
NFP PIONEERS: "CCL Formed in the Aftermath of *Humanae Vitae*"

John F. Kippley

July 25, 1968 was and is an important date within the Catholic Church, for on that day Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical, *Humanae vitae*. This summer marks the 25th anniversary of that document, and it is definitely being noticed. In CCL we celebrated the 20th anniversary at our 1988 bi-annual conference coordinated with the Diocese of Peoria. This summer we plan to do a special commemorative issue of our newsletter, but we do not plan a special national conference because there are already such conferences, and we want to be available to help with any local conferences.

In line with the commemoration of this event, I've been asked to write something about the history of the Couple to Couple League for Natural Family Planning.

The remote foundations go back to the middle Sixties when I was doing parish outreach work to the uncommitted and explaining the Catholic faith in a regular series of classes. It was my responsibility to explain the Church's teaching on sexuality, and it was in this context that I developed the covenant theology of sex, publishing my first article in February, 1967. In 1967-1968 my wife Sheila researched and wrote *Breastfeeding and Natural Child Spacing*. In the immediate aftermath of *Humanae vitae* I was appalled by what was passing for theology in favor of contraception. It was essentially saying that since the Church's teaching would involve the daily cross of sexual restraint at some times for some couples, the teaching was erroneous. Therefore I wrote a book titled *Birth Control and the Marriage Cov-*

enant, the forerunner of our current *Sex and the Marriage Covenant*.

Luke 11:46

For me personally, the publication of that book in 1970 was the beginning of CCL. I had reaffirmed the teaching of the Church showing both the errors of the dissenters and providing a somewhat new and positive theology to support it. I felt I had gone out of my way to affirm this difficult and unpopular teaching of the Church and it was then I felt very much the force of Luke 11:46:

And He said, "Woe to you lawyers also! for you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers."

Having affirmed the "burden" of marital chastity, I felt obliged (and still do) to do as much as I can to provide the practical help to make that teaching both more livable and therefore, to some, more believable.

My wife and I had taught ourselves the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP through a "Child and Family" article by Dr. Konald A. Prem. Thus, the next summer when we moved to the Twin Cities, we made personal contact with Dr. Prem. We learned he was a professor of OB/ GYN at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine and a long time teacher and promoter of the STM. He was delighted to help us get an organization started, for he had become con-

vinced that an organization such as CCL was necessary for the proper teaching and support of client couples.

The three of us started our first four-meeting course in the fall of 1971 at St. Odilia's Church in Shoreview, a suburb north of St. Paul. From that course and the next one that started in February, we got the nucleus of our Twin Cities chapter including Jim and Mary Glover who are still active in this apostolate.

A chance to teach college theology brought us to Cincinnati the summer of 1972, and within two years it was apparent that I had two full-time jobs on my hands—college and CCL. Two year start-up grants from the Archdioceses of Cincinnati and St. Paul-Minneapolis enabled me to work full-time for CCL beginning in July 1974.

The first few years were fun. Expansion was rapid; there was lots of interest; classes were large; the pains were growing pains.

Our first office was in the uninsulated third floor of the 100-year-old Kippley home. It never got above 62 on cold

days in winter, and that was by mid-afternoon. Of our first two employees, Donna Kneip is still with us and Marguerite Gehrum retired just last year and still comes in to help with special jobs. They would

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get the inventory from the basement, carry it up to the third floor for processing, and then carry it down to the main floor for shipping. Better than belonging to a health club! I cannot verify this,

but they tell me they had to bring their own pencils.

CCL in the Eighties

International expansion started in mid-1979 with the certification of Gerard and Hilde Loriaux in Belgium; they had attended a course I taught in upstate New York while they were on temporary military duty in the U.S., and they wanted to bring CCL back home. The next step in international development was the 1980 move of a Virginia teaching couple, Tom and Olivia

McFadden, to Ireland; they worked full-time for over a decade to establish the CCL apostolate in Ireland and England where it continues on its own now that they are back in the States. Service to a gradually increasing number in other countries was the brightest spot of the Eighties, just as the development of interest and service to Eastern European countries has been the brightest spot thus far in the Nineties. CCL currently serves by teaching in 15 countries on four continents, and we support members in all six populated continents and even in such places as Greenland. One staff person, Bill Corey, spends most of his time and energies in serving international development.

The great challenge of the Eighties was dealing with the decreasing interest in NFP. When CCL started in 1971, there were still a great many people who had formed their consciences according to the teaching of the Church—because the teaching was taught. Increasingly in the Eighties, the teaching of the Church was not consistently taught; indeed, young people were often taught to dissent from it. This was reflected in a significant reduction in the numbers of new clients taught by CCL and by every

other NFP program.

We faced the problem of disappointed volunteer teachers by increasing our Central staff to be in closer touch with our volunteer teachers in the field and with cooperative diocesan personnel.

Recognizing the need for education, we published a tidy list of books, booklets, brochures, and audio-visual programs dealing with NFP and chastity issues during the Eighties.

Facing the need for complete and understandable education in NFP in areas not served by resident volunteer teachers, we developed the CCL Home Study Course, and experience has demonstrated that it does very well what it was intended to do.

The Nineties

The publication of a revised edition of *Breastfeeding and Natural Child Spacing* in 1989 closed out the Eighties, and the publication of Marilyn Shannon's *Fertility, Cycles, and Nutrition* the next summer opened the Nineties. This was followed by the publication of *Sex and the Marriage Covenant* in the summer of 1991, and we are looking forward to the publication this spring or summer of *Marriage Is for Keeps*, a small book on preparation for marriage.

We believe it is not a matter of "if" but only "when" that responsible authorities in the Church and other Christian bodies start to take those actions which will make it obvious to any observer that they are serious about teaching the traditional norms of marital chastity and providing the best of practical help. A number of such actions are described in Chapter 9 of *Sex and the Marriage Covenant*.

We believe that our regular course

on NFP and our new book, *Marriage Is for Keeps*, offer an unprecedented supplement to whatever concerned priests and family life ministers are doing to prepare couples for Christian marriage.

We believe that is worthy of note that when we started CCL in the fall of 1971, we were teaching the three signs of mucus, cervix, and temperature; we were teaching ecological breastfeeding; we were teaching basic marital morality; and we were doing this in a series of four two-hour meetings spaced a month apart. The first two meetings now take about 2 1/2 hours since we started doing some workbook exercises and added a bit more material, but aside from that the basics are the same. We have been reaffirmed repeatedly over the past 21 1/2 years that our original plan was and remains a good one that serves well the needs of families today! ■

John F. Kippley is the President of the Couple to Couple League. The above article, with minor changes, first appeared in CCL Family Foundations, March-April 1993. It is reprinted with permission.

ERRATUM

We discovered an error under "Coordinator's Corner," Winter 1993. Please note the following correction on page 9, right column, last sentence in the first paragraph:

"We see the fruit of this policy working in the 10% or so, of engaged couples attending our classes."

We apologize for this editorial error.