

CANFP NEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter published by the
California Association of Natural Family Planning

Spring 2002

CANFP Annual Conference Amazing!!!

Gary Schuberg

What a roller coaster ride! Challenges, scares, thrills and then a sense of drained accomplishment. "Went to Magic Mountain, eh?," my buddies ask. "No, my first CANFP conference!," I reply to an astonished friend with "say, what?" all over his face.

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After vice president **Fr. Marcos Gonzalez** led all in a prayer invoking the Holy Spirit, CANFP president **Dr. Gregory Polito** reflected that the nation and world, in these post 9-11 times, have an opportunity for a "collective examination of conscience". We now have a unique opportunity to heal a people afflicted with the contraceptive mentality. **Bishop Richard Garcia**, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento echoed these comments in his welcome address. In the invocation, he exclaimed that "Now is the moment" to rededicate and re-commit ourselves to a culture of life.

After this enthusiastic call to take the ride, **Christopher West**, author of *Good News About Sex and Marriage*, then strapped us into our roller coaster seats and we lunged - chuga-chuga-chuga - up that first steep hill, the Theology of the Body and New Evangelization. He compared the culture of death to Goliath, we new evangelists to David, and the rock in our sling to the



Christopher West

Holy Father's theology of the body. Armed with this teaching and a culture of life philosophy, we are not just teaching methods, we are indeed bringing Christ into marriage while exposing the counterfeit view of the body so many have bought in to.

Then we crested the top, looked down and held back a scream as he challenged us to crash a frat party and tell revelers that what they really seek is the Eucharist and marriage, not drunken debauchery! The overdrinking is a phony substitute for

what is really a thirst for our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. Licentiousness is an empty fake for the real deal - sacramental marriage. The mystery of God's plan for each of us is stamped in our bodies but Satan impairs our vision and then plagiarizes and profanes God's greatest gifts by getting us hooked on the counterfeits.

Every marital act renews our wedding vows, if it is free, faithful, fruitful, total. Contraception sacralizes marriage, closing it to God's love, much like Adam and Eve shut out God by accepting a forgery, thus ushering in shame, lust and enmity between man and woman. The Holy Father's theology of the body helps us reveal the mystery of God he has stamped in our bodies. "The physical reveals the metaphysical."

Mr. West left us with a final challenge. Avoidance of the near occasion of sin is fine as a start, he said, but the goal is to achieve a state of grace so pure and holy that the eyes would not open the mind and heart to lust.

Now this CANFP ride went into a fun part. **Mercedes Wilson**, founder of Family of the Americas, showed slides of the simple farming images she has used to teach third world couples NFP. She then pointed

Conference continued on P4

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President's Perspective

...now is

the

moment

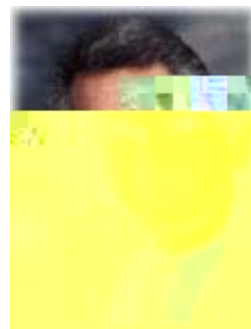
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NFP

Greetings! There is so much to tell you that I scarcely know where to begin. First, our 9th annual meeting in Sacramento was another terrific event thanks to the hard work of Sheila St. John and Winnie Neill. There were many memorable moments to the meeting, but I will mention two. Christopher West continues to evolve as a most engaging speaker who can bring “alive” John Paul II’s Theology of the Body. He makes dense theology very palpable, and this particular topic has got to be the most important one for our times, let alone for those who practice/teach NFP. Why? Because it explains the moral basis for chastity in general and NFP in particular. An example (and I am paraphrasing here): The eternal mystery of God is inscribed in our gendered bodies and reflects the life-giving communion of the Blessed Trinity. And: We don’t understand what mystical union with God will be in Heaven, but we do know that the joy experienced in a non-lustful, unselfish, unconditional conjugal embrace is meant to give us a tiny inkling of what that is to be like. Wow! Meditate on those

remarks for awhile and you will gain further appreciation of the importance of the NFP message. As counterpoint to Christopher’s didactic talks we had the outstanding couple witness of Anthony and Stephanie Epolite. Their presentation was a no holds barred examination of the most intimate details of a very challenging infertility journey that unfolded like an adventure novel. We could hardly wait for them to get to the end! Their story (available on audio and videotape from CANFP) is bound to become a classic for its forthright and emotional honesty and as a testimonial to God’s bountiful graciousness. If you purchase only one tape get this one!

Second, I know I am being repetitious when I state this, but I do believe that **now is the moment for NFP**. Don’t you notice a general rise in societal consciousness about it that was never there before? People are longing to return to their roots of moral behavior based on absolute truth, not *philosophie d’jour*, and what is more life enhancing to a couple than



Gregory Polito, MD, KM

conjugal love founded in chastity. Even the non-religious are becoming aware of NFP because of their concern about the “body pollution” inherent in the use of birth control pills. This is a time of great opportunity for NFPers!

So I ask you: Please help us to help you during these exciting, challenging times. Please upgrade your membership to the appropriate category and solicit memberships from clients and appropriate parish/medical organizations. CANFP must increase its income to be able to hire clerical support for its overburdened volunteer executive director... We are **your** resource and we need **your** help. Please keep us in your prayers and do what you can. Thank you!

Director's Desk

Sheila St. John

Our last newsletter reported on the clergy convocation held in Visalia, and the current issue focuses on our annual conference held recently in Sacramento. It has been a busy year and this is only May!

There seems to be no shortage of good ideas and projects to tackle, but alas there sometimes is a shortage of resources—

both the money kind and the human kind! Last year at this time we presented a vision for NFP in California that included some very ambitious plans. As much as we would like to implement them all, we find limited resources dictate we must prioritize.

Those in attendance at the annual meeting were given a

brief overview of the last year’s activities, and the opportunity to prioritize efforts for the coming year. See the chart (pg 7) for the results of this survey. The conclusions reflect the opinions of those familiar with CANFP and others new to the organization. In the written comments submitted with the forms, many indicated that they found it difficult to rate the

Desk continued on P7

Ask The Expert

Question & Answer:

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



Our CANFP Web Site Expert

My husband and I are trying to get pregnant. We have been trying for 3 months and just began our 4th monthly cycle. I have been having fairly consistent cycles, 30-32 days long, ever since I quit the pill in August. I am 28 yrs. old and my husband is 30. We of course are disappointed that we aren't pregnant yet, though we've been told it could take up to a year. One question we had was about trying to keep my husbands semen inside after we have sex. I have tried putting a pillow under my hips and sitting upside down, to let gravity work in our favor, but it seems that as soon as I sit upright, a lot of his semen leaks out of me, and I'm afraid that we aren't getting enough sperm into me for conception. Is this normal? Is the sperm that is necessary already on its way? Any advice you can give would be so helpful. Thank you.

First let me alleviate your fear that you are losing your husband's semen. Once sperm have entered the vaginal canal it takes approximately 20 minutes for them to reach the Fallopian tubes. I recommend to my clients that they lie still for at least 30 minutes after intercourse. After that, leakage is not a problem.

The thing that caught my attention when reading your question was that you came off the Birth Control Pill (BCP) in August. As a Creighton Model practitioner I recommend waiting six cycles after coming off the BCP before trying to conceive. This insures that your body will rid itself of the chemicals in the BCP. During this six months is a good time to learn a method of natural

family planning. NFP is wonderful for helping a couple pinpoint the best days for achieving a pregnancy because it teaches you how to identify the signs of fertility.

Let me also mention that only 76% of couples of normal fertility achieve a pregnancy the first cycle they try. This number is for couples that learned about their fertility using the Creighton Model of NFP.



Vicki Delucchi, BS, CFCP is a member of CANFP and lives with her husband and two daughters in Scotts Valley. She has been teaching the Ovulation Method since 1989.

Calegari Award Recipients!!!

Kathi and John Hamlon were honored at the CANFP conference as 2002 recipients of the Calegari Award. The Award is given annually to honor both its namesake, and the recipient—someone who has made a significant and enduring contribution to NFP in California.

Father Marc Calegari, who passed on to his heavenly reward ten years ago, was a Jesuit priest familiar to many of the pioneers of NFP in California. He was also a personal friend of the Hamlons, so it is only fitting they should be honored with this year's

award. Those attending the banquet were treated to a wonderful glimpse of Father Calegari as the Hamlon's shared some nostalgic memories of times spent together.

Kathi and John were instrumental in bringing modern NFP to the Bay Area, founding the first NFP program at St. Mary's Hospital almost thirty years ago. They also directed one of the first NFP centers in Minnesota, and were editors of the International Review of Natural Family Planning, a scholarly collection of essays which contributed significantly to the understanding of NFP.



Kathi & John Hamlon

Kathi and John presented on NFP and marriage at the 2001 CANFP conference in San Francisco, where all benefited from their vast knowledge and experience.

Surely Fr. Marc was smiling as these NFP pioneers were honored, and shared with the this years attendees a bit of the history of NFP in California!

Congrats!!!
Congrats!!!
Congrats!!!
Congrats!!!

Conference - continued

*...all
kinds
of
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marriage*

to studies showing a 99% effectiveness rate in various countries, rates consistently as good as or better than various artificial methods. She presented various recent surveys and statistics, which bear out what NFP couples have long known: when couples conform to God's plan, all kinds of graces and gifts flow into the marriage. Just a few of these, gleaned from these three separate studies, are: more prayer and church time, greater communication, greater success in family life, more frequent love-making, more openness to life and, logically, given the foregoing, vastly improved success in marriage with a divorce rate under 1%!

I felt charged up for the last segment of this CANFP ride, a series of challenging hills and valleys presented to us by [Stephanie and Anthony Epolite](#). They had us follow their journey in pursuit of starting their own family, discovering that age and a dizzying variety of fertility obstacles denied them the family they had prayed so hard for. Stephanie confessed that she had been quite nervous at the thought of addressing this crowd, afraid that we would be upset with them for buying into some of the lies fertility "experts" had sold them early on in this journey.

They became convinced this fear was unfounded, as they bared their souls and shared the many pains, frustrations and challenges they faced, which were all for naught. That is, until they met [Dr. John Gilsa](#), who in turn connected them with [Dr. Hilgers](#) of the Pope Paul VI Institute.

BABY UPDATES

BABY EPOLITE



This ultrasound was taken at 9 1/2 weeks. Stephanie and Anthony report all is going well and that Stephanie is looking forward to the end of her morning sickness!



BABY JIMENEZ

Con mucho gusto les presento a Isabel en uno de los ultimos ultrasonidos que nos hicieron a las 20 semanas de gestacion. Hoy en dia tengo 36 semans y las predicciones siguen para una cesaria el dia Mayo 22 a las 9:30 am. Les pido a ustedes me incluyan en sus oraciones para Dios mediante compartir con todos ustedes un final feliz dentro de unas cuantas semanas mas.

I was on the edge of my seat the whole time, following the chronology of their painstaking efforts to have a child. When their story reached the fall of 2001, I was crestfallen, having expected to see a picture of their miracle baby projected on the overhead. But there was a surprise ending.

Through the diligence of their efforts, the advanced scientific efforts and caring of these doctors, and the grace of God, they were able to announce that Stephanie was in the second month of a healthy pregnancy!

Tears of joy broke out everywhere as the Epolite family encircled themselves in a hug.

...to be

truly

happy

and

fulfilled

Participating in *CANFP's* annual conference was definitely a day well-spent. I found the presentations to be informative, well-prepared and groundbreaking. Through the use of pertinent examples and meaningful analogies, **Christopher West** unpacked some of Pope John Paul's profound insights on marriage

from his "Wednesday Catechisms on Divine and Human Love" (1979 to 1984). While John Paul has done much to deepen the understanding of the truths of *Humanae Vitae*, Mr. West takes marriage and family studies to the next step by casting light on John Paul's contributions. Putting into practice John Paul's "new evangelization," Mr. West has a gift for explaining seemingly complex theological concepts in a way that is easily comprehensible. "God doesn't blush!" he exclaimed. Indeed, He doesn't. Through spousal "holy communion," West explained, God desires to bring married couples to a deeper experience of the beauty of trinitarian life.

In her talk, **Mercedes Wilson** presented results from a recent survey which compared couples who use NFP with those who use contraception. Among other things, Mercedes showed that NFP couples not only have relations more often than contracepting couples, but also

they have bigger families. This piece of data contradicts critics of NFP who say that it is often used only to limit family size, explained Mercedes.

In their presentation, **Stephanie** and **Anthony Epolite** described their experiences of trying to have a child. Because they were having difficulty conceiving, they first sought the help of a fertility clinic. At the clinic, Stephanie and Anthony were treated impersonally and there was little attempt by the clinic technicians to find out the true causes of the couple's infertility. Only when Stephanie and Anthony went to **Dr. John Gisla** of Sacramento (who referred them for more specialized help to **Dr. Thomas Hilgers** of the



Pope Paul VI Institute in Omaha, Nebraska) did they really feel like they were being treated with respect and care. Although Stephanie and Anthony's story entailed the search for "physical" fruitfulness, it was clear that their increased "spiritual" fruitfulness was at the heart of their journey.



*After serving for a year and a half as a parish priest, **Fr. Blaise Berg** recently began a new assignment as Secretary to the Bishop and Vice-Chancellor in the Diocese of Sacramento. Having studied at the John Paul II Institute for Studies and Marriage at the Lateran University in Rome, Fr. Berg defended his doctoral thesis entitled "Christian Marriage according to Adrienne von Speyr" in October 2000.*

Listening to the presentations and visiting with the presenters and conference participants throughout the day was a most valuable experience. To be sure, what I learned at the conference will be of assistance in my work with couples preparing for marriage. Yet, beyond soaking in the content of the presentations, there was something else that I took away from the conference: a better understanding of my vocation

to the priesthood. Spending the day with spouses who had first-hand experience of the benefits of NFP and who seemed to be truly happy and fulfilled in their married vocation encouraged me to live my priesthood more faithfully. It was clear to me that these spouses and parents had a close relationship with each other and with Jesus Christ. Perceiving their unity moved me to strengthen my union with Christ and his Church.

La Conferencia Anual de CANFP

Gloria Soto

Al ser invitada la Diócesis de Sacramento para colaborar con la conferencia anual de “California Association of Natural Family Planning” (CANFP), fue sin duda un gran privilegio y honor. Nos sentimos agradecidos por la oportunidad de servir como anfitriones y agradecemos profundamente a todos los que de diferentes diócesis estuvieron presentes. Así también a nuestro **Reverendísimo William K. Weigand** por todo su apoyo. De igual forma a nuestro **Reverendísimo Obispo Auxiliar, Ricardo J. Garcia**, dándonos su apoyo con su presencia y con la elocuencia de sus gratas palabras que fueron de ánimo e inspiración.

La experiencia palpable en esta conferencia fue saborear el néctar de los frutos recibidos o sea, del trabajo comprometido de cada uno de los presentes, y de aquéllos que siguiendo un mismo fin no pudieron estar con nosotros, pero que sin embargo son parte y así se realizó “La Experiencia”.

Lo que preparamos, lo que ejecutamos, y unido al conocimiento que obtuvimos es lo que nos queda como esencia. Es precisamente lo que podemos llamar, “Bendita Experiencia”.

Al igual que los comentarios que escuché de otras personas, para mí, fue una “Celebración” por sí misma el ver las caras llenas

de alegría, y las expresiones positivas “¡que bonito, no había escuchado esto!”. “Veremos la forma de implementarlo en nuestra parroquia”, etc. Sencillamente manifestabamos la gran alegría de compartir un mismo espíritu.

Fue muy obvio que los conferencistas como el **Sr. Oswaldo Lozano** y la **Sra. Mercedes Arzú de Wilson**, proyectaron sus conocimientos intelectuales con sus investigaciones científicas, estadísticas y Teológicas, siendo un fundamento para iluminar nuestro caminar. Además, con su palpable espiritualidad fueron capaces de encender aún más



Oswaldo Lozano

nuestro corazón, y para así poder **n o s o t r o s** compartir este fraternal calor a otras parejas, como esperanza hacia un nuevo estilo de vida por medio de la enseñanza de Planificación

Familiar Natural. Ya que es un medio que instruye a las parejas sobre los signos naturales de la mujer de su tiempo fértil e infertil y así decidan tener o espaciar los hijos, pero que también enseña a descubrir el verdadero amor por medio de una íntima comunicación.

¿Quién de nosotros podríamos negar o contradecir el riquísimo repertorio de expresiones sobre el amor dentro de la vocación del matrimonio? De una forma u otra el Sr. Oswaldo Lozano y La Sra. Mercedes Arzú de



Dr. George Delgado

Wilson nos compartieron y que desde luego nosotros, hicimos eco y continuaremos comunicando su mensaje.

Hablamos del amor, cada uno en su estilo propio, y desde luego que en ningún momento se dejó de manifestar la fuente de donde procedía. Y que con mucho gusto les recordaré lo que Pablo VI escribe en la Carta Encíclica de *Humanae Vitae*, (ed. 2001. p. 9-10) sobre el Amor Conyugal:

“8. La verdadera naturaleza y nobleza del amor conyugal se revela cuando este es considerado en su fuente suprema, Dios, que es Amor (6), “el Padre de quien procede toda paternidad en el cielo y en la tierra” (7).

El matrimonio no es por tanto, efecto de la casualidad o producto de la evolución de fuerzas naturales inconscientes; es una sabia institución del Creador para realizar en la humanidad su designio de amor. Los esposos, mediante su recíproca donación personal, de sus seres en orden a un mutuo perfeccionamiento personal, para colaborar con Dios en la generación y en la educación de nuevas vidas.

En los bautizados el matrimonio reviste, además, la dignidad de signos sacramentales de la gracia, en cuanto representa la unión de Cristo y de la Iglesia.”

!Que bonito, no había escuchado esto!

Our sincerest gratitude to the Conference Donors:
Bishop William Weigand & Mercy Healthcare Sacramento
 Pottery World --- Archbishop William Levada --- Rev. Pettingil

And to the following for Sponsoring Attendees:

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Thank You!!!

Desk - continued

options presented, as they felt they were ALL important. Some rated an item in the bottom half, like the annual conference for instance, but then penciled in "Conference is VERY important—this is so hard to decide!"

And yet this is precisely the dilemma of the Executive Board: how best to allocate the resources of CANFP.

I interpret the feedback from those in attendance thusly: It is all important! We want CANFP to seize every opportunity to promote NFP in every forum imaginable, while providing support services and enrichment opportunities to those already involved in NFP, and forming our youth in the values that will enable the truth of NFP to resonate in their hearts too someday. But if we must prioritize, we think the most urgent needs are educating the clergy and the engaged.

And of course while newsletters and websites and conferences in

How did conference attendees rank these important priorities?

1. Clergy / Seminarian Education Seminars
2. NFP and Marriage Preparation / Enrichment
3. Outreach and Education to Healthcare Professionals (Physicians, Hospitals)
4. Youth Abstinence Education
5. Referral to, and Networking of, Professionals in NFP
6. Annual Conference
7. Website
8. Newsletter
9. Media Promotion
(TV, Radio, Print)
10. Develop NFP Resources
(Videos, Brochures)
11. Speakers Bureau
12. Exhibit Statewide

and of themselves are never the goal, they can be part of the strategy for achieving the goal. At the January clergy convocation for the Fresno diocese, the vicar mentioned he thought it was a CANFP newsletter that brought us to his attention and prompted him to invite our participation in their clergy convocation!

Of course, the way it really works is we plan and strategize, set goals and seek volunteers and funds, bang our heads against a few closed doors, and then God opens a window and we leap in! And for every window he opens, he provides the means.

Are you part of that plan? Perhaps you have a personal interest in one of the projects listed? Maybe you know a source of funding that could provide the means for hiring staff? Collectively we can do so much! If you are waiting to be asked, consider this a personal invitation! Fling open a window and leap through it with CANFP!

Inside this Issue:



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