



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE  
**Office of Human Life,  
Family and Bioethics**



July/August 2021

Highlights of this newsletter:

- ❖ World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly
- ❖ National Natural Family Planning Awareness Week
- ❖ News from our Office

Dear Friends for Life,

## WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

Last month the intergenerational bonds within families and communities were highlighted in anticipation of the first annual World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly which is this upcoming weekend. Since then, we have launched the [www.catholicgenerations.com](http://www.catholicgenerations.com) microsite which we hope you have had some time to peruse. Please check back frequently as we are still adding new content daily to make this a helpful resource beyond July 25. It has been a labor of love, to help visitors nurture and share the most important love of all: love for God and His Church. When we love God and order our lives to Him, then our mission is naturally fulfilled: to defend and protect the sanctity of life, to uphold the importance of family, and to develop an appreciation of moral law, because all is of His creation and perfect design.

## NATIONAL NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING AWARENESS WEEK

July 25th is also the 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* which instructs on the profound responsibility regarding the transmission of human life.<sup>1</sup> Husband and wife cooperate with God through the total self-giving of the marital embrace to beget a new, unrepeatable, human life with an immortal soul. In *Humanae Vitae*, Pope St. Paul VI explained how contraception separates irreparably the unitive and procreative purposes of marriage, interferes with the “language of the body,” and ultimately, rejects God’s plan for human sexuality. With prophetic accuracy, he outlined the dangers to which contraception would lead: infidelity, immorality, loss of respect (for women), contraceptive mandates and a misguided sense of bodily dominion.

And so, it is fitting that this anniversary day also marks the beginning of **National Natural Family Planning Awareness Week (July 25-31, 2021)**. Natural Family Planning (NFP) is also referred to as Fertility Awareness Based Methods (FABM). These are *scientifically-based* methods that may be used to achieve or postpone pregnancy (when there is a serious reason for the latter). Unlike contraception, when used as intended, NFP methods are considered morally licit because they respect the sacredness of the conjugal act. They do not utilize devices or drugs to interfere with God’s plan for marital love and in their practice these methods *always*

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 25 July 1968. [Online]. Available: [http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_25071968\\_humanae-vitae.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html). [Accessed 1 April 2020]  
see also Bishop Barres’ Pastoral Letter [The Supreme Gift: The Gift of Life](#)

remain open to life because every marital act is considered a total giving and receiving of self, including fertility and its fruits.<sup>2</sup>

At first glance, National NFP Awareness Week may seem unconnected with World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, but it is not. First, we see there is the intentional proximity of each event to the Feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne. Moreover, National NFP Awareness Week is a direct reminder that grandparents play an integral role not only as bearers of life and caretakers of the extended family, but also in passing on the faith—including the importance of chastity and the vocation of marriage. Grandparents (and other older persons) do this through their lived examples as well as conversations geared to the age, maturity and relationship with their younger audience. For those with access to FORMED, you can see an example [here](#).

Over the coming months we will be enhancing the NFP resources on our website and offering more Women's Health webinars in the Fall. In this diocese, we are most fortunate to have the [Gianna Center for Women's Health and Fertility](#) which welcomes women at their Babylon, Rockville Centre and Manhattan offices to a high quality, medically sophisticated and scientifically based, *better* approach to women's reproductive health care needs – and, most importantly, one that fully respects the dignity and sanctity of all human life. In addition, for those who are interested in becoming a fertility care practitioner, the **Creighton Model Education Program** will begin in September. You can find more details further down in this month's newsletter.

## NEWS FROM OUR OFFICE

As the Pastoral Center closes, our office will be moving. With this transition we will not be publishing a newsletter for August. We will resume in September.

Finally, if you have not yet signed the petition to oppose repeal of the Hyde Amendment, please go to [www.notaxpayerabortion.com](http://www.notaxpayerabortion.com).

As the “lazy” days of summer pass, let us thank God for all His gifts, most especially the gift of Life. Let us pray for the courage and wisdom to defend life, the family and institutions that support it, and the moral Truth that guides the mission. God bless you always!

Sincerely in Christ,



Lisa A. Honkanen, M.D.

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<sup>2</sup> The distinction between contraception and NFP is often blurred to justify the use of the former. Christopher West succinctly clarifies the difference:

“We must be careful to distinguish between *present* and *further* intentions (means and ends). They [NFP and contraception] may have the same *further* intention—to avoid pregnancy for just reasons. But their *present* intentions (the means by which they intend to achieve their common end) are very different. The NFP couple *intends to abstain* from fertile intercourse. The contracepting couple *intends to sterilize* fertile intercourse. These are different intentions altogether.

Take, for example, two students who both have the further intention of getting good grades. With that goal in mind, one intends to study hard, and the other intends to cheat on every test. The end never justifies the means.”

Christopher West, *Good News About Sex & Marriage Revised Edition* Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004), 117.

To further elaborate this distinction, see Trent Horn and the “[Wedding Analogy](#).”

Trent Horn, “Answering a Classic Birth Control Argument,” *Catholic Answers*, December 20, 2017, n.p. <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/answering-a-classic-birth-control-argument>