

Life Cycles



Fall 2010

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

An Abundance of NFP Information at National Conferences

by Tara Plymouth

As Administrator of NFP at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, it is a priority to stay updated on research and trends in NFP practice. I was blessed this July 2010 to attend three NFP-related conferences. So much helpful information was presented that I cannot fit it all here, but I would like to share some of it.

“Human Fertility: Where Faith and Science Meet” (Sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and several other religious and NFP organizations.) Items of note:

- An NFP “breastfeeding protocol” developed by Marquette University and using the Clearblue electronic fertility monitor is very accurate with correct usage, and can be helpful to those having a hard time interpreting their fertility signs during this transition time after birth.
- Interestingly, a representative of Planned Parenthood attended at least a portion of the conference. She said she wanted to make sure her local office made available all available family planning methods, including NFP, and that she wanted to learn more about NFP.

“FertilityCare: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Truth” (sponsored by the American Academy of Fertility-Care Professionals, who promote Naprotechnology and the Creighton model of NFP):

- Because currently so many people avoid sun exposure, and there are very few dietary sources of vitamin D, many people are deficient in it. Vitamin D is involved in bone and muscle maintenance, immune and cardiovascular system health, prevention of cancer, and healthy delivery of children. Taking vitamin D3 supplements can be helpful.
- For those practicing NFP with a very important reason not to become pregnant (such as those taking medicines or treatment which could cause severe birth defects), the Pope Paul VI Institute’s “family planning progesterone level” protocol can be helpful in confirming that the patient is in the post-ovulatory infertile phase of her cycle, by evaluating her blood level of progesterone.

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Letter from the President

Happy end of summer...I think. I know it has been hot, but it has also been short, or is it that I am getting old. At any rate, the Theology of the Body Institute congress held in the end of July was excellent and had many international attendees and speakers. Over 400 people attended the three day congress and it was great to “network” with all the attendees at the breaks (PNFPN had a display table). I was able to connect with a lot of local people as potential speakers at our annual conference and recharge the “batteries”, so to speak, for the upcoming busy fall.

We had another NFP awareness week this past July 25, which coincided with the end of the congress and again I heard several good homilies on NFP; hope you requested some of your priests and deacons, and if not, plan on doing so next year. Imagine, 42 years since *Humanae Vitae* and 50 years of the “pill”.

...Next on the calendar is Respect Life Sunday, Oct 2-3.

Please consider doing something for life; ask your priests and deacons for a homily on life; ask your adult ed program to sponsor a speaker program on life, especially with very special elections coming up in November. This is the perfect time and venue to learn what the Catholic church teaches on the “five non-negotiables” and voting one’s conscience (go to HLI.org or priestsforlife.org to get more info.).

Finally, with the latest current medical research, only 0.1% of US women currently use modern methods of natural family planning. We have a LONG way to go and our network is still working hard to promote NFP. Please join, please pay dues, and please go to our website and check out our resources. Plan on attending the PNFPN conference this year. Dates to follow.

Thanks and God bless,
Les Ruppertsberger, D.O.

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Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

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An Abundance of NFP Information

Continued from front cover

“National Theology of the Body Congress: Receiving and Proclaiming the Gift” (sponsored by numerous Catholic organizations):

- The history of contraception and NFP formed along different tracks, although nearly parallel in time. Contraceptive researchers studied the reproductive system in order to change and control fertility. NFP researchers studied the reproductive system in order to respect and live with fertility.
- Because of the body-soul unity of the person, understanding the body through NFP helps engaged couples and spouses to understand each other. NFP challenges the spouses to live out their sexuality according to God’s will; used rightly, it can be a tool to foster human formation in holiness.

The “Net”works

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IN SPANISH

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VOORHEES, NJ • SEPTEMBER 23

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Responsible Love by George & Eileen Finnin

Love is one of the most over utilized words today. What does it mean for a couple to love one another? Today the expression to “Make Love” is a synonym for having sexual relations. But is that really loving?

A 2007 Zogby International poll reported 56% of college age students considered themselves “sexually active” A quote from the poll comments - “Harvard’s health department reported last year that 47 percent of students there said they had not yet had vaginal intercourse. (Numbers not adjusted for homosexuality, apparently.) At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a 2001 survey found that only 51 percent of undergrads had lost their virginity; at Princeton the same year, the student body was 44 percent pure.” This tends to say that, by college age, self gratification is expected. Yet if this is love, why does the media continue to report stories of increased depression, alcoholism, gambling, divorces, violence, etc. as problems? Few people tend to ask ques-

tions as to – why is this so? Could it be that “freedom” to have sex with anyone at anytime without responsibility is not uplifting? In fact, could it have severe consequences?

A couple using contraceptives normally choose not to understand how a woman’s body works and want to have sexual relations whenever they want. But, with two people wanting to have sexual relations at different times, this can lead to conflict. And then they can get into a disagreement that the other is not giving me what I want now. This creates tensions in their relationship.

A couple using natural methods of birth regulation lives responsibly by understanding how a woman’s body does what it does and then makes responsible decisions. Part of making love is agreeing to be separate at various times during a woman’s cycle when trying to postpone pregnancy. When we teach NFP to couples we remind them that the sacrifice to postpone what I may want for the good of our marriage is another way to show my love.

“...the sacrifice to postpone what I may want for the good of our marriage is another way to show my love.”

Another Way to Kill Babies by Les Ruppertsberger, D.O.

This past summer our FDA approved another abortifacient drug—ulipristal—unfortunately being sold as Ella (or Ella one). This joins the current RU-486 and IUD’s and hormonal contraceptives as abortifacients. However, this “new” drug is being marketed to join the other “morning after” pill, Plan B, as a morning after pill that can be used up to five days after intimacy. Further, it is a progesterone blocking agent. It blocks progesterone receptors essentially preventing implantation of a fertilized egg (embryo/baby). It can also decrease the effectiveness of the corpus luteum which is the ovarian cyst producing progesterone to maintain the pregnancy. There is nothing secretive about the function of this drug, nor its purpose.

There is no other drug in its class. It can create problems in women with asthma. It is not indicated for women under 18. It should not be taken by people who have altered liver function. It may cause headaches, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and a delayed period. If it does not prevent a pregnancy (2% of the time) and it may cause an ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy in fallopian tube), which

can be fatal. The package insert and literature claim that its mechanism of action is “unknown”, but may inhibit ovulation, increase thickness of cervical mucus, and finally, thin the lining of the uterus to prevent implantation of a baby. Of course, its supporters do not agree that it has abortifacient properties, but this is the first of its class of progesterone receptor modulators that will be used by women to prevent pregnancies.

In the meantime, latest research shows a very small number of women in the U.S. using NFP methods (99% effective with no side effects and no abortifacient properties). The methods of aborting babies will continue to increase as technology and drugs “improve”, but one must question the wisdom of such as we as a society proceed precipitously down the slippery slope of the culture of death, and watch quietly as our families disintegrate before our eyes and our future is destroyed in the womb.

May God help us and Our Lady protect us from this holocaust.

Fact:

NFP is 99% effective with no side effects and no abortifacient properties

The following paragraphs are taken from an article:
Connections: Living Natural Family Planning
By John and Jennifer Campbell, Washington, D.C.

The entire article can be found at
<http://foryourmarriage.org/connections-living-natural-family-planning>

At the beginning of our married life, we used NFP to avoid pregnancy, as the time was not right for it. Currently, we are using NFP to achieve pregnancy. We were delighted to find that the two focuses of NFP have made our young marriage both more focused and more intimate.

Unlike artificial contraception, which usually places full burden of family planning on the woman, NFP promotes shared responsibility of the fertility of both the husband and wife. It lends a spirit of togetherness to a marriage. There's no "Have you taken your pill?" That is, "Are you safe?" In our marriage there's no holding back that precious part of ourselves—our fertility. Rather than a burden to be dealt with, for us it is a blessing to be understood and respected. The complete self-giving says, "I love all of you."

The benefits of NFP extend beyond family planning. We'd heard that often the husband will develop a deeper respect for his wife and the gift of her fertility. In practice, we've found this to be true. A constant awareness of cycles and phases makes it easier to perceive when to be loving and gentle, extra patient and thoughtful, and when to resume physical intimacy.

Unlike a couple using contraception in their marriage, sex is not always an option for two who are living NFP. That's a good thing, contrary to what popular culture might imply. By experiencing times when we cannot engage in physical intimacy, the moments that we can are made all the more poignant and precious. Even when we want to engage, and the chart says "no way, buddy," it lends an element of bittersweet waiting.

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