



Prot. N. 2014-0259 A

Instruction

Concerning Education in the Theology of the Body and Natural Family Planning

In creating man and woman in his own “image” and “likeness” (*Genesis* 1:26-27), God makes the human person capable of a life of love and communion with others. In responding to this highest calling, we find fulfillment in the total gift of self to another. The covenant of marriage, with its profound responsibilities, joys, and sorrows, allows a man and a woman to realize this vocation together (*Familiaris consortio*, 11).

This total gift of self within marriage is one of “life and love” (*Gaudium et spes*, 48), in which the conjugal act becomes the central point of this renewal of vows to a faithful love, a union of persons, and the empowerment that comes from God alone to cooperate with Him in the creation of another human person. Because of the intimate and total relationship of this lifelong, loving union of persons, it is crucial that couples preparing for marriage understand the full meaning and purpose of marital love in God’s plan.

Out of a genuine concern for the correct formation of consciences and the desire to promote understanding of the truth, dignity and meaning of human sexuality, while building upon existing policies implemented by my predecessors, and in accord with my pastoral obligation to make sure that marriage preparation is offered and fittingly organized (cc. 1063 and 1064),

I, hereby, issue this Instruction (c. 34) for the Archdiocese of Denver, to be followed when proximate marriage preparation (*Familiaris consortio*, 66) is conducted *within the territory of the Archdiocese of Denver.*

Nota Bene: This instruction pertains to steps 4 and 5 of the "Preparation for Holy Matrimony" brochure published by the Archdiocese of Denver's Office of Evangelization and Family Life Ministries. It can be found online at: <http://tinyurl.com/archdenmarriage>.

Step 4: Marriage Prep Program: Theology of the Bodyⁱ

- All couples preparing for marriage shall receive an introduction to the Church's teaching on conjugal love, modeled after Saint John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*, during their initial interview with their parish priest, deacon, or qualified layperson(s) and, afterwards, through their marriage preparation classes.
- Marriage preparation classes will provide at least one-hour of education in the *Theology of the Body*.
- Marriage preparation classes will also provide a presentation on the moral and practical aspects of natural family planning by an instructor with adequate knowledge of the subject, e.g., a natural family planning instructor, qualified practitioner couple, or member of the clergy.

Step 5: Natural Family Planning

- Couples should complete a full course of instruction in a method of natural family planning. Depending on the program and the couple, this can vary in length. *The Office of Evangelization and Family Life Ministries* will provide a list of approved courses. This list may be accessed on the Archdiocese of Denver's official website at <http://www.archden.org/eflm/nfp>.
- Instructors of natural family planning will complete a *Certificate of Attendance* for each couple, who, in turn, will be responsible to submit it to their parish so it may be incorporated into their prenuptial file.
- Special consideration should be given to those who are widowed, have received a declaration of nullity, or are seeking convalidation. Their past preparation and experience should be taken into account when creating a plan for their marriage preparation. If they are still within childbearing years, instruction in natural family planning is still necessary, unless they have received previous, equivalent training.
- Even if a couple is not required to receive instruction in natural family planning, education in *Theology of the Body* is still necessary so that they understand the beauty of

the Church's teaching on human sexual intimacy. These special situations are to be addressed by the priest or deacon during the marriage preparation process.

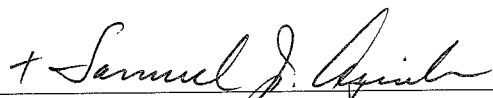
- Couples who are beyond childbearing years or who may be infertile are not required to receive instruction in natural family planning.
- Couples who are entering marriage following either party's sterilization or a similarly permanent, contraceptive procedure present a situation that must be addressed with charity and discernment. If surgical reversal is impossible, or, for moral reasons, imprudent, instruction in natural family planning is not required.

This Instruction shall take effect on the 15th of August 2014, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, everything to the contrary, notwithstanding.

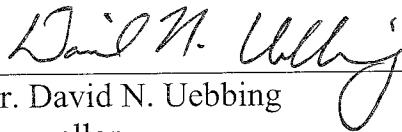
All couples *commencing* their proximate preparation for marriage on or after the effective date should be prepared according to this Instruction. Parishes may implement it sooner, if it is advisable in the judgment of the Pastor.

Given on the 26th of July 2014, the Memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the *Curia denveriensis*,

Denver, Colorado.



Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L.
Archbishop of Denver



Mr. David N. Uebbing
Chancellor