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March 23, 2002

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CANFP NEWS

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Winter 2002

God's Design For Married Love

Sheila St. John, CFCP

"I consider this convocation historic for the dioceses of the United States" was the parting comment of one priest attending the Clergy Convocation for the Diocese of Fresno held in Visalia the end of January. The 130 clergy in attendance heard of "God's Design for Married Love" from 24 presenters over four days, including six NFP only physicians, five NFP teachers, couple witnesses, and two priests from their own diocese. The response was extremely positive, and the experience was certainly one of the most inspiring of this NFP Professional's 20 years!

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Oswaldo Lozano

Bishop Steinbock laid a foundation for the gathering with his release Jan. 1, 2002 of an insightful Pastoral Letter: "Life Giving Love of Husband and Wife in Light of the Teaching of the Church on Marriage and the Family." Copies will be available at the CANFP conference in Sacramento in March, or can be obtained by contacting the CANFP office or viewing online at www.canfp.org.

The array of physicians who presented at this convocation—ob/gyn, urology, internists, family practice and urgent care specialists—were a true source of inspiration to the clergy in their example of faithful, articulate, and courageous witness in such a difficult



Diocese of Fresno Clergy Convocation

professional arena as medicine. The common thread in their presentations was the assurance that following God's design is not only spiritually healthy, but also medically sound advice.

Particularly inspiring was the compelling witness of the many married couples, several of whom lightheartedly compared the experience to "confession with over 100 priests". Their vulnerability in sharing the struggles and joys of marriage, and the liberation of living God's

plan for married love, was truly the highlight of the event. Never has it been more obvious to me how complementary the vocations of marriage and ordained priesthood are, and how truly inspiring spouses and priests who seek holiness and joy in their vocation are to each other. This was expressed visually in the beautiful display prepared by the Diocese for this event of framed pictures of smiling brides and grooms, standing beside the happy priest who witnessed their vows.

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Presenters and attendees alike left this event with a renewed enthusiasm for witnessing to chastity through the vocations of marriage or celibacy. As one priest said, "I will never be lukewarm on this subject again!" and still another "I've been coming to these convocations for 16 or 17 years. I have never enjoyed one more than I have this one. I go back to the vineyard renewed and refreshed with a lot more ammunition for the battle. I would recommend this to anyone!"

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President's Perspective

Last month I was struck by the irony of the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* following the Martin Luther King, Jr, holiday. Rev. King "had a dream" that blacks in America would some day be judged by the quality of their character rather than the color of their skin. He found it ludicrous (as it surely is) that anyone would be stigmatized, depersonalized, and pushed to the margins of society by an accident of birth. We are all God's children and each of us has profound dignity by virtue of our immortal soul made in His image and likeness. So America rightly celebrates this martyr for civil rights with a holiday.

Yet the following day, this year, was the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, when seemingly only a minority of us mourn the continuing legislation of the execution of pre-born American babies. We stand aghast at the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York with its 4000 lives, but this many are destroyed *daily* by abortion in the United States. These youngsters have been legally defined as "non-persons" by our Supreme Court and illegitimately stripped of their

inalienable rights. This certainly has a ring of familiarity to it for our brothers and sisters of color... "Inalienable rights" by definition cannot be given or taken away—they belong to every human being from the moment of conception to death. They emanate from our human soul, a "welcome to the human race gift package" from our loving God. Two consequences are inevitable if we do not purge this egregious violation of our human dignity from our laws. First, another group of persons will be deprived of *their* inalienable rights. So who's it going to be? The elderly? Infirm? Mentally ill? And why not: The legal precedent has been set and not yet successfully challenged on the basis that **the Supreme Court has no standing to give or take inalienable rights in the first place!** Second, slowly but surely this will lead to an unraveling of American jurisprudence. Why? Because if I as a citizen believe that my most fundamental rights are mine not from my Creator but only at the whim of some black-robed judges in Washington, DC, I begin to question the authority of *all* laws. And, frankly: Rightly so.



Gregory Polito, MD, KM

The solution to this problem is to pray for a cessation of abortion in the US and ask the Lord what part you should play in it. Furthermore, as NFPers we all realize that America must return to a family life that follows the plan of the Grand Architect. This is where respect for each other and all of creation is learned. This is where you expose the preposterousness of an *extrinsic* right of a mother trumping the *inalienable* right of a child to live.

So keep up your fine work as NFP advocates because your efforts demonstrate to others the love and joy that come from being in concert with God's natural law. And this orientation of minds and hearts to His will starkly reveal the evil inherent in abortion, and ultimately must lead to the rescinding of *Roe v. Wade*.

Sacramento's Bishop Weigand most graciously authored our clergy corner in this issue, and we get a preview of the conference in articles penned by two of our presenters. If you have already registered for the conference, perhaps you could use the enclosed brochure to invite a friend, physician, pastor, or colleague. You can also register at www.canfp.org.

Also featured are the inspired opening remarks by Fresno's Bishop Steinbock at the clergy convocation, and an order form for the audio and video tapes. They are a wonderful resource for continuing education and enrichment, particularly for empowering clergy to courageously proclaim the church's vision of married love.

Now is the Moment!

LA NOVEDAD CONTINUA

El es el

aquél que verdaderamente la desee y que luche por construir algo de ella en el mundo de hoy.⁶

Camino,

Antes de concluir pequeño esbozo de la catequesis que Juan Pablo II ha llamado "Teología del Cuerpo" es importante una nota final acerca de la relación entre la Revelación y la experiencia. Puesto que estamos tratando de interpretar el mensaje revelado acerca del hombre y, sobre todo, acerca del cuerpo humano, debemos referirnos a la experiencia humana puesto que aquello sobre lo que habla la Revelación—el hombre-cuerpo—lo percibimos y tenemos una experiencia personal de él. Es por esto que, aunque la Revelación hable de un estado de la historia humana—

como el estado original—al que no podemos tener acceso con nuestra experiencia puesto que no vivimos en él y se ha perdido de modo irremediable, nuestra experiencia humana es un medio legítimo para la interpretación teológica, puesto que el objeto de esta interpretación es algo que experimentamos en nuestra vida en este estado histórico. Por tanto, es como si nos detuviéramos y fuéramos espectadores sin entrar a escena, mas lo que se puede contemplar en escena no es totalmente ajeno a nuestra experiencia, sino todo lo contrario. Es por esto que sí es posible reconstruir desde el graderío—desde el estado histórico—lo que vemos en escena—el estado original de la existencia humana que se nos ha revelado¹⁰, así como el estado

escatológico al que todos estamos llamados y del que Cristo nos ha hablado algo¹¹.

Esta antropología teológica que ha desarrollado el Papa Juan Pablo II servirá de fundamento para comprender el sentido que tiene la enseñanza de la Iglesia en materia de moral sexual. Para esto, Su Santidad procederá a establecer los fundamentos más profundos de los dos estados de vida propios del cristiano—virginidad consagrada y matrimonio sacramental—de una forma que podemos considerar como novedosa, y terminará poniendo las bases para una auténtica espiritualidad matrimonial, a partir de la enseñanza del Papa Paulo VI en su revolucionaria carta encíclica *Humanae Vitae*.

Oswaldo Lozano es Profesor de Teología en el Instituto Juan Pablo II Para la Familia en Monterrey, Mexico. El hablará en la conferencia en Sacramento el mes que viene.

Notas continuan

⁶ Hablar de continuidad entre el estado original y el estado histórico no tiene sentido sin establecer esta misma continuidad con el estado escatológico al que el hombre está llamado y al que Cristo ha abierto las puertas por medio del Misterio Pascual. Cfr. *Rom* 8, 23.

⁷ Estas experiencias son las que conocemos como "fundantes". Las experiencias originales del hombre constituyen el fundamento de las experiencias que todo hombre vive actualmente. He aquí la gran riqueza del estudio de Juan Pablo II.

⁸ Los deseos del corazón humano que compartimos todos los hombres de toda raza, cultura y momento histórico—me refiero al deseo de inmortalidad, de felicidad completa, de amar y ser amado, de ausencia total del sufrimiento—los descubrimos cuando nos preguntamos por el significado de la vida, por el sentido del dolor, cuando nos sentimos solos; en pocas palabras, cuando nos damos cuenta de nuestro deseo humano de trascender. Esta realidad que es compartida por todos los seres humanos—por unos más conscientemente que por otros—constata que estos deseos están inscritos por naturaleza—es decir, por acción directa de Dios—en el corazón del hombre. Por esta razón, es posible establecer una relación entre Revelación y experiencia, puesto que lo que Dios ha revelado al hombre corresponde a lo que ha sido inscrito en el corazón humano, aún y cuando el pecado nos dificulte el descubrimiento de esa realidad ontológica, es decir, a pesar de que nos provoque una distorsión de nuestra experiencia de la realidad tal cual es.

⁹ La fe Católica cree en el misterio de la *Comunión de los Santos*. Sabemos que es una realidad a la que estamos llamados todos los hombres de buena voluntad y que la alcanzaremos en el mundo futuro después de la resurrección del cuerpo. No obstante, la misión de la Iglesia en el mundo de hoy es establecer esa comunión aquí en la tierra desde ahora. Todos estamos llamados a ser santos y la Iglesia está llamada a ser la comunión de los santos en este mundo, aún sabiendo de antemano que el más grande de todos en este mundo es más pequeño que el más pequeño del Reino de los Cielos. La culminación del misterio de la redención se logra en el mundo escatológico, pero es posible que el hombre comience a experimentar desde hoy la redención de su cuerpo por medio del fruto de la participación en los sacramentos, particularmente el Bautismo y la Eucaristía

Director's Desk

Sheila St. John, CFCP

Squeezed into this edition of CANFP NEWS is a timely report of a very recent---and fruitful---clergy convocation, affirming comments from—not one, but—TWO California Bishops, and a glimpse of wonderful things to come next month in Sacramento!

LA NOVEDAD DE LA “TEOLOGÍA DEL CUERPO”

Oswaldo Lozano

Juan Pablo II, en el desarrollo de su catequesis de los miércoles - que él mismo denominó como “Teología del Cuerpo” - sigue un método que en filosofía se conoce como fenomenología. Este método consiste básicamente en el descubrir la verdad del hombre a partir de las experiencias humanas. Sin embargo, el Papa no se fundamenta exclusivamente en las conclusiones que arroja su contemplación e interpretación de las experiencias humanas fundantes², sino que el punto de referencia que él toma para poder comprender las experiencias humanas es la Revelación contenida en la Sagrada Escritura. En pocas palabras podemos afirmar que Juan Pablo II emprende el camino para conocer qué y quién es el hombre, a partir de la relación que hay entre la Revelación que Dios ha hecho de sí mismo y del hombre³ y la experiencia humana propia, a la que la Revelación también se refiere.

Puesto que es Cristo el que nos indica el camino a seguir, puesto que Él es el Camino, la Verdad y la Vida⁴, y es precisamente Él quien nos remite al principio para contestar un cuestionamiento actual, es entonces que el Santo Padre emprende su estudio detallado sobre el plan de Dios acerca del hombre contenido en las primeras páginas del libro del Génesis. Las palabras de Cristo en el Evangelio de San Mateo “en el principio no fue así”⁵ atestiguan dos realidades muy importantes: 1) Que el plan de Dios para el hombre está contenido en esas primeras

páginas de la Revelación y 2) Que ese plan de Dios no ha cambiado y que, por tanto, existe una



Oswaldo Lozano

continuidad entre ambos estados de la historia de la vida humana, es decir, entre el estado original—antes del pecado—y el estado histórico o actual—después del pecado pero con la perspectiva de la redención lograda por Cristo en el Misterio Pascual.⁶

El Papa entonces, se propone a analizar los tres estados de la historia de la salvación—el estado original, el histórico y el escatológico—basándose en lo

contenido en la Revelación pero tomando como punto de referencia la propia experiencia humana. Es decir, para emprender este camino *el método será en analizar lo que Dios nos ha revelado sobre nosotros mismos, corroborándolo con la experiencia que tenemos de nosotros mismos*. Esto se comprende muy bien puesto que, por ejemplo, para poder reconstruir las experiencias originales del hombre⁷ contenidas en el libro del Génesis, tenemos que partir de nuestra propia experiencia en el día de hoy—estado histórico con la perspectiva de la redención—puesto que es imposible regresar al estado original. Lo mismo hará el Papa en su meditación sobre el estado del futuro escatológico, es decir, partiendo de lo que Dios ha revelado acerca del cómo será la vida en el mundo futuro y, al mismo tiempo, explorando los deseos profundos del corazón de todo hombre⁸, los cuales corresponden precisamente a esa vida futura que Cristo ha revelado y que aguarda a todo

‘La Novedad’ continua en la p. 7

Notas al pie de página

¹ Esta catequesis fue enseñada por Su Santidad durante los primeros 5 años de su pontificado, siendo interrumpida por el tiempo que él estuvo en recuperación por causa del atentado que sufrió el 13 de mayo de 1981 y durante el Año Santo que vivió la Iglesia entre principios de 1983 y mediados de 1984, en donde él dedicó esas audiencias para tratar los temas propios de ese tiempo.

² Con experiencias fundantes nos referimos a aquellas que son propias de todo hombre. Hay experiencias que todo hombre de toda raza, cultura y momento histórico hemos podido vivir y entender; por ejemplo: La soledad, la vergüenza por la desnudez, la necesidad de otra persona, la experiencia de nuestro propio cuerpo, etc.

³ “Cristo revela el hombre al hombre, y le da a conocer su altísima vocación” (Constitución Pastoral para la Iglesia en el Mundo de Hoy “*Gaudium et Spes*”, no. 22)

⁴ Cfr. *Jn* 14, 5.

⁵ *Mt* 19, 8.

Ask The Expert

I stopped taking birth control pills about 1 year ago and have been charting my cervical mucus and cycles since January. My cycles have been anywhere from 23 to 28 days long. I am currently taking Prozac (40 mg daily) as well as a multivitamin, folic acid (2 mg daily), ginkoba and coenzyme Q10. Could any of these supplements/drugs be having an effect on my fertility? I was pregnant approximately 10 years ago and had an abortion. My husband has two children from his previous marriage, so, I don't think that fertility is a problem. I have been attempting the Shettles method of gender selection as my husband's two children are both male and would like to try for a girl. However, it does not really matter what the gender of the baby is. We normally have intercourse on days 12, 13, 14, however, I have not yet become pregnant. I have been having extremely painful periods and am worried about entrometriosis. Any suggestions?

Q&A Answer:

Ask The Expert questions can be submitted through our web site, sent to the CANFP office, or emailed to experts@canfp.org

Once the BCP (birth control pill) is discontinued, ovulation usually resumes within a short period of time. However, fertility may be delayed because of the effects of the BCP on the cervical mucus crypts. Dr. Erik Odeblad, the world's leading authority on the cervix and cervical mucus has done extensive research showing that the BCP profoundly affects the “S” mucus crypts of the cervix. “S” mucus forms channels which assist sperm migration through

the cervix, allowing them to reach the egg in the fallopian tube. The “S” mucus crypts atrophy (shrink) and may or may not resume functioning after stopping the BCP. The quality and/or amount of “S” mucus may not be adequate for conception to occur. It is important then to have intercourse on the days of the most fertile mucus – stretchy, clear and/or lubricative. That may or may not be on days 12, 13, and 14 of your cycle. In a 23 day cycle it's possible that ovulation may occur as early as day 6 or 7 of the cycle. You do not state your age; however, shorter cycles may occur more frequently as a woman approaches the premenopause around age 40, sometimes earlier (at age 35), sometimes later. Shettles recommends douching with white vinegar to increase the chance of a female offspring. However douching is not advisable, as it could wash away the cervical mucus necessary for sperm survival and transport. You state you “had an abortion” approximately 10 years ago. An induced abortion may cause damage to the mucus crypts because the cervix must be forced open - dilated - to do the procedure.

Prozac has recently made the news because it may help women suffering with premenstrual syndrome. PMS may cause mood swings, bloating, headache, irritability, and painful periods. The reason for the PMS may be reflected in the charting of your cycles. Low levels of the hormone progesterone during the postovulatory phase of the cycle may contribute to PMS and



Pat Poindexter, RN, BS, FCP has taught the Billings Method and Creighton Model in Southern California for the past 22 years.

be a factor in difficulty achieving pregnancy.

Dr. Paddy Jim Baggot, a board certified OB/GYN located in Southern California, recommended continuing the multivitamin and folic acid. He commented that coenzyme Q10 and ginseng may actually enhance fertility. However, some “natural” preparations may contain impurities such as lead or mercury which could be harmful to the woman and her baby. It may be better to discontinue the products.

Depression may occur as a late consequence of induced abortion. This can be more acute when a woman later has difficulty conceiving. Post abortion counseling may be an important step to recover from the depression and eliminate the need for Prozac.

Finally, if you have not contacted an NFP instructor, do so. CANFP can provide a name and phone number of an instructor who can assist you in identifying underlying problems which may be affecting your fertility, as reflected in the observations and charting of the cycle.

Divorce Rate Among NFP Users

Mercedes Arzú Wilson

Everyone would agree that divorce is the greatest tragedy that can befall a family. This is why the Catholic Church from time immemorial has been struggling to protect the family from the tragedy of divorce.

Wouldn't it be providential if the practice of Natural Family Planning proves to be the authentic means to a successful marriage?

Last year a scientific survey was conducted under the direction of a reputable independent statistician, Dr. Robert Lemer. He is a Sociologist from the University of Chicago with a degree in Economics. The protocol stipulated that he would not only evaluate the findings, but also compare them to two of the largest U.S. government funded surveys that asked similar questions of the respondents.

The Natural Family Planning group studied consists of the typical middle class families of the United States of America, primarily Catholic, with small minority of Protestant and Evangelical. The report confirms that the practice of a natural method of conception regulation, (Natural Family Planning), seems to be the authentic alternative as often stated in John Paul II's writings.

Pope John Paul II says: "Everything passes by way of the family". Therefore, the most important foundation of society to keep safe and healthy, physically, morally and

The results presented from the three surveys analyzed revealed that compared to other women in general and to Catholic women of similar age, NFP users:

- ✓ have a dramatically low (0.2%) divorce rate;
- ✓ experience happier marriages;
- ✓ are happier and more satisfied in their everyday lives;
- ✓ have considerably more marital relations;
- ✓ share a deeper intimacy with spouse than those who contracept;
- ✓ realize a deeper level of communication with spouse;
- ✓ have relatively large families with many children;
- ✓ are appreciably more religious and attend Church more often;
- ✓ receive Communion more often;
- ✓ incorporate prayer more in their daily lives;
- ✓ rely strongly on the teachings of the Catholic Church, the Bible and Almighty God;
- ✓ are personally happier;
- ✓ have strong traditional, social, and moral views;
- ✓ preserve the family unit more responsibly than the other groups;
- ✓ Are:

- unlikely to have ever had an abortion;
- unlikely to have ever cohabitated;
- unlikely to work full time;
- unlikely to be supportive of and to engage in sex outside of marriage



Mercedes Wilson, Founder and President of the Family of the Americas Foundation, will present this data in both the English and Spanish workshops at the annual CANFP conference March 23rd in Sacramento.

spiritually, is the family. If the family is suffering physical, mental and spiritual degradation, society is placed in grave peril, as has repeatedly been the case in past civilizations. When such unprincipled societies are the powerful ruling forces, as is the case in today's world, the whole of humanity is endangered. Modern technology today can extend the forces of evil throughout the world at an alarming rate. It is our obligation, therefore, to do likewise and broadcast this good news to all men and women of good will.

I will close with a quote from Mother Teresa who would be so proud of the results of this effort, as she always enthusiastically supported our work. She was so instrumental in successfully teaching the Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning to her poorest of the poor in Calcutta and other parts of the world.

THE FRUIT OF SILENCE IS PRAYER

THE FRUIT OF PRAYER IS FAITH

THE FRUIT OF FAITH IS LOVE

THE FRUIT OF LOVE IS SERVICE

THE FRUIT OF SERVICE IS PEACE

Mother Teresa, M.C.

Clergy

orner

The theme of this year's statewide conference on NFP underlines the urgency of the church's teaching on conjugal love. Many Catholic couples today, especially younger couples, may not really understand and appreciate Jesus' understanding of marriage and conjugal love as taught by the Church. They may have heard the 'rules' of the Catholic Church, but have not yet heard the inner coherence of the teaching and how it flows directly from the nature of God.

...it flows directly

from the

nature

of

God

Catholic couples are entitled to understand where they are and who God is. The teachings of the church are more readily heard and accepted if they are linked to the God of absolute love. This love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not fixed or static, but is an endless pouring out of themselves, one into the other. When couples are invited to regard their own marriage as a reflection of the divine nature of the Trinity, they begin to understand what a "relational" love can really be.

By presenting the truly good news of this teaching, we are giving married couples in our parish communities the necessary tools for a happy, fruitful and lasting marriage, as well as for responsible parenthood. The family is the basic unit of any culture. Love within families is the basis for civilization.

Promoters of artificial contraception promised that it would be the answer to a vast array of social problems:

Capitolize on NFP: Now is the Moment!

Bishop William Weigand



divorce, unwanted children, child abuse, teen pregnancy, abortion and others. However, just as pope Paul VI predicted in 'Humanae Vitae', it has resulted in these very problems becoming much worse, not better.

Unfortunately, the contraceptive mentality - that children are a burden, rather than a blessing - has objectified children in a way that sadly robs them of their humanity. The very concept of a human being having a "wanted" or "unwanted" status should be anathema to any thoughtful Christian. The use of artificial contraception sets up the expectation that sexual intercourse is separate from procreation, so when a pregnancy does occur, it is unexpected and viewed as an injustice to the woman and the man. Thus, the widespread use of artificial contraception does not reduce abortion, it demands that abortion be readily available.

The very heart of the marriage is damaged when the spouses use one another as sexual objects. A man should respect his wife as an embodied soul, whose natural fertility should be revered and accepted, not mutilated or destroyed. A wife should love her husband with generosity and trust in his ability to order his sexual behavior in regard to the needs of the family.

Children are a great blessing to their parents. As the intimacy of conjugal love is expressed, the couple shares with God in the creation of new life. Certainly, raising a family is hard work, and

the burdens are many, but if the relationship between husband and wife is dynamic and fruitful, the children reflect and magnify that love.

Children benefit greatly from observing the love between their parents and learn from each other the joys and sorrows of living in this world. Certainly, the child who has sisters and brothers is more greatly enriched than the child who has only one sibling or none. No material advantages can even approach the value of a large family.

This is why the message of Natural Family planning is so urgent and timely. We live in a culture where promiscuity has devastated the lives of countless young single people, where millions children and their mothers have been abandoned and left to struggle on alone. Where sex is considered a right and children are considered a burden, where women are denigrated as sex objects and abandoned as though they were not human beings, but simply disposable trash. In this very harsh environment, killing the unborn, the elderly, the disabled becomes a "right" or a "choice".

As Catholics, we are all called upon to protest this "Culture of Death" and offer our young people a chance to learn a better way to live in a culture of life.

Now is the moment!