

possible brain damage and chromosome breakage.

Drops—LSD taken orally, usually dissolved in water and placed on a sugar cube.

Reefers—marijuana cigarettes also called "joints" and "sticks." "Roach" is the butt end of a "joint."

#### DEPRESSANTS

This category of drugs depresses the functions of the brain. Some addicts use depressants with stimu-

lants to achieve a "see-saw" effect. When combined with alcohol, the results can be fatal. Prolonged use could lead to impaired judgment and sluggish thought. Its most common effects are slow movement, slurred speech, dilated pupils of the eyes and symptoms similar to those of alcohol intoxication.

#### Barbiturates

These drugs—taken in tablet or capsule form—are called "sedatives-

medicines" and are aimed at causing sleepiness. They are highly addictive, and repeated use results in physical withdrawal. The most popular here are Seconal, Mandrax, Nembutal, Amtal, Luminal or Tuinal.

#### Related Slang

Seconal—"red devils," "pula" (red), "bala" (bullet) and "bala-tong" (mongo beans).

Mandrax—"Max," "Blue Max," "Puti" white), "M" and "bala."

## FAMILY PLANNING

# The Moral and Theological Aspects of Family Planning

Morality means responsibility. When we deal with responsibility in conception control, two problems confront us which are distinct but not unrelated. They are the problems of the (1) Development of Family Life, and (2) the Control of Population. I shall deal with these two problems separately. These two are not mutually exclusive; in attending to one, the other is not necessarily neglected. And yet not any solution of one, e.g. Population Control, will automatically guarantee the authentic solution of the other, Development of Family Life. Of the two, the more fundamental is the problem of the authentic development of Family Life. In the final analysis, the basic problem confronting us is the problem of development; and the crucial target of development is not material resources, but the spiritual quality of our human resources.

Let us then examine the problem of responsibility in the development of family life particularly in the exercise of parenthood.

#### Areas of Responsibility

The area of our responsibility, in general, expands as the area over which we exercise conscious control, expands. Thus in the area of parenthood, responsibility was exercised, in our long history, only after new life came to birth. Man had no control over the process of gestation of life in the womb; much less, over the moment of its conception. It is only in fairly recent times that this responsibility was extended to pre-na-

tal care with the advances in medical science. And in our own days, when the time and frequency of conception have finally come into our power, these two now become matters for responsible deliberation. The day may not be too far off when the determination of even the sex of some future child will be added to matters of parental responsibility.

#### Responsibility Over Conception Control

Responsibility over the control of conception is peculiarly critical in our times because of the changed conditions in our life. New demands of a medical, economic, social, eugenic and cultural character have been created, and they have imposed themselves as needs for human life in the societies of today. Responsibility dictates that parents take these into their reckonings, if the children they are to raise are not to become socially handicapped in their world. I need not dwell on this; it has been sufficiently treated. I just want to note that the newness of this responsibility over conception control is catching many parents by surprise, and has consequently found them unprepared. It will be our task to prepare them for this.

There are two qualities that the exercise of this responsibility calls for: 1) a personal, and 2) flexible exercise.

#### No Imposed Decisions

Responsibility can not be exercised by any other than the person upon

whom that responsibility rests; it can not be imposed by another. Thus, in decisions involving the exercise of parenthood, the responsibility for such decisions must rest with the parents or parents-to-be themselves. And that, jointly. No other person or institution can substitute for them—not their own parents, nor public authority, nor their pastor. To opt for a limitation or expansion of the size of their family belongs exclusively to the couple, as an exercise of an inalienable right. This principle is upheld by both Vatican II and the United Nations. The role of interested agencies is to help couples to develop as to be able by themselves to arrive at responsible decisions in this matter. Our role is essentially educational. This is why the primary orientation of our Program is towards Education, a formation in Responsibility.

#### No Irreversible Measures

No decision that parents make can truly be responsible, if made irrevocably, once and for all. For the decision affecting the exercise of parenthood is conditioned by the human situation; and since human situations are ever changing, decisions must be open to revisions necessary to meet the changes.

Can we say that a couple is truly responsive to their vocation to marriage when from the very beginning of their married life, they have already determined for the entirety of that life what the number of their children is to be? Marriage is a vocation to a love whose creativity is an ever present challenge. What that challenge calls for, can be responsibly determined only from moment to moment; it is conditioned by variables: the medical condition of spouses or of the children, their fi-

financial situation, social circumstances of the family or of the community to which they belong, etc. As these change, they will call for a change in previously made decisions. Hence the dynamic character of the exercise of parental responsibility. The freedom to meet new challenges is crucial to the development of persons.

This why measures that in effect render decisions irreversible such for instance as surgical sterilization, are rejected by a virtual consensus of interested experts.

The same dynamic character of this responsibility dictates against an ideal family size that would be common to all families. Each couple faces a situation that is necessarily unique to itself, not common to all. The ideal family size can not prescind from the situation of the family. As situations vary, so also must the ideal, necessarily, vary.

So far, we have seen how the conception of new human life must be the result of an exercise of responsibility—an exercise that is at once personal and dynamic. This sense of responsibility does not necessarily rest upon any religious belief; it emerges from reflections of that with which all men are endowed, common sense. That one is a Buddhist, or Christian, or Muslim or Pagan, has no relevance here. What is of relevance is that one act like a man, responsibly.

#### The Quality of Human Life

When, however, we closely examine the values that this responsibility is intended to safeguard, we note that the more widely accepted and more frequently urged values—namely, health, food, shelter, education—are those of a material character. It is true that these should be a serious concern of parental responsibility; that these values, for people taken at a mass, are indispensable infrastructure for a human way of life. But we can question whether they are the prime values to be sought in human development (which is the objective of parental responsibility). In other words, do we understand quite accurately the true meaning of "Quality of Human Life"?

Let us suppose that a couple sets out as their primary objective, in conception control, adequate food and clothing, improved health care and housing, a higher quality of education, for the children they are to

---

*We can question whether values of a material character are the prime values to be sought in human development. The quality of human life pertains to the development of moral resources.*

---

bring into this world. Let us further suppose that to obtain this objective more securely, they decide to restrain the size of their family. Can we now conclude that in their case, a smaller family will be a happier family? Let me propose the thesis that given material values as the main preoccupation in conception control, a smaller family will not necessarily emerge a happier family. On the contrary, it runs the risk of developing into a deteriorating family.

We have an illustration for this in a well known phenomenon that is puzzling well meaning parents. We refer to parents who by sheer industry and courage, succeeded in rising from the economic and social handicaps of their earlier years, to positions of security and comfort. A day dawns when they are faced with children who reject order in their family and society. The children are a cause of much unhappiness. "How could they turn out to be so?" the parents ask themselves. "We provided them with all their needs—spared them all the hardships we ourselves suffered!" The parents are puzzled; but social scientists see the answer in their very words: "We spared them all hardship". These children were provided with all they could consume. But consumption however rich, does not promote maturation. They were starved of opportunities, of the chal-

lenges, to mature. Achievements for the family in material values do not necessarily carry with them progress in moral values.

#### The Quality of the People

We can raise the same question to the macro-level, the level of the nation as a whole, and ask ourselves: "Supposing we did succeed in helping Filipino families contain their size, so that the country now began to number small-sized families in the majority—will we thereby have succeeded in reducing conflicts and tensions in the country? In reducing the accumulation of power by the few? In achieving a more equitable distribution of wealth? Will we have succeeded in minimizing corruption in the exercise of public power, and graft in the rendering of public service? Will external peace and order have finally settled over our land? Will we have truly succeeded in the task of development of a people?"

The problem of raising the type of children who will be equipped to face the problems of their world is not solved merely by reducing their number. The ultimate answer does not lie either in making provisions for everyone, of a sufficiency of goods that are largely or exclusively material. It lies, fundamentally, in the development of the moral resources of the young. By itself, howsoever rich in material goods, population control can lead to population deterioration. (cf. Eric Fromm; the bankruptcy of the consumer society). Hence a fertility control program that relies for its thrust largely on the attractions of material values will not solve the fundamental problem of human development. We do not minimize the importance of material resources; we should be on guard against giving them the primacy.

Again, let us reiterate the need for conception control. At the same time, conception control is merely a technique; and techniques are morally ambiguous. They need an ideology to guide them and give them meaning. Even the practice of Rhythm, of itself is not necessarily laudable. The selfish practice of Rhythm is a betrayal of the married vocation to creative love. What we aim to impart is an ideology rather than a technique. It is to highlight this that we have preferred the name RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD to Family Planning. (Continued next issue)