

**BIRTH CONTROL AND FAMILY PLANNING
IN THE LIGHT OF HUMANAE VITAE
(CONTINUATION)**

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III. The Marital Act and the Parental Act

A Misconception

I was once approached by a certain professional who said: "Father, I cannot afford to have more children. I already have twelve, and still God gives me more!" I had to repress an answer that was surging to my lips in the following terms: "My good friend, do you mean

¹⁰ I should be extremely sorry to say anything which could either directly or remotely be construed unfavorably to the cause of virtue; cannot think that the vices which relate to the sex are the only vices which are to be considered in a moral question; or that they are even the greatest and the most degrading to the human character. They can rarely or never be committed without producing unhappiness somewhere or other, and therefore ought always to be strongly reprobated; but there are other vices the effects of which are still more pernicious; and there are other situations which lead more certainly to moral offenses than the refraining from marriage." *Op. cit.*, Bk. IV, Ch. IV. "Malthus advocates the subjection of instinct to reason and the control of births through chastity. He wants people to be educated to chastity: in all this we cannot but agree with him. He holds that apart from this means an excessively high birth rate can never be checked save by measures harmful to social well-being, and here again he is right. He further shows himself supporter of a population growth proportioned to the increase of resources: No one can ask for more. "Men must therefore be educated to put off marriage until they are able to support a family, while parents must be induced to restrict their offspring to a reasonable number by the practice of continence." *Leclercq Op. cit.*, p. 263, 262.

* This is a continuation of footnote n. 10 found in the first installment of this article which appeared in our November issue. Ed.

to tell me that, even if you do not sow corn seeds in your farm God will give you corn stalks?" There is a misconception involved in this matter. People believe that, just because they are married, they have an unqualified right to the marital act. But, one thing is a right, and another thing is the claim to make use of that right. We distinguish them in our daily lives. Thus, e.g. every Filipino of age, has a right to vote or to suffrage; but he does not have a claim to the use of that right if he has failed to register, or if he does not know how to read or write, or becomes mentally deranged, wherefrom he cannot discharge that right properly.

Parental Act, Act of Responsibility

In like manner, whereas the procreational or parental act is an act of responsibility, as measured by human and moral standards, even if spouses have a right to such an act, if they can no longer discharge the parental responsibility of bringing up more children, they have no claim to make further use of the procreational or parental act. Much less are they entitled to the use of contraceptives in order to indulge in the said act, during the fertile periods. In other words, they should practice periodic continence and abstain from the marital act during the fertile periods; because it is then, when the marital act is also a procreational or parental act. This means that they have to observe the rhythm or *safe* period. Marriage is not essentially a state for sexual indulgement. To view marriage in such terms is to degrade it to the level of a kind of legal prostitution and debauchery.¹¹

The Basic Principle

We have to distinguish in the union of spouses, the marital act from the procreational or parental act. Those who, on account of

¹¹ "There is nothing particularly noble about a man and woman who marry in order to be happy and to satisfy their passion."

"There is no moral grandeur in a life wherein a person seeks merely to be as happy as possible. Man's moral greatness is proportionate to the degree in which he serves a cause that transcends him. In so far as a man seeks his happiness exclusively in married life, the latter is devoid of moral worth. The limited family based on the selfishness of parents is without moral values; it runs the risk, too, of moulding offspring who will likewise be lacking in moral worth." Leclercq. *Op. cit.*, p. 214 & 217.

economic straits, cannot afford to have and bring up more children, should refrain from union is a parental act; and they may engage in union only during the safe period of the woman, because then the act is only a marital act. The principle behind this discrimination is the following, namely: no one has a claim to exercise a right that is associated with a responsibility, if he cannot duly discharge that responsibility. Or to put it more clearly: married people have no further claim to the exercise of the right to procreate more children, if they can no longer discharge the responsibility of bringing them up, in the proper manner.

The Legal and the Ethical

Juridically, however, that is, legally, owing to the nature of the marital contract, "by which each party gives and accepts a perpetual and exclusive right over the body for the exercise of acts suitable by themselves to the procreation of children" (Cf. Canon 1081, 2), even in the said case, married people would still have a claim to the exercise of the parental act. This is not to be wondered at; because what is legal is not exactly coincident with what is ethical, but in some instances what is ethical may be narrower than what is legal. And so, it may well happen that one may have a certain claim according to positive law, but not according to natural law. Thus, one has a claim according to positive law to make use of his money for sinful pastimes, or to destroy his property, e.g. excess grain; but he has no claim according to natural law to do so.

It is mainly owing to the reason that their legal claim to the procreational act still remains intact, that married people believe that they still have a claim to the exercise of the procreational act, according to natural law, even when they are persuaded that they cannot afford to bring up more children.¹²

¹² However, even if in the absolute it is easy to say that, when couples can no longer afford to bring up more children, they have no longer the claim according to natural law to the exercise of the procreational or parental act, yet, as we shall see later, in the concrete individual instances it is very hard, if not almost impossible, to determine with certainty, when a couple can not bring up one or more children anymore. And consequently, it is also very hard to determine with certainty when, a couple no longer has a claim, accord-

IV. Natural and Anti-Natural Methods

Fundamental Difference

Many do not see much difference between the observance of the safe-period and the use of contraceptives in the pursuance of birth control. But, as we have already indicated, the ethical issue is not the limitation of births when called for, but the ethical nature of the means employed thereto. In the use of the safe-period or rhythm self control is practised; whereas, in the use of contraceptives, sexual wantonness is the order of the day. In the observance of the former there is no scheming and action against the ways of nature but an acceptance and a following of the same. In the use of contraceptives there is a scheming and action against the ways of nature and the designs of the Creator governing human nature and fertility.¹³

Natural and Anti-Natural

The latter is true even in the use of the anovulant pill for contraceptive purposes. In other more censurable methods there is besides,

ing to natural law, to the exercise of the procreational act. This is analogous to the case of almsgiving. It is easy in general and in the abstract to say that, when a person can no longer afford to give alms, he is no longer bound to do so. But, in concrete individual instances, it is very difficult to determine when a man is really not in a position to give even five cents as alms anymore.

In fact, beggars manage to feed an extra mouth or two by begging more. But, bringing up children in beggary is not to bring them up in the proper manner and environment. And married people are not required or expected to go to such extreme recourse, because beggary is for them their way of living.

¹³ "Such a means of avoiding pregnancy differs radically from contraceptive techniques. It does not consist in preventing the normal functioning of nature; it consists merely in utilizing a more thorough knowledge of the working of nature. However, it presupposes in husband and wife some degree of self-control, since it requires that they refrain from gratifying their passion on certain days. So far, indeed, the irregularity of the menstrual cycle in most women renders necessary a margin of security which obliges couples to practice a partial continence that is relatively considerable. Married couples who make use of the Ogino-Knaus method do not sin against chastity. The latter does not oblige them to have conjugal intercourse at one time rather than at another; besides, while satisfying the secondary purpose of marriage, the husband and wife are personally placing no positive obstacles in the way of conception." Leclercq. *Op. cit.*, p. 256 f.

either the frustration of the parental act (condoms and spermicides), or the interpolation therewith (withdrawal), or interference with the procreational process (IUDs). When we hear or say that Nature must be respected in this regard, we should not take Nature in the materialistic and secularistic sense, but in the theistic sense as the work of God. And when we hear of the Natural Law, we should understand the design of the Creator implanted in the nature of men to govern it. Contraceptive methods are not only un-natural or artificial, but also anti-natural, that is against the natural order established by God; whereas periodic abstinence following the rhythm is the natural method.¹⁴

The Hardest Bone to Gnaw

The bone of contention which many dissenters found hardest to gnaw was the disapproval by Pope Paul of the use of the Pill for contraceptive purposes as immoral because it interferes with nature or the natural process of human fertility. The Pope did not say so expressly, but indirectly. Nonetheless, he made people understand it so. "Immoral, because it is against the ways of nature, against nature!" This, they think is the most unconvincing portion of the Papal teaching. "Don't we interfere with nature when we apply corrective or remedial surgery? Don't we interfere with nature and its ways when we apply medication against ailments and medical action to ward off death? Are these things immoral? Are not modern medical transplants interference with nature?"

Interference versus assistance

Many are persuaded that they have discovered here a flaw in the Papal teaching. The mildest comment in this regard is: "The Pope does not know what he is talking about." The strongest is: "The Pope has made a mistake!" The undercurrent in both is: "He should

¹⁴ The following comment is, therefore, a gross confusion of terms and concepts. "It happens that in many cases it is possible to pinpoint the time when results are certain to follow. So abstinence can be limited to such times. Such a form of *contraception* is called the *rhythm method* because the possibility of conception comes in rhythmic cycles." E. L. Victoriano, S.J.: In the Pope's Encyclical the Pill is not the issue. The Philippines Herald, Aug., 4, 1968, p. 14.

be ignored." Some who presume to know better, say: "How can the progestin pill be against nature, when it precisely imitates the inhibiting or anovulant ways of nature?" But, a simple distinction will dissipate the hullabaloo. Not every intervention is interference with nature. When the intervention is to help a weakened action of an individual human nature, or even to correct an abnormality or to salvage another, then the intervention is an assistance to the individual human nature concerned, and is not an action against Nature or its Order. But, when the intervention is to rout the design of Nature or its Order in individual human natures, even if for the purpose we should make use of a natural function found in the latter, then the intervention is an interference with Nature and its Order. The intervention concerned is against the Natural Law.

One Can Make Use of What is Natural to go Against Nature and the Natural Law

Let us grant that the contraceptive use of the Pill makes use of the inhibitory or anovulant process of the female nature. Will that make the contraceptive use of the Pill natural? No. In truth, one can make use of a natural function against Nature and his own individual nature: eating to excess is a common instance. Failure to observe the proper diet is another instance. People are shocked when they learn that the fashionable Romans of ancient times took food in order to disgorge it afterwards. Aside from lavish dining halls they also had in their mansions *vomitoria* or vomiting halls where they disgorge the food they had taken, in order to be able to repeat the eating process over and over again. It was an abuse of a natural function, eating, for the sake of their social camaraderie. Eating was done not for feeding, but just for the enjoyment of the process of eating.

The modern appeal to *humanize* sex to the effect that man should have the right to decide "when sexual act should transmit life and when not and should not be just like animals, which are bound to transmit life when they use sex, (*) is just a version of the view of

* Conf. Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil: *Humanizing Sex*. The Sunday Times Magazine, Oct. 13, 1968, p. 52.

the ancient Romans that man should have the right to decide when eating should be for feeding, and when for conducting an orgy.

Papal Teaching

"The Church is the first to praise and recommend the intervention of intelligence in a function which so closely associates the rational creature with the Creator; but she affirms that *this must be done with respect for the order established by God*. If, then, there are serious motives to space out births, which derive from the physical or psychological conditions of husband and wife, or from external conditions, the Church teaches that it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythm immanent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infecund period only, and in this way to regulate birth without offending the moral principles.

"The Church is coherent with herself when she considers recourse to the infecund periods to be licit, while at the same time condemning, as being always illicit, the use of means directly contrary to fecundation, even if such use is inspired by reasons which may appear honest and serious. In reality, there are essential differences between the two cases: in the former, the married couple make legitimate use of a natural disposition; in the latter, they impede the development of natural processes. It is true that, in the one and the other case, the married couples are concordant in the positive will of avoiding children for plausible reasons, seeking the certainty that offspring will not arrive; but it is also true that only in the former case are they able to renounce the use of marriage in the fecund periods when, from just motives, procreation is not desirable, while making use of it during infecund periods to manifest their affection and to safeguard their mutual fidelity. By so doing, they give proof of a truly and integrally honest love."¹⁵

Moral Marital Love

We wish to invite attention to the last words of the Pontiff where-with he teaches that a truly honest and integral marital love must be a moral one, that is, observant of the moral law and order. A marital love

¹⁵ *Humanae Vitae*, N. 16, p. 13 fol.

that ignores morality and the moral law is not essentially superior to the love wherewith adulterers love each other who know no law but only the satisfaction of unbridled desire. Married people, by virtue of their marriage, have acquired the right to mate sexually and to procreate with their respective spouse. Marriage, therefore, has a double aspect or role, which complete each other within the family circle, namely, the marital and the parental roles. Spouses who cannot afford to bring up more children, are not thereby disfranchised from the claim to exercise the marital act which is part of married life.¹⁶

Even in the agenesic periods the marital act has value in itself, not only as a means of intimacy and encouragement, but also as an expression of mutual esteem among spouses. Among Christian spouses the said act may and is still called to bear the sacramental imprint; but this can be done only if it respects the order and the natural moral law of God.¹⁷

V. The Moral Norms for Rhythm and Limitation of Births

Legitimate and Illegitimate Birth Control

In the matter of moderation or control of offspring, of which we have been speaking, one thing is the moderation or the control of the

¹⁶ Some self-styled modern "Theologians" say that St. Paul does not equate marriage with the begetting of children. He reminds husbands and wives to render to each other the conjugal dues without mentioning procreation. (Conf. 1, Cor. 7, 3-5). On such premise they infer that spouses should have freedom in the exercise of their conjugal rights, even with regards to the practice of contraception, (Conf. J. F. Lacaba: No Birth Control. Philippines Free Press, Aug. 17, 1968, p. 2). But this is an undue overstretching of the matter. Spouses have a right to the conjugal act because they have a right to procreation within their conjugal circle; not vice versa, that they have a right to procreate as they please, because they have a right to the conjugal act. Freedom has its limits.

¹⁷ It is not conformable to modern medical thought to think that the marital act of spouses, when carried with moderation outside the fertile periods, has no results that are favorable to the physiology of both, aside from the sexual import and the expression of marital affection. (Conf. Leclercq. Op. Cit., p. 288; R. de Guchtermeere, Op. cit., p. 155.)

number of offspring, and another thing is the arbitrary exclusion of offspring. Then, again, one thing is the limitation of offspring according to the means that a couple disposes in order to bring them up properly, and another thing is the limitation of offspring to one or two children either merely for the sake of limitation, or in order to be free from the so-called burden of having extra mouths to feed, or in order to be able to have one or more extra cars, or in order to have more means and time to engage in pleasurable pursuits. The latter are unchristian ends and do not constitute morally acceptable or justifiable grounds.¹⁸ The use of rhythm for the said purposes is censurable and morally unjustifiable. It is just another way of beating nature and the fundamental scope of marriage.

Use of Rhythm, A Conditioned Right

When Pope Pius XII declared the lawfulness of the practice of Rhythm he also laid down the conditions for its lawfulness in the following terms: "There are serious motives, such as those often mentioned in the so-called medical, eugenic, economic and social indications, that can exempt for a long time, perhaps even for the whole duration of the marriage, from the positive and obligatory carrying out of the act. From this it follows that observing the non-fertile periods alone can be lawful only under a moral aspect. Under such conditions mentioned it really is so. But if, according to rational and just judgment, there are no similar grave reasons of a personal nature or deriving from

¹⁸ Such parental attitude is not a proper moral environment for the moral education of the few children. We should not overlook in this matter, the beneficial and important role that several brothers and sisters afford to each other as to the development of important moral and social virtues, such as, self-restraint and selflessness, consideration for others and group adaptation, self-reliance and cooperativeness.

"Insufficient fecundity is also dangerous. For the only child is deprived of the companionship, formative influence, and help that his potential brothers and sisters would have given him." (A Carrel, "Married Love," Readers' Digest, July 1939, p. 15.)

"It has been noted also that most eminent and distinguished people come from large families, and this is not a mere matter of chance; there are scientific and moral reasons for this." (R. de Guchteneere, *Op. cit.*, p. 77 f.)

external circumstances, then the determination to avoid habitually the fecundity of the union while at the same time to continue fully satisfying their sensuality, can be derived only from a false appreciation of life and from reasons having nothing to do with proper ethical laws."¹⁰ One ground commonly admitted as justifying the practice of rhythm and limitation of offspring is the economic shortage of couples.

No Fixed Margin

However, there is no fixed number of children beyond which, a couple with moderate income may be said, with certainty, unable to bring up any longer; except perhaps, when the number of existing minor children is already too large, e.g. ten or more. Conversely, even if a millionaire can afford to bring up twenty children or more, financially speaking, yet it is very doubtful that he can do so, in the real parental sense. The category itself of moderate income allows a broad margin. Besides, there is the relative aspect to consider: e.g., an income of P500 a month is much for one who knows how to stay within the margin of P300 in monthly expenses; whereas the same amount is not enough for one who does not know how to stay within the margin of P500 in monthly expenses. Likewise, people who live in urban or suburban areas are more shortchanged of their money, and spend more in the niceties of living, than people in rural areas. Finally, the economic shortage of a couple is not of a permanent nature and may be surpassed through intelligence and diligence.

Room for the Rights of Conscience

When the number of children is not already too large, there is no doubt that wiser expenditure and a more intelligent adaptation can make more room for additional children. There is a tendency for people, in particular, for those who have been accustomed to luxuries or wish to enjoy them to exaggerate their needs, and to interpret luxury in terms of need. Spouses have no obligation to engage in the procreational or parental act. But, if they exercise it, then they have no right to interpolate with it, in order to frustrate it. They have to shoulder the con-

¹⁰ Address to the Italian Catholic Union of Midwives, Oct. 29, 1951.

sequences and responsibilities that are annexed to the act of responsibility freely taken. It is the use of rhythm and with regards to ascertaining the existence of legitimate grounds that the upright conscience of married couples can exercise their rights, not with regards to interfering with the order established by God.

The Economic Shortage of the Country as Valid Ground

When admitting the principle of limitation of offspring considering the economic shortage of the family and of the country, the said economic shortage should not be considered merely in terms of economic resources that the family or country can dispose of, but also in terms of their economic resources that may readily be put to work or made use of. A country may have immense potential economic resources as compared to its population, for example: immense tracts of forest lands that may be converted into arable lands, untapped mines of wealth, or sea lanes full of fishes; but if the country has no means, whether in technical or human facilities to make good use of the said potential resources, they will just remain in the category of theoretical resources. In other words, they do not fall simply within the category of economic resources or means that the social community disposes of for the maintenance of its population.

The State however should do its utmost to develop them, or to develop the ability in the social community to make use of them. The economic shortage of the nation is a valid reason for limitation of births, but it is so only for the mass of the population, not for affluent families.

VI. The Fundamental Aim of Marriage

The Aim of Marriage as a Social And Legal Institution

It does not require much mental effort to see that the fundamental aim of sex is procreation, which is also the fundamental aim of the use of sex in the plan of Nature. Among human beings we also find that sex and its use, from time immemorial, have been complemented by the social and legal institution of marriage.

Marriage as a legal institution has been introduced among all peoples as a safeguard for the family, in particular for the mother, as the word itself "matrimony", coming from the Latin original "matris munimen", indicates. It is the safeguard for the rearing of children in the proper manner. The wisdom of ages has found out that the sex instinct, especially in the male of its nature is no better than that found among animals, which leaves the mate behind once it is satisfied. How many unwed mothers have learned the lesson too late and have had to bear their sorrow and burden alone, after having been deceived by ardent protestations of eternal love and promises of marriage. Responsible parenthood can be exercised only within the framework of marriage. Let no maiden be deceived in this matter which is so important and dear to her.

Errors to be Corrected

However, the aforesaid fundamental view of marriage has been thwarted by errors that have come to be widely accepted as truisms. These errors have also been instrumental in hindering the minds of people from seeing sensibleness and fundamental rectitude in the Papal teaching expressed in *Humanae Vitae*. One of these errors states that: "Marriage is for love." Although many will be surprised at what we are going to say, this proposition is erroneous, pernicious and malicious.

It is Erroneous

If marriage is for love, then a man should marry all the girls he loves and vice versa. This is the concept behind the move of a man who takes a number-2 and a number-3 and forms families with them. No, love may be an invitation to marriage, in marriage it is an encouragement; but marriage is not for love but for something more serious and transcendent which is the profession of parenthood, the basic profession of mankind.²⁰ The aforesaid error has been largely disseminated by irresponsible movie-plots. It is surprising how it could have been raised to the level of a principle and at times even rationalized into a moral principle.

It is Pernicious

The proposition that "marriage is for love" is pernicious. It does not contribute to responsible parenthood, but to marital and parental irresponsibility. "Marriage is for love," say a frustrated wife. "We are no longer in love, therefore we should no longer remain together." The concept leads to seek divorce, not reconciliation, unmindful of the good of the children. It leads a married spouse to break down the marriage of other people in order to be able to marry the object of his or her adulterous affection.

It is Malicious

The proposition that "marriage is for love" is finally malicious. It is strongly advocated by protagonists of free love in order to pull down marriage itself. Once you have admitted that marriage is for love, then they argue: "If marriage is for love, then marriage is not necessary. You can have love without marriage. Nay, marriage is harmful, it kills love because it compels love, it chains love. Love cannot be compelled by law nor chained. Once you compel love, it dies. Love must be free in order to be true love. Hence marriage is the greatest enemy of love."²¹

²⁰ Conf. Paul VI: *Humanae Vitae*, No. 12, p. 12.

²¹ Conf. Leclercq, J., *Op. cit.*, p. 176 fol. "If the couple love each other, what is the good of the solemn pledge to bind themselves forever? Is not love enough? And if an assurance is sought through such a pledge for

The Confusion of Love with Passion

Another error that must be corrected is the confusion of love with passion or the desire of the sex instinct. This is a gross confusion and mistake. It is also largely disseminated by irresponsible movie-plots and stories. The confusion of love with the passion of lust leads young men to premarital sex relations and to deflower the objects of their lust, mistaken for love. It also leads married women who do not experience the ardor of passion to think that they are not in love with the partner they have married, to believe that they have made a mistake in their marriage, to see no purpose in it and to feel frustrated. From here, adulterous gallivanting or divorce are the next stepping stories.

Slanted Mentality

Allied to the aforesaid misconception is the exaggerated importance allotted to the conjugal act as if it were the essence of marital love. That this is not true may be gathered from the fact that even emotionally estranged couples still carry marital relations. Nonetheless the aforesaid misconceptions have slanted the minds of people to view the

the time when love has grown cold, does it not constitute, from the very day of the union, an element of distrust that poisons the marriage? Can we imagine lovers who are genuinely enamored of each other indulging before marriage in mutual threats for the day when one might wish to leave the other? Yet that is the sole meaning of marriage."

"Love can flourish only as long as it is free and spontaneous: it tends to be killed by the thought that it is a duty. To say that it is your duty to love so-and-so is the surest way to cause you to hate him or her." ((Bertrand Russell: *Marriage and Morale*: N.Y. 1929, p. 140).

"Marriage turns into a jail when love between husband and wife comes to an end. If the couple are unhappy, to condemn them to continue living together merely increases their unhappiness. Such is the sole purpose of marriage: it forces those to remain united who are unhappy in their union. . . The only worthy, noble pure and true love is the free union which is founded on unfeigned love and terminates when love ceases." Leclercq, *Op. cit.*, p. 177.

In George Sand's novel, *Jacques*, the hero addresses his fiancée on the eve of their marriage: "You are about to swear to be faithful and subject to me, that is to say, never to love anyone but me and to obey me in everything. The first of these oaths is an absurdity, and the second a debasement." Leclercq, *Op. cit.*, footnote 48.

conjugal act as carrying apart the most significant thing in married life. This kind of mentality, rooted on false assumptions, resents the Papal teaching realigning the conjugal act within the scope of marriage, as an intolerable imposition. But, Sigmund Freud himself, despite his undue bias for sex has this to say: "We term sexual activity perverse when it has renounced the aim of reproduction and follows pursuit of pleasure as an independent goal."²²

The Fundamental Aim of Marriage Must be Respected

We have to stamp out the idea that marriage is a legal institution warranting sexual debauchery within the conjugal circle. The union of man and woman in marriage is a social responsibility and a basic profession of mankind that must be seriously discharged, not a private affair of the heart. Therefore, the correct use of the conjugal act must stay within the scope of sex and marriage.²³ It is for this reason that Pope Paul VI, repeating the traditional doctrine of the Church, reaches: "Each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life."²⁴ And again: "Excluded is every action which, either in anti-

²² A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. Transl. N.Y., 1920, p. 273.

²³ It is surprising that there should be civilized men who should ignore these things, which are known and considered as fundamental truths even by savages. Among savages we find that marriage is viewed as a social responsibility. In fact the fundamental note in the education of young boys and girls among them is the preparation of the same for the efficient discharge of parental responsibility in later life. For that purpose, the boys as future providers of the family are not only initiated in the art of hunting, but also in self-discipline and control, even through painful ordeals. Adulterous relations are condemned. Even if they go about in semi-nudism, sexual license among the youth is not rife. Children are taught that God frowns upon it and punishes youthful sexual abuses with stunted growth and a weak physical body which are no assets for survival in the dire conditions of primitive life nor for the rearing of a family. They know that if they do not want to have more children, the simple recourse is to abstain from the parental act.

²⁴ Ency. *Humanae Vitae*, N. 11, p. 10.

icipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, propose, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible.²⁵

Sophistical Charges

It is irrelevant for the purpose of morally justifying the contraceptive use of the progesterone pill to say that we have to stave off the population explosion. Granted; but does that make the contraceptive use of the pill morally correct? In the same manner one could adduce that line of thinking to justify abortion. The curbing of the excessive rate of population increase can be attained in the correct manner, not through sexual profligacy, but through mastery of self and periodic abstinence. It is plain sophistry to clamor that, whereas the Pope has branded as unlawful the contraceptive use of the pill for purposes of rendering the conjugal act unfruitful, he is thereby against the legitimate control of birth and population and is unmindful of the plights of countless couples.

The Correct Vision of Human Life and Values

In order to grasp the proper value of things, we should view them within the framework in which they belong. In this connection, it is not difficult to see that the conjugal act is a function of marriage and married life. The right order, therefore, demands that the conjugal act should stay within the scope of marriage and not venture outside it. But, marriage is also just a part of human life, both social and individual, hence, the rights and responsibilities of married life should be carried out taking into consideration the good of society and the higher destiny of the individual. The individual life is part of the supernatural plan of sanctification and salvation of God for men, therefore, no component of the individual or married life of man can be seen in its correct perspective without taking his supernatural vocation into account. Man is not a creature appended to sex; but sex is only a function in the life of man.²⁶

²⁵ Ency. *Humanae Vitae*, N. 14, p. 12.

²⁶ People have been too influenced and carried away in their appraisals by irresponsible pornography and commercials. They must be re-educated to

The aforesaid is the correct vision of human life and its elements, the Pope reminds us.²⁷ It is the correct total vision of man which he proposes vis-a-vis the miscarried vision and interpretation that seeks to justify conjugal acts deliberately made infecund, by the simple recourse of lumping them with the fecund and morally justified conjugal acts; mixing rotten rice with good rice does not thereby make the rotten rice good.

Where Love is the Aim

In this connection it is opportune to recall that among Christians, marriage is a sacrament and married life is a sacramental state of life, that is, a way to holiness. It cannot, therefore, countenance the ways of sensuality which are opposed to the ways of holiness.²⁸ Among Christians, marriage is the Sacrament of Love: for the husband in relation to the wife is called to represent the unselfish love of Christ for the Church; and the wife in relation to the husband is called to represent the abiding loyalty of the Church to Christ. If love is an aim, it is the aim of Christian marriage as a Sacrament. But, then, the kind of love that is the aim of the Sacrament is not the carnal love, and is respectful of the order and law of God. The aim of the Sacrament is beautiful, and the secularistic world would like to have this benefit of the Sacrament without attending to the requirements of the Sacrament.

As condition and basis in order to have the Sacrament we must have the social and legal institution of marriage, with its fundamental aim intact; because the Sacrament is none other than the Sacrament of Marriage. Among non-Christian cultures we find that an infertile marriage is meaningless, and is ground for its termination and for divorce. However, among Christian inspired cultures, owing to the Sacrament and its spiritual aim, infertile marriages still have reason to carry on.

see matters in the traditional way, that is: that sex is for marriage, and not marriage for sex. There are other values in marriage apart from sex. They should learn to regard again sex as the symbol of the man and of the woman, not man and woman as mere symbols of sex.

²⁷ Ency. *Humanae Vitae*, N. 14, p. 13.

²⁸ Conf. St. Paul, Romans 8, 5-8, 12-13; Gal. 5, 16, fol.

VII. The case against rhythm

Unacceptance of Rhythm

In the wake of the publication of *Humanae Vitae* a group of Professors of Moral Theology was called upon to conduct a dialogue on it. Instead of carrying a dialogue, they simply expressed their disappointment of the Pope's endorsement of the Rhythm for the purpose of family planning. It was their view and consensus that of all the methods available, rhythm was the most ineffective and impractical, as if effectiveness and practicality were criteria for morality. Views of this nature voiced out by priests tend to persuade the faithful that the Pope has placed them in an impossible position, and to promote stubbornness and disobedience.

The Catholic physician who related to me the aforesaid incident, and who has been working along the lines of Rhythm for the past years, was rather surprised at the stance of the said Professors of Moral Theology who attributed all the knowledge and all the reasons to themselves, basically from hearsay since they did not have clinical experience, and did not even allow the benefit of the doubt to the Pope. It is a typical stance. All their evidence is hearsay from physicians who do not favor the rhythm method because it entails too much of the precious time and attention, and is not as simple as the prescription of the pill, or as carefree as the IUD.

"It is Ineffective!"

We know that the Rhythm technique is not yet perfect. But how ineffective is it? I know of people who practice it and have found it effective, but these are professional people. The Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction of UST has found the following to be the chief factors of failures in the adoption of rhythm. A) Lack of the proper grasp of the operational background of Rhythm and hence, failure to carry out instructions to the letter. B) The woman's lack of exact information concerning the regularity or irregularity of her monthly cycles, which should provide adequate basis for determining her shortest and longest period. Women tend to think of their cycles as regular, even when there are always some variations. An exact tabulation for

the period of, at least, one year is necessary in order to have a sufficiently workable basis. C) Then, usually, the husband is left out of the scheme and his cooperation is not actively engaged, when he is naturally the principal protagonist in the project because it is the husband that usually determines the frequency and the timing of marital relations. So the rhythm method becomes ineffective not from the side of Rhythm itself, but from the part of the people who do not know how to make use of Rhythm properly. The proper course of action is not to brand Rhythm as ineffective and to do away with it; but to instruct the man and the wife better in the proper and effective use of the same.

Misbranding

It is not Rhythm that should be branded ineffective; but the mis-carried action of those who claim and think that they are practising the rhythm. If Rhythm were of its nature ineffective, then there would be no sense in speaking of the monthly ovulatory cycle and periods of infertility of the woman, which are medically established facts. Again, granting that rhythm has a greater margin of failures and that this, which has not been established, is attendant to the nature of rhythm itself and not to the improper way of using it, is not sufficient reason to brand the use of rhythm as ineffective. Something may not be 100% foolproof or effective in all cases, but that does not make it ineffective. Which medicine, anyway, is 100% effective in all cases? A car may have a margin of failure, (which one does not have?), but it does not mean that it is not an effective means of transportation.

And so, even if the use of rhythm carrying instructions to the letter should have a 10% margin of possible failure, a thing that has not yet been established, it cannot be said to be an ineffective method for family planning or population control. But, when asked about the margin of possible failure in the use of Rhythm under the stated condition, the Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction of the College of Medicine, U.S.T. gave as reply: NIL. It is the finding of careful statistical investigations.²⁹

²⁹ "It is less than 1% in the period of 30 years, practically all," says the Director of the Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, Dr. V. Rosales, Cnf. Tietze, C., and Potter, Robert C.: Statistical. Evaluation of the

"It is Impractical!"

Perhaps what is really meant by this allegation is that the practice of Rhythm entails some difficulty, considering the need to keep track of the calendar days and to supplement the latter with temperature reading.³⁰ The greater difficulty in the method is the need to observe abstinence at a time when the couple might wish to establish relations. Again, the computation of the abstinence period must be done from the uncertain date of the next menstruation, so that if the wife has a very irregular cycle or does not have a previous well charted tabulation, the period of abstinence can well cover twelve days. This can be some thing unbearable to one who takes the waiting stance.³¹

Rhythm Method, *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, Vol. 84, p. 692-698, Sept. 1, 1962.

³⁰The rise of temperature takes place after ovulation has taken place. Its detection is useful to determine the end of the abstinence period, that is, three days after but not when it should start. For, considering that the sperm has a life-span of 48 hours, marital relations carried before the said rise of temperature can result in conception.

³¹The aforesaid applies to Calendar Rhythm as distinguished from Scientific Rhythm. In Calendar Rhythm the 14th day after the first day of the flow, is assigned as about the time of greatest fertility, but this is just an average. It has been found that even in normal cycles of 28 days, ovulation can occur as early as the 7th or 8th day, or as late as the 22nd or 23rd day. Between the 7th and the 22nd day the average is the 14th. In view of the aforesaid, it would be very unreliable to base one's calculations on the 14th day. Even the temperature method of checking has this disadvantage, that illness such as cold, flu, etc., alcohol consumption, emotional disturbances or other factors may affect the temperature and cause variations in the curve. When these irregularities occur, they make the curve difficult to interpret on a day-to-day basis.

Aside from this, it is rare for a cycle to occur with clock-like regularity. A cycle of 30 days may have a margin of variation of five days, the 30th day being the longest, so that it should be expressed as a 25-30 cycle. The great discovery of Ogino and Knaus is that in any cycle in normal women ovulation occurs 12 to 16 days before the next flow. Giving allowance to variations, that means that if marital congress be limited to the week preceding the expected menses there is a very little chance of pregnancy. (Conf. Sutherland: *Control of Life*, p. 245-247.) It is evident that the aforesaid limitation is too onerous for average couples living within the marital circle, and even then the calculation would still be based on probability.

Theoretically, the period of abstinence could be reduced to three days, if women had some signs signaling the approaching onset of ovulation and fertility. Fortunately, in the majority of instances, there are such signs. According to the Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction, women can institute self-examination to discover the following signs:³² a) When the consistency of the cervix changes from that of the hardness of the tip of the nose to that of the softness of the lips; b) When there is a noticeable dilation of the cervix; c) When there is a relatively copious discharge that is watery in nature, similar to the nose flow that one has at the start of a cold, as different from the thick mucus of the third and subsequent days of the cold, d) When the discharge is threadable or elastic in nature so that it is readily stretchable. The onset of these changes indicates impending ovulation and period of fertility. Although these are not apparent yet they are there.³³

"It is not Possible!"

Finally, it is now impudently alleged that it is not possible to practice the Rhythm approved by the Pope, because it is not possible to control the sex appetite. This in women, it is said, tends to be more strong during the fertility period during which one is supposed to practice abstinence for legitimate birth control. If that allegation is true, then let us bid farewell to our vaunted rational superiority over the brutes: we are just on the same level with them. From this, the next step is sexual promiscuity and the pulling down of marriage. For, if one cannot control the sex appetite, then neither can one control adulterous sex appetite and the legal prohibitions defending monogamous marriage are a cruel imposition.

³² These were originally proposed by Dr. Edward Keefe of St. Vincent's Hospital, N.Y.

³³ These are the basis for Scientific Rhythm. As distinguished from Calendar Rhythm, previously mentioned, Scientific Rhythm is the practice of continence during the woman's fertile period, as scientifically ascertained.

The basis for the aforesaid theoretical 3-day abstinence period required for the practice of Rhythm is as follows: the maximum impregnating ability of the sperm is 48 hours; the maximum impregnating capacity of the ovum is 12 hours. The mentioned signs start to show approximately 48 hours before ovulation. Hence, 3 days, with some leeway.

The allegation concerning women is usually made by men, but it has not been established as a common occurrence. On the contrary, medical literature attests that the sex appetite in women is less vehement than in men. The allegation is *manifestly* false. If it were true, then there would be no need for women to go about with charts and temperature readings to determine when they are fertile. All they have to do is to watch for the time in the month when they are unusually "restive". But, the fact that they do not know the precise period when they are fertile, debunks the said allegation.

The error about the impossibility to control the sex instinct is demoralizing. The aforesaid error about the impossibility to control the sex instinct is demoralizing and must be vehemently denied. There are so many people who forego to entertain the sex instinct, in a matter of fact manner, going to office, attending to their business or just a concert, or delivering a lecture, etc. What is natural for man and raises him above the level of the brutes is his ability to control instinct. The more we develop that ability in man the more we make him true to his nature. And those who contribute to weaken that ability downgrade man.

Where there is a Will, There is a Way

Let us not exaggerate difficulties. After all, it is not so hard to practice periodic abstinence for the purpose of legitimate birth control. As the late Mayor Lacson in his characteristic way, jokingly yet pithily said: "When you go to bed, why don't you just go to sleep?"³⁴ "There is no prohibition against taking sleeping pills," quipped a Catholic physician. "So why do husband and wife not take a sleeping pill or two? That will help." Or, they can spend their slumber separately. "In any case," added another, "a tranquilizer will help relieve tension even from sex."

There is the question, whether under the circumstances of impending ovulation this might not be precipitated from the stress of intercourse. There is the possibility; but, so far, no medical evidence has been produced.

(For more information concerning the use of Rhythm, consult or write to the Institute for Study of Human Reproduction, U.S.T. Manila.)

³⁴Conf. H. Q. Borromeo: Overpopulation must be Curbed, but not thru the Pill. The Philippines Herald, August 1, 1968, p. 17, col. 1.

Traditionalism, Guarantee of Perennial Doctrinal Value

Let us face the matter squarely. The real reason behind the rejection of rhythm is that people nowadays have been accustomed to think that, in marriage they have an open sesame to sex, and hence, they frown on anything that should mean control or curtailment on the use of sex in marriage. The difficulty has been compounded by the irresponsible action of some false prophets, who have not cared so much to teach the law of God and of the Church as their own personal views which aim more at pleasing the intemperate than in giving out sound doctrine. Different were the ways St. Paul when he said: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. For I give you to understand, bretheren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man."²⁷ He has already forewarned against this denouement when he wrote: "There will come a time when man will not endure the sound doctrine, but following their own lusts will heap up to themselves teachers to tickle their ears, and while refusing to listen to the truth, they will turn aside unto fables."²⁸ To any serious thinker the branding of a doctrine as "Traditional" is not something derogatory, but a guarantee of perennial value and truth.^{29a}

VIII. Temperance still a basic virtue and remedy

Remedy for Overpopulation

Once in a public discussion a man rose up and in angry tones said: "What has the Church done to solve the population problem? Why

²⁷ Gal. 1, 10 fol. Conf. 1 Thes. 2, 4.

²⁸ Cont. 2 Tim. 4, 3 fol.

^{29a} If the Pope should have approved the contraceptive use of the Pill, we would soon come to the sacking of the 6th and 9th Commandments. These Commandments stand to exclude disorder and illegitimacy in human procreation. But, since the contraceptive use of the Pill would preclude procreation, there would be no disorder and illegitimacy to avoid. In which case the 6th and 9th Commandments would no longer carry sense and may be claimed to be no longer applicable. This is the danger to the lowering of morals and to conjugal fidelity which the Pope indicates and people do not readily grasp.

does she not come up with an effective remedy?" The man voiced out a complaint that is lurking in the minds of many. I answered: "My friend, it is a mistake to think that the Church has not proposed the effective remedy. It has been practised in ages past, and is known even to savages: Temperance. There should be no problem at all, if men practised temperance. The problem is one created by the renunciation of the practise of temperance, like the problem that a man creates for himself, when he desires not to put on weight, but does not want to refrain from eating freely of all the delicatessen that he should come across. Who is to blame in this situation?"

Temperance, Still a Virtue

It is hypocritical to accuse the Church of not providing an effective remedy because one does not like to accept the remedy of temperance that She counsels. Many wish that the Pope should have approved the use of the pill because it is the path of least resistance, or no resistance. But, as long as temperance is still a virtue, and a fundamental one at that, the Church cannot sanction the use of the pill for contraceptive purposes if only for the reason that would be tantamount to the glorification of intemperance.³⁷

³⁷ The virtue of Temperance is so forgotten nowadays that many do not quite grasp what we mean by it in the matter of sex relation. We may illustrate the point by comparing it to dieting in food-taking. This is accepted as a basic remedy against individual obesity and other ills attending to it. Dieting in food-taking is a version of temperance with regards to food. In analogous terms we may say, that conjugal temperance is "sexual dieting," or dieting in the use of sex. This is also the basic remedy against *familial obesity*.

Early missionaries relate that the early Filipino Christian couples, even without being told to do so, used to practice sexual temperance as a means of religious purification before and after receiving holy Communion even extending the practice to a week before and a week after. The reception of holy Communion was not then a daily affair and was considered an important event in their spiritual life. They also, on their own initiative, practised sexual temperance as part of the spiritual preparation for the celebration of important religious feasts just as they observed abstinence and fasting for the same purpose. It is the widespread breakdown of spiritual mettle that makes the practice of true responsible parenthood more difficult.

Integrants and Fruits of Temperance

Says Paul VI: "The honest practice of regulation of birth demands first of all that husband and wife acquire and possess solid convictions concerning the true values of life and of the family, and that they tend towards securing perfect self-mastery. To dominate instinct by means of one's reason and free will undoubtedly requires ascetical practices, so that the affective manifestations of conjugal life may observe the correct order, in particular with regard to the observance of periodic continence.

"Yet this discipline which is proper to the purity of married couples, far from harming conjugal love, rather confers on it a higher human value. It demands continual effort yet, thanks to its beneficent influence, husband and wife fully develop their personalities, being enriched with spiritual values.

"By its means, parents acquire the capacity of having a deeper and more efficacious influence in the education of their offspring; little children and youths grow up with a just appraisal of human values; and in the serene and harmonious development of their spiritual and sensitive faculties."³⁸

The Role of Conjugal Chastity

Chastity is the virtue whereby a person brings and keeps the sex instinct, under the control of reason.³⁹ Continence is the factual abstention from sexual relations. Before marriage chastity and the right order of reason require the abstention from all sexual relations, that is, complete continence. But, it is a mistake to think that in marriage, chastity has no longer a role to perform aside from the avoidance of adulterous relations. It is true that, nowadays, many have come to think of it in that way. But, that is an undue restriction of the role of conjugal chastity and makes the concept of responsible parenthood all the more difficult to grasp and to implement.

³⁸ Paul VI, *Op. cit.*, n. 21.

³⁹ Conf. *Summa Theol.* 2,2, q. 151, art. 1.

Within marriage the virtue of chastity has still ample room and the role to keep the sex instinct under the control of reason, so that spouses may not just give in to unbridled desire, but should exercise temperance and periodic abstinence when they can no longer afford to bring up more children in a becoming manner. The alternative to conjugal chastity under such condition is, in many instances, sinful birth control.¹⁴ Without conjugal chastity marriage is no longer a way to holiness, as it is called to be among Christians, and is no better than debauchery that happens to be legal. This kind of marriage runs counter to the concept expressed by Pius XI who, when speaking on Christian Marriage says: "Matrimonial faith demands that husband and wife be joined in a specially holy and pure love, not as adulterers love each other, but as Christ loved the Church". We know too well that adulterous love knows no restraint, but only the satisfaction of the sex instinct.

Chastity: Safeguard of Family Happiness

When I mentioned chastity, I know that I have struck a note that is harsh and dissonant to the ears of many. Chastity is not a popular virtue nowadays, particularly when the social environment is heavily spiced with elements that unduly arouse the sex instinct, and when fashions, movies, TV and entertainment show brazen social irresponsibility in this regard. But whether we like it or not, chastity is the fundamental safeguard of the happiness of the individual and his family.

"Tell me, young man, you who smile cynically when I mention chastity, don't you aspire to be happy when you get married to your ideal girl? What will happen to your happiness when the former girls you have taken advantage of, should someday come whispering to your wife that she is not your first love, that she is just one of the many and that last one at that? Suppose that you really loved your prospective wife, could you be happy with the cloud of suspense hovering in your mind lest someday she may come to know the truth? How sure are you that the former girls you have dishonored and jilted will not take the sweet revenge of revealing your past to your dear one? And, when in the moments of intimacy she asks you: Am I really your only love,

¹⁴ Conf Jacques Leclercq: *Marriage and Family Life*, Transl. N.Y. 1949. p. 104.

have you given yourself to someone else? Can you be happy when you try to stifle the pang in your heart with a quiver on your lips to hide the truth?

"And you unfaithful spouses, treading on forbidden grounds, what will happen to the happiness of your family, to your own happiness, when your gallivanting is discovered by your own? How can you mend the vase of happiness within your family, once it has been broken to pieces in this manner? If only for the sake of insuring their happiness, men should keep the sex instinct within bounds, and practice chastity."⁴¹

Conclusion: Misdirected Tirades

Despite the Pill

A week after the issuance of *Humanae Vitae* voices of doom were again heard raising the alarm over the excessive growth of population that the country has experienced in the past two years. From 2.5% the birth rate has shot up to 3.5% which sociologically forebodes disaster. The timing of the serialized press articles was perfect to make the Papal renewed ban on artificial birth control, inclusive of the Pill to appear and strike as inopportune if not preposterous.⁴² But, any serious thinker can readily see that if there has been lately an excessive growth of population as alleged, the Pope's ban on artificial birth control has had nothing to do with it. On the contrary, it shows that the efforts at population control through artificial birth control and the Pill have not been very effective, and perhaps the correct approach, after all, is to inculcate self-control as the Pope has done.

⁴¹ The main problem, nowadays, is that people aspire to maintain virtue on the basis of the intemperate. The conflict involved in the said endeavour can only result in emotional frustration and dissatisfaction. Instead of trying to reconcile sex with marriage, which is easier, they are trying to reconcile marriage with sex. In the classical view, marriage was not an outlet for intemperance, but temperance had a place in marriage. Gratification was viewed as the reward for the task of bringing up a family rather than a way of life; as the "dessert rather than the main course," or like taking wine at meals, not in a tavern.

⁴² The Manila Times, Aug. 10, 1968, p. 1; Aug. 11, 1968 p. 1.

The Result of Intemperance

The reason behind this is that it is easier to gather the fruit of temperance from temperance itself, rather than from intemperance. People nowadays wish to reap the fruit of temperance on the basis of intemperance. Once accustomed to the ways of intemperate sex-indulgence from the use of contraceptives and the pill, people will not think twice or stop from sexual indulgence when appetite is vehement just because they have not forearmed themselves with contraceptives. Instinct does not consider whether or not the woman has been forearmed with contraceptive. And when passion is ardent it is impatient of delay and is most demanding unless it has been trained to temperance and to yield to the dictate of right reason. This explains why despite the popularity and availability of contraceptives illegitimacy has not diminished, but rather has gone on the rise among teen-agers in Sweden and in the university campuses of the United States.⁴³

Blame it on the Mini

"If we have had an excessive number of babies in the past two years," remarked an attentive listener, "blame it on the miniskirts. That is the time when they became popular in the Philippines." My first reaction was to dismiss the comment as a shallow indictment. But, on second thought, perhaps the man had a point there. Our over-permissive mentality and society nowadays have dismissed the traditional standards of modesty as old-fashioned prejudices. In older times, baring the

⁴³ "Today, man is not only living in the Space Age, but also in the Age of the Sex Revolution. The reason for this is that millions of people everywhere regard sex as the be-all and end-all of existence. For them, life that is devoid of sex is hollow and meaningless.

"Overpopulation is a feature of the Age of Sex Revolution. Because millions of people today are too much preoccupied with sex, they keep on producing hundreds of millions of unwanted babies and unloved children every hour of the day. That is why they continue to suffer from poverty, hunger, and disease." (J.A. Arreola: *Sex is Sacred*, in the *Philippines Herald*, Sept. 5, 1968, p. 16, col. 4.

As someone quipped, the Church has done more to curb unwanted population in past ages through the 6th and 9th Commandments than the Pill in our days.

thighs in the case of women was considered immodest, not because women have unsightly thighs, but because it unduly aroused the sex instinct of men, which on the other hand is easily excitable and needs no additional prodding. It is not a statement of prudishness but of fact to say that for the sex instinct of men the exposed thighs of women are beautiful signposts of sex.^{43a}

Barking at the Wrong Tree

The case of the Minis is just a typical one. There are other such well-known things as sexy movies, erotic TV shows, drapeless exposures in the name of Beauty Contests, cavalcades of legs in the name of entertainment, pornographic magazines, burlesque strip-teasings, figure revealing dresses, blown-up bras that unduly excite the sex instinct of men and build up sex pressure. It is surprising how so many "enlightened" men are so tolerant of these baby-producing incentives and, at the same time, raise their voices against population growth. It is surprising how they can be so vocal against the Encyclical of the Pope which has had nothing to do with the present population explosion, and are so silent against the present-day glorification of sex. An intensive action against sex infatuation and these sex stimulating elements would do more in favor of population control, than their tirades against the Papal teaching which aims to tone down sex.⁴⁴

^{43a} Although miniskirts originated in Europe, yet there is a big difference as to its wear and possible influence between temperate countries and the Philippines. In temperate countries climatic conditions do not favor the wearing of miniskirts except during the summer months, whereas, in the Philippines climatic conditions favor its use the whole year through. In predominantly Buddhist countries miniskirts do not enjoy social acceptance.

⁴⁴ "The question now is: Why has sex, a perfectly natural function, become a major social problem? The obvious answer is that many in our frustrated society have been using sex as a psychological release from their frustrations and boredom. And society, to aggravate matters, exploits sex to the hilt through advertising, the mass media, as well as entertainment." Catarroja, Sebastian: *The Pope, the Pill and Procreation*. Philippine Panorama, Sept. 15, 1968, p. 7.

APPENDIX

CONSCIENCE OR LACK OF CONSCIENCE

In defiance to the Papal pronouncement "one of the outspoken laymen at this year's congress (of German Catholics at Essen) Dr. Max Engelmeier, told the closing rally of the congress that "freedom of the living conscience' was the supreme value. Obedience was of no value if it came from an enslaved conscience." (The Daily Mirror, Sept. 9, 1968, p. 2, col. 7.)

The first of these statements is preposterous. Either conscience is above the laws of God or not. If above, then there is no conscience to talk about: a lawless conscience is not conscience, but a lack of conscience. If conscience is not above the laws of God, then it is not the supreme value. Genuine freedom of conscience can only be of the lawful kind, not unlawful.

The second statement is just a play of words to avoid the issue which is the following: Which has more value, the obedience of a well-educated conscience, or the disobedience of a badly-educated conscience? A lawful conscience is no more an enslaved conscience than a lawless conscience is a free conscience.

Cocksurenness can be fatal, for as Scripture warns us: "There is a way which *seemeth just* to a man, but the ends thereof lead to death." (Prov. 14, 1.) It is precisely when there is lack of full evidence and certainty that we need the superior light of a divinely guaranteed guidance to show us the saving path and dispel all doubt. To call such guidance "imposition and enslavement" is an abuse of terms.

When we speak of conscience we mean no other than "moral" conscience. This is the awareness of the moral goodness or evilness of an action or line of conduct as measured by moral principles, not by economic, sociological, scientific or medical principles. For Catholics, by the will of Christ, among such moral principles are the moral directives issued by the Papal Authority.

To set up, therefore, the rights of conscience against the moral

directives of the Pope is to negate a moral conscience, and to claim rights for an a-moral conscience, to say the least. An erroneous conscience is not a correct guide for salvation, much less a vincibly erroneous and stubborn conscience. Such kind of conscience has no rights to speak about, but the obligation to correct its error.

To claim, as some Missouri Priests have done, (Conf. Manila Times, Sept. 7, 1968, p. 20, col. 6) that obedience to the Papal directive is a violation of their consciences, shows ignorance of what a moral conscience is and confusion of the latter with stubbornness. Correction of moral error is not violation, but rectification. It is helping to form a genuine and right conscience.

Finally, owing to the reason that the conscience under consideration cannot be other than a "moral" conscience, there can be no sensible talk of "enlightened" consciences among Catholics if the said consciences are not guided by the Laws of God and by the *authentic* interpretation of the same made by the Vicar of Christ (Conf. H.V. n. 4.) *Authentic* interpretation of the law means coincident with that of the Lawgiver himself. A conscience is not "morally enlightened" by mere academic or scientific education.

Common sense alone, however good that may be, is not moral conscience either. Much less sincerity of view of persuasion, however genuine that may be and if that could be validly claimed against an authoritative pronouncement. One can be sincerely wrong and think sincerely that he is right, but that does not make him or his conscience morally right.

Those who maintain freedom from obligation to accept the Papal teaching and ruling in *Humanae Vitae* on the premise that it is not an infallible pronouncement, are logically committed to the following absurdities:

a) That either their conscience when dictating on matters of moral conduct is infallible, because they are bound to follow it; or, that they are never bound to follow their conscience, in any instance, because it is not infallible.

b) That either the State is infallible when issuing laws, because citizens are bound to obey the laws; or, that citizens are not bound to obey any law of the State, because it is not infallible.

If the latter reasonings do not hold water, then neither the first one. Conf. A. Piñon: *How to Think on Humanae Vitae and Its Obligation on Catholics*. Philippiniana Sacra, U.S.T., Sept. 1968, p. 517. Also *Bol. Ecl.*, Vol. XLII, November, No. 476, pp. 859-60.