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The Role of *Humanae Vitae* and the Catholic Church in the Development of *NaPro Technology*—PART II

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Excerpted from a MS PowerPoint presentation given at the AAFCP 27th Annual Meeting, "Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* & 30 Years of Education Support from Creighton University School of Medicine"—June 11-14, 2008—Augustinian Conference Center, Rome, Italy (Visit www.popepaulvi.com/connect.htm for Part I)

The Catholic medical community had little to offer Catholics who wanted to remain faithful to the truths and teachings now outlined in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which was released by Pope Paul VI in 1968. The only widely known recourse was the very unreliable Rhythm Method. In the 1970s, however, other more reliable methods were becoming known such as the monumental Billings' Ovulation Method, which arose from the marriage counselling work of Fr. Maurice Catinich and the scientific research into the natural methods of fertility regulation by Dr. John Billings and his wife, Dr. Evelyn Billings.

Because of the need for medical science and research to assist couples in the area of natural fertility regulation, Pope Paul VI made appeals to the scientific community in *Humanae Vitae*. To men of science, *Humanae Vitae* called out: "[they] can considerably advance the welfare of marriage and the family...if by pooling their efforts they labor to explain more thoroughly the various conditions favoring a proper regulation of births..." To doctors and health care professionals, *Humanae Vitae* called out: "[they] who, in their mission, desire to safeguard what is compatible with their Christian vocation rather than what corresponds to some human advantage. Therefore, let them constantly pursue only those solutions that are in accord with faith and right reason...let them strive to gain agreement and the compliance of their colleagues in this matter...[let them] acquire all necessary learning in this...area. Spouses rightly seek such direction from them" (Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, paragraph 24).

A response to the appeals in *Humanae Vitae* was the newly developing, scientifically sound, objective, accurate, and standardized system of fertility regulation called the **CREIGHTON MODEL FertilityCare™ System (CrMS)**. After being exposed to the work of Dr. John Billings, I began to study women's charts and mucus observations and cycle patterns as they related to fertility and infertility. With a small team—Sue Hilgers, Diane Daly, Anne Prebil—we developed the **CrMS** and officially unveiled it in 1980.

Such advancements in fertility regulation as the **CrMS** received affirmation when another pontiff—John Paul II—began proclaiming the Gospel of Life. In his 1981 apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope John Paul II wrote, "Precisely because the love of husband and wife is a unique participation in the mystery of life and of the love of God Himself, the Church knows that she has received the special mission of guarding and protecting the lofty dignity of marriage and the most serious responsibility of the transmission of life." Here, he pointed out that the difference between contraception and a natural method of fertility regulation is "a difference which is much wider and deeper than usually thought, one which involves in the final analysis two irreconcilable concepts of the human person..."

"Modern" scientific research and technological advancement sees reason and faith as contradictory elements. Those areas of discovery that are guided by philosophical ideals expressed in *Humanae Vitae* are disregarded while those undergirded by Sanger-like and Planned Parenthood-like philosophies—those areas where reason is not "obscured" by the light of faith—are considered free thought, academic, and scientific. For example, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (the major

advocacy group for women's health care physicians) is undergirded by the basic moral methodology of proportionalism, which holds that "no thing is bad in itself, but only in proportion to others" (Pope Benedict XVI, Zenit News Agency, Sidney, Australia, July 14, 2008). This presupposes relativism, a philosophy by which the morality of actions is based on how those actions stand in relation to or relative to other conditions or circumstances. Therefore, there are no moral absolutes (From: *Ethics in Obstetrics and Gynecology*, ACOG. Washington, DC, 2002).

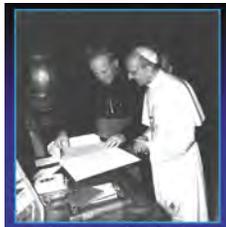
Some moral norms are always objectively immoral no matter the motives or other circumstances, noted Pope John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* (From: Mirkes, Renée). There is an integral connection between reason and faith. In the encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* (Sept. 14, 1998), Pope John Paul II wrote that "both the light of reason and the light of faith come from God...hence there can be no contradiction between them. ...[Faith] has no fear of reason, but seeks it out and has trust in it. ...Human reason is neither annulled nor debased in assenting to contents of faith." And once again, the Church appealed to men of science: "I cannot fail to address a word to scientists...so far has science come...that its achievements never cease to amaze us. ...[T]he scientific mentality has succeeded in leading many to think that if something is technically possible, it is thereby morally admissible." Our present situation in scientific study shows that "modern philosophy [moves] farther and farther away from Christian revelation. ...[T]he field of scientific research [has] abandoned the Christian vision of the world...[and] rejected every appeal to a moral vision. ...[W]hat has appeared finally is nihilism...a philosophy of nothingness." (From: Pope John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, Sept. 14, 1998, #43, 88, 106, and 46).

To continue preaching the Gospel of Life and to help build a culture of life, I opened the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction in 1985. At the Institute, we continue the scientific study into the correlation between women's **CrMS** charts and underlying hormone patterns, overall health, and disease all the while respecting the dignity of the human person.

On his recent visit to the United States (April 2008), Pope Benedict XVI called faith a "precious source of insight." The light of faith has shown us that there is another way to approach scientific study and technological advancement that upholds the dignity of the human person, of women and men and children, and of marriage. Faith allowed us to hold the belief in "the legitimacy...of a regulation of offspring which, unlike...birth control, is compatible with the law of God." And, that faith guided me to respond to the appeals of *Humanae Vitae* and to discover a new, highly effective approach to women's health care that is founded on Catholic Church teaching—**NaPro TECHNOLOGY!** And now, many, many doctors are discovering that there is a way to approach their patients with new, proven medical techniques while respecting the personhood of their patients. Hopefully, these doctors will continue **NaPro TECHNOLOGY** research guided by faith and the words of *Humanae Vitae*. ☺

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Pope Paul VI meeting with Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop of Krakow (12 Nov. 1977)



Dr. Hilgers presenting *The Medical & Surgical Practice of NaPro Technology* to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II (February 22, 2004)



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For man cannot attain that true happiness for which he yearns with all the strength of his spirit, unless he keeps the laws which the Most High God has engraved in his very nature. These laws must be wisely and lovingly observed. On this great work, on all of you and especially on married couples, we implore from the God of all holiness and pity an abundance of heavenly grace as a pledge of which we gladly bestow Our apostolic blessing.

— Pope Paul VI, Taken from *Humanae Vitae*, paragraph 31

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www.popepaulvi.com

www.creightonmodel.com

www.naprotechnology.com

Chapel of the Holy Family

Open business days, 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Mass Schedule

8:30 a.m. Mondays and 1st/3rd Fridays

Adoration

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• **Rev. Edward Richard M.S., D. TH. M., J.D.**

For ethics and questions

(314) 792-6100 or richard@kenrick.edu

Direct all other questions to:

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Pope Paul VI Institute Directory

• **FertilityCare™ Center of Omaha**

To learn the Creighton Model FertilityCare System:

(402) 392-0842 or fcoco@popepaulvi.com

Co-directors: Jeanne Winduska, Kathy Chervosky

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