

Fertility Care for Young Women

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO HELPING WOMEN APPRECIATE THEIR FERTILITY

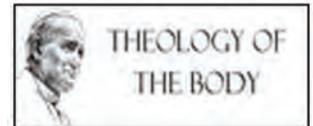


I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Teresa Kenney and I am a Women's Health Nurse Practitioner at Pope Paul VI Institute here in Omaha, Nebraska. For the past eight years, I have often thought of how uneducated we as women are about our own bodies. How many times have we gone to a doctor, a friend or relative and complained about symptoms related to our periods. Most of us have no idea what naturally occurs in a female menstrual cycle let alone what could be wrong. Having information about how your menstrual cycle works, as well as your hormones helps you to understand why you may be feeling a certain way both physically and emotionally. Being able to explain a certain pain or irregular bleeding or a PMS symptom in relationship to the natural events that occur during a cycle can help your doctor find out what is really wrong and help you to decide what is the

right treatment. At Pope Paul VI Institute, our goal is to not only educate women about their fertility, we help them learn to cooperate with their fertility and appreciate it as a gift. The goals of this newsletter are two-fold.

The first goal I have already explained. I want young women to be empowered with knowing how their bodies work, and to appreciate and care for their fertility as a gift of God. I also believe that this knowledge allows you to be an advocate in your health and in learning to maintain a healthy reproductive system. My second goal is to open up your eyes to the truth of our bodies as it relates to God and our existence. This is called the Theology of the Body. Our Catholic Church desires each of us to live a life that will lead us to true happiness and eternal life.

Our former pope, John Paul II, dedicated 129 talks to teaching us about the human person and sexuality. These teachings now referred to as the Theology of the Body explore the meaning of our bodies and of sexual desire



as it relates to our existence. This is the truth of God's design for all of humanity. In this ongoing newsletter, I hope to give you a lens to see the world through that can help us acknowledge the culture of death we live in, but also give us the hope and inspiration to change it to a culture of life.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

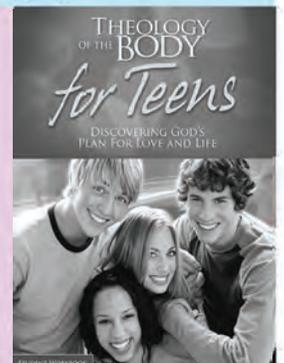
The Real Main Event in Your Menstrual Cycle	2
Facts About Your Fertility	2
Live It Out: Hope and Healing	3
The Life of Saint Maria Goretti	4
Resources	4

DID YOU KNOW????

The media portrays teen sex without regrets, but a survey of 1,000 sexually active teens across America revealed that 2/3 of them wish they had waited longer to have sex.

*77% of girls and 80% of guys

(Theology of the Body for Teens 2006)



A newsletter dedicated to helping young women

The Real Main Event of Your Menstrual Cycle

Most of us consider the period or days of bleeding to be the main event in the menstrual cycle. This is actually the follow-up to the real main event. Ovulation, when the egg is released from your ovary, is what causes you to end up with a period. A woman is born with 200-300 thousand eggs that she will have throughout her reproductive life. Each cycle, one or two of these eggs are released in the process called ovulation. From the time you start your first period, also called menarche, is when your fertility begins and it ends when you enter into menopause at around the age of fifty.

Your menstrual cycle is divided into two phases: the pre-ovulatory and postovulatory phases. It is scientifically known that the pre-ovulatory phase can be very variable in length; however, the postovulatory phase is very stable in length.

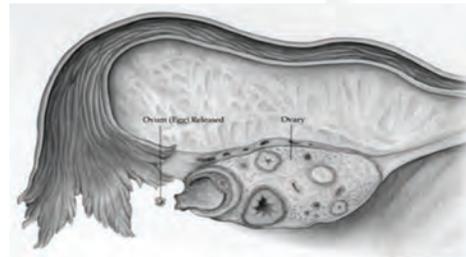
In other words you cannot predict which day you will ovulate in a cycle, but once you do ovulate you can predict within a day or two when your period will start. It is a common myth that women all ovulate on day 14 of the cycle; when in actuality that only happens in 14 percent of women. Therefore, our cycles are regularly irregular to some degree.

The ovulation cycle happens when somewhere in the menstrual cycle your body chooses one egg to become the dominant egg. It is grown or matured in the ovary within a fluid filled cyst called a follicle. That follicle grows until it reached maturity at which point the follicle ruptures and releases the eggs so it can be taken by the fallopian

tube and transported through the uterus. If conception occurs, it takes place in the fallopian tube and the new baby implants in the uterus 6-9 days later. If conception does not occur then the egg leaves the body through the uterus out the cervix. When a new life is not conceived, this signals the body to stop the production of hormones and this drop in hormones signals your uterus to shed it's lining, which you see as your period.

Ovulation is a series of complex and timed events, which we've only begun to explore. In our next issue we will look at the specific hormones that are produced during the menstrual cycle and what parts they play in this amazing process.

"The ovulation cycle happens when somewhere in the menstrual cycle your body chooses one egg to become the dominant egg. It is grown or matured in the ovary within a fluid-filled cyst called a follicle."

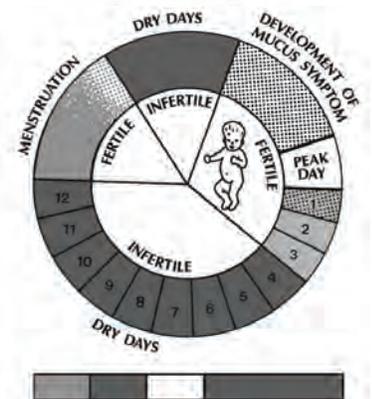


FACTS ABOUT YOUR FERTILITY

Did you know... that you can only ovulate once in a cycle?

This means that you can't ovulate this week and then again next week.

The menstrual period, which follows ovulation, occurs approximately 9-13 days after ovulation.



Live It Out: Hope and Healing

By: Crystalina Evert

Sitting on the steps in front of a church, I pondered if I should actually go in to the adoration chapel. Based upon what I had been doing at a party one hour earlier, I felt like I had no business being there. Yet something was tugging at me. Perhaps it was God calling me toward Him, or maybe it was just the fact that my lifestyle left me feeling so dissatisfied and hollow. Looking back, now I see that is was both.

So, I decided that if I had tried everything else in high school, I might as well try God. I walked into the chapel and knelt before the Blessed Sacrament. There was no flash of lightning or voice from heaven. Actually, I was thinking about the elderly lady sitting in the corner, wondering if she could smell the aroma of pot on me. There was pure silence. I was alone with Him.

At first, it was hard to look up at the Eucharist. I just buried my face in my hands, and debated if I should just leave. I didn't feel like rattling off memorized prayers. So, I just

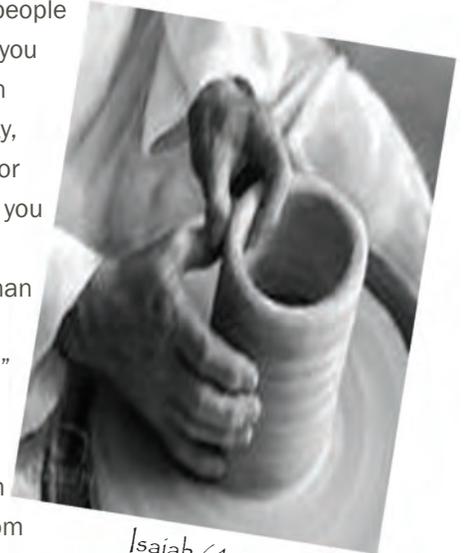
looked up and said, "God, Here I am...in my sin. I'm not hiding anymore. If you want me out of this, I need You to help me." I felt torn between the life I had known for years and a God I hardly knew. His invitation was clear, but my future seemed so uncertain. All He was saying to me was: "Let go and trust me."

From that moment, I understood that God does not just want my goodness. He wants the ugly. He doesn't like sin, to be sure, but in order for Him to embrace me and have a relationship with me, He wanted to embrace me exactly as I was, ever with all of my faults. For years, I had thought that I would need to become a saint in order for Him to love me. So I always kept Him at a distance.

It is precisely when you feel most torn between God and sin that you need to be still and let Him love you. Only when you understand your value in His eyes will you be able to change. You won't be motivated by shame, guilt, or fear, but because you know you deserve love. Knowing His love for you will give you

the motivation to love yourself. Knowing His forgiveness of you will help you forgive yourself.

But if you do not find your worth in how God sees you, where will your value come from? Will you measure your value by what you look like or what people think of you? Will you seek your worth in your athletic ability, your intelligence, or how much money you make? Pope John Paul II said that man has been created "for his own sake." What this means is that your value cannot come from what you do or from anything outside of you.



Isaiah 64:8

Regardless of your past, God has a plan for your life. You don't need to earn His love. You just need to let Him give it to you. No matter what you have been led to believe, you are loveable. It does not matter what you've been or what you've done. All that matters now is where you go from here.
—Theology of the Body

"Chastity can only be thought of in association with the virtue of love."

— Pope John Paul II



RESOURCES

*www.popepaulvi.com

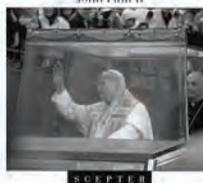
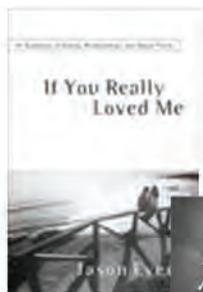
*www.fertilitycare.org

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

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

*www.onemoresoul.com

*www.ewtn.com



The Life of Saint Maria Goretti

Maria Goretti was born on October 16, 1890, in Italy. She had five siblings. She worked with her parents on a farm. She could not read or write because she had never gone to school. By the time she was six, her family was forced to give up their farm to move and to work for other farmers because her family became so poor. After that, her father died of malaria. He died when she was nine years old. Soon after, her mother, sisters, and brother went to work in the fields. Maria would cook, sew, and keep the house in an orderly fashion. At that time, it was very difficult, but the family stayed close.

Maria's family became poorer and eventually shared their house with the Serenelli family. This family had an eighteen-year-old son named Alessandro. He filled his head with thoughts and images that would lead him to sinfulness. Many times he came to Maria trying to make her sinful also. Maria refused and became very afraid of him.

One day, while Maria was mending clothes, Alessandro came from the fields and tried to force Maria into sin. Maria refused, so Alessandro threatened her life. She again refused and told Alessandro that his thoughts and ideas were wrong. Alessandro got really mad and stabbed her fourteen times. Her family heard her screams and rushed her to the hospital. Alessandro was arrested and sentenced to thirty years behind bars. Maria lived for twenty-four hours after being stabbed fourteen times by Alessandro. She died on June 6, 1902. She forgave Alessandro and prayed that he would turn to God in sorrow.

In prison Alessandro refused to admit he was wrong. He remained angry and bitter. After six years, Maria appeared to him in a dream and gave him a bouquet of lilies. That dream changed his life. He spent the rest of his sentence trying to make up for what he had done to Maria.



After twenty-seven years, he was released and the first thing he did was go to Maria's mother and beg for forgiveness. Then he joined the priesthood to complete his penance.

In 1950, she was canonized in a ceremony attended by twenty-five million people, including her mother, the first mother ever to see her child canonized, and Alessandro Serenelli, her killer. Her feast day is July 6. She is the Patron Saint of teenage girls and youth.

Few lives of the saints have touched the hearts of people as much as Saint Maria Goretti. Maria had a deep love for God, respect for her body, tremendous courage, and Christ-like forgiveness. Her life spoke louder than any words at the age of twelve. The influence of Maria Goretti continues to our day. Pope John Paul II has made her a model especially for youth: «Our vocation to holiness, which is the vocation of all the baptized, is encouraged by the example of this young martyr. Look at her, especially you adolescents, you youth. Be, like her, capable of defending the purity of your hearts and bodies; make an effort to fight against evil and sin, sustaining your communion with the Lord by prayer, the daily practice of mortification, and the scrupulous observance of the Commandments.» (September 29, 1991).

Pope Paul VI Institute

For the Study of Human Reproduction
6901 Mercy Road • Omaha, NE 68106-2621
(402) 390-6600 • www.popepaulvi.com
Comments/questions: popepaul@popepaulvi.com