The MARRIAGE SUPPLEMENT

Faith, hope and love

Carrie Ann Klein and Nicholas Brandon Fazio were married on Dec. 29, 2007, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Joseph J. and Mary Ann Klein. The groom is the son of Jack and Barbara Fazio. Father Stephen Bonet, pastor of St. Jude Parish in Indianapolis and a family friend, celebrated the nuptial Mass.

There's still time to register for Pre Cana, Tobit Weekend

Engaged couples still have time to register for two marriage preparation programs in coming months. The Pre Cana Conference, a one-day marriage preparation program, and the Tobit Weekend, a three-day retreat, are held at Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House, 5553 E. 56th St., in Indianapolis. Pre Cana Conferences are scheduled on Feb. 17, Feb. 24, April 6, April 27, May 4, May 18, June 8, July 13, Aug. 10 and Oct. 19. For more information, call the archdiocesan Office of Family Ministries at 317-235-1596 or 800-382-9836, ext. 1596, or log on to www.archindy.org/family.

Tobit Weekends are scheduled on April 4-6, May 16-18, June 6-8, July 11-13 and Sept. 19-21. For more information, call Our Lady of Fatima Retreat House at 317-545-7681 or log on to the archdiocesan retreat center Web site at www.archindy.org/tobit.

Mittel-Wienski
Stacy Lynn Mittel and Stephen Michael Wienski will be married on May 24 at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Jeffersonville. The bride is the daughter of Richard and Maxine Mittel Sr. The groom is the son of Michael and Virginia Wienski.

Myers-Craig
Robbie Myers and Jesus Craig will be married on April 12 at St. Nicholas Church in Suamico. The bride is the daughter of Thomas and Angie Myers. The groom is the son of Robert and Tammy Craig.

Spaeth-Robben
Adam Marc Spaeth and Irvin Joseph Robben will be married on April 26 at St. Mary Church in Rushville. The bride is the daughter of Bernard and Elizabeth Spaeth. The groom is the son of Anthony and Florence Robben.

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alexander-Gaddini
Emily Denise Alexander and Anthony Robert Gaddini will be married on April 26 at SS. Philomena and Cecilia Church in Oak Forest. The bride is the daughter of Joseph and Lynn Alexander. The groom is the son of Oliver and Penelope Gaddini.

Angie-Burkett
Erin Ashley Angel and Brent Michael Burkett will be married on May 31 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Mark and Jackie Angie. The groom is the son of Kip and Debbie Burkett.

Byerley-McDonald
Allison Kaiti Byerley and Matthew Todd McDonald will be married on June 14 at Our Lady of the Springs Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Wayne and Susan Byerley. The groom is the son of Kip and Debbie Burkett.

Crouch-Strasser
Jill Ann Crouch and Shane Allen Strasser will be married on April 25 at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Bob Crouch and Justine Crouch. The groom is the son of Ron Strasser and Darlene Strasser.

Cummins-Trulock
Megan Elizabeth Cummins and Patrick Steven Trulock will be married on June 21 at Bishop Chatard Memorial Chapel at Marian College in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Paul and Lisa Cummins. The groom is the son of Janet Trulock and the late Steven Trulock.

Downs-Valencourt
Lindsay Erin Downs and Jesse Roy Valencourt will be married on June 28 at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Kevin Downs and Cathy Curry. The groom is the son of Rene and Leslie Valencourt.

Eddleman-Wagner
Kristin Nicole Eddleman and Nicholas Ateme Wagner will be married on May 31 at St. Christopher Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of David and Patty Eddleman. The groom is the son of Gary and Debbie Wagner.

Grif-Keller
Laura J. Grif and Brian C. Keller will be married on April 26 at St. John the Baptist Church in Dover. The bride is the daughter of Robert and Marlene Grif. The groom is the son of Stan and Paula Keller.

Harmeyer-Hilger
Sarah Ann Harmeyer and Joseph Henry Hilger will be married on April 12 at St. Mary (Immaculate Conception) Church in Rushville. The bride is the daughter of Michael and Doris Harmeyer. The groom is the son of Joseph and Elaine Hilger.

Husser-Lecher
Lisa Marie Husser and Mark Andrew Lecher will be married on March 29 at St. Matthew the Apostle Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Terry and Kathy Husser. The groom is the son of Charles and Ruth Lecher.

Rosman-Altman
Courtney Rosman and TJ Altman will be married on June 14 at St. Patrick Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Jack and Josy Rosman. The groom is the son of Theresa Altman.

Simmons-Rossman
Kate Erin Simmons and Robert Lukehan Rossman will be married on April 12 at St. Patrick Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of James and Linda Simmons. The groom is the son of Roger and Irene Pippen.

Spaeth-Robben
Adam Marc Spaeth and Irvin Joseph Robben will be married on April 26 at St. Mary Church in Rushville. The bride is the daughter of Bernard and Elizabeth Spaeth. The groom is the son of Anthony and Florence Robben.

Steinmetz-Pertile
Mariana Joy Steinmetz and Joseph Louis Pertile will be married on May 17 at St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus (Little Flower) Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of David and Janice Thompson. The groom is the son of Joseph and Elizabeth Pertile.

Stock-Cooper
Shanna Courtney Stock and Randy Jay Cooper will be married on June 14 at St. Alphonsus Church in Zionsville, Ind. The bride is the daughter of Donald and Tina Stock. The groom is the son of the late Maggie Cooper.

Ward-Pippenger
Elizabeth S. Ward and Matthew S. Pippenger will be married on May 30 at St. Francis Xavier Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. The bride is the daughter of Charles and Elizabeth Ward. The groom is the son of Roger and Irene Pippenger.
Sacramental themes highlight new marriage research

By Daniel Sarell
Special to The Criterion

For years, the paradigm for preparing couples for marriage has centered on the ongoing effort and learned skills, especially communication and conflict resolution, required for a healthy marriage. Learning those important skills comprises a very human response to the grace of the sacrament of matrimony and remains crucial even as new research begins to highlight new themes.

For example, in Catholic marriage ministry, a new emphasis is emerging on the sacramentality of marriage, especially in light of Pope John Paul II’s “Theology of the Body.” Soon, that message will become better integrated with the skills-based themes of listening, family-of-origin patterns, time management and others.

While the phenomenal rise in the divorce rate, research has focused intensively on the consequences of conflict in marriage. While this emphasis is quite constructive, researchers and educators bemoan the negative tone of marriage education discourse such that we feel we are engaging more in “divorce prevention” than “marriage celebration.” Thanks to new research, that’s beginning to change.

In a recent “mini-symposium” published in the Journal of Marriage and Family in May 2007, researchers Frank D. Fincham, Scott M. Stanley and Steven R.H. Beach in the International Journal of the Psychology of Religion, in a recent “mini-symposium” published in the Journal of Marriage and Family in May 2007, researchers Frank D. Fincham, Scott M. Stanley and Steven R.H. Beach review “emerging trends” which seek to redefine the traditional emphasis on marital conflict as a “problem.” Instead, the research suggests that conflict, from an observational perspective, is a complex process and positive theme.

Forgiveness, the basis of Christ’s redemptive work through the sacrifice of his own body, is being recognized as a critically transformative influence in marriage. By one of the few processes by which significant damage can be healed to help when spouses hurt each other.

Without forgiveness, the consequences of sins for which every spouse is guilty from time to time can lead to snowball, leading to “negative downward cycles.” Rooted in Christ’s act of redemption was his total self-sacrifice—death on the Cross.

When we think of a married person sacrificing for the other, we might associate that selflessness with a loss of happiness, ambition and satisfaction. However, research is now suggesting that the transformative effect that sacrifice can have mitigates any sense of “loss” or “cost.” The attitude and act of focusing on the collective “us” in marriage shifts the focus toward the common good rather than “the price I pay.”

In fact, sacrifice is closely related to deep commitment, a combination of dedication (“internal”) and moral and cultural values (“external”).

It is this type of research that has led many to conclude that the leading cause of divorce is, in fact, the decision to get divorced, not the transgression or conflict that might have sparked such discord.

The additional variables of “ambivalence” and “indifference” to the more linear or binary measurements of “happy” or “unhappy” have allowed marriage researchers to see trends that lead us to a deeper understanding of why some couples forgive each other or are resilient to even the most traumatic events while others may quickly buckle out over relatively minor conflicts.

As Catholics, we believe that grace underlies all of these issues, which leads to the fourth major trend in this new research into “transformative processes”—sacritifi-
cation, “the process whereby [marriage] is perceived by people as having divine character and significance,” according to a 2005 study by K.I. Pergament and A. Mahoney published in the International Journal of the Psychology of Religion.

The extent to which people derive religious meaning from marriage has been shown to impact marital stability, in particular by deepening and motivating commitment, sacrifice and forgiveness.

Natural Family Planning (NFP) teachers have consistently taught both scientifically and theologically for years that those who practice NFP—most of whom are religiously and morally motivated to do so—report greater sexual satisfaction in their marriages and almost never divorce. Though perhaps most of us are suspicious of “hocus pocus” types of “miracle stories,” Catholics do tend to leave room for grace-filled miracles in our everyday lives, the types of miracles that don’t make the newspapers.

In 2002, a study presented by L.J. Waite and Y. Luo at the American Sociological Association found that 62 percent of women and 72 percent of men who stayed married reported that their marriages were happy five years later (and 77 percent “remained married.”)

Researchers call this a “nonlinear” example of “spontaneous remission.” I submit that Catholics would call this a miracle of faith, God’s action and presence in our lives and marriages. Many, perhaps most of those couples surely went through great suffering and put in a tremendous amount of effort to repair their damaged relationships, which on a cultural level eliminates the “hocus pocus” from the equation.

Still, researchers have not yet been able to answer definitively why these marriages “self-repaired.” However, they are recognizing the role of factors “deeply embedded in cultural traditions, such as ... commitment, forgiveness, sacrifice and sanctification.

In a time when pastors are finding that “integration” of Church teachings and new pastoral emphases must enhance the ministries that we are already doing rather than implementing new and expensive programs, not only are we—as ministers—challenged to rethink how we educate couples in marriage, but we—as couples—are also challenged to discern the role of faith in our marriages.

Are we faithful to the values of our tradition? Do we see the truly beneficial blessings of those teachings? Are we intentional about cooperating with grace as we live sacramental marriage?

The answers might be closer at hand than we ever thought as faith and science catch up to each other and enhance family life through openness and dialogue.

(Daniel Sarell is the director of the archdiocesan Office of Family Ministries.)

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Natural Family Planning strengthens couple's faith, hope and love

By Mary Ann Wyand

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is now simpler to understand, easier to practice and 99 percent effective in regulating conception. It also follows God's plan for the human body.

Family life research has shown that practicing NFP strengthens a couple's faith, hope and love in their marriage by enhancing communication, respect and intimacy.

The Couple to Couple League International, based in Cincinnati, Ohio, recently published a new NFP curriculum described as “an extreme makeover” to help married couples follow Church teachings on sexuality and family planning.

“The Art of Natural Family Planning” features new program materials that are “animated by modern technology,” said CCL executive director Andy Alderson. The new NFP program materials represent three years of work and include an instructional DVD embedded with video clips of a priest and physician discussing the late pope’s teachings on the “Theology of the Body” and instructions on the method as well as computer animation of ovulation and implantation. The workbook is presented in color with lots of graphics that help NFP facilitators teach engaged and married couples in fewer class sessions.

“The new materials simplify the science of the Sympto-Thermal Method, they make room for greater emphasis on another important element—NFP’s rich marital dimension,” Gundlach noted. “That altered emphasis is reflected in the line added to CCL’s slogan—NFP: safe, healthy and effective ... and it can change your hearts in surprising ways.”

NFP materials promote “knowledge of fertility in order to achieve or avoid pregnancy through the Sympto-Thermal Method,” Gundlach said, and also focus on responsible parenthood as “the virtuous application of this knowledge by couples who model dignity, respect and love for each other” in their marriage.

NFP teaching couple Mike and Ann Green of Carmel, Ind., who are now members of St. Alphonsus Parish in Zionsville, Ind., have practiced Natural Family Planning since they were married on April 26, 1997. They also felt the need to follow Pope John Paul II.

“Once couples start to see how beautifully the body is designed, they ... learn virtue and respect for their spouse. As a married couple, we give ourselves as gift to each other,” said Ann Green, who is a member of St. Alphonsus Parish.

Practicing Natural Family Planning offers health benefits, Ann Green said, as well as relationship benefits.

“We knew that artificial contraception wasn’t right,” she said, “and we were so excited to learn about NFP. We took the (Church’s) Pre Cana [marriage preparation] class and sponsor couple program before we were engaged, and our sponsor couple witnessed to us about how wonderful NFP has been for their marriage.”

Aside from their desire to follow God’s will by observing Church teachings, both Mike and Ann Green are engineers and were intrigued about the science of this very effective natural method of spacing children in marriage.

“We came to the understanding that NFP is a renewal of the marriage covenant,” she said. “It left us open to children and changed our hearts in surprising ways. We started to pray the family rosary and go to daily Mass. NFP is such a key component of our lives, and we want to share it with other couples.”

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