

May 1989

Message From the Spiritual Advisor

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Recommended Citation

O'Brien, Edwin F. (1989) "Message From the Spiritual Advisor," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 56: No. 2, Article 3.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol56/iss2/3>

Message from the Spiritual Advisor



Prayer — Its Essence

In last November's *Linacre*, Kenneth Berkes described an initial turning point in a long and impressive journey from Christian apathy to a genuine and captivating life of belief. It was the birth of his first child, witnessed during his second year of medical school, which awakened in the depths of his soul an awareness both of the mystery of life and of life's Author.

It would have been possible during the years that followed for Doctor Berkes to lose that sense of mystery. Familiarity can desensitize: minds and hands that probe the human condition as thoroughly and frequently as do the physicians' can lose appreciation of that deep center of identity that places every human life in a category unique and God-like.

And so the importance of prayer to keep alive our awe and respect for life.

Prayer, not simply words or rituals directed toward God, but heart and soul, which when faced with the ambiguity and enigma of human existence, reach out for contact. Prayer, which puts us in touch with the Mystery we glimpse in others whose worth hinges on that Mystery. Prayer, which in emptying ourselves humbly (as if recalling the dust from which we came and to which we will return) sensitizes us to the incalculable richness in every breathing human being regardless of appearance, productivity or burden.

“Prayer”, for Cardinal Newman, “is to the spiritual life what the beating of the pulse and the drawing of breath are to the life of the body.”

For *anyone*, not to pray is to suggest a death to things spiritual. When we live easily with that death, nothing living is safe.

— Rev. Msgr. Edwin F. O'Brien

“Your Special Signs” — Introduction to NFP is a nine minute introductory film/video about a woman's fertility signs which explains the way a woman can come to know the fertile and infertile phases of her menstrual cycle. It is sufficient to stimulate interest in Natural Family Planning but not enough to teach the method. The film is particularly suitable for doctors' waiting rooms and hospital closed circuit patient education viewing. A trailer can be attached advertising the hospital's programs in Natural Family Planning.

“Your Special Signs” was produced by Frank Frost Associates for the Human Life and Natural Family Planning Foundation and is now available in 16mm film and the VHS or Beta videotapes in English or Spanish. Double track English and Spanish is available for use with professional videotape cassette players. PAL tape is also available for use in England and Australia. The video may be previewed for two weeks or purchased from the Natural Family Planning Center of Washington, D.C., Inc. COSTS: Preview — \$15; Video: Prepaid — \$44.95, Postpaid — \$54.95; Film: Prepaid — \$99.95, Postpaid — \$109.95. Orders should be addressed to the Natural Family Planning Center of D.C., Inc., 8514 Bradmoor Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817-3810. Telephone (301) 897-9323.