

“The Constitution does not confer a right to abortion; Roe and Casey are overruled...”

Supreme Court of the United States
Dobbs, State Health Officer of the Mississippi Department of Health, et al, v Jackson Women’s Health Organization et al **June 24, 2022**

CANFP NEWS

A quarterly publication of the
California Association of Natural Family Planning

Summer 2022

SURFING AS PRELUDE TO NFP

by Gary Schuberg



Gary Schuberg enjoying our California surf

Before you scoff at this notion, be mindful that one of the world’s finest Catholic apologists, Peter Kreeft, penned a book under the title, *I Surf, Therefore I Am*. Ten years ago I left that book aboard the Southern Cross, a surf charter boat, in the surfing mecca of the world, Mentawai Islands. Surfers understand flowing with nature. I hope that book has inspired at least a few surfers to look deeper into the lineups in the Ments and see the Architect of all those perfect waves.

A point Mr. Kreeft makes in his book is that only an intelligent, loving and magnificent Creator could have thought up something as delightful, beautiful and mysterious as surfing waves. If, in His infinite wisdom, His creation included this glorious and artful play with the waves stirred by His hand, there are deeper mysteries to be discovered. Some of those mysteries could lead to accepting His will for the incredible procreative powers He gifts to us.

cont on p. 4

LIVING NFP AND THE FORMATION OF A SOCCER PLAYER

by Al Arévalo

Like many soccer players in their youth, I dreamt of playing professionally one day. To that end, playing soccer was paramount, but I remember being told not to play at a particular park or with certain players and that it was for my safety, and I obeyed. Later in life, I learned that those fields and players were what I needed for my formation, but with it came risk and responsibility.

By restricting me from those environments, I could not thoroughly learn and navigate risk and responsibility.

cont on p. 5



Executive Board

Rev. Blaise Berg, STD

Gary Schuberg

Rev. Mario Rizzo

Most Reverend Salvatore Cordileone

Edie Sickman

Sheila St. John

Advisory Board

Thérèse Maes, MA

Lynn Keenan, MD

M. Suzanne Regul, MD

Rev. Larry Toschi, OSJ

Mary Davenport, MD

T. Murphy Goodwin, MD

President's Perspective

Fr. Blaise Berg, STD

NFP and Sports?

the best
"NFL-er"



and
the best
"NFP-er"
do what
they do
for a
higher
purpose

2

When our Executive Board decided to go with the topic of "NFP and Sports" for this newsletter, I was rather dubious, even if I may have even been the one to suggest the topic in the first place. (I can't remember to be honest!) I seem to recall throwing the topic out there during a board meeting to see if it might stick like spaghetti on the ceiling. Well, it did stick and I can say that the topic has provided thought-provoking articles by a surfer and a soccer coach in this edition of our newsletter.

While my days of playing organized competitive team sports are pretty much over, I still enjoy being a sports fan. When it comes to following sports and being a parish priest, I have found that I can connect with many folks who like sports, but also with those who don't follow sports at all. I am able to connect with sports fans and with those who don't follow sports alike, because they can see the connection between the commitment it takes to be a good athlete and the kind of effort that is needed to grow in the spiritual life. As a homilist, I may refer to sports to connect with parishioners because sports have become

such a huge part of our American culture, for better or for worse. But, also, I refer to sports because they can teach us something about what it means to live rightly in this world and prepare to live eternally in the next. This is not an original homiletic strategy. None other than St. Paul used it more than once. To give one example, recall what St. Paul wrote to his good friend and collaborator, St. Timothy: "I have competed well, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Tim 4:7)

To be sure, there are the obvious qualities of being a good athlete that come to mind: the commitment to staying in good physical shape, the willingness to spend long hours in training and practicing one's skills, the sacrifices made to continue to improve and the healthy fostering of one's competitive disposition, to name a few. To be a good athlete, you have to follow rules, not just the rules of the sport in which you are competing, but also the "rules" of your body. An athlete has to "listen" to one's body and has to teach one's body to do new things. Think of a fastball pitcher trying to learn to throw a curve. Still, as a fan, I have to say that there are other qualities of the professional athletes that I find myself being attracted to. These are qualities that are not always as evident perhaps. Here I am thinking of humility, good sportsmanship, magnanimity and joy. So, yes, I confess, I will take a Lou Gehrig, a Cal Ripken or a Darren Ruff, for that



Fr. Blaise Berg, STD, President of CANFP, is Associate Professor of Theology at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park and has served on the Executive Board of CANFP since 2003.

matter, any day over...well, not to throw anybody under the bus....but over any player who seems to crave drawing attention to himself or herself through his or her actions on the field or the court. (Yes, I realize to each his own, but no, I am not a fan of bat throwing after a homerun and silly celebrations after a touchdown.)

So, where am I going with all this? I think you can see. While there are certainly differences between sports and NFP, there are some elements that NFP folks could teach athletes and vice versa, such as those mentioned above: commitment, humility, joy, practice and magnanimity. Still, when it's all said and done, the best "NFL-er" and the best "NFP-er" do what they do for a higher purpose, for the greater honor and glory of God. Yes, being a priest and a "professional preacher", you can imagine I'm going to propose this. But, in the end, what else is there? We want to be able to say with St. Paul: "I have competed well, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." ■

Director's Desk

Sheila St. John

Dobbs: Rejoice!...and then what?

"We hold that Roe and Casey must be overruled. The Constitution makes no reference to abortion, and no such right is implicitly protected by any constitutional provision, including the one on which the defenders of Roe and Casey now chiefly rely—the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment" Justice Alioto, Dobbs



sheila@canfp.org
Sheila St. John has taught NFP in the Monterey Region since 1982, and serves as Executive Director of CANFP.

The challenge is to make the Church's "yes" to Life concrete and effective. The struggle will be long, and it needs each one of you."

3

This is one of those "where were you when..." moments in history. I was in bed, awakened by my phone alerting me to a message. Half asleep, I reached clumsily for my phone, and through bleary eyes, I read: Sheilaaaaa!!! Woohooo! ♥♥♥

My befuddled response, uncharacteristic of me in both its brevity and lack of typos, was: ?

And with her response, the rejoicing began! Although, my gratitude might have been entirely overshadowed by a sense of dread over the tumultuous times ahead, but for my wise friend (thank you Ashley!). While sharing my concerns, she drew me into her joy, with the message to "take time to honor this momentous day!?"

Pondering that, I recalled my 16 year old self, when Roe v. Wade declared abortion a constitutional right. Soon after, I found myself sitting in the school courtyard, sharing lunch with a friend a couple years older than me, as she regaled me with stories of "free love" and her older "hippie" Big Sur boyfriend. If I am being honest, the young me was a bit in awe of her free spirit ways. Until the conversation turned to this new right to abortion---on that I was not the least confused. Despite my fear of exposing myself as young and naive to my worldly friend, I spoke up for life, and my belief that no circumstance could justify aborting one's baby.

It took me a little longer to see with that same clarity of conviction, that respecting the dignity of a life conceived is rooted in respecting the procreative and unitive nature of the act designed to create that life. This connection is the foundation of CANFP, my work for the last 40 years, and the commitment of many who are reading this.

And now, here we are, June 24, 2022. I grieve the 63 million people martyred on the altar of judicial activism that created a right to abortion despite no constitutional foundation. My heart aches for the millions upon millions of wounded mothers, fathers, and families of those lost lives. With the fierceness of a mother, I want to protect our young from falling prey to the lie of "responsible sex"--the post-pill version of the free love mantra of my youth. I am indebted to the courageous Justices who fulfilled their duty in the Dobb's decision, despite very real threats to their lives, and their families. This decision, while righting a wrong, does not resolve the issue, but is a call to action:

"On the question of abortion, the Constitution is, therefore, neither pro-life nor pro-choice. The Constitution is neutral and leaves the issue for the people and their elected representatives to resolve through the democratic process in the States or Congress—like the numerous other difficult questions of American social and economic policy that the Constitution does not address." Justice Kavanaugh (p. 125-126).

And so, here we are, in the belly of the beast if you will, our California Association of NFP. Surely, it is no coincidence that our state, where legal abortion preceded Roe v. Wade, and will likely continue post Dobbs, is also the only one with a state NFP association? I thought of so many who championed the dignity of life, and authentic sexuality, who did not live to see this day, when my son called and asked me: Did you hear? Did you ever think you would see this in your lifetime? For the record, I did not.

Rejoice! In the words of St. Pope John Paul II: *The Church is grateful to those who, with personal sacrifice and often unacknowledged dedication, devote themselves to the study and spread of these methods, as well to the promotion of education in the moral values which they presuppose*" EV #97

And then....this call to action, as we move beyond rejoicing, to the task at hand: *"The challenge is to make the Church's "yes" to Life concrete and effective. The struggle will be long, and it needs each one of you. Place your intelligence, your talents, your enthusiasm, your compassion and your fortitude at the service of life!"*

St. Pope John Paul II, Homily on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1993 ■

SURFING... cont from front page

NFP makes us aware of the flow, power, and joy of life

Reflecting back on my many decades entranced by this game of watching the ocean and sky for signs of the next magical day when all elements come together - swell, wind, tide - I have found in this pursuit some intricate truths and lessons that prepared me for living the life asked of me in my marriage to Beth. Among these: patience, delayed gratification, acceptance of and flowing with nature.

Sometimes the ocean is flat. Sometimes the waves are there but destroyed by onshore winds. Sometimes a swell peaks with a full moon fat morning tide and fades before the afternoon low tide can bring your local point alive.



One accepts these obstacles and delayed gratification, appreciating the more when all things come together. Though the comparison is, of course, trivial, this patience has helped me understand that we conceive hoped for children on God's time, not our own. When, with

prayer and spiritual advice, we find God's will calls us to abstinence, a surfer can be more practiced at accepting when the conditions are just not right.

As you have often read in the pages of this quarterly letter, sterile contraceptive sex can lead to excess and the resulting demystifying, desacralizing and demoralizing of the power of sex. Delayed gratification leads to appreciating the good, the powerful, the magnificent. Always "gratified" leads to enervated feelings of sterility and resentment. I think of Kelly Slater's wave pool in Central California, where it is always six feet, glassy and perfect, every

they fire up the wave machine. Fun for a while, but ultimately sapped of joy for being always available.

Living in Oahu in the early 70's a fellow busboy and surfer came to work all jacked up on



Gary Schuberg, Vice President of the Executive Board, is a passionate supporter of CANFP, pro-life advocate, businessman, but most of all, husband to Beth, father to their ten children, grandfather to their 21 grandchildren...and yes, surfer.

something. He asked me with intensity why I did not try this "totally natural and totally non-addictive" thing that was becoming all the rage on the North Shore - cocaine. My response (OK, this is where I will sound like the kind of surfer you see on the screen): "Dude, I get totally high on the natural energy of waves sweeping across the reef at Sunset Beach!" All my life the surfers most admired were those who flowed with the energy and danced with the waves. NFP makes us aware of the flow, power, and joy of life and the greatest creative gift God gave to us: cooperating in his power to unite ourselves with our spouses and be His partners in being open to and creating life.

Ah, what a life it is to flow with the waves He created on His oceans and in our natures! ■

SOCCKER... cont from front page

It is pretty fascinating to compare a bit about soccer formation and NFP

When forming a soccer player, the first lesson the player must comprehend is risk and responsibility. The risks one will undertake and the many responsibilities one must uphold. As the mentor or coach, I must understand that the player must feel, experience, and embrace these principles. I cannot protect them from the risks nor alleviate responsibility, and they must experience pleasure in the process.

Without this understanding, they will consistently fall back on comfort as the driver and measure of success. How did it make me feel? On the contrary, the elite athlete questions how productive this will be? Comfort and feeling end up on the latter of the list.

Similarly, understanding NFP is understanding and navigating the risk and responsibility of a couple's fertility. If a couple judges NFP on comfort and feeling alone, they will be somewhat disappointed.

I believe fertility is THE beginning of life. There is so much controversy about when life begins. But many fail to realize that life doesn't start with a fetus or the act. It begins the very moment one realizes the power of their fertility. Full of discomfort, risk, pleasure, and responsibility. In my opinion, the most prominent responsibility we have as men and women is orienting the young on the meaning of their fertility.

For an aspiring elite soccer player, life begins at the end of their comfort zone. Overloads are to a forming player, as is water to a grower of the finest grapes. Overloads in soccer formation are small to expansive prescribed challenges that form the player like an artist forming a piece of clay into a beautiful sculpture.

More so, I think an elite player is willing and can take on the overloads, risks, and responsibility because of their purpose. They have a clear purpose daily, which drives them to overcome the prescribed overloads.

Wouldn't it then make sense to say that living out Natural Family Planning needs a clear purpose? Can you define that purpose? Do you think the vast majority agree on that purpose?

For us in the NFP community, that purpose is the direct connection between choosing to bring new life into the world and building strong families. To live out the connection between sacrificing immediate gratification for the common good and living more loving lives. To "create a culture of life."

Today's societal push on what purpose is and what to have a purpose in is contradictory. It does not align with our God-given bodies. A wine maker does not grow grapes intended for a juice box!

It is pretty fascinating to compare a bit about soccer



Coach Al Arévalo, a professional soccer coach licensed by the Argentine Soccer Federation, is the owner/operator of Just4kicks Soccer School, and mentors players from around the world through Train Effective, a London-based football startup partnered with the Manchester United legend Rio Ferdinand. He lives with his wife Andreyra and their three children in the Sacramento region, where Andreyra teaches NFP.

formation and NFP. Both take on a heck of a lot of risk and responsibility, and for that to happen, they both need a purpose that drives them to that goal.

Most importantly, they must feel pleasure in that process. In soccer, it is becoming the body, technique, mentality, and emotion of the player they wish to be. In NFP, the pleasure is in the sexuality of both men and women. After all, fertility and sexuality go hand in hand.

We find joy in the idea that each act of intercourse ought to, by its very nature, be open to human life. The risks and responsibilities of that attraction are divine and magnificent.

When Natural Family Planning is understood, and a couple commits to the risks and responsibilities of living it out, humanity, living and departed, cheer in the stands by the millions, Golazo! ■

it is also not uncommon for women who have been seeking fertility care for years to not even have had these four basic tests done

6

Having worked with many couples wanting to get pregnant naturally, I know most couples do not understand what blood tests are essential for assessing female fertility. Even when couples have consulted an Obstetrician/Gynecologist, even a fertility specialist, few have benefitted from receiving a thorough evaluation with a complete set of blood tests, appropriately timed. So today I want to equip women who may be seeking an evaluation of the status of their fertility, with an understanding of the essential blood tests they should be receiving, and the timing of the those tests, based on my training and experience in functional medicine (also known as root cause medicine), NaProTECHNOLOGY, and FEMM (another form of Restorative Reproductive Medicine).

CYCLE DAY TWO OR THREE:

- FSH *Follicle Stimulating Hormone*
- LH *Luteinizing Hormone*
- Estradiol
- AMH *Anti-Mullerian Hormone*

FIRST HALF OF THE CYCLE:

- Thyroid panel:
 - TSH *Thyroid Stimulating Hormone*
 - Free T4
 - Free T3
 - Total T3
 - reverse T3
 - anti-TPO *thyroid peroxidase antibody*
 - anti-TG *thyroglobulin antibody*

ANY DAY OF THE CYCLE, BUT BEST DONE IN EARLY MORNING:

- Prolactin
- DHEA-S
- testosterone
- free testosterone
- sex hormone binding globulin
- complete metabolic panel *includes liver function test, kidney function tests, and fasting glucose*
- fasting lipid panel
- 25-hydroxy-vitamin D level
- fasting insulin
- hs-CRP
- homocysteine
- ferritin
- 8am cortisol

POST OVULATION LABS

- Estradiol
 - Progesterone
- Best to repeat test of both hormones, every couple of days, post ovulation, to assess ovarian function*

For clarity, Cycle Day 1 is defined as the first day of menstrual bleeding. However, for women who have three or more days of premenstrual spotting, Cycle Day 1 does not start until the first day of actual menstrual flow. For women who tend to have shorter cycles, like about 24-25 days, best to do those four labs on cycle day two, if possible

Most OB/GYNs are willing to order the four tests I recommend doing on cycle day two or three, as these are commonly ordered tests by fertility doctors. Having said that, it is also not uncommon for women who have been seeking fertility care for years to not even have had these four basic tests done by the time they see me.

While the post-ovulatory estradiol and progesterone would be done on alternate days in the luteal phase of the cycle, it is possible to have all the other tests drawn at the same time, if done on cycle day two or three, around 8am, while fasting (no food for 12 hours prior).

Research shows that when LH is twice as high as FSH, and/or when AMH > 5 ng/ml, the woman is more likely to have a hormonal condition known as polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). PCOS is linked to poorer egg quality and recurrent pregnancy loss. Fortunately, with the use of functional medicine, there are many ways to improve fertility for women with PCOS.

When FSH and LH are both consistently quite elevated, for example well over 20, in a woman who has not had a period for many months or years, it is likely that the woman is heading into menopause. Her odds of getting pregnant would be quite challenging as this would be difficult to reverse.

It is always better to test, than to guess

Contact info for Dr. Yao, and other CANFP Professionals, can be found on the [Professional Directory at canfp.org](http://ProfessionalDirectoryatcanfp.org)

7

OPTIMAL LEVELS FOR CYCLE DAY TWO OR THREE LABS

- FSH: 4-7 mIU/ml (7-10 is still considered decent)
- LH: <7 mIU/ml, and best in 1:1 ratio with FSH
- Estradiol: 30-50 pg/ml
- AMH: best to be <4 ng/ml

However, if only FSH is elevated and LH is still close to optimal range, and the woman has a fairly regular cycle of about 25-42 days, it is still possible to improve her fertility with use of functional medicine, and without the use of assisted reproductive technology.

Knowing the Estradiol level is helpful when evaluating FSH. Estradiol is a hormone that is produced by the ovary, and when present in excess would cause the brain to decrease release of FSH. Thus, a woman with high estradiol level may mask a likely high FSH level. Thus the fertility prognosis is not as good when estradiol level is higher than optimal. However, with the use of functional medicine, it is still possible for these women to conceive naturally.

And while most IVF doctors think AMH level of <1 means poor prognosis for achieving pregnancy, the reality is that AMH is only a good prognostic marker for women who do IVF and not for women trying to get pregnant naturally. In my practice, I have helped women conceive with AMH as low as 0.17.

As for the thyroid panel, while typically TSH is considered normal if it is less than 4.5 mIU/L, there is research

showing that it is best for preconception TSH to be < 2.5. Additionally antibodies against the thyroid have been linked to higher risks of miscarriage.

Regarding post ovulation labs, this does require the woman to know when she ovulates. One good way to determine the timing of ovulation is learning a fertility appreciation method such as Billings or the Creighton Model FertilityCare System. In NaProTECHNOLOGY, we like to see the estradiol and progesterone levels at seven days after ovulation to be close to 120 pg/ml and 15.7 ng/ml, respectively.

Based on research done by NaPro doctors, many couples seeking fertility care do have suboptimal post-ovulatory hormones. It is possible to correct these deficiencies by improving egg quality, and optimizing other hormones such as prolactin, DHEA-S, insulin, and thyroid. And if still needed, bioidentical estradiol and progesterone supplementation can be provided.

As for the labs that can be done any time of the cycle, these are definitely more nuanced. But in essence, it is good to make sure that these hormones and other markers of overall health are optimized to maximize female fertility potential.



Elisa Yao, MD, Professional Member of CANFP, is board certified in integrative and holistic medicine, with training in FEMM and NaproTECHNOLOGY. Having personally struggled with fertility challenges, and finally succeeding in having her healthy babies naturally in her late 30s and early 40s, Dr. Elisa Yao is passionate about helping couples get and stay pregnant naturally at her telemedicine holistic fertility clinic elisayaomd.com

In my clinic, in addition to the above tests, as appropriate, I also run specialized functional medicine tests to assess cellular nutrient status, gut health, and hormone breakdown pathways. These tests help me personalize the woman's treatment and further increase her chance of success in achieving and maintaining a pregnancy.

While this article is about testing for female fertility, it is important that the husband is not neglected. It takes both a man and a woman to have a baby. Thus, in a complete fertility work-up, a semen analysis should also be done.

When couples encounter difficulty conceiving, the first step is to do a thorough work-up. It is always better to test, than to guess. This is the root-cause approach, instead of the typical cookie-cutter approach, to fertility evaluation and treatment. ■

CANFP STATEMENT

CANFP rejoices in the U.S. Supreme Court Dobbs decision which overturned the 1973 Roe v. Wade law legalizing abortion nationwide. While the issue of the legalizing or the illegalizing of abortion is now the matter of state governments, CANFP realizes that there will continue to be much work to do in California. CANFP remains committed to promoting natural means of postponing and achieving pregnancy and will continue to make efforts to make all forms of contraception not an option, but especially those forms that are abortifacients. *Fr. Blaise Berg, STD*

DOBBS JUNE 24, 2022

“The inescapable conclusion is that a right to abortion is not deeply rooted in the Nation’s history and traditions. On the contrary, an unbroken tradition of prohibiting abortion on pain of criminal punishment persisted from the earliest days of the common law until 1973.” *Dobbs*

“The right Roe and Casey recognized does not stand alone. To the contrary, the Court has linked it for decades to other settled freedoms involving bodily integrity, familial relationships, and procreation. Most obviously, the right to terminate a pregnancy arose straight out of the right to purchase and use contraception... In turn, those rights led, more recently, to rights of same-sex intimacy and marriage.” *Justice Clarence Thomas*

EVANGELIUM VITAE *St. Pope John Paul II, 1995*

“The life which could result from a sexual encounter becomes an enemy to be avoided at all costs, and abortion becomes the only possible decisive response to failed contraception” #13

“The trivialization of sexuality is among the principal factors which have led to contempt for new life.” #97

“In transforming culture so that it supports life, women occupy a place, in thought and action, which is unique and decisive. It depends on them to promote a “new feminism” which rejects the temptation of imitating models of “male domination”, in order to acknowledge and affirm the true genius of women in every aspect of the life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence and exploitation.” #99

“I address to women this urgent appeal: “Reconcile people with life” You are called to bear witness to the meaning of genuine love, of that gift of self and of that acceptance of others which are present in a special way in the relationship of husband and wife, but which ought also to be at the heart of every other interpersonal relationship.” #99

“Despite their differences of nature and moral gravity, contraception and abortion are often closely connected, as fruits of the same tree.” #13

“It is an illusion to think that we can build a true culture of human life if we do not help the young to accept and experience sexuality and love and the whole of life according to their true meaning and in their close interconnection.” #97

CONTRACEPTION AND ABORTION: FRUITS OF THE SAME TREE?

William Newton, Lincacre Quarterly, May 2015, 82(2): 135-148

“There was just eight years separating the legalization of contraception and abortion in the USA (1965 and 1973); seven years in Britain (1961 and 1968); eight in France (1967 and 1975).”

“Contraception uncouples (in the mind of the individual who accepts it as normal behavior) the relationship of sexual intercourse to babies and to life-long commitment: in a word, it trivializes sex. Trivial sex, in turn, leads inevitably to unwanted pregnancies, which inexorably leads to abortion.”

“Contraception is the linchpin in a cultural revolution that has abortion as one of its principal effects. The overall result of this is that, far from liberating a culture from the scourge of abortion, contraception engrains, and entrenches this practice into a culture that accepts it.”

“Contraception embraces a notion of science and progress as the search for power unconstrained by the question of the good. This philosophy of science has obvious and disastrous effects when it is applied to other life issues. It inevitably leads to a totalitarian claim over the origins of life itself, which manifests itself not just in abortion but in illicit forms of artificial procreation, cloning and embryo experimentation: according to the logic of technocracy, as these technologies become possible, they become good.”

“The most fundamental reason why contraception fosters abortion is that contraception changes the meaning of sex, and not just in this or that act of sexual intercourse, but in the consciousness of whole cultures.”

“When sex becomes recreational, individuals engage in sexual intercourse with persons whom they certainly would not want to collaborate with in the long term and demanding task of child-rearing”

STOCKTON DIOCESE MENTOR COUPLE TRAINING

Deacon Steve Budnick, Stockton Diocese Coordinator of Marriage & Family Life, and **Sheila St. John**, Executive Director of CANFP, on June 25, 2022, with first class of Mentor Couples trained for the **Diocese of Stockton**, Diocesan CANFP Member.



ALL SAINTS PARISH, TURLOCK, HOSTS NFP WEEK!

NFP Week Sponsored by All Saints University Parish, with additional presentations hosted by Central Catholic High School and St. Joseph’s Parish, Modesto.



Catholic Students Association of Stanislaus State/Newman Club of All Saints University Parish, CANFP Parish Member in Turlock, CA, participate in lively discussion on God’s Plan for Love and Life with CANFP Executive Director, **Sheila St. John**, as part of week long Parish hosted presentations on NFP!

“Thank you for sharing your wisdom and knowledge of NFP! We really appreciate your time and support in helping educate our students about sexual integrity.” *Tanya Velasquez, Teacher, Central Catholic 5-16-22*

CANFP PROFESSIONALS INVITED SPEAKERS AT INTERNATIONAL LIFE SERVICES ADVANCED TRAINING INSTITUTE

JULY 28-30, 2022



CANFP Professional Members **Dr. Paddy Jim Baggot**, **Dr. George Delgado**, and Executive Director **Sheila St. John** were honored to be speakers at the International Life Services Advanced Training Institute, held during National NFP Week.



Sister Paula Vandegaer was honored posthumously with a **Lifetime Achievement Award** for her 50+ years of prolife work. The award was presented by **Betty McGuire**, and accepted by **Sister Shawn Marie**, both long time friends and colleagues of Sister Paula.



Hope, Courage, and Future Challenges in a Post Roe v. Wade World was the focus of Pregnancy Resource Center Directors, Board and Staff at the 2022 International Life Services Advanced Training Institute.

www.internationallifeservices.org

Clergy Corner

Fr. Tom Orlando

Turlock Celebrates



Fr. Tom Orlando, Professional Member of CANFP, is a priest of the Diocese of Stockton. Ordained five years ago he is currently the pastor of All Saints University Parish, a Church Member/Supporter of CANFP, in Turlock, CA

I have always believed that NFP is not something that should just be learned six months before getting married

I have been a member of CANFP for several years now. My parish, All Saints, has been a parish sponsor for a couple years now, too. I have enjoyed the CANFP magazine and its articles over the years and began to wonder, "How could CANFP help my parish?" So, I reached out, and began emailing and talking to Sheila St. John to come up with a way my parish could learn more about Natural Family Planning. Sheila was great to work with and full of ideas.

My parish is a Newman Center Parish so I wanted to make sure the college students could learn about NFP as well. I have always believed that NFP is not something that should just be learned six months before getting married.

Why not in High School or College? So, Sheila and I came up with a schedule that began on a Saturday and ended on a Thursday. I asked Sheila to give 'Intro to NFP' talks to different groups starting with young mother and engaged couples, the Newman Center, and our Ongoing Adult Formation group.



Our next meeting was Sunday night, following the 6pm Mass, at the regular meeting time of the college students of our Newman Center. The pandemic had hurt the normal attendance of our Newman Center meetings but the college students and young adults in our area showed up for this topic. 25 young adults showed up that night, men and women, and all were very engaged and asking great questions of Sheila. I felt it was a great success and it gave me a lot of hope to see these young people so open and interested on this topic.

Sheila concluded the week, by offering a method specific Introductory Session, for those wishing to go beyond learning "about" NFP, to begin the actual process of learning to use it in their own lives. During the time in between the talks, Sheila had office hours, for couples who would like to meet with her.

The first official meeting we held, only one engaged couple showed up. But they were very interested and engaged in the topic. If only one couple was helped and better prepared for a lifetime of marriage, I was ok with that.

Our next talk was held on Wednesday, on the night we do ongoing adult formation.



Love and Life!

It was another great session with about 15 people in attendance.

All these talks led up to Thursday, where those who were interested could attend the actual training of the Creighton Model of NFP.

I am very grateful to Sheila and CANFP for taking the time to spend almost a week in Turlock helping my parish and others learn NFP. It was also great to see Sheila able to give a talk at St. Joseph's in nearby Modesto, and

as a guest speaker to four classes of seniors, and one sophomore class, at Central Catholic High School, teaching the students Fertility Appreciation.

I think the "NFP Week" was a great trial run and learning experience that could possibly be done again for each of our deaneries in the Diocese of Stockton. We need to cultivate the next generation of NFP teachers and leaders, and I think this week went a long way towards doing just that. ■



could possibly be done again for each of our deaneries in the Diocese of Stockton

PARISH NFP WEEK

Heighten appreciation in YOUR PARISH of NFP as a tool for living God's Design for Love & Life!

CANFP offers a Parish NFP Week--or Day(s)! We visit your parish, and collaborate with you to provide services tailored to the needs of your community--or select from the menu of choices below!

- Brief 3-5 minute talk at end of each Mass, with staffed resource table
- Parish Wide Presentations open to all
- In-Services for Leadership
 - Presentation to area clergy
 - Staff In-Service (office staff, catechetical/ministry leaders, teachers, pastoral council, etc)
- Presentations at local high school/colleges
- "Celebrating Family" potluck or picnic, supporting and building community among NFP couples
- Presentation to local physicians/clinicians (CMA, or invitation to healthcare professionals in parish)
- Beginning Class on NFP (local teacher/method--and/or CANFP can provide Intro to Creighton Model)
- Targeted Presentations to Specific Audiences *such as*
 - Youth Group
 - RCIA
 - Engaged Couples
 - Marriage Enrichment
 - Organizations such as K of C, CDA, etc
 - Adult Faith Formation
 - Young Adult group
 - College Students/Newman Clubs
 - Parents of Parish School/Parish Catechesis
 - Infertility/Pregnancy Loss Support Group
 - Respect Life Group
 - New Mom's Group
 - Men's Group
 - Infertility/Pregnancy Loss Support Group
 - NFP Teachers or Users

Request Parish NFP Week Handout

SUCCESS STRATEGIES:

- Schedule speaker for existing meeting: Make this the topic of regularly scheduled clergy deanery meeting, quarterly training for staff, weekly meeting of youth, etc, in addition to offering a special parish wide event
- Inform/Invite neighboring parishes
- Collaborate with other parishes within the region to share the speaker & expenses (eg: speaking/providing resource table at parish masses in one parish one weekend, another the next, and weekday presentations at both in the intervening days).
- Preaching by priest at Mass on topic
- Promote via bulletin, announcements, and social media for weeks or a month prior
- Plan a dinner or picnic to support the NFP couples in the parish, with a presentation and fellowship (to affirm, and invite active participation in parish ministries, CANFP, or as NFP teacher/advocate, etc).

"The Church's teaching on marital sexuality is an invitation for men and women---an invitation to let God be God, to receive the gift of God's love and care, and to let this gift inform and transform us, so we may share that love with each other and with the world". USCCB Married Love & the Gift of Life

Ask the Expert

Progesterone to Prevent Miscarriage

Question

I am 20+3 pregnant and was given cyclogest 400mg daily from five weeks pregnant, due to three previous miscarriages (all at eight weeks). My doctor has suggested it may be time to stop taking the cyclogest but doesn't seem very sure. I asked if stopping could cause early contractions and my doctor said this was possible. I also asked if there was any harm in continuing, my doctor said that

there may be a chance of genital defects in the baby. I am really scared. I don't want to harm my baby, but having made it this far I don't want to risk losing the baby. My doctor suggested keeping some in stock so that I could take one if I start to feel contractions or start to panic. If I stop taking the cyclogest and then started having contractions next day, how quickly would the contractions stop if I then took cyclogest?

What is the harm in stopping taking it or continuing until 30 weeks when the baby stands a good chance of survival?

I really don't know what to do for the best and I am getting really upset and worked up about making the decision. My doctor doesn't seem too committed either way and it's a very difficult decision to make.

Answer

Cyclogest contains progesterone, the hormone normally occurring in large amounts in women after ovulation and during pregnancy. Progesterone is vital in developing the lining of the uterus so a child at the embryo stage can implant, receive nourishment, and develop. Some women have low progesterone states manifested many times with difficulty becoming pregnant, polycystic ovaries, miscarriages, etc.

Why? Because he did the research and set up normals on women who had normal pregnancies and so standardized what are normal progesterone levels throughout a pregnancy. Women who have low progesterone levels take progesterone and get their blood levels drawn and are followed. Some women need progesterone throughout the pregnancy, some women do not. They are followed and if the progesterone levels start to fall off, then they restart.

It sounds as if you are a person who doesn't produce enough progesterone in the early stages of pregnancy and progesterone support is needed. Fortunately, there has been a lot of work in this area at Pope Paul VI Institute by Thomas Hilgers, MD (Ob/Gyn). He has found that some physicians' hesitation to use progesterone is based on one study that I believe was on lab rats. The doses used were astronomical. In his 30 years of using progesterone guided by laboratory levels, he has had no problems with birth defects.

This standardized level of progesterone can be used through the laboratory at Pope Paul VI Institute in Omaha, NE. Your local lab would draw the levels and have them sent to Omaha. Your doctor would get an email or overnight fax so he would know immediately where to keep you on the progesterone.

There are many physicians trained by Dr. Hilgers in the world, myself included. Go to American Academy of FertilityCare Professionals and perhaps there is one near you

who could answer more of your concerns and some questions for your doctor.

To really answer your question, I'd probably stay on the cyclogest until I'd gotten some concrete laboratory analysis. I hope that this helps! *Gretchen V. Marsh, D.O.*



Gretchen Marsh, D.O., is board certified in Family Medicine, and a certified NaProTechnology Medical Consultant and Creighton Model FertilityCare teacher. Dr. Marsh sees patients virtually on MyCatholicDoctor.com and in person at the FertilityCare Center of Reno.

See [Professional Directory at canfp.org](http://ProfessionalDirectoryatcanfp.org) for listing of professionals: NFP teachers, physicians, and clergy

Ask the Expert

Did My Abortion Cause My Miscarriage?

Question

Last year I experienced a miscarriage at about five weeks into the pregnancy. Before this miscarriage, I had an induced abortion (approximately three years

before). Presently, I am faced once again with a miscarriage, this time it was a missed abortion. My question is, is there any relation with having had an induced abortion and

later on having miscarriages? I have never had my progesterone levels checked, is there any relation in low levels of progesterone and missed abortion? *Thank you*

Answer

I am sorry to hear about your situation. Yes, abortions can have an impact on future pregnancies. However, from the information I have, I don't think that your two miscarriages were an effect of the abortion. Let me explain. It sounds like you had a "surgical abortion" which is associated with cervical damage, uterine perforations (puncture), infections, incomplete evacuation (parts of the child and placenta were left in the womb), and scarring to name a few. We don't know the actual numbers of physical side effects because doctors who provide abortions are not required to be on staff at a hospital or have any of their procedures reviewed. The rest of the medical community has to have every aspect of their practice subject to review.

Your first miscarriage occurred quite early and I doubt this was a consequence of the previous abortion. The second miscarriage sounds as though it was "fetal demise" meaning the child had a genetic abnormality incompatible with life even in the womb. Other things could have occurred such as a poor placenta or cord, improper implantation, etc. The most likely cause is as you alluded to-- poor progesterone levels.

The best way to investigate this is to be taught how to chart your menstrual cycles. The biological markers such as cervical mucus are highly accurate reflections of what is going on in your body. A trained doctor or provider can then order the appropriate tests (hormone levels, ultrasounds, etc) at the appropriate times of the cycle where the tests are meaningful. There is a wealth of information on menstrual charts which helps your doctor and you make diagnoses and treatment.

Keep in mind that while I don't think your previous abortion were associated with your miscarriages, I would be concerned about other side effects of the abortion. Depression, drug use, and suicide increase by 3-4 fold in women who have undergone an abortion. Teresa Burke, PhD does an excellent job of describing this along with a great amount of research in her book *Forbidden Grief*. She cites the studies and organizations such as Rachel's Vineyard which are available for people who need healing after an abortion (men included).

Also, the risks of breast cancer increase after an abortion especially in women who had an abortion prior to the first

full-term pregnancy (Nat'l Institutes of Health). This is because during a pregnancy, the milk glands go from stage II to stage III. During the final weeks of a pregnancy, the glands go to the fully mature stage IV. If the pregnancy ends prior to the end of the pregnancy, the stage III glands are sort of left in limbo. They are much more prone to abnormal cell development. This occurs with women with repeated miscarriages and abortions. Women are not usually informed of this at the time of abortions.

I have given a lot of serious information but it is good that you are taking charge and looking into your health. CANFP has listings of doctors and providers who are trained in looking at menstrual charts. They also have lists of trained teachers. The American Academy of FertilityCare Professionals has doctors who are trained in the very specifics of which I discussed above.

I sincerely hope that you will find the help and information that will help you and that this could help not only you but other people you may meet along the way *Gretchen V. Marsh, D.O.*

Women are not usually informed of this at the time of abortions

VIVIR LA PFN

Creo que la fertilidad es EL comienzo de la vida

gracias
Maricela Miotto
for translation
services

Como muchos futbolistas en su juventud, soñaba con jugar profesionalmente algún día. Para ello, jugar al fútbol era primordial, pero recuerdo que me decían que no jugara en un determinado parque o con ciertos jugadores y que era por mi seguridad, y yo obedecía. Más adelante, aprendí que esos campos y jugadores eran lo que necesitaba para mi formación, pero con ello venía el riesgo y la responsabilidad.

Al restringirme de esos entornos, no pude aprender a fondo y navegar por el riesgo y la responsabilidad.



En la formación de un futbolista, la primera lección que debe comprender el jugador es el riesgo y la responsabilidad. Los riesgos que uno va a asumir y las muchas responsabilidades

que debe mantener. Como mentor o entrenador, debo entender que el jugador debe sentir, experimentar y abrazar estos principios. No puedo protegerlos de los riesgos ni aliviar la responsabilidad, y deben experimentar el placer en el proceso.

Sin esta comprensión, volverán a recurrir a la comodidad como motor y medida del éxito. ¿Cómo me hizo sentir? Por el contrario, el atleta por excelencia se pregunta ¿cómo será de productivo? La comodidad y el sentimiento terminan en el último lugar de la lista.



El entrenador Al Arévalo, un entrenador de fútbol profesional acreditado por la Federación Argentina de Fútbol, es el propietario/operador de la escuela de fútbol Just4kicks, y asesora a jugadores de todo el mundo a través de Train Effective, una empresa de fútbol con sede en Londres asociada con la leyenda del Manchester United Rio Ferdinand.

y el sentimiento de soledad, se sentirá algo decepcionada.

Creo que la fertilidad es EL comienzo de la vida. Hay mucha controversia sobre cuándo empieza la vida. Pero muchos no se dan cuenta de que la vida no empieza con un feto o con el acto. Comienza en el mismo momento en que una se da cuenta del poder de su fertilidad. Está llena de incomodidad, riesgo, placer y responsabilidad. En mi opinión, la responsabilidad más importante que tenemos como hombres y mujeres es

Del mismo modo, entender la PFN es entender y navegar por el riesgo y la responsabilidad de la fertilidad de la pareja. Si una pareja juzga la PFN en función de la comodidad

Y LA FORMACIÓN DE UN FUTBOLISTA

Es bastante fascinante comparar un poco sobre la formación del fútbol y la PFN

orientar a los jóvenes sobre el significado de su fertilidad.

Para un aspirante a futbolista por excelencia, la vida comienza al final de su zona de confort. Las sobrecargas son para un jugador en formación, como el agua para un cultivador de las mejores uvas. Las sobrecargas en la formación futbolística son desafíos prescritos, de pequeños a grandes, que forman al jugador como un artista que convierte un trozo de barro en una bella escultura.

Es más, creo que un jugador por excelencia está dispuesto y puede asumir las sobrecargas, los riesgos y la responsabilidad debido a su propósito. Tienen un propósito claro a diario, que les impulsa a superar las sobrecargas prescritas.

¿No tendría entonces sentido decir que vivir la Planificación Familiar Natural necesita un propósito claro? ¿Puede definir ese propósito? ¿Cree que la gran mayoría está de acuerdo con ese propósito?

Para nosotros, en la comunidad de la PFN, ese propósito es la conexión directa entre la elección de traer una nueva vida al mundo y la consolidación de familias fuertes. Vivir la conexión entre sacrificar la gratificación inmediata por



Andrea y Al Arévalo

el bien común y vivir vidas más amorosas. Para "crear una cultura de la vida".

La presión social de hoy en día sobre lo que es el propósito y en lo que hay que tener un propósito es contradictoria. No se alinea con los cuerpos que Dios nos ha dado. Un vinicultor no cultiva uvas destinadas a una caja de jugo.

Es bastante fascinante comparar

un poco sobre la formación del fútbol y la PFN. Ambas asumen una gran cantidad de riesgos y responsabilidades, y para que eso ocurra, las dos necesitan un propósito que las impulse hacia esa meta.

Lo más importante es que sientan placer en ese proceso. En el fútbol, es convertirse en el cuerpo, la técnica, la mentalidad y la emoción del jugador que desean ser. En la PFN, el placer está en la sexualidad de hombres y mujeres. Después de todo, la fertilidad y la sexualidad van de la mano.

Encontramos la alegría en la idea de que cada acto de relación debe, por su propia naturaleza, estar abierto a la vida humana. Los riesgos y responsabilidades de esa atracción son divinos y magníficos.

Cuando se entiende la Planificación Familiar Natural, y una pareja se compromete con los riesgos y responsabilidades de vivirla, la humanidad, viva y difunta, aclama en las gradas por millones, ¡Golazo!



1217 Tyler Street • Salinas, California 93906

CANFP
Members are sent
Print and/or Digital Edition
quarterly!

CANFP rejoices in the U.S. Supreme Court Dobbs decision which overturned the 1973 Roe v. Wade law legalizing abortion nation-wide. While the issue of the legalizing or the illegalizing of abortion is now the matter of state governments, CANFP realizes that there will continue to be much work to do in California. CANFP remains committed to promoting natural means of postponing and achieving pregnancy and will continue to make efforts to make all forms of contraception not an option, but especially those forms that are abortifacients.

Fr. Blaise Berg, STD

CANFP.
PROMOTING SEX
THAT IS 100% NATURAL,
SUSTAINABLE, AND
LIFE GIVING
Now, more
important than ever!



CANFP
NEWS

edited and published quarterly by the
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION
OF NATURAL FAMILY
PLANNING

1217 TYLER ST.
SALINAS, CA 93906

canfp.org

info@canfp.org

831-443-3746

Memberships and contributions
to support the mission of CANFP
gratefully accepted online, or by
check mailed to address above.

CANFP MEMBERSHIPS:

\$50 BASIC

\$100 PROFESSIONAL

\$250 CHURCH

\$500 INSTITUTIONAL (DIOCESE/ORG)