

Dear Padre,

Isn't natural family planning (NFP) a form of birth control? The couple still controls the potential of human life that God may have wanted to create at a particular moment.

Couples who use NFP aren't practicing contraception. By giving themselves completely to one another in body and soul, they're preserving the integrity of the marriage sacrament. In God's design, women are naturally infertile for many days of the menstrual cycle. The marital act during these times promotes bonding and yet is open to new life. There is no sin in abstaining from the marital act. When a husband and wife use NFP appropriately, they share responsibility for living with their combined fertility. Neither spouse takes

the other for granted. NFP is a healthy and holistic way to plan for children.

Many couples find that living an NFP lifestyle gives them a better understanding of their fertility, frees them from fear of medical side effects, increases their communication, encourages a greater sense of sharing and a generosity toward life, fosters sexual self-control, and gives them the peace of following their spiritual, religious, cultural, or ethical beliefs. Periodic abstinence encourages couples to focus on aspects of their relationship beyond the physical, resulting in a "honeymoon effect."

NFP's most important benefit is that it enables spouses to live the mutual gift of self that is an essential element of marriage. The Church values marital sexual love. NFP helps couples to be authentic in the expression of that love.

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A WORD FROM Pope Francis

Jesus teaches this: "The one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11). God does not exalt us because of our gifts, because of our wealth, or because of our skills, but because of humility. God loves humility. God lifts up those who humble themselves; he lifts up those who serve.

ANGELUS, SOLEMNITY OF THE ASSUMPTION, AUGUST 15, 2021



Our Parish Community

August 28, 2022

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Sir 3:17–18, 20, 28–29

Heb 12:18–19, 22–24a

Lk 14:1, 7–14

I'm Nobody! Who Are You?

*Humble yourself the more,
the greater you are, and you will
find mercy in the sight of God.*

SIRACH 3:18

This is the title of one of Emily Dickinson's most beloved poems. Did she really think she was nobody? Probably not. But neither was she eager to get bogged down by the approval of others. She seems to have been satisfied with who she was and how she lived her life.

Unlike Dickinson, many of us live for the approval of others. In fact, we almost glorify celebrities—and not simply for their accomplishments. Their taste becomes our choice in buying clothes; their opinions shape our thinking; their social life becomes our entertainment. This is a strange turnaround, for the only reason they are famous is that we have given them our approval. We made them celebrities.

We all know people who, in the eyes of the broader society, might be considered "nobodies" but who really are the "somebodies." They are like Dickinson. They know who they are and do not pretend to be someone or something else. They do not put on airs; they do not expect to be treated better than others. They simply are who they are. These are the people described in today's readings. They have lived as Sirach counsels: "Humble yourself" (Sirach 3:18). This does not mean humiliate yourself or put yourself down. It means be who you are, the *you* that God made. Don't try to be someone else. The Gospel story shows what might happen if you think you are more than you really are. The proud man was literally put in his place.

So, who are you?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- What do you do to gain other's approval? Does that change who you are?
- How often do you describe yourself as better than others? Is it true?