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The PNFPN Conference: A Very Fruitful Day
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Saturday, May 1, 2010: The annual PNFPN conference's theme was "The Bitter Pill: The Truth about Hormonal Contraception." Dr. Les Ruppertsberger ("Evidence-Based Ethics--Contraception: Subtlety of Evil") discussed the widespread usage of hormonal contraception (HC), and outlined its many health risks, including blood clots, cancer, and death.

Dr. Angela Lanfranchi spoke on "The Impact of Choice: Fertility Control and Breast Cancer Risk." She discussed how induced abortion and HC increase the risk of breast cancer. Estrogen, which is in HC, affects breast tissue by causing breast cell proliferation, thus increasing possible random mutations. Also, estrogen's metabolic by-products directly damage DNA, acting as carcinogens. It is only through a full-term pregnancy and breastfeeding that a woman's breast cells mature into being much more cancer-resistant.

Brian Gail's talk, "Fatherhood in a Fatherless World," discussed the "spiritual jungle" present today, where young people are not taught the truth about the gift and responsibility of fertility or the sacramentality and indissolubility of marriage, and where HC and pornography cause many problems. He challenged the men present to be fathers "in a fatherless world," by educating and challenging their children, and saying "yes" to God and "no" to self-centeredness.

Theresa Kuhar, R.N., spoke about "A Woman's Perspective: Living the Gospel of Life in the Culture of Death." She showed video advertisements for HCs, portraying gauzy images of worry-free women dancing. Their subversive messages were: "Take control of your life: control your fertility," and "Women are responsible for whether a pregnancy occurs." They tell men that a woman using HCs is desirable because she comes with no strings attached. To live a culture of life, she suggested: attend Mass and the sacraments often, talk to one's children about media messages, get involved in parish life, and offer assistance to the Family Life Office.

Fr. Philip Bochanski's talk, "A Total Gift: Moral and Pastoral Aspects of Contraception," discussed how priests in the confessional can approach the topic of contraception. He recommended prudent reserve in inquiring into such sins, and encouraging the penitent gently to seek repentance. Since many Catholics today do not understand why contraception is a sin, priests have a special role in helping them, reminding them of the invitation to God's love, and of the importance of their duties in the area of procreation and the education of children. Fr. Bochanski also noted that his guidelines can help *all of us*, in aiding our friends or family members who don't accept the Church's teaching on contraception, to understand the truth with wisdom and charity.