

Fertility Care for Young Women

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO HELPING WOMEN APPRECIATE THEIR FERTILITY



What Is True Love

By : Teresa Kenney, APRN, CFCP

We all desire true love. It is inscribed in our nature as human persons designed by a Loving Creator. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us: "Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The union of man and woman in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity: 'Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.' All human generations proceed from this union." (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2335)

Unfortunately, our society has a distorted view of what true love really is. When we think of falling in love, most of us

think of the emotions we have towards the other person and the way they make us feel. We have all seen it in the movies—the romance, fate, one true love and physical chemistry.

Many people who fall in love just as easily fall into bed, only later to end up being hurt and moving on to the next person who makes them feel "in love." This can lead to a cycle of depression, guilt, and consequences like sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancy. So, what is the answer to finding real and lasting love?

The Catholic Church, which desires our ultimate happiness, gives us a deeper understanding of the word Love. John Paul II tells us the most essential thing to love is the value of the person... "This is the basis on which the will of the loving subject strives for the true good of the beloved person, the entire and perfect good, the absolute good, which is identical with happiness." Therefore, love is not just a feeling; it is an act of the will. It is a decision to give oneself to another person entirely. Christ tells us "Love one another even as I have loved you (John 13:34). Jesus loved us by giving Himself completely even unto death on a cross. The Cross is the center and pinnacle of our Christian life. In order to see love in its pure and truest form, we need to look at the Cross.

In our culture, much of what we view as *Continued on page 3*

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DID YOU KNOW???

The egg is a wonderful symbol of birth and rebirth—it is an apparently lifeless object out of which comes life. Because of this, it is a symbol of Christ's Resurrection and is seen most often at Easter. In 2006, a necropolis under the Vatican revealed an infant who had been buried holding an egg to symbolize his parents' hope in his resurrection, because of Christ's Resurrection.

Legend has it that St. Mary Magdalene went to Rome and met with the Emperor Tiberius to tell him about the Resurrection of Jesus. She held out an egg to him as a symbol of this, and he scoffed, saying that a man could no more rise from the dead than that egg that she held could turn scarlet. The egg turned deep red in her hands, and this is the origin of Easter eggs and the reason why Mary Magdalene is often portrayed holding a scarlet egg.

Another level of symbolism is that the egg represents Creation, the elements, and the world itself— with the shell representing the firmament, the vault of the sky where the fiery stars lie; the thin membrane symbolizing the air; the white symbolizing the waters; and the yolk representing earth. [Taken from fisheaters.com]

A newsletter dedicated to helping young women

Seasons of Change

Most of us realize that menstrual cycles are not exactly regular. In fact, the majority of women who state their cycles come every month actually have somewhat irregular menstrual cycles. In other words, the percentage of women who ovulate on day 14,



which makes a 28-30 day cycle, is only around 15 percent.

Most women ovulate sometime between day 10 and day 19. This means that the actual cycle length varies from month to month. The timing of ovulation divides the menstrual cycle into two phases—the preovulatory phase and the postovulatory phase.

The preovulatory phase is highly variable in its length. The preovulatory phase begins with the first day of the menstrual period and ends with the point of ovulation or Peak Day.

The postovulatory phase is just the opposite. It is very stable in its length. The postovulatory phase starts with the Peak Day (or point of

ovulation) and ends with the last day before the menstrual flow. The average length of a postovulatory phase is 9 to 13 days. However, in the individual woman, there is great consistency in the length of the postovulatory phase of the cycle. What makes

some women have short cycles and some women have regular cycles and some women have long cycles is the variability in the preovulatory phase.

The biological marker called cervical mucus is what allows us to determine the phases of the menstrual cycle. The cervical mucus gives us a foreshadowing of the ovulation event. It can be described as a biological valve—when the woman observes cervical mucus, it tells her that the valve is open and that achieving a pregnancy is possible and, when the woman is dry or is not seeing any mucus, it tells her the biological valve is closed and that she is infertile.

After menses, a woman is usually dry or not seeing any cervical mucus. When a follicle begins to develop, starting the process of ovulation, then the woman will begin to see mucus on the tissue when she wipes.

The mucus begins as sticky,

cloudy mucus and then progresses over the next several days to become stretchy, clear, and slippery or lubricative. This type of mucus is called Peak type and is indicative that ovulation is occurring.

Once ovulation happens, then the mucus goes back to sticky and cloudy or to dry for the remainder of the cycle. The last day a woman sees Peak-type mucus (stretchy, clear, and lubricative) is the Peak Day. It is a very accurate indicator of the time that ovulation occurred.

Why is this important to know?

Well, for a married couple, this allows them to predict the onset of ovulation very precisely; therefore, they can choose to achieve or avoid a pregnancy. They are able to know each and every day whether they are fertile or infertile. For all of us women, it allows us not only to be able to pinpoint the day of ovulation but also to know exactly when menses is going to start. No more guess work, and you can always be prepared.

God has inscribed in our human bodies the ability to plan our families in accordance with His will. Having this knowledge and education not only empowers

And of what should we be afraid?
Our captain on this battlefield is Christ Jesus.
We have discovered what we have to do.
Christ has bound our enemies for us and weakened them that they cannot overcome us unless we so choose to let them.
— St. Catherine of Sienna

women and couples to use these biological markers in order to plan their family, but it empowers women to care for their reproductive health by using this information to monitor, evaluate, and maintain their gynecological health.

To learn how to chart your cycles, please visit our website fertilitycare.org. There you will be able to find a FertilityCare Practitioner to teach you the Creighton Model FertilityCare System. This system once learned can be used for your entire reproductive life!

What is True Love?

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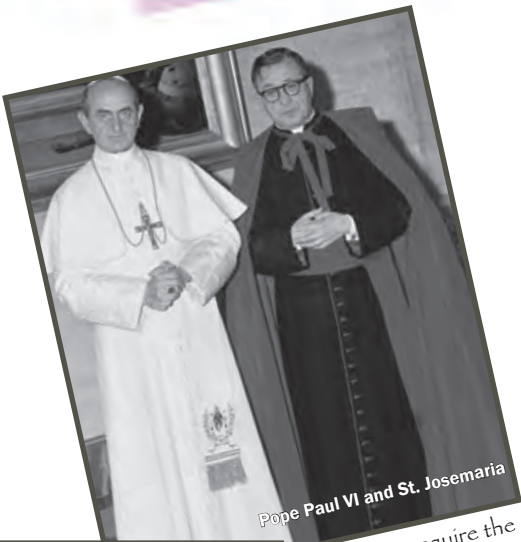
love is selfish. We are using the other person for our own physical desires and emotional feelings. If a guy truly loves a girl and pressures her to have sex, this is not an act of love. He is not desiring what is good for his beloved but using her for his own pleasure. This is not love; it is lust. Lust is the desire for sexual pleasure at the expense of the other. This tendency toward sin is because of original sin. The good news is there is hope. God has inscribed in our hearts, minds, and body the truth of the dignity of the human person: "Because of the redemption that is offered to us in

Christ, our hearts can be renewed. Because Christ's death on the cross won for us the grace not only to be saved, but also to transform our fallen inclinations...they can experience the authentic, safe, self-donating love that we are all seeking"(TOB for Teens).

Authentic love is free. If we are a slave to our passions and sexual desires, then we are not truly free. Much of our society is enslaved by some disordered passion whether it is addiction to sex, power, money, food, drugs, or pornography. How do we control these temptations around us? The Church calls us to the virtue of chastity. According to the Catholic Church, chastity includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery, which is training

in human freedom. The alternative is clear: either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be dominated by them and becomes unhappy. (Catechism 2339)

Chastity is not just abstaining from these passions. It is having a true freedom by not being enslaved by addictions that can become false gods. The Church teaches us that all of us are called to a chaste life whether single, married, or religious. We all can start today by living a life of chastity for truly it is the virtue of the gift of ourselves to others and seeing the other as a person created in the image of God. St. Josemaria Escriva explained it in these words, "When you decide firmly to lead a clean life, chastity will not be a burden on you: it will be a crown of triumph."



Pope Paul VI and St. Josemaria



"May you acquire the custom of concerning yourself every day about others, and give yourself to the task so much that you forget you even exist."
St. Josemaria Escriva

Facts About Your Fertility

What is Peak-type mucus? There are three properties that make up Peak-type mucus. First, the mucus is stretchy having one inch or more of stretch. Second, it is crystal clear or transparent when held up to the light. And, third, it is lubricative or very slippery when you wipe from front to back through the back portion of the vagina. All of these properties are a signal that your body is producing a hormone called estrogen, which stimulates your cervix to produce Peak-type mucus letting you know when ovulation is about to occur.

RESOURCES

*www.popepaulvi.com

*www.fertilitycare.org

*<http://www.chastity.com>

*<http://vocation-network.org>

*www.onemoresoul.com

*www.ewtn.com

Story of Our Lady of Guadalupe

(Based on the original account)

December 9th, 1531, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Juan Diego, a recent convert to the Catholic faith, was walking to attend the early morning Mass in Mexico City. Passing by Tepeyac Hill he heard the beautiful singing of birds, seemingly from heaven. Looking to see where the celestial music was coming from, he suddenly heard a young woman's voice affectionately calling his name, "Juanito." Reaching the top of the hill, he saw a radiant woman clothed in splendid light - the Ever Virgin Holy Mary, Mother of God. She told Juan that she desired him to be her special messenger to the Bishop of Mexico City. Juan was to tell the bishop that Our Lady wanted a church to be built where she could manifest her Son and hear the petitions of her spiritual children.

After being put off by the bishop's servants, Juan was finally granted an audience with Franciscan Bishop Fray Juan Zumarraga. The bishop didn't initially believe Juan Diego and asked him to return another day. Secretly, the bishop had been invoking the intercession of the Mother of God for help. The Spaniards had recently conquered the native Aztec people and were treating them harshly. Very few were willing to abandon their pagan gods and embrace the religion of their new dictators. All of this weighed heavy on the heart of Bishop Zumarraga, whom history now knows as the "Protector of the Native People." He wondered if Juan Diego's story was the answer to his prayers.

Dejected, Juan returned to Tepeyac and asked Our Lady to use someone else more worthy than himself. She assured him that he was personally chosen to be her ambassador. The next day he returned to plead with the bishop.

Though impressed by Juan's persistence, he was still unsure. He sent Juan to tell the Lady he needed a sign in order to know if it was truly her. Upon hearing the bishop's request, Our Lady told Juan to return the next day and she would give him the sign he needed. Returning home, Juan found his uncle ill and close to death. Instead of returning the next day, Juan



Our Lady of Guadalupe

stayed home and took care of his ailing uncle.

Early on December 12th, Juan rushed to Mexico City in order to get a priest to administer the last rites to his dying uncle. On his way he went around the back of Tepeyac Hill in order to avoid Our Lady whom he knew would surely understand. But Our Lady meet him anyway telling him not to worry, his uncle was already healed. He was to learn later that at that moment Our Lady had appeared to his uncle, who was restored to health. She urged Juan to go to the top of the hill where he would find flowers miraculously growing. Juan was astonished to see so many vibrant flowers during the frosty time of the year. He cut them and gathered them in his tilma (cloak). Our Lady arranged the flowers with her own hands, rolled up the tilma and ordered Juan not to unfurl his tilma until he was in the presence of the bishop.

After being harassed by the bishop's servants, Juan was finally brought in to see him. After recounting every detail of his conversation with Our Lady, he let down his tilma and the flowers fell to the floor. Juan was surprised when everyone in the room also fell to the floor on their knees. The image of Our Lady had miraculously appeared on Juan's tilma! Repenting for his unbelief with abundant tears, Bishop Juan Zumarraga promised to build the shrine that Our Lady had requested. Soon the church was built and the holy image transferred. The story spread like wildfire and people began to stream in to see the heavenly image and hear the story from Juan Diego. Many miracles starting happening and in the following years some 10 million were baptized and converted to the Jesus Christ! Pope John Paul II declared Blessed Juan Diego the greatest evangelist of all times.

Account taken from www.vatican.va

Pope Paul VI Institute

For the Study of Human Reproduction
6901 Mercy Road • Omaha, NE 68106-2621
(402) 390-6600 • www.popepaulvi.com
Comments/questions: popepaul@popepaulvi.com