

CCL VOLUNTEERS HONORED WITH SPECIAL AWARDS

By Joy Wambeke

Have you ever had a heart to heart talk with someone about natural family planning? Have you wondered if your words had an impact? Have you ever wondered what more you could do for NFP and the Couple to Couple League? Here are the stories of some of our volunteers who recently were honored at the CCL Convention. These are people who sow seeds, and sometimes even get to see them grow.



▲ MARY AND HOWARD MEAD

How do Mary and Howard Mead, recipients of the St. Paul Evangelization Award, busy themselves? For starters, they assist with the NFP classes in their Diocese of Madison, Wisconsin, by setting up the room, assisting with the techni-

cal work, coordinating child care and doing just about everything they can so that the teaching couple can concentrate on teaching and not have to worry about all the little things. Then they organize their diocesan NFP Enrichment Day, and they promote NFP by sending out postcards to individuals and bulletins to every parish. Let's not forget the articles they write and the newspaper ads they place, not to mention the books they provide for retreats. They also make sure that they are listed in the United Way directory for referrals. And, they've been on the Diocesan NFP Committee for the last five years. Busy, indeed.

But it wasn't always so. When the Meads began their marriage, they said they used contraception. It wasn't until 1988 that they felt the conviction to try NFP and attended their first CCL class.

Howard wasn't a believer at first. A biology teacher, he was ready to poke holes in whatever he could find in the method. But after he looked at the science behind it, he was hooked.

Mary discovered just how hurtful the sin of contraception was in their lives and found that natural family planning really spoke to the human person. She found that it helped the relationship between a husband and a wife to flourish.

As the Meads were driving in their car one day, it

struck Mary: “Those old men in the Vatican, they’re really on to something.”

Ever since, in an effort to help other couples find the joy that they’ve found, Howard and Mary have dedicated so much of their already busy lives to promoting NFP.

“It’s most rewarding when we see a couple beginning classes with the intention of avoiding pregnancy,” Mary explained when asked what keeps them going. “But then years later, we see them again, and they’ll have a new little one.”



▲ DAVID AND ANNA NILES

David and Anna Niles of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma were once that couple who came to NFP classes looking to avoid any further pregnancies. Forty years old and with three children carefully spaced with contraception, David and Anna didn’t think they would want any more children.

“I just thought that at forty, I was done with that stage in my life,” David said.

He was considering a vasectomy when they heard Fr. Daniel McCaffrey of Natural Family Planning Outreach give a mission at their parish. After hearing what he had to say, they both felt deeply convicted that NFP would be the way to go.

They began practicing NFP and immediately saw the fruits.

“We were able to love each of our children more fully,” explained Anna. “Of course, we loved our children before, but we thought we had control and we had them when we wanted them. When we used NFP we saw them more as gifts from God. It was a mindset that contraception didn’t allow us to have.”

A few years later, their fourth daughter, Rebecca, was born. David attributes her completely to NFP. “When we were contracepting, my heart was so hardened to having more children that if God was telling me to have more, I wouldn’t have heard it.”

Soon after the Niles’ finished their initial NFP classes,

they became certified instructors excited to help other couples find the joy that they found in NFP. They’ve even had one couple bring the message to Japan.

“One of our couples was a military couple,” said Anna, “and one day the wife called me from Japan wondering how she can promote NFP in their new home. I told her CCL does that! And we got her connected.”

Anna also uses her expertise as a nurse to promote NFP in a very unique and terribly needed way. Like a drug representative visiting doctors to sell their pharmaceutical products, Anna visits with doctors throughout her area to explain to them what NFP is and give them materials on it. Most of the doctors she meets have never even heard of NFP, or if they have, they don’t know a lot about it, she said.

“We get a few doctors who don’t want to hear about it. But most are very gracious and happy to have the information, and even some are very excited about it,” she said.

The Niles are the recipients of the Konald A. Prem Award for exceptional work for the advancement of marital chastity and NFP.

FR. RICHARD HOGAN

Fr. Richard Hogan, a recipient of the Herbert A. Ratner Award for those who have excelled in teaching and/or promotion of NFP, was simply stunned when he learned that he had been selected for the award. To him, promoting NFP is just part of being a priest because it’s better for people. “As John Paul II said,” Fr. Hogan said, “the Church is an expert in humanity.”

As a seminarian in the first years of Pope John Paul II’s pontificate, Fr. Hogan was convinced of the Church’s teaching on contraception. He was also completely taken with the new Pope’s Wednesday audiences that explained the book of Genesis in a new way: what we now know as the Theology of the Body. And he saw how the practicalities of NFP and the philosophical and theological teachings of the Theology of the Body really fit together and complemented each other.

Since becoming a priest for the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis, Fr. Hogan has written many books, given countless missions through Natural Family Planning Outreach, and talked at numerous seminars at dioceses throughout the country teaching Theology of the Body and NFP to priests. Currently, he is the Editor-in-Chief for the new Couple to Couple League course that teaches the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP through the theological construct of Theology of the Body.

He believes that the use of NFP will grow by leaps and bounds.

“People are becoming more and more disgusted with the alternatives,” he explained. “The younger generation especially is turning away from the Planned Parenthood

program. There just has been too much damage done, and they are turning away from the sexual revolution of the 1960s.”

TONY AND JULIE SKOKNA

Tony and Julie Skokna of Chicago, recipients of the Herbert A. Ratner Award for excelling in the teaching and promotion of NFP, were engaged to be married when they took their first NFP class more than 25 years ago.



Julie was the reluctant party.

“Tony was the oldest of eight,” she explained, “and at the time I was very career bound. I was a little worried that the Skokna fertility would win out.” But, it didn’t take long before she was just as convinced of the beauty of NFP as her husband-to-be.

“I started seeing the real beauty and the spiritual side of the method,” she said. “You don’t know how many kids God wants to send you if you limit that opportunity.”

As soon as they were married they became a teaching couple. Now, they like to call their classes their “dates” because it allows them to get away from it all and do something together that they feel passionate about.

Tony knows that the method will only grow in popularity.

“When we first started teaching in the early 1980s, a lot of people would come to class in desperation because they didn’t want more kids and needed a method to prevent that,” Tony explained. “Now many couples come who want to have a lifelong marriage full of love. They understand the relation to what John Paul II says in the *Theology of the Body*. That is, the beauty of our bodies will give us happy marriages if we understand how they work.”

Julie has the inside scoop of the future growth of NFP because she programs the web site for CCL. She knows that by using search engines on the internet people are finding out about CCL and NFP without ever having even heard about it previously.

“NFP will have exponential growth in the next few years because of the teaching and support that is done online. It duplicates the work of the teachers and promoters,” Julie explained.

ROSANNE AND MIKE SLOAN

Lest anyone think the work of promoters is any less important, just ask Jose and Elvira Guillen, a teaching couple for 25 years. Without Rosanne and Mike Sloan, of Rio Rancho, New Mexico, also recipients of the St. Paul Evangelization



Award for exceptional work in promoting NFP and CCL, the Guillens say they couldn’t do what they do.

Mike and Rosanne are the quiet champions of NFP and CCL. Promoters for 20 years, they take care of the day-to-day tasks associated with coordinating NFP classes such as arranging the rooms and providing child care. They also do the important work of coordinating their Prayer Watch, a team of individuals who take turns praying every day for chastity and for the success of the NFP classes.

Although they don’t teach, give talks, or write books, Mike and Rosanne reach people in their everyday lives by talking about NFP to whoever will listen.

To Rosanne, it’s about saving people. “Scripture says ‘My people die for lack of knowledge.’ So I try to inform them.” And it seems as if God provides more than enough people for Rosanne to inform.

One day, while working as a secretary at a school, a man came into the front office and announced that he had had a vasectomy. Rosanne figured that if he wanted to be so bold as to share personal information with a perfect stranger, she would be bold too. “I said, ‘Well what did you do that for? Have you ever heard of NFP?’”

Rosanne didn’t stop there. “I told my sister about it, and she and her husband started the method. Then my other sister wanted to know too,” Rosanne explained. “It seems like excitement is infectious. I even told my hairdresser about it.”

Although the Sloans don’t always see if their words sink into the hearts of recipients, they hope that for those they don’t follow up with, they are at least planting seeds.

Other award recipients were: David and Cristina Banda of Denver and Isidro and Maria Mejia of Irrigon, Oregon who also received the Konald A. Prem Award; and Jeff and Katy Appelhanses of Colorado Springs who were awarded the Edward A. Keefe Award for recognition of work done in the medical or scientific advancement of NFP. n

Inspiration Information

By Tom Bengtson

Combining motivational presentations with information, the 2006 convention of the Couple to Couple League re-energized about 1,000 people from 243 families who traveled to the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, June 25-29. The 455 adults who attended the three general sessions got an overview of the League's new teaching materials, a crash course in Theology of the Body, cultural commentaries regarding breastfeeding, pornography and the realities of the sexual revolution, a couple of personal witness talks, and a presentation on improving public speaking skills.

CCL executive director Andrew Alderson opened the convention by unveiling some of the work that has been underway for more than a year to update the League's teaching notes and slides. Alderson demonstrated the advantages of DVD technology, which is being used in the development of the new materials. Visuals for the newly-formatted first class will include animation, video streaming and charting examples that should make it easier for teachers to describe the method to new students. Alderson described the new class

format, which will consist of three sessions, followed up with supplemental classes addressing breastfeeding and pre-menopause. Alderson described a new student guide and teaching manual, which also are in development.

Alderson, who fielded questions from attendees about specific proposed changes in the way the method is taught, said the goal is to have new material in the hands of teachers by year-end. Acknowledging the significance of the proposed changes, Alderson said they are designed to more effectively communicate with the changing student couple population. Nearly all of the 69 evaluation forms



completed by people who saw the presentation expressed enthusiasm for the changes underway at CCL and the opportunity to teach with the new materials.

Fr. Richard Hogan, a CCL board member and a nationally-recognized expert in John Paul II's Theology of the Body, immediately followed up Alderson's presentation with a primer in the theological basis for most of the changes in the League's teaching approach. "We are like a reflection in the mirror, a reflection of God," Fr. Hogan said as he described John Paul II's approach to the book of Genesis. The exception, Fr. Hogan said, is "free will, which we need to love. That is why God gave it to us... God wanted a physical manifestation of personhood in the world."

Fr. Hogan described the competing world view that the body is a collection of parts, merely a complicated machine. Fr. Hogan proposed: "Which world would you want — a world where the body and soul are holy or a world where the body is a thing?" The body speaks a language, Fr. Hogan summarized. The wonder and awe communicated through that language leads to gratitude and, Fr. Hogan said, in marriage that gratitude leads to generosity, and that leads to new life.

A challenge to fight porn

Steve Wood, the founder of St. Joseph's Covenant Keepers and a speaker at CCL's 2004 convention, challenged the Couple to Couple League to broaden its mission to help families break free from pornography. He described pornography as a colossal problem, even in otherwise strong Christian homes. Wood referred to a survey Focus on the Family conducted among its supporters: 47 percent of respondents said pornography is a problem in their home. "It is overwhelming," Wood said. He cited a 1996 survey where 53 percent of the men at a Promise

Keepers event admitted to having a pornography problem. He cited another survey which revealed that 54 percent of pastors said they had viewed pornographic images within the last 12 months. He estimated that "tens of millions of Catholic men" are afflicted with the problem.

The Couple to Couple League is in a supreme position to tackle this problem, he said. Birth control divorced love from life, and pornography divorces love from reality. "Pornography opens the door to a divorce from reality, it opens the door to doing anything," he said. "A part of the effort to restore the unity of life and love is helping families break free from pornography."

Wood said that men who recognize an addiction to pornography suffer a deep shame. "Unless this is cleared away, this will destroy everything the Church teaches," Wood said. "Porn is twisting men's minds inside out."

Wood explained that when a man views a pornographic image, "a half-dozen chemicals are released in the brain. It creates a neuro-imprint on the brain." Wood said a drug dealer once told him it was easier for him to give up a drug habit than a pornography habit.

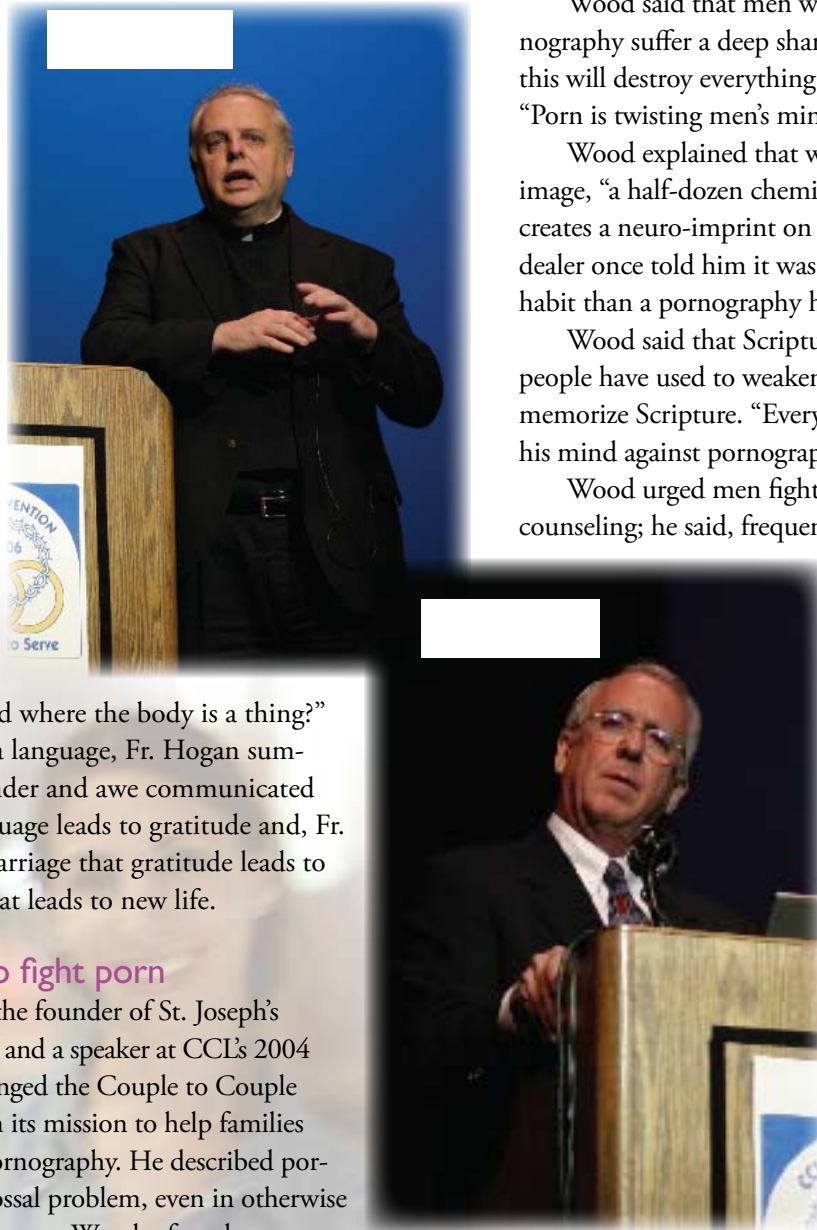
Wood said that Scripture clears the mind; a tactic some people have used to weaken the grip of pornography is to memorize Scripture. "Every man needs Scripture to fortify his mind against pornography," Wood said.

Wood urged men fighting a pornography habit to get counseling; he said, frequently a person might have to travel out of state to find a qualified counselor. He also cited telephone counseling as an option in some cases.

Since so much pornography is displayed over the internet, Wood recommended an "accountability software" called Spector Pro 5.0.

Unfulfilled promises

Dr. Stephen Genuis, a Canadian doctor who has authored three books and numerous articles for medical journals, told the CCL audience that one person can make a big difference if that person has a "vision and a passion." He cited Margaret Sanger, who changed the culture because of her vision and passion for the idea that people should have "unlimited sexual gratification without the burden of children." It will take people with equal or



greater vision and passion to reverse the sexual revolution, which Sanger's work unleashed, Dr. Genuis said.

Several promises accompanied the advent of the birth control pill in the late 1950s, Dr. Genuis said, including a safe, convenient means of preventing conception, freedom from unintended pregnancies, improved marriages and a decline in sexual dysfunction. At the time, the Catholic Church was the most outspoken critic of the pill. Courageous critics argued that the pill would result in men losing respect for women as more men increasingly consider women to be mere instruments of sexual gratification.

Dr. Genuis explained that five decades later the pill, in fact, has produced the exact opposite results from those promised. He said today there are more unintended pregnancies, more sexually transmitted diseases, more divorce, abortion on demand, and more sexual dysfunction than ever. Rather than giving us sexual liberation, the pill has given us sexual anarchy.



Hardwired for gender

Dr. Philip Mango, the president and co-founder of The St. Michael Institute for the Psychological Sciences in New York City, explained some of the implications of the distinct neurological differences between men and women. Masculinity, he said, is under attack in our culture, with men increasingly being encouraged to adopt feminine ways. Testosterone and vasopressin, the two primary male hormones, flood a man's mind, affirming characteristics such as assertiveness, and the desire to be a warrior and a protector, Dr. Mango explained. For men, maturity is a matter of harnessing these hormones.

Dr. Mango noted that Jesus Christ was a fighter, taking on demons and that He was assertive. "Christ was fighting from the moment He hit the tarmac," Dr. Mango said. In the same way that God the Father affirmed Jesus at His

Inspiration & Information continued on page 18



Teaching Couples have a demanding job, communicating effectively to people who have varying degrees of motivation to learn the Sympto-Thermal Method of natural family planning. Rob Laird closed out the CCL convention with 10 tips for presenting effectively before a group. He found a unique way to present his information – in the negative, so that if you follow his advice, your presentation is guaranteed to be a flop. In other words, do the opposite of what he proposes:

Teach for your own sake. Believe that it's all about you; seek your own benefits for teaching.

Take yourself very seriously, perhaps even read your presentation, word for word. Don't ever make a joke or make fun of yourself.

Never prepare and don't believe in your message. Don't bother practicing; the words will just come to you when you are standing in front of the group.

Ignore the clock. Don't pay any attention to the time; people will sit and listen to you as long as you talk. Their time really isn't very valuable.

Wish you were somewhere else. Dream about a vacation on a tropical island. The audience can't read your mind; they won't know that you don't want to be there.

Teach nothing new, use big words and don't define them. Try to get everyone to think that you are really smart, but don't keep up with the latest developments that may be of interest to the people in your class.

Say everything once. Everyone should be listening carefully to every word you say. You will never have to repeat yourself.

Assume the audience cares about you. They wouldn't be there if they weren't specifically interested in you.

Don't have fun. The audience is there to learn. Don't waste time on frivolity, small talk or jokes.

If something isn't working, keep doing it. If something isn't working, it is probably the fault of your audience. Just keep doing it and eventually everything will work out okay. n

Inspiration & Information continued from page 17

baptism, saying “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased,” (Mt. 3:17) fathers should affirm their sons. “Most boys are walking around hungry for their father’s affirmation,” Dr. Mango said. “God gives us affirmation; when we know that the King loves us, that gives us the power to go out and do anything. That is what fathers can give their sons.” Dr. Mango urged fathers to spend time with their children and show physical affection to them.

Dr. Mango said that boys typically have four dreams about who they want to become in life: a loving king or



servant leader; a noble warrior; a lover, that is, someone who presents himself as a gift to his friends and spouse; or a wise counselor. Christ, Dr. Mango noted, was all these things.

Renormalizing breastfeeding

Linda Smith, a popular speaker at the 2004 convention, offered a commentary on the cultural attitude toward breastfeeding during her 2006 general session presentation. “Breastfeeding is normal,” she said. “How did formula get to be normalized?” The world will acknowledge that breastfeeding is better than bottle feeding but she said a healthier



attitude would be to see bottle feeding as worse than breastfeeding. The difference, she said, is a perspective on what the culture considers to be normal.

A “breastfeeding quiz” administered by Smith informed the audience that:

- Artificially-fed babies have a four times greater risk of bacteremia and meningitis than breastfed babies.
- Babies who are not breastfed are at a 25 percent greater risk of contracting diabetes than breastfed children.
- Women older than 40 who were breastfed as children have 25 percent less risk of getting breast cancer; and
- Human milk mitigates deficits in congenital cretinism, improves visual acuity, and improves neuromotor skills in impaired children.

She said the consequences of not breastfeeding are significant and that it is up to people such as the members of the Couple to Couple League to get the message out.

Plus...

The convention featured several other components, including mini-sessions from Marilyn Shannon on nutrition, attorney Shane Goettle speaking on privacy, Ken Henderson on overcoming pornography, Ann Gundlach and Julie Skokna on CCL’s web site, and Dr. Jack Burnham on post-partum mothering.

The convention also featured its first-ever recognition banquet. Numerous couples were honored for decades of service to the Couple to Couple League and others were presented the League’s bi-annual special awards.


At the close of the convention, Alderson announced that the 2008 Couple to Couple League convention will be conducted near Asheville, N.C., at the Lifeway Ridgecrest Conference Center, July 29 to August 2. The Tuesday through Saturday event will be hosted by CCL Central rather than by a local CCL chapter. n

***** Combined Federal Campaign *****

Just a reminder for all League members who are federal employees or military personnel — CCL is again part of the Combined Federal Campaign.

We urge all members who are eligible to take part in this annual giving campaign to designate the Couple to Couple League as the recipient of their donations. Simply select organization #1335 on the appropriate forms.

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Pro-chastity message offers striking, but hopeful, view of teen life

By Margaret Berns



“Called to Serve” was the theme of the Couple to Couple League’s convention, and Mary-Louise Kurey has certainly done that. A former Miss Wisconsin and a top ten finalist in the Miss America pageant, Kurey gave CCLers at the convention a pro-life message filled with insights they could take back home with them and share with young adults.

Kurey has spoken to more than 200,000 teens and young adults on chastity and pro-life issues since her beauty pageant days and currently is the Director of the Respect Life Office for the Archdiocese of Chicago. In Arkansas at the CCL convention, she showed why she is one of the foremost speakers and authors on chastity and pro-life issues in the United States.

Her message is powerful and encouraging: there is a sexual revolution taking place among the nation’s teenagers. Fewer teens are engaging in sexual activity. Among those who have been sexually active, there is a high percent-

age of those who are choosing to “begin again” by choosing abstinence.

“The good news about chastity,” she said, “is that no matter what mistakes they’ve made in the past, their sexuality is still an incredible gift. No matter what you’ve done or what’s been done to you, your body is still a sacred space. You can make a new beginning.”

Kurey said that living out chastity in her own life gave her perseverance and strengthened her relationship with God. The youngest of four children, she had been taught early that every life is precious and has a special mission entrusted by God. “But if a child is lost,” she went on to say, “because he or she doesn’t fulfill their potential, or is aborted, then that light is lost to the world forever.”

Kurey admits that she was not always outspoken about her beliefs. In high school, many of her friends were sexually active, but Kurey did not feel that it was her place to say anything. She was surprised when one of her friends became pregnant, despite having relied on the use of a condom. The reality is, 14 percent to 17 percent of couples who use condoms to avoid pregnancy get pregnant within the first year, she said.

Later, a friend from college was hospitalized because of grief over an abortion. This friend, a bright and highly-motivated premedical student, attempted to take her own life because she kept hearing “her little baby’s voice cry out to her.” Kurey saw then the lies being promoted by the abor-

tion-rights movement. She wondered, could she have said something that would have made a difference?

As a result, Kurey became involved in organizations such as the Best Friends Foundation and Project Rachel. She is committed to her belief that no issue is more important than helping people get a correct understanding of the meaning and beauty of sexuality. “We live in a sex-saturated culture and yet the messages are superficial,” she said. “Chastity—both premarital and marital—reveals that to the world.”

Some of the statistics are depressing. One-third of all teen pregnancies end in abortion, Kurey reported. Three million teens contract a sexually transmitted disease every year and many of the more prevalent viral diseases cannot be prevented even by the use of a condom.

Kurey emphasized that rejection and teasing in high school are extremely difficult to withstand. The pressures to drink, do drugs and become sexually active overwhelm many teens. To counter this, teenagers must develop strong friendships that will enable them to go against the flow.

Even more important than the physical danger of premarital sexual activity is the psychological and emotional damage. Because of bad choices with high-risk behaviors (like sexuality) the kids don’t have the clear vision to see God’s plan for them.

Kurey advises teens to leave behind
Pro-chastity message continued on page 29

NFP is at heart of speaker's conversion to *really* living the faith

By Joy Wambeke



Patti Schneier didn't think she was a candidate for a deep spiritual conversion. Born and raised in a devout Catholic home, Schneier grew up loving Jesus. As an adult she was involved in music ministry, was a cantor for years at her parish, was pro-life, she and her husband were married in the Catholic Church, and were raising their three children in the Catholic faith. Schneier didn't think there was anything more she could do for God and His Church. She thought conversions were for people who were coming to the faith for the first time.

She was wrong.

During the annual Couple to Couple League Convention, to a room filled with attentive ears, Patti Schneier shared her story of a call to a deeper prayer life that led to the examination and confession of her 13-year use of contraception. The unexpected message turned her comfortable life upside down.

God began working on her heart

at a three-night parish mission that was led by the Sisters of the Apostles of the Interior Life. The entire Schneier family — Patti, her husband Larry and their children — cleared their busy schedules to attend each night.

Each night issued a challenge to the church audience. They were challenges to desire holiness as a mother searches for her missing child, and to find it in everyday life through daily meditative prayer. Schneier initially rebuked these challenges, excusing herself by thinking, “The only thing I have time to search for are missing socks.” But Schneier's heart softened, and before the last evening of the mission, she had already set aside a few moments in the morning for prayer, meditating with the daily Scripture readings; she committed herself to continuing her new spiritual routine every morning.

The last night of the mission, the sisters issued their last challenge. They encouraged each attendee to ask themselves: “Do I hate sin?” Schneier took this challenge and the next morning prayed about it. What came to mind was something that frightened her to her very core: for 13 years she and her husband had been using contraception. She had justified using it by claiming that the Church was unrealistic, and that the Church's standard was set too high to be attainable. “But most of all,” she said, “I felt that the Church should just butt out. This is between me and my husband and God. And

there's no way some celibate old guy in Rome is going to tell me what I can and can't do in my marriage.”

But in her heart, she knew that there was something she wasn't getting. So, this time, she issued God a challenge: “If your word is true,” she wrote in her prayer journal, “then show me. Prove it.”

Over the next month, each daily reading seemed to speak directly to Schneier. The Gospel readings coaxed her to drop everything to follow Christ, and to trust Him enough to walk on water. They also challenged her to remember that Christ's law is to be abided, and that those who obey them will be greatest in the kingdom.

“As the days went on,” Schneier explained, “it felt as though God was hitting me over the head, and it was getting harder and harder.”

She remembered a story about some pearls: A little girl bought herself a set of cheap plastic pearls, and she loved them very much. She wore them everyday. Her father, knowing how much she loved them, would ask her every night whether she loved him. If she did, he asked, would she give him the imitation pearls? But she wouldn't. One night, in tears, the little girl finally relinquished her pearls to her father who, smiling, pulled a velvet box out of his pocket and presented her with a string of real pearls. Schneier was coming to know that with contraception she was holding on to imitation pearls, and that God wanted to give her the real

NFP at heart continued on page 29

CCL volunteers reflect on long-term commitment

By Barb Ernster



Jim and Mary Glover of Plymouth, Minn., Tom and Kathy Fister of Georgetown, Ky., and Diane Donahoe of Huntsville, Ark., are honored for 30-plus years of service.

Diane Donahoe made a lifelong commitment to the Lord to promote natural family planning after the tragic death of her fifth child due to an IUD she was using. That was 30 years ago, and she's still fulfilling her commitment.

"The fact that I had that child and didn't carry it to completion is still with me. I could have lost my own life, too," Donahoe said.

Today, the 60-year-old grandmother of 12 from Huntsville, Ark., is a radiology technician at a Catholic clinic. As a CCL promoter, she distributes NFP brochures at hospitals and churches, and announces CCL classes in church bulletins. She also provides NFP information to patients

at the clinic whenever she has the opportunity despite "doctor's orders" not to talk about it.

"NFP is not something you can shove down these doctors' throats when they've been going the way they have for so many years. But you've got to plant seeds, and the doctors have started to accept me and even ask my advice now," she said. "Every chance I get I share my experience with my patients, and I believe the Lord has put me there."

Donahoe and her husband tried many forms of contraception in the first years of their marriage, which she said negatively affected her health and their relationship. Her husband read about CCL and the two of them learned the method; then they decided

to teach others. They used NFP to conceive their sixth child, and today Donahoe's greatest joy is helping other couples who want to get pregnant.

After several years of teaching, Donahoe's husband did not wish to continue so she taught alone for many years before becoming a promoter. In 1999, the couple experienced another loss when they got divorced after 33-1/2 years of marriage. But Donahoe continues to witness on behalf of NFP.

She hopes that doctors and clergy will be more open to it, and feels called to spread the message to Protestants. "You've got to keep telling them and trust in the Lord that He's going to change hearts and minds."

Wanted to share knowledge

Teaching NFP has become a 34-year apostolate for Jim and Mary Glover of Plymouth, Minn., and they'll keep going as long as they're needed.

Early in their marriage, the Glovers learned NFP as a way to space their children because the first two came fast. When it worked so well, they began teaching in 1972 and Jim was also CCL's teacher trainer for four years. They now have six children and six grandchildren, and said it took them many years to see NFP as a gift rather than as a functional vehicle.

"I think you come to understand the religious aspects after you get through the mechanics," Jim said. "Even though I was so reluctant to start teaching it, I realized it's such a shame to have this knowledge and not share it."

Most of the couples they taught in the early years were already married and sought NFP for similar reasons as they did, Mary said. Today they see more engaged couples who are very informed on the Church's teaching and open to NFP, and also infertile couples seeking to conceive.

"I've admired the young people through the years who want to do what the Church teaches and their heart is in it from the beginning," she said. "We're now teaching some of the children of the couples that we taught and they're really receptive. It's a credit to the way the priests are presenting it."

Jim said he would like to retire but whenever they are asked to teach, it's hard to say no. "We have to keep going because you don't know who you're going to touch—the next doctor or the next teaching couple. More dioceses are requiring NFP for marriage prep, so there's a strong need for enthusiastic teaching couples."

Felt called at first class

Tom and Kathy Fister of George

town, Ky., felt called to be a CCL teaching couple the first night they took a class in 1975. Yet, there were times when they almost quit because there were no couples to teach. Then they would get another phone call.

"That would be the shot in the arm," Kathy said. "Even if we were just teaching one couple at a time, it would be the one that truly needed it the most."

Tom added that he and Kathy needed NFP desperately when they were newly married, so they hung in there for the ones that wanted it. They decided to start praying for the couples and for themselves when they got discouraged. One time they were scheduled to teach a class on Friday and no one had signed up by the Sunday before.

"We asked the Lord if You want us to teach, send us five couples," he said. "Ten minutes later we got our first phone call and by Friday we had our fifth phone call. We firmly believe you have to pray for those couples because Satan will do everything to keep them from coming."

Tom said more support from the

clergy would have been helpful. One priest told them he didn't want their bulletin announcement because couples had enough to worry about already. "That hurt," he said. "We've got some young priests right now who are super and support NFP."

Their diocese also has a supportive bishop and a new family life director who led a task force on NFP, in which the Fisters participated. In 2007, a new diocesan policy will take effect requiring NFP classes as part of marriage preparation. Now the Fisters need to pray for more CCL teaching couples.

The Fisters, who are full-time farmers and parents of four children and seven grandchildren, have fond memories of the hundreds of couples they have taught, many of whom were away from the Church and came back. One woman told the Fisters she had an abortion and didn't believe the Church would accept her and her husband.

"We took them out to supper and talked to them and got them back to Church," said Tom. "That was one of the greatest experiences of teaching." n

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