

The Mysticism of Charting

Creighton Model

By Fr. Stephen Torracco, Ph.D.

From the Academy Activity, Vol 15 #2 Winter/Spring 1996

The primary purpose of charting is twofold. First is for husbands and wives, as co-creators with God, to cooperate with God as knowingly and freely as possible. It is God's design that man and woman, endowed with intellect and will, be intelligent and free **doers** especially in the matter of procreation.

Secondly, in the course of carrying out the first purpose, husband and wife would be **transformed in mind and heart** by the gift of fertility in and of itself, and independently of the matter of achieving or avoiding pregnancy, precisely because fertility is the extension in time and space of the activity of the Holy Spirit who is the love between the Father and the Son, the One whom we call, in the Creed, the Lord and the Giver of Life, the One by whom the tradition of excellence is handed on from God to humanity. If our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, charting is a listening to and even a touching of the Holy Spirit.

Couples who chart are **doing** the Theology of the Body. They are meditating on the Redemption and the Sanctification of their embodied persons and of their families. When they chart, they are in the presence of the new Adam (Jesus) and the second Eve (Mary). They are praying over the great mystery described by St Paul in Ephesians, and they understand these words better than anyone else: "Be subject to one another out of love for Christ.

"Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the Church, His body, and is Himself its savior. As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives be subject in everything to their husbands.

"Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word. That He might present the Church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes

it and cherishes it as Christ does the Church because we are members of His body. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and the two shall become one. This is a great mystery, I mean in reference to Christ and the Church.”

The charting called for by the Creighton Model has led to **an enormous blessing** known as NaProTechnology. In addition to this blessing, the CrM holds up a tremendous **spiritual benefit** in what I would presently call the Mysticism of Charting, a complement to Pope John Paul II’s new way of handing on the Gospel of Life, namely the Theology of the Body. According to the definition of mysticism it is the knowledge of God arrived at through the embrace of unifying love. Isn’t this what husband and wife are doing when they chart?

Like mystical knowledge, the spirituality of charting has the same object as the knowledge of faith and theology, but its method is more intuitive and direct than discursive and scientific. Like mysticism, the discipline of charting involves **contemplation** and sets the stage for an intimate knowledge and experience of God that He bestows through a special grace.

As in mysticism, detachment, purification, and the cultivation of stillness in the way of life of SPICE are fundamental in focusing the person’s grace on God. The only difference between what is known as mysticism and the spirituality of charting is that while a mystic seeks a freeing from the concerns of a bodily life, like the Holy Father’s Theology of the Body, the spirituality of charting begins with the body, specifically fertility itself. In this way the spirituality of charting is a new kind of mysticism, in that it is a thoroughly Incarnational mysticism. It has the potential to prepare the husband and wife for the transformational experience of the Gospel of Life. Nevertheless, the new Incarnational mysticism of charting shares in traditional mysticism’s uniqueness in the prominence it gives to the notion of union over that of absorption. Like the traditional mystic, husband and wife retain his and her personal identities in the relationship of mystical knowledge and love. In the mysticism of charting, the mystical relationship is thus a truly personal relationship between husband and wife and the Triunely personal creator.

In a nutshell, the mysticism of charting is the mystical experience of being temples of the Holy Spirit, of being caught up in the nuptial encounter between the new Adam and the second Eve. As practitioners of the CrM can testify, the mysticism of charting is a powerful means of evangelization- of handing on the tradition of excellence even with clients who came to the CrM with a contraceptive mind set and with contraceptive purposes. Many are the stories of conversion that could be told.

Be not afraid, for Christ has overcome the world.