

**Nature, Scripture and the Sexual Revolution:  
Why I Teach Natural Family Planning**

John F. Kippley, January 21, 2016, San Juan Capistrano, CA

My thanks to Martha Sears and the Raise the Bar volunteers for getting all of us together this evening. I greatly appreciate all the prayer and work that has gone into making the events of this weekend come about. My thanks also to each and every one of you who are here tonight.

The title of this talk is “Nature, Scripture and the Sexual Revolution: Why I teach Natural Family Planning.” The theme of my talk is that God provides and we need to listen and act.

Tomorrow, January 22, we sadly commemorate the 43<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Roe v Wade, the U. S. Supreme Court decision that struck down all state and federal laws against abortion. It is important to remember that Roe v Wade was made possible by two previous court decisions that outlawed all laws against contraception. Since there was nothing in the Constitution saying that states could not have such laws, the majority of the justices had to use their imaginations. They came up with what they called a penumbra – a shadow of a shadow. So there’s a definite legal connection between contraception and abortion.

Righteous outrage was immediate and has continued for 43 years. **That’s why busses are rolling tonight toward Washington D. C. and elsewhere in protest.**

We also need to remember that St. John Paul II wrote about the connection between contraception and abortion in his 1995 Gospel of Life:

“Contraception and abortion are often closely connected, as fruits of the same tree...” He also noted that some birth control agents are actually abortifacients.

There is also a connection between Margaret Sanger’s war to remove the anti-contraception laws of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the sexual revolution. Sanger began her campaign in 1914. In the debate that followed, the revisionists were saying

things like this: “We used to think that it was wrong to have sex outside of marriage ***because of the risk of pregnancy***. But now we know how to prevent conception. Just use condoms! So now we think it’s ***okay to have sex outside of marriage***.”

In this whole business of contraception and abortion and natural family planning, we have to talk about the Sexual Revolution. **How did the Sexual Revolution happen?** The United States ***was*** a nation of laws against contraception and abortion. How did our country become **a nation that forces its taxpayers to pay for both contraception and abortion?**

We need to start with contraception. It has a long secular history, but our primary interest is the Biblical condemnation of the **Sin of Onan** in the book of Genesis. In the biblical account, Onan’s brother died before he had any children, so Onan was required by a Near Eastern custom called the Law of the Levirate to impregnate the widow of his brother so that she could carry on the brother’s family name and property. But Onan was a reluctant brother. As the Bible puts it: “But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, so when he went in to his brother’s wife he spilled the semen on the ground, lest he should give offspring to his brother. ***And what he did was displeasing in the sight of the Lord***, and he slew him also” (Gen 38: 9-10). That’s the **death penalty** for contraception.

This scriptural condemnation of contraception was retained in the Reformation. Martin Luther called it a form of sodomy, and John Calvin called it a form of homicide. The American anti-contraception laws of the 1870s were passed by Protestants for a basically Protestant country. How did we go from that to the present?

**The first step was fear.** St. John tells us that “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). The opposite also may be true. Perfect fear casts out love. In **1798, Thomas Malthus**, an Anglican clergyman and economist issued his fear-filled paper predicting that a rising population would surpass the food sources and give us mass starvation. He recommended delayed marriage and then practicing total abstinence after you reached your desired family

size. However, just 25 years later, the **Neo-Malthusians** dropped his morality and began to promote contraceptive behaviors. That's 1823.

The anti-contraception laws of the 1870s represented considerable pushback on this side of the Atlantic.

The **second step** in the Sexual Revolution was the work of Margaret Sanger and her international associates.

**The third step** of the American Sexual Revolution was the **Anglican and Protestant acceptance of marital contraception**. Religion-wise, the **Church of England** had a very important role to play. Its liberal faction began urging it to accept contraception even before Sanger started her movement. In **1908** the bishops of the Church of England **reaffirmed** the Christian tradition against contraception. In **1920**, they **reaffirmed** the traditional teaching once again.

The year **1930** is very important for **three** reasons. First, in **August of 1930**, the Anglican bishops **capitulated** to the birth control lobby. The Church of England thus ***became the first significant ecclesial group in Christian history to accept marital contraception.***

What is also important about the debate in the Church of England is that the **Anglican conservatives** argued that if they accepted contraception for married couples, they would be logically accepting not only contraception for the unmarried but also **sodomy**. How prophetic! Today we have not only the Anglican acceptance of contraception but also their acceptance of sodomy, even among their bishops.

The **second** event of **1930** that is very important for us is about natural family planning. In **February** of that year, a **German medical journal** carried an article by a Japanese doctor that described ovulation and the fertile time. It also advised how couples could calculate the infertile time. This was **the beginning of the calendar rhythm method**. Consider the timing. **Six months before** the Anglican bishops accepted marital contraception, the first form of systematic natural family planning was published. **God provided the basis for calendar rhythm, but the Anglicans didn't listen.**

The **third** very important event of the year 1930 is the Catholic answer to the Anglicans. **Pope Pius XI** responded very strongly to the Anglican acceptance of contraception with his encyclical, ***Casti Connubii***, dated December 31, 1930. The following is a direct quotation. It's a 135 word sentence. I will quote only the last 49 words.

Since, therefore, openly departing from the uninterrupted Christian tradition, some recently have judged it possible solemnly to declare another doctrine regarding this question, the Catholic Church, to whom God has entrusted the defense of the integrity and purity of morals, standing erect in the midst of the moral ruin which surrounds her, in order that she may preserve the chastity of the nuptial union from being defiled by this foul stain, raises her voice in token of her divine ambassadorship and through our mouth proclaims anew: ***any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin*** (para 56).

In the next paragraph the Pope stressed the need for priests to be faithful to this teaching. In paragraph 59 he affirmed the right of couples to practice systematic natural family planning.

Three months later, on **March 21, 1931**, in the United States, a committee of the **Federal Council of Churches**, now called the National Council of Churches, accepted marital contraception. This was **strongly challenged** by a number of Protestant churchmen, but it became the *de facto* Protestant acceptance of unnatural methods of birth control. I think the most interesting reaction is this one from the ***Washington Post*** the very next day:

Carried to its logical conclusion, the committee's report if carried into effect would sound **the death-knell of marriage as a holy institution**, by establishing **degrading practices which would encourage indiscriminate immorality**. The suggestion that the use of legalized contraception would be "careful and restrained" is preposterous.

We need to ask ourselves, “What is **revolutionary** about the Sexual Revolution?” Sexual weakness and sins have been with us since biblical times and before. What is **revolutionary** is the **contradiction in teaching**.

Unbelievers, skeptics, philanderers and others have long rejected biblical teaching about sexual morality. The revolution in sexual morality occurred when those who called themselves Christian said that previously condemned behaviors were now morally permissible.

Let’s move ahead some 30 years. When the **Pill** came on the scene in **1960**, it simply poured **gasoline** on the existing flames of the revolution. Since the Pill worked in a way **completely different** from the barrier methods of contraception, it was hailed as a **scientific** form of birth control. The Pill put birth control all over the newspapers as if it were the new and accepted thing.

Most people had no idea how it worked, but my Jesuit professor of moral theology, Fr. Gerald Kelly, in early 1963 used a small **secular** paperback that made it quite clear that the Pill had **three** mechanisms—**inhibiting ovulation, inhibiting sperm migration, and its abortifacient property of denying implantation to a newly conceived little baby**.

To review, the **first** step in the acceptance of the Sexual Revolution was the Malthusian fear factor. Sanger provided the **second** step. The **third and crucial** step was the Anglican and Protestant acceptance of 1930. That gave a religious cover to lust.

The fourth step in the Sexual Revolution was the *de facto* Catholic acceptance of marital contraception. After the strong teaching in *Casti Connubii*, how did so many Catholics capitulate to the culture?

Great theological harm was done within the Catholic Church by the confusion brought on by the Pill. Some **Catholic writers** wrongly thought that the Pill simply **regulated the time** of ovulation. It did not. Some argued that the Church could change its teaching and still say it was not contradicting its teaching of 1900 years. That is silly. Almost all such authors said that **if the Pope** ruled otherwise, they would accept his teaching. When the time came, they did not.

Pope John XXIII set up a commission to study the matter. Vatican II reserved judgment to the Pope. Pope Paul VI enlarged the commission and waited.

In 1967, the commission presented two sets of recommendations to the Pope. The **majority** recommended that the Church should change its teaching and **accept marital contraception**.

The **minority** of the commission pointed out that the majority position **could not say NO to sodomy**, just as the Anglican conservatives has done in 1930, and **the Pope saw it clearly**.

On **July 25, 1968**, Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae* to **reaffirm** the Tradition of 1900 years, previously affirmed by *Casti Connubii* in 1930. It was not what the revisionists within the Church wanted, and **there was massive dissent**. Today only a small fraction of fertile-age Catholics accept and follow the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*. As a result, **the Church as well as the culture is suffering the harmful effects that Pope Paul VI prophesied in section 17 of that encyclical**.

This is not the place to review *Humanae Vitae*. We have a review at the website of NFP International. When you read the encyclical, be sure to read it to the very end.

So much for some of the bad news about the Sexual Revolution. My theme is that **God provides and we need to listen and act**. So now let's take a look at some of **the good news** that God has provided relevant to **natural family planning**.

**Two good things came out of the dissent**. First, it became clear that *the reasoning* of the principal dissenters **cannot say "no" to any imaginable sexual behavior** between freely consenting adults of legal age.

**The second good thing** to come out of the dissent was the realization by the **American bishops** that they needed to support natural family planning. Thus they promptly instituted the **Human Life Foundation** to promote research and the availability of natural family planning. The Foundation did accomplish the **research part** of that before it ceased operations after 15 years—in 1983.

I want to describe some of the **good news** about natural family planning in the context of *Humanae Vitae*. In Section 26 of that encyclical the Pope wrote: (in Prof. Janet Smith's translation)

"Thus it happens that a new and especially worthy kind of apostolate is added to the already ample vocation of the laity: like will minister to like. That is, spouses fulfill their apostolic mission on behalf of other spouses by becoming guides for them. **Among all the forms of Christian apostolate this apostolate seems most suitable today.**"

I certainly agree. My wife and I head up an organization called Natural Family Planning International, and that's our mandate. We are a **Humanae Vitae apostolate**. I would also like to describe the blessings of natural family planning and the work of this apostolate in the context of a statement made by the **U.S. Bishops' Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices**:

"We urge that premarriage programs require a full course of instruction in natural family planning as a **necessary component** in the couple's effective realization of **what they need and have a right to know** in order to live in accord with the clear teaching of the Church." I didn't make that up. It's from page 47 of a 1988 book entitled "Faithful to Each Other Forever: A Catholic Handbook of Pastoral Help for Marriage Preparation."

The early sections of *Humanae Vitae* explain why the Church has the right to teach on these matters. We do the same thing in our NFP course. The first chapter of our NFP manual describes faith in the Church's teaching about love and morality in terms of the promises that Jesus made at the Last Supper. **We believe that Jesus keeps his promises** to keep sending the Holy Spirit to guide the Church's teaching. Pointing this out is a work of the **New Evangelization**. Regardless of the birth control issue, it is good for the Church to have its people learn once again that our faith is so closely related to the Last Supper promises of the Lord Jesus.

*Humanae Vitae* calls for **generosity in having children** (n 9). In our apostolate we transmit that teaching and make it clear that systematic NFP is **NOT** just Catholic birth control. I recall very fondly a father of seven children telling me one day, "*John, I am so happy that you pointed out the*

*Church's teaching about generosity. We came to your course with two children and looking for Catholic birth control. I am so happy we heard the full story."*

*Humanae Vitae* teaches about **immorality** (n 14), and so do we. **Experience** has shown that **it is necessary to get specific** about immoral practices. We have had people tell us that they took NFP instructions from some other source where they heard nothing about these things. As a result, the spouses engaged in mutual masturbation and other immoral practices during the fertile time for years—23 years in one case, all the time thinking they were practicing NFP. That's why we have a short list of specific behaviors.

One of the great blessings that come from requiring couples to attend the course of NFP International is that couples will learn some **good news about ecological breastfeeding**, information that they will probably not hear elsewhere. There is ample evidence that frequent suckling significantly postpones the return of fertility. We read in 2 Maccabees 7:27 the words of the mother who told her son, "I nursed you for three years..." That only shows the **duration** of breastfeeding in biblical times, but there are recent studies showing **birth** intervals of 44 months among some hot weather tribes and 29 to 39 months among Canadian Eskimos.

The realities of breastfeeding force us to be specific about Ecological Breastfeeding according to the **Seven Standards**. These standards are simply maternal behaviors that allow frequent suckling. For example, don't use bottles or pacifiers. Take your baby with you. It is highly inadequate to talk about frequent nursing without being specific about the sorts of common things that interfere with frequent suckling.

My wife, Sheila, has done the research and has published the results. Mothers who follow the Seven Standards of Ecological Breastfeeding experience an average of 14.5 months of breastfeeding amenorrhea. [Amenorrhea is the absence of menstruation; breastfeeding amenorrhea is

caused by breastfeeding.] Mothers who do not follow the Seven Standards generally experience an earlier return of fertility.

***God provides a natural spacing of births when mothers stay with their babies and let them suckle as often as they want.***

It is good for the Church to have a way to teach this to young couples. Their babies will be healthier. Our hosts, **Martha and Dr. Bill Sears**, can tell you far more about the blessings of breastfeeding than I can. I will say only that in our NFP manual, *Natural Family Planning, The Complete Approach*, we report lots of benefits of breastfeeding for **both** baby and mother. The **greatest benefit** of Ecological Breastfeeding is that it **maximizes all the benefits** of breastfeeding-in-general. Dr. Sears has said that the key to successful breastfeeding is ***frequency, frequency, frequency***. That's also the key to the spacing effects of ecological breastfeeding.

*Humanae Vitae* allows the use of **systematic NFP** when couples have a sufficiently serious reason to avoid or postpone pregnancy (n 16). Does it work?

In chapter 15 of **Leviticus** we read that spouses are to abstain during menstruation and for seven days thereafter. So in normal cycles they would be coming together in the marriage act at the most fertile time of the cycle. This was ***clearly God's plan for building up the children of Abraham*** and it worked very well.

**Modern fertility awareness** started in **1923** in Japan when **Dr. Kyusaku Ogino** discovered that **ovulation** occurs about mid-cycle. In February, **1930**, Japanese Dr. Ogino published his calculations in German in a German medical journal. That was the beginning of ***calendar rhythm***. For many couples, it could be very effective. Our landlords in Santa Clara told us they used it with 100% effectiveness. The modern question is this: how well does any particular kind of systematic NFP work?

The cars of 1930 have developed significantly from then until now. The same is true of natural family planning. In the 1950s there were significant

developments in using the temperature, mucus, and cervix signs. In the **late 1950s, users of the cross-checking signs had a much more effective and certainly more esthetic way of avoiding pregnancy than the users of the barrier methods of the time.** The problem is that very few people knew about these systems.

Let us **speculate** for a moment.

**What if** our bishops in the 1950s had realized that married couples have a “**need and have a right to know** [their fertility] in order to live in accord with the clear teaching of the Church” to quote the bishops’ committee of 1988. **What if** every priest ordained in 1955 and later had been **well instructed** in the cross-checking calendar-temperature-mucus system of fertility awareness? **What if** the La Leche League breastfeeding movement that started in 1956 had spread so rapidly and widely that most Catholic mothers were doing Total Breastfeeding by 1968?

If that had happened, I doubt very much that the dissent movement would have caught on.

By the early 1970s, the natural family planning movement had developed to the point where there were two different approaches. One approach was called the Sympto-Thermal Method and the other was the Billings Ovulation Method. The first approach used the mucus and temperature signs in a cross-checking way. The second approach used only the mucus sign.

**The various claims about** the relative effectiveness of each system **led to controversy,** so the American bishops acted to try solve the controversy by getting the unvarnished facts. The director of the U.S. Bishops’ Human Life Foundation persuaded the National Institutes of Health to conduct an **impartial comparative** study of the Ovulation Method and the cross-checking Sympto-Thermal Method. A **randomized control trial** was conducted at Cedars of Lebanon hospital in Los Angeles between 1976 and 1978. **Doctors Billings, Hilgers, and Prem** were all consultants in the study.

The final report was published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* (141:4, October 15, **1981**, 368-376). Here’s the very important summary quotation: “The final results of a prospective comparative study of

two methods of natural family planning indicate a significant difference in the 12-month net cumulative pregnancy rates between the ovulation and symptothermal methods. These **differences are on the order of two to one in favor of the symptothermal method**”(368).

“Measured from the beginning of entry into the formal study phase, the Pearl pregnancy rates were **39.7 for OM** and **13.7 for STM** [per 100 woman-years ]” (374). “During the study phase, 62 pregnancies occurred (42 OM and 20 STM). There were **36** user failures and **six** method failures in the **OM** group during the study phase. There were **no method failures in the STM group**” (374). “**Results of this study show the STM to be superior to the OM of NFP in terms of use effectiveness**” (375).

Also significant is a sentence on the final page of the report. “It is of interest that after couples were informed in August, 1978, that a statistically significant trend in the pregnancy rates between the OM and STM groups had been found, almost all of the STM volunteers continued in training and virtually all of the OM volunteers requested to be, and were, thoroughly trained in STM” (376).

Some folks criticized the report. What needs to be kept in mind is that any faults in the study would apply to **both sides** of the study. The investigators had no special interests in either outcome. They were just doing what they were asked to do—provide an impartial analysis. I realize that **almost no one likes controversy**, especially among believing Catholics, all of whom are trying to be helpful. That’s probably why the bishops asked for the study. Ordinary folks have a right to know the facts so they can make their own decisions.

***God provides, and we need to listen and act.***

That brings us to **why Sheila and I still promote and teach** natural family planning. It all started here in California.

**Sheila** grew up in Montrose in southern California, and she was studying dental hygiene at the UC Medical Center in San Francisco when we met. I was preparing to enter the Institute of Lay Theology.

We married in April 1963, and I began to work as a lay evangelist at St. Clare's parish in Santa Clara.

With our first baby, Sheila attended childbirth classes and was directed to La Leche League where she learned that the advantages of "**total**" **breastfeeding** included baby spacing. Mothers talk about these things, and they noticed **a big variation in the duration of breastfeeding amenorrhea**. One mother might have a first period at 3 or 4 months while another went more than a year. One of the moms asked Sheila to research this, so she did. She did most of it in 1968, and in 1969 was self-publishing her book, *Breastfeeding and Natural Child Spacing*.

The book was built on her library research and the practical experiences of nursing moms. In **1970** she started to include a **breastfeeding survey** in every copy of the book, and the survey results showed that we needed to have a new phrase to describe the pattern of breastfeeding that really does postpone fertility. That's why we coined the phrase, **Ecological Breastfeeding**. Harper and Row published a hard cover edition of her book in 1974. Sheila's most recent book is ***The Seven Standards of Ecological Breastfeeding: The Frequency Factor***.

John's part.

Our effort at St. Clare's parish was an **outreach to the uncommitted**—Catholic and non-Catholic. The core effort was a short course in the Faith. This was in the years prior to RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults].

**Upholding the teaching of the Church** about birth control in the mid-Sixties when there was so much pro-Pill propaganda everywhere was a challenge. Somehow I started to use the idea that the **marriage act ought to be a renewal of the marriage covenant**. Very simple – 17 words. "**Sexual**

***intercourse is intended by God to be at least implicitly a renewal of the marriage covenant.***”

Let me spend a minute or so on that. The marriage act ought to be a way of saying, **“We take each other once again for better and for worse.”** But the contraceptive marriage act does not say that. Its body language says, **“I take you for better but definitely and positively NOT for the imagined worse of possible pregnancy.”** Contraception makes the marriage act **dishonest**. It pretends to be the marriage act but it contradicts its God-given meaning.

The covenant concept also helps to explain **why sex outside of marriage** is a moral evil. In God’s plan, sexual union ought to be a marriage act, a renewal of the marriage covenant. But **outside** of marriage, ***the sex act cannot be an expression of a marriage covenant*** because there is no covenant to renew. Within marriage, it is entirely different. It is part of God’s plan. And within marriage, it **ought to be a TRUE marriage act**, a renewal of their marriage covenant, for better and for worse.

So when *Humanae Vitae* was issued, I was grateful that Pope Paul VI had bravely upheld the teaching of some 1900 years.

When I tried to find the arguments of those **defending** the encyclical, I wasn’t finding anything written from a **theological perspective**. Thus in response to the dissent of 1968, I wrote a book—***Covenant, Christ and Contraception***.

It was published [by Alba House] in the spring of 1970, and then I had a **very strange experience**. The words of **Luke 11:46** came out of nowhere and hit me very strongly. In this passage, Jesus was telling it like it is to some Pharisees, and a scholar of the law replies:

“Teacher, in saying this, you reproach us also.” And **he** said, “Woe to you lawyers also. **For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers**” (Luke 11:45-46).

Here was our situation in the spring of 1970. I had written a recently published book in which **I did my best to affirm** and explain what so many others were calling a big **burden**. What about that second part—doing something to **lift the burden**?

We had the **breastfeeding research**, and Sheila's book was making the rounds.

We had the **covenant theology of the marriage act** that helped couples understand *the intrinsic meaning* of the marriage act.

And we had taught ourselves the cross-checking **Sympto-Thermal Method** of systematic natural family planning from an article written by Dr. Konald Prem.

In the light of Luke 11:46, **how could we NOT do what we could** to share these gifts?

We started to teach natural family planning in the Fall of **1971**. I taught the **Theology**. Sheila taught the **Ecological Breastfeeding**. Dr. Konald A. Prem taught **the Sympto-Thermal method**. In that first course we taught what we now call the **Triple Strand**.

That's what we are still teaching In NFP International.

Sheila and I have learned a lot since we started teaching NFP in 1971. As a result, we are **more enthusiastic** about the Triple Strand than we were when we first started to teach it. There are several reasons for this enthusiasm.

First, we didn't know how helpful the covenant approach could be. In fact, it is **sometimes surprisingly helpful**. When **Scott and Kimberly Hahn** accepted Catholic teaching on birth control, they were not only Protestants but Scott happily considered himself as the most anti-Catholic student at their seminary. **What got their attention was the covenant theology of the marriage act.**

Second, we now know more from experience and research about that the frequent nursing that we call **Ecological Breastfeeding**. We know more clearly that it is definitely a natural form of spacing babies. Last October I

gave a little talk in which I mentioned ecological breastfeeding. Right after the talk, a young man told me that his wife had recently completed **27 months** of breastfeeding amenorrhea. That is unusual but not abnormal. It is not abnormal for a mother doing eco-breastfeeding to experience two or even three years of breastfeeding amenorrhea.

We also know more about **its universal appeal**. We have seen a Lutheran mom do a series of blogs on each of the Seven Standards. We have seen an Irish mom publish a whole series of articles on this subject in an online diocesan publication. Sheila has recently been corresponding with a mother in Sweden. For more than a generation she has been helping orthodox Jewish mothers in New York City. Enthusiasm for Ecological Breastfeeding has led other moms to form the Catholic Nursing Mothers League. This group encourages Ecological Breastfeeding and seeks to build support groups in parishes and communities.

**Third**, we have a **much better appreciation** for the cross-checking Sympto-Thermal system than when we started to teach NFP in 1971. At first, Dr. Prem did all the of the Sympto-Thermal teaching. At the time, we didn't know the history of NFP development. We didn't know about some 99% effectiveness studies, some of which were published **before** *Humanae Vitae*. Now we do. ["A Short History of Natural Family Planning" is now available at the website of NFP International.]

**Comparative research** has demonstrated that couples can use the cross-checking mucus and temperature signs with a higher degree of effectiveness than with a mucus-only system.

The question is this: Don't couples have a **basic human right** to know these things? ***I really don't care what sign or combination of signs a couple choose to use.*** That's their personal business. But what I **DO** care about is that they are **free to make that choice based upon adequate information** about all these common signs of fertility. I think it's a matter of **religious liberty**. With sufficient information, the spouses are free to choose among morally acceptable options.

That's why we continue to teach the Triple Strand version of natural family planning in the *Humanae Vitae* apostolate of Natural Family Planning International.

**Perhaps the most inclusive reason** why we teach NFP is our conviction that teaching the right kind of natural family planning is an ***essential part of turning back the Sexual Revolution***. Here the theological content is even more important than the physiology.

If girls and boys and young women and young men come to believe that God has a plan for sex, that's a great step towards a return to sexual sanity. When they believe that in his plan sexual union is ***exclusively*** a marriage act, that's another great step forward, and the rate of fornication will drop tremendously.

If they come to believe that sex outside of marriage is ***dishonest*** as well as being lust driven, they will have an important tool for turning their thoughts away from fornication. That's because, at least in my opinion, ***almost no one likes to think of themselves as dishonest***. On the other hand, in our current culture, being known as lustful is regarded as being normal.

The Sexual Revolution is not just going to fade away by itself. It is built on human weakness.

You have heard many words this evening. The bottom line is this. There will be **no stopping legalized abortion without a rebirth of chastity**. The anti-contraception movement started with married couples, and I am convinced that **the return to chastity also has to start with married couples**. We need to lead the way. That means that **there has to be a massive acceptance of chaste natural family planning** as well as generosity in having children.

The effort to promote and teach chaste natural family planning is an **essential component in the effort to replace the culture of death with the Christian culture of life**. In that light, who can afford **not** to be involved?

So the question faces us: **What can the Church do** to once again lead people to live lives of faith and holiness including chastity? St. Paul's letter to the Romans is instructive. He has been teaching that **everyone** is called by the

Lord no matter what their background. Then he raises a question that still resonates today.

But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to **believe** in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? (Rom 10:13-15a)

**It's pretty easy to apply that to chastity in our culture.** How can anyone believe that God has a plan for love, marriage and sexuality as taught by the Bible and the Church? How can they **believe what they have never heard** in a meaningful way? Who is going to preach and who is going to teach?

If the almost 48 years since *Humanae Vitae* have taught us anything, it is that the effort to restore Christian chastity to the Church and Western culture demands significant effort from **bishops, and priests, and the laity, a truly tripartite effort.** No one part of that tripartite effort is going to get the job done alone. Both Christian couples and unbelievers **deserve to know** about God's plan for love, marriage and sexuality. It is a task waiting for fulfillment.

**God provides, and we have to listen and act.** We need to **do** and to **teach** the divine truth about human love.

The question of **what to do** is so vital that the teaching of St. James could hardly be more relevant.

“What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” (2:14-17).

If you think that what I have offered is something that needs to be shared, I invite you to be part of the *Humanae Vitae* apostolate of NFP International. On the internet, just search Natural Family Planning International.

\* \* \* \* \*