

Abstaining from sex with NFP to space pregnancy is not 'contraception' in the same way that not having sex when there is no inclination, privacy or time is not 'contraception'. Nor is it 'contraception' to have sex on infertile days, since conception is not possible then anyway.

Using NFP and using contraceptives are thus very different acts, separate from the intentions we may have for using them. And the act must first be judged independently of these intentions.

If we are willing to do an intrinsically evil act for good reasons, we would have to call the evil act a good thing to do. Since everyone acts only for beneficial goals, this leads to a corrupted conscience and to the increasing inability to make moral choices. Despite this – or because of it – some philosophies deny or ignore intrinsic evil.

But if NFP is not a contraceptive, why do many people feel that it is?

Decades of institutional denial and rejection of babies have created the mindset that children are optional extras, accidents or unwanted burdens.

Not only does contraception violate the procreative meaning of intercourse but also its unitive meaning, as it disfigures the sexuality of husband and wife and obstructs the total self-giving that is characteristic of love.

People below 50 years of age are born into this culture and are familiar with contraceptives, many accepting and using them.

We may even belittle sexual moderation and criticize NFP as ineffective when it is, in fact, as effective as the Pill¹, besides also being effective in achieving pregnancy.²

And even when we have sexual relations using NFP, we may use it as a contraceptive. The words we use betray us. We 'prevent' pregnancy not 'postpone' one; we 'make babies' not 'procreate'.

Used as a contraceptive, NFP would be a contraceptive and would then – and only then – merit the accusation, "NFP is the same as Contraception."

Clearly then, we need to strengthen our ability to discover right and wrong. We must cultivate or re-cultivate within ourselves a willingness to co-operate with God to accept fertility and children as gifts we value and protect instead of diseases we are afraid of and need to control.

If these principles are followed, marital sex will unite physical loving with fruitfulness, and spouses will be able to develop a fine balance between the two aims of marital sexuality, i.e. marital intimacy and children.

References

¹ World Health Organization (1981). "A prospective multicentre trial of the ovulation method of natural family planning. II. The effectiveness phase" *Fertil. Steril.* 36,591–8.

² Qian, S. Z. (1999) et al and the Chinese Billings Ovulation Method Collaboration Programme, "Evaluation of the Effectiveness of a natural Fertility Regulation Programme in China", *Reproductive Health*, Eds. S.G. Gu et al. [People's Publishing House : Beijing.]



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*NFP Service Publication
for the Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore
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What's the difference between ...

Natural Family Planning (NFP)

and

Contraception?

