

This question takes many forms:

“Are you saying that NFP and Contraception are different because one is natural and the other artificial? What’s wrong with being artificial? Anyway, NFP lacks spontaneity and isn’t this unnatural in primates?”

“How is the conscience of someone who uses contraception different from one who uses NFP? They both want the good of the family”

“For the same grave reasons to postpone pregnancy that make NFP morally acceptable, wouldn’t the use of a condom instead be just as moral?”

“If every sexual act must remain open to the transmission of life, then NFP is wrong too when used during the infertile time.”

The theme is that similar goals or effects seem to prove that they are both contraceptive and immoral or both family planning and moral.

NFP modifies sexual behaviour to suit fertility while contraception suppresses fertility to suit behaviour



Are they the same? Does it matter?

Both NFP and contraception have to do with birth regulation, but that does not make them the same.

All crows are birds and all eagles are birds but crows are not eagles. And apples and oranges or durians are all fruits yet different, one from the other.

Also, good ends are not enough. How you reach them makes all the difference. You will die if you eat the poisonous mushroom , even if you believe it is the truffle , a delicious and expensive fungus.

How exactly are they different?

Although both are used to regulate birth, *NFP modifies sexual behaviour to suit fertility while contraception suppresses fertility to suit behaviour.*

They are like two roads that diverge in a wood leading to different habits and cultures.

The words themselves describe these paths.

‘**Natural Family Planning**’ is ‘planning a family’, where couples in a licit marriage lose themselves in each other and express the language of their beings for the genesis of new persons.

NFP adds insight and skills to decipher and interpret this language to help spouses accept and space as many children as they can take care of.

So NFP supports the marital act viz licit sexual intercourse in a licit marriage, and binds us to God’s design of procreative love.

Being faithful to this design makes us beautiful, and the husband who recognizes the inner beauty of his wife is in a sense seeing God.

‘Natural’ then implies natural sex and Natural Law, the moral law inscribed in the heart to sustain human integrity, not the absence of pills or devices and not the scientific laws of nature.

Being faithful to God’s design of procreative love makes us beautiful.



‘**Contra-ception**’ means ‘anti-conception’ not ‘family planning.’ It is to have sex but block conception and is never used to achieve pregnancy. If it plans for the good of some children, it is at the expense of others, even selecting some for abortion.

‘Contraception’ is really a sex-fixating, anti-baby package. Freud called this sexual perversion.

This is true of the contraceptive use of devices like the condom, diaphragm or female condom and of measures like sterilization and withdrawal (Onanism, *Gn. 38,9*) which do not themselves cause abortion.

And true also of the Pill and the IUD which may also cause early abortion before pregnancy is even known. The Pill may also lead to thrombosis or breast cancer.

Yet, using contraceptives is not wrong just because of all these. Like homosexual sex, contracepted acts are unnatural sex de-linked from marriage, and corrupt the very meaning of sex as procreative love.

Contracepted acts ... corrupt the very meaning of sex as procreative love.

So NFP is not a contraceptive.

NFP accepts the cycle of God’s procreative gifts before menopause viz the gift of fertility and the gift of infertility – like using a radio as designed viz to produce music though it is sometimes off.

Contraceptives reject them, blocking a baby that could have resulted from sex on fertile days. They falsify the design of fruitful sex – like using the radio to hammer a nail into the wall.

Using contraceptives also violates the unitive meaning of intercourse, as it disfigures the sexuality of husband and wife and obstructs the self-giving that is characteristic of love.

But NFP does nothing to make the sexual act less fertile or less unitive than it would normally be.

Merely having sex on infertile days is not 'contraception', since conception is not possible then anyway – nor is abstaining to space pregnancy or when there is no inclination, privacy or time or in a celibate lifestyle.

Abstinence is non-procreative, not anti-procreative. It is necessary for relationships to work in a good marriage. Spontaneity too needs order – monkeys cannot be our role models.

But if NFP is not a contraceptive why do many people feel that it is?

With a counterfeit language of rights and the mantra 'safe sex', contraceptives 'protect' illicit sex. In this way, they have implanted a perverse incentive for promiscuity and sexual addiction, and seeded an anti-family and anti-life culture.

Fifty years of contraception have now created the illusion that continence is a prison, lust is freedom and pregnancy is failure.

And children are 'accidents', 'optional extras' or 'unwanted burdens'. Not surprisingly, abortion rates have risen along with contraceptive use.¹

Called society's values, this mindset belittles NFP, although NFP is as effective as the Pill for child spacing² and effective in achieving pregnancy³, which is what family planning means.

So although NFP is not 'Catholic contraception', we may see it as such. Our words betray us. We 'prevent' or 'avoid' pregnancy rather than 'postpone' or 'delay' one; we 'make babies' not 'procreate'.

Seen and used *as* a contraceptive, NFP would *be* a contraceptive and would then – and only then – merit the accusation, "NFP is the same as Contraception."

Using NFP and using contraceptives are indeed very different acts, separate from the intentions we may have for using them. And the act must first be judged separately from the goals.⁴

Because if we are willing to do an intrinsically evil act for good reasons, we would have to call the *evil* act a *good* thing to do.

Since everyone acts only for good reasons, this leads to a corrupted conscience and to the increasing inability to make moral choices. Despite this – or because of it – some philosophies deny or ignore intrinsic evil.

Clearly then, we need to strengthen our ability to *discover* right and wrong, not *decide* it; to use conscience as a reference and not as a preference.

We must cultivate or re-cultivate a willingness to co-operate with God, accepting fertility and children as a gift we value and protect instead of a disease we fear and need to control.

If these principles are followed, spouses will be able to develop a fine balance between marital intimacy and children in their family, the 'vital cell of society' and the 'sanctuary of life'.

References

- ¹ José Luis Dueñas et al. (2011). "Trends in the use of contraceptive methods and voluntary interruption of pregnancy in the Spanish population during 1997–2007" *Contracep.* 83:82–87
- ² World Health Organization (1981). "A prospective multicentre trial of the ovulation method of natural family planning. II. The effectiveness phase", *Fertil. Steril.* 36,591–8.
- ³ Qian, S. Z. et al and the Chinese Billings Ovulation Method Collaboration Programme (1999), "Evaluation of the Effectiveness of a natural Fertility Regulation Programme in China", *Reproductive Health*, Eds. S.G. Gu et al. [People's Publishing House : Beijing.]
- ⁴ *Summa Theologica*: I-II, Q. 18. The good and evil of human acts



Singapore NFP Service

Email: enquiry@naturalfamilyplanning.sg
Website: <http://www.naturalfamilyplanning.sg>
Tel: (65) 91061990

World Organisation of the Ovulation Method Billings
<http://www.woomb.org/>
<http://www.billingslife.org/>

*NFP Service Publication for the Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore
This pamphlet may be copied freely without alteration*

What is the difference between ...

Natural Family Planning (NFP) and Contraception?

