

Diocesan Activity Report-NFP

Seton Hall University

South Orange, New Jersey 07079

(201) 761-9647

November 1987

Msgr. James T. McHugh, *Director*

Kathleen Carr, *Administrative Assistant*; Theresa Notare, *Editor, Newsletter*

REV. PHILIP D. KRAUS, S.J. JOINS DDP

Joining Msgr. McHugh and the DDP staff as Assistant Director is Rev. Philip D. Kraus, S.J. Fr. Kraus, from the St. Louis Province of the Jesuits, comes to our program with a wealth of experience in Family Ministry. Receiving degrees from St. Louis University and the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, Father's expertise lies in Family therapy, Sexuality, and Education.

As Assistant Director of the Program Father will assist Msgr. McHugh in helping the dioceses to initiate, coordinate and expand their NFP programs.

Fr. Kraus is a member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy; the National Association of Catholic Chaplains and the American Academy of Natural Family Planning.

FROM THE DEMOGRAPHIC LITERATURE

Fertility Behavior in the Context of Development is a UN Population Division study of 38 developing countries, using World Fertility Study data. The study shows that only about 25% of all women in these countries were using any method of contraception, with 18% using a modern method (sterilization, pills, IUDs, condoms, female barriers, etc.) and 6% using a traditional method (rhythm, withdrawal, complete abstinence, folk methods). Among the 6% using a traditional method, those using rhythm (which includes newer NFP methods) are higher in the more developed countries and in those with strong family planning programs (24%). The findings of this study have positive implications for NFP. Since the effectiveness of all methods is heavily dependent on the users

(Continued on p.3, col.b)

U.S. HEALTH CARE AND FAMILY PLANNING

Two recently published articles deal with the history of integrating family planning into the public health system. The first, by Nancy Aries, "Fragmentation and Reproductive Freedom: Federally Subsidized Family Planning Services 1960-80", American Journal of Public Health, 77(1987): 1465-1471, focuses on the development of Title X. The second, "Catholics and Natural Family Planning: Tradition or Innovation?", by Robert Kambic, America, (Oct.17, 1987): 244-254, deals with the more ambivalent government treatment of NFP.

The Aries article, an analysis of family planning programs from 1960-80, describes the problem of fragmentation from other reproductive health services." Aries draws three conclusions for such fragmentation: 1) the lack of consensus regarding the exact nature of family planning; 2) the desire to remain independent on the part of reproductive health providers, in order to ensure a broad base of support; and 3) the issue's place within the context of the U.S. social welfare system.

It is Aries' conclusion that this time period is an important one in the history of family planning. The liberal side, which presented an increased demand for more and better contraceptives, joined with the conservative side, whose concern was population growth and domestic poverty. This coalition made family planning services more readily available. In this picture Congressional action did not argue against the funding of family planning programs, rather it set up the form such funding should take. Yet the actions of the

(Continued on p.3, col.a)

DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND: NFP SEMINAR

The fifth annual continuing education workshop was held at Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, 10/11 & 12 /87. NFP teachers from five adjacent dioceses attended.

"Building Family Strengths" was the topic of the keynote address given by Joan and Michael Hoxsey, Family Life Directors of Youngstown, OH. The point was made that the NFP lifestyle nourishes six basic strengths in family living: communication, commitment, affirmation, wellness, time together, and ability to handle crises.

Saturday's morning workshop was devoted to the Vatican Instruction on Respect for Human Life and Procreation. It was conducted by Msgr. James McHugh. After a detailed discussion of the document, a question and answer session followed. A panel presentation on the need for an "NFP Community Response to Couples Experiencing Infertility" was next on the program. Two models were presented: Janet Bettcher of South Bend, ID described the St. Joseph County NFP information workshops on infertility causes. Daniel and Linda Zamora of Akron, OH explained the support group that they formed for couples unable to bear children (Child Reach).

The afternoon session focused on updating teaching skills. Dr. Mary C. Martin presented a paper (see adjacent column). The presentation was followed by a group discussion. The day ended with an Eucharistic Liturgy and a certification ceremony for new and veteran teachers in the Cleveland diocese.

Tapes of the workshops are available from the Cleveland Marriage and Family Office. Dr. Martin's paper and group discussion questions are also available from that office. For info. on Child Reach, write - P.O. Box 5871, Akron, OH 44372.

Mary Ann Stanton

TEACHING AND LEARNING: A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP

The philosophy that permeates all good teaching is one in which trust is fundamental. Because good teaching is requisite to NFP, this element is pivotal. Trust is therefore operative within the three levels of the NFP learning process:

A. Trust between the couple; 1) Confidence that both will learn and accept the responsibility of their fertility. 2) Communication of their procreative desires to each other. 3) Openness to God's will in their conjugal life.

B. Trust generated by the teacher; 1) Competence in NFP methods. 2) Confidence in the effectiveness of NFP through a first hand experience. 3) Owning his/her limits of knowledge and having the resources for outside consultation. 4) Knowledge of sexual behavior and ways to encourage its healthy expression. 5) Non-judgemental attitudes. 6) Absolute trust in our Christ is fundamental. Prayer should then fuel our work.

C. Trust generated by the trainer of teachers; 1) Thorough knowledge in the physiological basis of NFP methods. 2) Thorough knowledge of the Catholic Church's teachings, and a working relationship with a diocesan expert. 3) Ability to work with the Diocesan Coordinator. 4) Creative and practical abilities to design and implement appropriate projects. 5) Ability to network with colleagues in the Diocese who share the same concerns.

There are many qualities that establish trust, these are a few. Remember, "a loving heart is the truest wisdom"; and a delicate quality which is essential for learning is a sense of humor.

Mary Martin

(cont. from p.1, col.b)

Reagan administration challenge the previous system: on one level it continues the momentum through seeking to strengthen the state's role in service delivery: on another level, its opposition to abortion and its policy of incorporating family planning programs into a block grant represents a reversal.

Where Aries focuses on birth-control history in this country, Kambic looks at the methods themselves and NFP's imperceptible presence. In a succinct article he drives home his point; i.e., NFP methods are recent developments in this history and consequently present a formidable agenda for its proponents.

NFP, when viewed outside the Roman Catholic Church, is presently at a disadvantage. Given the history of artificial methods, their technological developments, public press and governmental funding, they have become ingrained in the consciousness of the American people. Modern NFP has only been available for the past 15 years. Techniques such as the Basal Body Temperature the Ovulation Method, and Sympto-Thermal emerged within an already sold on technology society. An example of the depth of this conviction can be seen in the media reaction to the Federal aid made available in 1985 for NFP promotion.

Within the Church NFP is also struggling. Although in recent years John Paul II has done much to develop our understanding of "Responsible Parenthood" and the various arms of the Church have begun its pastoral implementation, nevertheless it too emerges within an impoverished tradition. It wasn't until Humanae vitae (1968) that the issue of NFP was clearly addressed. With its promulgation opposition as well as support was sounded. On the supportive side various church associated and nonreligious organizations developed for the purpose of education on the natural methods. Those groups, along with official

church programs and other elements in the greater society improved the climate. Despite these advances Kambic notes that internal tensions continue to retard full growth. "Unlike the population movement, they have not found an issue that will excite public interest; they have not been financially or philosophically able to form a body with the same national impact as Planned Parenthood and they have not assumed the leadership role in the worldwide NFP effort...." (p.254).

Kambic's sober realism in addressing the problems and tensions which face NFP is refreshing. He squarely looks at the situation and neatly offers some practical suggestions: with the NCCB's opening of a new chapter in this struggle there are areas where the bishop's support can have immediate effect; 1) the reexamining of diocesan Pre-Cana programs; 2) the presenting of NFP as a positive force in Religion and Social Studies courses in the Catholic educational system; and 3) the need for NFP groups to respect and support each others activities regardless of methodological differences. Kambic's concern is for a wholistic effort which takes in funding as well as educational activities.

(cont. from p.1, col.a)

motivation and correct understanding of their use, good NFP instruction programs can increase the proportion of NFP users. Because religious teaching still seems to have some impact on use, church-based programs would be helpful. Since in some regions large proportions practice post partum abstinence, efforts should be made to approach them with periodic abstinence as an adaptation.

"Contraceptive Failure in the US: A Critical Review of the Literature", by James Trussell and Kathryn Kost (Studies in Family Planning, Sept/Oct 1987) provides info. on the effectiveness of NFP as gleaned from a number of studies. It accepts an average failure rate somewhere

(Continued on p.4)

NEWS BRIEFS

Archdiocese of Chicago;

Sharon Dausman has been named coordinator of NFP. Her appointment gives official Archdiocesan Standing to NFP services which will be part of the Family Ministries Office. Congratulations Sharon!

Diocese of Cleveland;

The Dept. of Marriage & Family Ministry has their quarterly, Covenant, available for purchase. The Oct. '87 issue gives an analysis of the "Consistent Ethic of Life". Projected issues for 1988 will include the 20th anniversary of Humanae vitae. For further info. contact Mary Ann Stanton, 1031 Superior Ave., Rm.221, Cleveland, OH 44114.

Diocese of Memphis;

A Father/Son Program was held on Oct. 9th at St. Joseph Hospital. The program, for 10-14 year old boys and their fathers, accented respect and appreciation for the gifts of sexuality and fertility. It was led by the NFP Instructor couples of the Diocese. For further information about the responses to this event contact Mary Pat Van Epps at #901-577-2895.

Archdiocese of Omaha;

A new NFP video entitled "A Decision For Love and Life" was produced by the Archdiocese, the Pope Paul VI Institute, and the Couple to Couple League of Omaha. The video is not an explanation of the various NFP methods. Rather, it presents the Church's teaching regarding responsible parenthood through interviewing actual NFP users. A study guide, as well as a brochure briefly describing the Ovulation and Sympto-Thermal methods accompanies the video. Cost is \$35.00. Orders are made by writing: NFP Video, Archdiocese of Omaha, 3214 No. 60th St., Omaha, Nebraska 68104.

Diocese of Portland;

The Northwest NFP Services have received a challenge grant through

the Providence Medical Foundation from the Raskob Foundation of Wilmington, DE. The challenge grant is to go toward the teen sexuality education program whose goal is to end teen pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases. For further info. contact Rose Fuller, 4805 N.E. Glesan, Portland, Oregon 97213-2957

Diocese of Rockford;

A teacher training program for NFP practitioners is being presented by the Family Life Office beginning Nov. 6, 1987. The program is based on the Billings Ovulation Method using Creighton Model Curriculum as developed by Thomas W. Hilgers, M.D. For more info. write: Diocese of Rockford Teacher Training Program, Phyllis A. White, CNFPE, 272 King St., Crystal Lake, IL 60014.

Diocese of St. Cloud;

Frank Sheehan, known for the many workshops and seminars which he has given on marriage counseling and family related topics, spoke on "Parenting", Oct.3rd. For further info. contact Kay Ek, Diocesan Dr. NFP, Family Life Bureau, 305 N. 7th Ave., Suite 102, St. Cloud, MN 56301

(cont. from p.3)
between 16% and 23%. The analysis is fair, given the fact that NFP does not have a great deal of consistent data. Moreover, NFP rates are not out of line with other methods.

"Men - New Focus for Family Planning Programs", Population Reports, (Johns Hopkins Univ. Population Info. Pgm., Series J, No33, Nov-Dec. 1986) emphasizes the need to involve men in responsible parenthood. The article presents the usual failure rates and surveys the literature, regarding NFP, but at least includes NFP among the other methods with the urging that men be instructed as well as women.

All these articles draw on the same data, and underscore the need for more systematic compiling and reporting of NFP performance.