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11th Annual Conference
March 27, 2004

NFP
For The Health Of It!

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CANFP NEWS

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Fall 2003

Contraception ≠ Pro-Life

Sheila St. John

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Fruits

of the

same

tree

I have never met an NFP teacher or advocate who is not pro-life, but I have met many Catholics, many pro-lifers, and many Catholic pro-lifers, who see no problem with contraception. In the 18 years I taught NFP at a Catholic hospital, I taught more non-Catholics than Catholics. Ironically, will Catholics and pro-life advocates be the last to embrace NFP?

Christian tradition has always rejected contraception as contrary to God's plan for married love—ALL Christian denominations. In 1930 the Anglican Church accepted contraception in limited circumstances, with the end result that today only the Catholic Church maintains a formal teaching against artificial birth control. Some Christians, particularly Evangelicals, find contraception incompatible with uniting their will with God's in planning their families, but for the most part NFP is viewed as an idiosyncrasy of Catholicism. Even many Catholics think it is an old teaching, which the church just hasn't gotten around to taking off the books yet.

Our generation may be witnessing a similar breach in another Christian tradition, that marriage is between a man and a woman, with the election of a Bishop in the Episcopal church (the American branch of the

same Anglican church that opened the door to Christian acceptance of contraception) who left his wife and children to live with his same sex partner. Will the Catholic Church someday stand alone in this teaching as well? Will marriage between a man and a woman be someday seen as just another idiosyncrasy of the Catholic Church? And what does this have to do with contraception?

The widespread acceptance of contraception and increasing pressure to legitimize same sex unions are not unrelated. One objection to labeling same sex partnerships a "marriage" is that marriage, by definition, is between a man and a woman. Why? Because God created a female partner for Adam (it's Adam and Eve, not Adam and Bob) and decreed the two become one flesh, instructing

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them to go forth and multiply. If we sterilize marriage, altering God's design for marital intimacy to be both procreative and unitive, on what basis do we oppose same sex marriages? It's difficult to imagine a time when contraception was not the status quo. I wonder, will it be an equally foreign concept to future generations that there was a time when marriage was denied same sex partners? When societal trends dictate moral norms, the winds of change blow quickly.

While contraception has gained widespread acceptance, efforts to attain the same status for abortion have met greater resistance. I propose they are fruits of the same tree. None other than Planned Parenthood observes: "Despite their differences, abortion and contraception are two ways of accomplishing the same primary goal: control over one's reproduction". Who is the main provider of abortion? Who is the most outspoken advocate of contraception? Can they be so wrong about one, and not the other? Is it not significant these services are linked? The link between contraception and abortion is pervasive. We will never reduce abortion by promoting contraception.

Our Supreme Court said a mouthful in 1992 in the Planned

Contraception cont. on p. 5

Director's Desk

Sheila St. John, Executive Director CANFP

In conversation with a CANFP member recently, I was asked what members receive in return for their annual membership donation to CANFP, and I thought others might have the same question.

Investment

Membership in CANFP is tiered: the lowest rate for families and individuals; a slightly higher investment for those with professional interests in NFP; the top tier for groups such as organizations, churches and dioceses. While there are "perks" to being a CANFP member---quarterly newsletter and discount on materials and annual conference registration to name a few---the true value of a CANFP membership is not in what you get, but in what you give.

Obligation

A membership in CANFP is an investment, an obligation, and a privilege.

Privilege

It is an opportunity to pool resources to accomplish more than any one of us can individually. A membership in CANFP is an investment in getting the word out about NFP through the website, toll free number, newsletter, exhibits, brochures, conferences, and professional directory. Your membership dollars are buying envelopes and stamps, paper for brochures and newsletters along with the ink to print them, and paying the phone bill. The main source of funding for CANFP is its members, and your donations are hard at work every day advocating, educating, and promoting NFP.

Why do I call it an obligation? As Bishop Steinbock of Fresno said in his pastoral letter on marriage and the family: "Because it doesn't entail the manufacture of devices or pills that are part of a billion dollar industry, because it doesn't lead to economic profit, the world is not going to advertise or publicize NFP." So who is, my friends? The obligation rests with those of us who know that NFP is the foundation upon which a culture of life will flourish. We who know the physical, spiritual and relational benefits of NFP bear the responsibility to seek every avenue to share the good news with the world, whether it wants to hear it or not! That means we are probably doing our part, and then some, in our own communities. An effective state organization is not in competition with those local efforts, but will only strengthen and fortify them. We are blessed in California to have a unique organization in CANFP. There truly is no other like it in



the United States. That blessing carries with it an obligation, for CANFP is only as strong as its membership. To whom much has been given, much is expected.

And privilege? Privilege is simply finding the joy in fulfilling our obligation. Privilege is having the humility to see the benefits of NFP in our own personal and professional lives, and being grateful for the opportunity to be part of a larger effort to share that good news with others. And privileged is how I feel being part of the community that is CANFP!

And if none of that appeals to you, how about if I throw in a free pen?

Urgent Request!

Previous invitations to join the committee to plan our 11th Annual CANFP Conference have not yielded any responses. A Site Host and Committee Chairs / Members must now be identified immediately for plans to proceed for this event, scheduled for **March 27, 2004**.

Conference Planning Committees

Exhibit	Program and Brochure	Funding
Hospitality	Session Monitor	Environment
Site Host	Set Up / Breakdown	Promotion
Audiotaping	Registration Packets	Audiovisual

Please contact the CANFP office immediately at **1-877-33-CANFP** or e-mail sheila@canfp.org if you would like more information or to participate.

Clergy Corner

An Interview with Our Newest Member of the Executive Board



We're honored, Fr. Berg, that you accepted our invitation to serve on the CANFP Executive Board. What prompted you to take this on, amongst your many responsibilities and busy schedule? Having concentrated on marriage and family studies while in seminary and worked with engaged and married couples in the parish, I have seen how important it is for spouses to foster a strong spiritual relationship with each other, and each, in his or her own way, with God. NFP allows couples to share their spiritual and bodily lives in a powerful way. Couples have told me how using NFP helps them be mutually attentive and respectful. I accepted the invitation to serve on the Executive Board of CANFP because I saw it as an opportunity to spread the word about the many positive aspects of NFP.

Rev. Blaise R. Berg, S.T.L., S.T.D., earned his licentiate and doctoral degrees in sacred theology at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family, Pontifical Lateran University, in Rome. Ordained a priest for the Sacramento Diocese, Fr. Berg currently serves as priest Secretary to the Bishop, Vice-Chancellor for the Diocese of Sacramento, and on the Executive Board of CANFP.

What was your familiarity with CANFP prior to your appointment to the Board?
In March 2002, when CANFP held its annual conference in Sacramento, I had a chance to hear quality presentations by NFP instructors, users and doctors. Impressed by the high quality of the presentations and inspired by the couples I met at the conference, I was moved to find out more about CANFP and its mission.

Has being a board member given you a unique perspective on NFP in California?
In the short time that I've been a part of CANFP, I've seen how much work there is to do in getting the word out about NFP. I've seen that a lot of good things are happening. At the same time, I've noted that when we clergy fail to speak about NFP, when medical doctors do not promote it and when married couples refuse to try it, the beauty and truth of NFP is not proclaimed.

What do you see as the greatest obstacle in the promotion of NFP?

It seems to me the greatest obstacle in promoting NFP is ignorance. Many engaged and married couples are simply not exposed to NFP and we're not doing a good enough job in the parishes presenting the Church's teaching on marital sexuality in a positive and attractive way.

What response do you get from laity as you form them in the teachings of the Church re: God's design for married love?
The laity are hungry for Christ's truth. When given Christ's teaching in a clear and concise way, they recognize its inherent beauty and they want more. As we look back on the first twenty-five years of the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, we can give thanks for all that the Holy Father has done to teach Christ's truth. The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Wednesday Catechisms on love and marriage are just two contributions among many that have helped to teach God's design for married love.

What can the average person do to support and assist their priests in promoting this at the parish level?
The "average person" can assist their priests by encouraging them to preach about NFP and by offering their assistance in preparing couples for marriage. God's design for married love needs to be taught, in an appropriate manner, in all the various parish programs: RCIA, youth group, Baptism class, marriage preparation and adult faith formation.

Your commitment to serve on the CANFP Board implies this is a priority for you. What is the urgency?
The urgency is that I want to get to heaven. As a Catholic priest, I will be judged by how well I have helped others get to heaven and by how, through my own sinfulness, I have built obstacles in the way of others being able to receive Christ's truth. I want as many people as possible to know Christ, to know and live his teachings and to get to heaven. Hopefully, in some small way, by serving on the CANFP board, I can help others, and myself, get to heaven.

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Esquina del Clero

Entrevista con el recién llegado Miembro de nuestra Mesa Ejecutiva

Nos ha honrado, Padre Berg, porque Ud. ha aceptado nuestra invitación a servir en nuestra Mesa Ejecutiva. ¿Qué es lo que le movió a Ud. entre tantas responsabilidades que tiene, y su horario de tanta ocupación, tomar esta posición? Habiendo concentrado sobre el Matrimonio y los estudios de la familia en el Seminario, y trabajado con parejas comprometidas y ya casados en la parroquia, he observado lo importante que es que el Matrimonio anime una relación firme y espiritual uno con el otro, y cada uno a su manera, con Dios. Planificación Natural de la Familia (PNF) permite que esposo y esposa participen, tanto uno como el otro, sus vidas de corporales y espirituales, de una manera poderosa. Hay matrimonios que me han dicho que el haber usado este plan les ha ayudado a ser atentos y respetuosos mutuamente. Yo acepté la invitación para servir en La Mesa de CANFP porque la ví como una oportunidad de extender la palabra de los muchos aspectos positivos de PNF.

Rev. Blaise R. Berg,

S.T.L., S.T.D., obtuvo su licenciatura y doctorado en sagrada teología del Instituto Juan Pablo II para Estudios de la Familia y el Matrimonio, Universidad Pontificia Laterana, Roma. Ordenado sacerdote para la Diócesis de Sacramento, el Padre Berg actualmente sirve como Secretario al Obispo y Vice-Canciller de la Diócesis de Sacramento.

¿Estaba Ud. familiarizado cual era la misión de CANFP antes de este nombramiento? En el mes de Marzo 2002 cuando CANFP tuvo su Conferencia anual en Sacramento, tuve la oportunidad de ser testigo de presentaciones de calidad por los instructores, los que usan el plan, y los médicos. Impresionado por la calidad excelente de las presentaciones e inspirado por los matrimonios que conocí en la conferencia, fué impulso mío el querer conocer mejor dicha asociación CANFP y su misión.

¿El haber sido miembro de La Mesa, le ha dado a Ud. perspectiva singular, acerca de PNF en California? En el poco tiempo que he tomado parte en CANFP, he visto cuánto trabajo hay que hacer a fin de extender la palabra referente a PNF. He visto que muchas cosas favorables están ocurriendo. A la vez me he fijado que cuando nosotros, el Clero, no hablamos de PNF, cuando los médicos no son promovedores, y cuando los matrimonios se niegan a practicarlo, la belleza y la verdad de PNF no es proclamada.

¿Qué observa Ud. que sea el obstáculo más grande en la acción de promover todo lo que se refiere a PNF? Me parece que el obstáculo más grande en la acción de promover PNF es la ignorancia. Muchos de los que están comprometidos y los que ya están casados, sencillamente no han sido expuestos a PNF y no estamos cumpliendo bien con la obligación que tenemos en la Santa Iglesia de presentar sus enseñanzas sobre la vida sexual de una manera positiva y atractiva.

¿Qué reacción recibe Ud. de parte de los fieles al informarlos de las enseñanzas de la Iglesia, según los designios de Dios, respecto al amor en la vida matrimonial? Los fieles tienen hambre de la verdad de Cristo. Cuando se les dá las enseñanzas de Cristo, de una manera clara y concisa, pronto reconocen su inherente hermosura y quieren saber más. Al retroceder a los principios de los veinticinco años del pontificado de Su Santidad Juan Pablo II, damos gracias por todo lo que el Santo Padre ha hecho para impartir la verdad de Cristo. El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica y los catequeses de los Miércoles, sobre el amor y el Matrimonio solamente son dos contribuciones, entre muchas, que han ayudado a las enseñanzas de los designios de Dios en cuanto al amor en el matrimonio.

¿Qué es lo que puede hacer toda persona para ayudar a sus sacerdotes a promover ésto, particularmente en la parroquia? Toda persona puede ayudar a los sacerdotes, animándolos a predicar sobre PNF y ofrecer su asistencia preparando a los comprometidos para el matrimonio. Los designios de Dios para el amor en el matrimonio necesita enseñarse de una manera apropiada en todos los programas de la parroquia: RCIA, el grupo de jóvenes, la clase para el Bautismo, Preparación para el Matrimonio, y Formación en la Fe para Adultos.

El que Ud. se haya comprometido a dar servicio en la Mesa Ejecutiva de CANFP dá a entender que todo ésto es de suma importancia para Ud. ¿Cuál es la urgencia? La urgencia es que quiero llegar al cielo. Como sacerdote Católico seré juzgado por lo bien que he ayudado a otros a llegar al cielo y cómo por mi propia inclinación al mal, he construido obstáculos en el camino de otros que pudieran haber recibir la verdad de Cristo. Quiero que conozcan a Cristo cuantas gentes sea posible, que conozcan y vivan sus enseñanzas y que lleguen al cielo. Con buena disposición espero humildemente que al servir en esta Mesa Ejecutiva, pueda yo ayudar a otros y ayudarme yo mismo a llegar al cielo.

Question & Answer

Ask the Expert

I am 23 and up until about two months ago I had never had a period. I started seeing an endocrinologist/fertility specialist. He found that my estrogen level was about 60 so he put me on Demulin 135. After taking the pill for two months I still did not see a cycle, so he switched me to Demulin 150. I took it for a month and still nothing.. I called my doctor and he switched me to an estrogen therapy. As soon as he switched me to the estrogen therapy I saw spotting for three days. I had been on the therapy for about 4.5 months before I saw any more spotting. By then I had asked my doctor if we could try the Demulin 150 again because my husband and I were becoming very frustrated. I took the Demulin for two cycles and I saw spotting for three days each cycle. My question is will my periods be just spotting or will it eventually turn into a real cycle? Our goal is to conceive a child and I know that taking the birthcontrol pill is defeating this purpose. What is the next step you think we should take in order to make conception possible?

Signed,
Concerned

Dear Concerned,
If you have never had a spontaneous period at the age of 23, you need a comprehensive workup including chromosomes, ultrasound or CAT scan, and blood tests to test your thyroid, pituitary hormones, and ovarian hormones. You need diagnostic studies to see if you have an anatomical problem with your uterus or ovaries; an inherited congenital problem; a more ordinary hormonal problem such as polycystic ovarian syndrome, stress or exercise related problem; or a rare hormonal problem. The spotting you had after birth control pills was not a period; it is artificial bleeding and all it does is prove that you have a uterus. I believe that at your age, you are more likely to have a somewhat rare problem. Some of these problems can only be diagnosed properly in a University setting, where hormones extracted from the hypothalamus are used to diagnose pituitary problems by stimulating the pituitary gland. I would encourage you to seek your evaluation at a University medical center in the gynecologic endocrinology

department. You will get the quickest, most definitive answer to your questions if you are a patient in this type of setting. You cannot treat your problem without knowing the cause of the lack of periods.

Dr. Mary Davenport



Response by Dr. Mary Davenport, an Obstetrician-Gynecologist and NFP Medical Consultant in private practice in El Sobrante, California. A graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine, Dr. Davenport completed her residency at the University of California, San Diego, is a Fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and on the Advisory Board of CANFP.

Ask The Expert questions can be submitted at www.canfp.org sent to the CANFP office, or emailed to experts@canfp.org



www.LifeontheBallot.org

California voters have the chance of a lifetime -- the chance to put human life on the California ballot. This constitutional amendment will require abortionists to notify at least one parent at least 48 hours before an abortion is performed on an unmarried daughter less than 18 years old.

Petition circulators will have until the end of March, 2004 to collect 598,105 signatures to qualify this proposition for the November, 2004 Presidential election. Training and information sessions for signature gatherers have been set up throughout California. For the location nearest you, go to the website www.LifeontheBallot.org For more information call **213-896-9554** or email LifeontheBallot@cox.net.

International Prayer Team

Tara Lutman Agacayak



Greetings from Turkey.



Prayer

doesn't

change

God,

it

changes

me

In the movie *Shadowlands*, the C.S. Lewis character played by Anthony Hopkins says, "Prayer doesn't change God, it changes me". That line has always impacted me, for of course, what can we tell or ask God in prayer that He isn't already aware of? And in that case, why do we pray at all?

Personally, I feel inclined to pray most during my lowest moments, asking God to relieve my burden, or ensure an outcome.

"God, please take away this pain that I'm feeling."

"God, I pray that you would help me get this job that I am applying for."

"God, my Grandmother is really really sick, please heal her and make her well."

What effect does this prayer have on God's ears? Can I change His mind with my supplications? Does the degree of my pleading make God more merciful?

The more I pray, and the more I see the effects of my prayer, the more truth I find in C.S. Lewis' words - that it is I who

change as a result of my prayer, and not God. Using prayer as a means to focus on the desires and despair of my heart connects me with God and enables me to be more open and accepting of His will. Here the focus shifts from the request of God to a receiving of His Word. The balance shifts. In that state, I have found Grace and Peace.

So then what does this philosophy mean for the CANFP Prayer Team? Every week I send out messages on behalf of CANFP where we seek such practical things as money, support, and volunteers. These are prayers of request wherein we ask God to change our present situation. Indeed we could not conduct the business of CANFP without such practicalities, and surely it is noble of us to acknowledge that these things can come to us from God, but do we increase our chances of acquiring these by our prayers?

I like to think that what we are actually doing in those moments of prayer is finding a quiet space to identify that the aims and goals of CANFP are God-given in the first place. Then, we are expressing to God that we are grateful for the gift of NFP and the work of CANFP in promoting and fostering such a gift. In due process we come to realize that it is God who put the longing for NFP in our hearts, the desire to see CANFP prosper in its mission, and in the coming together of these, we see that whatever we would ask for of God, it has already been

given. In that moment of Faith, we see that God has already provided us the money, the volunteers, and everything else we have "asked" for, it is only that we have finally become open to receiving it.

When we are at that point, the point of openness and reception, and we realize God has already provided us all we could want, we are at a point where we are most able to give thanks. I believe in that state I am most faithful to God's plan, most peaceful in His guidance, and most filled with Grace in awe of His gifts.

I would like to thank all the members of the CANFP Prayer Team for their diligent prayers and the time they take to pray regularly for the benefit of CANFP. In addition, I would like to welcome any others who would like to be a part of our team. If you are interested, please feel free to email me at prayers@canfp.org

God Bless

Tara is a transplanted American living in Turkey. She married her husband, Cibin in February of 2002 and together they moved to Turkey where Cibin is serving his duty as a Turkish Naval Lieutenant. In preparation for their marriage, Tara and Cibin began studying NFP three years ago in California and were introduced to CANFP by their instructor. Understanding how precious a gift NFP is, Tara began working with CANFP to promote its success through prayer.

Contraception continued

Guardians

of

the

process

Parenthood vs. Casey decision, when they stated, *"in some critical respects abortion is of the same character as the decision to use contraception...for two decades of economic and social developments, people have organized intimate relationships and made choices that define their views of themselves and their places in society, in reliance on the availability of abortion in the event that contraception should fail."* To me, this says contraception has been so completely embraced in our behavior, and subsequently in our mentality, that we not only see sex differently, we see ourselves differently! In divorcing sex from babies, we have adopted a new self identity.

This is profound, so profound that I think the Justices must have been studying Catholic teaching on Theology of the Body when they framed this decision. Ok, maybe not, but let me explain how I think their rationale ties in with what our Holy Father has spent the span of his pontificate teaching.

The Theology of the Body is the study of how God reveals himself through the human body. The body, which you see, represents me, my personhood, which you cannot see. And I, as a person, reveal God. So, my bodily expressions reflect who I am, and can reveal more clearly, who God is.

What does a contraceptive act say? In a contracepted act I express with my body NOT the total gift God intended, but the limitations I in my weakness and

humanity place on it. And what we reveal to each other bodily, defines the very core of our personhood. With contraception we *define ourselves*, God's children, not by the infinite greatness of His love, but by our limitations to trust in it.

Contraception is inconsistent with Respect for Life because by its very nature it erodes the gift of self, usurps our role as co-creators with God, and alters how we view ourselves and our relationship with our Creator. Contraception is not the antidote to abortion, it is the fuel.

To see the clear connection between contraception and abortion we need look no further than the methods themselves. Emergency contraception is a term used to describe a concentrated dose of birth control pills taken within 72 hours after intercourse. Can emergency contraception cause an abortion? In a 2003 article, the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association responds: *"No. Emergency contraceptive pills work to prevent pregnancy---they cannot interrupt or disrupt an established pregnancy."* The same article provides an accurate explanation of just how emergency contraception, and all other hormonal methods like the Pill, Deprovera, Norplant, etc, do work: *"Emergency contraception works the same way as other hormonal methods of contraception... 1) delay or inhibit ovulation, 2) interfere with fertilization, or 3) prevent implantation."*

Implantation of.....what?

So, how do they reconcile the conflicting claims in this article, that the pill and all its variations do not cause an abortion when one of the mechanisms of action is to prevent the newly conceived baby from implanting into the mother's womb? By manipulating language to obscure truth: *"The medical community defines pregnancy as beginning with the successful implantation of the fertilized egg."*

More like redefines pregnancy! It's always been accepted that new life begins with the union of the sperm and egg, but now, so that the postfertilization effects of these hormones can be concealed from the very women they are prescribed for, we arbitrarily redefine when pregnancy begins.

To fight abortion and ignore the connection with contraception is to flail away at the serpent with a feather for a weapon. We must attack the problem at its root.

During October the U.S. Catholic Bishops called us all to celebrate "Life is a Miracle". God created Man and Woman to be the caretakers of that miracle; not only the miracle of life conceived, but the *miracle* that we are called to be guardians of the process in which God has ordained He will bring a new soul into being for all eternity.

How much He must love us to invite us to fulfill His design for the Miracle of Life.