

Become a member of the PNFNP

For the past seven years the PNFNP has existed solely on the generosity of a few people and never asked its members to pay dues. While we believe that news and information regarding NFP in the Philadelphia region should remain free, we realize that our efforts to engage in promotional activities is severely limited without a source of income. Therefore, we are appealing to our members to consider a yearly donation to enable us to continue our efforts in spreading the good news of NFP. We ask that you send \$15 for an individual membership, \$25 for a couple and \$10 for students. Those of you who donate will become members and will be eligible to vote for the executive board members each year. The PNFNP still intends to provide free copies of Life Cycles to all who are on the mailing list. We believe that the distribution of this publication is a valuable service. Please clip out the following and send your check to PNFNP, P.O. Box 220, Jenkintown, PA 19046.

Name: _____

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

Any additional information or comments _____

Do you have any news?

Life Cycles is your newsletter. Please remember to contact the editor or staff whenever you have information that should be valuable to PNFNP members. Our readers are interested in far more than just NFP class schedules. Please share with them your NFP training sessions, fertility appreciation programs, outreach activities happening on college campuses, Christian social functions, parish programs and health fairs. We also love to hear about God's little blessings, so kindly share with us announcements of births or adoptions. For more information on how to submit news and information call Barbara Rose at (215) 884-2922 or e-mail loveandlife@acninc.net

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Summer 2005

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

A Message from your President

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference held on April 2nd. Christopher West's presentations were great. As usual he left my head spinning with details of Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. There was a bittersweet moment when an announcement was made that our Pope had passed from this world. What better time to hear the news than when part of his teaching was being presented. We all took a moment to pray for his soul and to thank our Lord for his time with us.

I had many rewarding conversations during the breaks. I was impressed by a young engaged couple who both taught at a high school. They related how they teach the Church's understanding of sexuality and chastity and how they use themselves as examples. Also, I observed conversations between Archdiocesan and Creighton model teachers. They were sharing their experiences. Then I had a good talk with a person representing the St. Augustine Foundation. We were discussing how to get the Knights of Columbus more actively involved with promoting NFP.

Hopefully all who attended had good experiences as they shared their story with others. Where else can you get together with 160 very pro Natural Family Planning people? The Net Works! I saw it in action again. We are already talking about doing it again next year.

God Bless

PS: For any who missed Christopher West, his material is available at www.luminousmedia.org.
PPS: LOOK FOR OUR ANNUAL PNFPN MEMBERSHIP APPEAL IN A MAILBOX NEAR YOU

CCLI Broadening Appeal by Incorporating Theology of the Body

by Tom Bengtson

The Couple to Couple League International (CCLI), a leading provider of education in Natural Family Planning (NFP), is revising its teaching approach to incorporate Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body. After considering the changes for more than a year, the League's Board of Directors voted in January to move in a direction it believes will broaden the appeal of its NFP education. A two-year process of updating CCLI teaching materials has been underway, and the organization has now dedicated this project to the memory of the Holy Father.

Since 1971, CCLI has instructed more than 171,500 engaged and married couples in the art of NFP through their series of classes, while basing the morality component on the covenant theology. It was an appropriate application of Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*. Pope John Paul II brought new understanding to the meaning of marital love in his series of talks from 1979 to 1984 which is popularly known as the "Theology of the Body." The basic tenets of this new theological synthesis that relate to NFP will be incorporated throughout all of CCLI's teaching materials and the organization's affairs. This includes the League's training and education, teaching, writing, counseling, and the like.

This change will allow CCLI to better connect with member couples and those attending its classes and reading its publications. The organization plans to use the Pope's Theology of the Body approach to emphasize the emotional, physical and spiritual benefits of fidelity and periodic abstinence in marriage.

"Our goal is to help couples grow closer to God by living this theology," said Linda Kracht, CCLI Chairman of the Board. "CCLI's Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP gives them the practical tools for doing this."

CCLI remains committed to its "triple strand" educational approach, which combines the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP, moral theology as it applies to marital intimacy, and the importance of ecological breastfeeding and its effect on the natural spacing of children.

"Pope John Paul II's descriptions of marital love as a reflection of God's love have proven compelling for people all over the world," commented Fr. Richard Hogan, CCLI Board Member. "CCLI is eager to use this theological construct, which has already proven very appealing to engaged and young married people, so the League saw this as a natural step."

CCLI is continuing to grow with NFP outreach in 23 countries, and nearly 8,000 couples per year are taught in the United States by more than 950 volunteer teaching couples. "In addition to updating our theological foundation, we're looking into new technologies to deliver our instruction, updating our teaching materials and adding new opportunities for teacher training," said Andrew B. Alderson, CCLI executive director. "We expect to become even more proficient at providing NFP education and support to anyone who wants it."

The Couple to Couple League International, based in Cincinnati, was founded in 1971 to teach engaged and married couples the Sympto-Thermal Method of Natural Family Planning. For more information, visit www.ccli.org.

Life Cycles

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

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NFP Speaker's Bureau Forming

By Michael Castagno

A committee, appointed by Cardinal Rigali to evaluate current marriage preparation policy in the Philadelphia Archdiocese and to suggest future policy, has submitted its report to the Cardinal's office. After much discussion, the committee has recommended, among other things, that it be mandatory for every couple presenting themselves for marriage in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to receive a comprehensive presentation on NFP in their marriage prep or Pre Cana program.

The discussion did not center around whether or not this requirement or mandate was appropriate, or if such a requirement was in the best interest of the couple (the entire committee agreed that it was), but rather whether priests, deacons and Pre Cana teams throughout the Archdiocese had the resources to fulfill such a mandate from the Cardinal's office, should he approve this recommendation.

The PNFPN, in conjunction with the Family Life Office, is forming a speaker's bureau. WE NEED COUPLES who are willing to witness to engaged couples and share the beauty of Natural Family Planning and its very powerful, positive impact on their marriage.

The presentation will be approximately one hour. The Archdiocese will provide guidelines and necessary training to enable the volunteer couples to present with confidence. The time commitment will be minimal. A couple could pick and choose how often (every couple of weeks) or how little

(once every couple of months), that they wish to volunteer. The schedule will be designed to meet the needs of the presenters' work and family life.

In 2003 (latest available statistics), 4,465 couples were married by a priest or deacon in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. I'm wondering how many of these couples actually heard a compelling presentation on NFP prior to their marriage.

We have a golden opportunity here to spread the good news of NFP, but WE NEED YOUR HELP – YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP!!

If you are interested in finding out more about participating in the speaker's bureau, please contact Michael Castagno at 215-884-8555, ext. 10 during the day, or 215-885-8388 in the evening.

God's little blessings

Easton born February 2, 2005
to Laurie and Dr. Drew Ruppertsberger

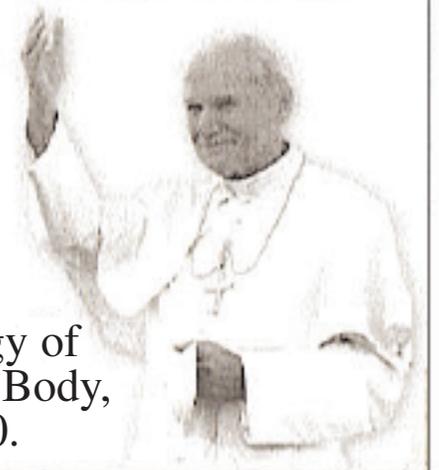
Alaina Victoria born March 14, 2005
to Alison and Gary Steele

Michael Richard Gerard born April 28, 2005
to Chris and Maria Meredith

Suzanne Mary born April 28, 2005
to Liz and Scott Parrish

Who's the World's Greatest NFP Instructor? Answer: Pope John Paul II

Okay, so maybe he doesn't know how to teach "charting", but he does understand—perhaps better than anyone else—why Natural Family Planning is in accord with God's plan. The topic of NFP is one of hundreds of truths the Pope speaks about in his landmark collection of works known as the "theology of the body". To learn more about the Theology of the Body, visit www.LuminousMedia.org or call 800-376-0520.



The "Net" works

NFP CLASSES and INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS

Pennsylvania

June 9 - Oreland

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be located at 88 Pennsylvania Avenue in Oreland, 19075. Please call Barbara Rose, RN, FCP at (215) 884-2922 for more information and registration.

June 9 - Linfield

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System. Please call Elizabeth Kauffeld, FCP at (610) 495-8821 for more information and registration.

June 27 - Perkasio

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System. Please call Liz Parrish, RN, FCP at (215) 249-9829 for more information and registration.

June 27 - Hatfield

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the CCL will be held at St. Maria Goretti Parish Center. For registration call Kristen Federmeier at (215) 712-0199, ext. 202 or email smgfaithformation@yahoo.com

July 7 - Oreland

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be located at 88 Pennsylvania Avenue in Oreland, 19075. Please call Barbara Rose, RN, FCP at (215) 884-2922 for more information and registration.

July 11 - Perkasio

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System. Please call Liz Parrish, RN, FCP at (215) 249-9829 for more information and registration.

August 5 - Norristown

The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the sympto-thermal method of natural family planning at Epiphany of Our Lord, Walton & Township Line Roads. For more information and registration please call (215) 587-5639.

August 8 - Perkasio

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System. Please call Liz Parrish, RN, FCP at (215) 249-9829 for more information and registration.

August 11 - Oreland

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be located at 88 Pennsylvania Avenue in Oreland, 19075. Please call Barbara Rose, RN, FCP at (215) 884-2922 for more information and registration.

September 13 - Wynnewood

The Philadelphia Family Life Office will sponsor a class in the sympto-thermal method of natural family planning at St. Charles Seminary, 1000 E. Wynnewood Rd. For more information and registration please call (215) 587-5639.

September 15 - Oreland

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System will be located at 88 Pennsylvania Avenue in Oreland, 19075. Please call Barbara Rose, RN, FCP at (215) 884-2922 for more information and registration.

September 16 - Perkasio

Free Introductory Session of the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System. Please call Liz Parrish, RN, FCP at (215) 249-9829 for more information and registration.

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. Pre-registration is required. For information call: (856) 756 - 7900 ext. 6315 or email: nfpoffice@camdendiocese.org

Sunday, June 5; 1 - 4 PM
St. Isidore Church, Vineland

Wednesday, September 14; 7 - 9:30 PM
St. Charles Borromeo Church, Sicklerville

Natural Family Planning Awareness Week is July 24-30, 2005

It's time to get your NFP Awareness Week posters. Double sided (English/Spanish) 17" x 22" posters are available for just \$ 2.75 each plus shipping and handling. Hurry, while supplies last !
To order call 1-866-582-0943 and ask for order # 0522 (special pricing for quantity orders). For additional resources, see www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/nfpweek/index.htm

Kudos

To the PNFPN Conference committee for a fantastic job again this year. Special thanks to John Cogan, Michael Castagno, George Finnin, Liz Parrish, RN, FCP, Dr. Lester Ruppertsberger and Betty Ruppertsberger.

To St. Mary Medical Center for their generous hospitality on April 2!

Joseph F. Hare, CPA



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One Couple's Journey to NFP

By Kristen Colton

Our story may seem ironic, but we've discovered that the good Lord works in funny ways. A doctor who, as far as we know was neither Christian nor pro-life, played a pivotal role in my husband's and my adoption of Natural Family Planning and our eventual commitment to Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body.

Randy and I are Southern Baptist, so we did not grow up hearing the Catholic Church's teaching on contraception. However, prior to marrying we decided to investigate the issue of contraception and determine what we should do. Randy, a philosopher, was familiar with Catholic teaching, and so we read "Humane Vitae" together. But we could not discern any ethical difference between using contraception and using NFP to space out children. So, we adopted the view that we would be open to the number of children that the Lord wanted to bless us with but would use contraception to space them out. And so, about four months before marrying, I scheduled an appointment with my GYN, told her I had migraines, and she prescribed a birth control pill for me, which I began to take.

Randy and I married and life went along smoothly for five months until I had a very bad migraine in November. I typically experience a visual aura, but this migraine was different. My visual aura lasted for over half an hour. I could not feel my left arm and I was having problems processing what people were saying. I was scared that I had had a stroke. I made an appointment with my new doctor, Dr. Smith*, to ensure everything was all right.

Dr. Smith asked me what medication I was taking, and I sheepishly named the birth control pill. (I was obviously never really comfortable with the fact that I was taking it.) She examined me, pronounced me well, and sent me home. That evening, after office hours, I received a phone call from her instructing me

to stop taking the pill immediately, because I was at an increased risk for stroke. And so, that evening, without another method of birth control in sight, I did not take the pill.

Randy and I made a follow-up visit with Dr. Smith to discuss other options. At that appointment, as Dr. Smith explained the way the pill and other options worked, she only made eye contact with me. To Randy, it was apparent that she viewed this as solely my problem, driving a subtle wedge between us. To me, it was apparent how the pill worked to alienate me from my own body. We had heard of NFP from a couple before we married and asked Dr. Smith about it. She was not too encouraging about that alternative.

Upon leaving her office, Randy and I discussed our impressions and decided that the only real option was to learn NFP. This decision turned out to be a gift from God. At the time we lived in Chicago, so I called the Archdiocese and was referred to a Billings Ovulation Method instructor. She was a godsend. She was a convert to Catholicism, which meant that she understood our Protestant perspectives. In addition, she herself had used the pill, so I felt no condemnation from her. We learned the method and began practicing it over four years ago.

Since then, we have had three children. Our biggest surprise came when we were blessed with fraternal twins. Once we began practicing the Billings Ovulation Method, Randy went back and reread Humane Vitae. At that point, he could see the errors we had made in our thinking when first married. And we have come to adopt the Catholic Church's teaching on contraception. In fact, we feel so strongly about it that we have spoken to college students at Randy's evangelical school, Eastern University, sharing our story and John Paul's theology of the body.

Little does Dr. Smith know how the Lord used her in our lives. At the time, it seemed the fur-

thest thing from a gift, but our lives have been changed and we have been blessed by her simple phone call.

* Name of doctor has been changed in this story

Understanding God's Gift of Fertility

By Stacey McCormick

As Catholics, it is our duty to know, understand and embrace the teachings of our faith. Unfortunately, the Church's teaching on contraception and natural family planning has become one followed by the few. In fact, most Catholics actually fall into one of three categories: 1) unaware or misinformed about the Church's teaching, 2) aware of the teaching but rationalize they have sufficient reason to justify contracepting, 3) aware of the teaching but reject it fully. In addition, most Catholics have either never heard of Natural Family Planning (NFP) or have a very limited knowledge of it.

God's purpose for intercourse is clear. "God blessed them, saying: Be fertile and multiply" (Gen 1:28). God created us male and female so that through the marital embrace we might express our love, give ourselves unconditionally to our spouses and accept His gift of new life. In this way, intercourse is unitive and procreative; it promotes bonding of the couple and yields the gift of children. When we use contraception, we intentionally reject the gift that God intends to give us. We say "no" to God, in favor of our own will and desires. Contraception also disrupts the unitive nature of intercourse. By contracepting we tell our spouse, "I accept all of you, except your fertility" or "I am giving all of myself, except my fertility."

Our fertility is a gift, yet contraceptives treat it as a disease. We take pills or shots, use patches and creams, mutilate our reproductive organs, all to or suppress or kill our fertility, while actually harming our bodies. Hormone-based contraceptives have dangerous health

risks such as blood clots, stroke and heart attack. All other methods of birth control carry some risk of adverse side effects. Tubal ligation can cause life-threatening ectopic pregnancies, chronic pain and abnormal bleeding. Vasectomies have been linked to pain, dysfunction and an increased risk of prostate cancer. Most importantly, hormone-based contraceptives and IUD's will occasionally allow conception to occur, but cause early abortions by making the lining of the uterus hostile to implantation of the young child in the embryonic stage.

However, despite forbidding contraception and sterilization, God does not expect us to have as many children as physically possible. Rather, we are called to responsible parenthood. "For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by

selfishness... Moreover, they should conform their behavior to the objective criteria of morality" (CCC: 2370). Natural Family Planning is an umbrella term for morally acceptable, highly effective methods of family planning that work cooperatively with God's plan for intercourse. Knowing our needs and loving us as He does, God made women to be fertile only a few days each month, and gave us the ability to easily determine the fertile times. NFP allows couples to achieve or postpone pregnancy by making bodily observations to determine the fertile and infertile times of a woman's menstrual cycle, and using those times accordingly. NFP does not impede the procreative potential of intercourse, rather it allows for full union of spouses, without the rejection of God. Using NFP to postpone pregnancy, couples abstain during fertile times, temporarily sacrificing the pleasure of inter-

course to reach their goal, rather than seeking the pleasure without the consequences.

For these reasons, the Catechism states that contraception is "intrinsically evil." (CCC 2370). That means that if used with full knowledge of the seriousness, it is a grave sin, requiring abstaining from Communion until the person has gone to confession (CCC 1457). This is true even if the spouses think they have good reasons. "Legitimate intentions on the part of spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means (for example, sterilization or contraception)" (CCC 2399). Our Lord has given us a means to practice responsible parenthood without recourse to spiritually or physically harmful methods. Men and women need to trust God, read about and reflect on His teaching, and sincerely pray for the grace to follow His will.

News from Our Members:

Lisann and Michael Castagno, Archdiocesan NFP instructors, participated in a "Theology of the Body and NFP" one day workshop on February 20 at St. John Parish in Manayunk.

Father Steven McDermott requires all engaged couples for whom he is officiating their wedding to attend this workshop, in addition to a marriage prep program. He also strongly recommends that the current RCIA candidates attend as well.

There were about 50 attendees at the session, and the information "seemed to be received quite well," according to Michael. In addition to St. John Parish, Lisann and Michael have shared with us the following successful promotional activities:

Saturday, March 5th -Comprehensive NFP presentation to engaged couples at SS. Peter and Paul parish in Downingtown.

April 14- NFP presentation to four senior classes at St. Basil Academy in Fox Chase.

April 21- NFP presentation to Medical Ethics class at Immaculata College.

April 27- NFP presentation to engaged couples at St. Cecilia parish in Rockledge.

Dorice Millar and Barbara Rose, two registered nurses and Creighton Model FertilityCare practitioners, presented **The Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System, A Natural Extension of Prepared Childbirth Education** to a group of childbirth educators attending a conference sponsored by Healthy Dimensions. The program held on Friday, March 18, was hosted by Mercy Suburban Hospital in Norristown.

Dr. Les Ruppertsberger and his wife Betty, traveled to DuBois, Pa., to St. Catherine of Siena Parish at the invitation of the Diocese of Erie to do a presentation on NFP and Theology of the Body (TOB) and contraception to a group of 22 priests and deacons. Their co-presenter was Fr. Richard Hogan, a nationally renowned lecturer on TOB. The program was on April 14 and was very well received by the priests and deacons present.

Liz Parrish, RN, FCP was granted certification as a FertilityCare Practitioner by the Commission on Certification of the American Academy of FertilityCare Professionals.

The American Academy of FertilityCare Professionals is an organization dedicated to fostering, advancing and promoting quality natural

family planning through service, education, leadership and research.

Certification by the American Academy of FertilityCare Professionals recognizes professional competence in providing FertilityCare services. It also offers the community the assurance of quality services with a strong ethical base.

Barbara Rose, RN, FCP and Judy McLane of Generation Life spoke to classes at SS. Maria Goretti – John Neuman High School in South Philadelphia on April 19. The presentation on Fertility Appreciation and Naprotechnology will forever be remembered by the students as it was interrupted by "Habemus Papam" and the joyous news of Pope Benedict XVI!

Welcome New Members

Kenneth & Roseann Lester - Folsom, PA

James & Dorothy Conway - Hamilton Sq., NJ

Michael & Kathy Zavrotny - Collegeville, PA

John & Erika McCauley - Philadelphia, PA

Barry & Gina Pine - Newtown, PA

Drs. James & Antonietta Galgano - Burlington, NJ