

DIOCESAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

NCCB Committee For Pro-Life Activities

1511 K Street, N.W., Room 333

Washington, D.C. 20005

202/737-1339

A C T I V I T Y R E P O R T

(June 1, 1982)

TO: NFP Program Coordinators

FROM: Rev. Msgr. James T. McHugh
 Mary Catherine Martin, Ph.D.

WASHINGTON OFFICE

The Diocesan Development Program opened the Washington Office in January, 1982 with a three year commitment to NFP diocesan development. Prior to that time there was initial activity providing orientation to the program for the bishops of the United States.

As of May, 1982 the following activities have been accomplished:

- 127 dioceses have appointed an NFP program coordinator. 66 of these dioceses are associated with the family life offices. 24 dioceses are associated with the social services or catholic charities offices. 37 dioceses are operating as NFP offices within the diocesan organization.
- Consultation meetings with nine dioceses have been held involving the coordinators and the NFP advisory committees.
- Meetings with the NFP coordinators at state wide meetings provided an initial consultation with 28 dioceses.
- A survey of NFP co-sponsored by the Catholic Health Association in St. Louis, Missouri is being conducted of all Catholic hospitals in the United States, and has been mailed to approximately 700 hospitals. Information from this survey will be used to describe and improve NFP services in Catholic hospitals.
- Consultation with some theologians is in process to develop and articulate key theological themes pertinent to NFP. Results will be published in the late Fall, 1982. The final product will be directed to priests, teaching couples and physicians to provide a theological perspective for their efforts in helping couples learn and practice natural family planning.

DIOCESAN EFFORTS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NFP PLAN

Most dioceses are moving with an organized response to the diocesan plan. Some of the following activities are particularly noteworthy:

- The dioceses of Cleveland, New York and Detroit are expanding the scope of NFP from an individual program focus toward a broader diocesan focus with emphasis on developing multiple sites for NFP in the diocese.
- The dioceses of Detroit, Boston, Portland, Oregon and Beaumont, Texas are developing NFP services within special ministries, i.e. hispanic, vietnamese and black communities.
- The Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania has completed a pilot curriculum for seminarians. This was a 13 week course for credit, an elective which involved an overview and intensive review of natural methods, discussions between the seminarians and experienced teacher couples, gynecologists, NFP program experts, and an author of popular NFP articles. The response to this pilot was very positive with 33 percent of the seminarians electing to take the course. The seminary has requested the course to be repeated in the next semester.
- Cleveland and Detroit are encouraging involvement and contribution of method-specific groups to promote a common interest in diocesan NFP program development.
- The Archdiocese of New York is developing NFP leadership couples to work at deanery and vicariate levels and interact with other Catholic leadership at those levels.
- The dioceses of New York, Cleveland, Detroit, and Portland, Oregon have involved persons from other diocesan offices and agencies to assist in identifying where their offices can help to promote NFP services, i.e. health and hospitals, adult education, marriage enrichment and pre-Cana groups.
- Many dioceses are planning to utilize other Catholic professionals within the diocese to assist in the NFP delivery program, i.e. educational specialists, theologians and medical specialists.

INTERNATIONAL NFP EVENTS

- New York: In March, 1982 the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) held a meeting pertaining to international NFP program development. Present at the meeting were NFP leaders from the two major international organizations, WOOMB and International Federation, IFFLP, UNFPA staff, World Health Organization and Population experts. The major outcomes of this meeting included a

united approach to NFP development from the major NFP experts, an openness on the part of UNFPA to consider funding and development of NFP programs and demonstrations as well as a more supportive position toward the educational programs of NFP in developing countries.

SPECIAL DIOCESAN PROGRAM: CLEVELAND, OHIO

The Diocese of Cleveland is moving systematically toward the full implementation of the diocesan NFP plan with the overall goal of developing responsible programs in NFP for Catholic couples in the diocese. In addition, Cleveland is developing a curriculum for training high school teachers to present fertility awareness information to high school students within the Catholic value context.

Milestones leading to the successful diocesan-focused NFP development in Cleveland included:

- A successful NFP information day for priests in the diocese. Attended by 60 percent of the priests in 1979.
- A mandate from the Bishop to proceed with expansion of the NFP diocesan program.
- The formulation of a diocesan NFP Commission to establish goals and priorities in NFP expansion for the diocese.
- The publication of the NCCB Diocesan Plan for NFP Program Development, which provided affirmation and helped to establish target dates and specific tasks leading to further NFP development.
- Consultation from the NCCB office staff to assist in some of the specific technical development issues.
- Consultation from a diocesan management expert who facilitated dialogue among the various NFP provider groups within the Cleveland diocese. This helped to expand the focus from specific programs to an overall diocesan goal.
- The establishment of an NFP Training Institute utilizing a multi-disciplinary professional training faculty and NFP method experts from the Cleveland diocese.

DIOCESAN APPROACHES FOR IMPLEMENTING NFP IN CLEVELAND:

- Level 1: Conduct diocesan regional orientation workshops using the framework of the Regional Councils to provide an opportunity for a pastoral lead. Introduction to the methods with discussion of the positive experience of couples using the natural methods will be a key theme of the orientation.

The overall goals of Level 1 include:

1. Providing NFP information and gaining clergy support and promotion.
 2. Recruiting and referral of interested couples to the existing NFP provider programs to learn the methods.
 3. Recruiting students for the NFP instructor training program who then would be screened by the Regional Councils as appropriate candidates.
- Level 2: Conduct the formal NFP Instructor Training Workshop by the Diocesan Faculty.

The overall goals of the Instructor Training Institute include:

1. Providing instructor training for teachers of NFP and fertility awareness to provide education in the parishes, schools and medical facilities of the diocese.
 2. Establishing a systematic educational process for competency-based training compatible with other dioceses in the state using diocesan criteria for competency.
- Level 3: Provide a supervised practice teaching experience with a final evaluation by the faculty and practicum instructors and a requirement for attendance at an annual In-Service Workshop for competency renewal.

Further information about this innovative diocesan development approach can be obtained from:

Rev. Anthony Rebol
Director
Dept. of Marriage & Family Concerns

Miss Mary Ann Stanton
NFP Program Coordinator
Marriage & Family Life Office

Dr. Anthony J. Iezzi
Marriage & Family Life Office

Diocese of Cleveland
Catholic Center
1031 Superior Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
(216) 696-6525