

THE LOVING CHOICE

ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1

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Advisory Board

The Detroit Archdiocesan Advisory Board for Natural Family Planning recently celebrated its 1st Anniversary.

This past year has seen much growth and direction.

Highlights include:

- ?? A celebration of the 30th anniversary of the encyclical, "Of Human Life", at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral
- ?? 7 NFP centers established
(see brochures for locations)
- ?? 11 new teachers trained
- ?? unified curriculum implemented
- ?? new flyers and brochures created to promote NFP (Copies are included in this issue. Please distribute.)
- ?? NFP phone message implemented (call 313-237-5892 ext. 1 then 5)

National NFP Week

March 21-27 is National NFP Week.

March 25th is the feast of the Annunciation and is designated as NFP Day!



The Annunciation celebrates Mary's "Yes" to the plan of God for a child in her life. We need to respond as Mary did with our "Yes" to the plan of God for children in our life. With our "Yes" will come the graces needed to live God's plan for us.

"Children As Gift"

"Children As Gift" is the title of a workshop to be held March 25th at the St. John Center, 44011 Five Mile Road, Plymouth from 7:30-9:00 p.m. Fr. John West, S.T.D. will address fertility and infertility procedures in light of the teachings of the Catholic Church recognizing that each child is a gift from God.

The need for support groups for married couples desiring to have children and married couples with children will be discussed.

Deadline for registration is March 19th. Call the Office for Family and Youth 313-237-5892. A flyer advertising this workshop is on page 3 of this issue. Feel free to copy and distribute this flyer.

Catholic Medical Association

The Catholic Medical Association released a statement on contraceptive hormones in which Catholic teaching regarding human dignity and uniqueness is upheld. "Any technology that interferes with procreation as instituted by God using the normative conjugal act of husband and wife is immoral..."

Contraceptive hormones inhibit ovulation, interfere with sperm transport and alter the endometrium (lining of the uterus) to prevent implantation. "Whenever the alteration of the endometrium causes the death of this recently created person, it is killing."

"The Catholic Medical Association (CMA) is vehemently opposed to the use of contraceptive hormones. Any and all of them regardless of the manufacturer or the labeling, can cause the death of a newly created person." CMA concludes with a request to "our legislators and all people of good will to enact restrictions immediately to prevent use of contraceptive hormones."

Physicians Healed

Physicians Healed is a book relating the personal stories of fifteen physicians (Catholic and Christian) and the consequences of their decision to not prescribe contraception or perform abortions.

John T. Litell, MD relates his experience of false accusations, and lack of hospital and peer support. He states, "Yes, I'm afraid to say that the persecution of Christians – and particularly, Catholics – who choose to lead their professional lives in accordance with their values and beliefs, is alive and well in these Godforsaken times."

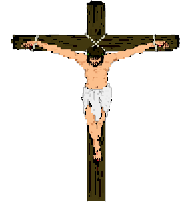
Dr. Litell's patients, however, were never a source of persecution. After being presented with the truth, these patients would ask, "Why didn't my previous doctors tell me about this?"

This inspiring book may be purchased from One More Soul, 616 Five Oaks Avenue, Dayton, OH 45406, phone: 1-800-307-7685. Cost is \$10 (\$3 shipping and handling).



Medicine and Ministry to Infertile Couples

by Fr. John H. West, S.T.D. Archdiocese of Detroit



With ever-greater frequency and intensity, news sources communicate unbelievable breakthroughs in reproductive medicine. Complex scientific procedures are made increasingly accessible to the consciousness of the general public, especially catching the attention of infertile married couples who endure the often silent and heart-wrenching suffering of pain and frustration, particularly in a society that so easily permits the abortion of millions annually.

Such a scenario creates intense personal and moral crises for married persons who so desire to become parents of a child. The first child conceived by in-vitro fertilization is now approaching her twenty-first birthday. While such scientific and medical procedures continue to develop into the twenty-first century, the Church in its role as teacher and pastor wants to walk with infertile couples to offer guidance and support.

Twelve years ago, the Vatican issued an important document on the dignity of procreation and respect for life in its origins. There are some important aspects of that teaching that can be highlighted here:

- ?? Medicine can be helpful to infertile couples as long as it limits its assistance and service to facilitate the marriage partners in their efforts at conception. Many of the procedures available put the medical professional, not the couple, in the president's chair of moral decision making. When the conception and generation of a child is separated from the human action of the couple, an important moral limit might be breached that could become irretrievable.
- ?? Medical interventions affect not only tissues and organs, but the person himself and herself. Especially in the arena of being pro-creators and co-creators with God, there are certain values that must be preserved, and two of these are fundamental. First, there is an intimate connection between lovemaking and the generation of children in marriage into which no technician can intervene. Second, we need to preserve the dignity of the human being generated from conception. Various protocols of cryopreservation, experimentation, donation and destruction of human embryos in reproductive medicine offend the human dignity of young human life.
- ?? Medical procedures can be developed that insure that the values of marriage and procreation are respected. The vast majority of reproductive technologies available today actually substitute for wondrous act of marital love and relegate conception to the laboratory, instead of facilitating the natural and interpersonal qualities of the marital sexual relationship that leads to new life.

Some feel that the Church's judgment about various reproductive technologies is rather harsh. It was formulated by the Church's teachers in dialogue with some of the world's most sensitive researchers and physicians who wanted to preserve moral values in reproductive medicine. The 1987 document encourages infertile couples not only to have recourse to medical experts, but also to engage in discussion with their pastors and other moral teachers who might be able to better listen to their dilemmas, and to determine how the teaching might apply to their difficult situation.

One frequently asked question is about baptism, namely if the Church will baptize infants who might have been conceived with the use of techniques about which the Church has given a negative assessment. In response, it is important to know that the Church does not ask parents in a pre-baptismal interview about the means that were used to generate the child. This child and every child is considered a unique and irrepeatable person of inestimable value.

More needs to be done to accompany infertile married couples along their path of moral decision making. The time seems ripe to organize support groups for these marriage partners who wish to be faithful to each other while at the same time being responsive to the moral values articulated by a loving Church who deeply cares for these young and struggling believers.



March 25, 1999

"Children As Gift" Workshop

Remember to attend the workshop, "Children As Gift". Fr. John West is the speaker and will respond to your personal questions.

Invite others to attend. Included in this newsletter is a flyer advertising this workshop. Feel free to make copies and distribute.

Register early to ensure sufficient Saint Gerard medals and prayer cards. Call the Office for Family & Youth 313-237-5892.

