

# Life Cycles



Spring 2007

The newsletter of the

Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

## New Marriage Prep Program Based on the Theology of the Body Beginning in Archdiocese

The nationally-recognized *God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* program is set to begin at Immaculate Conception parish in Jenkintown following a training seminar that parishioners attended in February. Considered to be the first marriage preparation program in the country based on Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body, *God's Plan* has already achieved extraordinary results in helping engaged couples understand and better live the Church's teaching on marriage.

"It is exciting to be part of a program that proposes an authentic Catholic vision of marriage and allows engaged couples the opportunity to meditate upon it," said Kim McBryan of Immaculate Conception. "It is my hope that there will be far more of these programs available for our brothers and sisters in Christ as they enter into marriage."

Kim, her husband, Mark, and a half dozen other couples will begin working with engaged couples this September.

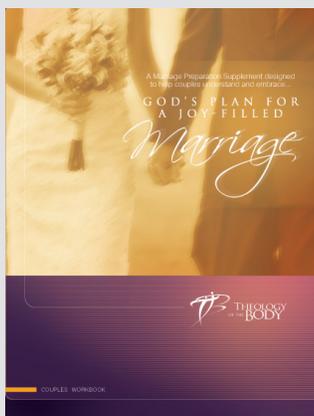
"It is commonly the experience of marriage preparation teams that engaged couples come to the programs with a faith in need of enrichment," explained Matthew Pinto, the president of Ascension Press which publishes the *God's Plan* DVD set and couple's

workbook. "This program offers both a rich catechesis in the basic Gospel message as well as a rich understanding of issues related to sacramentality and human sexuality."

The program touts strong statistical support from the more than 2,000 engaged couples who have gone through the program in the first few years of its implementation. Of the 91 percent of all couples who were sexually active coming into the program:

- 48 percent said they would remain chaste until marriage because of the program
- 31 percent said they would "definitely use" natural family planning because of the program
- 78 percent came away with a better understanding of the Catholic vision for marriage because of the program

The *God's Plan* program can be used as a supplement to any existing marriage preparation program used by a parish within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. To learn more about bringing the *God's Plan* program to your parish, please contact Damon Owens at [dowens@ascensionpress.com](mailto:dowens@ascensionpress.com) or (973) 847-0165.



*God's Plan for a Joy-Filled Marriage* is a new, supplemental marriage preparation program by renowned Catholic author and teacher Christopher West. Based on Pope John Paul II's revolutionary *Theology of the Body* and West's book *Good News About Sex & Marriage*, this program has a two-fold goal: to present a summary of Catholic teaching on God's plan for marriage and to offer engaged couples practical suggestions for embracing this plan in their own lives.

For more information, visit [www.ascensionpress.com](http://www.ascensionpress.com) or contact Damon Owens at [dowens@ascensionpress.com](mailto:dowens@ascensionpress.com) or (973) 847-0165.

## *Life Cycles*

The newsletter of the Philadelphia  
Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

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Articles may be submitted to Barbara Rose at:  
PNFPN

513 Leedom Street  
Jenkintown, PA 19046  
(215) 884-2922 • [www.pnfpn.org](http://www.pnfpn.org)

## *Kudos to...*

DR. LESTER RUPPERSBERGER for organizing another successful PNFPN conference at St. Mary's Medical Center.

## *God's Little Blessings*

Nicholas David born October 15, 2006  
to Barbara and David Roque

Leo Benjamin Casimir born March 4, 2007  
to Melissa and Benjamin Schools

Maryanna Therese born April 7, 2007  
to Kerry and John Monastra

## Rest in Peace Dr. John Billings 1918-2007

Dr. John Billings, world-renowned pioneer of natural fertility regulation, died in April after a short illness at the age of 89.

Billings was born in Melbourne and educated at Xavier College and the University of Melbourne. He married Dr. Evelyn Thomas in 1943 and saw service as an army doctor during WWII. In 1947, he was awarded a Nuffield Fellowship for post-graduate studies in London. When he returned to Australia, he was appointed head of the department of neurology at St. Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, and dean of the undergraduate medical school within the faculty of medicine of the University of Melbourne.

In 1953, at the invitation of the late Fr. Maurice Catarinich of the Catholic Marriage Guidance Bureau, Billings began work on a method of natural fertility regulation which was originally called the ovulation method. For the following fifty-plus years, Drs. John and Evelyn Billings researched, developed, and perfected the method which now bears their name.

Billings maintained a professional career as a consulting neurologist to St. Vincent's Hospital and, from the late 1960s until recent years, also spent a large part of each year traveling with his wife to many countries throughout the world, training teachers of the Billings Ovulation Method, establishing teaching centers, and lecturing to doctors, medical students, nurses, and others. Billings' work for the family was recognized with a Papal Knighthood in 1969, honorary doctorates from multiple international universities, and—with his wife—the International Catholic Physicians of the Year award in 2002.

*Excerpted from [www.woomb.com](http://www.woomb.com)*

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# FertilityCare on the Air

March 25-30 was designated Worldwide FertilityCare Week by the FertilityCare Centers of America, Inc. To help promote the Creighton Model FertilityCare system and NaPro Technology, the Pope Paul VI Institute created short radio ads entitled the “Pope Paul VI Institute Minute with Dr. Thomas Hilgers.” On March 28, the FertilityCare Professionals of Southeast PA had two of their own FertilityCare practitioners as guests of the local weekly radio program, “Voices for the Unborn” (WISP 1570 AM), hosted by Jeannette Wynne and Bill Miller.

During the program, the Philadelphia listening audience had the opportunity to hear a few of the Pope Paul VI Institute ads, as well as a pre-recorded interview with Dr. Hilgers. In it, he explained to Bruce and Kris McGregor of KVSS radio station in Omaha, Nebraska, what motivated him to begin his pioneering work in the area of natural fertility regulation.

Liz Parrish, a FertilityCare practitioner, explained her practice to the listening audience and revealed that she has been receiving referrals from as far away as Allentown. Barbara Rose informed listeners of the grow-



Bill Miller and Jeannette Wynne (far right) welcomed Barbara Rose and Liz Parrish to their weekly WISP radio program “Voices for the Unborn.”

ing number of hospital-based FertilityCare programs throughout the country and asked the audience to pray that one will be established in Philadelphia. The FertilityCare practitioners announced with joy that another Creighton Medical Consultant will soon be practicing in Delaware County and that a new training program for FertilityCare practitioners and medical consultants will begin at Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, as early as the spring of 2008.

To hear the “Pope Paul VI Institute Minute with Dr. Thomas Hilgers,” visit [www.kvss.com](http://www.kvss.com).

To obtain your free copy of Women Healed in Philadelphia, contact Barbara Rose at (215) 884-2922.



*“In destroying the power of giving life, through contraception, a husband or wife is doing something to self. This turns the attention to self and so it destroys the gift of love in him or her. In loving, the husband and wife must turn the attention to each other as happens in natural family planning.”*

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta to the National Prayer Breakfast, Washington, DC, February 3, 1994

## NFP Witness Couples Speakers Center Update

By Michael Castagno

We need volunteers! The more participating couples we have, the better we’ll be able to meet the expected demand. Working together in great numbers, we can ensure that the message and blessings of NFP are heard loudly, confidently, and—most importantly—accurately.

All that is required is a willingness to speak passionately to engaged couples about NFP. Training will be provided. The time commitment is flexible; you are free to choose how often you want to speak and where you want to speak.

If you are interested in attending a training session, please contact Michael Castagno at (215) 884-8555, ext. 10.

Joseph F. Hare, CPA



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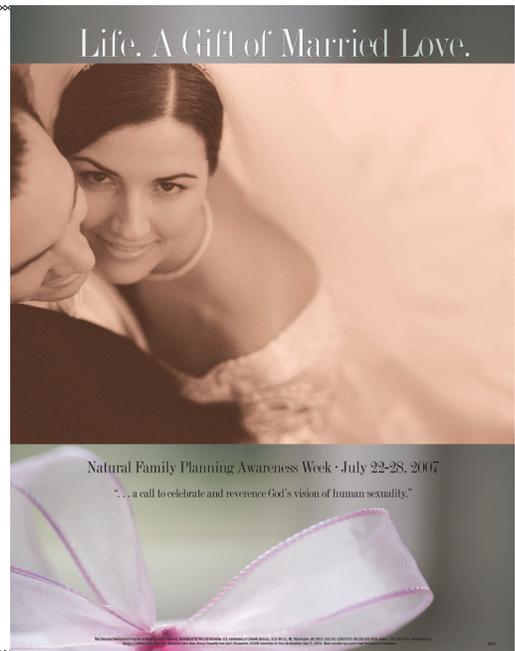
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## Mark Your Calendars

### National NFP Awareness Week is July 22-28, 2007

This week highlights the anniversary of the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (July 25) and marks the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne (July 26). Help spread the good news about NFP by placing an announcement in your parish bulletin, distributing NFP brochures, and talking to your pastor about preaching on the topic and using a special “NFP edition” of the prayers of the faithful (available at the website listed below). The poster to the right can be ordered by calling (866) 582-0943 or e-mailing [customerservice@ifcweb.com](mailto:customerservice@ifcweb.com). Additional promotional ideas are available at:

[www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/nfpweek/index.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/nfpweek/index.shtml)



## The “Net”works

### *NFP Classes and Introductory Sessions*

#### NORRISTOWN, PA

MAY 4

The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the Sympto-Thermal method of Natural Family Planning at Mercy Suburban Hospital, 2702 De Kalb Street. For more information or registration, please call (215) 587-5639.

#### CHALFONT, PA

MAY 11 • JUNE 22

Free introductory sessions of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be held at 800 Manor Drive. Contact: Liz Parrish, RN, CFCP, at (215) 249-9829.

#### ORELAND, PA

MAY 16 • JUNE 6 • JULY 11 • AUGUST 8

Free introductory sessions of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be held at 88 Pennsylvania Avenue. Contact: Barbara Rose, RN, FCP, at (215) 884-2922.

#### WYNNEWOOD, PA

MAY 23

Free introductory session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be held at the parish center of Presentation BVM Church, 240 Haverford Road. Contact: Marcia Niznan, FCPI, at (610) 789-4547.

#### WEST CHESTER, PA

MAY 24 • JUNE 20

Free introductory sessions of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be held at 606 East Marshals Street. Contact: Helen LaFrance, PA, FCP, at (610) 436-8323.

#### NEW JERSEY

NFP instruction is available through the Camden Diocese. Each course is taught in a series of four classes spaced about one month apart. Pre-registration is required. For more information, please e-mail [nfpoffice@camdendiocese.org](mailto:nfpoffice@camdendiocese.org) or call (856) 583-6120.

#### HAMMONTON • MAY 3

7:00 p.m. at St. Anthony of Padua Church

#### VOORHEES • SEPTEMBER 27

7:00 p.m. at the Barry Brown Health Education Center

*Additional listings  
are regularly updated at  
[www.pnfpn.org](http://www.pnfpn.org)*

# The Wichita Experiment

## Diocese Increases NFP Awareness Through Marketing Campaign

By George Finnin

At the Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network conference this spring, Judith Leonard described an NFP promotional effort executed by the Wichita, Kansas, diocesan NFP office in the fall of 2003. The Family of the Americas provided a grant to support this initiative, and the goal was to develop increased awareness of NFP in their area and increased attendance at NFP classes.

Wichita was chosen by the Family of the Americas because its demographics are representative of the rest of our country. The area included an urban and suburban population. The targeted group was females 18 to 45 years old. Prior to the campaign, a marketing company interviewed 307 women. Based on this survey, the NFP office decided that radio ads, print ads in the diocesan newspaper, and billboards (shown here) were the best way to reach the target market.

Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted, who served as bishop of the Diocese of Wichita from 2001 to 2003, encouraged diocesan priests to include an insert about NFP in their parish bulletins. People were also encouraged to write letters to the editors of secular newspapers. As a result of this promotional effort, two local television news stations devoted spots to the campaign, which ran from September to December 2003.

The diocesan office relied on help from local people associated with national teaching organizations such as Billings Ovulation Method, Family of the Americas, FertilityCare Services (Creighton), and the Couple to Couple League. When phone calls were received, a script was available:

Callers asking about NFP were given the following description: 'Natural Family Planning is a method for achieving or avoiding pregnancy that is based on the observation of certain naturally-occurring signs in the woman which indicate the fertile and infertile phases of her menstrual cycle. The Ovulation Method is based on a woman's awareness of the importance of

a cervical secretion which appears regularly during her reproductive years and is a natural sign of fertility.'

—From *The Linacre Quarterly*,  
February 2005, "Lessons Learned  
from Advertising Natural Family  
Planning"

The *Linacre* article presented a list of statistics that the diocese compiled from the responses to the effort. The diocese received hundreds more calls about NFP than they had in the past. Some physicians called and offered their help. They also found that different population groups had different responses when they called in. The Hispanic population callers consisted mostly of females. Follow-up attendance at their group training sessions was good. On the other hand, "casual" inquir-



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ers were grouped as those who listened to a modern rock station. Most of this group tended not to follow through with taking classes.

The NFP office met its goals during its campaign, which raised awareness of NFP and increased attendance at training classes.

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### For additional information, contact:

Ms. Judith Leonard  
Office of Natural Family Planning  
Catholic Diocese of Wichita  
1515 South Clifton, Suite 400  
Wichita, KS 67218

E-mail: [msjudy@nfpwichita.org](mailto:msjudy@nfpwichita.org)  
Visit: [www.nfpwichita.org](http://www.nfpwichita.org)

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## Become a Member of the PNFPN

In the past, the PNFPN existed solely through the generosity of a few people and never asked its members to pay dues. While we continue to believe that news and information regarding NFP in the Philadelphia region should remain free, our promotional efforts are severely limited without a source of income. Thus, we are asking our members to consider a yearly donation to assist our efforts in spreading the good news of NFP. We request \$15 for an individual membership, \$25 for a couple, and \$10 for a student. Free copies of *Life Cycles* will still be distributed to everyone on the mailing list, but those who donate will be eligible to vote for the executive board members each year. To make a much-appreciated contribution, please clip out this form and send it with a check payable to PNFPN, P.O. Box 220, Jenkintown, PA 19046.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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Can we list your name and phone number in our directory of PNFPN members?    Yes    No

ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Do you have any news?

*Life Cycles* is *your* newsletter. Please remember to contact the editor or staff whenever you have information that would be valuable to PNFPN members. Please share with us your NFP training sessions, fertility appreciation programs, and outreach activities. We also love to hear about God's little blessings, so please send us announcements of births or adoptions. For more information on how to submit news and information, call Barbara Rose at (215) 884-2922 or e-mail: [savro@verizon.net](mailto:savro@verizon.net).

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