



Men, Sexuality, and Natural Fertility Regulation

Carlos Aldana-Valenzuela, MD



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Gregory K Chesterton in his famous book, *The Everlasting Man*, wrote: "About sex especially men are born unbalanced: We might almost say men are born mad. They scarcely reach sanity till they reach sanctity"¹

I think these words reflect a fundamental truth about the major difference between female and male sexuality. It has been long recognized that woman's sexual identity is more interior, more intimately linked to her being whereas a man's sexuality is more exterior, less "connected" to his interior being and more intimately related to his activity.² So women readily understand human sexuality as multidimensional and a fundamental component of personality. Additionally women in many ways teach men how to be receptive to new human life. In fact their own "fatherhood" is learned from their mother, so their mother's contribution, as John Paul II has beautifully written, is critical in

laying down the foundation for a new human personality.³

This places a major responsibility on women to assume a crucial role as educators of male sexuality. They can jeopardize the development of male discipline and sexual maturity either by not recognizing this role or by abdicating it. It is likely that many women are not aware of this because either their mothers did not teach them or they simply did not grasp its significance.



Carlos Aldana-Valenzuela, MD, shown here presenting at the 2001 CANFP Conference in San Francisco, will be a featured presenter at the 2005 CANFP Conference in Los Angeles March 18-19.

From my experience teaching the Creighton Model System in Mexico for many years I came to the realization that the infamous Latino machismo, wherein men treat women as sexual objects, is due at least in part to the prejudice that men cannot be educated—that their male sexuality is impulsive and not amenable to discipline and self control. So the women simply shrug and accept that attitude as inevitable and give up their role as educators. This has a negative effect not only on marriage and the family but even on society at large.

On the other hand when a man works with his wife to purposely decide the "when" of marital intimacy he becomes aware of the great mutual gift they are exchanging, a unique gift that can only be expressed through the body. The practice of NFP is a very powerful tool to reveal this profound aspect of human sexuality. Many men experience greater self-mastery and more interior freedom as they collaborate with their wives in the use of NFP. Trust and mutual understanding are enhanced. Periodic continence is appreciated as a rewarding challenge on the path to greater mutual love and happiness rather than as an obstacle to same. The beauty and multifaceted character of

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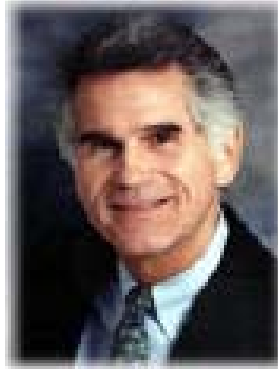
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President's Perspective

Gregory Polito, MD, KM

Size Matters



*W*e generally "see" size. That is, we use our gift of vision to appreciate this aspect of reality by stereoscopically looking at a subject's length, width, and height. Objects that are much greater than we can encompass into our field of vision, or are too small for us to visualize, demand a certain "faith" that they exist. For example we must rely upon astronomic pictures of the stars and planets or the light/electron microscope magnification of cellular structures to appreciate their existence. This fact of reality can create problems. We self-centered human beings may fail to consider (or choose to ignore) profound implications of our actions when we cannot directly visualize the material reality present in some event—when we cannot see what is going on.

Example one: Human sexual intercourse. God chose marital relations to be a privileged act of a couple sacramentally covenanted to each for life. I not only make a gift of my love-making and my body to my spouse, but I receive (or give) virtually invisible packages of my unique genetic material to my lover that could, God willing, initiate a new human life.

our ethical construct has become merely utilitarian

Because it is most appropriate for the diminutive saplings to be raised to "know, love, and serve God" within the family setting the Lord asks us to reserve sex and children for marriage. Through our experience of family life we gradually understand what a loving and gracious a God we have and what bliss eternal life promises.

Yet because we cannot see and therefore more fully appreciate the profound exchange that occurs during intercourse we pollute our bodies to prevent ovulation or implantation, or we mutilate them to obliterate the reproductive canal. We disregard the admonition to be chaste so we share our DNA with others indiscriminately instead of with our lover for life. Instead of creating an ever-maturing community relationship - in preparation for an eternal one - we continue to pursue actions that only isolate ourselves more. Believe it or not the atheist Jean Paul Sartre wrote a deeply disturbing short story that gives us a pretty good idea of what hell is like. Called **No Exit** it is about a group of people in a room for all eternity where each one is only interested in him- or herself...

Example Two: Infant stem cell harvesting. It is breath-taking to think that in the last 40 years we have descended to such depths of depravity that our ethical construct has become merely utilitarian: If I need something to better my human existence I am going to take it from you, even if I have to sacrifice your life for it! Because we cannot see the little 14-cell blastocyst he or she is considered expendable currency in our current culture. For what? To chase after cures for diseases that are still poorly understood and for which there is no evidence **infant** stem cells would do the job any better than umbilical cord blood stem cells or adult stem cells. In fact only the latter have shown promise.

I pray that we all may continue to "see" much better God's magnificent plan of creation by allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our minds and our hearts rather than we simply relying upon our eyes.

Director's Desk

Sheila St. John, Executive Director CANFP



As I write this I, along with the rest of the nation, await election results. I experience a strange discord of power and helplessness each time I vote. The privilege and power of each vote is undeniable. And yet lil'

ol' me, alone, will not alter the outcome of the elections.

We can become frustrated and immobilized with the overwhelming problems facing our country, or we can step up to the plate and shoulder our

responsibility at the ballot box to help chart the course to solutions.

I felt passionately about some of the choices on the ballot, and not only exercised my obligation to vote, but attempted to

Question

and

Answer

My husband and I have been trying to become pregnant for about three years now. I have never been on BCP. My doctor did preliminary tests and discovered I have numerous fibroids on my uterus. Could this be our problem? If so, what can be done? We both get disappointed every menstrual cycle. Thank You.



Ask The Expert questions can be submitted through our web site, sent to the CANFP office, or e-mailed to experts@canfp.org

Fibroids, which are benign muscle tumors in the uterus, are an extremely common problem and are present in 25% of women over 30. Although fibroids often are asymptomatic, they can produce excessive bleeding, pressure and pain, and most certainly be a cause of infertility. If you have multiple fibroids, they can be removed by an operation called a myomectomy, which involves removing the fibroids one by one. If you have many fibroids, it can require several hours. This operation can be somewhat bloodier than a hysterectomy and in some cases patients donate their own blood prior to surgery. Depending on the location of the fibroids (subserous on the outside of the uterus, intramural within the

muscle wall of the uterus, or submucous just underneath the inner lining of the uterus) the approach can be through the abdomen or through the vagina. For subserous and intramural fibroids myomectomy is conventionally done through a regular abdominal incision, although at times using a laparoscope with mini-incisions is suitable. If the fibroids are very large, sometimes they are shrunk prior to surgery by injections of Lupron, which create an artificial menopause. I would find a surgeon experienced in myomectomy, and in techniques to avoid adhesions (scar tissue), which can be a complication of this type of surgery, and who is very motivated to save your uterus rather than remove it. Because

Dr. Mary Davenport is an obstetrician-gynecologist with an NFP only medical practice in El Sobrante, California. She graduated from Tufts University School of Medicine and completed her residency at the University of California, San Diego. Dr. Davenport is a Fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, a Medical Consultant in Natural Family Planning, and serves on the boards of the California Association of Natural Family Planning and the American Association of Pro-Life OBGyn's.

Ask the Expert



Dr. Mary Davenport

many couples with fertility problems have more than one cause of infertility, I would be sure to have a thorough hormonal evaluation, make sure the fallopian tubes are open, do NFP charting to assess cervical mucus, and obtain a semenalysis for your husband, so other potential problems can be addressed systematically and not overlooked. Also, you may want to get a second opinion as to whether the fibroids are a significant cause of infertility in your particular situation, and if myomectomy is the logical next step in your fertility workup and treatment.

Desk continued...

the power of one!

influence the thoughts of others as well, fueled by the conviction that the alternative would negatively impact our society in the coming years. Other ballot issues were less clear to me. Lacking information or insight on these, I relied on the wisdom of others whose opinions and convictions I value. And yes, in a few cases, I confess---I guessed.

It has always been my nature,

when confronted with a problem, to want to fix it. Rarely does this mean I have a solution, mind you! But this awareness seems to do little to thwart my desire to make a difference. At CANFP, I am fortunate to be surrounded by wise people who guide our efforts and fan the flames of my commitment.

Those who read this newsletter share a passion for the issues it addresses. Individually, we feel

alternately powerful---as we see the changes our efforts can bring in individual lives---and helpless, as we face daunting challenges.

I ask you to exercise the power of one! Join CANFP if you are not already a member, contribute if you are, and use this newsletter and the enclosed brochure to invite another to join you. We don't have to have all the answers to make a positive contribution.

2005 Professional Directory

**Professional
Resource Directory
of the
California
Association of
Natural Family
Planning
2005**



CANFP maintains an online Directory of NFP Professionals at www.canfp.org and produces a hard copy bi-annually. The 2005 California Directory of Natural Family Planning Professionals is now being assembled for distribution at the 2005 CANFP Conference in March. To be included in this directory, California NFP Professionals---NFP teachers, physicians, nurses, and clergy---must:

- 1) not prescribe or refer for contraception, sterilization, artificial reproductive technologies, or abortion
- 2) be current Professional members in CANFP
- 3) sign and submit their completed *request to be listed* to the CANFP office by December 15, 2004.

Contact CANFP to obtain a **request to be listed** and confirm membership status:

1-877-33-CANFP info@canfp.org 1217 Tyler St. Salinas, Ca. 93906

Deadline for submissions is December 15, 2004

Thank You to our Parish Members for their support of CANFP!

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Carmel Mission	Carmel
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St. Andrew's	Pasadena
St. Brendan's	Los Angeles
St. Gerard Majella	Los Angeles
Our Lady of Lourdes	Tujunga
St. Matthew's	San Mateo
St. Cecilia's	San Francisco
Newman Center	Chico
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TOP TEN Reasons to be a CANFP Parish Team Member!

- TEN** See *your* parish listed in the next **CANFP NEWS**
- NINE** Receive a 10% discount on **CANFP** materials
- EIGHT** Receive a discount on registration for paid church staff attending annual **CANFP** conference
- SEVEN** Receive a discount on registration for clergy attending the 2005 statewide clergy convocation
- SIX** Receive **CANFP NEWS** quarterly
- FIVE** Honor your parish volunteers
- FOUR** Invest in healthy women, healthy marriages and healthy families
- THREE** Experience the satisfaction of supporting a unique, statewide effort to unite, promote, and support all methods of NFP
- TWO** Know you are donating to an organization that knows how to get the most bang for your (\$100) buck(s)!
- ONE** **It is the right thing to do!**

Celebrate the Gift



Dr. Thomas Hilgers, Director of the **Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction**, co-developer of the **Creighton Model Fertility Care System**, and author of the just released 1300 page textbook *The Medical and Surgical Practice of NaProTechnology*, will be a featured presenter at the physician and clergy conferences, as well as the Saturday sessions. Dr. Hilgers, board certified in obstetrics, gynecology and gynecologic laser surgery, is a member of the Society of Reproductive Surgeons, the Pontifical Academy for Life and the Pontifical Council for the Family.



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Camille E. De Blasi

is President and co-Founder of **Healing the Culture**, which is devoted to advancing the most complete and dignified vision of what it means to be a human person. She co-founded the **Center for Life Principles** in 1993, is a collaborator on the book: *Healing the Culture: A Commonsense Philosophy of Happiness, Freedom, and the Life Issues* and author of *Modestly Yours* (for teenagers), *Life Principles: Making Sense of the Life Issues*. She will be speaking at the CANFP 2005 Conference on the topic **Contraception: Barrier to Happiness?**

2005 Annual Conference
March 18-19, 2005
The Center at
Cathedral Plaza
Los Angeles

Statewide
Clergy Conference
Physician Conference

Friday, March 18th

Grand Banquet
Friday Evening

11th Annual CANFP
Conference

includes workshops in Spanish
Saturday, March 19th

Concluding with

Palm Sunday Vigil Mass
celebrated by
Cardinal Roger Mahony



Also featuring
Carlos Aldana-Valenzuela, MD
Gregory Polito, MD, KM
and more!

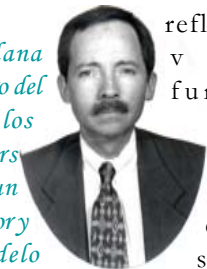
**Interested in joining
the conference
planning committee?**

**Contact the CANFP office
to volunteer your
services!**

1-877-33-CANFP
sheila@canfp.org

**Invite physicians and
clergy in your region
now to reserve the
dates!**

G.K. Chesterton en su famoso libro "El Hombre Eterno" escribió: "En relación a la sexualidad, especialmente los hombres nacemos un tanto desbalanceados. Casi podríamos decir que nacemos un tanto locos. Los hombres alcanzan la cordura cuando alcanzan la santidad".¹ Creo que estas palabras no han perdido su



El Dr. Carlos Aldana Valenzuela es un miembro del consejo directivo de los FertilityCare Centers International. El es un consultor médico, educador y profesor del Modelo Creighton en Leon, México. El Doctor Aldana va a ser uno de los presentadores durante la Conferencia del CANFP que tomara lugar en la Catedral de Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles en la ciudad de Los Angeles el 18 y 19 de Marzo, 2005.

actualidad y reflejan una verdad fundamental acerca de las grandes diferencias en la sexualidad masculina y femenina. Ha sido ampliamente reconocido que la identidad sexual femenina es más interior, su sexualidad está íntimamente ligada a su interior mientras que la sexualidad masculina es más exterior, menos podríamos decir "conectada" a su interior y más íntimamente ligada a su actividad.² De esta forma la mujer más fácilmente entiende y percibe a la sexualidad humana en su carácter multi-dimensional y como un componente fundamental de su personalidad. Además la mujer por sus mismas características le enseña al hombre como recibir una nueva vida humana y su propia "paternidad" la aprende de la maternidad de su esposa, luego entonces la contribución de la madre es decisiva para los cimientos de una nueva personalidad humana como ha

expresado bellamente el papa Juan Pablo II.³

Todos estos hechos hacen que la mujer tenga una gran responsabilidad, debido a que tienen un poderoso papel como educadoras de la sexualidad masculina. Ellas pueden lesionar la misma disciplina masculina y madurez sexual del hombre cuando no están concientes de este rol tan importante que tienen o bien cuando simplemente renuncian a tener este rol. Es muy probable que muchas mujeres no están concientes de estos hechos de la vida, posiblemente sus madres nunca les enseñaron esto.

A lo largo de los años de enseñar el Modelo Creighton de regulación natural de la fertilidad me he dado cuenta de que el famoso machismo mexicano que implica tratar a la mujer como un simple objeto sexual por lo menos en parte puede explicarse por esta idea que tienen muchas mujeres de que el hombre no es educable debido a lo impulsivo de su sexualidad, por lo que ellas acaban renunciando a este papel tan crucial que tienen. Esto tiene un impacto negativo no solo en el matrimonio y familia sino en toda la sociedad.

Pero por otro lado cuando el hombre renuncia a imponer sus propias necesidades sexuales y acepta los ritmos de su esposa, el hombre se da cuenta de que los esposos deben ser un don de sí al otro y que su cuerpo es una expresión de este don. La práctica de la planificación

natural de la familia es una poderosa herramienta para poder descubrir este aspecto tan profundo de la sexualidad humana. Muchos hombres experimentan un mejor dominio de sí mismos, una mayor libertad interior y gozosamente ayudan a sus esposas con el aprendizaje y el uso del método. La continencia periódica es vista más que como un obstáculo como un reto y esto a su vez de ver la sexualidad en todas sus distintas dimensiones pero como un concepto abstracto sino como algo real y que se experimenta.

Finalmente la union de esposo y esposa no solamente implica fecundidad física sino también espiritual, total donación al otro. Como Hans Urss Von Baltasar dijo: "La sexualidad aun en su aspecto de "eros" debe ser una expresión del ágape y ágape siempre implica un elemento de renuncia. Solo los cristianos pueden entender el reto que representa la encíclica *Humanae Vitae* y solo en la medida que luchan por seguir a Cristo como personas casadas y mantener su ejemplo delante de sus ojos con fervor cada vez mayor".⁴

REFERENCIAS

¹ GK Chesterton. *El Hombre Eterno y Ortodoxia*. Editorial Porrúa. México. 1992
² W. May. *Marriage: The rock on which family is built*. Ignatius Press pag 53. 1995
³ Juan Pablo II. *Encíclica sobre la dignidad de la mujer (mulieris dignitatem)* 18. 1998
⁴ Hans Urs Von Baltasar. *A Word on Humanae Vitae*. *Communio*. Summer 1993

The Bible, philosophers, and common sense tell us pregnancy is a gift from God.



Father Brian Crawford, OSJ is shown here in front of the Shrine of St. Joseph, Guardian of the Redeemer, in Santa Cruz, California, where he serves as Director. A priest for 12 years, Fr. Brian is also the Provincial for the Oblates of St. Joseph.

If we have any hope of fulfilling God's plan for marriage and family, we must be convinced of this truth. That is why the Church must stand strong against those who would have us believe pregnancy is a thing more to be avoided than welcomed, even when this view is expressed from within our own Church!

Once we accept that the conception and birth of a child are precious gifts from God, then natural family planning makes perfect sense. NFP helps us see artificial contraceptives, sterilization, in vitro fertilization, and surrogacy for what they truly are: major tragedies that undermine our society's very foundations.

This is because they either block the gift of pregnancy or they force it to come on our terms and in our way. The perception then becomes that conception is more a product of human

effort than a gift. Thus, we think we can do with it as we see fit. We don't appreciate it for what it is, a gift to be treasured, not used.

For these reasons, it is especially necessary for us as priests – and any who minister to married couples – to teach them the truth, beauty, and wisdom regarding NFP and contraception.

Furthermore, if we give "permission" to a couple to contracept or be sterilized, we expose them to something the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) describes as an "intrinsically evil" act.

The Church teaches this as a truth to be believed. Therefore, how can I (or any priest) tell a couple in good conscience to use contraceptives? The CCC goes on to say, "[Artificial birth control] leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality" (no. 2370).

By giving couples permission to contracept, I would not only undermine their marriage vows in the procreative aspect, but in its unitive aspect. Since those are the two ends of marriage, and they are inseparably linked, I would have thus undermined the whole marriage.

In light of this, priests and all those who have care of souls must counsel couples that contraception is morally impermissible. No doubt some believe they help couples or exercise compassion by counseling them to the contrary. No doubt, also, they have imbibed our society's fallacious view of pregnancy and childbearing. However, if they understood that both pregnancy and the children that result are precious gifts from God – to be received from Him in absolute, complete trust and love – there is no way anyone would give such counsel.

Let us ask Our Lady and St. Gabriel that more hearts are opened to the beauty of the Church's teaching on this matter.

Men continued...

human sexuality is appreciated as something real and experienced rather than as some abstract concept.

The union of husband and wife engenders not only physical but also spiritual fruitfulness as well as the couple totally surrenders to each other and love each other unconditionally. As Hans Urs Von Balthasar has said, "Sexuality even as eros is to be an expression of agape, and agape always involves an element of renunciation. Only Christians can understand the challenge posed by the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* and even Christians only to the degree that they strive to follow Christ as married persons and keep his example before their eyes with ever increasing devotion"⁴

¹ GK Chesterton. *The Everlasting Man*. Ignatius Press. Page 116. 1992
² W. May. *Marriage: The rock on which family is built*. Ignatius Press. Page 53. 1995
³ John Paul II. *Mulieris Dignitatem* 18 1998
⁴ Hans Urs Von Balthasar. *A Word on Humanae Vitae*. *Communio*. Summer 1993.

Carlos Aldana Valenzuela, MD serves on the Board of Directors of FertilityCare Centers International, and is a Medical Consultant, Educator and active Practitioner of the Creighton Model System in Leon, Mexico. Dr. Aldana will be a featured presenter at the 2005 CANFP Conference in March in Los Angeles.

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