

Natural Family Planning: Techniques, Marital Values Should Be Tied Together

Washington (NC) -- The marital values connected with natural family planning should be taught along with its techniques, speakers stressed at a conference on natural methods of regulating birth.

The National Meeting and Working Conference on Natural Family Planning, held at the Catholic University of America July 17-21, was the first national gathering of diocesan coordinators of natural family planning.

One organizer described the conference as a "new constituency" in the American church.

Experts on natural family planning told the conference to expect natural family planning to renew family life.

Natural family planning is "not simply another method of birth control," Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York said in an address at the conference.

"It involves a fundamental approach to human sexuality that places conjugal intimacy in the larger context of marital rights and responsibilities," he said.

The cardinal warned that some people "become victims of the contraceptive mentality and seek only the

technologically most efficient and effective method of avoiding procreation."

"The promotion of contraception -- including sterilization and abortion -- drives a wedge between the two purposes of conjugal love, that is, a deepening of conjugal intimacy and an openness to procreation," he said.

The cardinal urged diocesan coordinators to work toward a "positive, strengthening approach toward life, toward conjugal love, toward relationships between husband and wife, between parents and children."

In a talk on Pope John Paul II's writings on the human person, Father Terence Brinkman of the University of St. Thomas in Houston said, "Despite the fact you may be teachers of technique, it is the values involved, not simply in mastering the technique but in self-mastery, that are eminently the human ones."

The conference also heard a presentation on integrating themes of conjugal love and responsible parenthood into natural family planning instruction from Msgr. James T. McHugh, director of the national Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning. William May, associate professor of moral theology at Catholic University, spoke on the relevance of Christian views of human sexuality to natural family planning.

The four-day conference was sponsored by the Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning and Catholic University's National Center for Family Studies.

The 120 conference participants represented 70 U.S. dioceses.

"The conference is extremely significant," said Mary Catherine Martin, associate director of the Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning.

"This is the first time theologians, providers of natural family planning and diocesan natural family planning leadership have come together for a national meeting," she said. "It's the coming together of a new constituency in the church -- the people who are concerned with natural family planning."

Father Steven Priester, director of the National Center for Family Studies, praised the conference for bringing social and psychological theory on the family to the participants.

During the conference participants discussed strategies for implementing the Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning, a three-year program instituted by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Pro-life Activities in 1982 and supported by a grant from the Knights of Columbus.

gregation and be sure the congregation knows they are expected to sing. The more people you get singing, the more candidates you have that might be interested in joining a musical group.

- Know your parish community. That includes knowing which students are active in local school music programs. Contact them and invite them to join a group.

- Be sure that all the members of your musical groups know that they are the best advertisement to other people. Encourage them to invite others to join!

- Have social times during the year -- coffee and cookies after rehearsal, Christmas party, summer picnic, etc.

After following through on all these suggestions your musical groups should be large enough so that you won't have to disband for the summer months. In my parish of approximately 500 families, we have 40 choir members. Even if half of them were to be on vacation at the same time, which is very unlikely, we still have enough left to have a good sounding choir.

Also, invite people to join for the summer if they have schedules that prevent them from joining the rest of the year. College students home for the summer often enjoy being able to be part of the program. Summer rehearsal schedules can be easier with a little planning -- rehearsal every other week, later starting times.

Good luck!
(Helen Halligan is the music coordinator for St. Vincent DePaul Church, Churchville, and is also the chairperson of the diocesan Music Committee.)

Insights In Liturgy

By Helen Halligan



Restarting Singing Groups

Many of our church singing groups have taken a vacation from their ministry for the summer months. As we come to the middle and end of August it's time to think about getting back together and recruiting new members.

Hopefully your groups have enjoyed some social time together during the summer months and have continued to grow as a community. Examples of togetherness like this can become a model for the parish community.

I am going to list some things that have worked in my own parish for building community and to assist recruitment of new group members. I hope you will find some ideas that will work in your situation!

- Put regular notices in the bulletin inviting people to join your singing groups. In the announcements list rehearsal times and Mass at which each group ministers.

- No auditions! People do not do well when put on the spot. You will find out soon enough if someone cannot fit into the group. Give everyone a chance. You will rarely have to ask someone to leave the group. If, by chance, a problem does surface, arrange to work with the individual privately and see if any improvement can be made.

- Be sure to contact the newly confirmed and invite them to join.

- Registration of new parishioners should have space for them to indicate areas in which they want to be active. Be sure to contact them if music is their interest!

- Use many different styles of music. If you get stuck in only one style, you will only attract a small group of people. You will be reaching only a certain percentage of the congregation each Sunday.

- Make it a priority to have a good singing con-

End Silence Code, Priest Tells Mafia

Vatican City (NC) -- The car bombing which left four people dead and 10 wounded July 29 in Palermo, Sicily, ought to lead to the demise of the Mafia code of silence, said a front-page commentary in the Vatican daily newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano.

The killings were widely attributed to the Sicilian Mafia.

The commentary by Father Claudio Sorgi said that those participating in Italian organized crime no longer seem to distinguish "between 'enemies' and innocents."

"The victims of this ferocious massacre are a warning that cannot leave any conscience in peace and that must make fall definitively every residue of 'omerta' (the Mafia code of silence) even in the most fearful," Father Sorgi wrote.

The commentary emphasized the duty of all to "commit themselves to the construction of a culture and of a society which will finally

bring the sign of the Gospel and not that of a paganism which seems to ignore millenia of Christianity."

The car bombing outside the home of chief investigating Judge Rocco Chinnici in Palermo July 29 killed Chinnici, two police guards and an employee of the apartment building in which Chinnici lived. Ten people were wounded.

Judge Chinnici, 58, had headed several investigations into Mafia activities in Palermo, capital of the Italian island of Sicily.

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