

## **Myths & More Myths**

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"What's the biggest myth in our culture regarding natural family planning?", a friend asked. "Hmm," I said, "That's a tough one. There are so many." There are myths about what the natural methods are and what the Church teaches. These and more have had a negative impact on Catholics accepting Church teachings and living NFP in their marriages.

Shortly after this conversation, one of the myths regarding NFP science hit the news. It came from Dr. Roger Pierson, a scientist who was part of a research team that studied the ovaries of fifty healthy women. Incredibly, he said that most women are not able to use NFP! The study found that ovarian follicles develop more than once during a woman's menstrual cycle. In 68% of the women studied, two waves of ovarian development occurred. Despite this "wave" effect, they also observed that a woman will typically produce only one egg in each cycle.

What is sound science is that ovarian follicles develop in waves. Science ended and myth began however, when Dr. Pierson said that "up to 40% of women may not be able to use natural family planning methods because there will not be a "safe time" in their menstrual cycles. That is factually wrong.

Why? Anyone familiar with NFP science knows that a woman's signs of fertility can be observed so that the fertile and infertile phases of the cycle can be identified. It does not matter how many "waves" of development a woman may experience; as soon as the ovaries are "serious" and produce the mature egg, the hormonal message will be sent to the cervix telling it to secrete mucus –the primary sign of fertility. Any woman, in any culture, with any level of education can learn how to observe this sign – it does not matter if she is "regular" or not. And, "double ovulation" in one cycle happens only within a twenty-four hour period. "Fraternal twins" can be the outcome of intercourse during that time.

How can a scientist give inaccurate information? Perhaps because NFP science is not taught routinely in medical school. Perhaps his mind is also closed to truth. The same scientist said, "What do you call couples who use NFP?" "Parents." Not only does this reveal his lack of knowledge of NFP science, it reveals intellectual arrogance! In the world of family planning research, scientists have become so obsessed with trying to control ovulation they have lost sight of its wonder. Typically, scientists do not seek to understand human fertility in order to work with it. They treat it as a disease and insist on suppressing or mutilating it. Women's fertility in particular is consistently manipulated to the point that the many side effects of contraception pose a real health danger. Woman should demand better treatment.

One would expect scientists to be aware that human beings are wonderfully made and that human fertility is an awe-inspiring gift. Without such wonder and reverence, scientists will remain closed-minded to God's hand in creation and they—and we—will suffer the consequences.♦