Letter to the editor NFP and NaProTechnology

HELEN WATT

Anscombe Bioethics Centre, Oxford, UK

As the editor of the Anscombe Bioethics Centre's new book *Fertility and Gender: Issues in Reproductive and Sexual Ethics* (Watt 2011), I was delighted to read Sr. Renee Mirkes' generous review in the May issue of *The Linacre Quarterly* (Mirkes 2012). Aware of Sr. Mirkes's extensive experience in assisting couples with fertility problems, I approached the review with some trepidation, hence was especially grateful for her response.

I was, however, slightly puzzled by one comment made in the review: that natural family planning (NFP) as a licit means of addressing fertility problems was a topic missing from the book. True, there is no paper in *Fertility and Gender* dedicated to this issue alone. However, my own paper looks not only (as do several others in the book) at controversial fertility treatments such as GIFT, but at other responses to fertility concerns, both those controversial for Catholics (NFP advice to unmarried couples; "seminal fluid collection devices") and those less controversial (NaProTechnology and other NFP-based treatment and/or management approaches).

NaProTechnology is indeed an effective approach to treating infertility. The Anscombe Centre, at our 2010 conference from which many of the book's papers

were derived, benefited from an excellent conference presentation (if not, unfortunately, a follow-up text) from a NaProTechnology practitioner in Ireland who explained his own experience and that of colleagues in helping couples to achieve pregnancy. This treatment approach faces many challenges in the hostile environment of the United Kingdom, but is certainly proving most successful both in and outside the U.S. (Stanford et al. 2008; Tham et al. 2012).

REFERENCES

- Mirkes, R. 2012. Book Review of *Fertility and Gender: Issues in Reproductive and Sexual Ethics* by Helen Watt. *Linacre Quarterly* 79:245–6.
- Stanford, J. B., T. A. Parnell, and P. C. Boyle. 2008. Outcomes from treatment of infertility with natural procreative technology in an Irish General Practice. *Board of Family Medicine* 21:375–84.
- Tham, E., K. Schliep, and J. Stanford. 2012. Natural procreative technology for infertility and recurrent miscarriage: outcomes in a Canadian family practice. *Canadian Family Physician* 58:E267–74.
- Watt, H. ed. 2011. *Fertility and Gender: Issues in Reproductive and Sexual Ethics*. Oxford: Anscombe Centre. Available at: www.bioethics.org.uk.