

10 Year anniversary of the ground breaking for the St. Bernard Church addition

July 23, 2017

This anniversary is a good time to reflect on the history of St. Bernard Parish. This is a summary of information from Parish documents, School Sisters of Norte Dame Chronicle and local newspaper articles.

St. Bernard was incorporated as St. Bernard Church of Benton, because that was the city around the church site. The City of Cologne was organized in 1881; Benton disbanded and was annexed to Cologne at a later date. The corporate name was never changed and remains.

St. Bernard Church of Benton

St. Bernard's Roman Catholic Church, at Cologne, was first organized as a Parish in 1856, by Reverend Father Mehlmann. The organization comprised nineteen families. Services were held at the house of John Mohbacher until in 1860, when under the direction of Rev. Father Bruno Riss, Benedictine, a small frame church, costing about five hundred dollars was built.

The first burial recorded in the St. Bernard book of burials is Aretz. In 1857

The first Baptism is recorded as, Cotharina Margaritta Censius, daughter of Casper Censius and Cotharina Mohrbacher on June 30, of 1859 and is considered the start of St. Bernard Catholic Church.

In 1877, a new brick church building costing \$14,000.00 was erected under the supervision of Father Gottfried H. Braun. Article in the May 18, 1877 issue of The Weekly Valley Herald, under "Benton Items" "Bishop Ireland will be at this place on Monday next, May 21 to lay the corner stone of the new Catholic Church"

This means the church building is 140 years old this year, 2017.

The School Sisters of Norte Dame arrived in Benton Minnesota September 5, 1880. Sister M. Generosa, Sister M. Bertrand and two candidates formed the first community. The enrollment was 95. The Sister were asked to prepare the children who were old enough for their first Holy Communion, which took place in December. The class consisted of eleven boys and girls.

The Weekly Valley Herald, March 4, 1886 Cologne: "The new Church Altar for the Benton Catholic Church, made by F. X. Hirschner of Shakopee, passed through the village this week drawn by three teams."

In 1887 twenty-seven children were admitted to first Holy Communion, July 3rd. September 14th school reopened. Eighty children were present the first day. The reason for this late opening day was the unfinished annex to the school. October 20, 1987, the new addition was blessed. We now have three classrooms.

The Weekly Valley Herald, July 13, 1893, Cologne. "The interior of the Catholic Church is being painted and frescoed, and it will be done in grand style." Some of this frescoed painting is visible on the ceiling where the organ is installed.

June 25th 1897 marked the close of school. We had about 140 pupils during the past school year. June 27th thirty-eight received their First Holy Communion.

Since 1898, two sisters went to Norwood every Saturday for four months to instruct the children in Religion.

June 27, 1902 School closed for the summer vacation. During the past school year, we had 165 children in the grades. On the 29th of June, a class of 34 were admitted to First Holy Communion. Among them were 13 from Norwood.

The Weekly Valley Herald, February 4, 1904, Cologne C. P. Meuleners and C. F. Kusserow of this place were awarded the contract to build the Catholic parsonage here on Tuesday.

At the opening of school in September, 1914 all our classrooms were overcrowded.

In October, Mother M. Isidore visited us again; Sister M. Hermenegild accompanied her. The object of her visit was to confer with the Reverend Pastor concerning the erection of a new school building, since the present building no longer affords sufficient room to accommodate all our pupils.

April 20th, 1915, was an important day for St. Bernard's. The first sod was turned for the work of excavation. After Holy Mass the reverend Pastor – whose greatest concern is the education and training of youth – set out for the place destined for the new school the children marched in procession, led by the cross-bearer, and followed by the Pastor and the altar boys. The two smallest boys, decorated with papal colors, carried the new spade, which was decorated with our national colors. The children were placed in position, surrounding the fringe of the area on which the foundation of the new structure would arise. In the middle of this formation stood the Pastor and the people who had come to participate in the ceremony. Convinced that every success depends on the blessing of God, Father sprinkled the space with holy water. Amid the recitation of the prayers of the Church, the first excavation was made in the form of a cross. Father turned the first sod – three spadefuls of sod.

August 1st, 1915, the cornerstone was laid. God's blessing evidently rested upon this work undertaken for His honor and glory, and with His assistance.

Christmas approached; December 22nd was the last school day in the old building. The Christmas vacation lasted until Jan, 17, 1916. On this day, the first classes were taught in the new school. May 30th His Excellency, Bishop Trobec, dedicated the school. On the same day, 112 children and adults were confirmed.

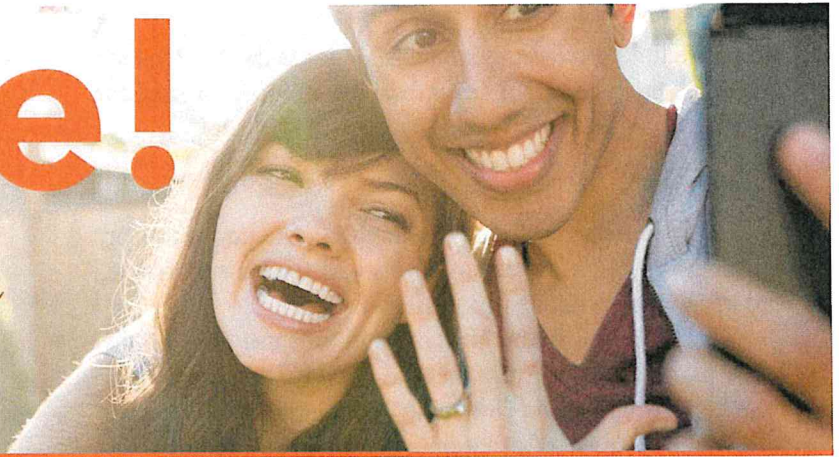
November 30, 1922, the bowling alley was taken out of the basement of school, and preparations were begun to turn same into a chapel for the winter where mass could be said during the cold weather. Same was continued on school days during the winter months.

All the sisters returned with the exception of Sister Davida who was replaced by Sister Aerua as organist and music teacher. September 4, 1923; reopening of school with 262 pupils.

History continued next week July 29/30 with display in the Narthex

It's time!

*Say "Yes" to God's plan
for married love.*



HOW THE METHODS OF NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING CAN HELP MARRIED COUPLES LIVE GOD'S PLAN FOR THEIR MARRIAGES

Catholic teaching on love, sex, and “responsible parenthood”¹ is a resounding “YES!” to God’s plan for husband, wife, and marriage. When a man and woman marry, their “Yes” to each other should also include their “Yes” to God’s plan for married love. Why?

God is the author of marriage

God is the creator. He created men and women in his image (Gen 1:27). And, God is the author of marriage as well. God designed married love to be total,² fruitful, faithful and exclusive. Marriage was created to mirror God’s own Trinitarian love. Married love therefore rejoices in the other and is respectful of God’s design. This means that husband and wife offer themselves to each other as a gift. There is no “taking” here, just “offering” and “receiving.” There is no exclusion, like denying God, one’s person, or fertility. Anything that counters the meaning and beautiful integrity of the marital act and God’s call for life is avoided (e.g. contraception, sterilization, pornography, IVF, or surrogacy).³

God willed that married love involves the whole person, with reason, a well-formed conscience in God’s truth (that’s what Church teaching is!), and fertility. It also means that husband and wife understand that openness to new human life is not an “add on” but an essential element of married life—indeed God himself entrusted husband and wife with the gift of life.⁴ This is true whether a couple is fertile or not. Married couples ought to prayerfully discern when God is calling them to bring new life into the world, not treat it in a casual way.

What does all this have to do with Natural Family Planning (NFP)?

Catholic teaching on the nature of human sexuality, marriage, conjugal love and responsible parenthood reflects God’s loving design. The significance of NFP methods is that they are the *tools* to help husband and wife live that

reality. This is because the methods of NFP respect God’s plan for married love. They do nothing to harm God’s design. That is why the Church supports NFP use in marriage.

NFP—good medicine

Natural Family Planning is the general title for the scientific and moral methods of family planning that can help married couples either achieve or postpone a pregnancy. NFP methods provide fertility education that is informative and practical. NFP helps husband and wife to live healthfully and honestly with their combined fertility.

The facts of human reproduction form the basis of all NFP methods. Specifically, NFP methods attempt to identify the “fertile window” of husband and wife. The fertile window is the combination of information about the woman’s day of fertility (ovulation, which occurs only within a 12-24 hour period) and that of the man’s fertility (sperm, which can live in a *fertile* woman’s body for up to 5 days). When a woman is fertile, her reproductive hormones will send messages that yield specific and observable signs. Recognizing the pattern of those physical signs forms the basis for most NFP methods.

NFP methods

The majority of NFP methods are based on the daily observation of the woman’s signs of fertility.⁵ This takes some effort to learn. NFP methods provide guidelines to help couples identify the fertile and infertile time in the wife’s cycle. Pinpointing their “fertile window” (the number of days within the menstrual cycle when they are likely to conceive), is the central focus of NFP methods.

Being able to accurately identify the couple’s fertile window is key to successful use of NFP. When a couple realizes that God is calling them to have a baby, they may use the fertile window to conceive. When spouses decide that it is time to avoid a pregnancy, they will abstain from sex during

the fertile time. Periodic sexual abstinence is the NFP means to avoid a pregnancy. No drugs, barriers, devices, or surgical procedures are ever used.

NFP works!

Any couple can use an NFP method. The key is to learn the method well, be aware of God's will for your marriage, and apply the guidelines consistently.

When looking for an NFP method to learn, you should know that there is no "best method." All NFP methods are based on solid science. Choosing a method depends upon how much fertility information a couple needs and can live with!

NFP, it's time!

It's time to give NFP a chance! The benefits are many. NFP provides sound fertility education. It is environmentally safe and has no harmful side-effects. NFP education is also economical. Most providers charge fees for class (or an on-line course) and any resources—that's it!

Most importantly, NFP respects God's plan for married love. It promotes respect for one's spouse, the virtue of chastity, self-sacrifice, and mindfulness regarding the meaning of married love. It may not always be easy, but if a couple perseveres, NFP can actually help them deepen their relationship with each other and God!

Endnotes

- 1 To learn about Catholic teaching on responsible parenthood, see: www.usccb.org/nfp/what-is-nfp/responsible-parenthood.cfm
- 2 Married love "involves a totality, in which all the elements of the person enter—appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity and aspiration of the spirit and of the will" (*Familiaris consortio*, [FC] no. 13). Married love is the most deeply personal union found among men and women (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], no. 1643). The marital union calls husband and wife to become one flesh, one heart and one soul (see FC, no. 13). It therefore "demands *indissolubility* and *faithfulness* in ... mutual giving; and it is open to *fertility*" (FC, no. 13).
- 3 On contraception and sterilization, see the papal encyclical, *Humanae vitae*, which discusses the nature of conjugal love and responsible parenthood and the moral prohibition of contraception at http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html. On pornography, see the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on anti-pornography and other resources at <http://www.usccb.org/cleanheart>. For a summary of Catholic teaching on the moral prohibition of some assisted reproductive technologies see <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/catholic-teaching/upload/Life-Giving-Love-in-an-Age-of-Technology-2009-2.pdf>.
- 4 In fact, the Church teaches that when they marry, husband and wife receive a "kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state" (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 48). Part of their sacred "duty" is to become parents if it is God's will in their marriage.
- 5 A handful of NFP methods are based on the research of women using the classic methods. These other NFP methods use a formula (algorithm) to calculate the woman's fertile time. See <http://www.factsaboutfertility.org/resources/overview/standard-days-method>.

Learn more about Church teaching that supports NFP use in marriage at
www.usccb.org/nfp/catholic-teaching/index.cfm

Read more about NFP methods at www.usccb.org/nfp/what-is-nfp/index.cfm

To learn an NFP method see www.usccb.org/nfp/find-an-nfp-class.cfm



A version of this article first appeared in Catholic News Service's **Faith Alive!** Series on Natural Family Planning.

Copyright © 2017, Natural Family Planning Program, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce in whole or in part, in print and/or electronically, with the following statement: "Title of Resource," NFPP/US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC: USCCB, 2017. Used with permission. Natural Family Planning Program; tel. 202-541-3240; nfp@usccb.org.

7 Married people who use Natural Family Planning candidly respond to Fr.

Gregory's questions. July 23, 2017

1. What did you think of the NFP classes you attended? Do you think NFP is complex/difficult?

Respondent 1 ---- Definitely a huge shock with all the information, but you get over that quickly. It's really excellent stuff to know....for man or woman, there's a little bit of info you have to study and learn. That said, there's no question anyone can do it with a little time or practice and studying.

Respondent 2 (R2) ---- The sessions have been beneficial to understanding the method of NFP and how to practice it. I was a little overwhelmed by the intro session. The Creighton Model that I follow seemed like it involved a lot and would be a challenge to undertake. However, it is quite the opposite. The things I do throughout the day to check the "signs" are very routine and not a challenge.

R3 ----- No, not really. My wife found an app that can log the data and pretty accurately predict things. It can sync with a Bluetooth.....

R4 ---- Our NFP classes were pretty awesome. We decided to go with the Creighton model, and that involves an intro session in a small group, and the rest of your classes, over the course of a year, are one-on-one with your instructor. That way you can get into personal details, and ask as many questions as you want. Usually NFP is thought of only as a way to prevent or achieve pregnancy, but with this model, it can also help uncover potential health problems and hormone imbalances so they can be treated. A friend of mine is finally being treated for a painful disorder after finally finding the cause through NFP.

NFP is not at all complex or difficult, at least with the method we're using. Not all NFP methods are alike, and some have more levels of complexity than others. I think we originally picked the Creighton method because of its simplicity.

R5 ---- It was very informative, and I liked how my husband was required to attend as well. I then had several follow up one-on-ones over the next few months with the instructor to review my information and see how it was going. I have found the tracking itself isn't that hard, but it can be difficult to identify where you're at with your cycle, especially if you have an irregular one.

R6 ---They were good, very informative & professional. I learned a ton medically about how a woman's body works, & a woman's and man's together. This gave me greater respect for the way God created us and how perfectly He did so.

R 7 ---- We were amazed how easy it is. At first with the paper and pencil tracking it was a little cumbersome but then we found an app which makes it super easy.

2. Do you think young people are open to it?

R 1 --- If young people had any clue what it's actually all about I definitely think young people would be open to it.

R 2 --- I have other married friends who are Christian or Catholic but know very little about NFP and therefore use contraceptives. I'm not sure that they see the benefits NFP has to offer.

R 3 --- Yes. If they aren't, they will be when they learn more about it. In fact, the secular version of NFP which is called "the fertility awareness method of contraception" is gaining popularity as

apps and other aids for it begin to appear. People are becoming more conscious of the dangers of chemicals to the body and a method to prevent kids without chemicals or barriers is appealing.

R 4 --- We both think that young people are open to it. Some do it because they want to be faithful to the church, but a lot of non-Catholics are also starting to use it because of the health risks of chemical birth control.

R 5 --- I think some are.....but I think the convenience of contraceptives is probably too tempting for those that don't see it as wrong. Either way, I think all women should take the class to learn their cycles.

R 6 --- Yes! Especially if they are well informed about the risks of using contraceptives, and if they are taught how our bodies work and have a respect for that. Young people are also becoming more interested in NFP not only for religious reasons, but for health reasons.

R 7 --- I'm not sure about all young people, most of my friends aren't. From what I gather people don't really understand its effectiveness. Interestingly enough when I went to the doctor a while back she asked me about the subject & when I told her I was practicing NFP she gave me a weird reaction like she didn't believe that was a real method.

3. Do you see any benefits to NFP?

R 1 ---- Absolutely. It helps a couple strike a balance and teaches about the totality of a person and love. But above all, it's a way to practice discipline, which is essential to success in any area of life, or love.

R 2 --- Yes. NFP requires the couple to both be in tune to a woman's body and her cycle. This involvement requires communication and flexibility between the husband and wife. It also encourages loving each other in multiple ways.....NFP also helps a woman detect any issues or areas of concern with her fertility, which can then be discussed with a doctor. NFP isn't beneficial for only avoiding pregnancy, but achieving a pregnancy as well.

R 3 --- You are required to talk to each other about the chances of conceiving a child and each month you both have to agree whether you are ready for children. I suspect it is far too easy when on the pill to just do whatever and never talk about the big things like "I really want a son, but you refuse to give me one," etc. Non-discussion harbors resentment and the breakdown of the relationship. NFP helps to keep the discussion alive and healthy.

R 4 --- The main benefit that we have seen is that, on any given day, my husband knows where I am..... and therefore he knows when I'm likely to be a little crazy, so to speak. He said it would be a good thing for all men to learn about women's cycles, so that they could be more empathetic toward the women in their lives.

R 5 --- It definitely opens up dialogue about where we're at as a couple/family. [Our intimacy is] an active decision and it helps to have my husband understand more about me, since the cycle affects more than just when you are likely to get pregnant. Shortly after we were married, another recently married couple got moved onto my husband's project, and we became friends. She talked about getting mood swings and other side effects of going on the pill, and how it was affecting both her and her husband, and I encouraged her to look into NFP. I was glad I didn't have to deal with that, especially on top of all the other stuff you deal with as newlyweds.

4. Anything else you want to say about NFP?

R 1 --- It breaks my heart that this isn't included in standard "sex ed". Young people are cheated out of this necessary info to make informed choices about sexual activity. Very few people, I suspect, understand that truly there are alternative to mainstream birth control methods. NFP is all about science and biology, and going "natural" & organic.".... Anyone can master it, but it can at times be a little bit of a challenge to follow. That little bit of discipline is what makes it so great, and unfortunately, also controversial.

R 2 --- I wish more people knew about NFP and what is actually involved, instead of just the stereotypes of it. Also, NFP (at least the Creighton Model that I follow) is more effective than birth control, and is completely natural based on the woman's cycle (i.e. no hormones going into the body, etc.).

R 3 --- You can be intimate in a number of ways.

R 6 --- Practicing NFP is so worth it. It can be very challenging at times if a couple needs to use the method to avoid conception, and it can bring up conflicts between spouses. However, working through those conflicts, while difficult, is so important for growth in understanding and self-giving love between spouses. Sometimes NFP reveals our ugliness and selfishness, but commitment and prayer through it is cleansing and helps us to grow to purify our love and understand ourselves and our spouses better. It also helps us to see ourselves rightly before God as the Creator, and we as His creatures. It helps us to respect God and be in awe that He has made us co-creators, yet we are still His creatures, we are not gods. It helps us to see that all life is a gift; a child is something that we open ourselves to and receive if God gives us that gift. Being parents is a great honor and privilege, but not a right.

It is also important that people realize that NFP is not only for avoiding/delaying conceiving children, but NFP can also be used to try to conceive. It can be extremely beneficial and effective for helping a couple who struggles with infertility, especially if they work with a good doctor who is well versed in NFP (such as a NaPro Technology practitioner).

R 7 --- We're glad we were introduced to it and encouraged to pursue it. We think it's brought us a little closer together.

NOTE: I am identifying Mary (and Michael) whereas I did not identify the other NFP respondents because: (1) of the uniqueness of her experiences & challenges, and (2) as a resource especially for those struggling to conceive.

1. Did you hear about NFP growing up?

Respondent: I grew up as the oldest of 8 children with very devout Catholic parents. My parents lost their third child, my baby sister, full term and after this many doctors counseled my parents to avoid further pregnancies because my mother's life was at risk. My dad explained to me that they tried to avoid pregnancy but became pregnant 6 more times afterward. They welcomed all of us with open arms. They wanted a large family and abortion was, of course, never an option. I will admit to you, Father, that I struggle greatly with how these pregnancies affected my mom over the years (many health challenges and a lot of postpartum depression) not to mention all the financial struggles my family went through. At the same time, I have to admit that I am not sure how conscientiously my parents were at really trying to avoid pregnancy. Or perhaps NFP wasn't as developed as it is now, which means my parents didn't have access to all the information that is available now and this lack of information led to all the pregnancies. My grandmother says we young people have the benefit of so many years of medical research, which has refined NFP and made it such an effective gift for married couples. Looking back, I see that God always provided and my family always had a strong faith that transformed these struggles, but there is a part of me that wishes my parents had had better education to avoid pregnancy. It bothers me that they were trying to avoid pregnancy and kept continuing to get pregnant. I can see how other couples would have discontinued NFP and possibly even left the church over the teaching on sterilization and contraception, falling into mortal sin and feeling they had no other choice. (In fact, Margaret Sanger's family history which led her to found Planned Parenthood is eerily similar to my family's story, leading down a different path.)

I would also like to say that my Mom never introduced me to NFP. I remember as an 11-12 year old finding her charting and asked her about it, but she quickly hid it, and I was left to believe that it was something secretive. Many seeds were planted in my heart which opened me up to NFP--my parents in their prolife mentality, my Catholic faith, my girlfriends who were married, and charting and my Catholic doctors. However, it was not until my 2nd year of college that a friend (who was not even a Catholic and sadly has turned to IVF to achieve pregnancy now) sat down and shared the Creighton model with me over coffee. I am forever grateful!

2. What did you think of the NFP classes you attended?

Respondent (R): Despite hearing about the Creighton Model, Michael and I decided to learn NFP the Sympto-Thermal method first because we didn't have a Creighton Model teacher in the city where we lived. I found this method to be hard because it involved a lot of math and it required me to check my fertility in more than one way each day. Not only was this hard to keep up with, but we were not getting pregnant and I was not making progress in improving my fertility. I decided to drive further away and re-learn NFP, this time learning the Creighton method which I had heard was more effective. I thought these classes were more organized, more informative and less overwhelming. I began to have confidence and hope when I began meeting with this teacher.

3.) Do you think it is complex/difficult?

R: I am partial to the Creighton method because of my condition and how the actual charting is enabling doctors to assist me in my fertility. I believe it is easier and there is less work to narrow down problems with fertility. To all the young women trying to decide which method to use, I would tell you this: regardless which method you choose, NFP is not complex or difficult. However, it does require your everyday diligence, patience and commitment. But all good things do! I don't do it perfectly. I have to overcome resistance every day in order to keep up with it. But there is SO MUCH GRACE in this daily struggle. I continue to grow in virtue every day because of this method. On the hard days, I remind myself of all the reasons why I am doing this: to be faithful to God, grow in intimacy with my husband, be open to life and take care of my body as God designed it!

4.) Do you think young people are open to it?

R: I pray regularly outside our local Planned Parenthood. Primarily, the young women who come to the facility are coming because they want birth control. When I have tried to reach out to them, they believe I'm crazy to say that birth control is dangerous. (I think that they believe this now because they are young, but when they get older, they will many reconsider what I told them.) I think it is wrong to conclude that these women are closed to NFP when in fact, they haven't been exposed to it and they probably don't have friends who can explain how it could help them live a more free life. Doctors and society at large have a contraceptive mindset. I am HOPEFUL that NFP will become more and more popular because of the push to avoid unnecessary drugs and go green. Also, because so many women are having trouble getting pregnant and NFP improves chances of normal pregnancy by working with your body more naturally.

5.) Do you see any benefits to it?

R: 100% YES! Using NFP forces you to be intentional about sex! We have been using it to try and get pregnant. We have not gotten pregnant, but charting has shown us why this is the case. Consistent charting and showing our charting to a Catholic doctor led us to the diagnosis that I have PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome), Endometriosis and a lot of hormone imbalance. BECAUSE of our charting, we knew that something was wrong! The Creighton model was designed by an internationally acclaimed Doctor, Dr. Thomas Hilgers in Omaha, Nebraska. He specializes in women's fertility issues, especially the most complex issues. I am now being treated in Omaha because I chose to go to the best clinic in the country. (I could have been treated in my state if I chose this route). Since my diagnosis, I have been able to give advice to many other women who were unaware of the Creighton model and were also struggling with similar infertility problems. There is so much HOPE in this method! It is effective in preventing and achieving pregnancy, whatever your goal is at the time.

6.) Anything else you want to share about NFP?

R: When I started NFP, I believed I was charting first and foremost to be open to life. I left myself out of it for the most part and just focused on being obedient to God. This mentality made it very hard to continue charting when I wasn't getting pregnant. Since my diagnosis of endometriosis and PCOS, my mindset has changed. Now when I chart every day, I tell myself that I am doing this first and foremost so that I can take care of the body that God has given me and so that I can understand myself better. Anything more than that is a blessing!