

“NFP, the Theology of the Body, and Our Marriage”

By Michael and Alysha Chambers

Many will tell you that the responsibility of being permanently faithful to one person is too great and that being open to life is too much of a burden. They say contraception brings with it freedom and life; however, we have found that **it is in openness to God, to each other, and to new life that true freedom is obtained.** This is what living Natural Family Planning (NFP) can help couples to experience.

Alysha was in college when she first heard NFP mentioned. All she knew then was that it existed and the Catholic Church considered it a good thing. Michael, a convert to Catholicism, grew up believing that contraception was good and that all couples should use it. Our first real understanding of what NFP is, and what the Church teaches came during our marriage preparation program. We learned that NFP at its core is simply knowledge of the physical changes one can observe in the woman’s fertility cycle. It gives couples a way to measure and chart their fertility signs. We also learned how responsible parenthood is the virtuous application of this fertility knowledge.

One unexpected aspect of NFP that impressed us was how it fosters communication between spouses. Couples practicing NFP discuss the future of their family with every cycle. Knowing how to discuss such important matters has proven a great blessing to many marriages. Michael decided that blessing, by itself, was enough of a reason to learn NFP.

Another theme we discussed in marriage preparation was the Theology of the Body. It helped us understand who we are and how God created us. It is through our bodies that we express who we are spiritually. Also, because we were made in the image and likeness of God, our bodies are supposed to reflect who God is which means we are to act as He acts. How does God act? He loves. **God’s love is a total gift of self. God’s love is life-giving.** As husband and wife one way we love like God is through our sexuality. If NFP is studied in this context, our appreciation of each other as man and woman increases because the uniqueness and dignity that God has imprinted in our bodies is revealed. It was at this point that Michael realized NFP was not moral birth control; rather, it is a complete way of life honoring one’s spouse’s sexuality and fertility. It is loving naturally – the way God designed it.

In studying NFP in the context of the Theology of the Body, both of us have become more open to each other, to God, and to children. We truly believe that “children are the crown of marriage” and we pray that God will bless us with children some day. Until then, we will “make our plans but hold them lightly.” For us, that means planning to use NFP both when we are attempting or delaying pregnancy, all the while striving to hear and do God’s will!

July 25-31 is Natural Family Planning Awareness Week

St. Mary & St. Joseph Catholic Churches

Ashland



1625 Adams Street, Ashland NE 68003
Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:00 PM
Sunday Mass: 8:30 AM

Greenwood



7 Oak Street, Greenwood
Sunday Mass: 10:30 AM

Pastor: Father Gary Coulter Rectory & Fax: 944-3554, CCD/Hall: 944-7509
 View the weekly bulletin & monthly calendar Cell: 202-3782, stmaryashland@windstream.net
 at our **website: home.windstream.net/stmaryashland**

Welcome to new parishioners,
 please call the rectory to register
 or for information on any of our parish
 activities and organizations.

Confessions a half hour before Masses
 Saturday 4:00-4:50 PM St. Mary
 Sunday 8:00-8:20 AM St. Mary
 10:00-10:20 AM St. Joseph
 Any time by calling the rectory.

Mass Schedule for this week				
Sat.	July 24	5:00 PM	Ashland	Poor Souls
Sun.	July 25	8:30 AM	Ashland	For the People
		10:30 AM	Greenwood	+ Joseph & Idella Lorenz
Mon.	July 26	9:00 AM	Ashland	St. Anne
Tues.	July 27	9:00 AM	Ashland	+ John Tafoya
Wed.	July 28	9:15 AM	Care Center	+ Msgr. Charles Keenan
Thurs.	July 29	9:00 AM	Ashland	
		6:30 PM	Greenwood	+ Donald Hummel
Fri.	July 30	9:00 AM	Ashland	Poor Souls
Sat.	July 31	9:00 AM	Ashland	
		5:00 PM	Ashland	Prendez Family
Sun.	Aug. 1	8:30 AM	Ashland	+ Walter Yunker
		10:30 AM	Greenwood	For the People

<p>Scholl's Lawn Service Lawn Mowing • Aeration Commercial • Residential Rob Scholl St. Joseph Parishioner 304-0813 Free Estimates</p>	<p>BARN DOOR Restaurant & Lounge <i>Eat In - Carry Out</i> <i>7 Days a week!</i> 440 East Elm Ceresco NE 402-665-2500 <i>Catholic Owners</i></p>	<p><i>Advertise Here</i> Discounts for Parishioners 944-3554 stmaryashland@windstream.net</p>
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July 25, 2010

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ministries for Next Weekend

Sat. July 31 - 5:00 PM
Servers: Issacson, Kresak, McGinley
Acolyte: Gene Kresak
Lector: Mace McGinley
Sun. Aug. 1 - 8:30 AM
Servers: Vaveks
Acolyte: Craig Pease
Lector: Joanna Torpy
Sun. Aug. 1 - 10:30 AM
Lector: Leslie Krings
Offertory: Egeberg

Our Return to the Lord, July 17-18
Table with columns: St. Mary, St. Joseph
Rows: Adult, Plate, Children, Weekly Budget, Masses

Readings and Celebrations this week:

July
26 Mon Jer 13:1-11 / Mt 13:31-35
Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary
27 Tue Jer 14:17-22 / Mt 13:36-43
28 Wed Jer 15:10, 16-21 / Mt 13:44-46
29 Thu Jer 18:1-6 / Jn 11:19-27 or Lk 10:38-42
Saint Martha
30 Fri Jer 26:1-9 / Mt 13:54-58
[Saint Peter Chrysologus, bishop and doctor of the Church]
31 Sat Jer 26:11-16, 24 / Mt 14:1-12
Saint Ignatius of Loyola, priest

18TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ecll 1:2; 2:21-23 / Col 3:1-5, 9-11 / Lk 12:13-21

Stewardship Thought
Jesus is describing God's immeasurable generosity when He says in today's Gospel, "Whoever asks, receives; whoever seeks, finds; whoever knocks, is admitted."
But it should also be the description of us as Christian stewards — those seeking to follow Christ by using our gifts in service to others.
- See Luke 11:10

Congratulations
Anniversaries this week:
Chris & Annette Schmidt
Peter & Deanna Vavak
Jason & Joslene Pike
Birthdays this week:
Alice Bustamante
Peggy Curtis
Jeran Bentz
Anna Vavak
Bonnie Yard
Colt Campbell
Will Breen
Ginny Hummel

Calendar for this Week

Sun. July 25, 6 PM Summer Catechism Class
Wed. July 28, 9:15 AM Mass at Care Center
Thurs. July 29 6:30 PM Mass at Greenwood

Today is NFP Awareness Sunday, I wholeheartedly encourage every couple to learn, and live, NFP. Here are a few websites:

- www.nfpoutreach.org
www.ccli.org
www.popepaulvi.com

Parish Announcements

Special Thanks again to all who worked and participated in Sloppy-Joes, Rummage Sale, Cake Walk and Bingo during Stir-Up Days.

Our parishes' new Photo Directories have arrived. Pick up your directory in the back of Church. Please take one per family.

Several parents have expressed interest in St. Mary, Ashland opening a half-day Catholic Preschool in our Education Center. For this to be feasible, we would need a part-time Preschool Teacher, flexible scheduling, competitive hourly wage. Talk to Fr. Coulter or contact stmaryashland@windstream.net, 944-3554.

Holy Land Pilgrimage with Fr. Coulter and Fr. Damien Cook Nov. 7-17, 2010. Deadline to sign-up us Aug. 1 to guarantee the low price of \$2,835/person, double occupancy. Contact Fr. Coulter at 944-3554 for more info.

Communion Announcements

Ashland VFW Food Pantry requests donations for the needy, this month needs include: Spaghetti and Sauce, Toothpaste and Deodorant.

Diocesan Announcements

Natural Family Planning (NFP) Creighton Model Introductory Sessions in Lincoln Mon. Aug. 9 and Tues. Aug 24. For location and pre-registration call: 488-2040.

Discover Adoption, a free informational meeting for parents about the adoption process. Mon. July 26, 6:30 PM at Hope Christian Church, Lincoln NE. RSVP by calling 402-992-2661 or email hlundgren@bethany.org. Do you want to touch the life of a child? Are you being called to grow your family?

Two day Catholic Charismatic Conference Sept 3-4 at New World Inn, Columbus. Features James 'Butch' Murphy of www.veracruzcm.com \$15 if registered by 8/25. To register or for more info call 246-9219 or email sothoth@aol.com.

Stop Planned Parenthood from opening an abortion clinic in Omaha at 3105 N 93rd St near a strip mall. Nebraskans United for Life has created a Petition that needs to be signed as soon as possible, and is organizing a one hour Prayer Vigil on Saturday, July 31st starting at 1:00 PM at the location for the new clinic 3105 N 93rd St. Go to nebraskansunitedforlife.org to download the petitioner of find out more information.

Two Marriage Enrichment Weekends - Retrouvaille for marriages that are struggling Aug. 6-8, 1-888-317-5654, www.retrouvaille.org. Marriage Encounter for couples seeking deeper intimacy and communication, Aug. 13-15, call Jeff & Lori, 366-4005, jlmckillip@usadig.com.

11th Annual Midwest Catholic Family Conference, Aug. 6-8, Wichita KS - outstanding speakers: www.catholicfamilyconference.org

Poor Clare Sisters Monastery Fundraiser Wed. Aug. 11. www.omahapoorclare.org

Catholic Social Services memorial Golf Classic & Auction on Fri. Aug. 13 at Hillcrest Country Club. www.csisus.org

Holy Trinity, Brainard Chicken Dinner & Bazaar is Sun. Aug. 15, 11AM-3 PM.

Pope Paul VI Institute, to honor its 25th Anniversary, will hold a Celebration of Life and Love - a free Family Fun Day Sat. Sept 4, 9 AM-4 PM at the Omaha Quest Center. Rides, games, entertainment, concessions, speakers and more. www.PopePaulVI.com

St. Louis Motorcoach Tour: Our Lady of the Snow and Vatican Splendors Exhibit, Sept. 8-10, \$288/person. Call Elite Tours 1-800-488-2114.

The Bishops Lay Committee for Vocations

wants to thank you for praying for our Seminarians and for vocations to the priesthood; and now asks you to pray this week for the following Postulants preparing to become School Sisters of Christ the King: Katherine Wozny, Jessica Lewandowski, and Elizabeth Bader.