

# Women Speak FOR THEMSELVES

## July Note from Helen

Even the most open minded people are tempted to dismiss fertility awareness based methods—also known as “natural family planning”—as:

--A Catholic plot to take the fun out of sex;

--Theological mumbo jumbo about retaining some mysterious link between the “unitive and the procreative” aspects of sex;

--Too darn hard;

--Scary ineffective

Today, however, for a variety of reasons, a lot of women and men—non-Catholic and Catholic—are taking a second look. There is, for example:

--Huge awareness of the [problem of filling our bodies with synthetic hormones](#) for....whoa....30 or so years;

--[Persistent research](#) about links between hormonal contraceptives and problems like depression, blood clots and strokes, and heightened HIV transmission rates;

--Evidence all around us ([and in high-level journals](#)) that when sex is divorced from even the “idea” that it’s the source of every human being, it loses its “weight” and women become more likely to have nonmarital sex and pregnancies, and less likely to obtain marriage and marital childbearing.

This is *not* to argue that using fertility awareness based methods instead doesn’t take effort and persistence. But it is to suggest that the last 50 years’ experiment with contraceptive drugs and devices has caused a lot more people to think that maybe it’s worth the effort.

Not to mention how many women testify to the fact that when a couple is practicing a fertility awareness based method, marital conversations are incredibly rich. You have to talk about sex, about your feelings, about your budget, about your plans and dreams for work, finances, family, life goals. Using an FABM reminds you that sex is about every one of those things. Contraception lets you easily sidestep this sort of communication.

That is why our WSFT Gatherings questions and materials for July are centered on Fertility Awareness. Offering the option of FABMs plays a role in helping reconnect sex with marriage and kids for the benefit of women, men, and children. Women are empowered by learning about their fertility and seeing it as a *good* to be *understood* and *embraced*. Whole families and communities can be influenced in a positive way by this shift in mindset.

Your Gatherings Materials for July:

- 1 The [NFP/FABM Fact Sheet](#) compiled by WSFT
2. [This blog](#) post reaches out to Catholic women about the outside support they need to use fertility awareness based methods of family planning.
3. These two articles ([here](#) and [here](#)) by Chelsen Vicari offer a Protestant's perspective on NFP/FABMs.

And here are your WSFT [Gatherings Questions](#) for July.

Be well,

Helen