

Ask the Deacon December 2016

Contraception and Natural Family Planning are two different means of accomplishing the same goal, which is to avoid having children. So why does the Catholic Church condemn one and not the other?

Because the means used to attain an end can make a world of moral difference, as can be seen in the following example: Suppose two people needed a thousand dollars for some worthwhile cause. One gets a job and earns the money, while the other swindles an elderly widow out of the same amount.

In fact, though contraception and natural family planning both intend to avoid conception, the similarity stops there. A contracepting couple acts directly against the procreative good of their marriage and thereby set up a barrier to God's plan for marital union. The couple using natural family planning is cooperating with the natural cycle of fertility and choosing not to exercise the procreative capacity at certain times for a serious reason. At no time will they work artificially against God's gift of fertility to them. At no time will they treat that mysterious gift as an intruder needing a mechanical or chemical "fix".

Besides, nearly every contraceptive pill and IUD has abortive properties that over time will lead to an abortion of a break-thru pregnancy that is always gravely morally wrong. We would all do well to read the Catholic catechism on the use of contraception and NFP.

P.S. Remember that the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Dec 8th is a Holy Day of Obligation established by the Church. When we miss Mass on this day of obligation without a very serious reason we risk the commission of mortal sin requiring that we must go to Confession before receiving the Eucharist again. Again, read the Catechism on our responsibility to attend Mass on the established Holy Days of Obligation.

JMJ