



CANFP NEWS

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**California
Association of
Natural
Family
Planning**

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How to Preach Against Artificial Contraception

by Michael
Pakaluk



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In my now 40 years as a Catholic, only once have I heard a priest as homilist teach that artificial contraception (“contraception”) is a sin—even though contraception is materially a serious sin, harms a couple regardless of their intentions, and damages the common good of society. This is out of over 12,000 homilies, given by good and faithful priests.

We can admit that much good comes of a pastor’s simply stating the Church’s teaching here, not infrequently. To do so takes away the perception that teaching is an embarrassment. It supports couples who are trying to follow the teaching, while it encourages others to do so, because any teaching is strengthened if each couple can consider, reflexively, “we know that the others know that we know” that the teaching is meant to be followed. Only in such a way, indeed, can a doctrine itself become a common good.

But a homily against



contraception—that presents its own difficulties. To which Scripture readings could such a homily be linked? And how does one avoid offending and turning away couples who are not following that teaching? After all, bad consciences can breed anger, and ignorance too.

I am not a priest or a homilist but a married layman and father of a large family. Perhaps my advice can be useful nonetheless. When I was becoming a Catholic, I worked through the arguments and documents and came to see that contraception is wrong.

How, then, would I advise a priest of goodwill?

Do not try to cover everything at once—I would insist—but rather go slowly. Break the topic into four homilies spread out over four years. During this time, have available for free or at a subsidized price in the vestibule to the church, to support what you are teaching: pamphlets of Pius XI, *Casti Connubii*, and Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*; Mary Eberstadt’s book, *Adam and Eve after the Pill*; and some good literature on NFP. Each year during this time ask a couple who are leaders in the parish to form a reading and discussion group on one of these texts—a different couple each year, with a new group of members. See if the members themselves can be chosen from among leaders in the parish. In this way the teaching will become talked about and be diffused.

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President's Perspective

Fr. Blaise Berg, STD

We Were Blessed

It does not happen every day, but it does happen. And when it happens, it is a gift. I am referring to those blessed moments in life when we are taught something from an unlikely source. In her song "Blessed", Lucinda Williams sings:

*We were blessed by the blind man,
who could see for miles and miles.*

*We were blessed by the fighter,
who didn't fight for the prize.*

*We were blessed by the mother,
who gave up the child.*

*We were blessed by the soldier,
who gave up his life.*

*We were blessed by the teacher,
who didn't have a degree.*

*We were blessed by the prisoner,
who knew how to be free.*

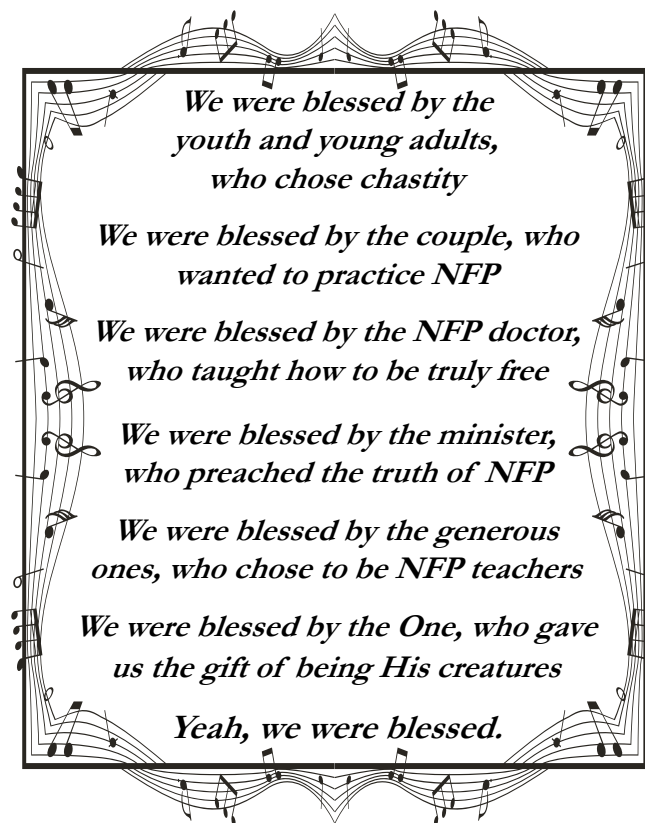
In this song, Lucinda Williams describes well how sometimes we are taught important things from unlikely sources. And when that occurs, we feel blessed.

In order to be blessed by an unlikely source, at least two conditions must emerge. For one, the "teacher" possesses the quality of a prophet, which means he or she has the courage to point to the truth. A prophet fully embraces the truth because he or she understands the inherent beauty and goodness of it and wants to convey this truth to others. Thus, like the song goes, someone may be physically blind, but still be able to "see for miles and miles" in a spiritual, instinctual or astute way. The second condition necessary is that one must be receptive to the witness of the prophet, to the message that the prophet is conveying in word and deed. Being receptive to a new truth demands humility and docility, two qualities which are seldom esteemed in our present-day culture. Living childlike receptivity is a prerequisite for being able to feel blessed from an unlikely source or by an unusual occurrence.



Fr. Blaise Berg, STD, President of CANFP, is Assistant Professor of Dogmatics at St. Patrick's Seminary, in Menlo Park, CA.

Prophets are very much needed in today's culture. (I make this statement with the hope that the reason why prophets are needed is rather self-evident.) Specifically, promoting, teaching, preaching, living NFP, and helping couples conceive naturally and treating their fertility healthily demands courageous prophets. All of our contributors in this edition of CANFP News point to the need for prophets and for docile receptivity to the prophet's message. Our contributors (and Lucinda) have inspired me to pen a few lines to a song:



Do you have the courage to be a prophet?
Are you willing to teach, preach,
promote, and live NFP?
If so, you will be blessed.
And you will be a blessing to others.

Do you
have the
courage
to be a
prophet?

Director's Desk

Sheila St. John

WANTED: NFP Teacher



sheila@canfp.org

Often, the
calling
to teach
NFP is
rooted in
a desire
to share
with
others,
what has
greatly
benefited
us

We have seen many of our California NFP teachers discontinuing their services in the last few years.

Some are simply retiring, after many decades of service. We thank this faithful and dedicated group, many of whom continue to support CANFP in their retirement, because they understand more than most the need to unite our efforts advocating for NFP throughout California.

Others have stopped teaching due to family demands, with hopes of resuming in the future.

Then there are those who cite lack of local support and referrals as their reason for discontinuing. Not all teachers are blessed to be serving parishes with priests who value their role, or as a resource for a physician who refers patients to learn to chart their cycles.

I have been teaching NFP for 42 years, and it has never been easy. Yet, I would not trade the experience for anything! If the NFP teacher lacks support locally, so do the couples who seek it out! It is all the more rewarding in such situations, to bring the good news of NFP to those who would otherwise not hear it. Despite the challenges, the rewards are plentiful. The women and couples I work with are a blessing in my life, and most are so grateful and appreciative.

Andreya (see *Meet Our Member* in this edition), while acknowledging there have been

challenges, articulated well the blessing and privilege it is to be an NFP teacher. This is a common theme in other interviews you will read in our *Meet Our Member* articles at canfp.org

Are you being called to teach NFP? Often, the calling to teach NFP is rooted in a desire to share with others, what has greatly benefited us. The training is rigorous, but you will be grateful, as it is that thorough training that you will rely on as you mentor couples through the challenges of the different stages of life. The cost of the education program is an investment in your professional development, and you can recoup the investment through fees for your services. You should be prepared to dedicate six to ten hours a week to your teaching program.

Are you a pastor who would like to make this service available to your community? Andreya is not the only NFP teacher who pursued training in response to her pastor's invitation. Is there a woman in your parish that you think would be a good candidate to teach NFP? She is a user of NFP, and would be a good mentor for other women and couples? She is equipped to handle the academic demands of the training, reliable, and persistent? Perhaps you could partner with her, investing in her training, in exchange for direct services to the parish, speaking to parish groups like RCIA and Confirmation classes, and providing parish

based instruction in NFP. You might partner with other parishes in your region, sharing the investment in the training, as well as the services of the NFP teacher. Some pastors consider the NFP teacher a member of paid parish staff, or teaching NFP as part of her job description in addition to other duties, such as youth minister, or catechetical director.

Are you a pregnancy resource center, medical clinic, physician, or hospital? Integrating NFP services into these settings benefits the sponsoring organization, and the women and couples they serve.

We have an opportunity to train a new generation of NFP teachers, this fall, right here in California. The program is a 13-month course of study incorporating two classroom phases and supervised teaching experience. See the info on page five of this edition, and contact CANFP or Margaret Howard (program director) to request more info.

Consider joining our team of California NFP Professionals. It is a unique opportunity to truly make a difference--in your life, and the lives of those you will serve. ■

MEET MEMBER...

Andreya Arevalo



MEET OUR MEMBER
is a regular feature of CANFP NEWS, coordinated by CANFP Professional Member Peggy Stofila, who lives in Torrance, where she works part time as a Physical Therapist and teaches the Creighton Model FertilityCare System.

ANDREYA, WHY DO YOU SUPPORT CANFP?

"CANFP is a vital organization for those dedicated to promoting holistic and life-affirming approaches to family planning and reproductive health."

I've proudly served as a FertilityCare Practitioner of the Creighton Model (CrMS) since 2019. My journey with CANFP began concurrently with my certification as a practitioner.

Married for 23 years and a mother of three, my introduction to Natural Family Planning (NFP) came in a pre-cana class prior to our marriage. At that time, the concept seemed distant, but it resurfaced after the birth of our first child. Confronted with contraceptive options postpartum, I quickly realized NFP was the path for us, opting out of hormonal birth control due to its adverse effects.



Our commitment to NFP deepened over the years, guiding us through the births of our subsequent children. In 2016, while actively engaged in volunteer work, particularly in offering Theology of the Body classes and assisting engaged couples in their marriage prep process, I was approached by our newly assigned pastor, now CANFP president, Fr. Blaise Berg. His passion for NFP was

infectious, and he proposed the idea of becoming a NFP instructor for Creighton. Embracing the opportunity, I began the educational program and embarked on the journey to becoming a FertilityCare Practitioner in 2017.

The rigors of the program were initially underestimated, yet the journey has proven profoundly rewarding. Guiding women and couples, including those grappling with infertility and seeking NaProTechnology treatments, as well as teens and individuals facing hormonal imbalances and exploring holistic alternatives to

contraception, has been an immense privilege. I am forever grateful to Fr. Berg for his unwavering support, my family for their encouragement, and CANFP for fostering an environment conducive to such impactful work. Presently, I serve as the Director of Family and Faith Formation at St. Mary's Parish in the Diocese of Sacramento.



Andreya Arevalo, CFCP, Professional Member of CANFP, teaches Natrual Family Planning in Vacaville, in the Sacramento region, where she lives with her husband and their three children.

In addition, I continue my roles as Marriage Prep Coordinator, FOCCUS Facilitator, and Certified FertilityCare Practitioner, serving as the responsible practitioner of Our Lady of Guadalupe FertilityCare Center in Vacaville, California.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve within CANFP and contribute to the promotion of Natural Family Planning. CANFP has given me the opportunity to deepen my expertise, connect with a supportive community, advocate for NFP awareness, access valuable resources, and enhance my professional standing in the field. It is a vital organization for those dedicated to promoting holistic and life-affirming approaches to family planning and reproductive health. It is an absolute privilege to witness the transformative impact of NFP on individuals and families, and I look forward to continuing this journey of service and advocacy. I am beyond blessed!

LOOKING FOR AN EXPERT NFP TEACHER?

For elite group of NFP Teachers who are CANFP Professional Members go to <https://canfp.org/find-an-expert/>

INTERESTED IN TEACHING NFP? FertilityCare Teacher Training coming to California this fall!

November 17-24, 2024 EDUCATION PHASE I: An eight-day total immersion course, followed by a six-month PRACTICUM (a faculty supervised teaching experience at the student's home location to develop basic skills).

June 2-7, 2025 EDUCATION PHASE II: A six-day course of advanced study consisting of lecture, group discussion and hands-on problem solving of advanced aspects of teaching the Creighton Model FertilityCare System followed by a seven month PRACTICUM (a faculty supervised teaching experience, including on-site visitation).

EP I and II: **ST. ANTHONY RETREAT CENTER** **INFORMATION & APPLICATION MATERIALS**
43816 Sierra Drive Margaret Howard, MAM, CFCE, Program Director
Three Rivers, California 93271 mphoward.cfce@protonmail.com 402.320.9268

Application deadline: October 15, 2024 Submit applications early to allow time for processing and preparation

Medical Matters

George Delgado, MD

The Three "C"s of Marriage



George Delgado, MD,

President and Founder of Steno Institute and Medical Director of Culture of Life Family Services (COLFS), San Diego, is a Professional Member / Supporter of CANFP. Board certified in both family medicine and hospice and palliative medicine, Dr. Delgado received his medical degree from the University of California, Davis, and completed his residency at Santa Monica Hospital/ UCLA. Dr. Delgado is a Natural Family Planning Medical Consultant, trained in NaProTechnology. He and wife have four children and seven grandchildren.

Wise people have said, "As the family goes so society goes". For years, we have bemoaned the divorce rate in the Western world. Now, many couples are avoiding divorce by avoiding marriage altogether. Living together without the benefit of a public bond or a sacramental union has become much more common and much more accepted. The lack of permanence of non-marital unions has led to the further deterioration of the family, which is the building block of society.

The ripple effect has reached even those who choose marriage. The pressures from our post-Christian culture make it very difficult to have a successful, thriving marriage. Couples must be dedicated and intentional. They can no longer count on things simply falling into place. The land of the free and the home of the brave is becoming the land of the divorced and the home of the single-parent family.

What keeps two people together for the long haul? What transforms newlyweds into parents and later into grandparents? What are the critical components that make a family a reflection of The Holy Trinity?

If we can distillate into simple steps, I would offer the Three Cs: **Christ**, first and foremost, is the cement, the super-glue binding a husband and a wife;

Communication is how they constantly readjust to one another; in **Charity** they carry one another's crosses.

Christ must be at the heart of any marriage that has any chance of success. In fact, the "job" of each spouse is to help the other get to heaven and to have children, whom they will also set on a course to heaven. Christ's Church must be at the heart of our marriages, too, for He established the Church in order to bring us to Him. Without the Church, marriage has no meaning as a sacrament, which is a gift of God's grace.

Communication continues to be an elusive goal these days from the family room to the bedroom to the boardroom. In our era of digital communication and social media, communication has become impoverished. The more people are virtually connected, the more isolated they are personally.

In a marriage, communication is critical because we are all so variable. A marriage without good communication is like a pilot trying to fly in the fog without instruments.

Communication brings us closer to one another and closer to Jesus. The more we know each other, the better we can love each other.

Communication allows us to share our different perspectives and feelings on life and God

with one another. It can be verbal, nonverbal, and physical. Its highest expression, of course, is in the marital act, the sacramental peak of spiritual and physical unity, the total gift of self.

Husbands and wives sooner or later discover that men and women communicate differently and expect different results from communication. Generally speaking (and I realize I take a risk with generalizations), women need to discuss things thoroughly or "vent." Sometimes the mere process of discussion is more important for them than the resultant action. Men, on the other hand, often prefer to "cut to the chase" and identify, then attempt to solve the problem at hand. As you might imagine, a well-intentioned husband and an equally caring wife might easily get on each other's nerves by not understanding the differences between their communication patterns.

Many couples, including my bride and me, have found "couch time" very useful. Couch time, a concept we learned from Catholic author Bud McFarlane, Jr., is when a couple steps back after the kids or grandkids are in bed, sits down on the couch, and "checks in." They are totally there for one another. The more we utilized couch time, the easier it became and the fewer crises we had.

After 39 years of marriage, I have learned to simply listen to my wife without automatically engaging my problem-solving mode. Repetition has definitely been the mother of learning for me. Even now, checking in with one another is crucial. Explicit and intentional communication has saved many of our days.

The third C is Charity, or love. *"So faith, hope and love remain, these three, but the greatest of these is love."* (1 Corinthians 13:13) The love of marriage is not simply the romantic love of falling in love. No, that's what Hollywood dishes up to us nearly every waking moment of our lives. The love of marriage is the love that imitates Christ. *"Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ."* (Ephesians 5:21)

We may want to review the types of love that include charity (caritas in Latin and agape in Greek). Unfortunately, the English language limits us to only one word, for the different types of love. The ancient Greek language gives us at least four versions which can all contribute to a healthy marriage.

Storge is the natural affection that family members share. It is the love that binds family members, such as siblings, together even though they didn't necessarily choose one another.

Eros is an attractive love that leads us to fall in love and to want to possess the other. It is the spark. However, like other sparks, if it does not lead to a deeper relationship, it will fade.

Philia is a deep abiding love based on virtue and respect. This is the rich friendship that develops among close friends and in strong marriages.

Agape is the highest level of love. It is known as "caritas" in Latin and "charity" in English and is the sacrificial love that desires what is best for the other. While, in many ways eros is focused on oneself, agape is totally focused on the other.

Charity means that we are willing to lay down our lives, as well as our lifestyles, for each other. Marital charity may be as simple as not debating who is right or wrong in a disagreement, but rather swallowing your pride and your anger. Marital love may mean doing things with your spouse even though they aren't your favorite activities because being with him or her is your favorite activity.

In charity we should place our spouses and our children's interests before our own. Career moves, promotions, long hours at the office, work brought home, volunteer tasks and committees can take their toll on family life. It is better to be less successful, less accomplished, less popular, less admired, less rich, less a career climber, less a "super mom or dad," than to be less of a spouse and a parent.

God will judge parents and spouses by how they manage their domestic churches (i.e., their families), rather than on how many church or civic groups they led or how many dollars they earned. *"God calls us to be faithful, not successful,"* to quote Saint Teresa of Calcutta.

Charity might direct husbands to draw a line in the career sand, limiting their work hours. Women may need to sacrifice their own careers while their children are at home. Both must be committed to prioritizing family over materialistic lifestyles. The result will be an expanding spiritual lifestyle.

Charity will lead to fuller adherence to the Ten Commandments. Self-sacrifice will lend itself to greater family unity in prayer and in leisure on the Lord's day. When Sundays are given back to God by the elimination of unnecessary work, worshipping together, and spending the day together, beautiful things begin to happen. I know, I've seen it in my own family.

Part of charity, which could really be a fourth C, is Chastity--the proper use of our sexual gifts. In marriage, of course, it means fidelity to your spouse. More than that, however, it means respecting the dignity of your spouse and acknowledging that he or she is a temple of the Holy Spirit. It requires self-control and self-mastery in the avoidance of temptation.

Temptation or coveting of others, can be as simple and innocuous as "checking out" a woman (or a man). If we truly imitate Christ, who laid down his life for us, then we would never disrespect our spouse by being interested in or admiring the beauty of another. The way a husband looks at his wife or the way the wife looks at her husband should be a special gaze reserved for them alone.

It is through chastity and charity that the blessings of natural family planning come forth. With Christ at the center, communication as the guide, and charity the milieu, a man and woman truly can be *"joined . . . and the two shall become one flesh."* (Ephesians 5:31).

Marriage is like a fine sports car; it requires attention and maintenance. Intentional focus on the three Cs, like exercising our bodies, builds healthy, happy, and holy marriages. ■

desea purificar el templo de nuestros corazones de todo pecado, idolatria, mancha de corrupcion, como purifico el templo en su dia

En el evangelio de San Juan, Jesus entra al templo con la fuerza de un huracan, volca mesas y saca de alli los vendederos que hacen de la Casa de Su Padre un Mercado. Podria ser este el mismo Jesus, lleno de bondad y compassion, el cual se somete a la muerte en una cruz?

Quedamos perplejos al ver que este cordero manso y suave es al mismo tiempo un leon feroz. Como podria ser asi?

Nos lleva a ponderar la leccion de las Sagradas Escrituras desde el principio hasta el fin. El Dios que es perfectamente puro y santo aborrece el pecado y la corrupcion porque van en contra de su naturaleza, en contra del orden de la creacion, y al fin y al



c a b o , conducen los seres humanos a la ruina.

Por seguro, Dios es supremamente, infinitamente misericordioso, y conoce muy bien nuestras debilidades y nuestra naturaleza pecaminosa. Pero al mismo tiempo desea purificar el templo de

nuestros corazones de todo pecado, idolatria, mancha de corrupcion, como purifico el templo en su dia.

Es algo que incomoda el mundo moderno, donde no queremos oír de nuestras culpas y maldades. Preferimos oír de un suave y apacible Jesus, una Buena Gente, que se compadece de nosotros, se acomoda a nuestros habitos, y nos deja permanecer en la degradacion de nuestros pecados.

Por su puesto, al pensar asi de Jesus, construimos una caricatura de Jesus, y no tomamos en cuenta el Jesus de los evangelios que reprende duramente a los lideres religiosos

por su hipocresia e intenciones deshonestas. El en evangelio de San Juan, le dice a los escepticos, los que lo rechazan, que no son hijos de Abraham, sino hijos del Diablo. Con estas palabras tan duras, parece Jesus quiebra el



Padre Alvaro Delgado sirve como sacerdote en la Parroquia de San Antonio en Manteca, CA. Antes de ser ordenado, hace 22 años, trabajo como periodista por varios años.

mandamiento del dia moderno: no ofenderas los sentimientos de ninguna persona.

Que vemos hoy dia? Personas que no hacen ninguna distincion entre su ser, su persona, y su pecado. El pecado es lo que son, y es

algo que no lo pueden cambiar. Cuando se denuncia un pecado en particular, resulta un choque con la idea popular de la libertad absoluta del individuo para hacer decisiones que no se pueden cuestionar, como si la libertad humana fuera algo sagrado e infalible.

por la gracia y Misericordia de Jesucristo, el cual me perdona, me levanta, cuando caigo en el pecado

Por lo tanto, cuando se le dice a una jovencita que se viste como una mujer de la noche, su auto-estima es lastimado. Si se le dice a una pareja viviendo fuera de matrimonio, en pecado, responden con ira: Quien es usted para juzgar? El mismo lema se repite por parte de homosexuales involucrados en relaciones sexuales. Facilmente olvidamos las palabras de San Agustin, el cual dijo que el corregir el pecador, en un espiritu de fraternidad, es la expresion mas alta del amor.

Jesus habla repetidamente del pecado, de la necesidad del arrepentimiento, y de los horrores del infierno para los que por fin le echan la espalda a Dios. Habla con severidad porque conoce muy bien la debilidad del corazon humano, y entonces trabaja incansablemente por derretir el corazon duro, para liberar la persona de su ceguedad y las cadenas de su pecado.

En particular, Jesus anhela por liberar del pecado a tantos hoy dia que se entregan a la profanacion del cuerpo. Lamentablemente, en el mundo de hoy, el cuerpo ya no se considera sagrado, sino como un objeto, un instrumento para llevar a cabo un proposito de utilidad.

A traves de esa mentalidad, se rebaja el cuerpo a ser meramente una entidad material, sin ningun sentido espiritual o transcendental. De

esa manera, el individuo declara su autonomia absoluta, aparte de cualquier nocion de Dios. Entonces es libre de bloquear la concepcion de un nino con anticonceptivos, abortar un bebe no nacido, o por otro lado, llevar a cabo la fertilizacion de embriones en un laboratorio, matando los que no se miran utiles. Sintiendo autonomo, es libre el individuo tambien de cambiar su genero, cuando quiera, al mutilar su cuerpo.

Con esta profanacion total del cuerpo, no es sorprendente que la plaga de la pornografia aniquila hoy dia el principio Biblico de hombres y mujeres creados a imagen y semejanza de Dios, para formar una communion de amor. El amore es destruido, a traves de la lujuria y el egoismo.

En este medio ambiente, el individuo facilmente se seduce y engana por el espiritu irresistible del mundo, al querer hacer lo que todos hacen, porque todos lo hacen. Pero Jesus advierte en Mateo 7:13: "Entren por la entrada estrecha; porque ancha es la entrada y espacioso el camino que lleva a la perdicion y son muchos los que entran por ella; mas que estrecha la entrada y que angosto el camino que lleva a la Vida; y pocos son los que lo encuentran."

La llamada de Dios, para Su pueblo, para todo creyente, desde el Antiguo Testamento, hasta Jesus en el Nuevo Testamento, es el imitar a Dios, el ser santos y perfectos,



como el Padre celestial es santo y perfecto. Es una llamada hacia la purificacion de mi templo interior, por la gracia y Misericordia de Jesucristo, el cual me perdona, me levanta, cuando caigo en el pecado.

Pero nunca podemos olvidar que el perdon y la redencion de Jesus no provienen de una gracia facil y barata. Nos llega a nosotros a traves del templo del Cuerpo de Jesus, destruido por nosotros en una cruz, levantado del sepulcro. Por seguro, Jesus pago un precio altisimo al ganar nuestra redencion.

Entonces recordemos siempre que el Señor que purifica el Templo con la ferocidad de un leon, y muere desgraciadamente en una cruz, es el Cordero de Dios, el Dios motivado por amor, y solo amor, al derramar su gracia sobre todo pecador que busca el perdon, sigue el camino de Dios, y hace de su corazon una morada santa, un templo de pureza, para el Señor.

Jesus: Lamb and Lion

He yearns to purify the temple of our hearts of all sin, all idolatry, all stain of corruption, as he cleansed the temple in His day

In the Gospel of John, Jesus enters the temple with the force of a hurricane, overturns tables, and drives out those who make of the House of His Father a marketplace. Could this be the same kind and gentle Jesus of goodness and compassion, who surrenders Himself to death on a cross?

We're left perplexed to see that this meek and gentle lamb is at the same time a ferocious lion. How could that be?

It leads us to ponder the lesson of the Sacred Scriptures from beginning to end. The God who is perfectly holy and pure abhors sin and corruption because it goes against His nature, against the order of creation, and ultimately brings human beings to ruin.

For certain, God is supremely, infinitely merciful, and knows well our weaknesses, our sinfulness. But He yearns to purify the temple of our hearts of all sin, all idolatry, all stain of corruption, as he cleansed the temple in His day.

It's something that makes the world today queasy and uncomfortable. We'd rather not hear of our wrongdoing, but of a meek and gentle Jesus, Mr. Nice Guy, who takes pity upon us, accommodates Himself to our habits, and allows us to wallow in the mire of our sins.

This, of course, is a modern caricature of Jesus, and not the

Jesus of the gospels who rebukes harshly the religious leaders for their hypocrisy and dishonest intentions. In the Gospel of John, he tells skeptics they are no sons of Abraham, but sons of the devil. It's tantamount to breaking the commandment of the modern day: thou shall not offend anyone's feelings.



What do we see today? People who make no distinction between their being, their person, and their sin. Sin is who they are, they can't help it, nor can they change it. When a particular sin is denounced, it clashes with the popular notion of the individual's perfect freedom to make decisions that cannot be questioned, as if human freedom were something sacred and infallible.

So it is, a young lady's self-esteem is wounded when she's told she dresses immodestly.

If a couple is told they're living in sin, they respond in anger: who are you to judge? The same mantra is repeated for the homosexual engaged in sexual relations. We easily forget the timeless words of St. Augustine, who counselled that correction of the sinner, in a spirit of fraternity, is the highest form of love.

It's all too common today for people to enclose themselves in a superficial self-esteem rooted in worldly standards, depriving themselves of the gift of authentic self-love offered by Jesus Christ, who loves the sinner to the point of death. In Him, the sinner freely and without fear acknowledges his sin, confident of the mercy of Christ, cognizant of his high dignity as a child of God.

Jesus speaks regularly of sin, of the need for repentance, and the horrors of hell for those who ultimately turn their backs on God. He speaks with such severity because He knows well the weakness of the human heart, and so he works to melt the hardened heart, blinded and enslaved by the evil of his sin.

In particular, Jesus seeks to deliver from the shackles of sin those who give themselves to the profanation of the human body, as is so prevalent today. In today's world, the body is no longer considered sacred, but rather as an object, an instrument to accomplish some utilitarian end.

by the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, who forgives me, lifts me up when I fall

With this mindset, the body is reduced to a mere material entity, with no sense of a transcendental, spiritual dimension. From there, the individual declares his or her total autonomy, apart from any notion of God, and is free to abort an unborn child, use contraception to block conception of a child, or on the other hand conceive an embryo in a laboratory dish like any commodity. The individual is also free to change his or her gender, at will, by mutilating his or her body.

With the wholesale desecration of the body, it's no surprise the plague of pornography today annihilates the Biblical principle of men and women created in the image and likeness of God, to form a communion of love. Love is killed, replaced by lust and selfishness.

In this environment, the individual too easily falls victim to the seductions of the Zeitgeist, the irresistible spirit

of the world, wanting to do what everybody does, because everybody is doing it. But Jesus warns in Matthew 7:13: "Enter through the narrow gate. The gate that leads to damnation is wide, the road is clear, and many choose to travel it. But how narrow is the gate that leads to life, how rough the road, and how few there are who find it!"

The call of God, for His people, for every believer, from the Old Testament to Jesus in the New Testament, is to imitate God, be perfect and holy, as your heavenly Father is perfect and holy. It's a call to the purification of my inner temple, by the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ, who forgives me, lifts me up when I fall.

But we must never forget. The pardon of Jesus, His redemption does not come from cheap and easy grace. It comes by way of the temple of the Body of Jesus, destroyed for us on a cross, risen from the dead. The price of redemption was indeed very high.



Fr. Alvaro Delgado, professional member/supporter of CANFP, serves as associate pastor at St. Anthony Church in Manteca. Prior to being ordained as a priest for the Diocese of Stockton nearly 22 years ago, he worked as a newspaper reporter for 17 years.

We must never forget: The Lord who cleanses the Temple with the ferocity of a lion and dies shamefully on a cross, the Lamb of God, is the God motivated by love, and only love, to pour down His grace upon every sinner who seeks forgiveness, follows the way of God, and makes of his heart a holy dwelling, a temple of purity for the Lord. ■

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Ask the Expert

Doctors Recommend the Pill

Question

Dear CANFP,

My son is 3.5 years old and about two years ago I started having spotting after my period that goes right up until ovulation. I have charted my cycle (cervical mucous + position, waking temp) for years and ovulation still clearly occurs with clear and seemingly normal temperature changes. Spotting is usually brown, occasionally red and changes with cervical mucous progress. My ob-gyn has done two blood tests to check various values and all have been normal. In Feb of this year, we performed a hysteroscopy and D&C and everything was fine with exception of slight tendency toward membrane thickening (but not a true hyperplasia). Recently I've noticed dull, constant headaches cropping up at menstruation as well and lasting 3-10 days (always gone after ovulation).

&

I am a healthy, active, married 38 year old, not overweight or under undue stress and eat a balanced, mostly organic, low-meat diet. I've seen other Drs as well, and they all seem unconcerned and recommend various treatments from birth control pills to control spotting to alternative treatments to correct whatever imbalance.

Responses on this site were very interesting and I'd be grateful for additional insight. Thank you, *Megan*

Answer

It seems as if your physician is taking the correct approach, checking medical as well as surgical causes for your abnormal bleeding. The causes for your bleeding could be either hormonal, autoimmune, anatomical or infectious. Presumably your hysteroscopy ruled out polyps, fibroids, and chronic endometritis as well as hyperplasia. Even if your doctor did some blood tests, there may be some hormonal conditions that were not covered in his/her workup.

Occasionally, thyroid abnormalities can cause abnormal bleeding. In reproductive age women it is desirable to have the TSH be under 2.5, even though many labs suggest that a TSH up to 5.5 can be normal.

Another possible cause for

premenstrual spotting could be low estrogen, which would go along with headaches from estrogen deficiency, especially if the headaches are midcycle or immediately before the menses. If a midluteal (about seven days after peak day/ovulation) estradiol is less than 70 pg/dl or so, it is possible you are having symptoms from hypoestrogenism. Low estrogen/premenopause is fairly common over age 35 and frequently underdiagnosed in women in their late thirties. Low dose bioidentical estradiol patches (.025) for the cycle might eliminate the problem and get rid of the headaches if this is the case.

Low progesterone could do this---maybe more often than low estradiol. Progesterone testing and post-peak supplementation may be helpful.



Mary Davenport, MD, OB/GYN and Professional Member of CANFP, offers telehealth services in NaProTechnology and Restorative Reproductive Medicine through MyCatholicDoctor.com

Finally, especially if you have any autoimmune condition (such as autoimmune thyroiditis, chronic fatigue, rheumatoid arthritis, etc) you may be deficient in the neurohormone beta-endorphin, and a trial of low-dose naltrexone might be helpful. It is hard to get a good test to diagnose beta-endorphin deficiency. *Mary L. Davenport, M.D.* ■

Ask the Expert

Mood Swings Vasectomy Related?

Question

&

Is it possible that after having a vasectomy, that hormones change and can elevate and can cause irritable mood swings? I have found myself in this way the past two months. My vasectomy was in February. *Brian*

Answer

Brian had a vasectomy about 18 months ago and wonders if the mood swings he is experiencing the last two months are in any way related.

I don't have the study in front of me but at least one good paper looked at the levels of various hormones (including testosterone and estradiol) following vasectomy and did not find any significant change. So if there is a relationship one must look elsewhere.

Two things are certainly in place by one year after a vasectomy: The great majority of men (85%+) have developed circulating antibodies to their own sperm in their bloodstream and the ductal system (drainage system, if you will) of the testes has become distended with sperm that cannot escape. How these changes potentially affect the body is subject to endless speculation (Do the anti-sperm antibodies cause auto-immune disorders? Do obstructed testes

cause chronic low-grade pain or somehow increase the chance of prostate cancer? etc.) but little worthwhile laboratory experimentation has been done as yet.

Perhaps the problem is not one of physiology but rather psychology: After all a young man is now sterile and unable to sire any additional offspring. I believe this much more consequential than most people think. *Gregory Polito, MD*

Question

Enlarged Testicle

&

My husband recently had a vasectomy reversal. Afterwards, when the main bruising and swelling had gone away, his right testicle was still very large, swollen, but with no bruising, pain, redness, etc. It is approx. twice the size of the other one and the scrotum skin does seem to be attached to the testicle where the incision was sewn back up. Sort of seems like the sutures went too far and possibly sewed the skin to the testicle in a small area. But again, he is not experiencing any pain or ejaculation problems with this. Should we be concerned about this or will the testicle return to normal size eventually? It has been two months since the surgery. Is there a procedure that would take care of this without another surgery, such as draining the testicle or something? Thanks in advance for considering this question. *Melody*

Answer

Melody asks why her husband has painless swelling of the scrotum two months following vasectomy reversal. In all likelihood her husband has developed what is called a "reactive hydrocoele"—irritation of the lining around the testis itself that then causes this lining to weep fluid into

the space immediately around the testis. Since the lining is impermeable—does not allow fluid to go back and forth—the fluid will generally remain trapped there. Sometimes it goes down gradually. Sometimes it continues to get larger gradually. It is harmless, but if it becomes uncomfortable the surgeon

can tap the fluid out with a small needle. It may or may not return. More permanent solutions include instilling a medication to discourage fluid reformation or a second procedure to remove the offending fluid and a portion of the lining that holds the fluid in. *Dr. Gregory Polito* ■



Gregory Polito, MD, KM, Professional member of CANFP and former President, is retired from his urological practice in the Los Angeles Region, which featured a subspecialty in vasectomy reversal.

See
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How to Preach against Artificial Contraception cont from front page

God's teaching about marriage remains constant, even if mere human authorities teach something different

FOR THE FIRST YEAR AND FIRST HOMILY, have a simple goal. Aim to convey this one idea: the Church's teaching about contraception was what all of Christendom believed, Protestants as well as Catholics, until 1930. In that year, the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops became the first respectable authority to hold that married couples only, in very unusual circumstances, might possibly be justified in using contraception. It was in response to Lambeth that Pius XI wrote *Casti Connubii*.

You might find it useful to quote from a story and an editorial from the Washington Post at the time. I have found it very effective to do so in my own teaching. Soon after Lambeth, the Federal Council of Churches in America, following the Anglicans, made a similar change in their teaching.

The Washington Post attacked them strenuously for abandoning Christian principles. This is good proof that the Catholic view used to be "everyone's view"—just

Because this first homily emphasizes that God's teaching about marriage remains constant, even if mere human authorities teach something different, it may profitably be linked to those passages where our Lord teaches against divorce—that "from the beginning" it was not so, and "what God has joined together" (including the procreative and unitive dimensions of the marital act) "man may not put asunder" (*Mt 19:6, Mk 10:9, Lk 16:18*).



The point is that the Catholic Church has not taken a strange and difficult position. It is holding fast to historic Christian teaching. This point can be presented uncontroversially as a simple matter of fact. Therefore, it will not threaten anyone. At the same time, it ought to pique the congregation's curiosity.

as we can be confident that, if our civilization survives, it will become the common view again, in the future. You can find those remarkable articles at

<https://canfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Washington-Post-Birth-Control-Articles.pdf>

IN THE SECOND YEAR AND HOMILY, have the simple goal of discussing the effects, or consequences, of the widespread use of contraception within society. This topic, too, is not threatening, because it deals with society in general; it will not seem to draw attention to the couples within your parish.

much good comes to couples from putting NFP into practice—for their relationship, their virtues and their spiritual maturity

There are five main effects. Many of these were foreseen by Pope Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae*. Therefore, it can be effective to quote from this encyclical from the pulpit.

- *First*, contraception leads to promiscuity, because it leads people to think of sex as something trivial, for entertainment or mere pleasure.
- *Second*, contraception leads to abortion, because it encourages couples to have intercourse in circumstances in which they are not prepared to welcome and raise a child.
- *Third*, contraception leads to lowered views of women, because they come to be seen as objects for the satisfaction of men.
- *Fourth*, because contraception involves the separation of sex from procreation, it leads to widespread acceptance of non-procreative sex acts, as also anti-life practices such as IVF.

• *Fifth*, because in contraception human beings claim a power over nature which they do not have, its widespread use invites public authorities to claim a similar power—which is precisely what happened in China, in its One Child policy.

This second homily can be linked to Romans 1 and also the verses where Jesus says that we can tell a tree by its fruit (*Mt 7:15-20, Lk 6:43-45*).

IN THE THIRD YEAR AND HOMILY, a homilist can discuss the marital act directly, though discreetly. Here he should draw on his own prayerful study of the texts mentioned, as well as the catechetical instructions of St. Pope John Paul II on the Theology of the Body. He might explain how, when the Church says that the unitive and procreative dimensions "should" not be separated, it means that the attempt to separate them destroys each. Sex does not become unitive at all, or in the right way, if it is not open to procreation; similarly, procreation becomes fragmentary and even inhuman if a child comes into existence other than in the marital embrace.

This homily, too, can be linked to the passages where Jesus taught about the unity of marriage "from the beginning." The homilist can also point out that it is not by accident, surely, that immediately after teaching about marriage Our Lord teaches "do not hinder the little children from coming to me" (*Mk 10:13-16*).

IN THE FOURTH YEAR AND HOMILY, the homilist, drawing on his own pastoral experience, can explain how much good comes to couples from



Michael Pakaluk, an Aristotle scholar and Ordinarius of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, is a professor in the Busch School of Business at the Catholic University of America. He lives in Hyattsville, MD with his wife Catherine, also a professor at the Busch School, and their eight children.

putting NFP into practice—for their relationship, their virtues and their spiritual maturity. Almost any passage from St. Paul about charity or marriage can provide an appropriate basis in Scripture.

It is possible to preach "against" contraception. By following the plan I have described, or a similar plan, a priest can lead his parishioners to appreciate the riches of the Church's teaching on the marital embrace, with little risk of angering or appearing to condemn anyone.



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