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An Abundance of NFP Information at National Conferences

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As Administrator of NFP at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, it is a priority to stay updated on research and trends in NFP practice. I was blessed this July 2010 to attend three NFP-related conferences. So much helpful information was presented that I cannot fit it all here, but I would like to share some of it.

“Human Fertility: Where Faith and Science Meet” (Sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and several other religious and NFP organizations.) Items of note:

- An NFP “breastfeeding protocol” developed by Marquette University and using the Clearblue electronic fertility monitor is very accurate with correct usage, and can be helpful to those having a hard time interpreting their fertility signs during this transition time after birth.
- Interestingly, a representative of Planned Parenthood attended at least a portion of the conference. She said she wanted to make sure her local office made available all available family planning methods, including NFP, and that she wanted to learn more about NFP.

“FertilityCare: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Truth” (sponsored by the American Academy of FertilityCare Professionals, who promote Naprotechnology and the Creighton model of NFP):

- Because currently so many people avoid sun exposure, and there are very few dietary sources of vitamin D, many people are deficient in it. Vitamin D is involved in bone and muscle maintenance, immune and cardiovascular system health, prevention of cancer, and healthy delivery of children. Taking vitamin D3 supplements can be helpful.
- For those practicing NFP with a very important reason not to become pregnant (such as those taking medicines or treatment which could cause severe birth defects), the Pope Paul VI Institute’s “family planning progesterone level” protocol can be helpful in confirming that the patient is in the post-ovulatory infertile phase of her cycle, by evaluating her blood level of progesterone.

“National Theology of the Body Congress: Receiving and Proclaiming the Gift” (sponsored by numerous Catholic organizations):

- The history of contraception and NFP formed along different tracks, although nearly parallel in time. Contraceptive researchers studied the reproductive system in order to change and control fertility. NFP researchers studied the reproductive system in order to respect and live with fertility.
- Because of the body-soul unity of the person, understanding the body through NFP helps engaged couples and spouses to understand each other. NFP challenges the spouses to live out their sexuality according to God’s will; used rightly, it can be a tool to foster human formation in holiness.