

Life Cycles



AUGUST 2001

The newsletter of the Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

The Myths of Contraception

Information provided by Cecilia LeChevallier

The 12 myths of contraception listed in the side bar are just that, "myths." For decades, Americans have put their faith in contraception, never stopping to think about all of the harm that results from trying to sever the link between love and life.

A panel of expert speakers carefully explored and debunked each these myths at the 1999 Pandora's Pillbox Conference, sponsored by the Gift Foundation.

Audiotapes of this conference provide valuable information to share with engaged and married couples, as well as teens, in your parish. To restore the culture of life we need to proclaim the virtue of lifelong chastity for the married and unmarried, and the freedom that comes from living according to God's plan for sexuality.

The Gift Foundation held a second Pandora's Pillbox Conference in the fall of 2000. Audiotapes of this Conference are also available.

If you would like to purchase audiotapes individually or by the set (only \$14.00) you can order them by calling the Gift Foundation at (847) 844-1167, writing to them at P.O. Box 95,

Carpentersville, IL 60110 or through their website at www.giftfoundation.org.

The Twelve Myths of Contraception

Myth 1

Parents need contraception to responsibly plan their families.

Myth 2

Contraception protects young people from pregnancy and disease.

Myth 3

Contraception reduces the need for abortion.

Myth 4

The pill and emergency contraception are not abortifacients.

Myth 5

Contraception is part of Biblically responsible Christian Stewardship.

Myth 6

Catholics can choose to use contraception in good conscience.

Myth 7

Natural Family Planning is really just one more form of contraception.

Myth 8

Contraception has improved the institution of marriage.

Myth 9

Contraception is necessary for women's equality.

A Message from Your President

As a nurse with a graduate degree, I have some appreciation for ongoing research into women's health. So when the Harvard School of Public Health invited me to participate in their Nurses' Health Study, I jumped at the chance. A short time ago, I received a survey that contained questions regarding social supports, intimate relationships and pregnancy outcomes. I was asked to record whether I agreed or disagreed strongly, somewhat, or partially to a number of statements. Here are a few of the statements that I was asked to agree or disagree with:

- My partner makes me feel unsafe even in my own home.
- I feel ashamed of the things my partner does to me.
I try not to rock the boat because I am afraid of what my partner might do.
- I feel like my partner keeps me prisoner.
- I feel owned and controlled by my partner.
- My partner can scare me without laying a hand on me.

Shocked? I certainly was. It is even more disturbing when you realize that this survey is sent to women who are college educated health care profes-

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Life Cycles

The newsletter of the Philadelphia
Natural Family Planning Network
(PNFPN)

Life Cycles Staff:

Editor: Barbara Rose RN, MSN

Contributing writers: His Holiness Pope John Paul II
Cecilia LeChevallier, Sr. M. Nora Dennehy

Proofreader: Michele Szupica

Computer graphics: Parker Design

PNFPN logo: Elena Cippola

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Articles may be submitted to Barbara Rose at
PNFPN P.O. Box 220, Jenkintown, PA 19046.

Life Cycles can be viewed online at www.pnfpn.org

Board Members of the PNFPN:

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The Myths of Contraception
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Myth 10

Since men cannot control their sex drive, women need contraception.

Myth 11

We need contraception to fend off overpopulation.

Myth 12

Contraceptives are part of good overall healthcare.

A Message from Your President
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sionals. Surely, they have access to birth control, in fact, many of them counsel women in the use of contraceptives. I don't believe it is too outlandish to assume that most of the women who would answer "I agree" use contraceptives in their marriages and relationships. Isn't it ironic how they believe contraceptives give them control over their lives while at the same time they identify themselves as victims of abuse?

For the record, I answered "strongly disagree" to every statement. But then, what would you expect from a woman who has practiced NFP with her husband for 14 years?



Look who's linked:

The PNFPN website is now linked with a number of national NFP websites to provide additional information for viewers. Click on www.pnfpn.org at home or at your local library and see for yourself.

Please Help Us...

to place the following ad in the Standard and Times this year for the October issue. An ad this size costs over \$400. Any size contribution would be appreciated.

Kudos to:

Lisanne and Michael Castagno

For their presentation to the Catholic Youth Conference in April.

Susanne M. Engler, MD

Sister M. Aquinas Hamilton

Mary Kate Hayden

Tony Hayden

Marie Vandenbosche, MD

For completing the Ovulation Method Instructor training course sponsored by the Family of the Americas in May.

The PNFPN finance committee:

For completing the 1023 application for non-profit status.

Have you heard the Good News about Natural Family Planning (NFP)?

- It helps spouses grow in intimacy
- It helps space births with scientific accuracy
- It helps low-fertility couples to conceive

It is wholly natural – Instead of using drugs which have harmful side effects, NFP teaches fertility awareness through knowledge of one's own body.

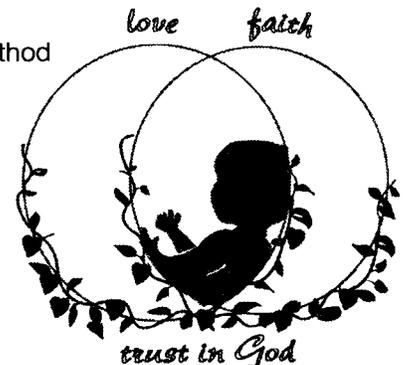
Find out more about this enriching method of family planning.

Call or write the Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network

P.O. Box 220
Jenkintown, PA 19046
(215) 885-8766

OR

Visit our website at www.pnfpn.org



Membership Profile

Sister M. Nora Dennehy

Sr. M. Nora Dennehy, RGS is a pioneer member of the PNFNP and graciously served as a board member from 1998 to 2000. She is a teacher and counselor of prenatal care and parenting to adolescents and young adults, having earned her doctorate at Temple University. She is presently a psychologist at CORA Services, Inc., a private, non-profit community-based Family and Children's Resource Center sponsored by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. Linked closely with the public and non-public schools in the area and with other community services, CORA has developed into a major service delivery system for children and youth in Philadelphia, providing services to over 30,000 children and their families annually.

Sister is a counselor and teacher trainer for the Teen STAR program (Sexuality Teaching in the context of Adult Responsibility) and Coordinator of services in the Philadelphia area.

The following interview was conducted in May of 2001:

PNFNP: What exactly is Teen STAR?

Sister Nora: Teen STAR is a proactive program of holistic education in Human Sexuality. It engages the experience of the body's fertility patterns to help adolescents come to an understanding of the power of their fertility. The program includes both classroom instruction and individual follow-up counseling to ensure that students are understanding material presented and internalizing values. There is also careful analysis of outcomes, demonstrating

that the program has regularly ungirded virginity and/or facilitated a return to chastity.

PNFNP: How many Teen STAR programs are conducted a year in Philadelphia?

Sister Nora: At any one time the program has been conducted at one to three high schools over the past ten years. It is also available in small group sessions or on an individual basis at CORA.

PNFNP: What made you decide to become a Teen STAR counselor?

Sister Nora: I became aware of a number of pregnant students in our Catholic High Schools in the mid-1980's. As a result I developed an adolescent pregnancy and parenting program involving the young mother-to-be, her partner and their parents. After a year of working with these young people, I realized we needed to do a lot more by way of sexuality education. In counseling or rap sessions many young people told me that if they had such sessions earlier, they would not have engaged in the behavior that led to their pregnancy. Most of the young people that I was seeing as well as their parents did not have a good understanding of the Church's teaching on sexual morality despite considering themselves Catholic.

PNFNP: How did you first learn of the Teen STAR program and where did you receive your training?

Sister Nora: I was asked to present teen pregnancy prevention programs in some of the schools served by CORA. I started looking for good programs, even using several without being totally satisfied as to the completeness of the programs. I read in *Crux*, a Catholic

weekly newsletter, about Teen STAR and underwent training at St. Peter's Hospital, New Brunswick, NJ with the program's author, Dr. Hanna Klaus, an Ob/Gyn and a Medical Mission Sister.

PNFNP: How does Teen STAR differ from these other programs that you evaluated?

Sister Nora: The major difference is that Teen STAR includes experiential learning of fertility patterns and, therefore, integrates one's understanding of the body. This in turn facilitates emotional maturity. The curriculum used in a Catholic School is a practical way of learning the Theology of the Body as articulated by Pope John Paul II.

PNFNP: How are the parents involved in this program?

Sister Nora: Parents are invited to a meeting where the program and course content is presented before students are approached. Parental permission is required for program participation. Two additional parent meetings are encouraged to receive parental input and feedback.

PNFNP: Please explain to us the Teen STAR curriculum as briefly as possible.

Sister Nora: In teaching fertility awareness, we use information contained in the Billings Ovulation Method. It offers an excellent vehicle for assisting young people in getting in touch with their sexuality, including an understanding of their now present biological capacity for becoming a parent in a respectful as well as a scientifically accurate framework.

In my work with adolescent girls, I have come to learn that instruction in fertility awareness enables them to come to a new and deeper insight into

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what it means to be a woman.

Developing a healthy feminine identity and full acceptance of their sexuality is part of adolescent development.

In addition to fertility awareness, the curriculum includes:

- 1) Psychosexual differences between men and women.
- 2) Dating; boy/girl relationships; the purpose of dating and appropriate dating behavior.
- 3) Evaluating sexual attitudes presented on TV and other media.
- 4) Assertiveness training for boys as well as girls. How to say no to sexual activity outside of marriage and still maintain a friendship.
- 5) The true meaning of a totally committed relationship, that being marriage.
- 6) STDs including AIDS.
- 7) Respect life issues.

In Catholic schools, Church documents on human sexuality including *Humanae Vitae* as well as the *Christian Meaning of Sexual Intercourse*, based on *Educational Guidance in Human Love* published by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education are integrated into the curriculum.

PNFPN: It has been reported that the Teen STAR program has received much criticism. Could you provide some insights as to why this occurred and what the program founders have done to counter it.

Sister Nora: There are groups who believe that sexuality education should be given by parents only. As Teen STAR has been given approval by Bishops and other Church authorities throughout the world and is being taught in several diocese in this country, this position is clearly not in keeping with Church

teaching. Since most of the criticism is aimed toward the problem of interference with the parent's responsibility to teach the children, I would like to emphasize the following:

- 1) We talk to the parents first, and get their permission before we instruct the children
- 2) We see this as a tool to aid the parents in teaching their children
- 3) The parents sometimes may not be aware of Catholic teaching in the area of sexual morality and find it helpful to have this reviewed for them.

Teen STAR operates in 24 countries and in most cases with specific approval of the Bishop, including our own Anthony Cardinal Bevilacqua.

To contact Sister Nora please call (215) 342-7660 or email her at marynorad@juno.com

The Road Show is Back

That's right. The Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network's NFP roadshow is back in operation and scheduled to appear at Assumption BVM parish in Feasterville on November 14, 2001. For more information please contact Bill Miller or Jeanette Wynne (listed in our PNFPN directory) or Sister Diane at (215) 357-1221. PNFPN members living in the Bucks County are urged to help out with brochure distribution and bulletin announcements in their parishes.

Have you seen our new brochures?

They certainly are beautiful and free for all network members. To order your stack today, please call (215) 885 - 8766.

Hot Items in NFP promotion

One More Soul has just begun to distribute a wonderful tape "Family Planning Choices" on which five couples describe their experiences, including contraception, sterilization, reversal, and NFP.

This is one of a 3-tape set from a CCL Clergy Day for the Diocese of Lansing MI. Fr Randy Moreau "Why NFP is a Priority in My Parish" describes his journey from disinterest in NFP to requiring a full course for couples preparing for marriage. He is very enthusiastic about NFP-using couples and the blessing they are to his parish. On the 3rd tape, Dr. Michelle Rabideau describes the various contraception methods ("Family Planning Methods Compared") and their side effects. On Side B, Dr. Phil Fleming tells the listener how switching his Ob/Gyn practice to NFP-Only affected him and his patients. Individual tapes are \$5, the set in a nice case-\$15.

Deep discounts for quantity orders—800-307-7685, or OMSoul@OMSoul.com.

Share your passion for NFP promotion and get on our new directory

The PNFPN will be publishing a new directory in Fall of 2001. If you changed your address or if you were previously unlisted and wish to share your name, please call the phone line or visit our website to inform us.

The "Net" works

In this column, our readers will be informed of NFP promotional events, seminars, lectures and classes scheduled. Please check this column regularly for volunteer opportunities.

NFP CLASSES SCHEDULED

Pennsylvania

August 15, 2001 – Orelan

An Ovulation Method NFP class by the Family of the Americas will be held starting at 7:00 PM. Individual counseling with certified instructors to follow every two weeks until the couple has mastered the method. For directions and registration please call the PNFPN phone line at (215) 885-8766.

August 17, 2001 – St. Charles Seminary, Wynnewood

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Philadelphia Family Life Office will be held, starting at 7:30 PM. For directions and registration call the Family Life Office at (610) 660-9002.

September 7, 2001 – St. Norbert, Paoli
The Couple to Couple League will sponsor a course in the Sympto-thermal Method of NFP at a place to be announced from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. This is a four class series with the additional dates of October 5, November 2 & November 30, 2001. Call (610) 408-8447 for information and registration.

September 12, 2001 – Orelan.

An Ovulation Method NFP class by the Family of the Americas will be held starting at 7:00 PM. Individual counseling with certified instructors to follow every two weeks until the couple has mastered the method. For directions and registration please call the PNFPN phone line at (215) 885-8766.

September 25, 2001 – Nazareth Hospital, Philadelphia

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Philadelphia Family Life Office will be held, starting at 7:30 PM. For directions and registration call the Family Life Office at (610) 660-9002.

New Jersey

The following classes listed are sponsored by the Camden Diocese. Each course is taught in a series of four classes spaced about one month apart. A complete set of materials is available at the first meeting and pre-registration is requested. Infants are welcome. For information call: (856) 756-7900 ext. 6315 or email: camdennjfnf@cs.com

July 30, 2001 – Berlin, NJ

Mater Ecclesiae Mission 7 - 9:30 PM

August 21, 2001 – Somerdale, NJ

Our Lady of Grace Church 7 - 9:30 PM

September 12, 2001 – Somers Point, NJ

at St. Joseph School. 7:30 to 9:45

Call: (609) 398-1431

September 27, 2001 – Blackwood, NJ

At St. Agnes Parish. 7:45 10 pm

October, TBA Gloucester County, NJ

7- 9:30 pm

November 12, 2001 – Camden, NJ

7 - 9:30 PM



Volunteer Opportunities

The PNFPN is looking for volunteers to serve as speakers. Wide variety of subjects include NFP in marriage, NFP for general women's health, NFP and sub-fertility and fertility appreciation. Audiences are diverse and can be matched to fit your geographical area.

Please call George and Eileen Finin at (610) 489-4940.

The PNFPN is in need of a volunteer coordinator for the NFP phone line. Please call the information line at (215) 885-8766

The PNFPN is in need of a volunteer witness couple for its next road show scheduled in November at Assumption BVM parish in Feasterville, Bucks County. If you believe you can assist in this role, please call Barbara Rose at (215) 884-2922

The PNFPN is seeking staff writers for feature articles and interviews in its official newsletter, *Life Cycles*. If you believe you can assist in this ministry, please call Barbara Rose at (215) 884-2922

The Family Life Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is seeking volunteer couples to be trained as instructors of NFP or to give positive witness to a Regional Marriage group. Please call them at (610) 660-9002.

The Diocese of Camden is looking for volunteers for their Diocesan/Parish Pre-Cana teams and for their Mother-Daughter/Father-Son Fertility Appreciation Programs. If you'd be willing to donate a few hours a year, please call Mary Ann Chezick at (856) 756-7900, ext. 6314.



Next PNFPN Meeting

Minutes and agenda for the next scheduled meeting can be obtained by calling Dorice Millar at (610) 873-8334.

The Pope addresses Catholic Obstetricians and Gynecologists

In a June 18th address, Pope John Paul II made the following remarks to participants in a Congress organized by the Pontifical Council for Health Care. The 140 doctors who gathered in Rome for the meeting, coming from 40 different countries, had reported a troubling trend toward discrimination against Christian doctors. Life Cycles has obtained the following address of John Paul II from the Vatican website:

On the occasion of the International Congress of Catholic Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Monday 18 June 2001

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I warmly welcome your visit on the occasion of the International Congress of Catholic Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, at which you are reflecting upon your future in the light of the fundamental right to medical training and practice according to conscience. Through you, I greet all those health workers who, as servants and guardians of life, bear unceasing witness throughout the world to the presence of Christ's Church in this vital field, especially when human life is threatened by the burgeoning culture of death.

In particular, I thank professor Gian Luigi Gigli for his kind words on your behalf, and I greet Professor Robert Walley, co-organizer of your Meeting.

2. Christian obstetricians, gynaecologists and obstetric nurses are always called to be servants and guardians of life, for "the Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus' message. Lovingly received day after day by the Church, it is to be preached with dauntless fidelity as 'good news' to the people of every age and culture" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 1). But your profession has become still more important and your responsibility still greater "in today's cultural and social context, in which science and the practice of medicine risk losing sight of their inherent ethical dimension, [and] health-care professionals can be strongly tempted at times to become manipulators of life, or even agents of death" (*ibid.*, 89). Until quite recently, medical ethics in general and Catholic morality were rarely in disagreement. Without problems of conscience, Catholic doctors could generally offer patients all that medical science afforded. But this has now changed profoundly. The availability of contraceptive and abortive drugs, new threats to life in the laws of some countries, some of the uses of prenatal diagnosis, the spread of in vitro fertilization techniques, the consequent production of embryos to deal with sterility, but also their destination to scientific research, the use of embryonic stem cells for the development of tissue for transplants to cure degenerative diseases, and projects of full or partial cloning, already done with animals: all of these have changed the situation radically. Moreover, conception, pregnancy and childbirth are no longer understood as ways of cooperating with the Creator in the marvelous task of giving life to a new human being. Instead they are often perceived as a burden and even as an ailment to be cured, rather than being seen as a gift from God.

3. Inevitably Catholic obstetricians and gynaecologists and nurses are caught

up in these tensions and changes. They are exposed to a social ideology which asks them to be agents of a concept of "reproductive health" based on new reproductive technologies. Yet despite the pressure upon their conscience, many still recognize their responsibility as medical specialists to care for the tiniest and weakest of human beings, and to defend those who have no economic or social power, or public voice of their own. The conflict between social pressure and the demands of right conscience can lead to the dilemma either of abandoning the medical profession or of compromising one's convictions. Faced with that tension, we must remember that there is a middle path which opens up before Catholic health workers who are faithful to their conscience. It is the path of conscientious objection, which ought to be respected by all, especially legislators.

4. In striving to serve life, we must work to ensure that the right to professional training and practice that is respectful of conscience in law and in practice is guaranteed. It is clear, as I noted in my Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, that "Christians, like all people of good will, are called upon under grave obligation of conscience not to cooperate formally in practices which, even if permitted by civil legislation, are contrary to God's law. Indeed, from the moral standpoint, it is never licit to cooperate formally in evil" (No. 74). Wherever the right to train for and practice medicine with respect for one's moral convictions is violated, Catholics must earnestly work for redress. In particular, Catholic universities and hospitals are called to follow the directives of the Church's Magisterium in every aspect of obstetric and gynaecological practice, including research involving embryos. They should also offer a qualified and internationally recognized teaching network, in order to help doctors who are sub-

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ject to discrimination or unacceptable pressure on their moral convictions to specialize in obstetrics and gynaecology.

5. It is my fervent hope that at the beginning of this new millennium, all Catholic medical and health care personnel, whether in research or practice, will commit themselves whole-heartedly to the service of human life. I trust that the local Churches will give due attention to the medical profession, promoting the ideal of unambiguous service to the great miracle of life, supporting obstetricians, gynaecologists and health workers who respect the right to life by helping to bring them together for mutual support and the exchange of ideas and experiences. Entrusting you and your mission as guardians and servants of life to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to all who work with you in bearing witness to the Gospel of life.

Remember to tell everyone:
Our WEBSITE: www.pnfpn.org
Our phone number:
(215) 885 - 8760

NFP goes on the air

Lester Ruppertsberger, D.O., FACOOG, a "NFP-only" gynecologist and PNFPN member may soon have a new career as a radio personality. Our sources tell us that he has been offered to do a program on NFP by Jim Manfredonia, the owner and program director of WISP 1570 AM.

The program is planned to run once a month for a full hour and have a call-in format. At press time the first show was slated for Friday 9/21 at the 4-5 PM time slot. The details of the program will be finalized at the end of the summer. Says Dr. Ruppertsberger: "I don't have a name or a theme song or a logo or even an "agenda" of topics but I know the Lord will lead me where He wants me to go."

To help make this project successful, PNFPN members are welcome to send their topic ideas to Dr. Ruppertsberger c/o P.O. Box 220, Jenkintown, PA 19046

Opportunities for Education and Training

Events sponsored by the CCL:

Physician Seminar in Cincinnati, Ohio with 11.25 Continuing Medical Education Credits September 14 - 16, 2001 and March 15 - 17, 2002.

Clergy Seminar in Cincinnati, Ohio November 6 - 8, 2001.

Contact Ginny Niehaus for both events at: 513-471-2000

Events sponsored by the Augustine Foundation:

Sept. 17, 2001 Conference for Priests and OB/GYNs

Topics include Pope John Paul's Theology of the Body as explained by Father Hogan, Father McCaffery's NFP outreach and an update on the use of fertility monitors by Dr. Richard Ferhing.

Sept. 29 - 30, 2001 NFP Weekend Mission lead by Father McCaffrey Immaculate Heart of Mary Parrish, Scarsdale, NY

Contact Dorothy Dugandzic for both events at 1-877-554-4637

Our Ongoing Appeal

In our previous issues we asked for your financial support of the PNFPN. Some of you have contributed generously and we thank you again for your sacrifice. Life Cycles is a free publication and our wish is to keep it that way. We need to cover the costs of printing and postage so that we can continue to be the source of news and information for the NFP promotion community in the Philadelphia and Southern NJ region. God bless you for your donations.

\$5 \$10 \$15 Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send your contribution to the following address:

P.O. Box 220 Jenkintown, PA 19046

Become a Member of the PNFPN

If you are not registered in the PNFPN, please join us. We need your talents and support if we are to be successful. Consider what would be possible if more people understood the gift God gave us in our cyclic fertility. If you know of someone who is dedicated to the promotion of NFP in the Philadelphia region that is not currently a member please snip this out and send it to him or her. Feel free to make as many photocopies as you wish.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail _____

Profession or association with NFP: _____

(Clergy, laity, couple, health care professional, promoter, pro-life advocate, etc.)

Are you a member of an organization that provides instruction in NFP?

(Archdiocese Family Life Office, C.C.L., Family of the Americas , or other)

Would you agree to have your name, address and phone # listed in a directory for PNFPN members only? Yes No

Mail to: George and Eileen Finnin
3842 Lywiski Road
Collegeville, PA 19426-1025

God's little blessings

*Catherine Bernadette
born on May 2, 2001 to
Lucy and Tom Pascos.*

*Rachel Elizabeth
born on March 19, 2001 to
Maureen and Tom Fusco.*

*Mary Margaret
born on June 16, 2001 to
Beth and Darren Poley.*

Road Trip Anyone?

A number of PNFPN members are planning to travel to New York on September 17 to attend the Augustine Foundation's Conference. If you are interested in joining please call: (215) 885-8766

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