

NFP: Ready Now

In Support of:

Covenant of Love

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Diocese of Phoenix
2009**

“One can foresee that this teaching will perhaps not be easily received by all: too numerous are the voices-amplified by today’s communications media-which disagree with the voice of the Church. To tell the truth, it does not surprise the Church that she becomes, like her divine Founder a “sign of contradiction” yet because of this she does not cease to proclaim with humble firmness the entire moral law, both the natural law and the law of the Gospel.

Our words would not be an adequate expression of the mind and of the solicitude of the Church, Mother and Teacher of all peoples, if, after having recalled men to the observance and respect of the divine law regarding matrimony, we did not encourage them in the way of proper birth regulation, even amid the difficult conditions that beset families and peoples today.

Humanae Vitae 18-19
Pope Paul VI, 1968

Office of Natural Family Planning:

This Office exists to assist the Bishop of Phoenix in promoting and providing instruction in the natural methods of birth regulation. In particular this office:

- Provides affordable, accessible Natural Family Planning services: NFP-related marriage preparation, client instruction and instructor training.
- Cooperates with and supports all certified methods of NFP in both English and Spanish.
- Provides the general public and the medical community with current information on Natural Family Planning and related issues.
- Provides leadership in support of the values of family life, with special emphasis on moral married sexuality, responsible parenthood and the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.
- Coordinates diocesan efforts in these areas with parish representatives.
- Acts as the Bishop of Phoenix's liaison to the community in the areas of Natural Family Planning and the related issues of moral married sexuality, responsible parenthood and lifelong chastity, including being available to the media and coordinating efforts with other organizations directly related to these areas.

The goal and focus of this office is to be prepared and ready to deliver NFP services related to Covenant of Love Marriage Preparation Policy for the Diocese of Phoenix, to be promulgated July 26, 2009 and implemented Jan 1, 2010. We hope to accomplish this goal by a multi-layered approach, utilizing the following new and existing programs to achieve this goal.

- Survey a sampling of parishes for marital NFP/Contraceptive usage data.
- NFP Couple Parish Representatives: Recruitment, Training, and On-Going Formation (English and Spanish)-new in 2008
- NFP Instructors: Recruitment, Training, and On-going Formation (English and Spanish)
- Diocesan NFP Introduction Classes-Enhancement needed
- NFP Class Series-add on-line client instruction "taught" by Diocese of Phoenix instructors
- NFP Advertising and Promotion
- NFP user support-providing refreshers, menopause and breastfeeding NFP workshops for entire reproductive lifetime of clients.

1. Survey a sampling of parishes for marital NFP/Contraceptive usage data.

It is suggested that a simple statistical survey be conducted in 2009 in representative parishes to collect baseline data for periodic assessment of marriage prep/NFP programs in the Diocese of Phoenix. This would need to be done *under the direction of Bishop Olmsted and with the cooperation of a number of pastors*. It could be done with a small, postcard sized questionnaire given in the pews to the faithful at the end of Masses.

2. **NFP Couple Parish Representative Program**

Thirteen English speaking couples/Six Spanish speaking couples trained in 2008. This new program is a direct response to Bishop Olmsted's 5-point plan given to the board of the PNFPC upon arriving in Phoenix. It has met with success in many parishes, successfully promoting NFP among the faithful. Trained Parish Reps have spoken to many thousands after Masses, hosted tables at ministry and respect life fairs, baptism and RCIA classes.

We will offer 4 trainings a year with the goal of NFP parish rep couples in each parish in 5 years.

3. **NFP Instructors: Recruitment, Training, and On-Going Formation**

Recruitment: We are seeing an increased number of teachers being trained, partially in response to an on-line component in the Sympto-Thermal method, and partially in response to the use this year of bulletin ads (Nine new teachers in 2008). We are committed to increasing our advertisements, and *ask Bishop Olmsted to consider drafting a letter* for use in bulletin ads to recruit NFP instructors and parish reps.

We are also open to exploring the hiring of part-time NFP instructors to be able to train all the engaged couples of the Diocese. In a cost analysis, this option would only cost a small percentage more than the stipends already provided to the instructors. The benefits in increased numbers of couples taught and continuity in reporting data would be substantial.

Training: We have begun the training of 2 additional S-T trainers for the Diocese of Phoenix - Cindy Leonard and Erin Campbell, who are being trained by Peggy Frei. With the 2 Family of Americas trainers: Josefina Camou and Armida Escarcega, this omits travel expenses for trainers of instructors and gives coverage for both ovulation method in English and Spanish and for the symptom-thermal method. By helping with the continued translation of the Northwest Family Services (NWFS) client manual, it is hoped that we will be able to train more Spanish speaking S-T teachers as well.

Formation:

We have instituted formation for our instructors so that we gather to not only show our appreciation for them at social events, but also to give them in-service opportunities; helping sharpen their teaching skills and to further their catechesis.

4. Diocesan NFP Introduction Classes

In 2004 the PNFPC began using PowerPoint presentations which replaced the old slides. It is now time to further enhance this presentation. Technological advances make it more practical and less expensive to make the changes necessary to keep the introduction lively and interesting for a technologically savvy generation. We have formed a committee, begun the editing process, applied for a CCF grant and are hoping to have a better product to use in the God's Plan classes starting in mid-2009. We would like to add video clips of couples sharing about their use of NFP. We would also like to add a *video of Bishop Olmsted* welcoming couples to the introduction.

In order to serve not only the engaged we are planning to make a shorter companion introduction presentation that can be used by parish reps to promote NFP in parishes in a more informal manner. With a shorter presentation, no registration, nor attendance taken, no fee charged and no certificate given, we hope that more will come to hear the good news in such a non-threatening way.

Last year we provided 55 Introduction classes in English to 927 couples in English and 28 Introductions in Spanish to 457 couples. We will offer 61 English Introductions and 33 Spanish Introductions in 2008. These classes can be added to the God's Plan weekend when they begin.

5. NFP Class Series**Traditional Classroom Series:**

Last year we provided 36 Class Series in English to 201 couples and 21 Class Series in Spanish to 146 couples. Many of the classes were not full, though as the year progressed and there were more parishes that began mandating the full series, we noticed an increase in our class sizes. We will offer 43 English Series and 33 Spanish Series in 2008 and hope that they will each have 6-8 couples per class. This effectively doubles the numbers we can teach in 2009 and we hope that more parishes will begin mandating the full series this year. Perhaps with permission from Bishop Olmsted a number of parishes will do so.

On-line Client Instruction:

In the past we have been able to refer clients to on-line instruction when they have not been able to go to a scheduled class. We are now negotiating with Northwest Family Services to be able to provide on-line client instruction for English S-T classes with our own Diocesan instructors.

Start up costs for this Moodle® application are estimated to be \$2000 with a small per client cost which can be passed on to couples. Costs would be balanced by

larger numbers of clients being “taught” per instructor, so many more clients could be taught for less teaching stipend/part-time salary. In Portland, a teacher oversees approximately 150 clients from her home computer, with 40-50 new clients per month. This takes 10 hours per week. At \$15 per hour or \$600 per month, this cost would be comparable to stipends for 4 full class series (\$600), yielding an average of 28 paying clients taught. NWFS believes many hundreds of couples would prefer an on-line option.

6. NFP Promotion

It is hoped that increased promotion of NFP throughout the Diocese will give name familiarity prior to the engaged couples seeking classes to fulfill a marriage requirement. In 2008 we have been more active in seeking out ways to promote our mission and this will continue in 2009.

- a. Parish Reps speaking engagements (Mass, RCIA classes, tables after Mass, Respect Life Sunday and Ministry Fair events)
- b. Conferences
 - i. Spanish - April 2008, 180 attendees
 - ii. English - November 2008 (Restless Hearts) - 235 attendees
- c. Website - (www.phxnfp.org) received matching grant from St. Luke’s Initiative of \$4000, developed and launched in August, is a registration tool to increase office efficiency, has capacity for articles, e-newsletter, and event advertisement. Google Analytics show 833 visits in September with 233 on-line transactions.
- d. Newsletter mailed in Spring 2008 to 800 clients and friends of NFP.
- e. Postcard sent in October 2008 announcing the new Office of NFP, the new website, and Restless Hearts to 1000.
- f. Catholic Sun ads run 1 X month, alternating between Spanish and English.
- g. Catholic Sun: 5 NFP articles in 2008(includes Bishop’s column of July)
- h. Schedules in Spanish and English sent in October’07 and ‘08 for following year to all parishes.
- i. NFP tables: Rosary Sundays 2007, 2008; at Life Rally ’07 and ‘08, ASU Newman Center 2007, 2008 Catholic Men’s Conference, Catholic Physicians Guild White Mass Banquet 2008.
- j. Schedules and brochures provided to pregnancy help centers.
- k. Articles and NFP information at all Catholic hospitals to be given in New Mother Packets per conversations with Sr. Margaret McBride and Martin Breedan.
- l. New Pastor/ Seminarians informational luncheon: slide presentation and packet of information, summer 2008.

7. NFP user support

It is our belief that our mission is best served by offering continuous support for NFP users. We have increased the offerings of NFP refreshers and workshops for NFP use in the special circumstances of pre-menopause and breastfeeding.

Conclusion

We have been extremely blessed in the Diocese of Phoenix by the number of holy men and women who have been pioneers in the mission of spreading the truth offered by Natural Family Planning use since 1974. Many workers have spaded deeply, carefully planted seeds and provided the nutrients to see this day of harvest come. As some, such as Fr. Marc Calegari, S.J. and Dr. Raymond Jennett look down at the harvest joyfully from heaven there are many others who have worked to see this day and the fruition of their early work in this ministry as we prepare for readiness to support the Covenant of Love policy on January 1, 2010. With the help of God's grace we will have the laborers to send out for His harvest. We feel we are ready to meet this challenge and will work with our eyes fixed on that goal.

“The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for His harvest.”

Matthew 9:37-38