

Natural Family Planning *by Marise Frangie*

To celebrate Worldwide FertilityCare™ Week (17-23 March 2024), a three-part Zoom series was organized by Marise Frangie, the Director of Cedar of Lebanon FertilityCare center, and the Natural Family Planning coordinator for the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn. She was assisted by Anne Olek, the director of FertilityCare Center of Rochester, NY, and Linda George, Director of the Office of Family and Sanctity of Life for the Eparchy of St Maron, as well as Subdeacon Ernest Karam and his wife, Elyse, the co-directors of the Family Life Ministry for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, Los Angeles. The purpose of the series was to help people discover and understand the beauty, truth and best kept secret of Creighton Model FertilityCare System and NaProTechnology. These methods are essential wisdom for every girl, woman and couple in helping them explore how artificial contraception has fundamentally altered our understanding of the meaning and purpose of sexuality and God's plan for marriages.

In the second part of the third presentation, Melissa Tablada, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Creighton Model FertilityCare Practitioner, delved into the significant and compelling marital benefits of cycle charting. She shared seven research-based benefits of using Natural Family Planning in marriage, as well as how to grow in intimacy in marriage in five unique ways that address the whole person.

Couples who are charting their cycles are able to accurately avoid pregnancy, successfully achieve pregnancy as well as monitor their reproductive health. The Creighton Method has a 99.5% success rate for couples with normal fertility who are using the method

to avoid pregnancy. Of those couples with normal fertility who are trying to achieve pregnancy, 98% will successfully get pregnant within six cycles. Couples who are charting their cycle are also able to effectively treat the root of infertility and miscarriage. Of those struggling with fertility issues, 20-40% of couples will achieve pregnancy simply by charting with Creighton and identifying their fertile window. Of those who need further support and utilize the gift of NaProTechnology, up to 80% of couples will achieve pregnancy.

Additionally, cycle charting has been shown to increase communication in marriage, improve intimacy overall and lower the divorce rate of users. Using a method of fertility appreciation requires couples to communicate more openly about their family planning intentions, health observations, where they are in the cycle and more.

Creighton has an acronym called SPICE that helps support a couple's intimacy as a whole. Research shows that couples who use a natural method of family planning have a 58% lower risk of divorce than couples who don't — this is not causal but the statistic alone is dramatic and compelling! As human beings, we are integrated persons. Every area of health impacts the others. If we have reproductive health issues, or any sort of physical health issues, it will impact our emotional, mental and relational health as well. We need to care for ourselves as a whole, instead of looking at individual segments as if they don't all connect.

Our sexuality is inherent to who we are as human beings, and yet this is not only about sex. SPICE is an acronym that is incredibly practical for couples desiring to grow in intimacy within their marriage. It stands for spiritual, physical, intellectual, communicative, and emotional. Melissa explained in detail how couples can strengthen their marital bonding in all those five aspects of our sexuality. Watching the full presentation on our website 2024 — CEDAR OF LEBANON FERTILITYCARE CENTER (cedaroflebanonfcc.com) is definitely worth one's time and anyone interested can connect with Melissa and be enriched by her blogs and Instagram posts at [Melissa Grace \(melissagracetablada.com\)](http://Melissa Grace (melissagracetablada.com)). ■

