**BULLETIN BRIEFS**

**Wisdom from Saint John Paul II**

“[R]esponsible fatherhood and motherhood directly concern the moment in which a man and a woman, uniting themselves “in one flesh,” can become parents. This is a moment of special value both for their interpersonal relationship and for their service to life: they can become parents—father and mother—by communicating life to a new human being. *The two dimensions of conjugal union,* the unitive and the procreative, *cannot be artificially separated* without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself. (John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, no. 12)

The logic of the *total gift of self to the other* involves a potential openness to procreation: in this way the marriage is called to even greater fulfillment as a family. Certainly the mutual gift of husband and wife does not have the begetting of children as its only end, but is in itself a mutual communion of love and of life. (John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, no. 12)

The work of educating in the service of life involves the training of married couples in responsible procreation. In its true meaning, responsible procreation requires couples to be obedient to the Lord’s call and to act as faithful interpreters of his plan. This happens when the family is generously open to new lives, and when couples maintain an attitude of openness and service to life, even if, for serious reasons and in respect for the moral law, they choose to avoid a new birth for the time being or indefinitely. (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 97)

The moral law obliges … [husband and wife] in every case to … respect the biological laws inscribed in their person. It is precisely this respect which makes legitimate, at the service of responsible procreation, the use of natural methods of regulating fertility. (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 97)

Supported by science, experience has confirmed the educational value of Natural Family Planning in contributing to an integrated vision of sexuality, marriage and responsible procreation. (John Paul II, *Address to Participants in a Course Sponsored by the Centre for Studies and Research on the Natural Regulation of Fertility,* 1993)

As ministers of a sacrament that is constituted through consent and perfected by conjugal union, man and woman are called *to express* the mysterious *“language” of their bodies in all the truth that properly belongs to it…. According to the criterion of this truth,* which must be expressed in the “language of the body,” the conjugal act “means” not only love, but also potential fruitfulness, and thus it cannot be deprived of its full and adequate meaning by means of artificial interventions. (John Paul II, *Theology of the Body* 123: 4;6)

******Copyright © 2012, 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, 2011. Used with permission.