

# NFP Praised In Papal Talk

Vatican City (NC) -- Pope John Paul II encouraged scientific study of natural birth control June 8 to combat "the strong emphasis on contraception, sterilization and abortion that we often encounter in the world."

He also said that "the ultimate reason for any natural method is not simply its biological effectiveness or reliability but its consistency with a Christian view of sexuality as expressive of conjugal love."

The pope spoke on birth control at an audience with groups in Rome for international meetings on procreation.

"The use of the natural methods gives a couple an openness to life, which is truly a splendid gift of God's goodness," the pope said to 350 members of the International Congress on the Philosophy and the Theology of Responsible Procreation, and the second International Congress on Procreation.

Pope John Paul told them that there is a "need for

scientific knowledge and its applications to be ruled from within by ethics."

Couples practicing natural family planning use scientifically determined indicators on body temperatures and fluids to assess the times during a month when a woman can become pregnant. The method requires occasional abstinence from intercourse during the month.

The pope said that instruction in natural family planning must go beyond providing technical information because it is "vital for the human and Christian well-being of so many couples."

"It must be rooted in true science and in a complete view of the human person," the pope said.

The pope also said that those who teach natural family planning methods assist the church in its pastoral care by offering "practical help to all married couples so that they may live their parenthood in a truly Christian and responsible manner."

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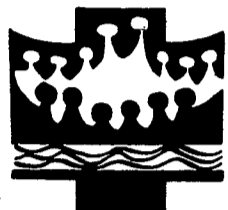
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## Insights In Liturgy



By Father Thomas P. Mull Part I

### A Christian Walk

The 1984 Liturgy Institute is now a part of history. The gathering of nearly 160 people, who met at Keuka College the weekend of June 1-2, brought together people of various lifestyles, interests, liturgical ministries and faith lives. Father Regis Duffy, OFM, from Washington, D.C., was the main speaker and weekend facilitator. In the next few weeks this column will highlight the event of this institute.

The topic of the institute was the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). Father Duffy entitled the experience as "The Christian Walk: Stories of Committed Faith and Honest Sacrament." This title became the theme of the Friday evening keynote address. During this initial talk, Father Duffy invited participants to reflect on their own catechumenate experience. So often, he pointed out, those who are involved in the RCIA process are very "caught up" in the purpose of their mission -- to bring people into the Church -- that they lose sight of the purpose of the stages of the process: to share the story of faith. Honesty is key in an understanding of faith. The living out of a sacrament demands that a person be aware of the activity of the Spirit in one's life. As its roots, the RCIA process is not an academic program, it is an experiential sharing of a peoples' faith life.

In catechumenal sharing, the tendency is often to present the "right" way to do everything. Father Duffy raised the issue of the individual Catholic and that person's ability to be faithful to the gospel. "We walk funny," he said. The paths are not straight. Everyone walks them differently. We must be able to accept our "funny walk." Sometimes we try to by-pass certain challenges. Sometimes we openly contradict the gospel values. Sometimes we surprise ourselves. Each new day presents a unique call to discipleship. If we accept

the fact that we respond to this call with a "funny walk," then we will accept the fact that when we are sharing our faith experience with others, we cannot expect them to walk exactly as we walk. We will allow the flexibility of seeing the myriad way in which God enters a person's life, and that there is no one Christian life but many paths which lead to and make up the Christian life.

For those involved in the RCIA process, story-telling becomes an important part of the experience. The catechist, sponsor, community person tells his/her story of faith. The catechumen is given the opportunity to relate his/her story, which is equally important. These stories are not simply "nice" things to hear during a group experience. They are intricate journeys of people of faith who have discovered the power of God at various stages of their lives: sometimes soothing, sometimes challenging, sometimes simply there.

The catechumen comes to know the Christian life of faith as one which has its hills and valleys. It is one which challenges each to grow in his/her experience of God. When this journey becomes specifically Roman Catholic, one begins to experience a faith-life aided by the rites and ritual of an ancient community. It begins to touch on certain moral values and doctrinal directions. To recognize all of this does not set up false (or unreal) expectations for the catechumen. It becomes an honest sacrament.

The closing point with which Father Duffy guided the institute participants was one of journal. He said to write down experiences. Look at people who were involved in the "turning points" of our lives. See the Lord's power experienced and who became the instruments of this power. Journaling becomes a powerful tool for "telling one's story."

Next week, we shall look at the various stages of the RCIA and consider how they fit into a person's "funny walk."

## Student Exchange Needs Homes

A Student exchange program between Mexico and the United States is seeking homes in the Diocese of Rochester for children between 12 and 16 this summer. The program, Intercambio Internacional de Estudiantes, A.C., was started by Abbot Placid Reitmeier, OSB of the Benedictine Monastery of Tepeyac of Mexico City.

According to Mike and Kathy Coyne, Rochester representatives, a need is especially great for homes for boys.

The children will arrive June 29 and 30 and will remain in the U.S. for eight weeks.

The obligations of the host family include providing food, shelter, "and lots of love," the Coyne's said. The children bring their own spending money.

Further information on the program is available by contacting the Coyne's, 385-1594; or by calling a toll-free national number, 1-800-437-4170.

## Rosary Rally

Diocesans interested in traveling by bus to the July 16 Rosary Rally at Auriesville have been asked to contact Mrs. Mary Kelly, 586-1664.

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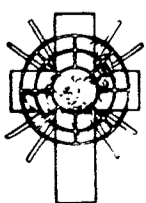
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