

February 1957

The "Gabriel Group"

Alice Holoubek

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lmq>

Recommended Citation

Holoubek, Alice (1957) "The "Gabriel Group"," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 24 : No. 1 , Article 4.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lmq/vol24/iss1/4>

The "Gabriel Group"

Alice Holoubek, M.D.

Shreveport, Louisiana Catholic Physician's Guild

Members of the Shreveport, Louisiana Catholic Physicians' Guild are assisting a most worthy project in their community. Dr. Alice Holoubek has sent us an account of the activities of the "Gabriel Group" that helps expectant mothers. Lectures are given, followed by discussion periods. The interest of Dr. Holoubek in this work is very evident, and we are quite certain that the cooperation of her fellow-Guild members is a reflection of her own efforts. But let us give you the story in her own words.

It is difficult for married couples of today to live up to their Christian ideals at best. In a predominantly non-Catholic community such as ours, the materialism of the environment certainly increases the difficulty. The attitude of the neighbors — the change of attitude toward the birth of each additional child — present formidable problems. In an effort to aid in the combat in an active way, groups of expectant mothers have been gathering to discuss and, we hope, to grow spiritually in their attitude toward their families. In addition, more formal talks are given to them on the normal functions and development of mother and child during this period of pregnancy.

There are many errors to be overcome in the purely natural field. Our young mothers receive most of their knowledge of pregnancy and childbirth from novels, movies, experiences of friends, and from their mothers. The first two sources usually present the difficult and heart-rending aspects, as each of us well remembers. As to real life experiences, these are often related inaccurately; the most unusual and bizarre events are the better remembered, and very often the informer really has very little true knowledge to impart. So on a purely natural level, instruction of normal physiology should tend to allay fear and ignorance, which are physical as well as psychical detriments to natural childbirth.

However, always of much greater importance, is instruction and emphasis on the spiritual glory of bringing a child into the world, a child whose soul will live and love and serve God for all eternity, a child whom God has co-created with the human parents, a child who carries in his body the potentiality of the future. A true understanding of this tremendous reality should make the most worldly individual regard parenthood reverently.

The families of our parish are of a fairly consistent economic level and have no need of the Public Health type of pre-natal instruction and care. However, in parishes where there are some who do not enjoy economic ease, this discussion can be adjusted to cover this aspect and be very adequately supervised and conducted by Catholic nurses engaged in Public Health activities.

Practically, the groups have been meeting about once a month for four meetings. At the first gathering, our Pastor introduces the series and emphasizes the spirituality of motherhood. Following his departure, as a doctor and a mother, I give a brief simple explanation of the physiology of menstruation. The second lecture, given by a prominent obstetrician, describes conception, heredity, fetal development, RH factor, and cesarean sections. At the third meeting, our Pastor is again with us, presenting the teachings of the Church as to the dignity of life and the Catholic teaching on birth control, abortions, and surgical operations of the generative organs. Also, another Catholic doctor describes the physiology of pregnancy and labor. The last meeting is a panel discussion by well-known and loved Catholic mothers of the community who discuss ways they have found effective in making Catholic teachings and especially the Liturgy, a part of their family life.

It is suggested that Guilds assisting with Cana activities in their communities might well include this "Gabriel Group" project in their program.