Diocesan NFP Ministry & The Social Doctrine of The Catholic Church

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Aligns with these core principles of the Church's social doctrine …

1. The dignity of the human person (*Imago Dei*).
2. The family as the foundation of society.
3. The promotion of the common good.
4. The advancement of integral human development through the promotion of subsidiarity.

How do Church teachings on marriage, conjugal love and responsible parenthood, Natural Family Planning, the value of children and the family fit within the Church's social doctrine?

Commissioned by St. John Paul II
Published by the
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church (2004)

The Compendium can help the faithful understand that Catholic social teaching is not merely about isolated societal issues but is grounded in specific doctrinal principles rooted in divine revelation.

Full text at
https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

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Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church (2004)

Provides a synthesis of centuries of magisterial reflection.

Equips bishops, clergy and laity to teach and live the doctrine.

Advances the evangelizing mission of the Church in the social sphere; and

Fosters dialogue and solidarity in a globalized world.

1. The Dignity of the Human Person—*Imago Dei*

Every human being is of inestimable value because of God who loved us into being!

NFP Respects Human Dignity

1. The Dignity of the Human Person—*Imago Dei*

Means that every person …

Possesses reason and free will

Can know and choose the good

Has the capacity of giving of themselves ("self-gift") to another

Has the potential to love God and neighbor

NFP Respects Human Dignity

1. The Dignity of the Human Person—*Imago Dei*

NFP aligns with this principle by helping husband and wife to …

Strive to understand and embrace God's gift of fertility doing no harm to it.

Cultivate mutuality and strengthen their communion of persons.

Fosters individual self-mastery as the needs of their spouse, children, other family members, and society are valued (responsible parenthood).

Conform their marital actions to be guided by love of God and each other.

NFP Respects Human Dignity

St. John Paul II In Theology of the Body—

Church teaching on the two-fold nature of the conjugal act—its unitive and its procreative meaning—is …

Unitive / Procreative

… Inseparably woven into the very nature of the human person and the vocation of marriage.

Catholic Social Doctrine teaches that …

The Family—founded on the Sacrament of Marriage—is the original cell of social life, an intimate community of life and love that reflects God's creative plan, mirrors Christ's covenant with the Church, and serves as the primary school of humanity, evangelization, and moral formation.

(See *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 48, 52; CCC, no. 2207)

2. The Family as the Foundation of Society

2. The Family as the Foundation of Society

The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life.

Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society.

The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom.

Family life is an initiation into life in society.

(CCC, no. 2207)

The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family.

Civil authority should consider it a grave duty "to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality, and promote domestic prosperity."

(CCC, no 2210)

2. The Family as the Foundation of Society

"The Duty of Government"

Natural Family Planning

Strengthens the relationship between husband and wife

NFP research demonstrates that NFP users have…

- Higher rates of agreement on the healthiness of their relationship
- Less divorce
- Improved spousal communication
- A deeper intimate relationship
- Respect for and acceptance of the total person
- Openness to accepting children from God

(See https://www.usccb.org/benefits-nfp)

2. The Family as the Foundation of Society

Natural Family Planning Builds Strong Marriages and Families!

3. Promotion of the Common Good

The common good is the sum total of social conditions that enable individuals and groups to achieve fuller human fulfillment.

(CCC, no. 1906)

The main elements of the common good are…

- Respect for the human person
- Social well-being
- Peace

(See CCC, 1906)

3. Promotion of the Common Good

NFP supports the Common Good by …

- Respecting the human person
- Honoring God's design of human sexuality through teaching fertility literacy and cooperation
- Requiring spousal communication and mutual decision making
- Giving access to necessities for personal development
- Fostering peace between husband and wife

St. John Paul II on NFP and the Common Good …

NFP is essential for personal, familial, and cultural renewal, fostering solidarity and a life-affirming society.

(See *Evangelium vitae*, no. 88, 93; Speech to Participants in the International Congress on Marriage, Family and Fertility, 1984)

The Church promotes NFP to "present to the world the values of the natural methods, and reduce the strong emphasis on contraception, sterilization and abortion," viewing it as "consistent with a Christian view of sexuality as expressive of conjugal love."

(See John Paul II, To participants in the International Congresses on Marriage, Family and Fertility, June 8, 1984; Speech, 6; se also .)

St. Paul VI on NFP and the Common Good

Moreover, it should be pointed out that the fostering of Natural Family Planning programs forms part of the Church's contribution to universal integral advancement. It is a specific service to couples who are striving to fulfill faithfully their proper duties as spouses and parents. [...] couples must be assisted with Christian understanding and patient pastoral care, so that, with divine help, they may successfully face whatever difficulties may arise from physical, economic, psychological, and social conditions, or from other trying circumstances.

(Paul VI, Address to the Archbishop of New York, 24 May 1978, sent on the Occasion of a Symposium Marking the Tenth Anniversary of *Humanae vitae*)

4. Human Development & Subsidiarity

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The Church's social doctrine teaches that human development is the integral advancement of every person and community toward fulfillment, rooted in dignity, solidarity, and the universal destination of goods, while subsidiarity ensures higher authorities support—without supplanting—lower levels like families and groups to foster freedom and initiative.

(See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church*, 186, 187, 327, 446; *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 26)

NFP ministry embodies **subsidiarity** by equipping families—society's basic unit—with the necessary education for self-determination, rather than imposing external solutions.

Conclusion

Questions on human sexuality, marriage, fertility and procreation, children and the family are rooted in Church doctrine—including its social doctrine.

NFP supports core principles of the Church's social doctrine, namely …

- The dignity of the human person
- The family as the foundation of society
- The promotion of the common good
- The advancement of integral human development through subsidiarity

NFP Ministry is here to stay and flourish!