

Green is the New Black

How NFP is good for your soul *and* the earth

There is no doubt that green is “in,” and veteran environmentalists hope that this is one warming trend that continues. But first, what does “Green is the new black” mean? Most ladies and fashion hipsters know the phrase, “_____ is the new black.” It means the object of the phrase is the new basic—the black dress, the go-with-everything shoes, jeans, etc.—the thing that is a foundation to fashionable living. The phrase has been co-opted for non-fashion arenas, and I use it here to talk about environmentalism in balance.

While every day is a green day, Earth Day is solemnity in the secular liturgy of environmentalism. There appeared both government and grassroots efforts and celebrations across the globe, with people of all ages from ordinary folks to politicians to A-list celebrities. It was all quiet on the family planning front, though.

While some environmentalists grow caustic over the hip-factor of caring for our planet because it’s something they’ve been at for a long time, I say let’s take advantage of the green fervor to bring to light something many greenies haven’t thought twice about: Natural Family Planning, or NFP.

Doesn’t it seem interesting that we’ll go to great lengths to ensure our meat, dairy and other grocery products are “all natural” and hormone free, but then we’ll turn around and ingest, poke or patch our bodies with all sorts of synthetic hormones, the ramifications of which we’re still discovering?

The National Catholic Register wrote last July about the serious effects we’re seeing in the environment because of the residual effects of drugs, or what biologists call “endocrine disruptors”—particularly chemical contraceptives. Now, if the human side effects of hormonal contraception don’t catch your attention, perhaps non-mating intersex fish will hook you. Colorado biologist John Woodling, speaking to the Denver Post in 2005 said, It’s “the first thing that I’ve seen as a scientist that really scared me.” We’re not talking one freak fish here; it’s a significant problem, a problem so significant that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the American Pharmacists Association have a major public-awareness campaign regarding this contamination called “Smar_xt Disposal.”

Years before the green trend train got going, Pope John Paul II said in 1990 that we have "a grave responsibility to preserve [the earth's] order for the well-being of future generations." Pope Benedict, dubbed as “The Green Pope,” further emphasizes the need to “focus on the needs of sustainable development.” However, he reminds us that there must be a balance between the environment and people reminding us that humans are "the only one of all creatures on this earth that can establish a free and conscious relationship with his creator."

With Pope Benedict, I urge my brothers and sisters in Christ and all people of good will to steward the earth’s treasures, but also to remember that we must value human life above all. “Population control” programs treat the humans as disposable carbon consumers, rather than

unrepeatable and irreplaceable gifts from God, not to mention potential problem solvers to the world's social and climate conundrums.

The contraceptive mentality of today's culture sees fertility as disease and babies as burdens, but we forget that children are a blessing, and within each child is a God-given mission to be great and to do great things. Al Gore and Davis Guggenheim teamed up to make the 2006 Oscar award winning *An Inconvenient Truth*, their documentary on the global warming crisis. It was groundbreaking moment for filmmaking as well as the Green movement, but it would not have been possible without their conceptions and births.

NFP is of inestimable value for the world for more than just the environmental credibility. It also fosters fertility appreciation, love of children and has marital and psychological benefits. It is shared system of family planning that fosters communication, builds prudence and self-control and decreases sexual objectification. As I've said before, NFP doesn't just have natural benefits; it has *supernatural* benefits. Gore and Guggenheim co-created a film that won an Oscar, but couples who cooperate with God's plan for marriage and sex experience a personal & spiritual vitality that not only nourishes communication and mutual self respect, but it makes them icons of the Most Holy Trinity. That's not a red carpet line, but a heavenly promise.