



## Stand Up for NFP!

Only 0.1% of US women use modern forms of natural family planning (W. D. Mosher and J. Jones. “Use of contraception in the United States:

1982-2008.” *Vital and Health Statistics Series 23, Number 29 (2010): 1-77*). While this may not be a statistic that we proudly proclaim here at TLC, it is the sad reality we are facing.

**“New study says that only 0.1% of US women use modern methods of NFP”**

The new study reporting this troubling statistic is titled “Use of contraception in the United States: 1982-2008.” The study’s authors, W.D. Mosher and J. Jones, report that the number one method of contraception used by the 7,356 women surveyed was the oral hormonal contraceptive pill. From the study it was estimated that 10.7 million (17.3%) women use this form of birth control.

Female sterilization was the second most popular contraceptive method with an estimated 10.3 million (16.7%) US women using this method.

When women listing “male sterilization” as their method of contraception were added, then sterilization (male and female) became the number one method of contraception.

The 0.1% or estimated 62,000 of US women who currently use natural family planning is down from the 0.2% or 124,000 women reported in 2002 and the 0.3% or 162,000 in 1982. A greater number of US women, 0.5% or 309,000 listed periodic abstinence or the calendar rhythm as their method of contraception. This is down from the 1.8% or 978,000 women reported in 1982.

Father Jeff Day’s message to “Be not Afraid” at the 2010 NFP conference at Sacred Heart Major Seminary takes on a greater urgency when we hear the startling numbers from the study above.

## Find Your Voice!

This is a call to stand up for NFP; to share with others all the blessings NFP has brought to our lives and marriages. Educating ourselves about NFP is an important first step. We must know our facts when faced with critics or even the careless presumptions of friends.

We must also find our voice; that authentic voice that reaches out to others with respect and understanding but carries the firmness of conviction.

It is this voice that we are relying on to get two important messages out about NFP. First, NFP is a scientifically proven method for couples trying to either prevent or achieve pregnancy. Second, NFP is not just a method to control birth but rather part of a mentality with which we approach our marriage. It is the mentality of complete self-donation, where nothing is

concealed or held back from our spouse. If we know that this is the type of honesty that sustains a marriage; that NFP is a gift every married couple should know about, then what is stopping us from sharing?

*A summary of the study: W. D. Mosher and J. Jones. “Use of contraception in the United States:*

*1982-2008.” Vital and Health Statistics Series 23, Number 29 (2010): 1-77 can be found at the USCCB website.*

Page 2 of this newsletter contains a summary of the talks from Fr. Jeff Day and Gretchen & Javier Mena at the July 20, 2010 NFP Conference



**Happy Thanksgiving!**



Please email topics, articles, questions, and suggestions to TLC at [jndorsten@gmail.com](mailto:jndorsten@gmail.com)



# Be Not Afraid Be Bold



On July 20, 2010 at Sacred Heart Major Seminary Dr. Fr. Jeff Day spoke with doctors, priests, seminarians, parents, and educators about the difficulties in presenting the good news about natural family planning in the secular culture we live.

He offered positive ways of making this message a priority and requested prayers as the Archdiocese of Detroit challenges her people to be open to life and accept the natural family planning, NFP lifestyle.

Not everyone is open to learning about NFP. Most people think NFP is the old Rhythm Method. Fr. Jeff recalled how his college roommate referred to NFP as Vatican Roulette.

Fr. Jeff learned the difference between Rhythm and the modern NFP methods in the seminary and eventually attended an NFP class series where he discovered with married and engaged couples how they observe signs of fertility and infertility and how they interpret charts.

As Fr. Jeff prepares couples for the sacrament of marriage he is able to share with these engaged couples the NFP information he learned.

Fr. Jeff Day encourages all of us, especially priests and seminarians to “be not afraid”, “The truth is on our side.”

We need to understand the fear priests have in presenting the NFP information to married and engaged couples. Due to the sex scandal, priests feel they have lost moral credibility in this sacred area of life. Dare

they anger couples by presenting this NFP information? Will the church donations decrease? Will medically informed parishioners challenge them? How will fellow priests respond?

Pope Paul VI was widely rejected when he wrote *Humanae Vitae!* Family life, the Church and Society, is harmed by contraception. The increase in divorce, break up of families, and lack of children to answer the vocation call to the priesthood and religious life are evidence of the truth of this message.

Fr. Day called on lay people to encourage, challenge and support priests who do talk about NFP.

For the past six years Fr. Jeff was chaplain for the Archdiocese of Detroit NFP Advisory Board. Fr. Jeff has learned the following:

1. Strengthen marriages and families by making NFP a priority. Up till now the Church has not done a very good job promoting the teachings of *Humanae Vitae*. We are here today to change that.
2. Educate seminarians, priests, medical personnel, and lay people about the difference between the old Rhythm Method and the modern NFP methods.
3. Give your medically educated parishioners the opportunity to learn about modern NFP methods. Require them to attend a NFP introductory presentation before marriage, and a series of

NFP classes when they are ready to use a NFP method.

4. Make a moral case for NFP. Weave a connection between making love, planning a family and developing a relationship with Jesus. Lead them to a greater conversion and intimacy with the Lord and sacrificial love. Share the positive aspects of NFP – low cost, high effectiveness, good for the environment and health. Who wouldn’t want a family planning method that was free and effective without chemicals or devices?

5. Make use of the many resources from the Archdiocese of Detroit especially the NFP DVD in which Dr. Greene, Mary Bieniasz and many couples witness how NFP enriched their marriage. Fr. Jeff thanked the Knights of Columbus who contributed substantially to the production of the NFP video, and to the training of NFP teachers for the archdiocese.

The *Conjugal Love* and NFP Presentations speak to the hearts of couples. This presentation is crucial to a couple’s understanding of the moral as well the medical aspects of NFP. The NFP series of classes that teach couples the rules of a NFP method give the information needed so that couples can use NFP effectively.

6. Share what you learn here today with people who the Holy Spirit will send to you. Be not afraid! This NFP Conference is a turning point in promoting NFP in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Let us share this message with all we meet.

Gretchen and Javier Mena shared their experience with NFP. Javier grew up with some knowledge of Rhythm, but nothing about the modern NFP methods even though a family member is a NFP teacher. Gretchen is a convert to the Catholic Church. She had no prior NFP knowledge.

In preparation for marriage they were required to attend the *Conjugal Love* and NFP Presentation. They decided they would go with an open mind and then make a decision.

They were so inspired by the presentation that they attended a series of NFP classes and used NFP first to avoid pregnancy and then to conceive their first born son.

Gretchen witnessed to the truth of the messages of Dr. Smith and Fr. Day. Through NFP Gretchen and Javier found that they grew closer to each other and to Jesus.

Their communication and commitment to each other and the church reached a new high. Now they are consistent in their worship and faithful in tithing. They are involved in their Church and are newly certified NFP teachers.

Gretchen shared how during an appointment with her family doctor she found him asking her advice about NFP questions. Doctors do not learn about NFP in medical school.

Gretchen boldly challenged everyone to be BOLD. She quoted Hosea 4:6, “My people perish for lack of knowledge...” We have the truth, and the responsibility to share this truth with others.