



Supporting a pastoral commitment to a culture of life in the Archdiocese of Omaha

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Marriage, The Family, and Human Sexuality—A Seminary Program about FertilityCare™ (PART II)

The Reverend Edward Richard, MS, ThM, JD

Excerpted from a MS PowerPoint presentation given at the AAFCP 27th Annual Meeting, "Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Humanae Vitae & 30 Years of Education Support from Creighton University School of Medicine"—June 11-14, 2008—Augustinian Conference Center, Rome, Italy (Visit www.popepaulvi.com/connect.htm for both installments). Presentation given by K. Diane Daly, RN, CFCE (Part I) and Father Edward Richard, MS, ThM, JD (Part II)

Curriculum revision in seminaries is responsive to developments in the field of priestly formation and changing needs of the Church and the priesthood.

Clearly, one of the more important developments in our time has been the body of teaching known as the Theology of the Body, as taught by our great and beloved Holy Father, the late Pope John Paul II. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Kenrick started to integrate this material into its curriculum. The Theology of the Body became an important part of several disciplines within the curriculum. It became an important element in the teaching of sacramental theology for both Holy Matrimony and for Holy Orders. Elements of the Theology of the Body are incorporated into components of our human formation in the course we teach on priestly identity, celibacy and ethics. And, of course, the Theology of the Body is central to a contemporary means of explaining the Church's moral doctrine on marriage, family and sexuality.

For ten years now, the moral theology course on marriage, the family and human sexuality at Kenrick has taken advantage of the insights from the John Paul II's Theology of the Body in order to help the men preparing for the priesthood to be better servants of the truth about the human person. This renewal of focus coincided with... the seminary's collaboration with the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction in Omaha, Nebraska.

The Pope Paul VI Institute's program, now known as the "Love and Life Unlimited" Conference, introduces priests and lay leaders into the comprehensive fertility care system, ...[called] the **CREIGHTON MODEL FertilityCare™ System** (CrMS). [The] program... covers anthropology, theology, doctrine and the basic scientific principles of the Creighton Model.

[I collaborated] with Dr. Thomas Hilgers and Diane Daly to develop the seminary course now known as *Marriage, Family and Sexuality* after the fashion of the Institute's program. ...[T]he seminary accepted the course into its curriculum—a course that focused not only on theology and doctrine, but upon the theological and doctrinal truths as they are applied in the day-to-day living out of the marital covenant and the spousal meaning of the body, even for the celibate. This includes, therefore, a clear presentation of the basic principles of biology and physiology underlying the Creighton Model and NaProTechnology. In its applied aspects the course also covers some of the practical dimensions of teaching and living in accordance with the Church's teaching by applying the Creighton Model.

The course seeks to harmonize theology and practice in such a way that doctrine is understood within the framework of the human person's vocation—that is, to prepare the men to assist the individual, the couple and the family to present themselves, by their way of living, as icons of the reality of the spousal meaning of the body. ...

One of the observations underlying our approach is that the rejection of the truth about sexuality is not only a denial of moral teaching and doctrine as it concerns human behavior, but a rejection of the truth about the human person who is the subject of action that has a moral quality based in reason. What is meant here is that, in the contemporary milieu, the human person is seen often as having little or no freedom, or as having the absolute freedom to create moral truth. Along with this comes a ...more fundamental error, the rejection of the idea that the body and procreation are good. Seminary formation must confront these ideas in a way that demonstrates effectively that the human body is unique because of the personal dignity of the human being and that human procreation is a fundamental good to be pursued within marriage. Also, it is necessary to effectively teach that the proper understanding of freedom suffers from a false view of human nature. The doctrinal and theological teachings present some, but not all, important aspects of the truth about marriage and sexuality. Seminarians come to us with minds and hearts open to receive the truths as taught by the Church in this moral area. However, even with personal acceptance of the truth of these matters, difficulties remain. We are living in a social context in which the traditional wisdom of the family having been lost in many demographical sectors and in which there is very little collective wisdom and experience available that supports the truth about the family and sexuality.

A lack of awareness can exist on the part of some who enter seminaries that it is possible to live the Church's teaching with fidelity for all except the most advanced and dedicated believers. It is possible to

think that these truths are for a select group of persons who have passed a certain spiritual threshold. These seminarians believe the truth taught by the Church, but they are unable to integrate the intellectual reality with the pastoral challenge that comes from an inability to explain the truth well with confidence that it can be lived by everyone. To those who have not had the experience of family life lived in the truth, it can be difficult to imagine that lives lived according to this teaching can wrangle successfully with the exigencies brought on by contemporary circumstances. What many in the Church and in our seminaries fail to realize are the tremendous benefits of the CrMS that by natural right belong to all people. Fertility care is not simply the Church's or Creighton Model's answer to the issue of contraception. This is about a happy, holy, healthy embrace of God's gift of all that we are as human persons in Creation.

The benefits of following the traditional view of family life and sexuality might be seen as an ideal but not considered necessary or realistic to the point of requiring the future priest to take action that contradicts accepted contraceptive practices. But, Christ himself established the Church. And, the Church gave us the Bible as the inspired Word of God and continues to guide us to eternal life through authentic teaching. And, that teaching is clear and definitive: direct obstruction of the procreative dimension of the marital act is gravely sinful. ... Thus, the consequences for the training of the Church's ministers are clear. We must conclude that the Church's teachings on family life and sexuality are an attainable reality—and we know this is so because of **CREIGHTON MODEL FertilityCare™ System** and **NaProTECHNOLOGY**— and that means the future priest needs to take action. The seminary education program Marriage, Family, and Sexuality is so important because it addresses this.

We are faced with a critical situation that begins with the fact that, within the scope of 30-40 years from the time the 1931 decision of the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church that made it the first Christian body to accept any method of controlling births other than abstinence, contraceptive practices became ubiquitous and almost universally accepted by Christians. While the unbreakable unity of the procreative and unitive aspect of the marriage act is a matter of faith for the Catholic, the attitudes of Catholics about birth control are on par with the rest of Christians. Very few of us, relatively speaking, think of contraception as sinful. Fewer still are willing to admit its devastating effects upon families and individuals. And even fewer know what really should be done about this problem. [With] scares about overpopulation and promises of freedom and health benefits, we went from a thorough rejection of the idea of contraception to the unquestioned embrace of it.

The Truth about the Human Person Understood

...Either the entire world and the Church have been wrong constantly about this for millennia and the apparently devastating effects of contraception are good, or seminaries are going to have to get serious about developing an approach that effectively combats the manifestation of these erroneous ideas. The contraceptive mentality is harmful and erroneous; it is, alas, persistent. Spurring our efforts on is the Church's constant and firm faith that marriage and procreation have a Divine pattern. We believe in an exalted view of the dignity of the human person. Humans are not simply evolutionary discharge. The unity of the couple reflects the unity of the Godhead. The truth about the human body is found in the criteria flowing out of creation of the human person in the image of God.

...It is necessary to explain a key point of the Theology of the Body, here, in order to appreciate the methodology of the course. The uniqueness of the human body and the originality of the experience of human persons in and through their bodies verify the Church's doctrine and confirm the experience of the natural law. There is a dynamic pedagogy that takes place in the creation stories about the coming to be of man and woman. Though he is part of the created, natural world, the first man discovers he is also set apart in some way; he is unique among all the animals and he is alone. This discovery is made by virtue of his body. He is different and this difference is recognized in and through his body.

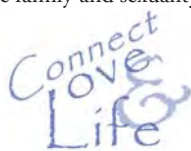


K. Diane Daly, RN, CFCE—Part I

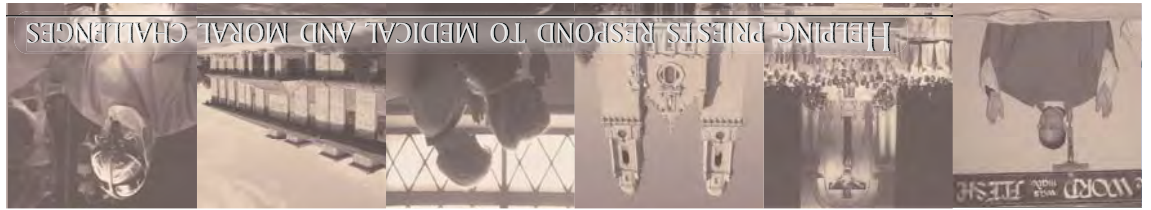
Co-developer of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System. Director of Office of Natural Family Planning and co-director of St. John's Mercy Department of FertilityCare™ Services, St. Louis, Missouri, USA. Certified FertilityCare™ Educator.

The Reverend Edward Richard, JD, MS—Part II

Dean of Students, Kenrick Seminary. Developer of one-semester course for seminarians in Creighton Model, NaProTechnology, and Theology of the Body. Member of board of directors of FertilityCare™ Centers of America.



Pope Paul VI Institute
For the Study of Human Reproduction



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In this issue: "Marriage, The Family, and Human Sexuality"—

A Seminary Program about FertilityCare™ by K. Diane Daly and The Rev. Edward Richard

The Home of FertilityCare™ and NaProTECHNOLOGY™

Building a Culture of Life in Women's Health Care

Lord, let my faith be joyful
and let it penetrate my thought,
my way of judging Divine and human things.
Lord, let my faith be joyful
and give peace and gladness to my spirit
and dispose it for prayer with God
and conversation with men,
so that the inner bliss of its fortunate possession
may shine forth in sacred and secular conversation.
Lord, let my faith be humble
and not presume to be based on the experience
of my thought and of my feelings;
but, let it surrender to the testimony of the Holy Spirit
and not have any better guarantee than in
docility to Tradition and to the
authority of the magisterium of the Holy Church.

— Pope Paul VI

Direct all other questions to:
Sue Hilgers: (402) 390-6600 ext. 149 or suehilg@aol.com.

• **Rev. Edward Richard** M.S., D. TH. M., J.D.
For ethics and questions
(314) 792-6107 or richard@kentrick.edu

Chapel of the Holy Family
Open business days, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
8:30 a.m. Mondays and 1st/3rd Fridays
8:45 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Tuesdays

More resources can be found on our web sites:
www.popepaulvi.com
www.creightonmodel.com
www.naprotechnology.com

Access this newsletter online at
www.popepaulvi.com/connect.htm

- **FertilityCare™ Center of Omaha**
To learn the Creighton Model FertilityCare System
(402) 392-0842 or fcco@popepaulvi.com
Co-directors: Jeanice Winduska, Sue Elser
- **National Center for Women's Health**
For clinic questions:
(402) 390-6600
Linda Cady (Dr. Hilgers' head nurse)
- **Creighton Model FertilityCare**
Allied Health Education Program
For FertilityCare provider education.
(402) 390-9168 or education@popepaulvi.com
Alice Sales
- **Center for NaProEthics**
For ethics questions and consults.
(402) 390-0812 or ethics@popepaulvi.com
Sr. Renee Mirkes, OSF, PhD

The creation of the second human person, which gives rise to the distinction of the genders, verifies that the human being is different. Through the communion of the two, there is an awareness that arises that is even more profound than the first experience of being different. This positive development is the discovery of personhood and communion. The two are not merely different from the other animals; their corporeal nature embodies a person who is capable of communion with other persons. One does not simply come to know personhood; one becomes part of the mystery of the other person and thus discovers, in turn, what it means to be a person. The anthropological conclusion is this: the identity of the person is discovered in self-gift, in being for others.

In retrospect it is possible to see that the course we are presenting pursues a similar goal for the discovery and understanding of personhood, and this is true for the celibate as well as for the one whose vocation is marriage. Even though all of the aspects of the course are not strictly speaking, theological, the course consistently manifests across disciplines the authentic theology of the body. The effect is multiplied. The truth about the body helps to illuminate the meaning of the human body in the natural law and theology. The pedagogy of the course thus succeeds, by a very genuine collaboration with the creative work of the Holy Spirit, in unlocking the understanding and renewing the mind. In this way, the course provides an experience of discovery that mirrors the discovery of

personhood that is at the root of every human experience. It begins, therefore, to rewrite the cultural conditioning that is not of the Father, but of the world, the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This seems to be a recapitulation of the primordial experience of discovery of personhood. The course is remedial and healing. It addresses the broad range of human experience so that just as the Theology of the Body begins to revolutionize the method of presenting authentic teaching, the other disciplines also are in some way made more fully human, corrected, if you will, for the mind and heart of the seminarian. ...

The sacred order established in marriage and conjugal love is inseparable from the intelligent order established in creation which men and women are capable of intelligently pursuing through their free choices. Preservation of the unity of human experience as bodily and spiritual, as both material and intentional, is the only way to pursue happiness which must of necessity correspond to human nature.

Across the broad range of human experience, and in various aspects relating to the common good, the student in this course is given the opportunity to witness authentic freedom exercised, as the rule, in the support of moral truth. Theology, science, medicine, professional fertility care services, professional counseling, and the experience of couples all point to the proper use of freedom and its end which leads to human happiness. ☺