

The Domestic Church

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Health Conscious

Body ecology is a mixed metaphor that describes the human body as a type of ecosystem. New mothers and fathers are keenly aware of the awesomeness of their baby's body, for instance. They count every finger and toe, and keep a close watch over any food or medicine that the little one ingests. It is an extension of their love to keep all harm away and to promote health in the new body.

In the domestic church, one of our primary missions is the raising of children. We make daily decisions that impact the bodily health of our children, particularly where their diet is concerned. Therefore, I appeal to the food and pharmaceutical industries to do everything in their power to insure that the food and medicines which our children consume are safe! If parents assume everything is "o.k." we are sleep-walking; I recently found aspartame (a toxic additive put in many food products as a sweetener) on the label of a leading brand's children's decongestant. Meanwhile, guest writer Erin Rapp would like to help parents do everything in *their* power to keep the family diet healthy. She also sympathizes with the tough choices the family farmer must make.

But there's more that we'd like to communicate in this issue. The contraceptive pill is not really a medicine because human reproduction is not a disease. The pill is a dangerous drug that has been scientifically shown to harm the woman's body ecology. (See interview inside with retired gynecologist Dr. Charles Norris.) We care because the women of today are the mothers of the next generation. We want to see both mothers and babies stay healthy! At the same time, as the interview in this issue shows the woman's body naturally communicates that it is fertile *when* it is fertile, during a limited phase of the monthly reproductive cycle!

The Church knows: "Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2288) Holy Mother Church loves us and wants to promote health of both body and soul!!

Ruth Andreas

Editor



A Woman's Place

by Erin Rapp

Erin Rapp is a wife and mother of three children (with one on the way). She is co-owner of "The Hungry Caterpillar", a kids' restaurant in McMinnville, Oregon.

What are we putting into our bodies? This is an important question I ask myself every time I buy food, whether it is produce, fish, beef, poultry, dairy or grains. As a mother of soon four children and an owner of a children's restaurant, my mission has become "healthy, wholesome and environmentally sound".

However, because we often don't know what kind of chemicals most of us are putting into our bodies, and what long term effects these can have on us, we are putting ourselves in danger. Unfortunately in most cases, washing our produce doesn't take off even 50% of what's been sprayed on it. We are drinking milk with growth hormones that, as studies show are causing children to reach puberty at younger ages. We are eating meat that is unhealthy due to unnecessary antibiotics. Our own country is the only country that gives healthy cows and chickens antibiotics as a "precautionary" measure. Cows are being fed animal parts to speed growth and production, which in turn is one of the root causes of mad cow disease. Also, mechanical butchering (large machines instead of people) in large factories allows fecal matter from improper stripping of colons and intestines to contaminate the meat with e-coli bacteria.

Secondly, we are putting our environment in danger. God made us stewards of the earth. This

means we have the responsibility of caring for what He has created. Spraying chemicals, genetically altering plants and feeding animals steroids, antibiotics and artificial growth promotants does not make our environment healthy. In fact, many agricultural chemicals wind up in the air of nearby residential areas, in the streams flowing out of farms and in the produce we eat. Farm workers are on the front lines of this chemical warfare, suffering

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tens of thousands of poisonings each year. On top of this, these chemicals are becoming less effective over time. There has been a tenfold increase in both the amount and the toxicity of insecticide use since the 1940's, but the share of the U.S. harvest lost to pests and insects has gone up!

Chemicals are a quick remedy. They do not solve the root cause of why a plant is unhealthy or infested with pests. Even worse, chemicals, just like antibiotics become ineffective when used repeatedly. Whatever insect or organism that is feeding on your plants becomes

immune, and that chemical no longer works. On the other hand, pests do not bother strong, healthy plants. Just as a healthy human with good immunity is rarely affected by sickness and disease, so does a strong and healthy plant remain unharmed from the pests around it.

Bio-terrorism, pesticides, mad cow disease, e-coli, genetically modified foods, growth hormones--all these terms have become prevalent as food safety has become one of the current environmental issues. Worldwide shipping and large scale distribution can quickly bring contaminated food from other countries to our tables. Not only that, but food that is shipped such large distances also requires some eye-opening procedures. Take for example the tomato. In order to better survive the 1500 miles the average food or vegetable travels in today's market, many tomatoes are picked while hard and green. Then they're gassed with a hormone to help them ripen. These practices have become commonplace in our industrial food system.

Another is the handling of farmed salmon. These salmon must be treated with antibiotics to stay healthy. This is due to their being confined in pens that contain concentrated amounts of their own fecal matter and parasites that would not occur in a natural environment. On top of that, the

diets they are fed cause them to lose color, so the salmon are dyed pink to have the appearance we are used to. Just look in the seafood case at your local supermarket; it's right there on the label: "farm raised salmon, food coloring added".

Here is a glimpse of the state of the food business today: four companies control 80 percent of U.S. beef packing, five control 75 percent of the global grain trade, and five control 64 percent of the global agricultural market. All of this consolidation has been disastrous for many rural communities and small farms. Farmers in the industrial system find themselves on a treadmill, forced to purchase seeds, pesticides and fertilizers from these same agribusiness giants every year. And as industrial farm sizes increase, community health takes a downward turn: there's less employment, more absentee ownership and higher levels of poverty. It's no wonder farmers are having a tough time in today's market. While the nation's annual food spending has jumped in the past 30 years from \$100 billion to \$500 billion, the amount of that money going to farmers hasn't risen since 1980. Today, only 20 cents of our food dollar goes to the farmer, down from 41 cents in 1950--the rest goes to all the other stuff, from advertisers to packaging to distributors.

So what are we to do? Where do we start? First, we need to think about where our food is coming from. By the time we purchase produce that has travelled 1500 miles or more and then sits on the supermarket shelves, it has lost a great deal of its nutrients. Instead, we can look to local producers (small farms in your community).

Buying from local growers not only supports the family owned and operated farm, but it can be good for the local economy as well. With Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), customers purchase a share of a farm's output and then enjoy produce that's distributed at the peak of ripeness throughout the growing season.

Your local farmer's market is another option for fresh produce, meat and locally produced goods. Also, many supermarkets, upon demand are starting to provide locally grown foods. Start reading labels and asking questions. After all, we all have a right to know where our food comes from and how it is grown.

Purchasing organic is another way to ensure quality foods. Today, it has become easier to find and identify these foods. Many supermarket chains are supplying a growing number of organic products. Under the national organic standard, all growers and food processors that label their food organic must be certified by an independent third party agent accredited by the USDA. Requirements (See box at right):

Organic farming's greatest benefits are a safer, cleaner, healthier environment and more sustainable use of resources. By eschewing pesticides and using methods that promote soil fertility and strong ecosystems, organic farming helps protect our topsoil from erosion and our groundwater, air and soil from chemical contamination. Organic farms are safer for workers and communities, and organic foods have been shown to have substantially less of the pesticide residues that may present real health risks, *especially to infants and children* (emphasis

added). In the U.S. where foods with unlabeled genetically modified ingredients (primarily corn, soybeans, cotton and their byproducts) are profuse in the supermarket, the organic label is a concerned consumer's only guarantee that this technology is not used.

It's true that buying organic is expensive. But the more we demand this standard of food production, the more readily available it will become, and at less cost. We need to think quality over quantity.

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- Synthetic pesticides, including herbicides, fungicides and other chemicals are prohibited;
- Genetic modification, or the splicing of genes between species, is prohibited;
- Irradiation of foods is prohibited;
- Use of processed sewage sludge, or biosolids as fertilizer is prohibited;
- Livestock must be given access to pasture;
- Livestock are not given growth hormones or antibiotics (sick animals are treated, but removed from the herd and not sold as organic);
- Livestock are given organically grown feed;
- Land must be free of chemical applications for three years before its crops can be considered organic;
- Written farm plans and audit trails are required.

A Pious Perspective

by Fr. Pius X Harding

The first in a four-part series on the life of St. Joseph, from an original address to seminarians.

Saint Joseph stands in opposition to our society which seems to believe that "manhood" is expressed primarily through sexual self-gratification, especially at the expense of a woman. Let's face it, we were all born male, but to become a man is a spiritual endeavor not every male embraces. A popular family therapist puts it this way: "Any male can be a sperm donor, but it takes a real man to be a father." Saint Joseph is that real man, willing to forego the pleasures of human sexuality for the great task of being a father to the Son of God. Are we willing to forego these pleasures in order to love our bride the Church and be a spiritual father to all Her children? Love is the only adequate motivation for this work of spiritual fatherhood. In order to love properly, one's heart must be free. This freedom is founded upon purity, and purity is safeguarded by the strong citadel of virtue. (Virtue, as you know, finds its root in the Latin word for man: *vir*) Chastity is the guardian of a pure heart, hence it is the servant of freedom. It might be helpful to recall those rightly famous words of Saint Augustine:

"In the first dawning of my

youth, I had begged of Thee chastity, but by halves..." give me



chastity, but not yet awhile;" for I was afraid lest Thou shouldst hear me too soon, and heal me of the

disease which I rather wished to have satisfied than extinguished, I longed to be delivered, but was kept fast bound, not with exterior chains but with my own iron will. The enemy held my will, and of it he made a chain with which he fettered me fast; for from a perverse will was created wicked desire or lust, and the serving of this lust produced custom, and custom not restrained produced a kind of necessity with which, as with links fastened one to another, I was shackled in cruel slavery."

We, who are called by God to love, cannot allow ourselves to be enslaved to lust if we are to be true spiritual fathers. It's not easy to be pure of heart in a society saturated in sensuality, but it is a battle which must be won, for purity of heart is prerequisite to communion with God. Don't ask for chastity "by halves". It will only be a cruel slavery. Saint Joseph, the most chaste spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary will help us to live a properly ordered life, pure of heart, free to love Jesus, free to love those to whom he sends us. God will be faithful to the covenant He makes with you. Trust Him. ■

What it really comes down to is God's design in nature. Beginning gardeners are sometimes surprised to learn that the phrase "organic gardening" does not *just* mean: no spraying, chemicals or hormones. Organic farming means working *with* nature. This way of life seeks to restore balance to the land and environment so that nature can do its job as efficiently as possible. When we do it this way, we are working with what God has given us, rich fertile soils with everything in nature provided to nurture, produce and sustain a plentiful harvest, without putting ourselves or the environment at risk. ■

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Mission Statement

Founded in January, 1995, St. Joseph's Center for the Domestic Church is a Catholic apostolate dedicated to serving the family. Our mission is to help families recognize their role as the "domestic church", the Church at home, and to re-establish the home as a sacred refuge.

Visit our Website:

www.domesticchurch.us

Send donations to:

P.O. Box 718
Lafayette, OR 97127

An excerpt from Hope's Edge by
Francis Moore Lappe and Anna Lappe

Jim began by telling us about his life. He was raised on the farm, left for the restaurant business in the south and came back in 1994. "My father had just died of cancer. It was a terrible death. We couldn't prove it, but everyone in the family blamed the farm chemicals. He was the one who did all the spraying of the fields...That's when we decided to go organic, all of us--ten families. Neighbors told us, 'You're nuts!' We did suffer through trying times because it takes three years without chemicals before you can sell as certified organic and get premium price.

As we were shifting to organic, our corn didn't look so good. One neighbor said, 'Hey Jim, what are you growing there--pineapples? I've never seen such lousy looking corn.'

Now, farmers who scorned us are asking how they can do it. This summer, five of our neighbor's fields are dead from the leaf hopper. A neighbor sprayed two or three times but it didn't work. The insect damage went right up the edge of our fields, but our crops are still healthy. Healthy plants in healthy soil will not be killed by bugs. Bugs scavenge for unhealthy plants."

St. Joseph's Center Retreat for Married Couples

THEME: Spousal Love
RETREAT MASTER: Fr. Brian Mullady O.P.
WHEN: June 4-6th, 2004
WHERE: Our Lady of Peace Retreat House,
Beaverton Oregon.

This retreat will be about the characteristics of the spousal love of the soul for God, which grace gives us. Special attention will be placed on the three ages of the spiritual life as described by St. Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and many other authors. Then this will be applied to the spousal love of marriage and family, fatherhood and motherhood.

*For more information call 503-864-9396
Grant monies are available.*

Holy Conversations

Interview with Dr. Charles W. Norris

Dr. Norris is a retired OB/GYN, and graduate of Georgetown Medical School. He and his wife Carol reside in Camus, WA.

Andreas: Dr. Norris, in the Catholic Church, we understand that *natural family planning* is the only morally acceptable means available to married couples for the regulation of births. I hope to show through this interview that it is the only healthy means as well. You are the author of a book, unfortunately out of print entitled Know Your Body on the subject of natural family planning. Let's begin by talking about the *ovulation method*.

Dr. Norris: I became aware of the ovulation method back in 1973. I was practicing in Salem, Oregon and I have to confess that, at that time I was writing prescriptions for birth control pills, and I was tying women's tubes after the third and fourth caesarean section. I didn't feel comfortable; I'm a cradle Catholic.

Then in 1973, a woman literally tossed a book on my desk, looked me in the eye and said, "Here is something you might be interested in." So I read The Ovulation Method by John and Evelyn Billings from cover to cover and I could hardly believe what I was reading!! I was reading that women could define the limits of the fertile phase of their reproductive cycle by the flow of what they referred to as "fertility mucus", which begins at various times in the cycle in the pre-ovulatory phase and which lasts for about 3-5 days; and about

the build-up of the mucus so that the sensation of this build-up gets increasingly stronger; I'm told it's a sensation of lubrication or slipperiness.

So I decided to ask the next one hundred new patients that came into my office about this, and ninety-nine of the women more or less said "yes, so what?"

Andreas: You did an informal survey of your own to confirm there was anything to this?

The woman's body communicates when it is fertile.

- Physical Mucus
- Mental Awareness
- Sensation

Dr. Norris: Exactly. The women all confirmed that they noticed mucus, but they didn't know why it was there or what it represented.

On the basis of the information I decided, "This has got to be true", and I became a strong proponent of the ovulation method. I also said to myself, "If the Catholic Church is right on this one, they're right on all the rest of it, too." Even though I was on the slippery slopes I said, "Uh oh, stop here. It's time to firmly come back to the Church of your birth." I've been an active proponent of natural family

planning and of the ovulation method ever since.

Andreas: Describe the "slippery slopes". What is going on in the field of obstetrics and gynecology?

Dr. Norris: I'll try to describe what my beliefs have led me to.

The mucus symptom is by far the most studied physiologic phenomenon in the history of medical science. There have been over 750,000 hormonal assays to confirm the relationship of the flow of the fertility mucus and the flow of the pituitary hormones and the estrogen & progesterone that make up the woman's cycle.

Andreas: It's available in the medical research articles?

Dr. Norris: Yes. It's the medical research of Dr. James B. Brown of Melbourne, Australia. I think he's published about 240 articles; there are many references to his work.

Andreas: And he conducted his research during the 1960's and 1970's?

Dr. Norris: Yes, but it was actually Dr. Billings who was the originator of the ovulation method; he started this research in 1953 when he was asked by Monsignor Caterinich in Melbourne, Australia to investigate rhythm failures. (Editor's note: This refers to failures of the so-called rhythm method in the *avoidance* of pregnancy.) So he went to the medical literature and found that

there was a paper published by a Dr. Smith back in 1855 which refers to leukorrhea, which means "white flow". Other articles had been published; not many. He decided to investigate...This led to the development of the rules of the ovulation method, which evolved over a period of 30 to 40 years.

Andreas: Just a very brief mention of the *rhythm method*. This refers strictly to a counting of days in the woman's fertility cycle, does it not, where one isn't actually observing bodily symptoms?

Dr. Norris: That's correct. What is true about human physiology is that nobody's body adheres to a mathematical, dogmatic succession of numbers; it's as simple as that.

To continue with the history, the Doctors Billings in the 1960's conducted a well-known test of the ovulation method on the south pacific island of Tonga. They tested about 1000 couples there and found that the method had an efficiency rate (if the intention was to avoid pregnancy) of about 99%!

Andreas: That's astounding.

Dr. Norris: When followed, this method is more effective than the birth control pill.

So the research is available, but when you talk about gynecologists and doctors in general...you see, only half of the world's population (females) enjoys this physiologic phenomenon. The other half (males) doesn't know what you're talking about (doctors included). So it's up to the women to really insist upon the fact that this is happening to their bodies. If the

couple is willing to abstain during the mucus, i.e. fertile phase of the reproductive cycle, they can avoid pregnancy. But they *do* have to pay strict attention to detail; this is very important.

Andreas: So this information hit in the 1960's?

Dr. Norris: After the research in Tonga, Dr. James B. Brown (Edinburgh, Scotland), a colleague of Dr. Billings came to Australia to verify through

"Hormonal levels were flattened so that they remained at a low level throughout the cycle. Dr. Brown was *appalled* (emphasis added) by these observations and concluded, as many doctors had already suspected, that the pill was producing a very serious abnormality within the whole of the woman's reproductive system and that under no circumstances should such medical treatment be encouraged." (*THE QUEST leading to the discovery of The Billings Ovulation Method* from the Bulletin of the Ovulation Method Research and Reference Centre of Australia. Vol. 29, #1; March, 2002)

hormonal studies the Billings findings; that was in the early 1960's.

Andreas: Right about the same time that the contraceptive pill was introduced.

Dr. Norris: Yes, and took off.

Andreas: I'm wondering why these findings of Billings and

Brown have not been taken seriously by gynecologists. I was reading the results of one of Dr. Brown's studies involving the contraceptive pill that showed how women's hormonal levels were dangerously "flattened" by the contraceptive pill (see quote in box at center).

This is an extremely serious matter where the health of women is concerned!

Dr. Norris: Absolutely. Let me suggest that society came to doctors, who are trained to treat and "control" disease and said, "There's a problem with overpopulation, and we want you doctors to handle the fertility of people so that we can cut down the pregnancy rate, i.e. we want you to control people's fertility". The problem is that doctors are trained to treat disease, so it should be no surprise that doctors began treating fertility, a perfectly normal physiologic function as if it were a disease.

Andreas: What is motivating doctors to do this? Are they not basically motivated to heal? They've taken the Hippocratic Oath and, I assume are concerned about the well-being of their patients. It's apparent now what the effects of the contraceptive pill are; they are facing a difficult dilemma.

Dr. Norris: In response to your question, Dr. Brown wrote: "Why the application of the mucus system has been rejected is a complete mystery to me".

The way I see it, doctors like to be in control of what they are treating (and, as already mentioned most of them do not ovulate). As long as the so-called

side effects (actually direct known undesirable effects) are at an "acceptable" level, they're willing to turn their back on the rest of it. I did it myself.

Andreas: But you were also open, when the Billings method came across your path to consider it...

Dr. Norris: I was hungering for something like that.

Andreas: Did this have more to do with your Faith?

Dr. Norris: I think that it had as much to do with my Faith as with anything else. Maybe the Holy Spirit gave me a good shaking.

Andreas: Something that I find so beautiful about the ovulation method: there was a desire to bring it to the third world. It's a simple method, from what I understand and something that can truly be of service to the poor.

Dr. Norris: Yes. Study after study has demonstrated exactly that. There are just four rules to the ovulation method.

(see inset box for rules)

Andreas: Four rules. All of this implies that the women are taught how to read the signs. There are books written about the method?

Dr. Norris: Yes; and it is very important to chart. The woman is expected to pay very close attention to symptoms during daily activities, and she can train herself to do so.

I'm a graduate of Georgetown University Medical School, and right now I'm trying to get the school to teach the physiology and the symptomatology of the mucus symptom to their medical students, not the ovulation method itself; just the physiology and symptomatology.

Andreas: I think most women assume that doctors already know

this very basic information about the woman's body.

Dr. Norris: I don't think doctors do.

And there's another problem with this. If a doctor were to sit down and instruct the patient in the ovulation method, you can see where it would take quite a bit of the man's time: maybe an hour, or a half hour over two or three sessions. A lot of these people don't have that kind of time.

Andreas: That's actually a very short period of time for the woman to grasp the information. And then, of course she could take care of herself *by* herself, along with her husband; it's a team effort. They could do this without the

expense of the contraceptive pill, and with a much better outlook for the woman's health, both present and future. It's a tragedy, isn't it?

Dr. Norris: Yes, I think so. Prescribing the pill is the quickest thing to do.

Andreas: It's a tragedy that the contraceptive pill came on the market just as all of this research was coming to light 45 years ago.

Dr. Norris: As you know, God works in very mysterious ways.

Andreas: So there'll be a time for this. Is that the good news?

Dr. Norris: It'll be a ticking time bomb, as George Weigel says, set to go off sometime in the third millennium of the Catholic Church. ■

Rule 1: Avoid intercourse on days of heavy bleeding during menstruation.

Rule 2: Alternate evenings are available for intercourse when these days have been recognized as infertile. [basic infertile pattern or BIP] In other words, completely dry OR a non-changing mucus sensation. It's a mucus sensation that does not change from day to day; it's always the same.

Rule 3: Avoid intercourse on any day of discharge or bleeding that interrupts the basic infertile pattern. Allow three days of basic infertile pattern afterwards before resuming intercourse on the fourth evening.

Rule 4: From the fourth day after peak day until the onset of the next menses, there is no possibility of pregnancy occurring.

*Basic infertile pattern: completely dry OR unchanging mucus pattern.

*Peak day: Last day that the lubricative ("slippery") sensation is present.

(indicates maximum fertility) Avoid intercourse for three days after that.

*Early dry days rule: use every other night for coital relations.

*These rules are acceptable for the avoidance of pregnancy if, with grave reason this is the desired outcome.

*Please consult an official source.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: CCC#1509

The Eucharist [is] the bread that gives eternal life and that St. Paul suggests is connected with bodily health.