

# Working mothers, family benefit from NFP through openness

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |

*One of a series of six special columns written by Catholic women on family planning issues.*

I am typically a private person, so this column is a little outside my comfort zone. However, the recent debate regarding the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services mandate and the Church has prompted me to rethink what my comfort zone should be. While my husband and I are certified teachers of natural family planning through the Couple to Couple League, I wouldn't say that I've been great at evangelizing why NFP was the path my husband and I chose while engaged. Here is my delayed attempt at contributing to the discussion about NFP, from the perspective of a woman who works outside the home.

My husband and I have been married almost six years. We have a son who is 2, born a little over a year after my husband finished law school. We are expecting our second child in November. I work in Little Rock in the private sector as a project manager.

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NFP is often mentioned synonymously with the rhythm method, which was used over a generation ago as an attempt to space children. There is a world of difference between the two. NFP is over 99 percent effective, more effective than many forms of contraception. It is a way to follow our Church's teachings while still planning a family. I personally can testify to its effectiveness. Our two children were planned. More than that, they came after much prayer and are celebrated as blessings — evidence of God's love and grace in our lives.

I understand that not every woman wants or needs to have as many children as possible. Personally, our family may or may not be complete with two children. This is something that my husband and I discuss and pray about frequently. It is part of the discourse we have with God, discerning what is best for our family.

I know too that being a woman with a child has affected my career. For me, the priority is no longer getting ahead in my career. I still want and need to be successful. Being a good mom and being a good employee aren't mutually exclusive, nor are working outside the home and following the Church's teachings.

I've faced the stigma of being a working mom in certain circles myself. Being a woman with a career doesn't mean that I prioritize my family less. Making the decision to continue my career was a very personal decision I made with the support of my husband. As someone who has always been a perfectionist, I don't deal well with failure, or even with half-way. There are days when half-way has to be good enough for some efforts. That has been a lesson I struggle to learn. This doesn't mean that my family comes second.

I find it interesting that the Church has been perceived as waging a “war on women” with the decision to hold the line on contraception. By not wanting to promote or pay for contraception (even through the rising cost of premiums that will result from insurance companies passing

along the cost of contraception), the Church is not trying to oppress women. Consider what the Church is promoting instead of contraception: a method of family planning that encourages women to understand their bodies; a way of encouraging “love” and not “use” in marital relationships; and the concept of not shutting down the healthy functioning of a woman's reproductive system. I actually find NFP to be liberating.

*Brooke Glover lives in Little Rock with her husband Matt, one child and one on the way. They attend Christ the King Church in Little Rock.*