

# Family Foundations

[www.ccli.org](http://www.ccli.org)

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TOB IN HIGH SCHOOL

SECONDARY INFERTILITY

Q&A WITH JEN FULWILER

## PLANTING THE SEED

HOW TO INSTILL THE FAITH





# Families, *become what you are!*

## **Celebrating *Humanae Vitae* as the bedrock of family life**

Join CCL as we celebrate family life lived according to the principles of *Humanae Vitae*. We want to thank the Church for consistently defending God's loving will for the family and all of the blessings that flow from it!

## **July 6–7, 2018**

**Sharonville Convention Center, Cincinnati, OH**

### **MAIN SPEAKERS**



**Christopher West**, founder of the COR Project and international Theology of the Body speaker



**Janet E. Smith, Ph.D.**, *Humanae Vitae* expert and professor of moral theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary



**Damon Owens**, founder and executive director of joytob, and an international speaker and evangelist

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Inspiring main talks and workshops
- Spanish track
- Daily Mass and Adoration
- Family concert
- Opportunity to make family memories on Friday afternoon

Open to families — childcare programming for ages 3–18; children 2 and under remain with parents

**Special Pre-Conference Volunteer Enrichment Day**  
**Thursday, July 5** • Open exclusively to CCL volunteers.



**CCLConvention.com**

Co-sponsored by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati





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We asked Margaret Berns to look back at her attempt to pass on Catholicism. She enlisted her husband, her oldest son and her youngest boys to join her in some pictures at the Cathedral of St. Paul in St. Paul, Minn., where the Berns family worships. Built in 1907, the cathedral was designated as the National Shrine of the Apostle Paul by the Vatican.

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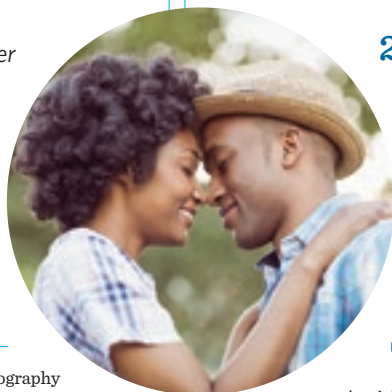
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Ann  
Gundlach  
Editor

# In the end, we trust

You've probably heard us say before that of all the prayer requests we receive at CCL, the most common is to pray for children who have left the Church. It's a sad reality that it is not easy in today's world to keep our children connected to the faith we try to instill in them.

To instill means to infuse slowly or gradually into the mind or feelings. The Latin root points to almost a drop-by-drop infusion or a trickle.

**We are determined to continue to witness to our kids (and now grandkids!) while respecting healthy boundaries given that our children are adults.**

When I was growing up, that is certainly what my siblings and I experienced with learning about the faith in our home. What I think we had that is largely missing today, however, is a community surrounding us that was experiencing the same thing. Many of our neighbor families were fellow parishioners whose kids also went to the parish school, and society in general upheld moral norms and values that are dismissed and even mocked today. When that trickle you get at home is in sync with the rest of the world you move about in, there's a greater chance of roots taking hold.

Our adult children are now getting married and starting families, and the percentage of their friends who are still engaged with the Church is shrinking. I believe they will have an even greater difficulty than our generation with passing on the faith. And while I can easily get depressed about all of the ways Greg and I personally failed in our

own efforts on this front, I've decided to not despair and give up. We are determined to continue to witness to our kids (and now grandkids!) while respecting healthy boundaries given that our children are adults.

In this issue feature writer Margaret Berns shares some helpful insights on keeping the channels of communication open with our children, making sure they know they are loved despite their inclinations about the faith and a reminder that we are not solely in control of the outcome (even though we often take on that burden). I also recommend the perspective we offer from Christina Dehan Jaloway on what she appreciated — and didn't — about her parents' approach to living their faith in the home.

Personally, I have found it freeing to relax the burden I put on myself to be solely responsible for the outcome of my children's faith choices. Yes, as parents we plant seeds, fertilize the soil and water the garden. But no farmer has sole control of the sunshine, the weather and the myriad of factors that play a part in the success of his crops. At some point he has to trust God.

And while the seeds analogy is helpful, it doesn't take free will into account. Seeds do not have the free will to decide whether to sprout or bloom. But our children do.

In the end, we also decide to trust God. In this season of life, we have a lot more time to be in prayer for our kids and grandkids. So we witness in multiple ways but pray with confidence that the grace of these efforts of ours now help make up for any missteps in years past.



## Family Foundations

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## A Servant's Heart



Chris  
Reynolds  
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## Foolishly optimistic

As we approach the 50th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, I am thrilled for the future. When you look at the world around us, that sounds almost foolish, but being an evangelical fool for Christ automatically means to be out-of-step with the world, being at odds with the culture. So be it!

One way we at CCL are stepping out and being a living contradiction is by hosting the “Families, become what you are!” conference this summer to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this document on which CCL was founded. We are co-hosting the event with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati on July 6–7, 2018 at the Sharonville Convention Center in Cincinnati and have added a pre-conference Enrichment Day on July 5 exclusively for CCL volunteers.

The volunteer Enrichment Day will largely focus on where CCL is going in the next seven years. Despite our successes as an organization, we are weary with the stagnation in the percentage of Catholics practicing NFP. The board and leadership team met back in December to take a good look at the NFP landscape to determine three things:

- First, what does the Church need to further knowledge of NFP or fertility awareness?
- Second, what does society need regarding NFP or fertility awareness?
- Third, how can CCL answer those needs?

After that weekend visioning retreat the leadership team spent months developing the ideas that came out of the meeting. We also sought input from family life directors, the USCCB, our volunteers, donors and the rest of the staff to determine what we need to do as an organization to actually move the needle in this ever-changing world of learning and practicing NFP. And yes, I am excited!

We have determined there are several ways that

CCL, as an organization, can make a major impact on the Church and the wider culture, leading more people to the Lord and his plan for faithful and fruitful marriage.

We will unveil to our volunteers the plan we have named “CCL 2025,” and I hope many of our volunteers can join us on Thursday, July 5th to hear how they can lead the way in enriching local NFP ministries.

The main conference on July 6–7 will celebrate *Humanae Vitae* with premiere speakers such as Janet Smith, Christopher West, Damon Owens and Father Nathan Cromley. We are pleased to have four bishops participating: CCL Board member

**Please join us for a long Fourth of July vacation and celebrate marriage and family with your CCL family.**

**Families, become what you are!  
July 6–7, 2018**

Bishop Michael Sheridan from Colorado Springs, Archbishop Dennis Schnurr from Cincinnati, Bishop Roger Foys from Covington, Ky., and Bishop Donald Hying from Gary, Ind. There will be daily Mass,

adoration and Friday afternoon is set aside for families to spend some time at local attractions. Friday night features a family concert with Catholic musician Chris Muglia and his band. After Saturday's program and closing Mass, there will be dinner and a Family Talent Show, ending the convention with a celebration of the individual gifts and talents we are blessed with by God. There is so much more; read about it further at [CCLConvention.com](http://CCLConvention.com).

As I spoke with volunteers and donors over the past year and a half, so many shared stories of past conventions and the fun, friendships and energy received from them. I know Cecelia and I personally enjoyed the conventions in Joliet, Ill., and Shawnee, Okla. and went home pumped up to go and spread the message of NFP far and wide. So please join us for a long Fourth of July vacation and celebrate marriage and family with your CCL family. And if you can't make it to the convention, please consider making a donation to help offset the cost at [ccli.org/do-more/donate/](http://ccli.org/do-more/donate/).





# From 'absolutely not' to sold on NFP

Bryan and Katie Wilson share this talk with their NFP student couples in Noblesville, Ind.

**Bryan** My perspective of natural family planning did not develop until I was well into my adult life. Before my relationship with Katie, I didn't see much of a need to learn about family planning methods. After Katie and I got engaged, we knew we would need to decide if we would use contraception or look into other methods, such as NFP. We were both very active in our Catholic Church, so we were open to learning about NFP.

**Katie** Absolutely not, I remember thinking. Bryan and I had just started our NFP courses. After charting a few months, we realized I would be fertile for our wedding night and our entire honeymoon. We had already prayerfully decided to pursue mission work in Brazil within the first year of marriage, and we were going to try to postpone pregnancy until we returned home. There was no way I was going to abstain from making love to my husband for the first two weeks of

our marriage, especially since we had both saved sex for marriage and we would be honeymooning at a remote, romantic cottage in Portugal for 10 days!

We decided to do some research and meet with my Ob/Gyn to talk about the possibility of being on the pill for the first few months of our marriage. I hoped this would give us the freedom to have that spontaneous and care-free intimacy during our honeymoon phase that we had hoped for.

**Bryan** Initially we thought we would use the pill for the first few months of marriage and then switch off to NFP after that. Katie had come from a family where they talked more about NFP, and mine did not. At first we were both open to using the pill, at least for a short time. I kept trying to rationalize the acceptance of using the pill within our relationship.

**Katie** Through our research, we discovered the pill has the potential to prevent a fertilized egg from implanting. Realizing that we could risk the life of any baby we conceived changed my "absolutely not" from NFP to an "absolutely not" towards the pill. As our wedding date approached, we continued studying NFP, charting, talking to couples who practiced NFP and reading the book *Theology of the Body for Beginners* by Christopher West.

**Bryan** Although the pill was out, the condom was still an option

in our minds. However, when we learned more and more about TOB and about how our love for one another during sexual intercourse was a reflection of God's life-giving love to us, we couldn't bring ourselves to use a barrier method. We knew we wanted to be total, faithful, free and fruitful in our lovemaking. We did not want a barrier between us in this loving and total self-giving act. We had finally decided to use NFP as our family planning method from the start of our marriage.

**Katie** I began falling in love with the beautiful concept that the marital embrace is meant to be a total self-gift to my husband, not a vehicle for my own pleasure and desires. Understanding that intimacy with my husband is a sacramental act and our wedding vows made flesh, my idea of NFP transformed from being a potential burden to being an opportunity to serve Bryan, to continuously prayerfully consider children, to express and communicate love to Bryan in other non-sexual ways and to model Christ's love by giving myself freely, totally, faithfully and fruitfully to my husband.

**Bryan** When we have chosen to postpone pregnancy, we have needed to find other methods to become intimate with each other. We often find ourselves giving massages and going on walks. I can also tell you how excited I get as we approach our non-fertile times of the month when we can make love. The feeling I have as we wait and abstain from lovemaking is one of excitement, which is similar to the weeks leading up to the time we first made love together.

As we looked into contraception, we learned just how bad it could be for Katie's body. Abstinence became

easier to practice knowing that it was keeping Katie's body free of unnatural substances that cause negative side effects. NFP has given me a greater respect for Katie's body. I can better appreciate and respect Katie and her body for who she is instead of seeing her as an object that is always available. I also really enjoy making our marital embrace a self-giving sign of my love to Katie.

**Katie** I feel incredibly blessed that Bryan and I were able to start our marriage with NFP. It has allowed us to begin our life together with a deep understanding of God's gift of sexuality. Practicing NFP has helped us to improve our communication by frequently talking about children and my charts. We begin the day by Bryan waking me up and handing me the thermometer. We end the day by documenting the fertility signs and talking about where I am in my cycle. Charting together has made practicing NFP a shared responsibility.

I greatly appreciate how informed NFP has made me of my cycles and my body. Charting has allowed me to discover several health issues that were able to quickly be diagnosed and corrected. Being aware of and using the signs of my fertility to co-create children with God has been one of the biggest blessings and joys of using NFP in our marriage. After becoming pregnant, being able to pinpoint when both of our sons were conceived and determine exactly how far along we were before we even had ultrasounds was amazing! By using NFP, we have



Our future excites me as we look forward to practicing NFP to continue building our family and strengthening our marriage.

— Bryan Wilson

gained a greater understanding and a deeper appreciation for our bodies and the immense gift we have been given.

**Bryan** NFP has been a true blessing to our marriage, and we are so excited to spread the good news. It is our hope that we can reach other couples who are seeking answers and help them make an informed decision about family planning. Our future excites me as we look forward to practicing NFP to continue building our family and strengthening our marriage.

**Katie** NFP and Theology of the Body have brought us closer together and closer to God. It has strengthened our communication, love for each other and our commitment to our Catholic Church and its teachings.

*We always need more teaching couples! If you feel called to share NFP with others, visit [ccli.org/do-more/volunteer/](http://ccli.org/do-more/volunteer/) for information about joining CCL's volunteer ministry.*



# A faith that sticks

Story by Margaret Berns • Pictures by Anna Ligocki





# When

**I was asked** to write this article, I felt overcome by two emotions: first, a joyful enthusiasm for sharing my love of the faith and then, an almost crippling fear of confronting 20 years' worth of mistakes.

(Just putting that out there at the start so you don't, you know, start to feel like I'm some pious know-it-all.)

My husband and I were married in December of 1995 — an older-than-average bride of 29 and a younger (!) bridegroom, 23, both fully committed to each other but having no idea what the future would hold. All I knew was that I wanted to do this “Catholic family thing” right — which meant being open to whatever God had in store while expecting to be in total control.

Entirely do-able, right?

We practiced NFP for the first year of our marriage because my husband was finishing law school. After some prayer and much discussion, we decided to open the door a little wider and — bim, bam, boom! — five kids arrived within the next nine years. Then there were four mis-carriages (not part of the plan) and then, at the end, two bonus babies for whom we're incredibly grateful.

That puts us at a total of seven children here on earth — ranging in age from 20 to 5 — so yes, I get this parenting thing and yes, we are trying our hardest to raise them in the faith. This article is about the journey, about how

to get them from here to there, with there being heaven and here being earth with all its tear-stained sorrows and unimaginable joy.

Are we there yet? Nope, so let's enjoy the ride.

## EAGER TO PLEASE

Once upon a time, the hardest thing about living the faith as a family was finding that one lost shoe so we could get to Mass. It was easy back then, when they were all young. They were earnest and innocent; it was a beautiful time. More than once I took an infant to my holy hour to have them stare — and I mean, stare — at the monstrance on the altar. My oldest son even waved once! What did they see? I could only wonder.

These early years, from around 2 to 11, encompass what the author Dorothy Sayers called the “Poll Parrot” stage. Children are eager to learn and love to memorize. Best of all, in my opinion, is that they accept our words as the Gospel truth.

(Pun very much intended.)

This phase of parenting is also good for a laugh or three. Once, as we were headed to Mass for the feast of St. Blaise, I told my daughter that the priest would be blessing her throat with candles. “Will they be...lit?” she asked nervously.

This type of exchange is a natural extension of living out the liturgical year. Our kids start to process what they experience and, at times, even get philosophical: “If Adam and Eve hadn't sinned,” my 6-year-old son once mused, “would balloons still pop?”

This is the time to lay down the traditions that will paper their memories for years to come. The Church makes it easy with its seasons of fasting and feasting — there are always activities to do and discuss. We make a point to read them a ton of Bible stories, do cutesy crafts and introduce them to the awesome communion of saints. Then, when the kids turn 7 or so, we get to add in the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist. (I call the sacraments our “super powers.” My 8-year-old, especially, thrives on such talk.)

## LEARNING FROM OTHERS

I like to watch what works for other families and adjust our habits accordingly. For example, I was inspired by Beth and Greg Gath, a CCL teaching couple from Long Beach, Calif. Beth, 43, a homeschooling mom, and Greg, 45, an insurance agent, make the faith real for their six children and keep it fun without watering down the hard parts. Their family practices the Byzantine rite and say that their liturgical traditions are among their kids' favor-

# 4 ways to reach out to family members who are distanced from God

1. **Pray for them daily. Don't give up on them.**
2. **Offer up your pain at their indifference.**
3. **Model goodness and joy. Attract, don't repel.**
4. **Invite them again and again and again. “Come and see” was Mother Teresa's gentle invitation. We never know when they'll be ready.**

ites. “We have once-a-month confession as a family, then go out for pizza or burritos to celebrate,” Beth said. “My son also loves the kings' cake we make for Epiphany and that we keep the Lenten fast as a family.”

Another beautiful habit they foster is praying for their children individually, circling around a few poetic intentions. “When [my oldest] was a baby, I heard the Gospel reading about the finding of Jesus in the temple, and the ending part was that Jesus grew in ‘age, wisdom and grace before God and man.’ Since then, that has become my daily prayer for my children. Several years after that, in an issue of *Family Foundations*, someone wrote



that they pray daily for their children's 'spiritual, physical and emotional well-being.' I added that to my prayers for my children each day. Finally, Greg and I pray for our children and for us that we will be able to raise them so they will 'know, love and serve him in this life so they can be happy with him in the next.'"

Family prayer is essential. You may not get to it every night, but the goal is many nights over many years. At our house, we all gather around Mom and Dad's queen-sized bed, joined (more often than not) by a guinea pig or two.

"Fall in," my husband will announce, barking if necessary, "fall IN!"

The results are usually riotous and often poignant, as when the then-6-year-old prayed for "Grandma and



Grandpa, all the people in Oklahoma and all the babies that have died." He had this whole litany he would say, always adding but never forgetting the older intentions he held dear.

Eventually he grew out of this practice, and that was a bittersweet moment for me. The innocence of a child is breathtakingly beautiful. I have no other words for it but will say that one of the very hardest moments for me has been when they lose this innocence. If only they could stay pure of heart forever, safe from the world and all its diabolical influences! If we could only, you know, pull an

Anna and Joachim and just drop them off at the temple like Mary.

"See you in 18 years!" I'd say. "Learn your catechism! Stay close to God!"

Alas, that's not how the story goes for us folks, and anyway, look at the trials that awaited Mother Mary. None of us are exempt from pain and suffering, which brings to the next stage: raising teens.

## LISTEN MORE, PREACH LESS

Sometimes referred to as the "dialectic" phase, the 'tween/teen years are when kids start to push back. "Why do I have to do what you say?" they protest.

Tweens and teens need to test the water, which often comes off as sassy and argumentative.

The temptation, for me, is to nitpick and nag, but this is not the way to win their hearts. I learned this the hard way with my oldest son, with whom I took more of a my-way-or-the-highway approach — and when that didn't work, I tried angry words and bitter tears alternately.

I would eventually discover that this is not the way to teach the faith effectively. Now I am trying to meet them halfway — to be pliable instead of stiff and unyielding — to listen more and preach way less.

Or, in the words of my kids' religious education teacher: "Put them in the line of grace and get out of the way."

This is the best time to get out and be active. Kids this age have tremendous energy, but it needs to be disciplined and directed toward a goal. Tell them daily: "You were made for greater things than this! You are a daughter/son of the King!" Show them what the works of mercy look like — in soup kitchens, at nursing homes, on mission trips serving the poorest of the poor. Show them that "Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared to love in dreams" (Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*) and their passionate hearts will rise to the challenge. Teenagers need to own their faith because if they don't, the world will steal it away.

Gina Bauer is a nationally known speaker and retreat leader. She has been working with young adults for more than three decades and has been the youth minister at St. Joseph's Church in West St. Paul, Minn., for the past 20. She told me that all kids struggle with same issues — homeschooled kids, public school kids, Catholic school kids — it doesn't matter, they're all the same.

"The struggle isn't bad," she said, "it's that they struggle alone."

Bauer told me the No. 1 obstacle our kids face is "the lie that they are not enough. They are not rich enough,



good enough, moral enough, happy enough, pretty enough, athletic enough, holy enough...”

She went on to list the three big contenders for our children’s hearts: “More stuff, more pleasure, and more technology — everything’s got to be quicker, faster, better. You just can’t keep up and that’s the fundamental lie.”

Bauer has learned that the best way to help teens own their faith is to develop their relationship with Jesus Christ through adoration, confession and prayer. “God is making future saints, and I get to watch it. I see his power, his grace, his strength — He is fighting for his children, and they are fighting for him. They fight against depression and porn and for religious vocations. We don’t need to be afraid of these things — rather, we need to be afraid of fighting them without him. We are not alone.”

## WORST-CASE SCENARIO

When my kids were all young — we’re talking six kids ages 12 and under — I spent a lot of time in fear-of-the-future mode. I thought that if only I were hyper-vigilant, I could protect my kids from a world that could hurt them. Pornography, depression, leaving the Church...these were some of my biggest fears, and I can tell you now, with

several years’ worth of hindsight, that my family has survived them all.

Our oldest son currently has no religious affiliation. He was extremely respectful of our beliefs when living at home, but I noticed a slight change in attitude around his sophomore year of high school. Sure enough, he stopped going to Mass once he’d left for college, and to be honest, nothing has ever hurt me more.

I’m told I should give them roots and then give them wings, but what do you do when they yank up those roots as they’re flying away? What can you do? You love him to pieces and pray, pray, pray.

My son is still one of the nicest, most respectful young men I know (yes, I’m biased) and my hope — my strategy — is to keep the front door of my momma’s heart wide open.

For instance, our conversation for this article took place over chips and dip at my kitchen table. He’d proposed coming home to watch the Super Bowl with us, and we were — *are* — always delighted to have him. He is as hands-on a brother as his younger siblings could hope and is always tossing one or another into the air with his strong, slim tattooed arms.

# Dos and don'ts

**1 Do lean heavily on the graces of your marriage.** Work with your spouse — not against him/her — and present a loving, unified front to your family, even if it means backing down or giving in. Commit yourselves to marital intimacy — biweekly, if possible, if you're in the right phase. Nothing has blessed our parenting more.

**2 Do take care of yourself** — body, mind and spirit. It's how we get our own oxygen mask in place before we can help others! My three non-negotiables are daily walks, a weekly holy hour and a monthly get-together with my book club friends. These are the things that keep me grounded.

**3 Do find a community that will support you in your goals.** No family is an island — especially when it comes to raising teens. My husband and I are underway with the Christian community People of Praise, and our children are active in youth groups as well. Catholic camps, retreats, teen-oriented Masses like NET Ministries' Lifeline and Steubenville North — these are all great ways to make the faith come alive.

**4 Do not hold a grudge when other people screw up.** Moms, especially, tend to take their pound of flesh before letting a family member off the hook. Forgive and forget. Forgive...don't flog.

**5 Don't compare yourself with other families.** You've heard this before, but it bears repeating: limit your time on social media. Similarly, do not judge other families without knowing their story and walking a mile (or five) in their shoes. Ask me how I know this! Do. Not. Judge. Because inevitably you'll be deserving of some judgment yourself.

**6 Be attentive to the voice of the Holy Spirit who, believe it or not, often speaks through your spouse!** I could give so many examples of this. Most recently would be the Lifeline Mass I attended with my daughter. I would have vastly preferred staying home that night, but my husband encouraged me: "You should go." He was right; the evening was both grace-filled and fun.

**7 Above all, don't throw in the towel!** This past Advent I felt discouraged, not having planned anything special or fun to do with kids. On the way into Mass on that first Sunday, we met the rector. "Don't forget to stop downstairs! There are Advent books for all the kids!" This is just one example but I could give many. Our good God always provides.

When I asked what he thought we did right as parents, he said that we were consistent in our beliefs. "I could see that you were devoted to your faith and went to Mass every week."

That said, he himself felt like he was just going through the motions and would rather be fully invested in his faith. He's grateful for the memories and everything we did that was church-related, but for now he needs to feel something before he goes back, adding that Catholicism feels too restrictive.

"I didn't like being forced into being someone I wasn't," he said.

He does think the weekly structure of Mass is useful in that it establishes a rhythm, but at this point he doesn't believe in God.

It is so easy to blame ourselves for this!

Although we can't know for sure how much is our parenting and how much is just his own decision. My husband feels he should have lived the faith more visibly. "I left it too much to my wife to lead the spiritual activities," he said. "During their teen years, the [older] boys needed to see my faith too. I was

often too busy at work, both with long hours and frequent travel. It's been easier now that I have a less demanding job to be more visible and more actively involved in their formation."

## LIFE-GIVING LOVE

Now you see why sharing my story has been hard. You may feel sorry for me or might even be a teensy bit Judgy McJudgerson because clearly, we've failed along the way!

Well, from what I've witnessed among my friends, my husband and I are in good company.





A dear friend has shed many tears with me over the abdication of her sons. “I have to trust and keep repeating to myself that God loves them more than I do, and He won’t leave them. All I can do is share and keep talking to them. It’s when they stop talking that I have found that Satan gets in there and confuses things.”

My adult son’s decisions have softened my heart in a way that has to be the Holy Spirit. No more casting stones for this mom! It was so easy to be judgmental when my kids were all little, so easy to condemn other families’ faults. We all do it, I dare say; it’s human nature to steer clear of all the scary influences and to turn into fierce mommy bears when anyone threatens our kids.

Wouldn’t it be so much easier to raise them in a Catholic bubble? Again, my thoughts turn to Saints Anna and Joachim, taking Mary to the temple when she was 3. Except there’s this unnerving thought: Our Lady’s sanctity didn’t spare her great suffering. The poor dear witnessed the very vilest of sins.

Here’s the baseline takeaway: Our kids need sacramental super powers to survive in this world. They need to actively participate in the Mass and spend time with our Lord in adoration. They need the grace of the sacraments and they need good friends. In my experience, that last one — having good friends — is huge. Our kids need a rock-solid cohort to help them win the fight.

## LATE-NIGHT WAFFLES

Recently I spoke with some of my daughter’s teen-aged friends and asked them how they keep the faith.

Caleb, 17, is a homeschooled student taking PSEO classes. His advice? “Stay close to the sacraments and have friends who keep you accountable. You can’t lie to

yourself and say that [keeping the faith] is going to be easy. It’s a grueling slugfest, and 95 percent of the time it’s really hard. The payoff, though, is worth it.”

Caleb spoke about having a breakthrough in the confessional when he was 12. He allowed himself to be vulnerable and poured out all of his sins to Jesus in the form of the priest. “There was an overflowing of love,” he said. “My faith became more of a relationship with a real person at the other end.”

Sophia, 17, a junior at Chesterton Academy in Edina, Minn., agrees with her friend Caleb. She noted that it happens often with young adults that they “don’t choose the faith as our own” and laughs about being forced to go to spiritual retreats in middle school because it was “good for her.” She spoke with admiration of her parents, both of whom

come from broken families and who are completely honest about their flaws. “Forgiveness is key,” she said, adding that her parents are her models for real love.

Now it may be worth noting that this conversation with my daughter’s friends took place at Perkins over Belgian waffles and enormous muffins — a late-night outing after a Lifeline Mass. Grace builds on nature, after all.

And yet, I hadn’t wanted to go to this Mass with my daughter — feeling lazy, I wanted to stay home and read.

Those creature comforts will be our demise if we let them! Facebook, Netflix, red wine, sleep...we all must make choices about how we spend our time with our eyes on the bigger, brighter picture. The older they get, the more crazy-busy we are, so I actually schedule the enrichment moments. I still do read-alouds with my daughters (and like family prayer, it’s often riotous), but like this, we lay down the rails for a lifetime of togetherness.

In conclusion, having shared my story (warts and all), may I be a little bit of a know-it-all? My parting advice to you is this: When it comes to instilling the faith in our children, we cannot have an app-based mentality. It can’t be one more thing to check off our list. We must get off our bottoms and really parent, even when things get ugly or scary.

Finally — and this is the most important thing — we must let go of the lie that we’re not enough: not popular enough, not rich enough, not skinny enough and not holy enough to get our kids to heaven. We need to let go and let God take control, because ultimately, it’s between them and Him. And God is still in the miracle business. [105](#)

*Margaret Berns lives in St. Paul, Minn. She is a wife, mother, writer and photographer (in that order) and blogs at Minnesota-Mom.com.*



# How my parents raised four adult Catholics who (still) love Jesus and the Church

by Christina Dehan Jaloway

**GIVEN THE STATE OF AFFAIRS** amongst millennials who were raised Catholic, I understand the surprised looks on people's faces when I tell them that my other three adult siblings (ages 27–33) and I are all intentional disciples, in the sense that we try to love Jesus, follow him and be faithful Catholics. All of us have married faithful Catholics, and we are all committed to raising our children to know and love Christ and the Church. To top it all off with even

more weirdness, my two sisters and I majored in theology in college, my sister Elisa and I both have master's degrees in theology, and my brother studied philosophy.

Even to other faithful Catholics, this sounds highly unusual. How in the world did we all end up like this? Did my parents brainwash us? Were we forced to go to daily Mass and completely sheltered from secular TV and music? Did we go to super Catholic elementary

and high schools where we had lots of other faithful Catholic mentors and friends around?

The answer to all of those questions is an emphatic no. Yes, Sunday Mass was an expectation, but I don't ever remember feeling like I was forced to do anything faith-related. Yes, my parents censored what we watched and listened to, but they tried to keep the rules age-appropriate and we definitely watched our fair share of TV in junior high and high

school. We did go to Catholic schools our whole lives, but in terms of Catholic identity, the quality of theology classes and the number of faithful Catholic mentor types around, these schools were mediocre at best. So how did they do it?

My parents would say that the fact that we all love Jesus and the Church is because of 1) grace, 2) grace and 3) grace. But even they have to admit (when pressed) that they played an important role in our faith formation; grace builds on nature, after all. I thank God on a regular basis for the gift of faith-filled parents who, through their witness, gave me everything I needed as a child to make my faith my own as an adult. My parents weren't perfect, and my family still has issues, but the one thing that has never been a source of division for us is Christ and his Church.

Looking back on my childhood, I can pinpoint six things my parents did that were particularly formative for my siblings and me. These aren't silver bullets, but I do think my parents' way of teaching and witnessing to the beauty of the Catholic faith is a huge part of why my siblings and I are still faithful Catholics today.

## 1. SAY THE NAME.

My parents talked about their relationships with the Lord, what He was doing in their lives and what they could see him doing in our lives on a daily basis. Jesus' name was frequently spoken in our house and always in a positive way. I never felt like God was a police officer in the sky, waiting for me to screw up. I knew He loved me even more than my parents did. For my siblings and me, faith wasn't just a Church thing or a school

thing. My parents' faith and love for Jesus was the air we breathed.

## 2. HAVE DAILY FAMILY DEVOTIONS.

Like most Catholic families, we did the typical grace before meals and prayers before bed. Unlike most Catholic families, we did a lot of extemporaneous prayer as a family, usually after dinner. My parents didn't emphasize rote prayer so much as heartfelt conversations with the Lord. We learned, from a young age, that the Lord cared about all of our concerns and that we could voice them aloud, directly to Him. My Dad says that this type of prayer helped us "stretch our prayer muscles," and he's right! My parents were good about keeping our prayer times on the short side so we wouldn't get restless, and they encouraged us (at the appropriate ages) to have our own prayer time each day. I didn't start to do that until high school, but the seeds were definitely planted, and our family prayer times paved the way for my future spiritual growth and intimacy with the Lord.

## 3. READ THE BIBLE.

My parents met because of the Catholic Charismatic Movement, which was the context in which they both



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encountered the Bible — outside of the Mass — for the first time. They took Biblical literacy seriously and wanted us to dive into God's Word as soon as possible. We listened to Bible verse memory cassettes in the car, which we loved, and read the children's Bible so often that we had entire stories memorized. As my Dad says, "You need water in your garden of souls; the Bible is your water source."

## 4. PRAY FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S SPIRITUAL FORMATION.

My parents prayed for us daily, and we knew this. They also took their responsibility to form us in the faith seriously, and educated themselves on the Bible and Church teaching. Until college, I didn't have a theology teacher who taught me anything my parents hadn't already covered — and then some.

## 5. BE CREDIBLE WITNESSES.

I remember waking up for school and seeing my mom reading her Bible, journaling, or kneeling, deep in prayer, before she came into the kitchen to supervise breakfast. My dad also had a daily prayer routine that was visible to all of us, and we knew how seriously he took his relationship with Christ. I think this was the most important component in our faith formation: the fact that we saw my parents — especially my Dad — living what they were teaching (albeit imperfectly), day in and day out. Not only that, but I could tell that for my parents, living the Christian life was a joy, even when it was difficult. I never associated Jesus or the Church with a bunch of arbitrary rules because my parents always framed morality in the context of our relationship with Christ.

## 6. FREQUENT THE SACRAMENTS.

I was so excited to receive my first Communion. I knew that I would be receiving Jesus, which I knew to be my mom's favorite part of the week. I wanted to experience the joy I saw on her face every Sunday after Communion. While we didn't start to go to daily Mass as a family until I was in college, my parents' joyful attitude toward Sunday Mass

*Four adult Catholics continues on page 27*



# Family interrupted

by Jessica Weinberger

When Kevin and Lisa Cotter got married at ages 22 and 21, they envisioned having a big Catholic family — maybe 10 kids.

Three months after their wedding, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) missionaries in Denver, Colo., found out they were pregnant. Three months after Lisa's fertility returned came their second pregnancy. She and Kevin thought they were well on their way.

But then six months passed after her fertility returned again with no positive pregnancy test.

"Something was not right, I just could kind of tell," said Lisa, 34, a Catholic speaker and author who leads the ministry Made to Magnify.

Even without fertility issues related to the births of their children Mary Clare, now 11, and Paul, now 9, the

Cotters found themselves in the relatively unknown and seldom discussed realm of secondary infertility: the inability to conceive or have a full-term pregnancy after having had a child or children without difficulty.

More than 3 million women in the U.S. who have one biological child have difficulty getting pregnant or carrying another to term, estimates the National Center for Health Statistics. Comparatively, approximately 6.1 million women (10 in 100) in the U.S. have difficulty becoming pregnant or staying pregnant overall, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The causes of secondary infertility are ambiguous, with some cases related to complications from a prior pregnancy or delivery. But in many situations, secondary infertility is linked to the same factors that cause primary infertility like ovulation problems, hormone imbalances or age. For affected couples, secondary infertility becomes an emotional balancing act of appreciating the child or children they already have while praying, hoping and trying to conceive again.

## An answered prayer

The Cotters decided to wait more than one year before pursuing medical treatment, which for Lisa only meant six to eight menstrual cycles as she was dealing with yet-to-be diagnosed polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). No red flags came through their initial testing, other than a minor thyroid issue, so she began to take an array of supplements and they continued to practice natural family planning using the knowledge they learned in the CCL class they completed as a part of marriage preparation. They felt confident in understanding Lisa's abnormal cycle, and charting helped them plan their busy travel schedules to maximize the chances of conception. But as the months passed, they hit a saturation point.

"I didn't want to talk to doctors anymore," Lisa said. "I didn't want to do blood work anymore and try crazy medicines that either made me feel funny or cost a lot. I was just trying to get to a place of peace and say, 'OK, this is what God has given us — two kids — and that's going to be enough.'"

As a part of their work for FOCUS, the couple traveled to Rome, where they prayed at the Basilica di Sant'Agostino and the Madonna del Parto, an icon of the Virgin Mary often attributed to healing issues related to fertility and safe childbirth. The trip dates fell over Pope John Paul II's first feast day on Oct. 22, and three months later, on the night before an appointment with a NaPro Technology doctor, they discovered they were pregnant with their daughter Grace. She was born on Oct. 22 of the following year.

"That's when God showed off," Lisa said with a laugh.

Now as a family of five, they yearn for more children, but they have more peace, no longer agonizing over every cycle or wrestling with unrest and anxiety. Yet there remains a sense of sadness and mourning that still accompanies the couple, especially as Grace passes through different life stages. Putting her toddler bed away was especially emotional, as they felt like another chapter was ending for their family. Relating to other mothers with growing bellies remains a challenge, as Lisa feels the need to defend herself to others, especially Catholics, whom she feels sometimes pass judgment on their family size.

"I felt like if I complained about it [secondary infertility], that I was ungrateful because I had friends who couldn't have children at all," she said.

Kevin Cotter, 34, the senior director of curriculum for FOCUS, said their struggles came as a surprise considering they had two normal, healthy pregnancies. He felt helpless during their experience, calling out a man's innate desire to fix the situation.

He focused on being a sounding board for Lisa as they explored different treatment options and encouraged her to take each day at a time. This included investing in the unique interests of their current children. For Mary Clare, it was indulging in her deep questions while they had one-on-one time in the car. For Paul, whom he calls an engineer-in-training, it was working together on a board with wheels for his model train.

**"THAT'S ONE THING THAT INFERTILITY OR SECOND INFERTILITY CAN DO — IT CAN MAKE YOU GRATEFUL AND HELP YOU COME TO THE REALIZATION THAT OUR LIVES AND OUR FAMILIES ARE ULTIMATELY A GIFT FROM GOD."**

Overall, he coped by being thankful for the gifts God had given them.

"That's one thing that infertility or second infertility can do — it can make you grateful and help you come to the realization that our lives and our families are ultimately a gift from God," Kevin said.

## Reaching for something more

Meg Herriot, 37, a veterinarian in the Washington, D.C. area, purposely left a stressful work environment to start her own business and set her own schedule so she could spend more time with her son, David, now 4 and a half. They enjoy regular "mommy-Davey hang-out days" where they spend unstructured time at home playing or reading books. They also plan random weekdays with her

husband, Mike, 43, a government policy director, where the family travels into the city and visits museums or enjoys fresh air on a hike.

This intentional focus on quality time stems from the couple's ongoing struggle with secondary infertility. While Herriot delivered David on their 11-month wedding anniversary following a normal, healthy pregnancy, they have been unable to conceive since. She partially blames her former demanding job, and initial blood work also revealed diminished ovarian reserve. Her doctor recommended a medication, but it required her to stop nursing her son at 15 months old.

"That was a sadness to end something with my baby in the hopes of having another baby," Herriot said. "I remember nursing him and looking at him and thinking, 'Am I being a fool? Will this be the last baby I get to nurse? Am I losing something that I have by reaching for something else?'"

Unhappy with the medication's side effects, she switched her care to a friend, a younger NaPro Technology doctor, who provided a more comprehensive view of Herriot's hormone levels and overall health. Today,



they're still praying for a new addition to their family, quipping that they've probably done "every novena that's out there."

It's difficult for Herriot to volunteer at her son's Catholic school, where classmates talk about having another sibling, which David then inquires about at home. She feels that some parents look down at them for having "only" one child, making comments that raising an only

*Family interrupted continues on page 27*



unsupervised for hours on end. We are bombarded with images on social media that make it seem like others are living perfect lives. We have unprecedented opportunities to bring in an income, both inside and outside of the home.

There is no template for how to thrive in this set-up, since it's not one that previous generations faced. I think this leaves us feeling unmoored, drifting through our lives without strong, established models of how to live this life well. This makes it easy to beat ourselves up and feel like we're failing when we're actually doing the best we can in this crazy new world we live in.

I think the key to thriving in this set-up is to discern your choices about your family and your lifestyle carefully and then resist the urge to compare yourself to others. These days, there are tons of ways to thrive as a family — one of the advantages of living in the modern age is

that we have so many opportunities that previous generations didn't have. You have to accept that your family is probably going to look very different than other families and that that's totally OK.

**Social media recently exploded over your confession that you'd been wearing the same earrings (er, stuck in the same earrings) for 12 years. "Motherhood means not changing your earrings for 12 years," The Bump declared in an all-caps headline. What takeaway do you hope other moms got from this story?**

No matter how much of a disaster you think your life is, mine is probably worse.

Catching up with

# Jennifer Fulwiler

**SIX KIDS, ONE RADIO SHOW AND A NEW BOOK POISED TO BE A BESTSELLER**

**As the cover art makes clear, your new book is about recognizing the beauty in the mess of motherhood. What keeps us from being able to do this more readily?**

Modern mothers are in brand

new territory. We have many conveniences yet also many struggles that our mothers and grandmothers didn't have: Most of us don't live near family or lifelong friends. We can't let our kids roam around outside

### How did you find the time to write this book amid homeschooling and your daily radio show?

I have help. Lots of it. Tons and tons of help. And I want to see more and more women boldly, unapologetically embracing that idea that we weren't meant to raise children in isolation. Women were meant to have help: In most other times and places in history, women lived in close-knit communities where extended family was always around to share the work of bringing up the next generation, or they at least were able to let their kids roam outside unsupervised to get a break that way. Most of us have none of that now, so we need to be intentional about seeking help.

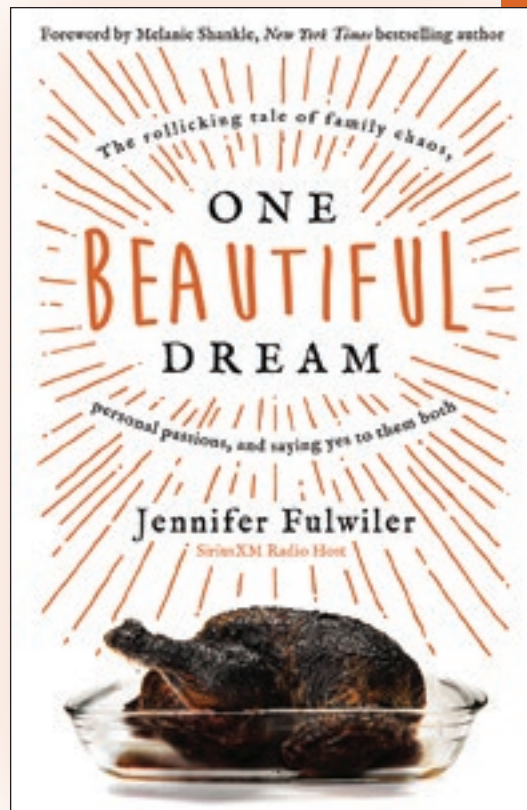
We've always spent a significant percentage of our monthly budget on babysitting, both when money was very tight and when it wasn't. I have a babysitter who comes most days, and she supervises homeschool. I head in to my office, where I do writing, email, and other work before my radio show, which is two hours a day, every weekday. I get off the air at 3:00 my time and squeeze in some other work and usually try to finish around 4:00, though on days that I have a big deadline it might be much later than that.

The key to all of this is that I partner with my family. We make all of these decisions about how much my husband and I work together, so we can be sure that everyone is on the same page.

### In your book you reflect on the "sense of inner freedom" you've gained from using NFP. It's personal and powerful — never pushy. Where do well-intentioned Catholics tend to go wrong when it comes to promoting NFP?

I think we do natural family planning a disservice when we make

it sound too easy. NFP should be pitched as an alternative lifestyle, rather than just another form of birth control. The reality is that this is a sacrifice-based method of child spacing. That is a much, much different prospect than taking a pill or getting a shot, and people sense that. If we can be honest that this does require sacrifice, I think we'll do a much better job of getting people's attention.



### What's next for you?

I will definitely be writing another book, though I'm still working on the topic. Other than that, I don't know! Our family circumstances are constantly changing with six kids, so I try to take life one month at a time — or, most days, one hour at a time. This is scary for me since I am a huge control freak. I want my five-year plan perfectly mapped out! But I've found that allowing God to lead my family and me one day at a time always leads us to a better place than if we tried to cling to our big master plans. [EF](#)

## Sneak Peek

*Editor's note: Zondervan just released Jennifer Fulwiler's new book, One Beautiful Dream: The Rollicking Tale of Family Chaos, Personal Passions, and Saying Yes to Them Both. This excerpt comes from chapter four, titled "Family Planning (And Other Things I'm Not Good At)." In it, Jennifer chronicles an OB appointment toward the end of her third pregnancy when a nurse inquires about her postpartum plan to use NFP.*

If the nurse had time for me to explain it all, she would see how animated I became when I described how my newfound theology influenced this decision. I could tell her all about how I came to agree with the old-school Catholic view that abstinence-based methods of child spacing are preferable to contraception. (I'd probably stand up and pace wildly when I related it all to Aquinas' description of Natural Law, since that part was just so exciting.) But life experience had taught me that if one were to make a list of Top Casual Conversation Subjects That Nobody Cares About at All, "Your stance on contraception vis-à-vis your religious beliefs" would make it into the top three, right next to "The weird dream you had last night" and "Whether that rash is an allergic reaction or a fungal infection."

I spared the nurse the details and just said, "I'm Catholic. I don't do contraception."

"My sister-in-law is Catholic. I don't think a lot of people pay attention to that rule anymore."

I shrugged. "I know. But it's what works for me."

"So you want to have baby after baby?"

Continues on page 22

“No. No, we’re done for a long time after this one. We’ve got it under control with natural family planning.” She looked pointedly at my protruding stomach. “We’re working on it.”

The nurse sighed. “Do you understand how much, umm, sacrifice is involved when you’re first learning NFP?”

I said I did. And I didn’t exactly look forward to that. But in the short time that I’d been using this system of family planning, it had changed almost every aspect of my life. I had discovered that it was more of an alternative lifestyle than just another way to avoid pregnancy. It strengthened my marriage, made me rely on my faith more than I ever would have otherwise, and it had given me another gift as well, one that I never expected to receive.

All my life, I had been uncomfortable with my body; in fact, it was a discomfort that bordered on hatred. It started in childhood, when my unusually tall height and unruly hair made me the target of endless teasing, and, eventually, bullying. In my teens and early twenties I dieted and exercised and obsessed about my appearance so that I could look how women were evidently supposed to look.

Meanwhile, I had a vague revulsion for all of those odd female things my body did, to the extent that I thought about them at all. In eighth grade health class we were taught about female cycles and fertility in conjunction with a teen pregnancy prevention program, and so it was all discussed with the same shroud of fear and suspicion as one might speak of witchcraft. I remembered the teacher showing us a graphic video of childbirth. When it was over, she switched on the lights and announced to our stunned and queasy

class, “That’s what will happen to you if you’re not careful!”

That class comprised 90 percent of my education about the inner workings of the female body in my younger years.

The result of all of this was that I felt at war with my body. I resented



my stomach’s cravings for food when I was always trying to lose a few more pounds to look like the women in the magazines. I was baffled by fluctuations in my monthly cycle. I knew little about pregnancy or childbirth. In college, I once heard someone say that a woman’s fertility fluctuates with her cycle, and she’s only fertile a couple of days out of each month, but I didn’t think that could be right.

I tried to assure myself that I was a strong, empowered woman. I would have never admitted this to anyone, but the naked truth was this: I was uncomfortable with almost every aspect of the female body.

Motherhood and my newfound faith had helped to heal some of this discomfort, but when I started learning Natural Family Planning, everything changed. In order to be good at this system of child spacing, you have to develop an intimate knowledge of how your body works. I was amazed when I learned about the

intricacies of the female reproductive system. I’d stay up late, poring over books with purple or pink binding that featured pictures of flowers on the covers (for some reason they all looked like this), sitting up in bed and whispering aloud, “Why didn’t anyone ever tell me this?”

I started to appreciate the differences between men’s and women’s physiology. I learned what optimal health for a woman really looks like, which led me to a natural revulsion toward the starving-skinny look I once forced myself to adopt. When I actually started getting to know my body, I finally stopped fearing my body. And when I stopped secretly loathing all of those perplexing things my body did, I stopped secretly loathing myself.

What I wanted to say to this well-meaning nurse was this:

“Yes, I do have some concerns about sticking with NFP, but it has given me something that years of introspection and self-help books never could. This practice has given me a sense of inner freedom I never thought I could experience. So, yes, I do have questions about what my future will look like with this type of birth control. But I also have no doubt that I am doing exactly what I need to be doing right now.” Instead, I fidgeted self-consciously.

“It sounds like I’m not going to get you to take this?” She held up a brochure from a pharmaceutical company about a new device that sterilized women more permanently than their competitors. The model on the cover was very thin and very tan and held her arms in the air to symbolize her freedom.

“No thanks,” I said. <sup>193</sup>

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## Love & Marriage



Father John  
P. Floeder

# 11 years of priesthood

*Editor's note: This is the season of priestly ordinations as well as anniversaries for longtime priests. We asked Father Floeder to look back on his ministry. Send him your questions to address in future columns at [fatherfloeder@gmail.com](mailto:fatherfloeder@gmail.com).*

Some of the most fulfilling parts of my priesthood are things I never imagined. From the very earliest days of my discernment, I thought about what my life as a priest would be like. I imagined it would involve what I saw those priests I looked up to doing. A priest celebrates Mass and brings Jesus in the Eucharist to his people. A priest hears confessions and so brings the healing love and mercy of God to those who seek it. A priest is there for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

All those are a part of my priesthood. The sacraments shape who I am as a man and as a priest; I bring the sacraments to others, and I rely on them myself. But those unlooked-for blessings are some of the greatest gifts that I have received.

I was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis on May 26, 2007. My first assignment of three years was at St. Stephen's in Anoka, Minn. Usually, the parish openings where the newly ordained will go are well known, and many are betting on who will go where. Anoka was not on anyone's radar. I was doubly surprised when I opened up my assignment letter from the archbishop: that I was going to Anoka and that I did not know where Anoka was.

My time in Anoka was an unexpected blessing. My pastor was

a tremendous mentor, who could make me feel good about myself even when he had to call me out on my mistakes. I was one of three priests, which is rare at a single parish, and so we prayed and ate together regularly. Those priests are lifelong friends.

I was also surprised how much I enjoyed the school. I was a public-school kid my whole life, and so being with the kids and being able to talk freely about the faith

**Some of my happiest moments as a priest have come from experiences I never could have anticipated. My hopes were fulfilled and surpassed.**

made a big impact on me. If I was ever having a bad day, all I needed to do was to walk through the lunch room and joke around with the kids. With that fatherly relationship, the children were open to going deeper into their relationship with Jesus with me.

In Anoka I also improved my Spanish and started working with Spanish speakers in the area. They taught me a lot about what it means to be a family. No matter what family I visited or how humble the house or trailer, they welcomed me with overwhelming hospitality and were



effusive in giving me their love and support for the little priestly service I extended to them. When I go back to Anoka, I am blessed to see those couples I walked with who were struggling now serving as leaders in the parish.

Now I am a formator and professor in the seminary, where I help men prepare to be priests. I am blessed beyond belief to be with these men as they courageously respond to the Lord's call to grow in those areas that will allow them to be the priest God wants them to be. They help keep me hungry for growth in my own life as a man and priest of Jesus Christ.

The ideas I had of what it is to be a priest from early years were definitely right. I get to witness Jesus and the Holy Spirit regularly transforming people's lives through the sacraments. I love doing those priestly things. But in providence, some of my happiest moments have come from experiences I never could have anticipated. My hopes were fulfilled and surpassed. Such is life in Christ. God blesses us in surprising ways if we are open. May we all in faith receive those unexpected gifts!



# Adam and Eve and 'the reverence due to a woman'

by Charisse Tierney

"Another effect that gives cause for alarm is that a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection" (*Humanae Vitae*, 17).

Men were created to protect women. This truth is written into the very fibers of the male body. While Pope Paul VI elevates the dignity of woman through words like "reverence due to a woman," it is his illumination of the dignity of man that especially sheds light on the sacredness of woman.

His call for man to consider woman his "partner" and to "surround [her] with care and affection" is an echo of a passage from Ephesians 5, quoted within the text of *Humanae Vitae*:

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church...Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church...This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church; however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband" (*Humanae Vitae*, 25).

We often think of Eve as the instigator of the Great Fall. But as we read the story of the expulsion from Eden, we see the words "So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it" (Gen 3:6).

Here we see the real duplicity of the devil. Not only did he convince Eve to eat the fruit herself, but he also convinced Adam to stand silently by without a word of warning to protect Eve from her sin. Intertwined with the first great sin was the failure of a man to protect a woman. And along with that came a fear of being naked, of being reduced to a mere instrument, and shame. Eve knew she had failed God's design by offering Adam an enticement to which he had no right. And Adam knew he had failed in his love for Eve by not acting upon his instincts to protect her.

But Ephesians 5 reminds us that Jesus' sacrifice and Mary's yes redeemed the sins of Adam and Eve. In being instructed to "love your wives, as Christ loved the Church," men can be sure that this is the type of love of which they are capable. Just as love for the Church brought Jesus to the Cross, so too does love for a woman bring a man to his own personal sacrifices, his own laying down of life.

This is the mystery of womanhood that inspires men to want to "surround [her] with care and affection." This is the core of the dignity of women that Pope Paul VI so eloquently points to throughout *Humanae Vitae* as he describes the respect and love that married couples are to give to one another.

When women respect the design of their bodies by refraining from the use of artificial contraception, they convey faith in men's ability to love them the way God designed them. Men were created to rise to this standard and respect and protect the mystery of women, their vulnerability, and the potential for new life that exists within the hidden recesses of their bodies. Because the very future of humanity depends upon it.

# The Armchair Warrior



Michael  
Gagnon

## Morning sickness

My wife is one of my heroes. She gives so much for our family. She never hesitates to give more of herself when one of her children (or her husband) has a need. And she's always striving to better herself, to give more of herself, to lift her family higher and to encourage us and challenge us and love us better. Simply put, she amazes me.

As I write this column she's lying in bed throwing up into a bowl and has never looked more lovely. She's been on-again, off-again bed-ridden for the last two months because of our slightly unexpected pregnancy, and she has horrendous morning sickness. On top of all that she's having to detox from anti-anxiety meds, and the detox is brutal.

It was about a month and a half ago that we realized we were pregnant. Her period was late, something that happens a lot with her crazy cycles, so at first we weren't too concerned. But then a couple extra days turned into a week.

I remember it like it was yesterday. It was a Monday morning when we brought up the possibility of being pregnant, and I said I'd get a pregnancy test on the way home from work. I loaded the kids into the car to drive them to school and on the way started getting nervous like I had on the other few occasions we thought we might be pregnant in the last two years. Both of those times we were extremely anxious because we'd taken a risk and we weren't ready for another baby. We were far, far from ready. And the thought terrified us.

So there I was driving my three beautiful children to school on a

Monday morning, experiencing waves of anxiety.

But then I started praying and putting it into God's hands. I realized that if we were pregnant we'd be OK, that God wanted this baby and had chosen to give him/her to us. (We're calling him Abednego until we find out if it's a boy or girl.) If Maria was pregnant with Abednego, then God placed him there and has a plan.

When I arrived home later that night we took the test and to our unexpected joy, confirmed our suspicions. Maria looked at me and asked how I felt, and I told her I was terrified and really happy! She let out a huge breath and said she felt the same. For us, this mutual terrified joy was confirmation of God's will and grace.

Since that moment things have gotten difficult, but through it all we are trusting in God and offering up the various sufferings for our children — at least we're trying to.

Tonight Maria lamented that she wasn't very good at that part. It's not like she has much of a choice to suffer or not, but she said she's not good at offering it up, that most of the time she just seems to forget about all the pious thoughts and just suffers and it sucks. And it occurred to me that that's OK. I don't think God expects us to suffer happily, as if the suffering

wasn't so insufferable. We make a choice, an act of the will to unite our suffering to Christ and then get on with the ugly-beautiful crying, throwing up, pain, tedium and exhaustion.

In so doing, we aren't just claiming a sentimental platitude by

**I don't think God expects us to suffer happily, as if the suffering wasn't so insufferable. We make a choice, an act of the will to unite our suffering to Christ and then get on with the ugly-beautiful crying, throwing up, pain, tedium and exhaustion.**

“offering it up,” but we are participating in the redemption of the world. When we enter into communion with Christ — not just his resurrection but also his passion and death — we become co-redeemers with him. And his sufficient grace sustains us to persevere and transforms our hearts and the hearts of others into the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:12). And isn't that the whole point of the Christian, the family and NFP: to be a domestic church, participating in and perpetuating the redemption of Christ in the world?

So Abednego, we offer this one up for you and your siblings, for the praise of his glory.





# Cincinnati invests in game-changing TOB curriculum

by Forest Hempen

When Emily Macke was asked to write an eight-semester Theology of the Body curriculum for high schoolers, she was undaunted. She was the educator coordinator at Ruah Woods, Cincinnati's TOB education center, and curriculum is a huge part of their work.

But the project quickly grew from a mere four-year lesson plan to a 13-year program, largely in response to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's first-of-its-kind decision to mandate TOB education in its schools.

Macke was joined in the project, called Rooted, by two other writers: Meghan Schofield, who signed on for grades 6–8, and Molly Meyer for K–5. Providentially, all three writers share an educational background with master's degrees from the Pontifical John Paul II Institute and are dear friends.

"This curriculum is a fruit of that friendship," said Meyer, who works as a curriculum specialist for Ruah. "We all share the same worldview. We all have a unique style of writing and teaching, but our foundation is the same."

Their compatibility played a key role in crafting a cohesive vision for such a far-reaching curriculum.

"As a team, we've asked questions such as, 'To understand fruitfulness in high school, what does a young child need to know?' That way, we're always looking at the whole instead of piecing things together," Macke said.

During their initial research, the team discovered that many teachers were hesitant to add what they perceived as an extra teaching.

"It seems that teachers and diocesan officials tend to view TOB as just a chastity program," Macke said, "and therefore, beyond morality or possibly vocations, it doesn't seem to have a place."

But it's a misunderstanding to think of TOB that way, Macke is quick to point out. "Theology of the Body is first a matter of Christian anthropology — understanding who the human person is. This has implications for everything!"

To help drive home this point while also accommodating typical course structures, the high school element of Rooted provides lessons for classes like morality, social justice, Christology and sacraments. Institutions seeking to incorporate TOB as an "anchor strand" in their education programs — such as the Archdiocese of Cincinnati — will find that the entirety of Rooted is designed to fit into existing religious curricula as seamlessly as possible.

The program, which had its humble inception at a diocesan meeting in 2011, is set to be completely finished in 2019, after seven years of development.

Some of it is available online now, thanks to the wise decisions to roll it out in stages.

Each part of the program underwent extensive review and piloting to ensure quality and efficacy. While Called to More, the 9–12 grade element of Rooted, only piloted in limited schools, the K–5 lesson plans are being tested in more than 1,200 classrooms throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati this academic year. Grades 6–8 will pilot this coming fall and sign-ups to participate in the trial are open to schools nationwide.

Although the program is still new and no quantitative results are available, the anecdotal results have been promising, according to Steve Deiters, director of Ruah Woods Press.

Deiters relates a story from the largest archdiocesan grade school in Cincinnati, which voluntarily began integrating TOB into its lessons a few years ago.

"[The principal] notes a real shift in student behavior — especially when it comes to discipline," Deiters said. And over time, the changes have continued with the ongoing emphasis on TOB. "[The principal] says that even the typical Principal's Office disciplinary meetings go differently, with the students often on their own articulating that they know they 'weren't being a gift to others.'"

His discipline files have evaporated from a full drawer a couples of years ago to a file folder about one and a half inches thick.”

It’s exactly that kind of culture-shifting effect that the creators of Rooted — and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati at large — hope to see played out over time on a larger stage.

“Everything about this K–12 curriculum goes beyond putting a band-aid on a cultural sore,” Emily Macke said. Instead, Rooted and TOB in general, seeks “to heal the deeper wounds and misunderstandings at the root of a culture of death.”

Widespread TOB education is promising for creating a culture of NFP. After all, Deiters said, “NFP will be naturally embraced by those who know who they are and what they were created for.”

“It will take a great deal of time,” he said. “[TOB education] is a strong but slow-acting agent of change.”

Macke agrees. “With the current cultural climate,” she said, “I think it’s close to impossible to share the beauty of the Church’s teaching on life if we don’t first walk with our young people in their understanding of who they are as a human person. ...These are themes that are highlighted throughout the high school curriculum. Even in the younger grades, seeds are being planted. When these young men and women are preparing for marriage, I hope that they will remember what they learned in grade school and high school and will naturally be drawn to NFP as a response to God’s love and a way of loving each other. This is a long-range vision, but I have great hope that, like the parable of the sower, these seeds will take root and flourish.” <sup>19</sup>

*Editor’s note: To read more of Forest Hempen’s reporting on Rooted, visit [ccli.org/blog](http://ccli.org/blog).*

*Four adult Catholics continued from page 17*

was what kept me interested as a child, even when the homily was way over my head. I wanted to be as close to Jesus as she was. It wasn’t until much later that my parents (and I) started to go to confession regularly, but now it’s a staple.

### WHAT MY PARENTS DIDN’T DO (UNTIL LATER)

You may have noticed that I didn’t mention the Saints, Marian devotion or the liturgical calendar. In part, that’s because my parents didn’t fully understand the importance of the Church’s teachings on the more devotional aspects of Catholicism when I was young. By the time I went to college, they had rediscovered the beauty and richness of Catholic devotional life, thanks partly to Scott Hahn. Meanwhile, at Notre Dame I met faithful Catholic students who introduced me to Marian devotion, the saints and the liturgical year.

Do I feel like I was deprived in some way? Not really. That’s not to say that I don’t plan on introducing my little one to these devotions (I do!), but I think that my parents’ emphasis on developing a relationship with Christ, reading and knowing the Bible, and the Mass was a wonderful combination despite its deficiencies. And they did it without any curriculum, printables or the Internet!

I know what my siblings and I received is so rare, and one of my hopes is that my generation will change this. After teaching high school for nine years and seeing the dramatic difference it makes to a teenager to have two parents who are intentional disciples, I’m even more passionate about raising my children to know the love, joy and beauty that comes with knowing Christ. <sup>20</sup>

*This is an abridged version of an article that originally appeared on [www.theevangelista.com](http://www.theevangelista.com). It was reprinted with permission from the author.*

*Family interrupted continued from page 19*

child is much easier. It’s in those moments that Herriot talks openly about their journey, which becomes a form of evangelization.

“Part of my journey of understanding what good can come from the struggle is that I can be a voice to others to talk about it,” Herriot said. “I’ve found myself talking to others about this topic that I wouldn’t have otherwise and being able to minister to others with kids or without through this struggle.”

The couple has considered fostering or adoption but admits that each path comes with its own set of complexities. With no firm diagnosis, they’re stuck with a “maybe” in terms of their future fertility, which Mike said is challenging when they want to deal with straight facts, but he works to stay positive with every cycle.

“My view has always been that unless or until someone tells us that they’ve found a cause that can’t be addressed, then we always have a chance,” Mike said, “and I believe we will overcome these challenges.”

To avoid feeling stuck, the couple fasts on the weekends, either from meat, desserts, TV or smart devices. They use that time to talk about future plans and focus on things other than work or their desire for more children. They credit CCL’s NFP and postpartum classes for strengthening their communication skills in their marriage.

Now four years into their secondary infertility journey, they can look back and see how they’ve grown closer together and to God as they remain hopeful for another baby.

“It’s been hard, but He has molded my husband and me. He has increased our patience and built us up and hasn’t torn us down,” Herriot said. “Whether you get ultimately what you want, it can be a vehicle for God’s love for you but also, really, for others.” <sup>21</sup>

# How effective is CCL's method of NFP?

by Andy Alderson

That's an easy one—it's 99 percent, right? The answer, which may surprise you, is “ehh, kind of.”

Wait, what? Have you been lied to all these years? No, you haven't been. CCL's method is grounded in science and backed up by peer-reviewed studies where available. We often state that NFP is 99 percent effective as a short-hand way of explaining that it is an effective means to space children. To be completely accurate, however, there are several considerations. Are we talking about method effectiveness or user effectiveness? Which rule are we talking about, or which part of which rule are we talking about? So let's answer those questions.

What follows is the efficacy of CCL's six primary Phase I and Phase III rules along with the studies that support them. After reviewing it, you should have a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the League's NFP method. (For more information you can consult the reference section of the *Student Guide*.)

## Phase I Rules

### DAY 5/6 RULE

**Assume infertility on Cycle Days 1–5. For women with cycles 26 days or longer in the last 12 cycles, assume infertility on Cycle Days 1–6. (This rule assumes the absence of mucus.)**

**Effectiveness: 99.6% method, 98.2% user**

The effectiveness percentages shown are for Cycle Days 1–5 and based on the 2007 Frank-Herrmann study. Method effectiveness of Cycle Day 6 is 99.8% effective based on the work of Dr. Josef Roetzer.

### Studies

Dr. Petra Frank-Herrmann et al, “The effectiveness of a fertility awareness-based method to avoid pregnancy in relation to a couple's sexual behavior during the fertile time: a prospective longitudinal study,” *Human Reproduction*, 2007; 22(5): 1310–1319.

Dr. Josef Roetzer, “A Prospective Sympto-Thermal Trial in Austria, German and Switzerland,” Presentation III International Congress IFFLP/FIDAF, Hong Kong, Nov 20–30, 1983.

### DOERING RULE

**Subtract seven from the earliest first day of temperature rise in the last 12 cycles. Mark that cycle day as the last day that you can assume Phase I infertility. (This rule assumes the absence of mucus and requires six cycles of temperature history.)**

**Effectiveness: % method – not reported, 96.9% user**

The study supporting the Doering Rule, while dated, still provides very acceptable efficacy data. It should be noted that this study was based solely on temperature. By checking for mucus, one could reasonably assume that CCL's use of this rule would be as effective or more effective than 96.9 percent.



## Studies

Dr. G.K. Doering, "About the Dependability of the Temperature Method to Avoid Conception," Translated from the original article in *Deutsche medizinische Wochenschrift* (9 Jun 1967); 92: 1055–1061.

### LAST DRY DAY RULE

**The end of Phase I is the last day without mucus sensations or characteristics. (This rule requires six cycles of experience, and women should have at least six days of mucus from its onset through Peak Day.)**

**Effectiveness: % method and % user unknown**

The Last Dry Day Rule is based primarily on mucus-only methods, e.g. Billings, Creighton. Since there are significant differences between methods on how mucus is taught and how effectiveness is measured, effectiveness of this rule is unknown. That said, CCL requires six cycles of experience; whereas, other methods do not. And the Wilcox study estimated the probability of conception on the 6th day preceding ovulation to be zero.

## Studies

Dr. Qian et al, "Evaluation of the Effectiveness of a Natural Fertility Regulation Program in China, Paper presented at a Congress organized by Center for Study and Research in the Natural Regulation of Fertility, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Rome, Italy, 8 Sept. 2000.

Results of meta-analysis of five separate Creighton studies: Method effectiveness 98.7%–99.8%; use effectiveness 94.6%–97.9%. <https://www.creightonmodel.com/effectiveness.htm>

Dr. Allen J. Wilcox et al, "Timing of sexual intercourse in relation to ovulation," *The New England Journal of Medicine* (7 Dec 1995); 333, 23: 1517–1521.

## Phase III Rules

### SYMPTO-THERMAL RULE

**Phase III begins on the evening of the third day of drying-up after Peak Day, combined with three normal post-peak temperatures above the LTL, and the third temperature at or above the HTL or the cervix closed and hard for three days. If these conditions are not**

**met, then Phase III begins after waiting an additional post-peak day for another temperature above the LTL.**

**Effectiveness: 99.6% method, 98.2% user**

Effectiveness of the Sympto-Thermal Rule is well documented. Effectiveness rates above are based upon both the Frank-Hermann study. In Dr. Roetzer's 40+ years of clinical experience and over 300,000 cycles, he did not observe any method-related Phase III pregnancies.

## Studies

Dr. Petra Frank-Hermann et al, 2007.

Roetzer, *Natural Conception Regulation*, Freiburg: Herder, 2006.

### CCL MUCUS-ONLY RULE

**Phase III begins on the evening of the fourth day of drying up or thickening of the mucus after Peak Day.**

**Effectiveness: 98.8% method, 98.0% user**

A Peak + 4 approach is widely accepted as an "industry standard."

## Studies

"Use Effectiveness of the Creighton Model Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning," Fehring et al, Marquette University, *College of Nursing Faculty Research and Publications*, 1994.

Dr. Qian et al, 2000.

Results of meta-analysis of five separate Creighton studies.

### CCL TEMPERATURE-ONLY RULE

**Phase III begins on the evening of the fourth day of normal temperatures above the LTL. The last three temperatures must be on consecutive days, and at or above the HTL.**

**Effectiveness: 100% method, 99.2% user**

This is an extremely effective rule. Dr. Doering observed no method-related pregnancies, and user effectiveness was above 99 percent.

## Studies

Dr. G.K. Doering, 1967.

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