



Marriage Supplement

FALL 2021

A moral and scientific way to cooperate with God's plan for fertility

By Gabriela Ross

As the Director of Marriage and Family Life, I coordinate Natural Family Planning (NFP) outreach in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. I work with clergy, medical professionals, certified NFP instructors and witness couples, and together we inform the faithful about God's plan for marriage and family and how fertility is a component of the vocation of marriage and responsible parenthood.



At a Catholic wedding, the bride and groom are asked three questions before they give their consent to marry. One of these questions is: "Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?" (#60, *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*). Natural Family Planning is a morally acceptable, medically sound and natural tool to fulfill this promise.

'Are you prepared to accept children ... ?'

In my work preparing engaged couples for the sacrament of marriage, we talk about NFP and how learning about a husband and wife's fertility can help them cooperate with God to achieve or avoid pregnancy. We address the role of NaPro (Natural

Procreative) technology, which is a morally acceptable alternative to *in vitro* fertilization, and can help couples who are experiencing infertility or other complications.

We are so blessed to have Catholic doctors who are proficient in NaPro technology come to speak to engaged couples at our Pre-Cana and One in Christ marriage preparation retreats about fertility awareness and the science of NaPro technology, and to have dedicated witness couples share their experience practicing NFP in their marriage.

Past retreat participants have said: "I felt that the NFP talk was really great. I wish I was taught this before today, but I'm glad I have another option," and "I loved having an MD discuss NFP. I was skeptical but the medical background was super helpful and convinced me to do it."

Many brides are happy to learn that NFP instructors can help their fertility return to normal after their hormones were altered from being on chemical contraception for many years.

'I wish I was taught this before ...'

But NFP is not just for engaged couples preparing to start a family. A new mother-daughter program was recently launched by the Couple to Couple League to help middle school and adolescent girls who are coming of age to understand their blossoming fertility in light of God's design, without getting into the topics of family planning.

With this tool, mothers can utilize resources to mentor their daughters, parishes can host mother-daughter events, and schools can incorporate the age-appropriate information into their health curriculum, knowing it is both scientific and from a Catholic perspective.

New mothers and women ending their child-bearing years are two other groups that could benefit from tracking their fertility through an NFP method. Because our society has relied on chemical contraception to treat all fertility issues, women are often left in the dark about the changes their body will naturally go through after giving birth or when entering menopause. With hormone changes come fertility changes, and women often benefit from the additional support that an NFP instructor can provide during seasons of change.

Take a look at the information provided in this issue of *The Criterion* to learn more about Church teaching on family planning, different methods to track fertility and the mother-daughter program, outreach in Spanish, and where to find local instructors and medical professionals who are ready to assist you.

If you have a personal story of how NFP has impacted your life, I would love to hear from you.

(Gabriela Ross is the director of the Marriage and Family Life Office of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and can be reached at gross@archindy.org.) †

(Graphic above provided by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops)

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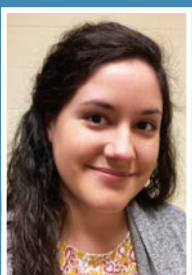


A DOZEN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING & CONTRACEPTION METHODS

Is in harmony with fertility			Interferes with fertility
Treats fertility as a gift			Treats fertility as a disease
Fosters increased communication			Requires little/no communication
Encourages "SPICE" (Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Communicative, Emotional) concept of sexuality			May inhibit "SPICE" growth
Promotes marital bonding			May promote feelings of being used
Reports less than 5% divorce rate			Reports greater than 50% divorce rate
Is effective to avoid and achieve pregnancy			Used only to avoid pregnancy
Encourages the couple to revisit the decision to avoid or achieve pregnancy			Assumes avoiding pregnancy
Can change use of the method to avoid or achieve pregnancy at a moment's notice			Requires discontinuing the method to achieve pregnancy
Is open to God's will for life			Is closed to beginning a new life
Protects the love and life nature of marriage			Interferes with love and life nature of marriage
Is healthy & brings awareness of the women's reproductive abnormalities for treatment			May cause side effects requiring treatment

Staff of the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life



Gabriela Ross

Gabriela Ross has worked for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for six years. She previously taught Theology of the Body in Catholic grade schools and parishes in Cincinnati. Her first position for the archdiocese was with the Office of Catechesis. Since 2019, she has worked as director for the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. Ross is bilingual in English and Spanish and can be reached at gross@archindy.org or 317-592-4007.



Claudia Corona

Claudia Corona is from Guadalajara, Mexico. She has worked for the Archdiocese of Indianapolis for 3.5 years. Her previous position was as administrative assistant for the Intercultural Pastoral Institute of the archdiocesan Intercultural Ministry Office. Since March, she has worked as office and event coordinator for the archdiocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life. Corona is bilingual in English and Spanish and can be reached at corona@archindy.org or 317-236-7310.

(Infographic above courtesy of the Archdiocese of St. Louis Office of Natural Family Planning)

Marriage event provides ‘an avenue of grace’ for couples

By Natalie Hoefler

DOVER—When nationally-known Catholic marriage presenters Troy and Kathleen Billings emphasized the importance of date nights for wedded couples, Justin Egan listened.

“Justin took that message to heart,” said his wife of 13 years, Katherine. “He set up a schedule with several other couples so that we alternate watching each other’s kids and having a date night.

“In the last month, we have been to a movie and also tried out a new restaurant!”

The Egans, members of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright, heard the Billings speak at All Saints Parish in Dearborn County on June 12. About 50 couples—from nearly 54 years of marriage to just three months—attended the event as a means to nourish their marriages.

“The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that marriage is the foundational building block of the world,” said Father Jonathan Meyer, pastor of All Saints Parish. “In our world, people are really starving for marriage ministry, and there’s just not a lot out there.

“We held this event so couples would know we love them and support them.”

‘Marriage is like dancing’

The Billings spoke not just from their years of experience as a married couple with five children, but also from their experience as leaders of a marriage ministry for their parish, bloggers for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ “For Your Marriage” website, and as authors of a new book to be released soon.

The retreat, like their blog, was called “Two to Tango.”

“We both loved to dance,” said Kathleen after sharing that she and Troy met as college students—he at the University of Notre Dame and she at the nearby all-women’s Saint Mary’s College in Notre Dame. “The problem was, we had different styles. We were always stepping on each other’s toes.

“Marriage is like dancing. Sometimes you step on each other’s toes. But the goal is to be close and to move with each other.”

Of course, marriage—particularly a Catholic marriage—is more than a dance, said Troy.

“As a sacrament, marriage is holy,” he said. “Sacrament has the same root as sacrifice, which means ‘to make holy.’

“When you sacrifice for your spouse—from cleaning to doing yard work—you’re giving of yourself and making your marriage holy.”

With the sacrament of marriage comes grace, Troy reminded the couples.

“So many forget to tap into that grace,” he said. “Couples need to ask God for the grace to live their marriage according to his will.

“The purpose of marriage is to communicate God to each other, but you can’t do that if you don’t know God. The more you know God, the more [grace] you have to pour into your marriage.

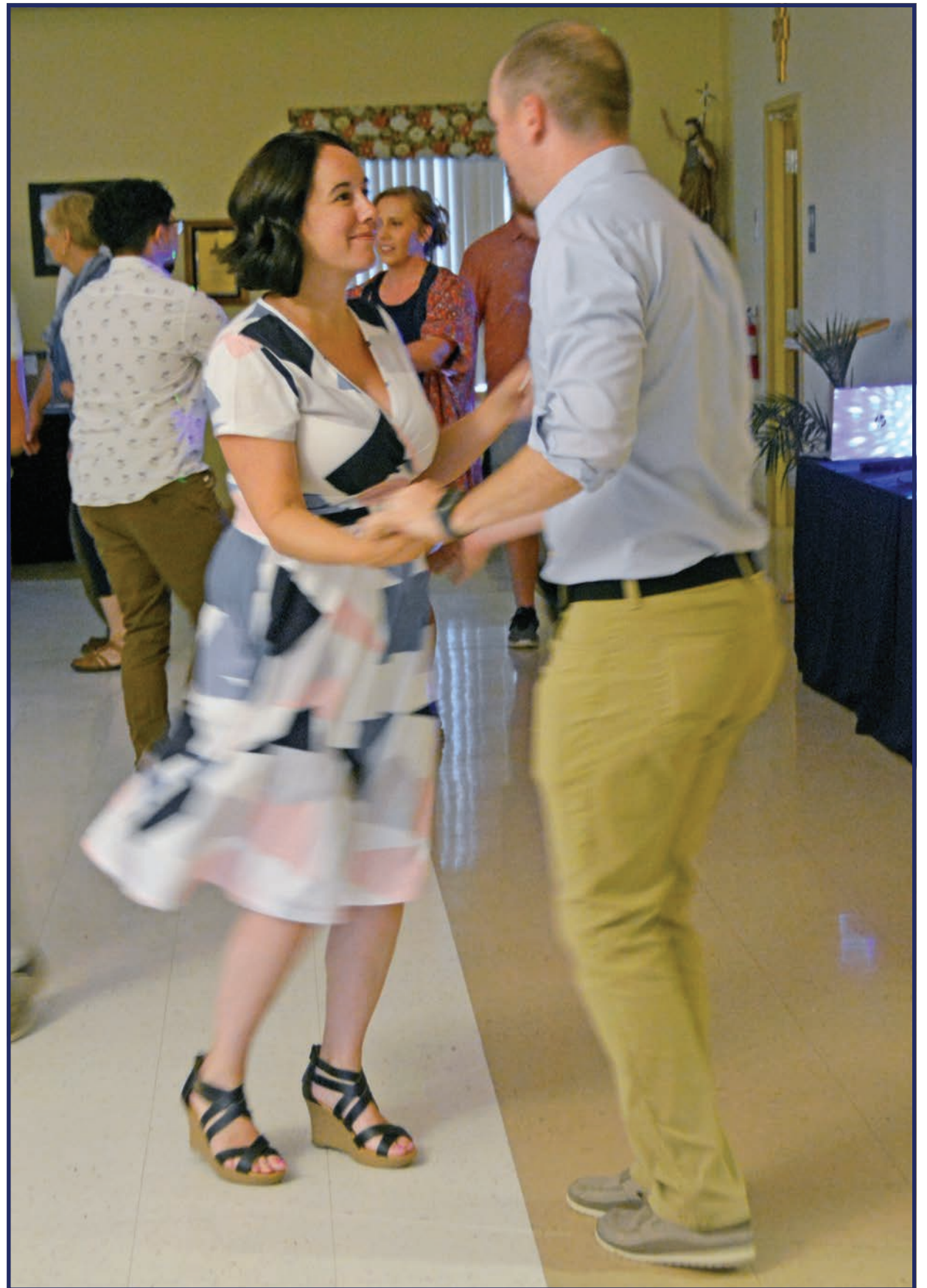
“We live in a crazy world. You have to keep Christ at the center of your marriage.”

‘Take 15 minutes a day’

Kathleen agreed with her husband.

“Satan is out there attacking marriage,” she said.

“He’ll do everything in his power to destroy your marriage. He’ll provide a million distractions, even your



Katherine Egan smiles at her husband Justin as he leads her out of a twirl during a marriage event at All Saints Parish in Dearborn County on June 12. The Egans are members of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross Parish in Bright. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

children. So keep a strong relationship with God, call on his grace and take time with your spouse every day.”

That spouse time needs to be intentional, Kathleen noted.

“Take 15 minutes a day—and not the last 15

minutes—to connect,” she said. “Not talk about the kids, not talk about the budget, but talk about how each of you are really doing.”

Kathleen also noted that it’s important to “make sure that your spouse feels loved. Not everyone feels love the same way,” she said, recommending the book *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman. “We can do many things that show love, and the other still doesn’t feel loved.”

The includes time for intimacy, she said, noting that “fresh love and fireworks fade without work. ... You have to be intentional about intimacy, both emotional and physical.

“Regular date nights are so important for spouses to stay connected and enjoy themselves,” Kathleen said.

‘Marriage takes work’

With nearly 54 years of experience, Rosele and John Jones, members of St. Michael Parish in Greenfield, agreed with the Billings.

“Marriage takes work,” said John. “It’s things like this [event] that get you out of our day-to-day routine and let you have a little time in a different place.”

Sitting next to the Joneses, Mary Jo and Bob Stoops nodded in agreement. The couple, members of St. Lawrence Parish in Lawrenceburg, have been married for nearly 12 years.

“I think it’s important to stay open to ways to improve and nourish your marriage,” said Bob.

“You need to be nourished in your family life just like you need to be nourished in your faith,” Mary Jo added.

Annie and Zach Webber are starting to nourish their marriage early, having just married in May. The couple

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Troy and Kathleen Billings, Catholic marriage ministry leaders, bloggers and authors, laugh during their presentation at a marriage event at All Saints Parish in Dearborn County on June 12.

Wedding ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRAINARD-HARRISON



Marie Elizabeth Brainard and Thomas Robert Harrison will be married on Sept. 4 at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Elizabeth Hackl Brainard and James Brainard. The groom is the son of Melanie Collop Harrison and David Harrison.

ETLING-HARTMAN



Mary Kathryn Marie Eting and Collin Wayne Hartman were married on June 19 at St. Joseph University Church in Terre Haute. The bride is the daughter of Joseph and Gretchen Eting. The groom is the son of Brian Hartman and Melissa Hartman-Compton.

HOTKA-BOWLING



Alexis Marie Hotka and Isaiiah Michael Bowling were married on July 10 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Jason and Jenifer Young. The groom is the son of Charlie and Jeanette Bowling.

KRUEER-SHEPARD



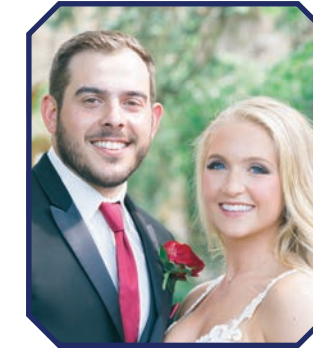
Nicole Marie Krueer and David Paul Shepard will be married in Sept. 18 at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church in Floyd County. The bride is the daughter of Robert and Elaine Krueer. The groom is the son of Alan and Maria Shepard.

MILLER-SHIREMAN



Deidre Sue Miller and Daniel Shireman will be married on Nov. 6 at St. Joseph Church in Corydon. The bride is the daughter of Dennis Miller and Debbie Zimmerman. The groom is the son of Joseph and Cindy Shireman.

ROLAND-ARDIZZONE



Audrey Lynn Roland and Joseph Robert Ardizzone were married on May 21 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Marc and Jamie Roland. The groom is the son of Tony and Judy Ardizzone.

CARLSTON-CONWAY



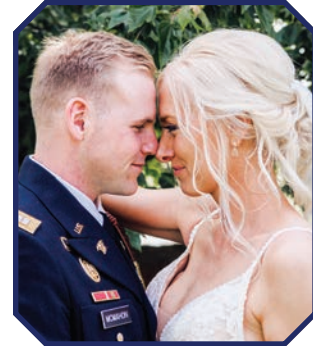
Gabrielle Nicole Carlston and Richard Edwin Conway were married on April 24 at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. (Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese). The bride is the daughter of Greg and June Carlston. The groom is the son of James and Mary Conway.

FRYE-LEONARD



Heidi Marie Frye and Riley Asher Foltz Leonard were married on Sept. 5, 2020, at St. Joseph University Church in Terre Haute. The bride is the daughter of Bernard and Myrthel Frye.

HUNTER-McMAHON



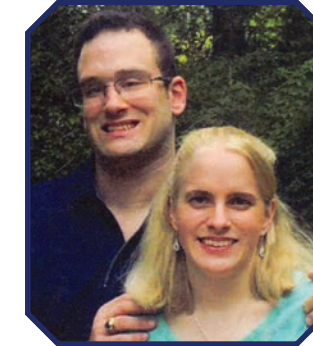
Savannah Grace Hunter and Hayden Charles McMahon were married on May 15 at St. Mary Church in New Albany. The bride is the daughter of Andrew and Kimberly Hunter. The groom is the son of Terrence and Charisa McMahon.

LIVELY-GLOUDEMANS



Patricia Claire Lively and Colin Alexander GlouDEMANS were married on June 26 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Chris and Kathleen Lively. The groom is the son of David and Julie GlouDEMANS.

NICKELS-CUNNINGHAM



Rebecca Clara Nickels and Clay David Cunningham were married on July 10 at St. Christopher Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Katherine Nickels. The groom is the son of David and Lynn Cunningham.

SCHEIBEN-NEWTON



Tess Anastasia Scheiben and David Lee Newton were married on Oct. 9 at St. Mary Church, a campus of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, in Richmond. The bride is the daughter of Robert Scheiben and Pamela Waters. The groom is the son of Jerry and Vicky Newton.

CHANDLER-FIXMER



Jeanie Marie Chandler and Nathan Bryan Fixmer were married on June 12 at St. Joseph Church in Shelbyville. The bride is the daughter of Ronnie Chandler and Tina Mozingo. The groom is the son of John and Sue Fixmer.

GARTRELL-BEHLMER



Stephanie Lee Gartrell and Adam Daniel Behlmer will be married on Aug. 28 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Debbie and the late Darryl Gartrell. The groom is the son of Jeff and Linda Behlmer.

JAGER-KILLEEN



Shannon Marie Jager and Kevin Alexander Killeen II will be married on Oct. 1 at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Bloomington. The bride is the daughter of John and Barbara Jager. The groom is the son of Kevin and Nancy Killeen.

MARTIN-FUNK



Shelby Anne Martin and Patrick Joseph Funk were married on May 29 at St. John the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Bryan and Sandra Martin. The groom is the son of James and Patricia Funk.

PARAS-DAVIDSON



Morgan Elizabeth Paras and Nicholas Richard Davidson were married on July 31 at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Mark and Lola Paras. The groom is the son of Greg Davidson and Kathy Korwek.

SCHMITTLER-JOHANNIGMAN



Katlin AuDale Schmittler and Christopher Mathias Johannigman will be married on Oct. 23 at Immaculate Conception Church in Millhouses. The bride is the daughter of Larry and Audrey Schmittler. The groom is the son of William and Nicole Johannigman.

DOLNE-TODD



Heather Michelle Dolne and Scott Morris Todd were married on April 17 at St. Jude Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Christopher and Kim Dolne. The groom is the son of Gary and Beth Todd.

GAYNOR-ZENGERLING



Tanya Marie Gaynor and Jacob Andrew Zengerling will be married on May 22 at St. John the Baptist Church, a campus of All Saints Parish in Dearborn County. The bride is the daughter of Ronald and Donna Gaynor. The groom is the son of Steven and Karine Zengerling.

KLINE-SCROGGINS



Jessica Marie Kline and Trent Kaine Barkley Scroggins will be married on Oct. 23 at St. Nicholas Church in Ripley County. The bride is the daughter of Bryan and Marie Kline. The groom is the son of BJ and Theresa Scroggins.

MAZE-KINNE



Grace Elizabeth Maze and Jordan Matthew Kinne will be married on Oct. 2 at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church in Greenwood. The bride is the daughter of Scott and Lillian Maze. The groom is the son of Jeff Kinne and Cindy Pullano.

POPP-MARTIN



Kaylyn Mackenzie Popp and Matthew Nicholas Martin were married on June 4 at St. Mary-of-the-Knobs Church in Floyd County. The bride is the daughter of Gary and Julie Popp. The groom is the son of Terry and Nancy Martin.

ELLIS-DUCKETT



Emily Jean Ellis and Owen Nathaniel Duckett will be married on Sept. 18 at Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Jeffrey Ellis and Amanda Ellis. The groom is the son of Zach and Jackie Williams.

HINEMAN-FLOOD



Madelyn Suzanne Hineman and Daniel Patrick Flood were married on May 22 at St. Joan of Arc Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Michael and Grace Hineman. The groom is the son of Dr. Michael and Mrs. Catherine Flood.

KNAPP-REGIER



Casey Lynn Knapp and Paul Michael Regier were married on May 8 at Holy Family Church in New Albany. The bride is the daughter of Tim Knapp and Tracy Harfert. The groom is the son of Pat and Ellen Regier.

MILLER-SHEPHERD



Lyndsay Nicole Miller and Jackson Samuel Shepherd will be married on Nov. 20 at St. Mary Church in North Vernon. The bride is the daughter of Shawn and Vicky Miller. The groom is the son of Travis and Laurie Shepherd.

POWERS-McHUGH



Paige Powers and Luke McHugh will be married on Dec. 18 at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Bloomington. The bride is the daughter of Jeff and Mary Powers. The groom is the son of Jim and Maureen McHugh.

See more couples on next page

Couples may announce engagement or marriage next spring in *The Criterion*

Engagement announcements will be published in a February 2022 issue of *The Criterion* for couples who are planning to wed between Jan. 1 and July 15, 2022, in a marriage that is recognized by the Church as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage.

Couples who were wed in the second half of 2021 in a marriage that is recognized by the Church as a valid sacramental or valid natural marriage may also submit an announcement if their engagement announcement was not published in *The Criterion*.

The wedding announcement form is available online at www.criteriononline.com by selecting "Send Us Information" from the menu on the left side of the screen, then choosing "Wedding Announcements."

An engagement or wedding photo may be submitted by e-mail to alewis@archindy.org. Digital photos must be clear, high-resolution images with the couple close together. Photos can also be mailed to Ann Lewis, 1400 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN, 46202. To receive the photo back, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Due to print quality, Xerox copies of photos will not be accepted. †

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENTS

SINGLETON-GOLDNER



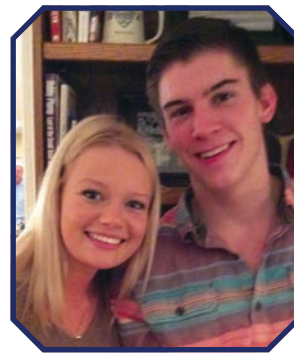
Victoria Singleton and Kevin Goldner will be married on Oct. 23 at St. Luke the Evangelist Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of John and Jeanne Singleton. The groom is the son of Rob and Jeanine Goldner.

WILLIAMS-MASCHINO



Brooke Elizabeth Williams and Jacob Daniel Maschino will be married on Aug. 21 at St. Joseph Church in Jennings County. The bride is the daughter of Lawrence and Sherri Maschino. The groom is the son of Jeffrey and Diane Maschino.

YOUNG-SCHUTZMAN



Emma K. Young and Brian J. Schutzman will be married on Aug. 21 at St. Mary Church in Indianapolis. The bride is the daughter of Gail and the late Daniel Young. The groom is the son of John and Teresa Schutzman.

STEPHENS-SANCHEZ-LAZARO



Ashley Nicole Stephens and David Crisogono Sanchez-Lazaro will be married on Oct. 9 at St. Mary Church in New Albany. The bride is the daughter of Louis and Bobbie Wilson. The groom is the son of Filemon Sanchez Angeles and Maria Lazaro Martinez.

WUNDERLICH-TORRES



Adriane Rochelle Wunderlich and Luis Alberto Mendoza Torres were married on July 10 at St. Joseph Church in Tampa, Fla. The bride is the daughter of Daniel and the late Margaret Wunderlich. The groom is the son of Yolanda Torres and Luis Mendoza.

ZAPFE-BRANDENBURG



Megan Nicole Zapfe and Craig Thomas Brandenburg were married on April 10 at Our Lady of the Greenwood Church in Greenwood. The bride is the daughter of Margaret and the late Richard Zapfe. The groom is the son of Howard and Sheryl Brandenburg.

What is Natural Family Planning?

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the general name given to the scientific, natural, and moral methods of family planning that can help married couples achieve or postpone pregnancy. It celebrates and reverences the vision of human sexuality.

Approved Methods

There are several scientific methods that have been developed to track a couple's fertility for natural family planning purposes. In the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, the following methods and providers have been approved. Other methods and providers may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Marriage & Family Life office for more information.

The Sympto-Thermal Method taught by The Couple to Couple League

- Website: celi.org.
- In-person and online instruction; Spanish instruction online.
- Includes instruction for irregular situations, postpartum and perimenopause, and a charting "app" for mobile users. Offers Mother-

Daughter program to begin discussing fertility awareness with adolescent young women (English only).

The Creighton Model FertilityCare System (CrMS) taught by local Creighton practitioners

- Website for Creighton practitioners: www.fertilitycare.org.
- Website for NaPro Technology: popepaulvi.com.
- In-person and online instruction; Spanish instruction local and online.
- Some Creighton practitioners have a NaPro (Natural Procreative) Technology specialization to treat infertility issues and other complications.

The Marquette Method (Sympto-Hormonal) taught by Whole Mission or a regional instructor

- Website for Marquette Method: cutt.ly/MarquetteMethod.
- Website for Whole Mission instructors: www.mmnfp.com.
- Regional providers in Louisville and Evansville provide in-person training. All other training is online, also in Spanish.
- Includes online charting tools, one year of follow-up consultations as needed, and consultation for irregular situations, postpartum and perimenopause.

Planificación Familiar Natural (PFN)

La Planificación Familiar Natural (PFN) es el título general de los métodos científicos, naturales y morales de planificación familiar que pueden ayudar a las parejas casadas a lograr o posponer el embarazo.

¡Celebra y reverencia la visión de la sexualidad humana!

El Programa de PFN de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos organiza una campaña educativa nacional del 25 al 31 de Julio, que destaca el aniversario de la encíclica papal "Humanae Vitae" (25 de julio) que articula las creencias católicas sobre la sexualidad humana, el amor conyugal y la paternidad responsable. Las fechas también marcan la fiesta de los santos Joaquín y Ana (26 de julio), padres de la Santísima Madre. El Papa Francisco ha designado el 25 de julio como el Día Mundial de los Abuelos y las Personas Mayores.

Si te interesa conocer más sobre:

- Cómo funcionan estos métodos
- Lista de instructores certificados en Indianápolis (en persona o en línea)
- Testimonios de parejas que lo practican
- Semana Nacional de Concientización PFN

Te invitamos a visitar la página de recursos para PFN en español de la Oficina de Matrimonio y Familia de la Arquidiócesis de Indianápolis: www.archindy.org/marriageandfamily/nfp-espanol.html. †

TO HAVE
TO HOLD
TO HONOR

Natural Family Planning
Supporting God's gifts of love and life in marriage



(Image courtesy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

For a list of local instructors and NFP resources, visit www.archindy.org/nfp.

NFP Awareness Week

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is participating in the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' NFP Awareness Week, which occurs this year on July 25-31. It coincides with the anniversary of the papal encyclical "Humanae Vitae" (July 25), which articulates Catholic

beliefs about human sexuality, conjugal love and responsible parenthood.

The dates also mark the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne (July 26), parents of the Blessed Mother. Pope Francis has designated the Sunday closest to their feast day—July 25—as the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly.

To learn more, go to cutt.ly/NFPWeek (case sensitive). †

TENERTE
QUERERTE
RESPECTARTE

Planificación Familiar Natural
Apoya los dones de Dios de amor y vida en el matrimonio



(Image courtesy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

EVENT

continued from page 9

are members of the Oratory of SS. Philomena and Cecilia in Oak Forrest.

“We wanted to start off strong,” said Annie.

Upon hearing that dance lessons would follow the presentation, Zach said he had one goal for the evening: “I hope to learn not to trip over my own feet—or Annie’s.”

‘An avenue of grace’

After the presentation, the lights were turned low and a disco ball scattered shards of moving color around the parish hall. One by one, couples joined the dance floor as a snippet from their wedding song was played.

Katherine Egan smiled up at her husband as Justin led her out of a twirl.

“It was a fantastic date night!” she later told *The Criterion*.

With the scheduled date nights the two have enjoyed following the event, the effects of the evening continue.

“In the past it would not be uncommon for several months to go by before we would do something, just the two of us” without their three children, she said. “The event ignited a desire in us to prioritize time together.”

The benefits the Egans gained from the Two to Tango evening affirmed Katherine’s opinion about the importance of such events.

“We often hear of retreats for those

who are discerning their vocation, or for kids who are growing in their faith,” she noted. “Often we neglect to continue to nurture our marriages.

“These retreats are an important opportunity for us to spend time as a couple, to lean on others for support and provide us with an avenue of grace.” †



Annie and Zach Webber, newlyweds married in May, enjoy dancing again to their wedding song during a marriage event at All Saints Parish in Dearborn County on June 12. The Webbers are members of the Oratory of SS. Philomena and Cecilia in Oak Forest.



A couple listens as Catholic marriage ministers, bloggers and authors Kathleen and Troy Billings share a message during a marriage event at All Saints Parish in Dearborn County on June 12. (Photos by Natalie Hoefler)

Couple offers tips for making marriage work

By Natalie Hoefler

Troy and Kathleen Billings—Catholic marriage ministry leaders, bloggers and authors—recently offered tips and advice on making marriage work at All Saints Parish in Dearborn County on June 12.

Below are snippets of advice and tips the couple offered:

• “The difference between a creek and a river is that boulders and rocks can alter the flow of a creek because its shallow. But they don’t alter the flow of a river because it’s deeper. God intended marriage to be like a river, not a creek.”

• “If you do a little different thing each day—get up early with the kids or make a call so your spouse doesn’t have to—these build up over

time to say ‘I love you.’”

• “In the words of St. Therese the Little Flower, ‘Do little things with great love.’ When you see your spouse do something extra, compliment them. Remember that small things add up to a great marriage.”

• “Do you date your spouse? As you get busier and have more kids, you need to stoke the fire of your marriage. It’s easier to stoke a fire than to build a fire again after it’s gone out.”

• “Take 15 minutes a day to talk with your spouse about how each

of you is doing. That’s about 1% of your day.”

• “One of the best ways to insure a healthy and holy marriage is to pray together. Maybe it’s the Our Father, the rosary, spontaneous prayer or making a holy hour together. A holy hour guarantees at least one hour of silence in your week! It’s a date night with Jesus.”

• “The greatest gift you can give your kids is to love your spouse. Kids notice the little things you say and do for your spouse, and it’s important to them.” †



ARCHDIOCESE
OF INDIANAPOLIS
The Church in Central and Southern Indiana

37th Annual Wedding Anniversary Mass

August 29, 2021

2:00 pm

Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul

1347 N. Meridian St.

Indianapolis, IN

Archbishop Charles C. Thompson, presider.

Registration at: www.archindy.org/weddingcelebrations
or contact Claudia Corona 317-236-7310 Ccorona@archindy.org

Organized by: Marriage & Family Life Office

The Mass will include a blessing for the renewal of nuptial commitment and a certificate of recognition will be awarded to couples who celebrate their 25, 50, 60, 65, 70 and 75 years of marriage in 2020 or 2021. A reception will follow the Mass.

How Natural Family Planning changed my life

By Dawn Farias

Special to *The Criterion*

As a child I was baptized Catholic, but essentially grew up with no religious practice. As a married adult, I re-entered the Church, and soon after felt a tugging at my heart to stop practicing contraception. At that time, I did not know about Natural Family Planning (NFP).

More basic, I did not know about Church teachings on the moral practice of family planning.

What I would learn about God's design for my married life and through the practice of NFP would change my life.

True freedom and openness to life

When my husband, Ariel and I took an NFP class, I have to admit that I was scared.

Giving up control was frightening! It was one thing to be committed to an ideal, but something quite different to follow through on it. It definitely involved a leap of faith! Over time and with some experience, I began to appreciate the gift and beauty of NFP.

In practicing NFP, my husband and I must decide if we, as a couple, are ready to embrace the possibility of a new life in each menstrual cycle.



When we had used contraception, we ignored this reality. With NFP we could not ignore how God made us—as a man and a woman.

NFP helped us understand the relationship that God designed between the marital act and procreation. It has made us “open to life.” It even brought our last two children into the family!

The gift of self

In using NFP over the years, both my husband and I now see that we give ourselves to each other fully in the marital act. For us, the idea of contraception has become almost vulgar. It cheapens the marital act. Contraception seems to say: “I love you, honey, but I don't love you THAT much.”

NFP also guards against the objectification of the woman in the relationship.

Contraception often keeps the woman in a defensive position because it allows “intimacy on demand.” NFP does not allow this because of the practice of periodic abstinence when not seeking a pregnancy. A deeper equality between husband and wife can be nurtured with NFP. NFP begins the process of this awareness.

Growing together in holiness

The sacrifices that NFP entails have only served to make me a better person and more devoted to the Lord. Without knowing it, using contraception promotes the idea that children are a burden.

Children do require lots of work, and pregnancy demands its own set of sacrifices, but NFP has helped me meet these challenges by leading me to the realization that children are God's blessings. I am constantly forced to pray, change, make concessions and find solutions to the selfishness and laziness that come up often when meeting the needs of others.

Today, I am confident that had I not been open to life in the practice of NFP, I would not have needed to

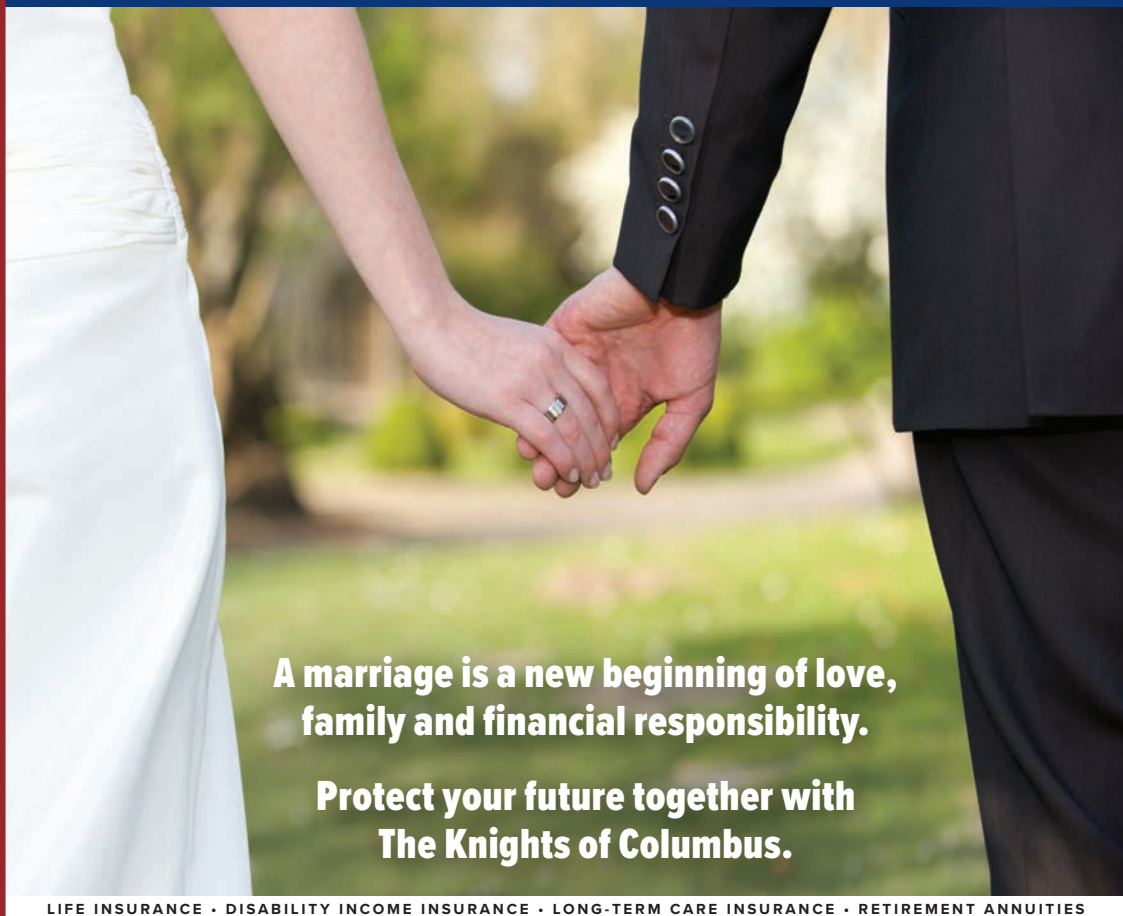


depend on God, and not have grown as a person. This growth benefits my family and the people I meet in everyday life.

Jesus calls us to serve others. Marriage and parenthood are ways we can immediately apply this call in our lives. NFP has led me to be more open to life, more aware of God's design for intimacy in marriage, more dependent on him to fulfill these plans. It has strengthened my relationship with my husband, given me personal insight, and it has given our children life!

(Dawn and her husband Ariel Farias have four children and live in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Farias, Dawn, “How Natural Family Planning Changed My Life,” NFPP/US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC: USSCB, 2011. Used with permission. Graphics courtesy of the USSCB.) †

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