

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

It is with great joy and excitement that I announce that Catholic Medical Center (CMC) in Manchester will be opening the **Women's Wellness and Fertility Center of New England** in early 2017. This new center will be using NaPro Technology to help women manage their fertility in effective, affordable and morally acceptable ways. Their opening can lead to many opportunities to speak about the Catholic Church's teaching on sexuality and marriage.

While I cannot get into extensive detail here, I want to open up the conversation. Unfortunately, when most people think about the Church's understanding of sexuality, they might think of the words *outdated*, *outmoded*, *don't*, or *controlling*. The truth is that the Church gleans its wisdom of our sexuality from the one who made us as sexual beings – Almighty God Himself – and from centuries of deep thought on the topic. If, for instance, the Church's stance against artificial contraception comes up, most people in our society laugh it off, or reject it outright. I challenge you, though, to ask the hard question: *Why* does the Church teach what she teaches? Don't just ignore the question, but delve into it. In a sense, I'm saying: *I dare you to prove the Church wrong*. Many who have tried over the centuries have come to embrace the *beauty* of the Church's teaching. And this is the key to it all – the Church's teaching on sexual morality, when understood correctly, *is beautiful* and draws us to desire to follow it. You see, the Church is not *imposing* morality, but proposing the most **beautiful, joy-filled** way to live!

So, in brief (and it must be brief... please, read, study, learn more!), the Church believes that God designed sexuality to be a reflection of His inner life and love. The Father eternally begets the Son, and the love between the Father and Son is so real, it is the person of the Holy Spirit. God designed for *us* to participate in creation (procreation) in an embrace of love which reflects His love – a love so real that it may become a person. This love of God (as seen on the Cross) is **Total, Faithful, Free, and Fruitful**. In this love, new people are begotten who didn't exist before and will exist forever (some have said this is God's favorite thing to do... make people who will be with Him forever!). To put it another way, God's plan is to connect **babies** and **bonding** in the sexual embrace, within the context of a loving, committed relationship (marriage). When we intentionally separate these elements – babies and bonding, in a loving, committed relationship – we are doing an injustice to very essence of what the sexual embrace is about.

Now, I know this may not be convincing, for I have not the time to get into all detail and beauty, but let's take this as it is, and look at the practical effect of believing this. It means that artificial contraception goes against how God created sexuality to be, and artificial means of fertilization does as well. It is amazing to see how our scientific findings are now corroborating the Church's constant teaching (okay, not so amazing since the same God who made science and the human body also made morality!). There are so many negative side effects of hormonal contraception – including physical problems which could even lead to permanent infertility, cancer, strokes and death; emotional problems, and relationship problems – and we never hear about these, yet it is right on the information packets of "the pill".

This brings us back to the beginning of the article, and the opening of the CMC Women's Wellness and Fertility Center. They will be teaching the Creighton method of Natural Family Planning (NFP) – a scientific and natural method of achieving or avoiding pregnancy. This scientific method is as or more effective than any artificial contraceptive at avoiding pregnancy. Once learned, there are no on-going expenses. NFP has no side-effects (unless you count as side-effects: (a) having a dramatically low [0.2%] divorce rate; (b) experience happier marriages; (c) having considerably more marital relations; (d) sharing a deeper intimacy with spouse; (e) realizing a deeper level of communication with spouse; and (f) being personally happier). NFP also *helps* achieve pregnancy when desired. CMC will also provide NaPro methods of **helping correct infertility** in ways that are **more effective** and **less expensive** than in vitro fertilization. It keeps together God's plan for procreation (babies and bonding in the sexual embrace), and avoids anything which is immoral, such as freezing or destroying our children, as in vitro very often does.

For more information, check out www.cmc-womenswellness.org.