**NOVEMBER 27, 2019**

**TO:** PRIESTS

**FR:** COORDINATOR OF FAMILY & LIFE PROGRAMS

**RE: SPONSOR COUPLE 2019 ADDITION: NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING/ CATHOLIC FERTILITY AWARENESS SESSION FOR ENGAGED COUPLES**

**CC:** DEACONS, SPONSOR COUPLES, HFCL

**WHO:**

Priests, Deacons, Family Life Coordinators, Sponsor Couples, Parish Level Marriage Preparation

**WHAT:**

The Diocese of Evansville is adding (1) NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING/CATHOLIC FERTILITY AWARENESS class for engaged couples. This class will replace current NFP curriculum in the marriage preparation programs, thus the NFP material in the marriage preparation programs will no longer need to be covered by our Sponsor Couples. This includes For Better Forever, Joy Filled Marriage and Unveiled marriage preparation programs.

**WHEN:**

 **EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2019**, all engaged couples will attend an Engaged Couple natural family planning/Catholic fertility awareness session.

 AT THIS TIME, Sponsor Couples will no longer need to review the NFP sections in their programs.

**WHERE:**

Classes created specifically for this need will be delivered monthly and across the diocese to ensure ease of access for our engaged couples.

**WHY:**

1. Currently, Natural Family Planning/Catholic Fertility awareness is taught by Sponsor Couple volunteers who are not specifically trained in natural family planning techniques and methods.
2. Many Sponsor Couples state that they feel uncomfortable discussing this subject.
3. Many Sponsor Couples state that they feel unqualified to discuss this subject.
4. This topic is often taught inconsistently due to #2 and #3 or not at all.
5. For the above reasons, many dioceses are already taking this topic out of the sponsor couple programs directly (thus saving time during that session) and adding a separate session focusing only on NFP. This session is taught by trained professionals who keep up with the variety of methods and ever changing updates to these methods.
6. Many Catholics today are shown to be misinformed or uninformed completely regarding Catholic fertility, natural family planning methods and their effectiveness in spacing and achieving pregnancy.
7. Trained professionals are better able to dismiss faulty information and stereotypes circulating in the general population as well as in our parishes regarding natural family planning and Catholic fertility awareness.

**HOW:**

1. The Diocese of Evansville currently collaborates with a regional not-for-profit, the Holy Family Center for Life, which currently provides Natural Family Planning Introductory Sessions, Natural Family Planning detailed sessions and now will provide our NFP for Engaged Couples sessions.
2. The Holy Family Center for Life consists of trained, professional, dedicated men and women who reside in our diocese and attend our parishes.
3. Classes will be FREE to our engaged couples and will be no longer than 45 minutes with 15 minutes for questions and answers.
4. Classes will be held in collaboration with the Office of Family and Life/Catholic Charities.