicine, published by National Academy Press, Washington, D.C., 1995. This is a book of studies and analyses of existing studies. Written by seventeen researchers, it was funded by the National Institute of Medicine.

After 90 or so years of contraceptive use, the most amazing statistic is that over-all unintended pregnancy rate in the United States is 57.3 (pg. 32, Table 2-2). The principle source of many of the statistics come from the national Survey of Family Growth. The analysis of these surveys, done every two years, are comprehensive and used in a number of the chapters on socio-economic status, ages of women, use of contraceptives, family background, etc. The committee spends a good deal of the introduction defining categories of unintended pregnancies,

i.e., mistimed, unwanted, or unintended.

Complicated analyses of the unintended pregnancies (statistics for 1988 specifically) would like to lead the reader to believe that contraceptives are effective. However, just the opposite is the case. Sterilization (of either partner) is the 'best method.' Regarding reversible contraception, stated on page 94: "Unintended pregnancy occurs among women using reversible contraception because contraceptive methods may fail or be used improperly." Yes, 57.3% of the time, apparently. Flipping a coin would give at least a 50% chance anyway. This is after Planned Parenthood has spent billions of dollars on education and research on better methods!

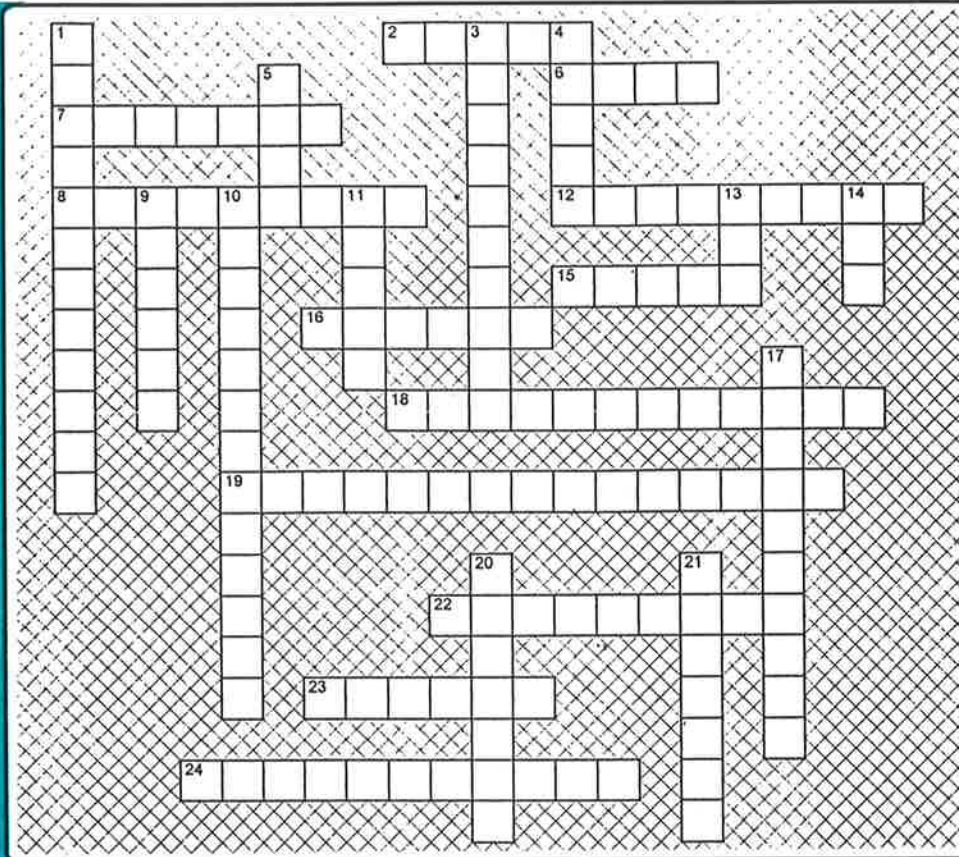
We say to each of you NFP teachers: plow through the whole book. It's worth it. This book demonstrates that contraceptive use, as promoted by Planned Parenthood, is a complete and utter failure. We know that the only family planning which will promote generosity and love is NFP. Only NFP allows husband and wife to cooperate with God's plan for all of us. Perhaps unintentionally, this book has gotten us past "The Wall." After having taught NFP for 32 years, it is the most hopeful sign we've had in many years. ■

Sheila is the director of NFP services for the Archdiocese of New York. Charles, Sheila's husband, is the Associate Director.

Learning Through Puzzles

Effective communication need not follow standard formats such as lectures, narratives, or even dialogues. Good messages can be communicated in a variety of formats. For example, games, both written and spoken, can be used to pass on the ideas and information you want to share. The following is a fun exercise which an NFP teacher created to help his clients learn basic NFP information. It addresses the "knowledge" level of understanding. Try your hand at it (answers on p. 16).

(Designed by Don Eveker, Diocese of Springfield, IL.)



Across

2. A secretion containing water, inorganic salts, epithelial cells, leucocytes, and mixture of glycoproteins.
6. The last day that the mucus produces a slippery, wet sensation, whether or not mucus is seen.
7. The external pouch suspended behind the base of the penis, containing the testicles.
8. The release of the ovum from a mature ovarian follicle.
12. That period of time which marks the permanent cessation of menstrual activity.
15. The child in utero from the third month to birth.
16. Pregnant
18. The periodic discharge of blood, mucus, and cellular debris from the uterus.
19. That quality of privacy which characterizes the client/instructor relationship.
22. The reproductive organs.
23. One-celled human being to four cells.
24. Relative sterility, diminished or absent fertility.

Down

1. The main androgenic hormone formed by the Leydig cells of the testes, and possibly secreted also by the ovary and adrenal gland in small amounts.
3. The union of the sperm cell and ovum, fertilization.
4. The mature male sex cell.
5. A tubular structure giving exit to the secretion of a gland
9. The hollow reproductive organ of the female in which the fertilized ovum implants and develops.
10. Fluid surrounding the fetus.
11. One of the glands in the female reproductive system; produces the ovum, the reproductive cell, and two hormones, estrogen and progesterone.
13. Premenstrual syndrome.
14. Sexually transmitted disease. Formerly called venereal disease.
17. Channel through which fetus passes during birth.
20. Capable of reproducing.
21. The muscular sac which stores the urine before it is periodically discharged.

NEWS

BRIEFS



DDP ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are very happy to announce that our colleague and friend, Helen Alvaré gave birth to her first son on September 16, 1996. Big sister Catherine is very excited and father Brian Duggan is all smiles.

DDP Biennial Conference will be held in conjunction with the diocesan Pro-Life Coordinators' Conference in August of 1997. The place of the Conference has yet to be decided upon. We will let you know as soon as we have more information.

Many thanks to Mary Ann Chezik, NFP coordinator, diocese of Camden, for generously giving of her time and talents by serving for three years on the NFP National Advisory Board.

Development of the NFP National Test is underway. The NFP National Advisory Board, with consultants, met in St. Cloud, MN in September to begin drafting the NFP National Test. This represents the final phase of the implementation process of the *National Standards*. Once completed, the procedure for certification of diocesan NFP teachers will be finalized. As many readers know, the *Standards* were established for the development and evaluation of diocesan programs of NFP. Diocesan Coordinators who have worked through the process have found it to be invaluable for either "fine tuning" existing

programs or for creating new services. Coordinators who have not yet implemented the *Standards* should contact the DDP. We are ready to help you!



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

WOOMB Spain, in collaboration with International Federation for Family Life Promotion and Asociación de Profesores de Planificación Familiar Natural, will host the "V International Symposium on Recent Advances on Natural Fertility Regulation," October 31 - November 2, 1996. Among the topics to be presented are: "Endocrinology of the Sexual Awakening," "Women and Infertility," and "Efficacy Studies in NFP." Contact: WOOMB Spain, TEL., 91-726-48-26; FAX, 91-726-72-46.

The Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture (SERFAC), directed by Dr. Sr. Catherine Bernard, will host its Fifth International Conference on January 4-8, 1997, in Madras, India. The theme, "The Family at the Threshold of the Twentyfirst Century," will be an international dialogue on family issues. Renowned international pro-life and family centered speakers will present papers and guide the working group discussions. Papers include: "Human Sexuality and Education for Life"; "Family, the Home of Virtue and Values"; and "The Interconnection between the Individual, Family, Social Well Being, and Sustainable Hu-

man Development." Registration will be limited to 120 participants. Deadline for registration— December 1, 1996. Contact: Dr. Sr. Catherine Bernard, SERFAC, P.B. No. 18, Tambaram West, Madras 600 045, India; Tel., 00-91-44-237-6398; FAX, 00-91-44-2376149.

During the conference Drs. John and Evelyn Billings will inaugurate the Asian Centre for Billings Ovulation Method (BOM-ASIA) of NFP at SERFAC on January 4, 1997. BOM-ASIA is a member of World Organization Ovulation Method Billings (WOOMB). An ambitious group, BOM-ASIA has pledged to: promote the authentic teaching of BOM in India and standardize BOM materials and literature in the Asian continent; carry out/facilitate BOM services in India and in the other countries of Asia; implement training criteria for certification of BOM teachers; train, certify, and accredit personnel/practitioners for teaching BOM in India/Asia; set up BOM Centres of Excellence in India/Asia; organize annual updating certification/practitioners courses for BOM teachers in India/Asia; influence medical curricula for inclusion of BOM in obstetrics and gynaecology practice; maintain database on research and recent advances on Natural Fertility Regulation from BOM Centres around the world; conduct research with focus on NFP in its relationship to marriage, family, and culture(s) and to encourage gender and equal responsibility in fertility regulation in India/Asian countries; to provide a platform where teachers for BOM, India/

Asia and the world can share and exchange teaching experiences; to improve reproductive health and the voluntary acceptance of family planning and contribute effectively to slower and more balanced population growth in India/Asian countries; and to influence policies of governments with regard to family planning in India and the countries of Asia.

The Center for Study and Research on Natural Fertility Regulation, WOOMB, and the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Rome will hold an international congress on November 8-9, 1996. The theme is "At the Sources of Life, Education for Responsible Procreation." Presentations will include: "Responsible Procreation: Political, Juridical, Scientific Aspects"; "Investigations on Cervical Mucus Biosynthesis at the Cellular Level"; and "The Catholic University at the Service of the Family and Church." Speakers include: the Drs. Billings, Dr. Odeblad, and Dr. Anna Cappella. The languages of the congress will be Italian and English, with simultaneous translation. Contact: Center for Study and Research on Natural Fertility Regulation, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Largo A. Gemelli, 8-00168 Roma, Italia; Tel. 06-3013-4954; FAX, 06-3015-343.



MATERIALS

DEPPA of Kansas introduces the Awareness Wheel designed for young women who are trying to understand the changes occurring in their bodies. Great for Mother/Daughter or teacher/mother/daughter programs. The cost is \$5.50 plus S&H. Contact: DEPPA of Kansas, Via Christi Regional Medical Center/St. Francis Campus, Education Building, 929 N. St. Francis, Wichita, KS 67214; 316-268-5446 or 316-268-5775.

The Medical Institute for Sexual Health (MISH), a nonprofit medical and educational organization begun in 1992, disseminates practical, medically accurate research-based materials. They pro-

vide a sex ed. guide, a health newsletter, and brochures about STDs as well as other useful materials. Contact: MISH, PO Box 4919, Austin, TX 78765-4919; 800-892-9484.

Origins (July 4, 1996, Vol. 26) printed the full text of the Pontifical Council for the Family's document, "Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage." This document has a helpful section on the place of NFP education in the proximate preparation of the engaged (#35). Contact: *Origins*, 202-541-3290; FAX, 202-541-3255.

Protestants Against Birth Control is a new group which provides materials about contraception and abortion. Although it expresses a greatly qualified support of NFP use in marriage, it is interesting to find a group of fellow

Christians actively opposed to contraception. Contact: *Protestants Against Birth Control*, P.O. Box 07240, Milwaukee, WI 53207; 414-483-3399; FAX 414-571-4227.

The diocese of St. Cloud has available videos from recent BOMA conference (September 6 & 7, 1996). Among the topics covered are: "What research Tells Us About Cervical Mucus," Dr. Eric Odeblad; "The Light Factor, Defining & Treating the Symptoms," Joy DeFelice, R.N.; "Marketing NFP on the Parish Level," Rev. Daniel McCaffrey; "how the Cervix Changes When the Pill, Depo Provera or Norplant are Used," Dr. Eric Odeblad; and "Reproductive Technology," Janet Smith, Ph. D. Contact: Office of NFP, 316 North 7th Ave., St. Cloud, MN 56303-3631; 320-252-2100; 1-800-864-6225.

Answers to puzzle on page 14:

Across:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| 2. Mucus | 16. Gravid |
| 6. Peak | 18. Menstruation |
| 7. Scrotum | 19. Confidentiality |
| 8. Ovulation | 22. Genitalia |
| 12. Menopause | 23. Zygote |
| 15. Fetus | 24. Infertility |

Down:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Testosterone | 11. Ovary |
| 3. Conception | 13. PMS |
| 4. Sperm | 14. STD |
| 5. Duct | 17. Birth canal |
| 9. Uterus | 20. Fertile |
| 10. Amniotic fluid | 21. Bladder |

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The NFP Forum is published quarterly. Its purpose is to serve the Roman Catholic diocesan NFP programs of the United States through offering: national and international news of NFP activity; articles on significant Church teachings, NFP methodology and related topics; and by providing a forum for sharing strategies in program development. Contributions are welcomed. All articles may be reproduced unless otherwise noted. For more information contact the editor.

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