

The Truth and Beauty of NFP

(by Fr. Michael Freihofner)

I ask you [age 14 and above], as you read this, to be open to God's Spirit. If we think with the world (and our flesh and the devil), we will be closed and rigid. All of us should be flexible in the Holy Spirit and open to God's loving plan for our lives. The truth sets us free—not emotions. God teaches us in the Holy Scriptures that children are a blessing. Jesus, the head of our Church, teaches us through Sacred Tradition and the Magisterium (the Pope in union with the Bishops) that children are a blessing. Jesus teaches us that He wants to work with us and through us. We Catholic Christians are open to life. Sex is sacred and is reserved for those who are truly married (one man and one woman, as designed by God).

The marital embrace should always be open to life; this is why any form of masturbation is intrinsically wrong and selfish (we must pray to be chaste and confess our sins frequently). This past week (July 22-28) our Church celebrated Natural Family Planning (NFP) awareness. NFP is a way to work with God and lovingly accept children. God is against any form of artificial birth control and sterilization. Artificial methods of birth control shut God out and lead to an anti-children, selfish-adult *mentality*.

In 1968, Pope Paul VI wrote *Humanae Vitae* (*Of Human Life*). Because of limited space, let's look at the consequences of a society that uses artificial birth control. Pope Paul VI was a prophet, as all of the following things have come to pass. Paragraph 17 of *Humanae Vitae* states:

Responsible men can become more deeply convinced of the truth of the doctrine laid down by the Church on this issue if they reflect on the consequences of methods and plans for artificial birth control. Let them first consider how easily this experience is needed to be fully aware of human weakness and to understand that human beings - and especially the young, who are so exposed to temptation -- need incentives to keep the moral law, and it is an evil thing to make it easy for them to break that law. Another effect that gives cause for alarm is that a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection.

Since the pill and other forms of artificial birth control came on the scene, divorce (~ 52% in the U.S.; 56% in Colorado), adultery, pre-marital sex, cohabitation, STDs, etc. have skyrocketed. The media is fairly quiet about the side-effects of chemical contraceptives. They can cause abortions; so can IUDs. Side effects from the chemicals

include: breast cancer, cysts, migraines, strokes, irritability, depression, weight gain, and reduced libido.

Since sex is seen as primarily for pleasure, and not for procreation in married life, our country has developed a mentality of anything is "legal": homosexual activity, transgender rights, and other alternative lifestyles. Also, men are no longer seen as spiritual leaders.

Our country seems to have a *mentality* of having two children and then "stopping." We Catholics, on the other hand, pray to God and ask Him how many children He wants us to bring into His Kingdom. We let Him be our Lord and Master. The Church allows NFP as a way of spacing births. Many people are afraid of trying it; they think it is too hard or unreliable. We know that fear is behind every sin and that the Bible says not to be afraid 366 times. (God was prepared for leap year!)

There are many advantages to using NFP. Let's look briefly at the spiritual, physical, and relational aspects. Spiritually, NFP couples appreciate the wisdom of the Church and see a woman's fertility as a gift, and not as a disease or side-effect of sexuality. Also, they respect the truth of sexuality and the language of the body. Finally, they become cooperators and co-creators with God. Physically, NFP has no side effects. It is extremely reliable for preventing pregnancy (97-99%). Used with ecological breastfeeding, it promotes important bonding. Breastfeeding also reduces the chances of breast cancer. Relationally, very few NFP marriages end in divorce. It fosters communication and greater mutual respect and trust. Since the couple is working with God, they are open to "surprise" pregnancies. Periodic abstinence fosters self-mastery and generosity; it promotes self-esteem. For those who were chaste before marriage, it recalls the joy of courtship. Couples become better lovers, since the sexual act becomes more the result of choice than of an urgent need. In general, the NFP household is more tranquil, less materialistic, and is a good example to children.

My brothers and sisters, I encourage you to study the teachings of our Church on this issue and pray. God will give you the grace to practice NFP and appreciate it. I invite you to take Dr. Janet Smith's CD, *Contraception: Why Not?*, from the entryway CD racks and learn from it. Please, if you are afraid, don't "shoot the messenger" and "bad-mouth" God's Church. NFP is the teaching of Jesus through His representative, the Pope. It takes discipline to be a disciple of Christ.

Our Archdiocese is blessed. It has been teaching NFP to young couples preparing for marriage for about 20 years now. There are many NFP teachers throughout the state. To get more information and learn more about NFP, visit www.ccli.org. Women, you can get great advice from www.bellanwc.org. Also, you could leave a message for me, Fr. Michael, at the office and I will give you the names and numbers of persons who teach NFP within the Archdiocese.

The Truth about Human Reproductive Principles. **Do You Want to Follow Jesus and His Teachings?**

(by Fr. Michael Freihofner; help from San Juan Catholic Seminars)

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus came to us out of love and set up a beautiful Church in order to distribute many invisible gifts of love, peace, healing, etc. He is the head of the Church (see Col 1:18). He set up the hierarchy and gave His disciples the authority to teach, preach, sanctify, and legislate (see Mt 28:18-20, Jn 20:23, Mt 18:17-18, and 1 Cor 11:23-24). In Luke 10:16, Jesus said to His closest disciples: “Whoever listens to you listens to Me. Whoever rejects you rejects Me. And whoever rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me.” In John 14:15, Jesus also said: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

Jesus is serious about obedience. He gives us laws, precepts, and beatitudes to keep us happy. Unfortunately, today it is popular to rebel. The prevalent attitude is: “No one is going to tell me what to do.” Satan told Eve in Gen 3:5, “...you will become like gods.” Then Adam and Eve disobeyed God and became very unhappy. Disobedience becomes a curse.

The following short synopsis regarding human reproduction is taught to us through the Magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church. In 1987, the Vatican issued a document called *Donum Vitae* (= the gift of life). Because it may be difficult for the beginner to read, it is summarized into the concepts below. As stated above, Jesus speaks about faith and morals through the Magisterium, the pope in union with the bishops.

Basic Reproductive Principles from God, Given Through His Church

- (1) Medicine and technology must respect the moral teaching of the Church. Not everything that is scientifically possible is morally allowable.
- (2) A child is a gift from God. Married couples do not have an absolute right to have a child. Married couples only have the right to the marital act that opens up the possibility of children if that is God’s will.
- (3) All of us are made in the image and likeness of God. All human life is sacred from the moment of conception because it involves the creative action of God. No one should kill innocent human life.
- (4) Sex is sacred and reserved for marriage between one man and one woman. In procreation, spouses cooperate with God who infuses a spiritual soul at the moment of conception. The marital act is procreative and unitive (“babies and bonding,” life-giving and love-giving). New life must be the product of the natural marital act between husband and wife. We humans are both physical and spiritual. Conjugal love

is a human act where the physical procreative process expresses the spiritual love between the spouses. Every child has the right to be brought into existence through a truly human or personal act.

(5) As soon as the male sperm has fertilized the ovum (female egg), a new life has begun; and any attempt on this life is murder. Although the laboratory production of human life is evil, the children that result are human beings made in God’s image and likeness, and have full human rights.

(6) Since this new life is from God and is sacred, this new human should not be treated as the object of an experiment or destroyed to obtain his/her cells.

(7) A child has the right to be conceived, nurtured in the womb, born, and raised within marriage by his/her parents. Parents must develop the child and affirm him/her as a prince or princess of the Lord.

Artificial Procreation (“Test-Tube Babies”) and Why It Is Wrong

In-vitro (= in glass) fertilization (IVF) is the fertilization of an egg by a sperm in a petri dish. The test tube supplies the nutrition for the young human (embryonic stage of development) until it is transferred (embryonic transfer = ET) into the woman’s womb. Eggs are collected from the woman (this surgery is called laparoscopy) and sperm is collected through masturbation (disordered action). Normally, many eggs are fertilized and the “healthiest one” is implanted in the woman’s womb; the rest are destroyed (= abortion/murder). Cloning can create a human life. To keep it simple, in cloning scientists intervene by separating cells of an embryo, trying to create two different embryos with the same genetic information.

At this point, using the Catholic moral principles listed above, it should be obvious why IVF, ET and cloning go against God’s teaching. However, just in case, here are a few of the problems:

- (1) Ordinarily, IVF involves abortions, since unused embryos are destroyed.
- (2) IVF, ET, and cloning are dangerous experiments on the new human life. It was all about the uninformed decision or poor judgment of the parents and not about the rights of the child.
- (3) IVF and cloning excludes the unitive aspect of the marital act and it perverts the procreative aspect, since the egg and sperm are brought together without natural intercourse.
- (4) IVF and cloning violate the child’s right to be conceived naturally.

If you have been involved in IVF or ET, please see your priests ASAP. God’s greatest attribute is mercy. The truth will set you free; God will bless you. You can spread the message of His Kingdom.

Funeral for Jan Reynolds, Tuesday, OLS; 11 a.m.

Jan Reynolds (from StB), wife of Lee, died a few days ago. The funeral will be on Tuesday, **July 31** at **11 a.m.** at **Our Lady of the Snow** (followed by a reception). Here is your chance to perform spiritual and corporal works of mercy—pray for the living and the dead; assist in burying the dead with prayers.

Recruiting Teachers for Religious Education

Here is your chance to perform a spiritual work of mercy. We are looking for role models who can teach for about 21 Thursday evenings during the year, from September to February (with breaks during Thanksgiving and Christmas). Will you help Jesus teach our children?

Please contact your priests, or call Valerie at 303-815-0055. We will meet on August 16, OLS, 6:30 p.m.

Call to Prayer: Get Out Your Weapons!

Each Friday, August 3 – September 28, answer the U. S. bishops' call to pray and fast that a change in the U.S. Supreme Court will move our nation closer to the day when every human being is protected and welcomed in life. Join at www.usccb.org/pray/

If you go to this above website, click on the Novena for the Legal Protection of Human Life each Friday, from August 3, 2018 to September 28, 2018.

Click on the day, pray the prayer, read the small blurb, and pray one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be for the intention of the novena. Participants will also be provided with weekly opportunities to learn more about Roe v. Wade and share that information with their representatives.

Hike on Wednesday in Grand Lake

This Wednesday join Fr. Peter for a hike. Mass at St. Anne at 8:30 a.m.; then hit the trail. Expect a moderate hike. Bring water and something for lunch.

First Saturday Devotion, August 4, at Our Lady

Our Lady at Fatima requested that we go to Mass, Confession, recite the Rosary, and meditate on it for 15 minutes for five consecutive first Saturdays of the month. You have a chance to respect her request this coming Saturday at Our Lady of the Snow.

Confessions, 8:45 a.m.; Mass, 9:30 a.m., followed by Rosary and meditation.

Men of the Parish, Ask Yourselves: “Is God Calling Me to be a Deacon?”

Who will be the next deacon to serve with Deacon Jim in Grand and Jackson Counties? Who will make the sacrifice? Please pray and see Deacon Jim or your priests before September 1.

Deacon Day of Prayer: pray for Deacon Jim and all deacons on August 10, the feast of St. Lawrence. Also, pray for men to answer the call to become deacons.

Rockies Tickets for Altar Servers and Their Families on Thursday, August 23

We have 40 Rockies tickets for the afternoon game (1:10 p.m.) at Coors Field on Thursday, August 23. Call the office and ask Angela for the tickets. The tickets are in section 117, rows 15-18.

We thank our anonymous donor for helping us reward our servers. Thanks to all the families who get their children to Mass early to serve.

Upcoming Church Celebrations

-August 5, Sun, Our Lady of the Snow. Mass as usual at 9:30 a.m. with the Musicians of St. Clare, followed by a fish fry; **bring a side dish to share**

Calendar of Events

-Aug 5 (Sun). Celebration of OLS. Mass at 9:30 a.m.

followed by a fish fry; bring a side dish to share

-Aug 15 (Wed). Holy Day: Assumption of Mary

Mass Collections, July 21 – 22

St. Anne	\$ 2682
St. Bernard	1436
Our Lady of the Snow	1679
St. Peter	610
St. Ignatius	<u>877</u>
Total	\$ 7284

Vocations Prayer Calendar

Please pray for our seminarians every day.

Sat—Thomas Scherer & Owen Limarta

Sun— Joe Bui & Sean Conroy

Mon—Men in our boundaries called to the priesthood

Tue—Grand/Jackson Women called to consecrated life

Wed—St. John Vianney Seminary staff

Thu—*Redemptoris Mater* Seminary staff

Fri—Men and women applying for formation

Mass Intentions and Schedule for StA, StB, and OLS

KEY: StA = St. Anne; StB = St. Bernard;

OLS = Our Lady of the Snow

-Sat, Jul 28, StA, 5 p.m., Marion Vonnegut

-Sat, Jul 28, StB, 5:30 p.m., Michelle Kullman

-Sun, Jul 29, StB, 7 a.m., People in our region & visitors

-Sun, Jul 29, OLS, 9:30 a.m., Vicki Schivalon

-Sun, Jul 29, StA, noon, Michelle Kullman

Weekday Masses

-Mon, Jul 30, StA, 8:30 a.m., +Jim Dice

-Tue, Jul 31, OLS, 7:30 a.m., Maurice and Joanne Noll

-**Tue, Jul 31, OLS, 11 a.m., Funeral for Jan Reynolds**

-Wed, Aug 1, StB, 8:30 a.m., Barry/ Aimee Kroneberger

-**Wed, Aug 1, StA, 8:30 a.m., Sean Schivalon Family**

-**Thu, Aug 2, OLS, 8:30 a.m., Norris Creath Family**

-**Fri, Aug 3, OLS, 8:30 a.m., Garry and Pamela Creath**

-**Sat, Aug 4, OLS, 9:30 a.m., Fr. Michael's intention**

Mass Intentions and Schedule for StP and StI

KEY: StP = St. Peter; StI = St. Ignatius (Walden)

-Sun, Jul 29, StP, 10 a.m., Larry and Janice Gross

-Sun, Jul 29, StI, 1 p.m., People in our region & visitors