

# Fertility Care for Young Women

**A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO HELPING WOMEN APPRECIATE THEIR FERTILITY**



## Questions about the BCP

By : Teresa Kenney, APRN, CFCP.

Previously printed in online magazine Faith and Family. Teresa Kenney, a women's health nurse practitioner who works for the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, has generously offered her services. Here she answers a common question about the use of birth control pills.

**Q.** Back in college, my doctor put me on the birth control pill because I had painful periods and irregular cycles. Now I am married and want to use a natural system of family planning but am fearful that those problems will return if I come off the pill. What can I do?

**A:** It is common medical practice these days for doctors to put women on the "pill" for many women's health problems

including painful periods, irregular cycles, ovarian cysts, PMS, and even acne. The reason the pill works to treat so many menstrual problems is because it suppresses

the entire menstrual cycle and therefore suppresses the troublesome symptoms that women experience.

However, there is an alternative to using the birth control pill to treat many women's health disorders. In 2004, Dr. Thomas Hilgers introduced a new reproductive health science called NaProTechnology (natural procreative technology). It is a women's health science designed to treat the underlying causes and diseases of these common disorders. NaProTechnology was derived from years of research developing and working with a natural system of family planning: the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System.

The Creighton Model System is based entirely on the observation of cervical mucus a vital indicator of our fertility. It has been scientifically developed and standardized and is extremely effective at both achieving and avoiding pregnancies. One of the incredible benefits of this system is that it can be used to monitor, maintain and evaluate, women's gynecological health.

Instead of covering up the problem by shutting down the reproductive system like the birth control *Continued on page 3*

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## DID YOU KNOW????

Did you know the average age of puberty is 12, however girls can start their period as early as 8 years or as late as 16 years. Menstruation, the monthly process of shedding the uterine lining, is guided by hormonal changes that result in several signs indicating that a girl's first period is on its way. Those signs include white vaginal discharge, spotting, and breast development.

Another name for the beginning of breast development is thelarche. Breast tissue begins to grow because of the increasing amounts of estrogen in the girl's body as well as other hormones.

Before the first menstrual period, known as menarche, the young girl will notice vaginal discharge several months before the onset of any bleeding. This discharge comes from the cervix and is produced also because of the hormone estrogen. It is a monthly sign that lets a woman know that ovulation is occurring.

Some of the other signs of puberty in girls are the growth of body hair and pubic hair, acne and oilier skin and hair, an increase in height, and growth in the hips. Girls will also have emotional changes as well. These normal changes in a woman's body are part of growing into an adult woman made in the image of God.

A newsletter dedicated to helping young women

## Looking Back: BCP and Last 50 Years

By: Teresa Kenney, APRN, CFCP

It has been 50 years since the development of the birth control pill. We ought to pause and think about what has changed in our world since the pill's development. Freedom and equality were the cries of women who were advocating for methods that were convenient and reliable for preventing birth. More and more women were entering the work place, which changed how women viewed motherhood and childrearing. What women wanted within our culture—respect and dignity—was not something intrinsically wrong; in fact, it was inherently good. However, when the birth control pill and contraception was widely released and offered as a solution for women's needs, our whole view of human sexuality changed. With this one medicine and its "cousins", we released a sexual time bomb on the culture, one now referred to as the *sexual revolution*.

The sexual time bomb of the 60s and 70s unleashed a false sense of freedom on the human person. The birth control pill and contraception allowed people to think that they could enjoy the benefits of sex without the messy consequences. *Who cares about God being the author of life who gave the gift of sexual union in marriage as a way to co-create the kingdom of God?* Our society lost reverence for the work of God in our lives. We stopped seeing sex as a gift from God for communion with our beloved spouse and for participation in the creation of new human life—both an earthly *and* an eternal life!

Many believed that contraception and the pill would prevent unwanted pregnancies and abortion. According to professor and author Janet Smith, PhD, in her article *In Focus: Uncovering a string of lies*, the "human and social devastation wrought by the pill and companions cannot be overstated. It is not difficult to connect the dots between contraception, fornication, promiscuity, cohabitation and divorce. The amount of sex outside of marriage and the incidence of cohabitation and divorce has increased wildly since the invention of the pill" ([www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com)). Statistics since the 1970s have shown the opposite: abortions have sky rocketed as well as out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, child abuse, domestic abuse, and suicide. Separating the procreative and unitive dimensions of intercourse in marriage has had catastrophic consequences, most notably the almost 50 million innocent human lives that have been ripped from their mothers' womb since the 1973 legalization of abortion. According to the Guttmacher Institute, 50 percent of pregnancies are unintended; 50 percent of women were using a contraceptive when they got pregnant; and more than 50 percent of women having abortions say they were using a contraceptive when they got pregnant (Family Planning Perspectives, 1998, 30(1): 24-29 & 46). What this tells us is that women do not use birth control consistently and they also use abortion as a back up method for the failure of birth control.

While drug companies and the media continue to push health benefits of hormonal contraceptives and down play sometimes-serious side effects of the birth control pill, the connection between the pill and side effects like heart attack, stroke, and blood clots is very real. Often people are unaware of the potential risks not to mention the growing evidence supporting an associated increased risk of breast cancer and cervical cancer. Women are often unaware of the abortifacient effect of the pill. The pill disrupts the endometrial lining making it difficult for a new embryo to implant and, therefore, causes an early abortion if conception occurs.

We also must consider the environmental impact of the birth control pill. It is hard to believe that more research has not been done on the impact of having these hormones dumped into our water systems. Girls starting earlier puberty, cancer rates rising and infertility are just a few of the possible side effects of this environmental damage. Dr. Jose Maria Simon Castellvi, president of the International Federation of Catholic Medic Association, speaking to the Catholic News Agency, pointed out the "devastating ecological effects of the tons of hormones discarded into the environment each year. We have sufficient data to state that one of the causes of masculine infertility in the West in the environmental contamination causes by the products of the pill" (Catholic News Agency and CathNews.com).

For these reasons, in my opinion the release of birth control has enslaved women more than it has made them free. It has enslaved women by making them mere sex objects to men, which can be evidenced in the billion-dollar pornography industry, infidelity and divorce rates, sexual abuse, and domestic abuse. It has enslaved women by making them responsible for "controlling" their fertility through medicines, devices, and procedures with sometimes serious or even deadly consequences. Most devastatingly, it has enslaved women by fostering the belief that children are not always a blessing but sometimes a burden that can be disposed of quietly through an abortion.

And of what should  
we be afraid?  
Our captain on this  
battlefield is  
Christ Jesus.  
We have  
discovered what  
we have to do.  
Christ has bound  
our enemies for us  
and weakened  
them that they  
cannot overcome us  
unless we so  
choose to let them.  
— St. Catherine of Sienna



## Reflections on 25 Years of *HV*

You don't have to wait to be old or lifeless to practice the virtue of chastity. Purity comes from love; and the strength and gaiety of youth are no obstacle for noble love. Joseph had a young heart and a young body when he married Mary, when he learned of the mystery of her divine motherhood, when he lived in her company, respecting the integrity God wished to give the world as one more sign that he had come to share the life of his creatures. Anyone who cannot understand a love like that knows very little of true love and is a complete stranger to the Christian meaning of chastity.

— St. Josemaria Escriva

*For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom for an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants to one another. (Galatians 5: 13)*

According to the Catholic encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which addressed the issue of birth control in 1968, there is a certain type of love for which humans must strive. It comes from or it mirrors the highest source of love, God the Father, Who is LOVE. When describing married love (also known as conjugal love), *Humanae Vitae* states “God the Creator wisely and providently established marriage with the intent that He might achieve His own design of love through Men. Therefore, through mutual self-giving, which is unique and exclusive to them, spouses seek a communion of persons. Through this communion, the spouses perfect each other so that they might share with God the task of procreating and educating new living beings.” What Pope Paul VI is saying is that this love is

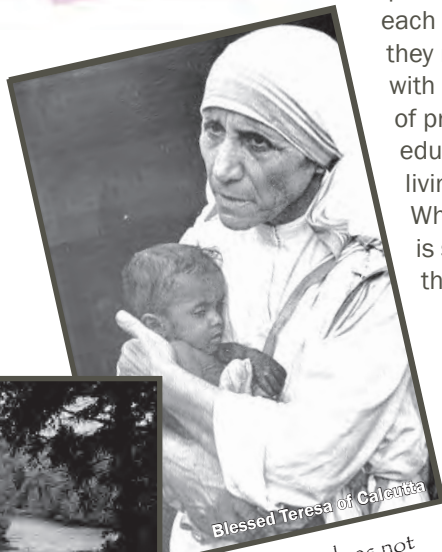
devoid of all selfishness. It is “total, faithful, free and fruitful.” This love is “the sacramental sign of grace representing the union of Christ and His Church.” Christ emptied Himself completely for His Bride the Church on the Cross. This is the example of self-donating love that God has set before us as our goal: the perfect love of the Father for His Son, the Word Made Flesh, and the Holy Spirit the Fruit of their perfect love.

Is the Church saying this is easy? No way! The Church cannot and will not deny Divine Truth, or this mystery of LOVE. Therefore, the Church will always be opposed to any form of contraception, which is the opposite of the perfect love.

However, the Church also does not say that we all need to have as many children as humanly possible. *Humanae Vitae* states, “Certainly, there may be serious reasons for spacing off-spring; these may be based on the physical or psychological conditions of the spouses or on external

factors...the Church teaches it is morally permissible for spouses to calculate their fertility by observing the natural rhythms inherent in the generative faculties and to reserve intercourse for the infertile times” Since, 1968 when *Humanae Vitae* was released, great advances in the area of natural family planning have occurred.

Thomas W. Hilgers, MD, answered the call of *Humanae Vitae*. He has worked for over 30 years to bring modern science to the area of natural fertility regulation. He co-developed the Creighton Model FertilityCare™ System, which has proven 99 % effective at avoiding pregnancy (see *Journal of Reproductive Medicine* 1998). Those of us who work with this amazing system realize its enormous benefits to marriages, to women's health, and to the Christian society at large. For more information on the Creighton Model System go to [fertilitycare.org](http://fertilitycare.org) or call the Pope Paul VI Institute at (402) 390-6600.



“Intense love does not measure... it just gives..”

— Blessed Teresa of Calcutta



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*continued on page 1* pill does, this approach to women's health tries to actually solve the underlying problem thus providing better outcomes for patients while preserving their fertility. And, it allows women to avoid the physical side effects of hormonal contraceptives as well as the serious ethical implications they pose for Christians.

Anyone interested in finding a doctor who practices NaProTechnology, should check out the [PopePaulVI.com](http://PopePaulVI.com) or [FertilityCare.org](http://FertilityCare.org) where there are lists of doctors and Fertility Care Practitioners who teach the Creighton Model System. You can also contact Pope Paul VI Institute directly at (402) 390-6600.

## RESOURCES

\*[www.popepaulvi.com](http://www.popepaulvi.com)

\*[www.fertilitycare.org](http://www.fertilitycare.org)

\*<http://www.chastity.com>

\*<http://vocation-network.org>

\*[www.onemoresoul.com](http://www.onemoresoul.com)

\*[www.ewtn.com](http://www.ewtn.com)



## Josemaría Escrivá

(Josemaría Escrivá was canonized on 6 October 2002. This text is extracted from the Apostolic Brief regarding the beatification of Josemaría Escrivá, priest and founder of the Opus Dei and now a saint on [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va). He has "recalled that the universality of the call to full union with Christ implies also that any human activity can become a place for meeting God. ...He was a real master of Christian living and reached the heights of contemplation with continuous prayer, constant mortification, a daily effort to work carried out with exemplary docility to the motions of the Holy Spirit, with the aim of serving the Church as the Church wishes to be served.")

Josemaría Escrivá was born in Barbastro, Spain, on 9 January 1902, the second of six children born to José Escrivá and María Dolores Albás. His parents were devout Catholics ...[who gave him] a firm grounding in the faith and the Christian virtues... Between 1910 and 1913 his three younger sisters died and in 1914 his family suffered financial ruin.

In 1915 the Escrivás moved to Logroño, a nearby town, where their father found a job with which to keep his family. In the winter of 1917-18 something happened which was to have a decisive influence on Josemaría Escrivá's future. The snow fell very heavily that Christmas in Logroño, and one day he saw some frozen footprints in the snow. They had been left by a discalced Carmelite. Josemaría found himself wondering *If others sacrifice so much for God and their neighbor, couldn't I do something too?* This was how God started to speak to his heart: *I began to have an inkling of what Love is, to realize that my heart was yearning for something great, for love.* He did not yet know what precisely God wanted of him, but he decided to become a priest, thinking that it would make him more available to fulfil God's will.

...[H]e started his priestly studies at the Seminary of Logroño, passing on, in 1920, to the Seminary of Saragossa...he also studied Law at the University of Saragossa. His generous and cheerful character and his straightforwardness and calm approach to things won him many friends. His life of piety, respect for discipline and endeavour in study were an example to his fellow seminarians...[and] he spent many hours praying before the Blessed Sacrament. ...As he recalled on 2 October 1968: *Since I felt those inklings of God's love, I sought to carry out, within the limits of my smallness, what he expected from this poor instrument. (...) And, with those yearnings, I prayed and prayed and prayed, in constant prayer. I kept on repeating: Domine, ut sit!, Domine, ut videam!, like the poor fellow in the Gospel, who shouted out because God can do*



St. Josemaría Escrivá

*everything. Lord, that I may see! Lord, that it may come to be! And I also repeated (...) filled with confidence in my heavenly Mother: Domina, ut sit!, Domina, ut videam! The Blessed Virgin has always helped me to discover her Son's desires.*

On 27 November 1924 his father, José Escrivá, died suddenly and unexpectedly. On 28 March 1925, Josemaría was ordained a 97 up residence in Madrid to study for his doctorate in Civil Law... [H]is apostolic zeal soon brought him into contact with a wide variety of people: students, artists, workers, academics, priests. He spent many hours caring for children, and for sick and poverty-stricken people in the outer suburbs of the city. At the same time he taught law to earn a living for himself and his mother and sister and young brother.

...The foundation of Opus Dei Opus Dei was born on 2 October 1928. Blessed Josemaría was spending some days on retreat and, while doing his meditation...he suddenly saw...the mission the Lord wanted to entrust to him: to open up in the Church a new vocational path, aimed at spreading the quest for holiness and the practice of apostolate through the sanctification of ordinary work in the middle of the world, without changing one's place. ...[T]o place Christ at the heart of all human activities by means of work that is sanctified, and sanctifies both the doer and those for whom it is done...was the goal he set for the initiatives of the faithful of Opus Dei: to lift up to God, with the help of grace, each and every created reality, so that Christ may reign in everyone and in everything; to get to know Christ Jesus; to get Him known by others; to take Him everywhere. ...

On 26 June 1975, at midday, Blessed Josemaría died in his workroom, of a cardiac arrest. ...At the time, Opus Dei was present in all five continents, with over 60,000 members from 80 nationalities.

## Pope Paul VI Institute

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