



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Heavenly Father,
Send your Holy Spirit
to open our minds and hearts.
With your grace,
grant us understanding of Your
gifts of human sexuality, marriage,
children, and family
according to Your divine plan.
Grow in us the virtues of chastity,
prudence, temperance, justice,
and fortitude.
Deepen our faith, hope, and love
so that we can love You and
our families and neighbors
as You love us!

Amen.

Reading (*Lectio*)

Read the following Scripture slowly, and if possible, out loud, two or three times.

(Matthew 13:10–17)

The disciples approached Jesus and said,
“Why do you speak to the crowd in parables?”
He said to them in reply,
“Because knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom
of heaven
has been granted to you, but to them it has not been
granted.
To anyone who has, more will be given and he will
grow rich;
from anyone who has not, even what he has will be
taken away.
This is why I speak to them in parables, because

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they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand.

Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says:

*You shall indeed hear but not understand,
you shall indeed look but never see.
Gross is the heart of this people,
they will hardly hear with their ears,
they have closed their eyes,
lest they see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their hearts and be converted
and I heal them.*

“But blessed are your eyes, because they see,
and your ears, because they hear.
Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous
people
longed to see what you see but did not see it,
and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”



Meditation (*Meditatio*)

After the reading, call upon the Holy Spirit to help you reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:

- ❖ What word or phrase caught my attention?
- ❖ What did the word or phrase “say” to me?
- ❖ What comforted me?
- ❖ What challenged me?

During this NFP Week where we celebrate God’s gifts of married love and the gift of life and learn about the ethical methods of Natural Family Planning, ask a few more questions:

- ❖ **Do I understand and embrace the Lord God's truth about the nature of human sexuality, marriage, and children?**
- ❖ **Do I understand why the Church teaches that contraceptive use is immoral, but the methods of Natural Family Planning are moral?**
- ❖ **Am I open to having children (even open to foster care or adoption)?**



Contemplation (*Contemplatio*)

Read the Scripture again, followed by this reflection:

- ❖ **What conversion of mind, heart, and life is the Lord asking of me?**
- ❖ **Is my heart open to the Lord's grace of ongoing conversion?**

Now, sit in silence and let the Holy Spirit speak to you.



Prayer (*Oratio*)

Praise the Lord and bring your concerns and petitions to Him.

After your conversation with the Lord, pause and be still in His presence. Allow yourself to love Him and receive His love.



Closing Prayer

Conclude your prayer with following psalm taken from today's readings (Psalm 36:6–7ab, 8–9, 10–11):

O LORD, your mercy reaches to heaven;
your faithfulness, to the clouds.
Your justice is like the mountains of God;
your judgments, like the mighty deep.

How precious is your mercy, O God!
The children of men take refuge in the shadow of
your wings.

They have their fill of the prime gifts of your house;
from your delightful stream you give them to drink.
For with you is the fountain of life,
and in your light we see light..

Keep up your mercy toward your friends,
your just defense of the upright of heart.

Lord help me to love like You!

Amen.



Resources

Church teaching on love and human sexuality:

This webpage summarizes Catholic teaching
<https://www.usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning/love-and-sexuality>

Humanae vitae: This papal document (encyclical) of the Catholic Church explains the nature of married love and the gift of life

https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html

Married Love and the Gift of Life: This document of the U.S. bishops summarizes Church teaching on marriage, procreation, and responsible parenthood. See

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/Married%20Love%20Final%20Text%20Nov06%20for%20Website%20-%20Copy.pdf>

Natural Family Planning (NFP): Where to learn about the ethical methods of NFP and to learn a method see <https://www.usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning>