

Diocesan Activity Report-NFP

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Most Rev. James T. McHugh, Director; Rev. Philip D. Kraus, S.J., Assistant Director
Theresa Notare, Editor, Newsletter

NATIONWIDE SURVEY*

To assess client satisfaction in their instruction and use of NFP and to determine the role of NFP in the couple relationship, the DDP commissioned a Nationwide Survey. 9,442 Questionnaires were mailed to NFP clients from twenty-four diocesan programs across the United States, yielding 3,763 responses for an overall response rate of 39%. Of this total there were 3,345 completed Questionnaires. This summary is a report of the preliminary analysis of these data.

1. Church teaching in family planning decisions is important to respondents: 60.1% of wives and 59.9% of husbands affirm, "the Church should be involved in family planning"; 68.1% of wives and 62.7% of husbands express the belief, "being in conformity with Church teaching in matters of family planning is important to me." In contrast, only 21.2% of couples responding were referred to NFP programs by a priest and only 31.6% of wives and 29.5% of husbands stated they had received support from their pastor in seeking NFP instruction.

2. Couples continue to use natural methods following instruction: 77.3% of the couples responding are currently using a natural method, over half of the sample indicated they have been using NFP for more than three years and 35.3% have been using NFP for more than five years.

3. Overall perceived effectiveness for couples using NFP "within the past year" exceeds
(Continued on p.3)

DDP CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE MEETS

The second plenary meeting of the DDP Certification Committee met June 14-15, 1988. The primary focus of the meeting was the progress of the individual subcommittees, and the projected goals for the upcoming year.

The subcommittee on Methodology has already completed a first draft of NFP standards. The major areas of the draft are: I. Standards for Diocesan NFP Programs; II. Standards for Instructor Training Programs; and III. Standards for Instructors. The subcommittee on Church Teaching has drawn five theological points which must be included in the standards. Among them are: "In God's plan, marriage is a permanent, faithful, mutual partnership of man and woman, directed toward unity and harmony of life and to parenthood."; and "The act of sexual intercourse is part of God's plan to enable couples to intensify their mutual intimacy and to bring new life into the world. By God's design there is an inseparable connection between the two purposes of the act of intercourse." A list of primary and secondary sources has also been compiled, as well as a selected bibliography.

The subcommittee on Marriage and Family Relations has articulated sixteen areas of content. These ranged from "Female/male gender differences" to "Demographic fertility patterns and family planning patterns". Of these, four items were tentatively chosen as divisions of content; they are: I. Psychorelational
(Continued on p.2)

(Certification cont. from p.1)
aspects of periodic abstinence;
II. Basic counseling techniques and
knowledge of when and where to
refer; III. Basic principles of
adult education; and IV. Psychore-
lational impact of developmental
phases of reproductive life/psycho-
dynamics of infertility and
subfertility.

The Examination subcommittee
underscored the need to keep the
overall evaluative process in mind.
The final product should be
culturally generic and attention
should be given to alternatives in
testing (e.g., oral rather than
written, etc.). Materials on the
NFP methodology are already in
existence and are undergoing
revision by Dr. Mary Martin of
IFFLP. It was recommended that Dr.
Martin be invited to join the
subcommittee.

The following was submitted as
a tentative schedule:

- 1) Oct.15, 1988....All subcommittee
work completed and sent to DDP.
- 2) Nov. 1988....Plenary Meeting.
Consultation on draft and
conference planning.
- 3) March 1989....Plenary Meeting.
Final decisions on text, and final
conference planning.
- 4) April 1989....Text of Standards
printed and mailed to all diocesan
coordinators.
- 5) July 1989....National Diocesan
Coordinators meeting.

CCL CONVENTION 1988

In his travels around the
country since joining the DDP
office, our Assistant Director, Fr.
Phil Kraus, S.J., in addition to
meeting representatives of major
NFP Provider organizations, has
already made the acquaintance of
numerous dedicated diocesan NFP
Coordinators, and in the near
future plans to contact the
remaining coordinators with the
intent of maintaining regular
contact between the DDP office and
our NFP Coordinators out in the
field.

Thus far in 1988, Fr. Phil
(representing Bishop McHugh and the
DDP office) has been able to join
many of you in celebrating the 20th
Anniversary of the issuance of
Humanae Vitae.

After delivering the keynote
address at the 7th Annual Meeting
of the AANFP, Fr. Phil traveled to
Illinois to attend the CCL 1988
Convention, "Celebration of Faith".
One of the most immediately obvious
and impressive aspects of this
celebration of faith - especially
in view of the fact that our
society often regards the child as
a "problem" - was the presence of
so many families with children.

In addition to the convention
itself, CCL also sponsored a well-
attended "Seminarian's Workshop"
with excellent speakers and power-
ful testimony from the Haydens and
other couples.

The highlight of the conven-
tion for Fr. Phil was the special
Mass in honor of the 20th Anniver-
sary of the issuance of Humanae
Vitae.

Overall, with their fine array
of outstanding speakers, deeply
appreciated local Episcopal support
(Bishop O'Rourke and Meyers) and
dedicated staff, the 1988 CCL
Convention was a real success.

Other factors contributing to
this success include a fine spirit
of cooperation among staff and
participants and the beneficial
presence of several OM teachers.

As Pat Homan remarked after-
wards, the presence of some OM
teachers and the communication
between them and CCL teachers was
mutually beneficial.

Hopefully, in spite of real
differences between methods, this
kind of communication across
boundaries might represent not only
a generally recognized need for,
but in actual fact, an increasingly
greater harmony among, NFP provider
groups. (Fr. Phil Kraus, S.J.)

(Survey cont. from p.1)
national studies: of the 2,430 couples who reported using NFP "within the past year", 10.5% of the wives said they had an "unintended pregnancy". Similarly 10% of the husbands reported an "unintended pregnancy" while using a natural method. This is less than the average of 16.1% failure rate for women using all methods of periodic abstinence reported in the most current research literature.

4. Client satisfaction with their instruction and use of NFP is quite high: 86.1% of wives and 82.4% of husbands responded "true" or "very true" to the statement: "Overall, I am satisfied with my instruction in natural methods of family planning." Similarly, 70.8% of wives and 70.4% of husbands responded positively to the statement: "Overall, I am satisfied with my usage of NFP to avoid pregnancy."

5. Couples believe that family planning is a mutual responsibility: 78.4% of wives and 85.8% of husbands give the most positive responses to the item: "My partner takes equal responsibility for avoiding genital contact during the fertile time. For nearly one-third of all respondents who have been using NFP "within the past year", the husband is either mutually or totally responsible for charting the signs of his wife's fertility.

These preliminary findings demonstrate the need for an increased pastoral role in the development and on-going operation of diocesan NFP programs. This commitment is necessary if NFP programs are to move from their present position on the periphery into the mainstream of marriage and family life pastoral programs.

* Copies of the full report are available from the DDP.

NEWS BRIEFS

Archdiocese of Chicago

An NFP Teacher Training Advocacy and Promotion Institute, (Oct.26-30, 1988) and Continuing Education Seminar (Oct.28-30, 1988) will be held at St. Charles Pastoral Center in Romeoville, IL. Sponsored by the Family Ministries Office of the Archdiocese of Chicago and facilitated and staffed by the Illinois NFP Association (INFPA), the event's goal is to build a network of informed NFP educators, advocates and promoters.

The theme, "Focus on the Future", will feature among its speakers: Bishop James T. McHugh, Director, DDP for NFP; Dr. Hanna Klaus, NFP Center of Washington, D.C.; and Dr. William P. Roberts, University of Dayton. Teacher candidates attending the institute will receive verification toward their certification by INFPA. Established teachers, meeting all certification requirements, will be awarded newly instituted INFPA state certificates.

For further info. please contact Sharon Dausman, 9230 South Winchester, Chicago, IL 60620.

Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

The Office of Family Life, through its NFP department, has developed its first NFP Newsletter. Its primary goal is to promote NFP and provide educational information in the Archdiocese. The outreach is aimed at local churches (both Catholic and some Protestant), Ob. Gyn. doctors, Catholic schools and hospitals, as well as any interested persons.

For copies, or further info., please contact Susan Staudt, NFP Coordinator, Office of Family Life, 1314 N. Oak, Guthrie, OK 73044.

Diocese of Cleveland

The annual Ohio NFP Seminar, jointly sponsored by the Diocesan NFP Coordinators of Cleveland, Toledo and Youngstown, will meet September 9-10, 1988. It is an opportunity provided for NFP Teachers to enrich their knowledge of some aspect of the science, the teaching or the practice of natural methods of family planning. Among this year's features are; DDP Director Bishop James T. McHugh, speaking on "Humanae vitae - 20th Anniversary"; and DDP Assistant Dir., Fr. Philip Kraus, speaking on "Common Counseling Situations in NFP Teaching. What do we say? What can we do?"

For further info. contact Mary Ann Stanton, 1031 Superior Ave., Rm. 221, Cleveland, OH 44114, 216-696-6525.

Family of the Americas Foundation

A Master Teachers' Institute will be held on Oct. 22-29, 1988, in Corpus Christi, TX. Please contact FAF, P.O. Box 219, Mandeville, LA 70470-0219.

NFP Center of Washington, D.C.

Upcoming Teen Star Teacher Training workshop: Sept. 16-19, 1988, Louisville, KY. Additional information can be obtained from: NFP Center of Wash., D.C. 301-897-9323.

Northwest NFP Services

A teacher training and certification program in the "Sympto-Thermal Method" will be held Oct. 16-21, 1988 in Portland, Oregon. For further information please contact: Rose Fuller, NWNFPS, Providence Medical Center, 4805 N.E. Glisan St., Portland, Oregon 97213.

Physician's Weekly

Dr. Herbert Ratner was featured in the June 1988 issue of Physician's Weekly. In a column

called "Point/Counterpoint", Dr. Ratner responds to the question, "Would you give your teenage children condoms?".

Dr. Ratner's "no" to the question succinctly articulates the tragic situation of multiple sexual partners who run the risk of STD's as well as starting on "...the road not only to pregnancy, but to sterility and AIDS." "What father...", asks Ratner, "wants to impose this fate on his children?"

The column is printed as a 2 by 3 foot poster, and distributed to hospitals throughout the U.S.

Pope Paul VI Institute

A Conference on the Vatican Instruction on Reproductive Ethics and Technology will be held in Omaha on 10/28-30/88. Please call 402-390-9167, or write: Sr. Marilyn Wallace, R.S.M., Pope Paul VI Ins., 6901 Mercy Road, Omaha, NE 68106.

Twin Cities NFP Center

Twin Cities NFP Center and the College of St. Thomas will be hosting the Third Annual Human Fertility Institute Oct. 6-9, 1988 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Entitled "From Theory to Practice", the Institute hopes to deal effectively with the many complex issues surrounding human fertility. Each day's program will systematically address the following areas: research, NFP and family dynamics. Further info. may be obtained from: Twin Cities NFP Center, Riverside Medical Center, Riverside at 25th Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. 55454.

USCC

Available from the Pro-Life Activities program is the 1988-1989 Respect Life brochure/order form. Send requests to Respect Life Program, NCCB, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005-4105. *Attention: Order Dept.