



**St. Anthony of Padua**, patron against infertility

**St. Gerard Majella**, patron of pregnant women

- **Pain of infertility:** Coping with infertility is grieving the loss of having biological children. Infertility is not usually discovered until a couple wants a child, and often comes as a surprise to the couple. Infertility is on many women's minds daily. At the point of reaching out to you, the couple is suffering. An approach of accompaniment and listening is the most beneficial pastoral approach. Consider recommending the resources available from the Office of NFP (listed below) when the time is right.
- **Worthy in God's eyes.** When questioning why they haven't conceived, the couple may feel that they aren't worthy of God's blessing or love. Men and women may blame themselves, their pasts, something they did or didn't do, for why they are unable to conceive. It is an extremely isolated and lonely cross to carry. While there is never an easy answer to "why me?", there is no doubt that they are loved by God and the Church. He is with them every step of the way. They are no less of a man or woman. God still has a plan for them and their family.
- **Medical, emotional, spiritual support.** Couples touched by infertility need much support in all these areas. The Office of NFP can help with the medical support and NFP methods, but we also have the Enkindle Infertility Ministry to help with the emotional and spiritual support. Couples can be connected with a seminarian to pray specifically for them. At the parish level, consider offering a support group, spiritual guidance, etc. There are other resources listed on our [Resource website](#).
- **NFP compared to artificial reproductive technologies.** Reproductive technologies such as IVF (Invitro fertilization), IUI (Intrauterine Insemination), surrogacy, etc., may be perceived as a reasonable solution to infertility, but they are considered immoral options by the Church. For one thing, they introduce a third party into the act of creation and, as with IVF, may be abortifacient by the destruction of embryos. The use of NFP is morally permissible, cheaper and safer than these artificial technologies. (See USCCB regarding reproductive technology.)
- **The Role of NaProTECHNOLOGY.** NaProTECHNOLOGY (NaPro) is the medical practice of interpreting the Creighton Model System (CrMS) of charting to diagnose and treat reproductive issues including infertility. NaPro is over twice as effective for treating infertility as IVF. The St. Louis area is blessed to have several NaPro trained physicians ([See NFP Providers list](#)).

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- **The issue of adoption.** A couple may or may not be ready to consider adoption. Adoption may seem like the next logical step for some couples, but for other couples, it may feel like giving up on being able to conceive. Encourage adoption (infant or foster-adopt) if they seem open and mention the Archbishop Robert J. Carlson Adoption Grant to help with the financial burden.
- **Secondary infertility.** Even a couple that has children can experience secondary infertility (the inability to become pregnant or carry a baby to term after previously giving birth to a baby) which can be just as frustrating and painful as primary infertility.
- **Thoughtful touches.** Consider offering up Mass, rosary, and/or prayers for the couple to let them know that they are not forgotten. Send a personal card around Mother's/ Father's Day or holidays to let the couple know that they are in your prayers.
- **Being sensitive to mothers and fathers.** Mother's Day and Father's Day can be particularly difficult for women and men who want to be parents but are not. Some have even admitted to avoiding Mass on that day to avoid being embarrassed or emotionally triggered by not being able to stand for a blessing. Consider wording your blessing and/or petitions to be especially sensitive to those who have experienced infertility or loss of a child and giving the blessing when the entire congregation is standing. There are some suggestions on our blog - see resources link below.
- **Avoid common reactions.** Avoid asking young couples why they aren't expecting a baby yet, even if you are trying to encourage young families. Avoid statements that may feel dismissive of their deep struggle and suffering. (i.e. "Pray, hope and don't worry!" "All in God's time" etc.).



## Refer To:

- Infertility Rack Card
- Archbishop Robert J. Carlson Adoption Grant
- NaPro Physicians list
- NFP Providers list
- Introductory Session Schedule
- Mother's Day and Father's Day suggestions
- Good Shepherd Children & Family Services
- USCCB Resource on Reproductive Technologies
- Springs In the Desert Catholic Infertility Ministry



See current links to these and other up-to-date resources at [bit.ly/NFP-TP-Resources](https://bit.ly/NFP-TP-Resources)