



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

WINTER 2010 • VOLUME 5, NUMBER 4

Welcome to the winter 2011 issue of the Connect! I invite you to enjoy some highlights from a presentation given by the Reverend Jarosław Szymczak, PhD, at our international conference on the Pastoral Directives of *Humanae Vitae*. The conference was part of the Institute's 25th anniversary Labor Day Weekend Celebration of Love & Life in September of this year.

The founder of Fr. Szymczak's order, Archbishop Kazmierz Majdanski (1916-2007), was imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp for six years. During World War II, when the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, a bloody persecution of Poland's Catholics began. This was a concerted effort to destroy the Church in Poland. Polish priests and religious were obvious targets and many were martyred for their Faith. In fact, in June 1999, 108 World War II Polish martyrs were beatified. Archbishop Majdanski survived, and he believed the strength and faith of the Polish family saved Poland. Consequently, he founded the Faculty for Studies on the Family, and Secular Institute of Consecrated Life Holy Family Institute that is dedicated to the family and married couples. Fr. Szymczak conducts marriage weekend retreats throughout the year.

As a professor at the Faculty for Studies on the Family at Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Łomianki-Warsaw, Poland, Fr. Szymczak teaches a master's course on *Humanae Vitae*. Fr. Szymczak has attended the Pope Paul VI Institute's Love and Life program and has audited our first education phase. He supports **FertilityCare™** and **NaProTECHNOLOGY** efforts in Poland. In February, he will conduct the inaugural marriage retreat for NaProTechnology physicians and their spouses and for those physicians who are facing the conversion process from artificial reproductive technologies. Such a retreat has been a goal and dream of mine for many years. Physicians need to be strengthened and supported in their vital involvement in building a Culture of Life.

I invite you to read Fr. Szymczak's entire presentation with its anecdotes and in-depth explanations on Connect's website, www.popepaulvi.com/connect.htm, as well as previous issues of Connect. You can also obtain audio recordings of the conference by contacting our Publications Manager, Vicky, at (402) 505-4942.

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM

Pastoral Directives on Humanae Vitae & 25th Anniversary of the Pope Paul VI Institute

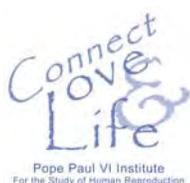
Fr. Jarosław Sz. Szymczak, PhD, Faculty for Studies on the Family, UKSW – Poland

Ever since my ordination I have worked at the Institute, now Faculty, of Studies on the Family. My position at the university has revolved around working with young people who have chosen to especially concentrate their attention on God's plan for marriage and the family. Members of the Institute of the Holy Family seek to support families through ongoing formation, spiritual direction and retreats. ... Through all my years as a priest I have learnt to put great trust in the grace of the sacrament of marriage, and I have often seen how God has especially chosen families as the setting where He wants to be with us. Hence all Hell is let loose on the family. We can be certain, however, that Satan will not prevail over the Church, including the domestic church. I would like to share some of this experience of working with families, which I have been continuously learning from the dear Pope Paul VI, in a few reflections on the third section of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*—...an encyclical about human dignity, especially the dignity of women, [extolling] the beauty of marital love and human nature and marriage as taught by the Church.

continued on page 2



Fr. Jay Szymczak – Presenting on the Pastoral Directives of Humanae Vitae at the September 2, 2010 conference preceding the Labor Day Weekend Celebration of Love & Life, the 25th anniversary celebration of the Pope Paul VI Institute.



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Chapel of the Holy Family – Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Pastoral Directives on Humanae Vitae...

Continued from page 1

1) “spouses recognize and value the true goods of life and the family” (HV 21)

...Love [is] more than a feeling; [it is] a program for the whole of one’s life – even eternity – and certain conditions must be met for it to be possible. It is important to be mature and this love must be expressed in a mature form (i.e., in the form of a decision, which will be binding to the end of life, be it mine or the other person’s). Hence the conditions are that one must be mature and make marriage one’s life-project. ...Marriage, in its essence, is a gift of self.

In this context, the words of the Second Vatican Council Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes* appear especially significant: “Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, ‘that all may be one. . . as we are one’ (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.”² (GS 24)

The question comes up, however, as to whether it is possible to give oneself fully to another. ...There must be some way to render a gift of self through which I also realize myself more fully. This unique way is that of love, understood to be God’s gift in us. At the beginning of our lives, God endows us with three beautiful gifts through Holy Baptism: the divine virtues of love, faith and hope.

Gaudium et Spes reminds us that our love (which is *eros* – human affection) is healed, perfected and raised up by God through His love (*caritas* – willing love)³. This is possible only in the order of love, and it is absolutely necessary if we are to fully realize ourselves as persons. ...When a person becomes a gift of self, he or she enriches himself or herself and develops internally because the laws of development that govern people are different than those that govern the world of things, which we can own, transfer among one another, and of themselves are oblivious to who happens to own them. In contrast to this domain of things, when it comes to persons, the one who gives himself as a gift to another actually matures and he enriches himself. Karol Wojtyła describes this in terms of the ‘law of ecstasy’ – exit from oneself to be more fully in another. ...

2) “they acquire the habit of complete mastery of themselves and their desires” (HV 21)

...One of the prerequisites for gift is *possession*; [the other] is that we can only give that which we both possess and *control*. Possession alone does not signify control. There has to be both possession and control. Hence, if one gives oneself, it is positive proof that one possesses oneself and one is in control of oneself.⁵

Self-possession and control signify that feelings and sensuality are subdued to intellect and will which, in turn, need to be trained in perceiving truth and striving towards true good. Absence of this, difficulties in seeing truth, and weakness of will are the result of original sin. Ever since original sin, concupiscence drives us to

turn natural emotional and sensual yearning for the other person into use of the other person.

It is this concupiscence that also leads to signs proper to married life losing their meaning. A sign...must [have an] agreement between the intention and the action and the sign expresses what it means in itself.⁶ ...[S]igns and actions that are proper to married life, such as embraces, kisses, and intimacy, need a certain temperance and self control if they are to be really in keeping with their intrinsic meaning and the ethical order. (HV21) ...

The virtue of chastity, which is a form of the virtue of temperance, is a key prerequisite for the beauty of human love to remain intact. It is a virtue, a strength, that allows us to keep incursions of sentimentality, sensuality, and lust at bay. Reason and will play important parts in this. ...

Chastity allows us to see the whole truth about a person. [People often] look upon each other in terms of usefulness... rather than their value as persons. ...Chastity allows us to look at others in purity, clarity, transparency, especially at another of the opposite sex. It is chastity which alone can be a foundation for a gift which must at once be objective, total, mutual, exclusive, life-long, and unconditional. ...

3) “requires continuous effort” (HV 21)

Paul VI...devoted two whole paragraphs, to explain how to build true love, “When these matters are placed in the proper light, we can clearly see the characteristic marks and requirements of marital love. It is of the greatest importance to have an exact understanding of these” (HV, 9). ...

[W]e not only need marks but also requirements to show that love is founded on truth and not on illusions. Hence, Paul VI first speaks of the marks, or characteristics, and then of the requirements of married love in the same paragraph. Love is first of all human – spouses strive together to attain human perfection. Next, this love is total – spouses enrich their beloved with the gift of themselves. ...Then, marital love is both faithful and exclusive to the end of life. ... Such quality—the quality of deep, genuine love—without permanence would be nonsense. ...And finally, this love is fruitful – marriage and marital love are ordained by their very nature to the procreating and educating of children.

In paragraph 8, Paul VI writes: “Therefore, through mutual self-giving, which is unique and exclusive to them, spouses seek a communion of persons. Through this communion, the spouses perfect each other so that they might share with God the task of procreating and educating new living beings.” ...Life often requires that the gift of one of the spouses be seemingly bigger than that of the other. ...Married couples will always know, however, how to distinguish when they generously share everything with each other and when any undue reservations and concern for their selfish convenience creep in.

It is worth emphasizing Pope Paul VI’s insistence that the efforts of married spouses [to keep God’s law] in fact serve to elevate human dignity and confer benefits on human society as a whole—beginning with the small society of the family and expanding outward to broader society. ...

4) “fosters the fruits of tranquility and peace” (HV 21)

The gift of self in everyday life needs constant effort and temperance. Paul VI noted “this (virtue) fosters the fruits of tranquility and peace in the home and helps in the solving of difficulties of other kinds. It aids spouses in becoming more tender with each other and more attentive to each other. It assists them in dispelling that inordinate self-love that is opposed to true charity. It strengthens in them an awareness of their responsibilities (*munerum exsequendorum*). And finally it provides parents with a sure and efficacious authority for educating their children” (HV 21).

5) “with the abundant grace of God, upon which the good moral choices of people depend and from which they get their strength” (HV 20)

These abundant fruits cannot be won solely through human endeavor since our Redeemer knows our “weaknesses, has compassion on the crowd, receives sinners” (HV, 19). That is why we need “the abundant grace of God, upon which the good moral choices of people depend and from which they get their strength” (HV 20). That is the right response to weakness: “Where sin abides, there grace abounds all the more.” Paul VI wanted to bring freedom to the enslaved contemporary man. He emphasized Romans 8—that although man has succumbed to original sin and temptations of the flesh, Christ is the one who quenches all our thirst and helps us overcome our tendencies to sin. “In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will” (Rom 8:26-27).

6) “encouraging them to keep and respect the laws of God concerning marriage” and “to teach the law which is proper to human life restored to its original truth and guided by the Spirit of God” (HV 21)

... *Humanae Vitae* is a great invitation addressed to every man to safeguard the dignity of every woman in his heart and in his actions. It is a call to every doctor as well. The doctor is often the first person—even before the priest—[to] be encountered by a woman...[whose husband] has begun to use her as an object for self-gratification and [who] is tempted to seek safety in contraception....

The doctor’s response can be crucial and may either mark the beginning of a turning point for his patient or become a seal of complicity for a pattern of self-depreciation, consent for exploitation, and intentional health-destruction. ...The physician’s duty of care is to defend the good and dignity of a person who may be almost unable to defend herself. It is the vocation of a doctor to be mindful of...the full good of each patient. Inducing sterility, maiming the capacity to bear life, destroying fertility...[are] diametrically opposed to harnessing health, guarding the dignity of one’s patients, and maintaining a fully human and responsible and just doctor-patient relationship. ...

Professor G.E. M Anscombe, a mother of seven children who held the Chair of Ethics at Cambridge University in England, once wrote about the importance of clear teaching on *Humanae Vitae*, and the unfortunate scarcity of such teaching: “As things were, those lay people who were faithful in their lives were, humanly, in a sense alone. I am grateful I wasn’t put to the test of these times. They had to lean upon God, not upon the encouragement of their pastors. A deathly silence from the clergy, I mean from those who did not actually dissent, was pretty discouraging. And spirituality dried up. All this was perhaps out of fear of driving people out of the Church. Well, it has often meant that the process was accomplished in two stages. First, you decide to reject the teaching about contraception. Then you become more and more watery in the dogmatic content of your faith. Then, very often, it fades out altogether. Or it settles down to a total worldliness.”

[We are now celebrating the 25th anniversary of an Institute which has been inspired at its founding by faithfulness to the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*.] It is wonderful, therefore, that Professor. Hilgers has decided to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Institute by first recalling what all of us can and should do to build up a civilization of life and love. ...As priests, we also need to examine our consciences as to whether we have served our laity adequately in this area. This can also be an occasion to ask for forgiveness and renew our commitment to teach *Humanae Vitae*. A commitment we should take up with all our hearts! ♪



Images from the Labor Day Weekend Celebration of Love & Life



You and I = We

Culture of Life Physician/Couple Retreat

*A retreat especially for physicians & their spouses or fiancé[es] to strengthen physician couples
in promoting a culture of life through the practice of NaProTechnology*

A weekend retreat led by the Reverend Jaroslaw Szymczak, PhD, focusing on marriage, family, and the practice of women's medicine in a Culture of Life. Daily Mass; silent reflection/prayer before the Blessed Sacrament; retreat sessions (lectures, workshops, & couple dialogue); and two continuing medical education lectures by Thomas W. Hilgers, MD include Building a Culture of Life in Women's Health Care and Are Science and Faith Compatible? Sponsored by Pope Paul VI Institute & Creighton University School of Medicine.

www.popepaulvi.com/PhysiciansRetreat.htm

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Helping Priests Respond To Medical and Moral Challenges
In this issue: Pastoral Directives of HV & 25 Years of the Institute by Fr. Jay Szymczak