

# Dear Padre,

**Isn't natural family planning (NFP) a form of birth control? The couple still controls the potential of human life that God may have wanted to create at a particular moment.**

**C**ouples who use NFP aren't practicing contraception. By giving themselves completely to one another in body and soul, they're preserving the integrity of the marriage sacrament. In God's design, women



are naturally infertile for many days of the menstrual cycle. The marital act during these times promotes bonding and yet is open to new life. There is no sin in abstaining from the marital act. When a husband and wife use NFP appropriately, they share responsibility for living with their combined fertility. Neither spouse takes

the other for granted. NFP is a healthy and holistic way to plan for children.

Many couples find that living an NFP lifestyle gives them a better understanding of their fertility, frees them from fear of medical side effects, increases their communication, encourages a greater sense of sharing and a generosity toward life, fosters sexual self-control, and gives them the peace of following their spiritual, religious, cultural, or ethical beliefs. Periodic abstinence encourages couples to focus on aspects of their relationship beyond the physical, resulting in a "honeymoon effect."

NFP's most important benefit is that it enables spouses to live the mutual gift of self that is an essential element of marriage. The Church values marital sexual love. NFP helps couples to be authentic in the expression of that love.

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## Calendar

### Monday

AUGUST 29  
*The Passion of St. John the Baptist*

1 Cor 2:1-5  
Mk 6:17-29

### Tuesday

AUGUST 30  
*Weekday*  
1 Cor 2:10b-16  
Lk 4:31-37

### Wednesday

AUGUST 31  
*Weekday*  
1 Cor 3:1-9  
Lk 4:38-44

### Thursday

SEPTEMBER 1  
*Weekday*  
1 Cor 3:18-23  
Lk 5:1-11

### Friday

SEPTEMBER 2  
*Weekday*  
1 Cor 4:1-5  
Lk 5:33-39

### Saturday

SEPTEMBER 3  
*St. Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church*  
1 Cor 4:6b-15  
Lk 6:1-5

### Sunday

SEPTEMBER 4  
*Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time*  
Wis 9:13-18b  
Phlm 9-10, 12-17  
Lk 14:25-33

## A WORD FROM Pope Francis

*Jesus teaches this: "The one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11). God does not exalt us because of our gifts, because of our wealth, or because of our skills, but because of humility. God loves humility. God lifts up those who humble themselves; he lifts up those who serve.*

ANGELUS, SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION, AUGUST 15, 2021



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