

A newsletter of the **Pope Paul VI Institute** for the Study of Human Reproduction

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*From the Founder...*

Welcome to the spring 2012 issue of *Building a Culture of Life in Women's Health Care* newsletter! With the development of NaProTechnology at the Pope Paul VI Institute, a strong scientific foundation in gynecologic and reproductive health has been established. And, our education programs offer professional, high-quality instruction. In addition to welcoming over 99 students to our Education Phase II this April, we are taking our education programs to Poland in September. We are also welcoming new fellows into our fellowship program this summer and continue to offer retreat opportunities for physician couples.

This research, education, and service foundation has laid the groundwork for building a culture of life in the medical profession. You can see this happening now in the St. Louis Review article "The new face of natural family planning" included in this newsletter. These young, OB-GYN professionals will never prescribe birth control pills, do sterilizations, or refer for *in vitro* fertilization or abortions. The Institute's vision to

change the pro-death attitude within reproductive and gynecologic medicine is now coming to fruition with new healthcare professionals like these enthusiastic, morally committed, and well-trained pro-life physicians. Blessings to you!

**Thomas W. Hilgers, MD**  
Director of the Pope Paul VI Institute



Dr. Hilgers and his wife Sue at the Vatican, 2012

*MARK YOUR CALENDAR...*

July 11-14

**AAFCP Annual Meeting**  
Salt Lake City, UT—Thomas W. Hilgers, MD

September 8-15, 2012

**Education Phase Poland**  
Lomianki, Poland—Thomas W. Hilgers, MD

September 29, 2012

**Fort Worth Pro-life Banquet**  
Fort Worth, TX—Thomas W. Hilgers, MD

October 6-13, 2012

**Education Phase II**  
Omaha, NE—Thomas W. Hilgers, MD

**NaProTechnology – Real Solutions to Real Problems – at the Vatican**

Thomas W. Hilgers, MD, presented NaProTechnology—which provides real solutions to real problems—at this year's Pontifical Academy for Life (PAL) meeting. His February 24th presentation was "NaProTechnology: The Evaluation and Treatment of Infertility".

The two objectives of the Management of Infertility Today meeting of the PAL, according to its president, Monsignor Ignacio Carrasco de Paula, were "to contribute to the efforts of slowing down the proliferation of infertility...[and] to provide information on the recent developments in prevention and treatment of this problem, as well as, do a comparative analysis—in terms of both cost and efficiency—between the authentically therapeutic interventions and the so-called procedures of artificial fertilization and reproduction."

"There are nine-and-half million women in United States who have impaired fertility," said Hilgers. "Now of those nine-and-a-half million women, less than 0.5% actually have a baby through IVF. Said in another way, 99.5% of women who have an infertility problem are not served by IVF." *continued on page 2*



Dr. Hilgers and FertilityCare™ professionals present at the Pontifical Academy for Life

## The new face of Natural Family Planning

By: Jennifer Brinker (Reprinted from St. Louis Review [March 7, 2012] with permission)

Drs. Alexis Simon, Brooke Jemelka, Gavin Puthoff, Kathleen McGlynn, Simon Patton and Jacob Peyton are resident physicians in the OB/GYN Residency Program at Mercy Hospital in St. Louis. The six plan to specialize in natural family planning in their future practices. It was a month before she had to decide her specialty in medical school, and Brooke Jemelka found herself at a crossroads.

She had been concentrating on pediatrics during her studies at Texas A&M University, but by the end of her third year, she was starting to question what she wanted to do with her life.

Then she delivered her first baby, "and my whole life changed," said Jemelka, a native of Yoakum, Texas.

As a Catholic, she was involved in pro-life activities, including sidewalk counseling, pro-life rallies and more. It was later that she realized that was preparing the way for a future in obstetrics and gynecology.

"I felt like there was no way I could not be doing God's work," she said.

Today, Jemelka is one of six -- yes, six -- resident physicians in the OB/GYN Residency Program at Mercy Hospital in St. Louis

who plan to specialize in natural family planning in their future practices. As part of their training, the residents currently are caring for uninsured and underinsured women who come to Mercy's JFK Clinic.

Each of them has a different story of how they became involved in medicine, but all of them agree that God put them in the place where they're at now for a reason. While doctors here and around the nation who specialize in natural methods of fertility care are still considered the minority, all of these residents have encountered many women who want to know the truth about their fertility through the use of NFP.

### The reaction

First-year intern Jacob Peyton of Argyle, Texas, said as a Catholic, his family and friends were very supportive of his decision to focus on natural family planning. However, as a student at UT Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, he said almost no one was familiar with current natural family planning methods.

"They thought it was impossible to do OB/GYN without prescribing contraception," he said.

### NaProTechnology at the Vatican... *Continued from page 1*

"The diseases are identified, they are treated in NaPro," said Hilgers in his presentation. The other approaches to infertility invited to the academy discussion relied on artificial reproductive technologies. Hilgers noted in his talk, "IVF approaches the evaluation and treatment [of infertility] by skipping over the diseases. Unfortunately, they do not look for the root causes."

He said, "I can't tell you the number of people that I have seen over the years who have come and come and come and kept saying to us, 'They won't look for [endometriosis]', 'They won't listen to me', et cetera."

"[With NaProTechnology] the foundation is being laid for future success," Hilgers said. "More total pregnancies are achieved, the multiple pregnancy rate is really low, the prematurity rate is low, there are no frozen embryos, and we use fertility-focused intercourse....[I]t is not built on a foundation of destroying life. It is built on a foundation of nurturing it."

Hilgers, founder and director of the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction in Omaha, Nebraska, is a long-time member of the Academy, having been appointed in 1994 by Blessed John Paul II. He is the

discoverer of the new women's health science of NaProTechnology. By looking for the causes of gynecologic and reproductive problems, NaProTechnology provides real solutions to problems such as infertility, menstrual cramps, PMS, ovarian cysts, abnormal bleeding, PCOD, repetitive miscarriage, postpartum depression, prematurity prevention, hormonal abnormalities, and chronic discharges.

"The pursuit of a diagnosis and of a therapy," said Holy Father Benedict XVI in his address to the Academy, "represents the most scientifically correct approach to the question of infertility, but also that which is most respectful of the integral humanity of the subjects involved. ...Thus, it is my desire to encourage intellectual honesty in your work, which is the expression of a science that keeps the spirit of the pursuit of truth alive, in the service of man's authentic good, and that avoid the danger of being a merely functional practice."

NaProTechnology does seek diagnoses so that it can provide truly therapeutic answers to women's health problems. And, NaProTechnology will continue to answer the call of the Church set out in *Humanae Vitae* and articulated by Benedict XVI.

Second-year resident Gavin Puthoff, a native of Austin, Texas, admitted he tried talking himself out of pursuing obstetrics and gynecology, but he realized, like the others, that “for most of us, a big part of what we do everyday is God’s work.”

Jemelka, who is a fourth-year resident, said she, too, was told by many during her medical school days that they “thought I was hanging myself out to dry” by focusing on natural family planning. Next year, she will be moving to Omaha, Neb., for a fellowship program at Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction.

Founded in 1985 by Dr. Thomas Hilgers, the institute is the home of the Creighton Model

FertilityCare System, one of several Church-accepted natural methods of fertility regulation. It also is the force behind NaPro Technology, a medicine-based health science that monitors and maintains a woman’s reproductive and gynecological health, all within the realm of Church teaching.

### Mercy’s support

While it’s common knowledge that practicing NFP-based medicine isn’t exactly mainstream these days, the residents and others have heaped their praises on Mercy for welcoming them into the program.

Jemelka said she interviewed with more than 17 residency programs around the country and found the process discouraging.

Several of those programs, including some at Catholic hospitals, even told her that she wouldn’t be able to practice medicine “according to my moral conscience.”

She said the reaction she received from Mercy was, thankfully, much different.

“This was a non-issue at Mercy,” she said. “Even on my first interview, I felt accepted and not judged based on my religious beliefs. I knew that my beliefs would be supported at this program without a doubt.”

First-year intern Alexis Simon, said she, too, has been pleased with her decision to come to Mercy for residency.



Drs. Alexis Simon, Brooke Jemelka, Gavin Puthoff, Kathleen McGlynn, Simon Patton, and Jacob Peyton are resident physicians in the OB/GYN Residency Program at Mercy Hospital in St. Louis. The six plan to specialize in natural family planning in their future practices. (Photo and Archdiocese of St. Louis NFP logo courtesy of Lisa Johnston in St. Louis Review; with permission)

“I know that my beliefs aren’t exactly mainstream, but nearly every person I’ve worked with has been supportive of me,” she said. “I feel so blessed to have been welcomed into this program.”

K. Diane Daly, supervisor of the Department of FertilityCare Services at Mercy and director of the archdiocesan Office of Natural Family Planning, said she gives “a lot of credit to Mercy for the support they give to these residents, for the hospitals that support these NFP programs, and to the archdiocese for the support they give to all models of natural family planning, which help empower women to be partners in their health care.”

### St. Louis as a leader in NFP

It has been a slow and quiet process, but St. Louis is emerging as a leader in NFP-based health care. That’s a sentiment being echoed by Catholic health care organizations around the country.

Besides the six residents, there are five other OB/GYN doctors practicing in St. Louis. There also are several family medicine doctors, not to mention nurse practitioners, nurses and others who teach four methods of NFP here.

“I think St. Louis certainly has emerged as a real powerhouse for natural family planning,” said John Brehany, executive director and ethicist with the Catholic Medical Association. “Mercy Hospital in St. Louis has had an outstanding FertilityCare Services clinic since the 1970s, there is a strong Catholic Medical Association guild there with several all-NFP OB/GYNs, and the Archdiocese of St. Louis has provided substantial support over the years. I don’t know of any city or diocese which is doing it better.”

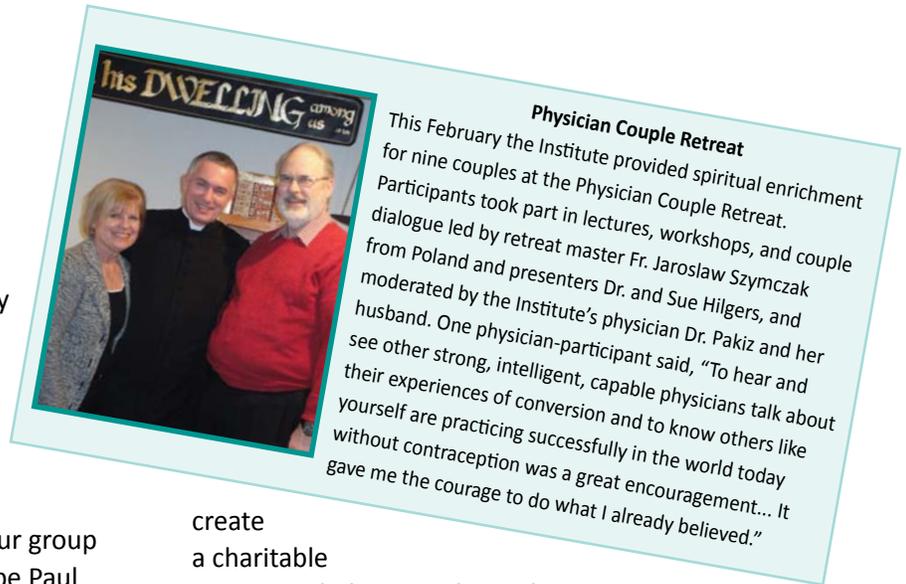
Daly, who travels around the world to teach and supervise others in the Creighton Model FertilityCare System, said she is seeing St. Louis emerging to the forefront of fertility care through natural family planning.

“It’s not the old rhythm method that your grandmother once used,” she said. “St. Louis has been outstanding in its leadership and support.”

## Remember the Institute in Your Estate

There are many ways to remember Pope Paul VI Institute in your estate plan, only a few of which involve any expense or professional fees. You may wish to consider one of the following options:

- Amend an existing insurance policy to add Pope Paul VI Institute as an additional beneficiary, or simply purchase a new one for our benefit.
- Visit your personnel office and ask to amend your group life insurance policy or retirement plan to add Pope Paul VI Institute as one of your beneficiaries. Or, add the Institute as a recipient if another person predeceases you.
- Instruct your lawyer to prepare a simple, inexpensive codicil to your existing will, creating a bequest for Pope Paul VI Institute.
- Deed your house to Pope Paul VI Institute and continue to live in it. Your income tax savings from the gift may cover the legal costs.
- Leave written or verbal instructions for your surviving spouse to include Pope Paul VI Institute when redrawing his or her will.
- If you have a sizable estate, create a trust which will pay an annual income to Pope Paul VI Institute for a period of years prior to distributing the principal to your children or grandchildren. The income we receive will



create a charitable estate tax deduction. This technique may allow you to make a substantial gift at a cost as low as five cents on the dollar, and avoid taxes which might otherwise claim as much as 60 percent of your estate.

There are many ways to benefit Pope Paul VI Institute through planned gifts, some of which will provide you with positive benefits during your lifetime. If you place Pope Paul VI institute near the top of your charitable priorities, we hope you will, at a minimum, consider naming the Pope Paul VI Institute as a contingent beneficiary of your will, insurance and retirement programs.

The inclusion of Pope Paul VI Institute in your estate plans will enable the Institute to continue to help women and couples. If you would like additional information about estate planning opportunities, please call Sue Hilgers 402-390-6600 ext. 149.

## A Gift that Changes Lives!

Having lost two children by ectopic pregnancy and grieving for the babies, then almost losing John at the beginning of my pregnancy and fighting the signs of premature labor— we call him our miracle baby. Dr. Hilgers and Pope Paul VI Institute made this miracle happen.

We became donors one week after our son John was born. We will never be able to thank the Institute for giving us hope, joy, and health. But, we can provide this hope to many other families at loss, in pain and despair. We joined the Monthly Giving Club and made a commitment to support the mission of Building a Culture of Life.

We want other families to experience the joy that we have had. We support the Institute because it enables babies to live. Please join us by making your monthly donation to the Pope Paul VI Institute.

— Jennifer and Patrick Murry

