



WHEN NFP IS HARD

‘I had a plan and a baby wasn’t in it’

by Maria Garabis Davis

After 10 years of charting my cycles, I was a natural family planning fail. I was furious.

I think I took five pregnancy tests that day. Looking back, it may actually have been seven.

I was chasing a toddler at Mass that bright Sunday morning when I was suddenly hit with the realization that I was off schedule. And by off schedule, I mean, way off schedule. My heart was instantly in my throat and I was in full panic mode by the time we gathered our little chickadees into the car and drive the mile and a half home from church. I didn’t even leave the car, hastily explaining to my husband that I needed to run a quick errand, and I was off to the first of three pharmacies I would descend upon that day.

Each time the test blared neon-light

positive, I stared down in disbelief and took another. With each one I found myself more urgently pleading with God that the tests were a fluke, some crazy cosmic joke that would somehow have a different ending. When I was finally defeated, I sat on my bed and cried and cried and I continued to cry for the next few weeks.

I couldn’t have thought of worse timing. I was in the middle of applying for local jobs so I could stop my weekly Ohio-Washington DC plane commute, which had become more and more of a burden on my marriage and children. We were financially strapped. I felt underwater with the kids that I had. And worst of all, six weeks earlier I had lost my beloved mother to a sudden and unexpected brain aneurism. Her death had left me reeling. Not only was I scrambling to secure the childcare she had provided, but I had lost my biggest fan. She was an irreplaceable support in the day-to-day responsibilities of raising a family as a working mother. What would I do with another baby?

This unplanned and unexpected pregnancy crushed me. I was confused. I was heartbroken. I felt let down by God. After 10 years of successfully monitoring and charting my cycles, I was a natural family planning fail. I was furious.

So I moped. And I was cranky.

My darkness only lifted when someone finally had the guts to say to the moodiest pregnant woman in the world, “Why are you so upset about this? Isn’t this the point of natural family planning anyway – to leave room for God to work so that He can plan your family?”

And I cried. And I felt incredibly and insanely guilty because I knew I had nothing really to mope, cry and be cranky about. Unlike others in unplanned pregnancy situations, I had a job with great benefits, a husband who was excited for another baby, a house full of baby accessories and no health problems. I felt guilty that I felt so terribly bitter about having a baby when I had so many close friends and loved ones who bore the heavy, heavy cross of infertility.

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this? Isn’t this the point of natural family planning anyway – to leave room for God to work so that He can plan your family?”

And I realized it was true. This pregnancy blindsided me because, according to my chart, it was simply not possible. It wasn’t part of my plan for my life. But nothing is impossible with God and He knew what I needed. Without knowing it, what I needed was this baby.

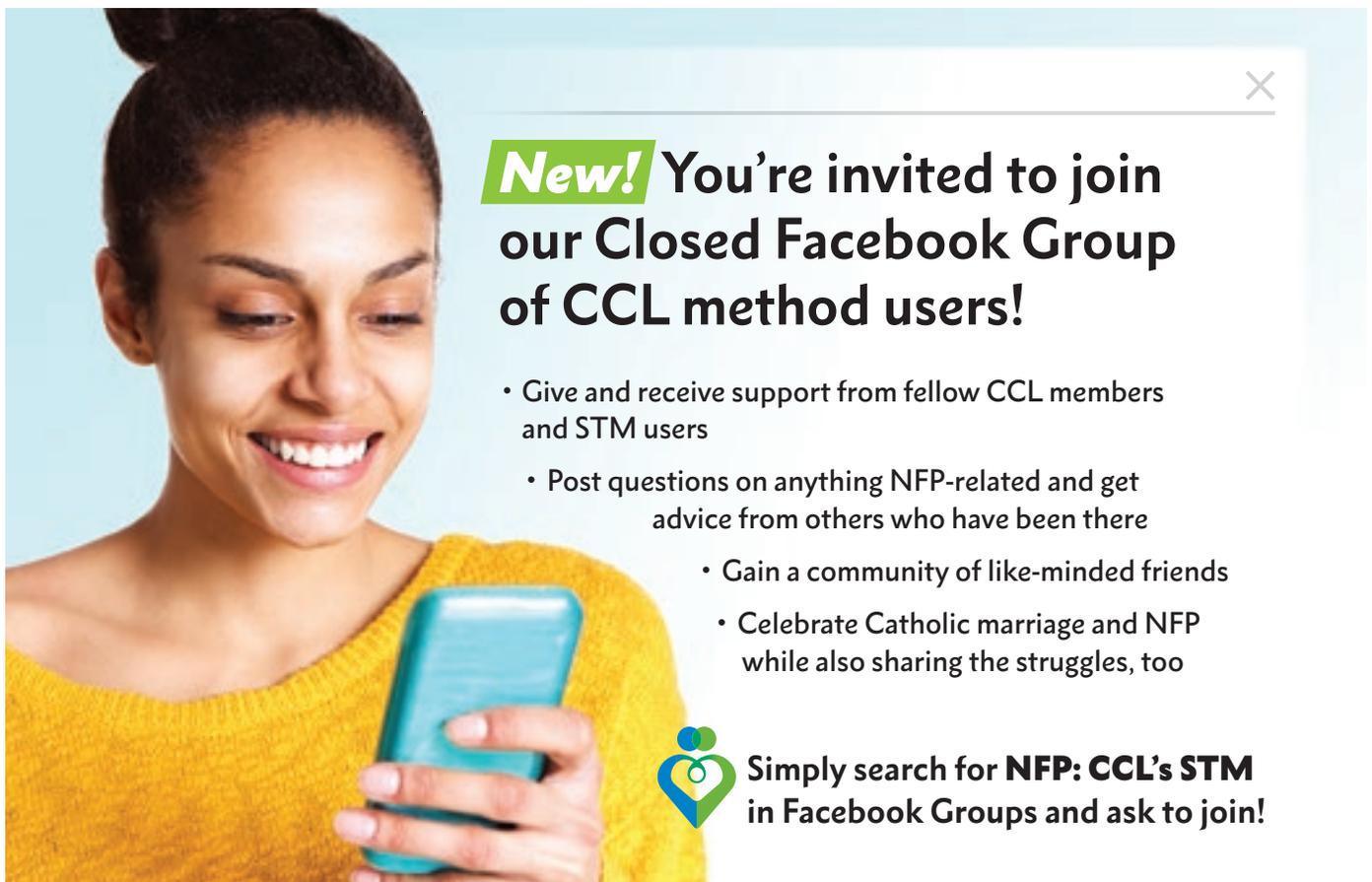
My Zelig, now 2 years old, is my greatest source of joy. She has filled a void we didn’t even know existed and established a unique and irreplaceable place in our family.

I simply cannot imagine my life without her.

Through her, I learned that it’s OK to not be excited about an unexpected pregnancy. Because in the end, that pregnancy is not a pregnancy; it’s a bright, sweet, bouncing baby with a name.

Every night when I put Zelig to sleep I tell her the same story: Once my heart was broken and God loved me so much that He sent you to heal my heart and fill our home with joy and laughter. She smiles. And I smile too, content with the realization that God’s plan for my life will always surpass all of my expectations. [BT](#)

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