



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

As we do every summer, our Church is participating in *Natural Family Planning Awareness Week*, (July 19—25). No, that doesn't mean we have another special second collection. But...we do ask for something from the faithful: take the time for some reflection and prayer on Natural Family Planning.

You might think, "I don't have time to study God's plan for married love. I have plenty of worries and concerns on my plate right now." Fair enough. Perhaps I can work on my philosophy of life when it comes to doing God's will or doing my will. This year's theme is "*Live the truth and beauty of God's plan for married love.*" God's plan, not mine.

But, so often, we rebel against any idea of a plan by God. We have our own plans, our own designs. For instance, today I will determine whether I want to be male or female. I'll design me in my own image. Science and technology will help me. We will call it "freedom." Or...We will define marriage according to our own pleasure, not divine designs. We will call it "equality."

Too often, we feel most at home back in the Garden walking in the footsteps of Adam and Eve. I can do what I want, never mind what my Creator says. Pride presents itself front and center. I know better than God. 'If you do exist, God, don't call me, I'll call you when I want something, and you best respond to my request according to my personal plans.' No matter how unpopular, no matter what everybody else thinks, we are called to live the truth and beauty of God's plan for married love. The truth is God does have a plan that is beautiful, life-giving and practical.

Authentic family planning honors God's design by supporting the love-giving and life-giving nature of sexual intercourse. It promotes openness to new life and the value of the child. It helps to enrich the marital bond between husband and wife. Authentic family planning builds healthy and holy families. Through NFP, married couples celebrate and reverence God's vision of human sexuality.

Please visit our *NFP* office at our diocesan website: [www.rcdony.org](http://www.rcdony.org) to learn more about this important element of the Church's teaching on marriage. We are truly blessed to have Suzanne and Angelo Pietropaoli serve as our diocesan directors of Natural Family Planning. Please contact them at the *NFP* office at 518-483-0459 or via email at [apietropaoli@rcdony.org](mailto:apietropaoli@rcdony.org) for more information or assistance in this important ministry that makes for stronger marriages and healthy, happier families.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry R. LaValley".

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg