



## Celebrating Richness of Church Teaching

Winter 2008

Janet Smith, PhD

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The Church's teaching on contraception is not just a doctrine that tells them what not to do. Many people would benefit from knowing that it is a doctrine that explains how extraordinarily important is the act of having children. One reason that modern culture has trouble understanding the truth of *Humanae Vitae* is that it fails to appreciate what a profound good children are. It is true that most parents love their children beyond belief and frequently even acknowledge that they are great gifts from God. Many parents will testify that when they held their baby for the first time, they experience a rush of love matched by little else.

*Vitae* does speak of the "extremely important mission of transmitting human life" that God has entrusted to spouses.



**Dr. Janet Smith**  
featured presenter  
2008 CANFP  
Statewide  
Conference  
April 11-12  
San Bernardino

But they do not always realize that in having children they are "co-creators" with God. This is not a term used by *Humanae Vitae*; it is a term used by **John Paul II** in his writing. *Humanae*

A human life is of inestimable value; a human soul is destined to share a blissful eternity with God, the angels and saints. Only God can create a new human soul but he needs the help of human beings to bring forth a new human being. When engaging in sexual intercourse spouses are inviting God to perform his creative act of bringing a new human soul into existence: they supply the sperm and egg; God provides the soul.

*Celebrating cont on page 12*

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## President's Perspective

Gregory Polito, MD, KM

### Keep the Faith

**T**he priest homilist at Mass the other day was discussing how Scripture is replete with examples of how God may take something very small and make something grand out of it to illustrate what He is trying teach us. The case in point was the Sermon on the Mount and the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. It speaks to God's compassion, love, beneficence, and generosity. And the heart of the priest's message was that we need to give God *something* to

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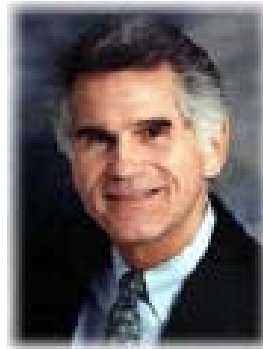
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work with, some basic element in even a tiny incremental amount—and He will take it from there!

To me those of you laboring in the NFP field are an example of this reality: Your numbers may be very small at the moment, but the truth of God's plan for married love is never going to go away. Its validity and value for the marital relationship is going to be better appreciated and understood as the negative



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consequences of the "alternatives" come to light over time on the one hand and as more young people are exposed to and understand *The Theology of the Body* on the other hand. I have no doubt that your dogged pursuit of promulgating NFP played no small part in the US Catholic Bishops finally writing their wonderful document, *Married Love and the Gift of Life*. So, you see, "keep the faith" and continue to tell the world about the truth and beauty inherently scripted by Our Creator in marital love. It may take time but God will use all of our efforts to fulfill His plan.

And do mark your calendars for our next convocation, the 2008 CANFP Conference in San Bernardino on April 11-12. We promise you an uplifting experience by talented speakers and the opportunity to rub elbows and share stories with your likeminded colleagues. And I know you are going to enjoy meeting our energetic and enthusiastic hostess, **Marie Widmann** (see Marie's invitation p. 4). **See you there!**

**A Banquet Gala  
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**MARRIED LOVE AND THE GIFT OF LIFE**



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**Most Rev. Salvatore Cordileone**  
Auxiliary Bishop  
of San Diego

**BISHOP CORDILEONE SHARES A MESSAGE OF EVANGELIZATION: LIVING IT, WILL INEVITABLY LEAD TO CHRIST**

*The sexual spiritual relationship is the heart of the couple, the couple is the heart of the family, and the family is the heart of society*

*The challenge is not the technique of NFP, but the spirituality of responsible parenthood: openness, communion, perseverance, generosity, confidence in truth*

**Glorify God in your body**  
*1 Cor 6:20*

## Director's Desk

Sheila St. John, Executive Director

### Anniversaries Abound



sheila@canfp.org

**F**ifteen years ago, in March of 1993, a brand new organization held its debut event in Santa Clara—a two day conference that featured **Drs. John and Lynn Billings, Fr. Gerald Coleman, and Clayton Barbeau**, among others.

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The seed for the organization was planted the year before, when a group of NFP teachers and advocates gathered to assess the state of NFP in the regions they represented throughout California, and to brainstorm how, through collaboration and unity, we might accomplish as a group what had evaded all individually. **Theresa Notare**, of the Diocesan Development Program of the USCCB, addressed the group, and at the conclusion of the presentations, **Therese Maes**, then Family Life Director of the Diocese of San Jose, unveiled a dream of uniting all methods of NFP under one organization in California that would set aside geographical, methodological, or denominational differences to work as one to advocate natural methods of family planning.

There was consensus that there was a need for such a structure to network all in California interested in or involved in NFP, and to educate the larger community on its benefits. Many meetings later, conquering the legal hurdles of by-laws, articles of incorporation, non-profit applications etc, the **California Association of Natural Family Planning** was born, with its first conference setting the bar for professional

events of the highest quality. The year was the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, and participants at this conference each received a copy of the "hot off the presses" publication by CANFP of **Fr. Marc Calegari's** translation of *Humanae Vitae*.

In 2008 we find ourselves commemorating two anniversaries: CANFP's 15<sup>th</sup>, and *Humanae Vitae's* 40<sup>th</sup>. Some who will attend the April conference celebrating these milestones have been members of CANFP throughout those fifteen years, some may have only come to know the benefits of NFP through the advocacy work of CANFP members, and others will be hearing the good news of NFP for the first time at this gathering hosted by the **Diocese of San Bernardino**.

The first day of this conference is designed to provide a one day foundation for living God's plan for marriage, including understanding the role of NFP, from a medical, relational, and spiritual perspective. The second day will build

on the first, looking more deeply at the Church teaching on marriage as articulated in *Humanae Vitae*, Pope John Paul II's development of the Theology of the Body, and the US Bishops' statement, *Married Love and the Gift of Life*. Each day will include small group

Donations gratefully accepted to meet the expenses of this event (*indicate conference in check memo*) or to provide scholarships for those who may wish to attend, but lack funds, including priests and seminarians (*indicate scholarship*)

discussion, developing practical ideas for integrating into ministries and implementing in a variety of settings. Saturday will include a workshop sharing ideas for celebrating National NFP Week in July of this anniversary year, led, appropriately, by **Theresa Notare**, from the USCCB, who was present at the conception of CANFP. We are honored that **Professor Janet Smith**, author of *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later*, and editor of *Why Humanae Vitae was right: A Reader*, will speak both days, and that **Bishop Cordileone** of San Diego will be our guest speaker at the Friday night Banquet. Joining our invited guest speakers will be California's own experts, such as the always popular presenter **Dr. Mary Davenport, MD**, an OB/GYN who practices woman centered health care in Northern California.

This conference is an opportunity for those who use, teach, and advocate NFP to invite

others from their region to an event that will inspire all to grow in faith and their understanding of the happiness that comes from living God's plan.

# The Diocese of San Bernardino Invites YOU!

Marie Widmann



Life has become so very complicated these days. Most of us are people of good will trying to do the right thing day by day. But we're not always clear on what the right thing to do is. Perhaps some of these situations remind you of your own experiences or those of people you care about:

Good News of Happiness

Andrew and Kathy, starry eyed and so in-love, are participating in their parish **Marriage Preparation Class**. They share with their Facilitators that they want to be responsible and so are using condoms and the Pill during their engagement, since they want to save the beauty of having babies until after marriage.

Patricia and Michael are married and have had several children. As they prepare to baptize their third baby they ask the counsel of their **Baptism Preparation Coordinator**: should Mike have a vasectomy or would it be better if Pat tied her tubes?

Pedro and Maria have longed for a family for years but have been unable to conceive. The stress is hurting their marriage and during counseling sessions with their **Parish Priest** they wonder if in vitro fertilization might save them from divorce?

Diana and Richard are looking for an alternative to the chemicals and gadgets associated with artificial contraceptives and so they turn to their **Deacon and his wife**: do they know what Natural Family Planning involves and does it really work?

If a friend, family member or parishioner came to you in a situation such as this, would you know how to advise them? You would certainly want to greet them with compassion and practical help. **Would you know what our Catholic Faith has to offer?** And why the Church teaches what it does?

It is unfortunate but true, that most Catholics do NOT know what the Church teaches about Married Love and the Gift of Life, even many Ministry Leaders, Priests, Deacons, and Religious. **We don't know because no one ever taught us!** How can we as Church Leaders address the needs of those we are responsible to serve?

Health and Holiness for Marriage

As the Director of the Natural Family Planning Ministry for the Diocese of San Bernardino I have been looking forward to the **Married Love and the Gift of Life Conference** for a very long time and I hope and pray that YOU will join us April 11 & 12! I promise that these two days will enrich your personal life and will enhance your outreach to others.

PLEASE will you share this Good News with friends, family and fellow Leaders in Ministry? Will you invite them to attend the Marriage and the Gift of Life Conference with you, so that their **Lives may be blessed with the Good News of Happiness, Health and Holiness for Marriage?** Will you reach out to volunteers and staff from your Parish and Diocese: to your Priests, Deacons, Religious and those involved in preparation for Marriage, Baptism, Faith Formation and RCIA, so that they in turn can share the teachings of our Faith with the many others they work with?

God bless you for spreading the Good News of the **Married Love and the Gift of Life Conference!**

Marie Widmann is the Director of Pro Life Catholic Ministries for the Diocese of San Bernardino

# CANFP Goes to LA Congress

Over 40,000 Catholics attended last year's Congress

For the fourth consecutive year, CANFP will be sharing the good news of NFP at the **Religious Ed Congress** to be held Feb. 29<sup>th</sup>-March 2<sup>nd</sup> in Los Angeles. It has been a rewarding experience introducing NFP to those responsible for catechesis in our schools and parishes. Questions are plentiful, and interest has been high. CANFP member **Joan Noyes** relates how encouraging it is to share the good news of NFP with those attending the Congress: "I was thrilled to witness a steady stream of people looking at

the materials displayed. Talking to people who stopped by the booth was an invigorating experience. From the inside of the booth, it seemed the whole world was enthralled about NFP!"

CANFP members who might like to share in this rewarding experience on one or all three days, are invited to contact CANFP to schedule a shift.

This year we are especially excited to personally invite those who visit

our exhibit to join us at our two day conference the following month, designed to equip them with the knowledge and confidence to proclaim the

Contributions to fund this outreach can be sent to CANFP. All donations marked **LA CONGRESS** will be used for this project, where need is greatest, or you can specify if you would like your donation to be applied to the cost of:

space rental (\$1,000)

program ad (\$300)

distribution of free materials in Spanish and English (\$1,000)

CANFP Members are invited to call CANFP at 1-877-33-CANFP to volunteer to help staff the exhibit for a shift at this year's Congress.

**Free gift** when you present coupon **Booth #648** CANFP Exhibit at 2008 Religious Ed Congress

beauty of the Church's teaching on **Married Love and the Gift of Life** in their respective ministries. We will be distributing this newsletter, offering a variety of NFP resources, and referring to Professional CANFP Members throughout California.

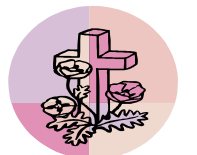
CANFP's participation in the LA Congress is an investment in getting accurate information into the hands, and hearts, of those on the front lines of faith formation. Over 40,000 Catholics attended last year's Congress. Please consider supporting this outreach project with your time and treasure.

Come by and visit us at **Booth # 648**--and present the coupon above to receive a free gift!

## Tribute to Dr. Arthur Stehly



The NFP community gained a heavenly advocate when our Lord took **Dr. Arthur Stehly** home on November 14, 2007, surrounded by his loved ones. Being the 11<sup>th</sup> of 13 children growing up on an Orange County farm and the father of 10 himself barely scratched the surface of Dr. Stehly's connection to children. He delivered thousands more in his practice as an obstetrician/gynecologist, and helped couples seeking to restore fertility by performing tubal reversals. As one of his colleagues, remembers him: "Golf was lost on him. Fancy dinners were lost on him. Fancy cars meant nothing to him. Faith and family came first. A close second came his medical practice." Our condolences to his family, friends, and patients. Dr. Stehly was a faithful supporter of CANFP, and we are honored by his family's support of CANFP in his memory.



## Medical Matters

Lynn Kerr, MD

### The Symphony

When you consider in detail the beauty and mystery of a woman's cycle, it is like a symphony. Each part is beautifully balanced, and works in concert with the other parts.

Each part is beautifully balanced and works in concert with the other parts.

Let's begin our tour of the physiology of the cycle that comprises this symphony, with an introduction of the musicians. Our fertility pacemaker resides in the **hypothalamus**, near the center of the brain. Situated nearby, and connected to the hypothalamus by a special set of blood vessels, is the **pituitary gland**, which produces the hormones which stimulate the **ovary** in each cycle. Finally, there is the **uterus** which responds to the ovarian hormones by preparing to support the new life that may result when audience participation is well timed and all is in harmony. Background instrumentals are provided by the **thyroid and adrenal glands**.

It is important to understand the role of receptors when discussing hormones. Many compare receptors and hormones to a lock and key, but it is important to know that the lock (receptor) is not immovable on the cell, but can increase and decrease in quantity. For the steroid hormones like estrogen and progesterone, the entire hormone and receptor move together as a unit to the nucleus of the cell, where it attaches to the DNA and starts the process of making the expected protein. The type of protein produced depends on the particular cell,

for example the endocervical cells produce mucus when the estrogen binds to the estrogen receptor in that cell. Altering either the hormone or the receptor will affect function.

At the beginning of the symphony, the fertility pacemaker is gathering data from the woman's body, to get a sense of when to start the music. If there is too much stress in her life, the pacemaker may wait awhile, like a conductor waiting for all of the musicians to be seated, hence the variability of the preovulatory phase. The hypothalamus starts the concert with rhythmic bursts of GnRH (gonadotropin releasing hormone) released about every 90 minutes. This GnRH flows through the blood vessels toward the pituitary, surrounding the cells, which respond by releasing LH and FSH at the same tempo. LH is cleared from the blood stream relatively quickly, but the FSH holds the note longer, remaining in the blood stream up to 200 minutes. Thus with each pulse of GnRH, the amount of FSH increases above the LH. The FSH stimulates the follicles to enlarge, and to produce and secrete estrogen. By the mid follicular phase, the rising estrogen level will change the music in a number of ways. First, it will develop more estrogen receptors within the cells, so the estrogen will have sites to bind to. The rising estrogen also promotes the production of the progesterone receptors, so that at the time of ovulation there is a high concentration of progesterone

receptors ready and waiting. The increased estrogen also stimulates the endocervical cells to produce mucus, the endometrium to proliferate, and increases muscle contractions of the uterus and fallopian tubes to assist with sperm transfer. The elevated estrogen inhibits the release of FSH from the pituitary, lowering the levels of FSH in the blood. Whereas the estrogen diminishes the FSH, it is an amplifier for the LH, facilitating the release of greater amounts of LH from the pituitary with each GnRH pulse. As the estrogen climbs, it stimulates the GnRH pulses to beat faster, up to every 60 minutes. Just before ovulation, the progesterone levels from the ovary start to rise, which further amplifies the amount of LH released with every GnRH pulse. With the pulse of the GnRH becoming more rapid, and the amount of LH released being amplified by both the estrogen and the progesterone, the LH escalates to its peak, leading to the rupture of the ovarian follicle, the release of the ovum, and the potential for new life.



**Lynn Kerr, MD**  
Vice President of the CANFP Executive Board, is an NFP Medical Consultant, Medical Director of Sierra Adult Health Center, and Associate Clinical Professor at UCSF Fresno Internal Medicine Residency Program.

cont p.7

## Ask the Expert

### Question *Lingering Effects of Depo*

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I got the Depo-Provera shot on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and at the time I was menstruating, but stopped just a few hours later. I began bleeding again about 4 weeks later, and have bled continuously ever since, although I stopped taking any type of birth control after that one time. It is now November 2<sup>nd</sup> and I am still bleeding. Occasionally the flow is very light, more often medium to heavy, and now I am having a very thick dark brownish red discharge. What's going on??

P.S. I am 19yrs old, and had my son on March 6<sup>th</sup>. I took only one type of birth control (Depo-Provera shot), and I only took it once.

### Answer

Visit Ask the Experts at [www.canfp.org](http://www.canfp.org) to view over 700 questions, answered by our team of CANFP Experts!

One of the main side effects of Depo-Provera is bleeding abnormalities - either irregular cycles, or continuous spotting. This is the main reason why almost half of the women who are given this medication choose to discontinue it within a year. The Depo-Provera shuts down your cycles, and the lining of the uterus builds up and sheds lining randomly, rather than in a coordinated way. Most women

start having regular cycles within three to four months after a Depo-Provera injection. However, a significant minority of women have cycles that are disrupted for much longer, up to two years or even more. Cycle abnormalities after Depo-Provera are treated either with more hormonal therapy (oral medication), or simply with observation and waiting until the effects of the Depo-Provera are completely



**Dr. Mary Davenport**  
is an ob-gyn in private practice in El Sobrante, CA. She is a Fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and serves on the board of CANFP and the American Association of Pro-Life OBGyn's.

gone. You had a child about six months ago. Your doctor needs to be sure that there is no infection (chronic endometritis) or other condition causing the bleeding. You do not mention if you are breast feeding, but breast feeding can also cause cycle suppression and lack of ovulation that could also be contributing to your bleeding abnormalities.

### *Symphony cont.*

With the collapse of the follicle, the corpus luteum is formed, and progesterone increases and prepares the uterus to support life. With the peak concentration of progesterone receptors available, the progesterone immediately becomes active, increasing the number of secretory glands of the endometrium to nourish the new life, if created. The progesterone decreases the muscle contractions in the uterus and tubes and thickens the cervical mucus, forming a barrier against infection. The progesterone takes center stage, blocking estrogen receptors from forming. Although the corpus luteum makes estrogen,

Progesterone takes center stage

without estrogen receptors the estrogen is not as active within the cell, and builds up outside the cells in the bloodstream. The estrogen and progesterone continue to suppress the FSH, as does another ovarian hormone, inhibin. The progesterone also slows down the rate of GnRH pulses to its slowest rate of around every 200 minutes. The slower GnRH slows down the LH pulses, but the amplitude is still elevated by the progesterone.

If a new life is not created, the progesterone and estrogen levels begin to fall, which allows the GnRH pulse frequency to increase. Although both LH and FSH are then stimulated, the LH has become somewhat depleted, so the FSH can be

released in greater amounts during the last few days of the cycle. With the drop in progesterone, the endometrial lining is shed, and the FSH is already beginning to stimulate some follicles to begin the symphony again.

We are wonderfully made, with a beautiful, complex design. The challenge to men and women who practice the art of medicine is to respect the delicacy of this design, the rippling implications to health when it is disrupted, and how to restore harmony when the body is discordant. This 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Humanae Vitae invites all doctors and health care professionals to "consider it their special mission to acquire all necessary learning in this difficult area". HV#27

An invitation from the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to receive the gift of God's love, and let this gift inform and transform us as we live God's plan for married love



Married Love and the Gift of Life  
English

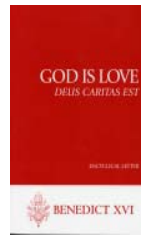
El Amor Conyugal y el Don de la Vida  
Spanish

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"I wish my first encyclical to speak of the love God lavishes upon us and which we in turn must share with others"  
---Pope Benedict XVI



God is Love English

Dios es Amor Spanish

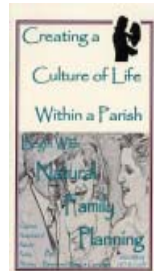
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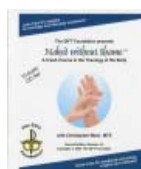
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Translation by Fr. Marc Calegari, SJ

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Theology of the Body  
by Christopher West

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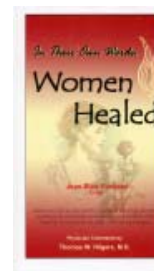
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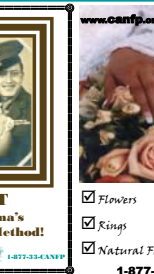
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## Clergy Corner

Fr. Roberto Pirrone

### *Humanae Vitae More Relevant Than Ever*

Every December there are “predictions” for the new year in the tabloids. Most read these for amusement purposes only, as all know that it is not possible to predict the future. But what if someone did just that? This is an indication that the encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* is more than a “lucky guess,” that it is truly inspired by God. Unfortunately, all the predictions given by **Pope Paul VI** have come true.

We are all familiar with the encyclical’s teaching of the unitive and procreative aspects of married love. In paragraphs #17 and #22 he writes of “grave consequences” of separating these, such as marital infidelity (and consequent divorce), treating one’s spouse as an instrument of “selfish enjoyment,” and governments imposing contraception upon their citizens. With the loss of self mastery through chastity, “every class of immorality contrary to the progress of civilization and the defense of the common good of the human spirit” will result.

In 1968 such warnings were openly laughed at as the ravings of someone out of touch with the modern world. Yet time has proven these warnings to be all too true. Once the two aspects of conjugal love are separated, the door is wide open to every kind of perversion. If not for marital love and family, then one can speak of “recreational sex” which has as its only purpose one’s personal “fulfillment.” Marriage for life is impossible

and even undesirable as there is always someone “new and exciting” to encounter, regardless of age, sex, species, etc.. Abortion is a necessity as pregnancy is an obstacle to one’s personal enjoyment. Doctors no longer refer to one’s spouse, but to one’s “partner” (as in one of many) and of course clinics are set up in secondary schools (and in some places in elementary schools) to pass out contraceptives and abortion referrals without the parents knowledge or consent. The consequent breakdown of the family has resulted in the well documented increase in venereal disease of very class, gang violence which plague every city, child pornography, etc.. Governments do in fact impose contraception and abortion, as in China, for those who cling to the “old ways.”

In view of this bleak reality, it must be quickly added that most people have fallen into this abyss for only one reason - they have never been told of another positive, life-giving vision. While not able to address those of other faiths, after nearly 20 years as a priest it can be stated that the vast majority of Catholics have never heard the Church’s teaching on married love. All they know is what society has taught. They come to the priest very unhappy with their lives and not able to figure out why, as they think they are doing “the right thing” (according to society). When they hear for the first time the beautiful vision of married love given by God, it is as if a new world has opened for them.

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frpirrone@juno.com

*Fr. Roberto Pirrone was born and reared in the Los Angeles area, the fifth of six children. He has served in eight parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Los Angeles since his ordination in 1988, and is currently assigned to All Souls Parish in Alhambra. Audiotapes are available through CANFP of Fr. Pirrone’s presentation at the 2000 CANFP conference in Los Angeles., in both English and Spanish: “Creating a Culture of Life in a Parish: Begin with NFP”.*

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## Esquina del Clero

### *Humanae Vitae mas relevante que nunca*

Every December there are “predictions” for the new year in the tabloids. Most read these for amusement purposes only, as all know that it is not possible to predict the future. But what if someone did just that? This is an indication that the encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae* is more than a “lucky guess,” that it is truly inspired by God. Unfortunately, all the predictions given by **Pope Paul VI** have come true.

We are all familiar with the encyclical’s teaching of the unitive and procreative aspects of married love. In paragraphs #17 and #22 he writes of “grave consequences” of separating these, such as marital infidelity (and consequent divorce), treating one’s spouse as an instrument of “selfish enjoyment,” and governments imposing contraception upon their citizens. With the loss of self mastery through chastity, “every class of immorality contrary to the progress of civilization and the defense of the common good of the human spirit” will result.

In 1968 such warnings were openly laughed at as the ravings of someone out of touch with the modern world. Yet time has proven these warnings to be all too true. Once the two aspects of conjugal love are separated, the door is wide open to every kind of perversion. If not for marital love and family, then one can speak of “recreational sex” which has as its only purpose one’s personal “fulfillment.” Marriage for life is impossible

and even undesirable as there is always someone “new and exciting” to encounter, regardless of age, sex, species, etc.. Abortion is a necessity as pregnancy is an obstacle to one’s personal enjoyment. Doctors no longer refer to one’s spouse, but to one’s “partner” (as in one of many) and of course clinics are set up in secondary schools (and in some places in elementary schools) to pass out contraceptives and abortion referrals without the parents knowledge or consent. The consequent breakdown of the family has resulted in the well documented increase in venereal disease of very class, gang violence which plague every city, child pornography, etc.. Governments do in fact impose contraception and abortion, as in China, for those who cling to the “old ways.”

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GRACIAS!  
FR. MARCOS  
GONZALEZ for  
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*El padre Roberto Pirrone, el quinto de seis hijos, nació y fue criado en el área de Los Angeles. Desde su ordenación al sacerdocio en 1988, él ha servido en ocho parroquias de la arquidiócesis de Los Angeles y actualmente está sirviendo en la parroquia de “All Souls” en Alhambra.*

# Teachable Moments in Parish Life

Fr. Ed Horning



The Truth will set us

Throughout the month of January, the celebrations of the Holy Family, the Epiphany, the Baptism of the Lord, and civilly, the sad anniversary of Roe v Wade, provide opportunities to preach on the Gospel of Life, including the gift of marriage and family life. It's an opportune time to highlight the gift of sex and fertility and point out the evils and destruction of contraception.

At St. Mary's parish, we see this time too, as an occasion to encourage marital chastity. The CANFP website has a wonderful *Ask the Expert* section touching on all kinds of topics. This year, we are putting up a display with some sample questions and answers with references to the website so that couples can grow in their understanding of the meaning of life and the gift of sexuality. We hope to soon put out brochures from CANFP to promote a culture of life and acceptance of Church teaching.

This year of 2008 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (*On the regulation of birth* is the English title). Our parish has ordered over 100 copies to give to married couples to familiarize them with the teaching of the Church. Each married couple will receive their copy from another married couple after Sunday Mass. Although the exact anniversary date is July

25<sup>th</sup>, we did not want to waste any time here promoting this wonderful teaching. The Truth will set us free.

We have also ordered hundreds of copies of *Married Love and the Gift of Life* by the US Bishops, both the booklet and the bulletin inserts which will be going into the bulletin soon.

In the months to follow, we will invite people to learn more about the "Theology of the Body" (Pope John Paul II's teaching on the body, which grapples with the very meaning of life, the meaning of being male and female, and many other profound truths) and work through *Humanae Vitae*. We will use some DVD's available through Ascension Press. One set is called *God's Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage* and the other is called *Introduction to the Theology of the Body*. We had been meeting monthly, but soon we will meet weekly as a parish to learn more about John Paul II's illuminating teaching.

We have had great success in having study groups using the DVD *God's Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage* in 2007. For example, couples came once a month to watch the DVD, discuss what they learned as a couple and as a group with myself (their pastor) and some other married couples. Many of them were evangelized. Most began to practice their faith more intensely. Many came to a deeper understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage. A lot of the couples came to Mass and many who were having sex before marriage stopped, and began to chastely prepare for marriage. The program has been



Fr. Ed Horning is a priest of the Diocese of San Diego and is pastor of St. Mary's parish in El Centro. edhorning@hotmail.com

very fruitful in helping to evangelize couples with regards to the Sacrament of Marriage because it incorporates Scripture, Church teaching, and practical insight. The couples who watch the accompanying DVDs and reflect on the accompanying workbook understand the importance of natural family planning, see the value of their sexuality, and experience an overall growth in their faith.

Of the couples who had no understanding of natural family planning, many have taken not just the introduction, but the whole program to learn a particular method well. Recently, 14 couples from my parish alone learned a method of natural family planning and are excited about their Sacrament of Marriage. (I am pleased to say that our Diocese has incorporated *God's Plan for a Joy Filled Marriage* into the Diocesan marriage preparation program).

This is some of what we are doing at our parish of St. Mary, and also some of what we are hoping to do, this year of 2008 – the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*

# Married Love cont

the coming to be of a new human being truly changes the universe

He then entrusts that soul to the parents to guide and educate and ultimately to help get them to heaven.

Our culture does not really focus on helping people to realize that some day they will likely be parents and how tremendously important a task that is. We do not often think that we should be spending much of our youth preparing for the responsibilities of being parents. Contraception enables us to think of sexual intercourse as a causal and to some extent as an insignificant act rather than an act that can change the universe – for the coming to be of a new human being truly changes the universe. Someone who did not exist before comes into existence and will remain in existence forever.

If people were conscious of the extreme significance of the sexual act, they could not possibly be as cavalier about it as they now are. They would choose their spouses very very carefully – and use as a foremost criterion the suitability of that person to be a parent. Those who succeed in marrying

someone who will be a good parent – someone who is patient, generous, responsible, kind, other directed, and reliable also are nearly guaranteed to get a terrific spouse – for who wouldn't want a spouse with those virtues? Our sexually out of control culture and divorce culture has led 68% of children born in the US to being born out of wedlock or born into households that will fragment through divorce. One out of four pregnancies is aborted.

Those who understand the Church's teaching on sexuality know that to a great extent it is shaped by a concern for the well-being of any children who may result from acts of sexual intercourse. Children born into families where their parents are sexually self controlled, where they are faithful, stable, and desirous of children are predictably much better off than those born to single parents, to the unfaithful, to those open to divorce or divorced. The Church's teaching is also shaped by a knowledge that those who become parents generally become much better

people; they need to develop quite a set of virtues in order to be good parents. Those virtues also help them be good spouses, good co-workers, good citizens. Those who use natural family planning to plan their family size develop the virtues needed to be good parents; they develop sexual self-control and patience and generosity – and they almost never divorce.

Catholics who have not heard a defense of the Church's teaching on contraception might be surprised how rich and full of common sense it is.

Janet Smith, PhD holds the Father Michael J. McGivney Chair of Life Ethics at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, and is serving a second term as a consultant to the Pontifical Council on the Family. She is the author of *Humanae Vitae: A Generation Later*, and editor of *Why Humanae Vitae Was Right: A Reader*. Over a million copies have been distributed of her tape, *Contraception: Why Not*.

More info at these websites:  
www.canfp.org  
www.ascensionpress.com  
www.joyfilledmarriage.com



## Rocio and Steve Hicks, \*MD

A formatting error resulted in the inadvertent omission of the names of monthly donors Rocio and Steve Hicks in our last CANFP NEWS. Though they were too gracious to mention it, we apologize and thank them for their monthly commitment to CANFP.

\*Monthly Donor

It is a tribute to CANFP Member Mary Ann Giacopuzzi's commitment to life, faith, and family that her daughter honored her on her birthday with a donation to CANFP! We join her in wishing a Happy Birthday to Mary Ann!



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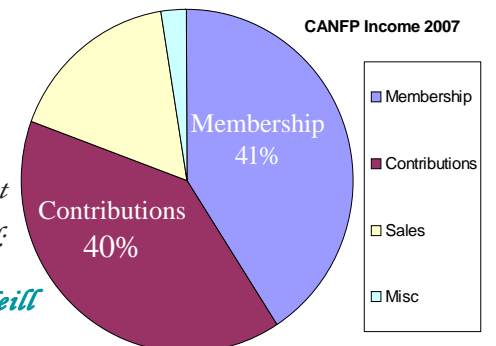
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