

Life Cycles



Spring 2010

The newsletter of the

Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

NFP and Infertility by Tara Plymouth

The beginning of the Disney/Pixar movie “Up” touchingly illustrates the issue of infertility in a brief montage. It shows a young couple falling in love, seeing visions of babies in the clouds, decorating a nursery, and then sadly learning in a doctor’s office of the diagnosis of infertility. NFP can be used to help people conceive, through targeted intercourse during fertile times. However, there is a careful orchestration of hormones, glands, and reproductive system functionality within two separate people that miraculously coordinate to co-create a child with God. If even one of these components is off-key, conception difficulties occur. It is often challenging to determine precisely why a couple cannot conceive. Many people will not know in this life why they are infertile, and the pain of infertility can cause deep suffering.

In vitro fertilization and most other reproductive technologies are against Church teaching (see *Donum vitae* and *Dignitas personae*), since (among numerous

reasons) they separate the unitive and procreative aspects of the marital act, and they treat children as commodities. Adoption, although very worthy, is not always the answer. Some couples aren’t ready for the risks involved, or can’t afford the tens of thousands of dollars often required. Sometimes couples face the cross of others thinking that since they don’t have children, they must be contracepting.

How can our understanding and practice of NFP help us with the difficulty of infertility, or to be empathetic towards others experiencing it? Utilizing NFP can be a school of sacrifice. Abstaining during fertile times is difficult. However, practiced correctly, and without a contraceptive mentality, this difficulty is turned into a sacrifice for love of the other, and for the good of the family. Also, one can offer difficulties to the Lord, to transform into a redemptive offering. Infertile families can likewise give their suffering and unfulfilled longing

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Letter from the President

HELLO AND HELP!

As we enter a new year, we all need to make a renewed commitment to defending life and ending the culture of death. As all who read this newsletter know, Natural Family Planning is at the forefront of defending life, including family life and marriage. NFP is not a method of spacing children, it is a lifestyle. In addition to living the lifestyle, we supporters of NFP need to confront the reality of the battles we face: contraception, abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, assisted reproductive technologies, divorce, STDs, promiscuous out of wedlock sexual activity, pornography... and the list goes on.

PNFPN is trying to do its part. We are having a conference on May 1, “The Bitter Pill: the Truth about Hormonal Contraception” with Brian Gail, author of

Fatherless. We are sponsoring a billboard campaign to promote NFP linking to www.thinknatural.com. We are working with the Family Life Office to enhance and facilitate this promotion.

We NEED your financial help. We NEED your membership and your dues. We NEED your prayers. Please consider joining our network and sending in your dues. If all of those who receive this newsletter joined, we would have enough money to fund more billboard and ad campaigns. We can win this battle, but not without God and not without you.

God’s Blessings to all,
Les Ruppertsberger, D.O.

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Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

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NFP and Infertility

Continued from front cover

to conceive a child to Him. God uses this suffering to glorify His name and bring about the salvation of souls. All of us are in fact called to give everything to God, and to serve Him, even in the suffering of infertility.

NFP also helps couples to remain focused on giving themselves totally to another. NFP does not utilize barriers between spouses, thereby allowing complete self-gift to the other. Even if an act of marital love does not bring about conception, the spouses still give themselves fully, and offer complete acceptance of the other. One “speaks” a word of full and fruitful love to the other with one’s body. This fruitfulness enriches one’s life and confers an openness to the good of others, both within and outside of the marital bond. Infertile couples are a sign to the world that the fullness of life is found in spiritual fecundity and the complete gift of self in love.

The “Net” works

NFP Classes and Introductory Sessions

Free introductory sessions of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System

For more information, visit www.pnfpn.org or call the number listed.

HARLEYSVILLE, PA
MARCH 24 • APRIL 7 & 14
Diana King-Gates, FCPI • (215) 855-5494

JENKINTOWN, PA • APRIL 8
Barbara Rose, RN, MSN, FCP • (215) 884-2922

BROOMALL, PA • APRIL 13
Marcia Niznan, MS, FCP • (610) 789-4547

EXTON, PA • APRIL 21 • MAY 9 & 19
Helen LaFrance, PA, FCP • (610) 436-8323

Philadelphia Family Life Office classes in the Sympto-Thermal method of NFP

For more information, visit www.pnfpn.org or call the Family Life Office at (215) 587-5639.

NARBERTH, PA • APRIL 12

YARDLEY, PA • MAY 11

PHILADELPHIA, PA • MAY 13 (IN SPANISH)

NORRISTOWN, PA • MAY 14

WAYNE, PA • JUNE 1

PHILADELPHIA, PA • JULY 15

PLEASE see if you can have the flier to the right included in parish bulletins or other places of interest! An electronic copy is available at the www.pnfpn.org website.

“The Hope Retreat: A Day of Support and Healing for Couples Struggling with Infertility” (Saturday, April 17, 2010), presented by FertilityCare™ practitioners, will be a time to help couples step aside from daily struggles, focus on their marriage, learn coping techniques, and receive spiritual and emotional support and encouragement. For more information, please see www.fertilitycarefriends.org/hoperetreat.html.



Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network &
Philadelphia Catholic Medical Association &
St. Mary Medical Center present

The Bitter Pill

The Truth about Hormonal Contraception

SATURDAY, MAY 1
8:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL
PARISH HALL
611 Knowles Avenue ♦ Southampton, PA 18966

GUEST SPEAKERS
Brian Gail, Author of *Fatherless*
Angela Lanfranchi, M.D., Director of Breast Cancer Prevention Institute

TO REGISTER (Continental breakfast and box lunch will be provided.)

\$15 per person \$25 per couple \$10 for religious and students

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

How did you hear about this conference?

Newspaper Church Bulletin Flier Radio Word of Mouth Other

Please mail this information, along with a check payable to PNFPPN, to George Finnin, 3842 Lywiski Road, Collegeville, PA 19426. For more information, e-mail grfinnin@verizon.net or visit

www.pnfpn.org

Please
register by
April 15!

NFP for Social Health

By Elizabeth Brunner

After eight months of marriage, my husband and I decided to stop using the pill. It was not a decision we made lightly, and one we weren't ready to make just "because the Church says so." However, once we learned of the numerous social, spiritual, and physical health benefits of NFP, we realized that NFP was the best approach towards sexuality and the only admissible approach towards our future parenthood. This article describes the social health advantages that resounded most with us; future articles will address the spiritual and physical health advantages.

Since the inception of widely available, reliable contraception, we have seen a dramatic rise in the divorce rate, a surge in abortions, an increase in out-of-wedlock babies, a proliferation of STDs, and a societal acceptance of pornography. While my husband and I didn't intend to take part in any of these things, the knowledge that we were involved in an activity which fostered this was unacceptable. We wanted more for our marriage.

Practicing NFP has given me greater respect for my husband. NFP encourages strong spousal relationships and fortifies marital commitment. The American divorce rate hovers around 50%. The divorce rate for NFP couples is less than 5%, evidence that wide-scale lasting marriage is certainly still possible. Since starting NFP, my husband and I frequently discuss what each of us wants for our family. It has essentially instituted a monthly marriage check-up. NFP promotes an environment in which it is easy to communicate with your spouse. After all, if you can talk about mucus signs, you can talk about anything!

The practice of NFP is valuable to both married couples and greater society. Marriage is the pillar upon which society is built, and the health of society hinges on the health of individual marriages. NFP ensures a healthy marriage.

Editor's Note: Elizabeth and her husband, Gregory, have a very interesting web presence (and some really good pages on NFP) at www.thatmarriedcouple.com.

Don't Forget the 2010 PNFPN Conference on May 1

Visit www.pnfpn.org for more information.

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