

# Diocesan Activity Report - NFP

Diocesan Development Program

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## VATICAN CITY, ROME

His Holiness, John Paul II, has emphasized the importance of NFP within the context of conjugal life. The text of two presentations are attached.

The first of a series of talks related to conjugal life and love given by Pope John Paul II is now available. The book Original Unity of Man and Woman is a catechesis on the Book of Genesis published by the Daughters of St. Paul, Boston, Massachusetts, 1982. These talks were given at the Wednesday general audiences and are recommended for NFP instructors, seminarians and priests interested in the study of the theology of marriage.

## LATERAN UNIVERSITY, ROME

Rev. Msgr. James T. McHugh will be teaching at the Pontifical Institute on Marriage and the Family at the Lateran University in Rome, from October 20 to December 5, 1982. The course is entitled Principles of Demography and Population Ethics.

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

ADOLESCENT FERTILITY AWARENESS - A meeting was held with some of the NFP leadership from the Baltimore-Washington area to discuss various approaches used in presenting fertility awareness to adolescents.

In attendance were Dr. Hanna Klaus and Sr. Ursula Fagan who are conducting a study for the Kennedy Foundation, Washington, D.C.; Sr. Anna Walsh has finalized an adolescent teaching program for St. Agnes' Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland; Chris O'Keefe and Mrs. Anne Lanctot are working with an adolescent fertility awareness program in the Center for Life at Providence Hospital, Washington, D.C.

Some of the approaches that are successful in these programs included:

- discussion of spiritual values related to chastity and sexuality.
- involvement of parents is viewed essential.
- a preference for giving the course over several months as opposed to a one time offering of the information.



- encouragement of charting at least the cervical mucus sign. Parental approval should be required for the charting.
- encouragement of adolescents to discuss their problems and viewpoints related to sexuality.
- a preference for long term program evaluation.

FAMILY LIFE - The National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers is holding its annual convention in San Diego, California from September 28 through October 1, 1982. Dr. Martin will present the diocesan program for natural family planning.

AMERICAN NURSE ASSOCIATION - The American Nurse Association held its bi-annual meeting in Washington, D.C., June, 1982. The convention addressed three major themes:

- 1) ethics and values in nursing practice,
- 2) promotion of autonomy and wellness in patient care,
- 3) economic concerns for the needy in light of current budget cuts in social programs.

Dr. Mary Martin conducted a special workshop concerned with NFP as an approach to wellness in reproductive health care. The workshop was well attended by nurses, many of whom had an active affiliation with NFP programs.

THE NFP THEOLOGY PROJECT - In Familiaris Consortio Pope John Paul II called upon theologians "to illustrate ever more clearly the biblical foundations, the ethical grounds and the personalist reasons" for the Church's teaching on responsible parenthood, which "is of incomparable value and represents a unique and highly meritorious service to the family and humanity".

Recognizing the need for a theological perspective as a foundation for the practice of NFP and related pastoral and teaching efforts, the national office has begun a series of consultations with theologians. The meetings are directed toward articulating and integrating into NFP programs specific themes on marriage, human sexuality, grace and Christian spirituality. Two meetings have been held so far, and more are anticipated. This consultation will involve married couples, scientists and theologians. The ultimate objective is to provide a specific theological dimension that will become an important part of NFP teaching programs.

CCL BI-ANNUAL CONVENTION - From July 28 through July 31, 1982, the Couple-to-Couple League held its bi-annual meeting at Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska. More than 150 teaching couples took part in the meeting which provided updated information and an opportunity for renewed enthusiasm. Msgr. McHugh told the participants that the Diocesan Development Program was progressing well. Its implementation would create greater opportunities for all in the NFP apostolate and CCL could expect to be part of the overall diocesan effort. As dioceses



develop programs they will take responsibility for extending current NFP efforts, recruiting new teaching couples, and sustaining the diocesan NFP network. A spirit of cooperation and flexibility will be necessary as each diocese attempts to unify and coordinate existing NFP programs. Diocesan expansion may involve some new approaches. However the long-range objective is the same for all--enabling more couples to learn and practice NFP and assurance of quality and competence in the teaching efforts.

THE NFP SURVEY AND THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (CHA) - The Washington Office is conducting an analysis with CHA of the responses from Catholic hospitals regarding the status of NFP services as well as expansion or development needs. The analysis is not yet complete and a full report will be available later. Some of the hospitals expressed a great deal of interest and may be in contact with diocesan coordinators for development. Some general guidelines for assisting service development within Catholic hospitals are available from the Washington Office.

The Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research & Education Center and CHA are conducting a series of workshops throughout the country on Bio-Ethical Concerns. These workshops are designed to assist hospital administrators, doctors, nurses, pastoral care personnel and other health care providers to understand ethical issues. Special interest seminars including differences between NFP, contraception and sterilization are included. Dr. Mary Martin, Mrs. Dianne Daley and Mrs. Terry Maes will discuss the NFP component.

DIOCESAN EFFORTS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NFP DEVELOPMENT PLAN - Diocesan Coordinators have been appointed in 131 dioceses. 69 Coordinators are associated with the family life offices, 24 Coordinators are associated with social services or catholic charities offices and 38 Coordinators are directly appointed to an NFP office.

Meetings have been held with 32 dioceses. Nine of these have been with the full advisory board and the diocesan coordinator. Visits to the dioceses this summer revealed that:

- Kansas City, Missouri is looking to expand its existing program and needs more teaching couples. The diocese is actively participating in cooperating with other dioceses in Missouri through the family life agencies.
- Kansas City, Kansas is making a primary effort to identify and coordinate existing efforts into a fuller NFP diocesan program.
- Indianapolis, Indiana reports coordinating efforts of existing NFP groups. CCL couples are teaching in various sectors of the diocese. Good medical support accompanies the NFP program efforts and a fuller diocesan instructional program is envisioned.
- St. Louis, Missouri has incorporated the NFP policy into the Common Marriage Policy for the State of Missouri. The Priest's Manual of the Archdiocese of St. Louis provides an explanation



of the pastoral position on natural family planning as well as a listing of the NFP teaching programs in the Archdiocese.

- Scranton, Pennsylvania is working toward NFP expansion and integration of hospital programs with a couple-oriented program in the family life bureau.

The Archdiocese of New York reports that a Spanish-speaking NFP couple has been hired to further develop programs for hispanic communities. The NFP coordinators have begun visits to the Vicars of the Archdiocese to develop plans for publicity and service development within each vicariate. A Day of Recollection is being planned in October for NFP instructors which will focus on development of spiritual support groups. Suggestions will be given to help NFP instructors develop similar support groups with couples whom they teach.

An effort to better inform OB/GYN physicians of current NFP and program services is being done in Portland, Oregon. Two medical NFP advisory board members are sending letters to their colleagues with an overview article on NFP, a listing of NFP service programs and brochures. It is anticipated that physicians will become better informed about current NFP and can inform interested couples.

The San Francisco Archdiocesan and Oakland Diocesan Councils of Catholic Women are sponsoring an accredited seminar to popularize a teen sexual abstinence program in October, 1982. The conference is directed toward health care professionals, educators and parents. The conference will present concepts and approaches to deal positively with the issues of teen sexuality within the framework of chastity.

The Washington office has a basic package available for any diocese wishing to initiate its own instructor training program. The expansion of NFP services will require for many dioceses the need to increase the number of NFP instructors. Consultation is available to assist the dioceses to utilize their NFP expertise to further develop and offer NFP instructor training. Any diocese wishing information, please contact the Washington office.

SPECIAL NOTICES - The Surgeon General of the Public Health Service has issued warnings on the use of marijuana. Chronic effects of marijuana use can affect fertility by resulting in decreased sperm count and sperm mobility as well as cause interference with ovulation and pre-natal development.

These findings are important for young couples who may use marijuana periodically not thinking that any serious consequences of the drug are possible. They are noteworthy for NFP instructors in regard to normal cycling patterns and fertility potential.