*The following press release provides general information about the USCCB’s national campaign to raise awareness of Natural Family Planning methods. Feel free to use this text in its entirety or include it in a news release of your own.*

DATE: [insert date here]

**NFP Awareness Week Begins July 23rd, 2017**

WASHINGTON, DC – “It’s Time! Say ‘Yes’ to God’s Plan for Married Love” is the theme of this year’s Natural Family Planning Awareness Week, a national educational campaign of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to celebrate God’s design for married love and the gift of life and to raise awareness of Natural Family Planning (NFP) methods. “NFP,” as the U.S. bishops have written, is supportive of Catholic beliefs about married love because it “respects the God-given power to love a new human life into being” (see, U.S. Bishops, *Married Love and the Gift of Life*). This year’s theme invites a reflection on how “now” could be a very good and acceptable time to learn more about NFP and the Church’s beautiful teachings about marriage and God’s plan for married love. Echoing the words of Pope St. John Paul II:

 The moment has come for every parish and every structure of consultation and assistance to the family and to the defense of life to have personnel available who can teach married couples how to use the natural methods. For this reason I particularly recommend that Bishops, parish priests and those responsible for pastoral care welcome and promote this valuable service. (*Address to Teachers of Natural Family Planning*, December 7, 1996)

The dates of Natural Family Planning Awareness Week (July 23rd – 29th, 2017) highlight the anniversary of the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (July 25) which articulates Catholic beliefs about human sexuality, conjugal love and responsible parenthood. The dates also mark the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne (July 26), the parents of the Blessed Mother.

Resources (e.g., the 2017 NFP Week poster, web banners, prayers, homily notes, bulletin inserts, etc.) and ideas for celebrating and promoting NFP Awareness Week in your area can be found on the USCCB’s NFP Program website: <http://www.usccb.org/nfp/awareness-week/index.cfm>. For more information, contact nfp@usccb.org.