

7 Local NFP Leaders Attend International Symposium

By Maribeth Galecki

Seven people from Natural Family Planning Education of Rochester joined NFP supporters from around the world at the International Symposium on Natural Family Planning in Arlington, Va., Nov. 5-8.

Attending were Therese Petracca, executive director; Rosalie Parsons, board of directors; Dr. Frank and Marty Foley, medical directors; Gary and Judi Neuderfer, instructors, and this writer.

The symposium brought together doctors, priests, NFP

professionals, teachers and others to discuss current research and trends. Participants attended lectures and workshops on a variety of topics.

Dr. Josef Roetzer of Austria, a pioneer NFP researcher and author, opened the symposium with a discussion on chart interpretation. Other medical presentations included Dr.

Edward Keefe's workshops on cervix, temperature and mucus signs; Dr. Richard Blandeau, University of Washington, on fertilization; and Dr. Hymie Gordon, Mayo Clinic, on modern advances in genetics.

Dr. Thomas Hilgers, director of the Creighton University NFP Education and Research Center, presented the preliminary

findings of a study on the effectiveness of NFP methods. He stated that it is difficult to compare effectiveness rates of NFP to those of contraceptives, often because many couples use NFP to achieve a pregnancy while when using contraceptives pregnancies are considered failures.

Many NFP groups, including the group from Rochester, have organized fertility awareness programs for adolescents. For example, students at a Catholic high school in Phoenix, Ariz., can choose a theology class on fertility awareness/NFP as an elective.

Their teacher, Father Mark Calegari, said that the students gain an understanding of responsible parenthood, the difference between contraceptives and NFP, and their own procreative powers.

Other topics included the theology of NFP, the demise of the pill and the IUD, NFP in other countries and male/female relationships.

At the Saturday night banquet, Rep. Henry Hyde, a pro-life leader in the House of Representatives, explained his beliefs and experiences.

The symposium concluded on Sunday with an explanation of the U.S. Bishops Diocesan Plan for NFP, now being implemented throughout the country. Dr. Mary Catherine Martin, associate project coordinator, noted that the plan encompasses instructional services, outreach, consultation and referral services, expansion, financing and quality control.

The School of the Holy Childhood is a non-denominational school for the mentally handicapped in the greater Rochester area. This organization, currently celebrating its 35th anniversary, has been extremely successful in enabling mentally retarded children to reach their highest individual potentials.

The School of the Holy Childhood is a photo listing service for children of special needs who require extra exposure to find adoptive parents, and features children in the Democrat and Chronicle in the series, "A Child is Waiting." The series previously ran in the Courier-Journal.

"It's totally free advertising for them (the restaurants)," said Shah. "The sponsoring business receives extremely inexpensive advertising exposure as a strong and viable community concern."

The CAP Book is a photo listing service for children of special needs who require extra exposure to find adoptive parents, and features children in the Democrat and Chronicle in the series, "A Child is Waiting." The series previously ran in the Courier-Journal.

Non-Profit Groups Aided Through RIT Program

The School of the Holy Childhood and The CAP Book, Inc. will be the recipients in a unique fundraising activity by students in the Continuing Education Program in Effective Selling at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

In this program that has spanned five years aiding non-profit organizations, RIT students involve themselves in this hands-on sales experience taught by I.C. Shah, president of Executive Telephone Systems.

This year's approach is titled the "Business Sponsored and Restaurant Adopted" game plan. In this plan, area restaurants are invited to place small cards, folded in half, on each table. On this card is a description of the program, the name of a business that has paid to sponsor the card, and where the funds raised will be going. The cards will be on the tables through the month of December.

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Fr. Loujs J. Hohman



The Open Window

What Is Vocation?

Dear Father Hohman:

What is a vocation to the priesthood? Why are there so few of them since Vatican II?

Dear Reader:

Vocation is from the Latin word, "vocare," to call. It is therefore, by definition a call from God to serve Him in a position of leadership in His Church. Many years ago we would see pictures of a very beautiful young man or woman with Christ leaning over his or her shoulder and the caption underneath, "Come, follow me." I think it is obvious that a call from God does not come in a specific physical voice.

How then does a call come? A call comes through the faith community. The spirit of God leads the community not only to call specific persons but also the spirit moves in a special way in the person who is called. Note how in the Ordination ceremony specific approval of the faith community is asked for by the ordaining bishop.

This perhaps is one of the reasons why there are so few men pursuing a vocation to the priesthood in the present time. Perhaps our communities are not all that interested in making the call and therefore there are fewer people interested in hearing it. However there are other factors involved. One of them might be the

very limited group of individuals whom we expect to hear the call that we issue as a faith community. They must be male, young, intellectually qualified and willing to be celibate. The fact that young men in past times were willing to accept such a call by God through the faith community does not mean that would necessarily prevail today.

Incidentally, it is not always true that the Church called only young unmarried men to the priesthood. In its very earliest days married men who were deeply rooted in their faith and already established as holy Christians, were called to be leaders in the faith community — which is what a priest is.

This also is one of the reasons why people are asked to pray for vocations. There is that need on the part of the community to want a person to lead them in the midst of the Church. Praying for vocations, therefore, is a way of asking God to fill individuals with the spirit to accept the call and to become leaders in the faith community. It should be remembered that vocations of one kind or another do not necessarily come primarily through the faith community. For example, our vocation to the service of God comes through baptism. The vocation of a Sister to a religious community comes from the religious community as well as from the spirit. The bottom line perhaps is maybe if we want more we'll get more.

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"I think the symposium was beneficial for all of us," said Mrs. Petracca. "We met leaders in research, medical and religious fields who have worked hard to advance NFP knowledge. I also enjoyed learning what other NFP groups are doing. It's exciting to see how quickly NFP is catching on around the country."

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CHRISTMAS: MASS FOR YOU

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HELPING THE POOR TO HELP THEMSELVES

The Midnight Mass in Bethlehem is offered each Christmas for members of this Association. How better can we say thank you? In 18 mission countries (where Catholics, though few, are mostly of the Eastern Rites) the Holy Father helps millions because you read this column. Blind boys in the Gaza Strip (not one of them a Christian) are learning rug making, basket-work, the ABCs, at the Pontifical Mission Center for the Blind. Lepers in India are cared for by native priests and Sisters. The poor have the Gospel preached to them in Egypt, Iraq, Iran and Ethiopia. . . This season especially, won't you remember our work in your prayers? Our priests and Sisters depend on you. They ask the infant to bless you always!

Gifts we receive no later than Thursday, December 31, can be listed in your 1981 income tax return. Wondering what you can do?

BUILDING FOR CHRIST

Immediate help is needed for three projects in poor rural areas in India. St. Augustine's Chapel and School in Kokkai is much too small for present needs and the roof is in danger of collapsing. Just \$2,000 will repair and enlarge it. For the protection of the growing girls there, the Sister Superior of St. Mary's Orphanage in Erezha needs \$1,500 to construct a wall around the property. A convent is needed for Sisters in Urukunnu who are assisting Father Albert. In ministering to six remote missions in the area. Who will help provide the \$5,000 needed to build it?

A HOME FOR THE HOMELESS

Sister Immaculate, in Chellamkonam, India, pleads for \$6,000 to build an Orphanage for the 25 desperately poor girls who are now crowded into unsafe, temporary buildings on the convent grounds.

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