

Diocesan Activity Report - NFP

Diocesan Development Program

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ANNOUNCEMENT: NATIONAL MEETING

JULY, 1983

The NFP Diocesan Development Program is conducting a national meeting for NFP Diocesan Coordinators in Washington, D.C., July 17 to July 21, 1983. The program is being co-sponsored by the Center for Family Studies at The Catholic University of America with the support and assistance of the NFP office of the Archdiocese of Washington. Additional information will be forthcoming.

WASHINGTON OFFICE. A consultation with a small group of diocesan coordinators was held in Washington, D.C. on December 14, 1982, to discuss efforts at implementing the Diocesan Plan and projections for the future. The group dealt with many of the points that have been made in discussions with diocesan coordinating committees during the past year. The following is a summary of the topics discussed, and the action that will be pursued in the immediate future.

- SURVEY OF NFP ACTIVITY IN CATHOLIC HOSPITALS. The preliminary findings of the Catholic Health Association--Diocesan Development Program survey are positive and challenging. Almost one third of the hospitals (177) had an NFP service program and 110 hospitals indicated a strong interest in initiating or expanding NFP programs. There was a positive attitude toward working with diocesan leadership and personnel and also toward integrating NFP couples into the hospital program. (Summary report of the survey is enclosed.) The Washington office will work with CHA and with the individual diocesan coordinators in meeting the needs of hospitals. To achieve this, a mailing with specific guidelines is now being sent to the hospitals exhibiting strongest interest, and also to those dioceses where such hospitals exist.

- FERTILITY AWARENESS. There was a good discussion of fertility awareness programs for teenagers, and many dioceses have such programs. The Washington Office had held a meeting in early fall of some people involved. More study is needed, but there are good diocesan models in existence. Further work is needed on this topic.

- THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES. Some initial meetings were held with theologians to explore pertinent theological themes for the benefit of priests and ways of injecting a richer theological perspective into NFP instructional efforts. A basic package has been worked out covering the theology of marriage, conjugal love, responsible parenthood and the personalist values of NFP. The preliminary outlines were sent to theologians, NFP couples and other specialists. The final product will be ready in February/March, 1983.

● NATIONAL MEETING. There was a general consensus in favor of a national meeting of NFP coordinators, as compared to regional meetings, to discuss ways of implementing the Diocesan Plan and some of the problems encountered to date. There was strong urging that any national meeting be directed primarily to meeting programmatic needs, but also including some update on NFP and some theoretical considerations.

DIOCESAN ACTIVITIES

● State of Missouri: The Family Life Committee of the Missouri Catholic Conference has included support of NFP in the Common Marriage Policy for the state. Along with other NFP, marriage and family experts, the Diocesan NFP Coordinators from St. Louis, Kansas City-St. Joseph, Springfield-Cape Girardeau and Jefferson City, Missouri have included the following goals for NFP diocesan development within their respective dioceses:

- calling for competent teacher couples in every parish supported by an active parish council.
- developing leadership to conduct continuing educational programs for priests concerned with the areas of sexuality, celibacy and natural family planning.
- developing NFP instructor training centers in every diocese.
- providing opportunities for every Catholic couple to learn NFP.

● Boston, Massachusetts: The archdiocese will pilot Seminars of Awareness for clergy and permanent deacons to discuss the pastoral implications of natural family planning. A team of NFP experts will take part in the seminars to stimulate interest in the spiritual, counseling and psycho-biophysical aspects of NFP. A resource book will be distributed to clergy to further stimulate personal reading about issues concerned with NFP and conjugal life. For the second year, the diocese will conduct a seminar on NFP for deacons at St. John's Seminary in Boston who will be ordained in the summer. The Boston archdiocese is also including NFP instructor training in the Collaborative Training Institute. The aims of the Institute include recruiting parish members to become active in the parish ministries. Formal training is offered in Parish Preparation, Marriage Preparation, Liturgical Preparation and Home Visitation. Natural family planning will now become an integral part of the diocesan vision for parish ministry, training and services.

● Phoenix, Arizona: The diocesan coordinator reports working closely with the directors of both the Family Life Office and Vicariate of Christian Formation to provide NFP information sessions for major diocesan groups. These sessions have been given to approximately 60% of the priests, the majority of Catholic social service counselors, couples who serve in the marriage preparation ministry and the directors of youth ministries as well as Catholic and public high school teachers.

● Portland, Oregon: The diocese is sponsoring a one-day pastoral seminar on human sexuality and NFP in eight sites of the dioceses of Portland and Baker, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. NFP is being actively promoted to the medical and nursing health communities through efforts of physicians and nurse on the NFP Advisory Committee.

● Cleveland, Ohio: Five Regional NFP Resource Centers have been set up throughout the diocese to accomodate the needs of supervising and continuing education for NFP instructor training as well as the formation of NFP couple training sites. Each Resource Center is staffed by a pastoral and medical consultant, and an NFP trainer couple. The diocesan NFP medical consultant will monitor method teaching at all centers. The Resource Centers are equipped with audio-visual equipment, learning materials for couples and reference libraries for NFP instructors. Two parish sites serving black and rural communities as well as two hospital sites and a site at the Catholic Center have been established.

ANNOUNCEMENTS. The American Academy of Natural Family Planning is an organization formed by Natural Family Planning (NFP) Practitioners to foster, advance and promote quality NFP through service, education, leadership and research. The first Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Natural Family Planning was held in St. Louis, Missouri in July, 1982. The second Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Natural Family Planning will be held in St. Louis, Missouri from June 26 through June 30, 1983.

ENCLOSURES. The statement by Cardinal Casaroli to the Congress of the Americas (formerly WOOMB) is enclosed for your reference. Also enclosed is an article summarizing the results of the CHA - Diocesan Development Program Survey of Catholic Hospitals. Specific follow-up materials are being mailed to dioceses.