

In Sickness - In Health

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THOUGHTS FOR THE MARRIED

DOCTOR DON SPEAKS...

- MOTHERHOOD
- STERILITY
- CHILD TRAINING
- INFIDELITY
- CONTRACEPTION
- SEX
- CONFIDENCE
- CAESAREAN BIRTH

This pamphlet discusses particular problems of Marriage. You the reader may have a similar difficulty but in all cases it is recommended that you discuss your personal problems with a Priest, either in Confession or at home.

THE CATHOLIC DOCTOR

I am a Catholic doctor. I thank God for guiding me into this wonderful vocation. Not only must I serve Humanity and be ever ready to attend to the the medical requirement of my patients, but I must do more. I must first of all serve God! In addition to my medical vocation, I must carry out a social apostolate, insinuating into every medical circumstance the unalterable law of God. I can make my work a prayer by seeing in each patient "one of the least of My little ones," an immortal soul contained in an earthly body; by recognizing that I am dependent on God, not only for my existence and strength, but also for the stream of thoughts that flow through my mind developing into the cures that fascinate the credulous ones and make my patients love me. I can magnify my medical vocation into the most wonderful spiritual vocation.

You can see that my most treasured possession is my Faith, and I must say it is a wonderful consolation to be able to share this faith, this supreme confidence, with my patients. God has given to all Catholics, but especially to Catholic doctors, the chance to really bring faith to the people and people to the Faith. In time of sickness, all turn to ask for help and strength. The Author of life Himself is always ready to help those who have faith in Him. I frequently say to my patients the words which St. Pius X used to utter in his miracles of healing, "Have faith in God and He will help you."

A Catholic doctor must concern himself at times with what may at first appear to be purely social problems, and it is primarily with these that I wish to deal in these letters. Such things as divorce and abortion, mothercraft, sex education, the care of orphans and the aged, etc. These and other topics you will read about as you come with me to visit the happy and the sad, the faithful, the rich

and the poor, the weak and the strong. I want you to see the magnificent drama of life as a Catholic doctor sees it. Yes, I want you to see God as I have seen Him, to love Him as I have loved Him, to pray to Him as I have prayed to Him.

Have you ever thought of prayer as one of the medical wonder drugs like penicillin or, cortisone? What is prayer? Where do you get it? In what dose is it effective? What is its immediate effect? How much does it cost? How many incurable cases have responded to it? Are they permanent? I can tell you that prayer is the most wonderful drug that God ever gave us.

SEX IN FOCUS

In our day social scientists, including some non-Catholic Churchmen, declare that it is wrong to "shackle sex to the conception of children." One group even suggests that a couple should make a "thoughtful and prayerful Christian decision" to enjoy sex while using unnatural methods to prevent the fulfilment of its purpose.

But it was God the Creator who "shackled" purpose to use in respect of all creation. He gave us eyes for the purpose of seeing, ears for the purpose of hearing, the use of sex for the purpose of begetting children.

Men can discover the purpose and the right use of sex without the aid of revealed religion. From our experience of the human race and from the natural law which, as St. Paul says, is "written in our hearts", we can, by using our intelligence, discover what sex is for, and how it should be rightly used. By using our will power we can restrict ourselves to using it correctly. The teaching of our religion on this matter simply confirms the conclusions of our reason.

Doctors who by their professional training and experience, acquire a better-than-average knowledge of the use and abuse of sex, should feel obliged to pass on such information as can help others and protect them from the shattering effects on soul and body of unnatural attitudes and behaviour in sex matters.

There can be no true sex education unless the purpose and use of sex are understood correctly.

If I were to use water as a "modern" fuel for my car; if I were to give a child a carving knife as a "modern" toy; if I were to eat the daily newspaper and assert that it was a "modern" food; my sanity would be immediately suspect. I would be using these things without reference to their purpose. In all creation correct use depends on purpose.

Sex is, of course, quite a special part of created human nature. It can find its natural fulfilment only in achieving its noble social purpose, its primary purpose - the procreation of children.

There is a partial fulfilment in its personal use for lawful satisfaction in the married state. That is genuine conjugal joy. But as in other human functions, when the primary purpose is completely subordinated to selfish pleasure, the result is a very temporary thrill followed by remorse.

SEX - A SANE SLANT

Catholic parents often find themselves baffled by the attitude of many persons, including their own children, to sex matters. Parents recognize instantly when a particular idea is wrong or a particular person is astray. What they find difficult is to pin-point the exact fault in the evil idea or action. Even if they are able to do this, sometimes they are at a loss to explain to their children what are the correct attitudes and actions, and why.

As a doctor I am often asked, in private and sometimes in public, to give advice on this matter of sex. Now, after many attempts to give the correct Catholic slant, I have come to realize that the principles on which sex instruction and sex education rest, are essentially the same - whether one is speaking to tots, to children, to teen-agers, to engaged couples or even to married people. Obviously there will be some necessary variation in the words used and in the fullness of presentation; but not even religious differences in one's listeners alter the basic principles.

Of course, I cannot hope to explain fully, or even to justify, this assertion in one page. Nevertheless, succeeding articles will, I trust, amply outline a plan for sound sex instruction. Such instruction to children is a sacred responsibility of parents. It can be difficult, apparently complex, but it is not impossible.

For the present I will simply outline the guiding principles. First and foremost, from the standpoint of common sense and experience, it is necessary to establish that the primary purpose of sex is to give life, that sex is part of the plan of nature and of the Author of Nature, and that the right use of sex presupposes the possible fulfilment, not the deliberate frustration of this purpose and plan.

Secondly, one must appreciate the differences which suit each sex to its role in life-giving, and which make the two sexes complementary. This involves a discussion of sex structure (anatomy), sex function (physiology) and sex emotion (psychology).

Thirdly, even from a natural standpoint, one must stress the need for control. This control includes the good example which parents should show their children.

Lastly, God's revealed commandments must be given adequate explanation and correct interpretation.

From these four fountainheads flows all - not only Catholic - sound sex instruction.

SUMMIT TALK

We are here concerned with the problem of giving practical and precise sex information to children. Other discussions deal with the purpose and right use (the philosophy) of sex, with the need of dignified restraint and control (the morality) of sex. Now we look at the science of sex, the plain observable facts of life.

The best person, to impart such knowledge to the child is the parent. In the eyes of the child, a parent who avoids this issue risks the surrender of the parental status. This status may well stand or fall by the willingness and competence shown by the parent in handling this most vital issue at what may well be called a "summit talk".

No one can give another what he himself does not possess. Thus, it is essential for the parent to possess the knowledge in order that it can be given to the child. An unhealthy, secret, furtive attitude adopted by some children is simply a reflection of the unhealthy, secret, furtive attitude adopted by some parents. Within the bonds of prudence, discussion of sex problems with children ought to be open and frank.

Too often doctors and teachers are asked to perform this task, while much too often children are left to find out for themselves in a hundred undesirable ways.

I believe that scientific terms should be used as widely as possible. "Whatsits" and "thingamajigs" and "you know whats" are definitely out these days. One must give a straight forward explanation

of the names, functions of the organs; and some remarks about the different sex emotions and impulses of male and female.

Of course, you cannot speak of sex as you would of a new hat or a new car. Sex is quite different because it is the most priceless natural possession. Speak of it with enthusiasm clarity and genuine joy, but always restrained by reverence.

A confident introduction to the mysteries of birth, to physical development, to sex hygiene, to the problems of courtship and eventually of marriage, can be of the utmost value to the growing child. Use everyday scientific talk couched in everyday religious Catholic attitudes. Never miss, or allow your children to miss, the essential point of scientific sex, that it is part of God's pattern of life. Religious truth and scientific truth can never contradict each other.

MOTHERHOOD

One great reality usually stands out among the plans of young women - marriage and motherhood. God himself instituted the wonderful Sacrament and declared its aims, the procreation and education of children. St. Paul says: "Women will be saved through childbearing", and again, "I wish young girls to marry, to bear children and to become mothers of families." (Elsewhere, St Paul recommends the virtues of celibacy too.)

Doctors and midwives must encourage mothers to carry out readily the function of motherhood. Young wives have as their example Mary herself, who, when asked to become the Mother of the Holy Infant, said readily, "Be it done unto me according to Your word." I would earnestly point out to you the greatness, the beauty, and the nobility of motherhood. Within you life stirs, is formed, lives and is born. You are privileged to co-operate with God in this creation.

Marriage and the conjugal union exist because it is God's will - to procreate. This truth must be realized by those who see in the conjugal task something degraded. Conjugal union in marriage is no fall, no cause for disillusionment. God's will cannot be wrong. The physical pleasure is also given by the will of God and is in no way displeasing to Him.

Think, dear Christian Mother, of the silent advent during pregnancy. Joy is mingled with pleasure. Yours is a special two-fold life at this time. You eat and the hidden being partakes of the nourishment. Your strength and your blood are transmitted to the little being within. And remember, a little soul lives in your body and has been created and entrusted to you by God. This little soul can never perish, even if death extinguishes the corporal life before birth. This little soul will be with you in eternity.

You are travelling God's road and there will be sacrifices. But I have observed that mothers gain new strength, energy and vitality and quietly perform their duties, remaining happy and active, although they must be careful and prudent so that the germinating body within them will not suffer. The God who gave them their great human task gives them also the strength and courage needed to face the difficulties of their calling.

CONFIDENCE

"The key-note of all maternity treatment nowadays," said Sister John, the Matron of the Maternity Clinic, "is the elimination of fear. The more confidence a mother has when she comes to give birth to her child the better. Fear causes tension and complicates what should be a normal process of nature."

"Well, I think I have conquered most of my fears over the past few months," replied Mrs. B. who had come for a check-up. "Of course, I have always had plenty of confidence in my doctor."

"That's good. He deserves it I assure you. He is always very thorough, particularly when it is a maternity case."

"Yes, isn't he? He has been most meticulous in his investigations."

"I'm sure he has. You can be quite sure that he is doing all in his power to eliminate all element of risk. All the various investigations - blood examinations, X-ray investigations, dietary instructions, etc. - are meant to make your confinement as nearly normal as possible."

"I feel sure it will be now. But I'll admit that at first I was more than a little scared. I suppose most women are with their first baby at any rate. I am much more at peace since he told me what really happens at the actual labour. He made it sound like a perfectly normal function of the body. I mean, you hear such blood-curdling tales about..."

"You do, don't you? There are exceptional cases and, as usual, they get all the publicity. And even these, I think, are often dramatized in the telling. But the truth is that nine out of every ten cases of confinement are perfectly normal from start to finish. Yours will be one of these. When a mother knows what is going on during labour she is better able to co-operate and use her natural powers to produce a satisfactory result. She is not so likely to be obsessed by fear as has so often been the case in the past."

"Of course," continued the Matron, "the best way to ensure a normal confinement is for the mother to be most scrupulous about attending the Pre-Natal Clinics. These are among, the blessings that modern women enjoy. They are a well-established part of every doctor's practice, and to an even greater degree of every large Maternity Hospital."

GROUNDLESS FEAR

"Doctor," began Mrs. K as soon as the door of the surgery closed "I'm afraid I'm going to have another baby."

"That's good" I answered, motioning her to be seated. "Why afraid?"

"Well, I had a terrible time with my first. In fact the doctor said I should never have another."

"How many children have you?"

"Only the one, I mean, after what the doctor... "

"Yes, I understand. Tell me about the terrible time you had." Mrs. K. found when she started to tell the story that she could remember very little about it. Her only clear memory was of the joy she felt seeing her child for the first time. She suddenly realized that her knowledge of the terrible time came from the staff and the doctor.

We had quite a discussion about it. I pointed out that the staff in their efforts at encouragement had inadvertently impressed on her mind that her labour was longer than usual. The doctor could have meant his remarks about not having any more children to be a positive prohibition. On the other hand he may have made it in passing merely commenting on the difficulties he had conquered in her case. Most people when they have been successful tend to exaggerate the obstacles they

conquered. We are all receptive to a little flattery. The doctor may have done that and his remarks been taken too seriously.

"You know, Mrs. K." I said, "a warning to completely avoid children is very rarely justified. The fact that your first confinement proved difficult is no indication that the same difficulties will arise next time. So before we start any examination or treatment for this confinement let us clear the decks of groundless fears. If you are going to trust me to look after you over the next few months then trust me when I tell you that there is absolutely no reason why this confinement should not be an ordinary, average, uncomplicated confinement and delivery. Let's treat it as such till it proves otherwise."

PRE-NATAL CARE

"Now that it is all over," said Mrs. T.--- happily, "I don't know why I was so worried and frightened."

"Is that so?" smiled her doctor, "Then you will not mind me saying 'I told you so'. Giving birth to a child is a perfectly natural process for the average woman. She has nothing to fear."

"But you hear so much about complications!"

"You do. Far too much. But actually cases in which the confinement becomes complicated are in the very great minority. In recent years the advances made in the care of the mother during the pre-natal period have accounted for the fact that there are so many women who have no undue difficulty in giving birth to their children."

"I am very grateful that I came to you early in my pregnancy."

"Yes, that is the safest way. As soon as a woman thinks that she is pregnant she should put herself in the hands of a competent doctor. Then she is given the right advice about diet, clothing and exercise. Blood tests can be taken and other important investigations can be made."

"All the same I did feel that I was wasting your time coming along regularly when there was nothing actually wrong with me."

"Not at all. Frequent checks with the doctor are an added safeguard against trouble. Then if something does go wrong the doctor is in a position to cope with the trouble. X-ray examinations, kidney tests, etc., can easily be carried out and the trouble located and remedied. Besides it gives the doctor a chance to talk with the woman about the coming birth, to tell her what to expect and to instil into her mind that confidence and freedom from worry that are so necessary for a safe and successful confinement."

"Yes, I was very grateful for the little talks you gave me. Knowing what were the various stages of growth and development of the child as well as the various symptoms to expect, took away all that fear of the unknown which causes so much mental strain. Once you know what to expect and how to cope with it there is no cause for panic. Everything just goes to schedule."

"That's right. And that is how it should be and how it usually is. After all, gestation and parturition are wonders planned out and catered for by a Creator of Infinite Wisdom."

BACKACHE

It always saddens me to see a Mother with backache, because in most cases it is at least theoretically preventable. But, so I am told by numerous Mothers, it is a very different matter in practice. The main cause of this disability is lack of rest and care after baby is born. The "proud" posture of pregnancy, gradually developed, is suddenly replaced by the normal upright position, and the muscles and ligaments are thereby greatly strained. Anyone who works very hard, or who stands or walks excessively is likely to develop a backache. Especially so is a tired convalescent Mother, who invariably finds extra work to do after returning from hospital, and who must do for the whole family as well as the new arrival.

Modern society does not ordinarily provide for domestic help, but in some municipalities a "House Keeper Service" has been instituted. Most often it is after the family has tried - and failed - to manage, that outside help is sought. By then Mother has had the backache so badly that it is decided something will have to be done. It was the custom of old for neighbours and friends to call in and help with the children and the housework at such difficult times. Such truly Christian and charitable acts will not pass unrewarded even in this world.

Other less frequent causes of this unhappily disability are pelvic congestion and certain displacements. Both are greatly aggravated by undue arid unhealthy activity too soon after having had a baby. One suggestion often proposed to eliminate this trouble is for the Fathers to have the families. It is said that "they would take good care of themselves." "I have never lost a Father yet," is the proud boast of every obstetrician.

My suggestion to all young mothers is this: don't wait until you actually have a backache before you do something about it. Pre-natal and post-natal exercises are becoming popular, as it is now realized that by strengthening the muscles, front and back, a more speedy return to normal strength is to be expected. Don't rush home from Birth Centre before the doctor is satisfied with your condition. When home, take adequate rest and care. Don't try to do everything at once as this may produce backstrain and ache. Never refuse friendly assistance at this crucial time. For those who already belong to the Backache Club, I say, "See if your doctor can help you with operations or supports. Be consoled with the thought that many a backache, patiently suffered, will prove to be a gold pass on Judgement Day."

INFECTIONS

"So most of my fears are based on 'Old Wives' Tales'?", queried the young woman who was expecting her first child.

"Not exactly. They would have been realities eighty, or twenty, or thirty years ago. But medical science has so advanced that complications which were prone to occur then, have now almost been eliminated from the text-books."

"Thank God for that. I suppose, too, the doctors of today are better than they were then."

"Well, we have the advantage of a better training. Each generation of doctors adds something to the fund of knowledge. We have benefited immensely from the experience and skill of our predecessors as future generations will benefit from us.

"Besides, improved technique," continued the doctor, "we moderns have the advantage of the new drugs that reduce the danger of infection - penicillin and allied drugs."

"So the women of today are in a much better position than their grandmothers, Doctor?"

"They are. However, in spite of all skill and precaution there are certain infections that can still occur in maternity cases. Often enough it is the mother herself who is directly responsible."

"What would they be?"

"Oh, things like septic teeth, bad tonsils, untreated discharges, about which they say nothing. They can all provide a septic force in the body which can easily light up when the patient's general condition is impaired. The doctor does his best but the patient can help herself a great deal by attending to such matters as these."

"They would all come under the general heading of pre-natal care, I suppose."

"That's right. If a mother takes the normal precautions and has the benefit of a competent doctor, complications are rare. After all, childbirth is a normal function of a woman's body. It was designed by God to fulfil this purpose. The vast majority of births follow the normal natural pattern. A minority present difficulty of one kind or another. Of course, these are the ones that attain notoriety and become subjects of discussion."

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

"Yes, Doctor, I do suffer from blood pressure a little," said young mother-to-be, Mrs. J. "I hope it is not going to complicate matters now that I find I'm pregnant."

"No. It shouldn't. It seems to be your only complication. You have no kidney or liver troubles. With careful supervision and strict adherence to advice we will manage all right."

"I'm glad to hear that, Doctor. I have been rather frightened about pregnancy ever since I've had this blood pressure. You see I remember a friend of my mother's who had this trouble, and she died carrying the baby."

"I can quite believe that when a woman with high blood pressure becomes pregnant, the condition deteriorates unless it is checked. In the past controlling blood pressure was a major problem. In fact, many women suffering from Hypertension, as it is called, have been advised to have the pregnancy terminated."

"Oh, dear! I hope..."

"Don't worry. There would never be any question of that. Thanks be to God, we now have new drugs which enable us to control the blood pressure during pregnancy. These drugs make it comparatively easy for patients suffering from this to be carried through their pregnancies without any ill effects."

"I'm not going to be one of these save the mother or child problems?"

"Not at all. They exist mostly in books, never in real life, these days. Even in extreme cases of blood pressure we have no problem saving the mother. Your case is not extreme. In fact, it is not uncommon. With ordinary care and the use of our drugs, there is nothing to fear."

PANIC IN THE HEADLINES

Cancer, cancer, cancer! Of late, papers have blazed the word across the world, and public emotion has been aroused. We have been told we will get cancer if we smoke too much, if we have too many medical X-rays, if nations are allowed to explode the H-bomb. We have been asked to contribute to funds for cancer research.

A few things are worth noting at the start:

1. Cancer is a rare disease, even though many families can count a victim in one generation or another;
2. Medical science has made a splendid start in the development of cancer cure;
3. Early diagnosis is the predominant factor in the cure of cancer;
4. The main symptom of early cancer is not pain.

Cancer in women is usually in the generative organs. The cause of this is not known - as yet. Immorality, may contribute to it; or having a family. But good-living, single women are also affected.

In women, cancer of the breast is the most common. This is one form of the disease, however, in which there have been many cures. Any woman who discovers "funny little lumps" in her breast should present herself for a doctor's examination immediately. Should she have cancer, delay could prevent its cure.

Cancer can also occur in the internal sex organs, the most common site being the neck of the womb (or uterus). Once again, the main symptom is not pain. Here it is haemorrhage, which comes at irregular or untimely occasions: quite frequently after marital relations, or following the change of life. Young women, especially mothers, are not immune; and they should watch carefully for abnormal "periods". Actually, in at least ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the cause will not be cancer, but one should never hesitate to visit the doctor, and so be reassured.

If cancer does unfortunately strike, early treatment by operation (usually combined with radiotherapy) can be trusted to give good results. Sometimes, of course, it does not. Let me stress again that the cure of cancer depends largely on early discovery.

In the extremely rare case of cancer in a pregnant uterus, removal of the cancer and the fetus (pre-born infant) is morally permissible since there is no intention of killing the child.

RADIATION DANGER

A feeling of ungrounded fear might easily be aroused by the film *On the Beach* which depicts, even if unrealistically, the end of the world as a result of atomic war. Churchmen and scientists have condemned the film as being devoid of any morality and scientifically exaggerated and absurd. The dangers of radiation, though real, are over-emphasized in this movie, and the portrayal of suicide - pill -rather -than -death -by -radiation attitude does violence to correct traditional values.

X-RAYS are a form a radiation, and the danger of atomic radiation naturally leads to the question of how harmful a simple medical x-ray can be.

There is a definite, though slight, risk of some untoward effects from too frequent exposure to x-rays. The element of risk has been well known since the advent of x-rays. Doctors and technicians working with x-rays always wear protective gloves and aprons.

Both in diagnosis and treatment, x-rays are virtually indispensable, but competent doctors never use them unnecessarily. In the case of pregnant mothers, greater than ordinary care is normally exercised, routine x-rays being postponed until after the birth. But if necessary, x-rays of mother

and baby are done if the circumstances seem to warrant it. Under these conditions, one could say it was as near as possible to being absolutely safe.

For comparison, the danger or risk of traffic accident or road death is far greater than the risk of medical x-rays. But no-one seriously suggests that motor cars be prohibited or that pedestrians should be kept off the streets. As long as you are alive there is a risk of dying; but no-one suggests that the birth of people be prohibited to save them from the "horror" of dying. No, the reasonable approach is to take care. The more the risk, the more the care. So it is with x-rays.

Only an extremist would refuse to have an x-ray and run a real risk of dying with a disease which, without x-ray, must go undetected.

The various diseases produced by x-ray have been the result of subjecting animals to intense radiation in scientific tests. No clear proof yet exists that in ordinary medical practice any such harm has resulted.

The moral of the story is - be sensible with, but not afraid of, x-rays.

A CAESAREAN

A patient once proudly told me that his wife had "an Assyrian operation, you know, Doc, when you have a baby." Of course he referred to a Caesarean Section, an operation used by doctors to deliver babies when it is considered virtually impossible to deliver them the natural way.

But this operation should never be considered an easy way out for ordinary uncomplicated cases. It would be quite unlawful for a Catholic mother to ask for or submit willingly to a "Caesar" without a serious reason. It should be noted that in non-emergency cases, the death of the baby is more likely after a "Caesar" than after a natural delivery, even a moderately difficult one.

Don't misunderstand me! I thank God for Caesarean Section. Since the advent of penicillin and blood transfusions, it is a "safe" operation and in certain cases is the only way to save the mother and child. But I feel the operation is used excessively and unnecessarily, with several pernicious social and spiritual effects.

In general, only two conditions make a "Caesar" necessary: Absolute disproportion, when the size of the baby makes it absolutely impossible for it to pass through the natural passages; and in cases of severe haemorrhage. When minor degrees of disproportion and minor haemorrhages occur, these cases often succeed naturally if given a "trial" at natural labour.

Most "Caesars" are done simply as the result of previous "Caesars" (many of which were unnecessary), it being the widely-held, but incorrect, notion that "once a Caesar, always a Caesar."

Some doctors have an idea (quite false, morally and medically) that they should do a "Caesar" if there is any doubt about a safe natural delivery. They neglect the fact that humans have souls to save as well as bodies. Many mothers have been terrorized into accepting a "Caesar" by exaggerated warnings of the doubts and dangers of natural birth. Then after a couple of children by Caesarean they are advised to use contraceptives.

My advice to all mothers faced with the question of Caesarean is to ask the doctor is it absolutely necessary. If it is, proceed. If not, then ask him to give you a trial at natural birth. If real difficulty develops, you can then be satisfied to have the operation. But hundreds of trials are successful. Once the baby is born naturally, there is little reason to fear for future occasions.

HOW MANY CAESAREANS?

"Oh, I'm feeling wonderful, Doctor," said Mrs L. in answer to my question. "I should actually be back on the job, looking after the family. This is just a holiday."

"Make the most of it," I advised. "Once you get back to the care of the family the holiday is over."

"There's one worry though..."

"What's that?"

"Well, this is my second Caesarean... What about next time?... if I have another baby I mean... How many Caesareans can a woman have with safety?"

"It's impossible to be dogmatic about the number of times, Mrs. L. You see..."

"They say that three is the most that any one can have with safety."

"Yes, that's what is commonly said. But it is not true. There are any number of mothers who have five or six without any undue complications."

"Six! Well, why do you so often hear that three is the limit."

"Huh! Why do you hear so many wild statements about pregnancy and childbirth? There are literally thousands of 'old wives tales' that have only varying degrees of truth. This is one of them. But I assure you that if there was such a limit placed on the number of Caesareans many parents would not now be the proud parents of some of their dearest and best loved children."

"Oh, I realize that. I think it would be worth half a dozen Caesareans to have this little fellow. And if God blesses me with other children in the future, then I will readily face other operations. It is a small price to pay really. Only I wondered how many a woman could have, especially when I heard 'three only'. I got a bit worried."

"Well, don't. No two patients are necessarily the same. All rules have their exceptions and in this case even the rule is vague. There is no definite limit. A doctor will know whether future pregnancies would be dangerous or not. The best thing is to leave it to him. If he decides that there is a danger, then is the time to face your problem and get the necessary instruction and advice."

NATURAL NURSING Breast-Feeding

These days, many mothers are bulldozed into bottle feeding their babies. Bottle feeding is said to be better for baby, easier for mothers, more modern, more scientific. Mass advertising has convinced many mothers that it is impassible to feed their babies the natural way; and fearfully, against their mother instinct and without even a trial, they reject natural for artificial feeding.

In normal circumstances, natural nursing is best for baby. No scientist can disprove this. At most, artificial feeding is a substitute for natural feeding, if natural feeding is, as it sometimes is, impossible or very impractical.

The baby needs nearness and love. A baby has emotional needs as well as bodily needs. In the emotion department, there is no substitute for mother.

Furthermore, a mother needs to nurse her baby for her own sake. Breast feeding is a natural method of developing motherliness. Obstacles have to be overcome. Overcoming them means little acts of self-denial, but the reward is very great, indeed.

Mother Nature and natural mothers are never out of date or unscientific. The so-called Laws of Nature and the order in the Universe, which our modern scientists are so thrilled to discover, were implanted in nature by God, and myriad mysteries of nature still remain undiscovered.

It is therefore some of the scientists who are unscientific. They carefully examine how natural functions occur, ignoring or rejecting the need to examine why they occur and where they fit in Nature's God-given plan. Every natural function or organ has a precise place in God's plan. Every created thing has a precise purpose. Use in accord with purpose is natural. Use in defiance of purpose is unnatural.

Of course, there are times when breast feeding, although desirable, is impossible or impractical.

Some mothers go out to "work", others have to do the shopping, as deliveries have stopped; others are driven to near despair by housework and washing, as these days domestic help is out of the question. These extra and severe strains placed on the nursing mother can render it impossible to nurse a baby beyond a few weeks or months.

CHILD TRAINING

"Stop poking your tongue out at the Doctor," warned the distressed mother. The doctor was preparing to leave after spending twenty minutes trying to persuade this self-same child to poke out his tongue to be examined. "He is really a little darling," she apologized, "but he does have a mind of his own." The doctor grunted something. "Of course, as my husband says, it is essential not to thwart him in his development of individuality. We have read that too much repression may harm him:" She turned in time to see this product of modern child psychology cutting the baby's hair with her sewing scissors. (This is a true story. I know. I was the doctor.)

Over the years I have seen many children and throughout this time I have tried to discover why some children are well behaved and others are not. I have come to believe that the social and spiritual behaviour of children depends on the attitude of the parents. Many parents have become infected by the deadly virus of modern child psychology. A distorted pattern of life causes distorted development and so distorted lives.

Parental good example is the most effective way of teaching good behaviour to little children. Some parents exploit the antics of their children as entertainment for friends and relatives. This may develop in the child a false sense of values, a desire for excessive excitement and is reflected in the pranks of "Hooligans", "Bodgies" and "Teddy Boys". I am sure that temperate use of corporal punishment is a necessary adjunct to sound moral and social instruction. The will power is the muscle of the soul. By consistent attention to moral values by parent and child, the problem of true education could be solved. No teacher or school can be expected to do what is strictly the parents' duty. There is no substitute for real Mother's Love in the treatment of behaviour disorders.

CONTRACEPTION

While the most important thing about unnatural contraception is that it is a violation of the natural and the divine law, nevertheless there is a solid medical argument against it. The champions of "birth-control" discreetly avoid these objections and, by their guilty silence, are able to deceive even good Catholic people.

Contrary to popular theory, the health and length of life of the mothers of large families are thereby greatly improved. By exaggerating the "danger" of maternity and the plight of the occasional

individual worthy of our sympathy, and by completely ignoring the hundreds and thousands of happy, healthy mothers, the advocates of "birth-control" distort reality - so that when the true facts are told, they seem incredible. In fact, the dangers of maternity decrease after the first birth and, on the average, the maternal health measured by length of life, is considerably better in mothers of large families than in those who, especially by guilty methods, have no family.

These days there is a marked decrease in the death rate of new-born babies, but this is due to the real scientific advances - penicillin, skilled hospital care and the like. It is not due, as is so lyingly claimed, to the spurious "science" of birth-control. Where modern medical facilities are missing, it is the poverty and the disease of the people which cause the trouble; and it is by attention to the establishment of social justice in these places that real progress can be made to help families.

Not one of the many and varied methods of artificial contraception is free from grave medical danger. It is easy to accumulate weighty evidence from skilled and unbiased doctors that contraception is definitely harmful. To be brief, as the sex organs and glands are intimately associated with the emotions and the nervous system as a whole, it is obvious that the continued perversion of the natural function will inevitably result in functional, physical, or nervous disease - such as irregular haemorrhages, inflammation and congestion, and neurosis. Nor can the danger of cancer be overlooked due to the irritation of chemical and mechanical devices used. Several of the techniques lead to the death of the newly-conceived infant! Of all the methods of control, none is so safe and so satisfactory as the natural "rhythm technique", "natural family planning", "the Billings Method", the use of which is sanctioned by the Church in special circumstances. In which latter case it is desirable to consult a priest and a Catholic doctor.

TERMINATE

"Well, that is most encouraging, doctor," said Mrs. B. "But the doctor who attended me when I had my last baby told me that I should make certain never to have another. In fact, he gave me a lot of advice about birth control - which I didn't take - and said if I did conceive the pregnancy should be terminated. Ever since I have realized I am pregnant again I have been terrified."

"Unfortunately, Mrs. B., that sort of advice is too easy to give. And it is wrong. Terminating the pregnancy is just a polite word for murdering the child. If a woman agrees to that she condemns herself to endless remorse which can do far more harm mentally and physically than a dozen pregnancies.

"Yes, I know that, Doctor. That's why I came to you."

"Quite apart from the sinfulness, such medical advice is often quite wrong and unnecessary. You would be surprised how many women who have ignored such advice have brought into the world healthy children who would have been lost. Even when the pregnancy is likely to be attended with grave risks to the mother, trust in God, the Author of life, and the help of a competent doctor can work wonders."

"I was hoping to hear that, Doctor. My husband and I dearly want this baby. Now I feel confident that all will be well."

"That is a big help, that confidence. People should have confidence in their doctor no matter what their trouble. It makes all the difference. The doctor should be one of the family's best friends. There are many problems in married life that could be sorted out with the help of a good, competent Catholic doctor.

"There are, for example, not a few couples who find that they are unable to adjust themselves to the state of affairs required in marriage. Frequently sexual difficulties and misunderstandings are the root of the trouble. Unless the principal cause of the trouble is found and corrected then it is impossible to get things working properly and happily. A doctor who has the confidence of the couple can usually help a long way towards the solution of such problems."

"Well, Doctor, you have certainly helped solve mine. With the help of God and the intercession of St. Gerard I have every hope that we will get by in spite of the gloomy forebodings of the defeatists."

ECTOPIC GESTATION

I was asked recently about what was a case of ectopic gestation. A woman was taken to hospital in very great pain. She was choking for breath and paralysis was setting in. When she was asked to sign a paper, she did so without very much thought, not interested in the kind of operation. She learned afterwards that a Fallopian tube had been removed together with a six weeks' old baby. Then she began to worry about possible neglect.

It does sometimes happen that a pregnancy develops outside the womb. This is called ectopic, out of place, not in its normal position. The phenomenon usually occurs in one of the Fallopian tubes. These tubes are very small and are not designed by nature for the reception of a growing fetus or pre-born infant. The result is that practically every pregnancy of this kind terminates itself between the sixth and the twelfth week; the blood vessels rupture or the tube bursts.

Under certain, definite conditions it is morally permissible to remove a Fallopian tube - even when it contains a living fetus (infant), and even when the fetus (child) will die when removed, because it is not sufficiently developed for independent life. The purpose of the operation is not the direct killing of the fetus (baby); this is never lawful under any circumstances. The operation is to stop a haemorrhage which puts the mother's life in danger.

Most likely the woman in question had suffered a severe haemorrhage, possibly a rupture of the tube. Had she been informed of such a state of things she would have been quite justified in giving permission for the operation. Further, if a woman is told by her doctor that she is here and now in grave danger because there is a fetus (child) developing in a Fallopian tube, she may leave herself in his hands. Haemorrhage and disintegration begin long before the bursting of a tube.

There is no need to fear an ectopic gestation. In practice, such a pregnancy will be diagnosed before any damage is done. It is well to remember that in all ectopic operations, every effort should be made to baptize the fetus (infant), as long as it is not certain that the unfortunate fetus (baby) is dead.

STERILITY A PROBLEM

My assistant and I were lolling over the morning "cuppa", talking about nothing in particular, when up pops the mighty question of sterility. He had the knack of introducing argumentative topics. I suppose it was one way to tapping his senior's wide experience.

"Had a fellow this morning," he began, "who was very upset. There had been an upheaval in the home. Fairly young fellow, too. But he and his wife wanted a large family and have none. He wanted to know a lot about sterility."

"Yes, too bad," I observed. "A big disappointment for a young couple who want a family, and not even one baby arrives. Can easily cause a crisis between them. Here's an amazing thing. The population of the world is about 2.3 billion, and increasing by 25 million every year. Yet, look at the number of cases of sterility that one comes across."

"Has the tempo of modern life anything to do with it, do you think?"

"Well, I suppose it has. I suppose it's true to say that the nature of people's work, of their recreation and of their general mode of living can be responsible. Yet, I've met many cases where it just occurs without any reason at all."

"And it seems to be fairly divided between the sexes. I looked up a few figures for that man this morning and I found that of the people attending a sterility clinic, 30% were men, 40% were women, and the remaining 30% were husbands and wives who were both sterile."

"That's an important point. I always insist that no investigation is complete unless both husband and wife are tested. It is only then that we or a clinic can give the necessary treatment or the proper advice. If that man was going to a clinic I hope you stressed that moral principles must always be observed in any test."

The 'phone rang. The "cuppa" was finished. And so, too, had to be our discussion.

CHILDLESS MARRIAGES

Hundreds of disappointed couples attend doctors' surgeries each year to find out why they have no family and whether anything can be done for them. Most of these have led good lives and have kept the commandments concerning marriage. Of course, there are several who have not "played the game", and it is most noticeable that severe emotional effects invariably follow a period of immoral "birth control". This is especially marked if belated attempts to have a family are unsuccessful.

From the doctor's point of view sterility is never diagnosed until it is determined by a combination of special tests, coupled with several years of failure to conceive. It seems desirable to postpone the tests at least until after two or three years of failure. It is then that a doctor can help to solve such a problem.

Careful examination of both husband and wife is the first step. Any obvious abnormality should be seen and, if possible, corrected. But when, as is usual, there is no obvious sign of trouble, the special tests should be conducted. It is important to appreciate that both husband and wife should have the tests. And it is my practice to start with the husband. He is just as often the cause of the trouble and is much easier to test, as far as both patients and the doctor are concerned.

Strict attention to moral and medical detail is absolutely essential. It is desirable, therefore, to get some advice from your priest. Very many tests are performed by doctors, sometimes with the best of intentions, but they are nevertheless absolutely immoral. By and large, it is best to ask a priest to recommend a doctor who can be relied upon to observe the law of God in these examinations. {In Vitro Fertilization breaks the Laws of God in several areas, not the least of which is the deaths of many conceived children, and is NOT authorized by the Catholic Church.}

The tests on the husband can usually be performed in the doctor's office; but the wife's examination often requires attendance in hospital.

With all the available evidence a competent doctor can fairly accurately assess the degree of subfertility and advise corrective measures. Quite frequently conception takes place within the near future.

However, if it is discovered that almost certainly there can never be a family, for goodness' sake don't be too disheartened. I strongly recommend all couples in this unhappy position to make immediate moves to adopt a baby. The mother-instinct is agreeably consoled and a lonely soul is given a family.

ADOPTION

"Well, Doctor," said John Eastman, "what is the decision? Which of us is the cause of our childless marriage? What can be done about it?"

"You may be surprised to hear it," I said, "but there is absolutely nothing the matter with either of you. There is no apparent reason why you should not have a family."

"Oh, but Doctor, after five years..." questioned his wife.

"I know it's a long time, Mrs. Eastman, but there are the facts. You are both perfectly healthy and normal. I'm afraid that nothing can be done. You see, there are many unknown factors about the problem of sterility which so far have defied medical science. Saying that a child is a gift of God is more true than most people think."

"In that case, Doctor, we can only trust in God and our prayers. We thought we would come to you for examination because you had the same moral principles as we have. Now we have done our best. The rest is in the hands of God."

"Thank you. I am glad you came and am very sorry I cannot help you. Of course, there is a solution. Adopt a child."

"Oh, I don't think that I could ever love an adopted child as though it were my own," objected John.

"How do you know, Jack?" questioned his wife. "I think an adopted child would become as dear and precious as any child of our own. My worry would be the child's background, its hereditary tendencies and that sort of thing."

"You could have it's background checked," I replied. "And it would have no more evil tendencies than any other child. Your faith, your home and your training would curb them in an adopted child as in one of your own."

"We have talked it over, Doctor. But Jack has kept putting off the decision in the hope that we would have a child of our own. Maybe we will do something about it now. They say if you adopt one, you conceive one. It happens that way sometimes."

MERCY KILLING

At Christmas, Christ, by His own unaided divine power, proved Himself the Author of Life. At Easter, by His resurrection, He showed His mastery over death. Yet some self-styled scientists, ignorant of God and His Law, advocate a blasphemous rejection of His supreme authority over life and death.

The exponents of birth prevention and legal abortion have tried to disguise their sinister motives by claiming that Science demanded these measures. The truth is that Science, well learnt and well

applied, has rejected them and their ideas. Science has proved such immoral procedures are unnecessary.

There are others who advance "scientific" reasons for putting people to death and blithely style their murder "mercy killing". The victims of incurable disease, those with "intolerable" pain, with "dehumanizing" mental illness, the deformed, and even the elderly are classified by these "angels of mercy" as useless and better dead.

True science continues to advance rapidly, continues to unfold new and better ways of assisting humanity. What achievements the next decades will make we cannot foresee, but we have every ground for great optimism.

The mercy murderers take for granted that certain diseases are incurable and certain pains intolerable. They are wrong on both counts.

Recent discoveries foreshadow remarkable improvements in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases previously regarded as "incurable", even in cases of cancer. Powerful and safe sedatives are available for the relief of pain. Great strides have been made in the management of mental disease.

Every living creature has an instinctive desire to keep living. Some despairing souls may choose to frustrate this instinct and end their cares. Others accept suffering with resignation but would welcome death if it were the Will of God.

Human nature, properly understood in the Christian sense, cannot be "dehumanized" and is never "useless". Neither mental disease, old age, infirmity, deformity, nor poverty can alter human nature or render life useless. Only in pagan or atheistic rituals is life deliberately and wantonly destroyed.

Euthanasia is grossly immoral, and Science has proved it a fraud.

INFIDELITY

Infidelity in marriage and the consequent disintegration of Christian family life, has reached alarming proportions in the so-called Christian countries. It is estimated that 25 per cent of wives and 35 per cent of husbands are unfaithful. Quite clearly, some remedy is needed to arrest this terrible devastation of bodies and souls.

The spiritual (moral) questions and answers connected with this problem are the same for wives and husbands, and are for the most part well known. No matter how often they are ignored, no matter what theories of "liberty" are proposed by elastic modern consciences, the fact is that all infidelity is gravely immoral.

The medical questions concerned with the emotional and biological aspects of sex are not so well known, nor understood. For his own very good reasons, God has made women less susceptible to sex impulses and less enslaved than men to the drive of sex experience. Dr. Kinsey "discovered" this answer for the moderns, although it was long known to most people.

Many moderns have discovered these self evident facts for themselves. But, and this is the whole crux of the matter, they have refused to believe them. They have been subjected to a continuous barrage of misleading "sex education" that has been further distorted and misrepresented in press, on radio, at the cinema and now on television, the key-note of which is a glamorizing and exaggeration of sex satisfaction. Emphasis on physical satisfaction as the goal of marriage is a most

pernicious influence on modern society. It is on a par with the Communist technique of "brain washing".

There cannot be any easy success in marriage because of the very nature of the biological and emotional differences involved. When this is realized, and married people refuse to chase after the mirage of immediate complete satisfaction - for it is only a most nebulous and ethereal mirage - the major medical cause of infidelity will be cured.

Some people, even some doctors, cash in on sex. They write detailed elaborate text books which completely miss the mark. Sex is part of the great plan of God, and therefore, a deep and spiritual understanding of the dignity, the purpose of sex in a happy Christian family is the indispensable basis for sex adjustment in marriage.
