

Every Man A Lover

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Man and woman have the capacity to love and be loved. To come to a better understanding of love and responsible parenthood read this pamphlet.

Dedication:

To My Parents.

"There are three things my soul delights in, and which are delightful to God and to men: concord between brothers, friendship between neighbours. and a wife and husband who live happily together. Eccles. 25: 1.

Confucius said, "If there is harmony in the home there is order in the nation and peace in the world".

Knowledge may grow, but wisdom does not necessarily follow. Despite the scientific advances and the improvement in levels of general education over the centuries since the time of Confucius, it is reasonable to say that family life has seldom been so unstable as in our present day.

[Note. This pamphlet will refer at times to *Humanae Vitae*, the encyclical of Pope Paul VI. It can be read in full from the Vatican web-site: www.vatican.va]

1. Message not getting through

The philosophical ideals of married love and happy family life can be perceived by many persons who are not Christians. But Christ in his own words, and through his Church, has given us an even more exalted view of married love, and has made marriage a sacrament, a means of grace. Christians have a special obligation to give witness to the world that their view of marriage is true, so that more and more will strive to maintain the integrity of marriage and the purity of its love. Somehow, the message is not getting through; perhaps we ourselves do not understand it well enough; perhaps we are not proclaiming it loud enough and with conviction; I do not believe that the world is merely refusing to listen.

Marriage is creative

In Christian marriage, the husband and wife become co-creative. They obtain the privilege of the closest act of human co-operation with God in His creative power. It is their love which is generative of a new person with an immortal soul to spend eternity with God. This is the purpose of the sexual union, the love of the husband and wife becoming an echo of the Blessed Trinity itself where the Holy Spirit is generated by the mutual love of the Father and the Son.

We're not "super-beasts"

Pre-occupation with the story of evolution may distort one's concept of love. Much of what is now written about sex reflects an assessment of human beings as mere "super-beasts". Their various animal instincts demand gratification for sound physical and mental health, with inevitable corollaries of sterilization for eugenic purposes, preservation of semen for artificial insemination, therapeutic abortion and so on. Those "moderns" who ignore the accumulated wisdom of Christian teaching are really two thousand years out of date.

A perpetual surrender

In making men and women complementary to each other and creating the physical union of marriage, God intended that it should express a similar idea. They are one flesh, and this act symbolizes a perpetual surrender and sharing of their whole lives thereafter. It is when the physical act gives expression to a continuing attitude of mental unity and love that sex finds its fulfilment, and emotional and physical contentment become most exquisite. Here are joy and pleasure that the promiscuous individual has never experienced and scarcely understands.

Generosity is essential

The essence of love is generosity. St. Thomas Aquinas following Aristotle as had St. Augustine, taught that love implies the intention of bringing about the greatest possible happiness of the person loved. [St. Thomas Aquinas, 1, 2, Q. 26, A. 4.] The love which is totally generous nourishes and enriches itself and the personalities of the husband and wife, whereas "A love which is all of the body, not of the soul, soon becomes a thing of yesterday." [Ronald Knox, "Bridegroom and Bride", Sheed and Ward, London.] True love is like the cruse of oil that never fails.

Depends on reverence

Love depends upon reverence, and the purest love flows from reverence for God, with reverence then for the work of His hands and the object of His love. Love is not blind, but looks deeply into the other to find a creature made in the image of God. When the husband says "With my body I thee worship", he is acknowledging the revelation of God's nature in the woman he is marrying.

To love and be loved in return

For the full development of the human personality, there is need to love and to be loved. We all possess the basic urge to receive and to give love. A child learns to love by being loved. One sees a number of unhappy individuals who have grown into adult life bitter and frustrated, without ever having learned to love, because they have been unloved in the world, and have never been taught about the God who loves them. It is another creative aspect of married love, that the husband and wife complete and perfect each other.

...is sanctifying

Love is sanctifying because it enables the soul to find the Creator who is Love itself. "How can the man who has no love have any knowledge of God, since God is love?" [I John, 4: 8.]

...endures

Heaven is love that endures and there is no better image of Heaven on earth than the love of a husband and wife for each other. "If we love one another, then we have God dwelling in us, and the love of God has reached its full growth in our lives". [I John, 4: 12.] Henceforth, every incident of the life together is hallowed by His presence, as at Nazareth. "Where there are charity and love,

there the God of Love abides". [Antiphon for Maundy Thursday.] And two Guardian Angels have joined in a common task.

2. Expressions of love

The physical union between husband and wife is a loving, joyful expression of their giving themselves to one another as long as they live. This love will find expression in many other ways, because love should be constantly expressed and demonstrated, and there will be times when sexual union is not possible. There are times when it is abstinence from sexual union which is the demonstration of love. And they look forward to the day, after the temporary separation by death, when they will join their hands again in the peace of Heaven.

A source of strength

The lives of those who have chosen virginity for the love of God can be a source of inspiration and strength, (Pope Paul VI) "the witness of the priest who, in order to be a pastor with Christ and in His name, in order to be unreservedly at the service of His brothers, offers himself entirely to the One who has chosen him, to the One who can and must fill his life". [Pope Paul VI, Letter to Bishops' Conference, February 2, 1969.] The purest and most generous love in marriage springs from a selfless love of God. Pope Paul also holds up to us the example of St. Joseph with his "total commitment to Mary, the elect of all the women on Earth and of history". [Pope Paul VI, Address during Holy Mass, St Peter's Rome, March 19, 1969.]

Perfecting love

Having created marriage as a triangular partnership of creative activity in the first instance, God endowed the physical union with the power to express and increase the love of the partners for one another. Thenceforth, these purposes of marriage and sexual union become indivisible, so that in begetting children the parents manifest their love, and in manifesting their love they themselves never exclude any creative potential with which God has endowed the act of intercourse at that time. Marriage is for the good of the offspring, who are begotten and nourished (educare) by their parents' love. In this completeness, the progress of the husband and of the wife to perfection is leavened by the Sacrament they have administered to one another, and their marriage will take them to Heaven.

Founded in God

Pope Paul VI has reminded us that "Conjugal love reveals its true nature and nobility when it is considered in its supreme origin, God, who is Love, the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth named". He defined the characteristic marks and demands of conjugal love, that it is "fully human, that is to say, of the senses and of the spirit at the same time", that it is "total", that it is "faithful and exclusive unto death", and that it is "fecund". Conjugal love is "an act of the free will, intended to endure and to grow by means of the joys and sorrows of daily life, in such a way that the husband and wife become one only heart and one only soul, and together attain their human perfection". [Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, A.C.T.S. Publication, Melbourne.]

When St. Paul [Ephesians, 5: 23.] told us that the husband is head of his wife, he put forward the example of Christ as head of his Church, indicating the role of the husband as devoted friend and protector. Many men have never learned the truth of this saying of St. Paul, although, generally speaking, women understand it very well. The husband is to be the head of the family, he is the protector of his wife in all that concerns her well-being, her rest and recreation, her emotional

stability, in the provision of a home and material necessities and comforts; he is the bulwark against the evils and dangers of the world. He needs to develop the conviction that she now belongs to him, it is now his right and obligation to guard and cherish her, and that he intends to do so no matter what anyone, even she herself, may say.

3. Not a business contract

The husband should understand that marriage is essentially different from any sort of business contract. Marriage is a partnership not of equals, but of two persons who are physically and emotionally different and who have different contributions to make to the partnership. Sometimes a woman may complain that the only time her husband makes love to her is when he wishes to have sexual intercourse. This denotes a failure to appreciate that a wife feels secure in her husband's love only when she is reminded and re-assured of it daily.

A husband who lacks the wit to discern this fact may be indignant when reproached, insisting that his temperance, fidelity and industry on behalf of the family are sufficient to convince "any fool" of his love. They are enough to convince "any fool" of a man, but a woman's nature needs assurance of another kind. She needs words and gestures of affection, little demonstrations that persuade her that in all her activities she is bathed in a fountain of love, and that some day her loving guardian will present her to God "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing". [Ephesians, 5: 27.] In one of the beautiful poems which G. K. Chesterton wrote to his wife, he expressed this idea in the following words:-

"You cannot guess How I shall flaunt before God's knights
The triumph of my own princess.... I swear it shall be mine alone
To tell your tale before the throne".

What St. Paul is saying is not appropriate only to a particular historical setting, nor related to the status of women in society, but has permanent application because of its insight into the essential differences in the masculine and feminine natures.

What a mother needs

In the normal course of family life, the children are at first in direct control of their mother and identify themselves with her. She provides the care and discipline which establish them in emotional security. The mother suffers physical and emotional depletion in these tasks and her husband stands in the same relationship to her as she does to the children. If he does not provide the love and security that she needs she will be depleted from both sides and is in danger of physical and mental breakdown.

Identity

Identifying themselves with the mother, the children react to her emotions, copy and follow them. As the children become older they develop a more personal relationship with their father. To the growing girl the father is her first man, which means that she recognizes him as the person who is providing the authoritative care of the family for which she will look ultimately to her own husband. The boy, even by the time he is three or four years old, begins to learn to identify himself with his father and to imitate him. In adolescence the boys develop an affectionate "mateship" with their fathers and it is respect for his authority and character that helps them to become good citizens.

Hazards

A good deal of sexual frigidity in women springs from a background of a disturbed family life during childhood, and particularly a failure of the father to fill his proper role. In young men homosexuality may appear when they have been unable to learn respect for their father, many cases of homosexuality arising in a family where the mother is aggressive and domineering, whilst the father is meek and submissive. The problem may be that of a father who is absent from home too much.

Another problem not uncommon in Australia despite the relative prosperity of all its citizens, is that of the father who works long hours of overtime at night and at weekends. He is resentful if he is accused of being a miser, claiming that he is working so hard only to give his family security, not realizing that no bank balance, however large, can make up to a family for the absence of the husband and father. Divorce statistics show a striking frequency amongst the husbands of occupations which cause long absence from home; they are servicemen, taxi drivers, dance-band musicians, doctors, etc. It is possible, of course, for the man to maintain his position in the family even when he is unavoidably absent by sharing those elements of his vocational activities which the family can understand and has a right to know.

The husband's role was beautifully expressed by the twelfth-century poet [Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141).] who said "Woman was not taken from man's head, for she was never meant to rule, nor from his feet to be his slave, but from his side to walk beside him, from beneath his arm to be protected by him, from near his heart that he might love and cherish her."

4. Understanding differences

Difficulties in the development of sexual harmony are commonly the result of a failure to appreciate the importance of this proper relationship of the husband and wife to each other, and their differences in physical and emotional reactions.

It is well known that physical arousal comes easily and quickly to a man; the adolescent boy learns this too. Part of the development of his manly character is the achievement of control of physical reactions which may come so quickly as to catch him unawares. Emotionally he is sluggish and the whole act of sexual intercourse may occur without his having experienced more than physical satisfaction. When this is so he will sense the deprivation of that emotional happiness which God intended he should enjoy.

On the other hand women are more easily aroused emotionally, whilst the development of physical responsiveness is not only slower but will depend upon a preceding emotional arousal, turning their minds towards their husbands in a state of love.

Sincerity of love

Once we understand this difference between the husband and the wife, we will understand why altered techniques of physical stimulation will not overcome the difficulty; rather they will be likely to cause upset and even revulsion against the act of intercourse. The husband must first concentrate his wife's mind on the constancy and sincerity of his love for her, and this will be more easily accomplished if he has been in the habit of showing it. When she is emotionally and physically ready, and has a husband who is really manly and therefore a man worthy of physical loving, she will become the dominant partner in the act of intercourse and with the beauty of her body give him full measure of emotional and physical contentment.

Happy sexual loving

Whilst there may be happy and loving relationships in a marriage where complete sexual harmony has never been established, and whilst the frequency of this physical expression of love is very variable, it can be said that in the majority of happy marriages sexual loving is a source of great happiness. This is not only because it reflects a deeper and more lasting union, but also because happy sexual loving intensifies and increases the bond between the husband and the wife. The love continues to be creative in establishing an atmosphere of serenity which assists the husband and wife to fulfil the obligations of their vocations, and which promotes the psychological security most conducive to the full development of the personalities of the children. A great deal of nervous and mental ill-health and behaviour disorders in children and adults can be traced to early environmental influences arising from disturbances and breakdown of family life. As the poet has put it:-

"In ancient shadows and twilights Where childhood had strayed, The world's great sorrows were born And its heroes were made. In the lost boyhood of Judas Christ was betrayed." *

[* "Germinal" by A. E. Quoted by Graham Greene in "The Lost Childhood and Other Essays", A Penguin Book, p. 16.]

Possible for all

The Christian concept of marriage is not to be regarded as a remote ideal. There is no snobbishness in Christianity. To hold the view that marital chastity is a level of virtue to be attained only by those of exceptional strength of character or unusual piety is to underestimate the generality of mankind. And the more the Christian view is propounded with the serious intention of inviting its universal application, the more chance there is of a consensus of opinion that will limit the errors and follies which come from clouding of the intellect or weakness of the will. As the Archangel Raphael said, "The fiend has power over such as go about their marrying with all thought of God shut out of their hearts and minds". [Tobias, (or Tobit) 6: 17.]

5. An expression of love: already deep and generous

It is a mistake to expect a marriage to be stabilized on the basis of physical sex alone. Rather is it found that sexual intercourse gives the greatest joy and intensifies the love of the husband and wife for one another, when it is the expression of a love which is already generous and deep.

It is the little incidents of everyday life that are so precious, enabling the husband and wife, the father and the mother, to create a home where love is supreme. These little things are demanding. They are the more demanding because they seem so trivial, the little ways of helping, protecting, teaching, restraining, guiding, leading and, above all, giving. And those who are expert in spiritual matters tell us achievement of worldly happiness in this way can be also the path to sanctification. Thus Father Garrigou-Lagrange, "Without this fidelity in little things actuated by the spirit of faith and love, humility, patience and gentleness, the contemplative life will never penetrate the active, the ordinary everyday life. Contemplation will be confined, as it were, to the summit of the intellect, where it is more speculative than contemplative; it will fail to permeate our whole existence and manner of life, it will remain almost completely barren whereas it should become every day more fruitful". [Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange. O.P., "Providence", B. Herder Book Company, St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.]

Individual men and women can transform the world if they have the sincerity to live according to their opinions and the courage to proclaim and defend those opinions. To bear witness, to accept the

calling of the lay apostolate means "To live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist". [Statement by Cardinal Suhard.]

Responsible parenthood

The proper use of sex, which we have been considering, implies an observance of The Natural Law. This is a subject about which much confusion exists, many people failing to distinguish between what is The Natural Law, ["Natural Law Morality To-day" by Cabal B. Daly, Clonmore and Reynolds Ltd., Dublin.], and what are merely Laws of Nature. ["Marriage and the Family" from "Society and Sanity" by F. J. Sheed, Sheed and Ward, London.]

For example, when rays of light fall on the retina of the eye they are converted into electrical impulses which convey images to the brain. This is, in God's creation, a Law of Nature. The Natural Law, however, is a matter of conscience, the moral use of a human faculty in accordance with the purpose of its creation.

Related to life and love

That human generation depends upon the sexual union of man and woman is a Law of Nature. God the Creator also decided that for men and women alone amongst all His creatures, this physical act of sexual union serves to manifest and increase the love of the one for the other. The Natural Law demands that the sexual faculty be reserved for all those purposes for which God ordained its use.

There need be no surprise that the generous mind welcomes- the restriction of the moral law as a guide that promotes its movement upwards to God, as in the prayer of the Machabees, "With law and precept of his (may God) enlarge your thoughts, and send you happiness". [2 Machabees, 1: 4.]

Francis Thompson has the same thought in his poem, "To the English Martyrs":-

"Hardest servitude has he That's jailed in arrogant liberty. Freedom spacious and unflawed Who is walled about with God".

Pope Paul VI has reminded married persons of their task "of making visible to men the holiness and sweetness of the law which unites the mutual love of husband and wife with their co-operation with the love of God, the author of human life." [Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, A.C.T.S. Publication, Melbourne.]

6. Advances in scientific knowledge

As will be considered later, advances in scientific knowledge have brought us to such an understanding of the natural rhythms of fertility and infertility, that virtually every pregnancy can be deliberately intended. It is a situation which offers new and deep insight into the wisdom and beauty of the traditional Christian ideals of parenthood. God has ordained that the same sexual act, always remaining appropriate to the transmission of life, will be creative of a more perfect love. During pregnancy, for example, or after the menopause, when further conception is impossible, the act is precisely the same.

One occasionally encounters the situation where a husband has become so habituated to the practice of withdrawal in intercourse, as an immoral, inefficient and damaging means of preventing pregnancy, that he continues the perversion during the pregnancy which has followed; even now, in his futility, he does not allow the act to remain open to the transmission of life.

Generosity, essence of love

The essence of love, and therefore of responsible parenthood, is total generosity. All the great saints of the Church have exhorted us as did Ignatius of Loyola, to "give and not to count the cost". True happiness can be achieved only by loving generously. The person who says plaintively, "Why should I have to give all the time?" has not understood the paradox of which Francis of Assisi reminds us, "It is in giving that we receive". The privilege of sharing in the creation of human life does not require much reflection for the wonder of it to become apparent. Parents can now decide to act in a partnership of creation which brings into existence a human personality whose immortality will allow him to enjoy the happiness of the knowledge of God beyond all time. The liberty provided by a technique of family planning which is secure, harmless and morally lawful permits us to become the responsible builders of a sane society on Earth and of a heavenly kingdom.

The large family

Christians understand therefore that children are the supreme gift of marriage contributing to the material welfare as well as to the eternal destiny of their parents. Those parents who, in response to a careful decision of their conscience, appropriate to the opportunities provided by their particular circumstances, confidently and generously have and educate a large family are worthy of all the economic support they require not as a gratuitous concession but as a just contribution from a grateful society. Pope Pius XII said in his wisdom, "Large families, far from being a social disease, are the guarantee of the physical and moral health of a people".

Family planning

Nowadays, whenever the subject of human love and marriage are discussed, family planning is soon mentioned. It is a widely held belief that one of the most serious problems to be solved by young people getting married, is that of preventing children arriving too soon or in too great a number. This attitude is altogether wrong. It is a kind of mental sickness in society which creates problems that ought never to have existed.

Some will be childless

For every hundred who marry, ten will never be able to have any children, so they certainly do not have the problem of avoiding pregnancy.

The peak of human fertility is usually between 20 and 25 years, with a gradual decline thereafter, the decline becoming much steeper after the age of 35. Once the age of 40 has been reached about 50 per cent of marriages have become sterile. There are some married couples where fertility was high enough for conception in the first few years of married life, but who lost their chance of having children through postponing their effort to do so, until the natural decline of fertility had brought it below a level at which conception was possible.

My own observations have persuaded me that the avoidance of pregnancy in the early years of married life, whatever the means adopted, imposes a serious strain upon the marriage. The marriage may survive it, or it may not.

7. Normal, natural development

If young people could be persuaded to marry with a willingness and eagerness to follow their natural inclinations in their love-making, and to leave to Almighty God the decision as to whether they will have children immediately or not, there would be many more stable and happy marriages in the community than there are at present. Family Planning would be recognized as being only a

temporary necessity for the majority, to be applied when sexual maturity and harmony in living together make its acceptance easy for both the husband and wife.

Occasionally some serious problem, usually of a medical nature, makes the avoidance of pregnancy very desirable or even imperative. My own experience embraces an unusually high proportion of instances where there was a serious obligation for the husband and wife, and so for the doctor advising them, to avoid pregnancy by whatever lawful means were available.

Improved knowledge

Many people still have the idea that the choice rests between methods which are lawful but unreliable and those which are unlawful but dependable. The fact is, that even when the Rhythm Method alone was available to Catholics, it was able to achieve results as good as the contraceptive techniques which were then in vogue. As the efficiency of artificial contraception has improved, and the contraceptive pill been developed, there has been a corresponding improvement in the techniques for defining the fertile days and of eliminating the failures of the Natural Method.

I have often wondered why some people have this curious opinion, that what is morally good is unlikely to be efficient. I have thought that it may be a misinterpretation of a passage in scripture when Our Lord said that "The children of this world are more prudent after their own fashion than the children of light". [St. Luke, 16:8] It has always been my experience that, even at a material level, behaviour which is morally good is that which is most likely to be profitable. Good morals are certainly good medicine.

When is family planning necessary?

The subject of family planning also requires discussion because of the need for control of excessive population growth in certain areas of the world. {In 1969, Dr Billings, like so many others, had been persuaded that there actually was excessive population growth in the world. Doom-sayers still exist in our world nearly 40 years later, even though the dire predictions of 40 years ago have totally failed to materialize! The U.N. slogan is most apt here: "Take care of the world's people, and the population will take care of itself."} Family planning should be seen here in its proper perspective, not as the only need, nor even as the major need, but simply as one of the ingredients of the total plan. An emotional state close to panic has been provoked in certain individuals by unwarranted fear about population pressures, and this prevents a critical assessment of the various methods of family planning.

I am firmly of the opinion that in so far as family planning is necessary, it can be successfully accomplished by methods in harmony with the traditional Catholic opinion; many people fail to realize that this is so. Most of the agitation for the introduction of birth control programmes seems to come from the United States of America. It is unfortunate that the citizens of the United States, who have exhibited a level of generosity towards their less fortunate brethren without parallel in the world's history, should be obsessed with the idea that the under-developed nations must be persuaded to accept the contraceptive programmes which are offensive to so many Christians and non-Christians alike. Malcolm Muggeridge, who is not a Catholic, [he was to become one before he passed away many years later,] wisely condemns these "colporteurs of sterility who so complacently and self-righteously display their assortment of contraceptives to the so-called backward peoples of the world as our civilization's noblest achievement and most precious gift". [Malcolm Muggeridge, "What I Believe," Allan and Unwin, London.]

Parenthood

Catholic teaching on the subject of birth control is for the present a minority opinion in the world. It has not always been a minority opinion and the time will come when it is not a minority opinion any more.

The natural sequence

God in His infinite wisdom created women in such a fashion that during their reproductive years they are more often infertile than fertile. The person who believes in God will conclude that there must have been some very sound purpose in His mind. The complex sequence of events which determines the occurrence of ovulation is such, that even when the woman ovulates more than once in a menstrual cycle, these ovulations are separated only by a matter of hours; there is only one ovulation day in any cycle. Allowing for the continuing nourishment of the husband's cells within the wife's body, there is only about a week, and usually less time, during each cycle when conception is possible. It is part of the natural order of God's creation, that opportunity for the expression of the conjugal love in sexual intercourse is available, without any possibility of pregnancy.

8. The fertile time

For the Catholic, the avoidance of pregnancy, if necessary, is achieved by the method of periodic continence, the avoidance of intercourse at those times when conception may follow. The success of the method depends on the accurate delineation of the infertile (safe) days. For many years the infertile days were predicted on the basis of the variations in the length of the menstrual cycles. This menstruation method or Rhythm Method, had the basic defect of all methods involving prediction, that the pattern on which the prediction was based might alter; in this instance, the menstrual cycles might suddenly change their length, when the prediction regarding safe days would be incorrect. In addition, if allowance were made for considerable variation due to irregularity of the cycles, the days available for intercourse in each cycle became few in number.

Detecting ovulation

The Rhythm Method has been superseded by methods which detect the actual occurrence of ovulation, and which therefore eliminate any difficulties or unreliability arising out of menstrual irregularity. [See * "The Ovulation Method", The Advocate Press, Melbourne.] {Dr John Billings and his wife were chiefly responsible for the break-through research which went into making the book.} The following facts should be appreciated:

1. Every woman has a safe period.
2. Every woman can determine days of complete security, and in the vast majority this determination of the safe days is extremely easy.
3. Irregularity of the menstrual cycles has ceased to be a problem, and treatment "to regulate the cycles" is unnecessary.

{4. Infertile couples now have an easy to use and highly accurate way to identify when the woman is fertile, so that planning to have a family is more likely to be successful!}

The use of the contraceptive pill in an attempt to regularize the menstrual cycles is ineffective as well as unnecessary. In addition, the treatment with the pill is likely to create problems which may

be more difficult than those which existed in the first place. There is a further objection to the use of the pill in these circumstances, a psychological problem, that a state of anxiety may be temporarily removed, but later the woman is involved in accepting a return to the state of anxiety or of even greater anxiety by discontinuing the pill. {Moreover, the contraceptive pill has a potentially abortifacient side-effect. (Obviously, this could be a foreseen but unintended side-effect.) See Section 14 'Contraception' in the following pages. }

9. Observable signs

Almost all women, even if they are both uneducated and unintelligent, can learn to recognize certain symptoms which occur in their own bodies as an indication of fertility. The commonest of these symptoms is the presence of mucus in the vagina or the actual loss of mucus from the vagina for a few days, two weeks or so before the next menstrual period. Even where, for some reason, a prolonged discharge occurs, the particular features of the ovulation mucus enable it to be identified. Other symptoms may occur, including some types of abdominal pain, and bleeding. These symptoms depend upon a build up of certain chemicals in the blood stream. Following the occurrence of ovulation these chemicals diminish in concentration and are replaced by others which cause an elevation of the body temperature. Ovulation is then defined either by the symptoms, or by the temperature pattern, or in those cases where a serious problem exists, by combining both methods, so that one is cross-checked against the other.

The symptoms

The method of the symptoms does not require an ability to take the temperature, nor even an ability to count. It is not influenced by irregularity of the cycle; it identifies the approach of ovulation, and is therefore self-correcting against cycle irregularity.

The temperature method is also free from any difficulty related to irregularity of the menstrual cycles. It depends upon the fact that in the pre-ovulatory phase of the cycle the temperature tends to be low, whilst after ovulation the temperature is elevated by the hormone progesterone. Study of the symptoms and the temperature pattern together form an integrated system, which are part of the Ovulation Method. [{See Billings, J.} "The Ovulation Method", The Advocate Press, Melbourne.]

Not abnormal

There are some people who consider that the observation of the natural workings of the body is somehow improper, or at least indelicate. These people often regard certain parts of their bodies as "rude" or obscene". This indicates an unhealthy attitude about sexual matters in general, with conscious or repressed feelings of guilt on the subject. Observation of natural phenomena is observation of God's handiwork, and the Catholic attitude is one of co-operation with the Creator in the natural fulfilment and use of what he has provided. The observations do not lead to hypochondriasis, for the hypochondriac mistakes natural occurrences for the expression of disease. In learning more about the workings of her body, the woman learns that symptoms she may previously have observed but not understood, can now be recognized as an indication of normal health.

10. How effective is the partnership?

It is sometimes said that periodic abstinence is likely to create emotional difficulties between the husband and wife. This may be so in the first few years of marriage, and more particularly when the reasons for the avoidance of pregnancy are trivial, so that the husband and wife may then disagree

on the need for abstinence and one regard the attitude of the other as an indication of lack of affection. It may be difficult to secure the co-operation of the husband or wife if they have not been properly instructed in the method and assured of its effectiveness. Those people who are so sadly out of date as to be unaware of the reliability and usually easy application of the newer methods of determining the safe period, and yet upset persons who are already anxious about the risks imposed by further pregnancy, are very mischievous.

Getting or giving satisfaction

The demand for the right to have intercourse at any time the inclination exists can be an expression of a sexual gluttony for which the only cure is periodic continence; unchecked it may destroy the very love it purports to express and to foster.

Some remarkable opinions exist imputing sexual immoderacy to Southern Europeans and others with the "Latin" temperament, and sometimes also to Asians. Sexual behaviour and the frequency of intercourse varies very considerably amongst all peoples, but in general it can be said that after the first few years of marriage periodic continence is not a matter of great difficulty. The idea that a citizen of the developing countries of Asia, for example, ravaged by poverty and disease, and condemned to work long hours each day in tropical heat, demands and is capable of repeated acts of sexual intercourse each day of his life has merely to be enunciated for its absurdity to be evident.

Emotional frustration

My own experience includes a number of instances of complaints that the excessive demands of the husband have made the avoidance of the fertile (unsafe) days impossible. This situation is commonly the result of emotional frustration for the husband, arising out of the wife's poor responsiveness to his loving advances. A vicious circle is easily set up, so that the more intemperate the demands, the chillier the reception. If the wife will give her husband a loving welcome when the safe days have arrived, co-operating warmly in the act of love, the problem will often disappear.

How can love be expressed?

It has been my experience that periodic continence may have a very beneficial effect upon the psychological relationship of the husband and wife to one another. The act of loving is frequently refreshed by rest, and it is very important for married persons to learn that love is expressed in many other ways. Sometimes it does create difficulty and the wise husband or wife who perceives this learns a new measure of the other's love. There are words sometimes used in the marriage service which put it this way, "Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy; and perfect love can make it a joy. We are willing to give in proportion as we love. And when love is perfect the sacrifice is complete". [The Marriage Service in the Baltimore Ritual.] And there is no remedy save love for the fear of the woman who believes, rightly or wrongly, that her life will be imperilled by further pregnancy; "Love drives out fear." [1 St. John, 4: 18.]

11. Recognizing God's plan

Periodic continence may also assist those persons whose inclination to love making depends upon physical rather than mental stimuli, although the argument is sometimes expressed the other way about. One hears objection, for instance, to the use of the method of periodic continence because there may be maximal inclination in the woman on the days of maximal fertility. One can see that the coincidence of inclination and fertility may very well be part of a Divine plan, because with some married couples intercourse occurs so infrequently that unless there was some impulse

towards intercourse at the most fertile time they might very well remain childless. Furthermore, in the early years of marriage there may be emotional difficulties between the husband and wife which make the development of sexual harmony a difficult and delicate problem; in these circumstances the chemical drive may be of considerable assistance.

A deepening mental harmony

Later on in married life, however, sexual intercourse finds its true place as an expression of a deepening mental harmony and unity between the husband and wife. When love reaches this maturity it is the spiritual unity which determines the inclination for physical unity, at the times of greatest joy and love in their life together.

Under these circumstances the happiness of intercourse reaches a level not readily appreciated by those who have not experienced it. And for those whose inclination is largely determined by chemical influences within their bodies, there may be a premature termination of sexual loving as middle life approaches. In fact, however, it is unusual for an inclination to intercourse to be restricted to the fertile days, even as an expression of resentment. Fluctuations arising from chemical variations can be observed at different phases of the cycle, including days of infertility.

The natural method

The natural method of family planning involves complete abstinence from all sexual contact during the days of possible fertility. When these days have passed and the safe time has arrived, some women feel that they have lost the inclination for intercourse. It is helpful to them to explain that she now has the opportunity to return the generous love the husband has given in his self-restraint for her good and the good of the family, by making a positive conscious effort to be attractive and to invite her husband to the physical act of love. The woman who loves her husband readily understands that he will respond immediately to a loving invitation. She will find great joy in this responsiveness and in her ability to satisfy all his physical and emotional needs. The safe time is awaited with joyful anticipation and their greater awareness of each other can even enable them to experience a level of happiness hitherto unknown in their marriage.

Something in combined opinion

There may be individuals amongst the celibate clergy who are deceived by the protestations of some married couples regarding the difficulties of periodic continence. As Newman said with regard to matters of doctrine, "There is something in the combined opinion of the pastors and the laity (*Pastorum et Fidelium Conspiratio*) which is not in the pastors alone". [J: H. Newman, "On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine", p. 104. Published by Geoffrey Chapman, London,] The pastors can be assured that a very large body of lay opinion in the Church can perceive, with greater or less clarity as the case may be, the fundamental wisdom and goodness of the teaching of the Church regarding contraception. This body of opinion was not moulded by the traditional teaching so much as having resulted from personal experience of the application of the teaching, which might in the first instance have been regarded as irksome. There is much to be written and understood yet regarding the theology of periodic continence, but I am sure that there are many happy marriages which would not have survived if there had not been times of continence when there was a strong inclination for intercourse. Love must be generous, and must serve the good of the person loved and the good of the family. Malcolm Muggeridge ["Tread Softly for you Tread on my Jokes," Collins, London, p. 56.] grasped a good deal of the distinction between love and sex when he wrote, "Sex begins in passion which comprehends the concepts of both suffering and joy;

it ends in a trivial dream of pleasure which itself soon dissolves into the solitude and despair of self-gratification". {Muggeridge was not a Catholic when he wrote this.}

12. Principle under challenge

It is common tactics for a moral principle to be challenged on the basis of a "hard case". The hard case often proves to be largely theoretical. It is important to understand that the sacrifice of a principle as a matter of expediency in response to the emotional stress provoked by a difficult problem, results in suffering for others, and a greater total amount of suffering in the long run. Sometimes, for example, periodic continence in marriage is rejected as impossible of attainment in certain situations, for example, when the husband is an alcoholic. The following observations may be made, amongst others, when this unhappy problem exists:

1. Alcoholism is an abnormality and one does not accommodate an abnormality by repudiating principles.
2. A number of alcoholics have latent homosexual tendencies, and are not at all immoderate in their demands for intercourse in marriage.
3. Even if they have normal or immoderate heterosexual tendencies, the effect of the alcoholism is to promote the development of sterility or impotence or both.
4. If an attempt were made to solve the problem by sterilizing the wife, by surgical or medical means, the effect would be to make her "available" at all times, and to lessen her ability and resolution to resist the immoderate demands. Her situation could then be even more intolerable than previously.
5. If the alcoholism is to be cured, the alcoholic must regain some measure of self-respect. It is possible in some cases that his acceptance of periodic abstinence will prove to be of great psychological benefit in his struggle to overcome his weakness for alcohol.
6. In order to break the vicious circle which the alcoholism has produced, the wife may be able to bring herself to overcome the avoidance of her husband and her rejection of him by using the infertile days to offer a loving invitation to intercourse. This has the hope of supplying his basic craving for love, of making him feel wanted and so helping him regain his self-respect.
7. It is a foolish channelling of ideas to imagine that the only problem, or even the most serious problem for the marriage arising out of the alcoholism is the family planning problem. If the alcoholism persists complete breakdown of the marriage is a probability. One should not be deflected into an attitude where the total problem is looked at from a distorted point of view.

Priests, doctors and others are often approached for counsel regarding problems of married life including family planning. They know well enough, but cannot be reminded too often of the fact, that when people seek advice, there is a presenting problem, and in most cases a far more important and significant basic problem. Furthermore, each may be both a moral problem and an emotional problem. The latter is of very considerable importance. Until they have been emotionally stabilized by an understanding priest who then accepts them each as an individual person of great value, few people will be able to accept his moral direction; this is true even though Catholic people naturally look to the priest to obtain certainty of conscience. For a person to accept the fact that approval of a particular course of action cannot be obtained, and to move to the positive action of seeking instruction so that he can apply himself to a moral solution of the problem, much time must be

expended in the counselling. It requires also that a priest must be able to judge whether a particular recommendation, for example, regarding medical treatment, is likely to be morally lawful or not. If he lacks the necessary medical knowledge, he has an obligation to seek advice about it. He needs to know, for example, that many of the reasons given by doctors for prescribing the contraceptive pill are morally unsound, such as the intention to relieve anxiety in a woman by removing a fear of pregnancy. He should also know that not only do modern techniques of family planning not require regularity of the menstrual cycles, but also that there is no scientific evidence at all that the contraceptive pills will regulate the cycles.

Both priests and doctors may have a tendency to be rather aggressive individuals; certainly their position of authority can tend to aggravate any aggressive elements in their personalities. One needs to recognize also that there may be certain areas of embarrassment in one's own attitudes. For example, the priest or doctor who has had an alcoholic father may find it difficult to counsel an alcoholic of the same age as the father at the height of his disorder.

13. Facing the real problem

It is only with considerable experience that one recognizes how often the client avoids discussion of the real problem, especially in the early sessions, even when he has sought the consultation voluntarily. He must be encouraged to talk about himself, whilst the counsellor pays attention and loves him. This love is not purely intellectual but needs also to be felt emotionally. Reassurance should be used sparingly at first, as a client is well aware that the basic problem cannot yet be understood. The ultimate aim is that he should understand his own problem adequately, and decide on a course of action for himself. If it becomes clear that the man is not only withdrawing from contact with his family, but also from his club, his sporting activities and his hobbies, the problem is not so much likely to be one to do with the marriage but with the man himself. If he is making excessive demands for intercourse, it may be that he is something of an effeminate individual, needing to demonstrate his manliness to himself. What is he trying to prove? Is it that he feels uncertain of his wife's love and needs her acquiescence to reassure him? Perhaps he is an anxious individual, striving to allay his fears but using intercourse to help him sleep, or as a tranquillizer.

There are many situations in which complete acceptance of the client's moral attitudes may not be possible but he can always be accepted with friendliness and interest. It is well to bear in mind that all people are to some extent lonely, and also that many people are most truculent and argumentative when they are most uncertain of themselves.

Being not understood

Unhappiness and bitterness arising in marriage will reflect a sense of being unloved, and so often this is the product of misunderstanding or foolish thoughtlessness. The pain and anger would not occur if there were not love underneath; both parties need generosity and humility, a readiness to accept the weaknesses of the other and to acknowledge their own, for this is the way to happiness and peace. Their marriage has made them one in God's sight, each dependent upon the other. As St Paul told us, "If you are a wife, it may be your part to save your husband, for all you know; if a husband, for all you know, it may be your part to save your wife". [1 Corinthians, 7: 16.]

Fear of too many children

For the majority of persons in normal health living in a country like Australia, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that on getting married they should look forward to a family of four or five

children. If they would do so. instead of allowing their married life to be plagued by the fear of having too many children, it is certain that there would be fewer unhappy marriages, fewer divorces and that a large number of couples would discover that their fertility is surprisingly less than they had anticipated. What is also important, those who found the avoidance of pregnancy necessary would have reached a state of sexual maturity and emotional harmony which permitted them to take the problem in their stride.

Overconcern

The tendency to be too concerned about family planning brings its own problems. There are a number of married couples who in the past tried to use the Rhythm Method from the time they were first married. Either through inaccurate knowledge or because they took chances from time to time, they found that a number of pregnancies occurred. Eventually they acquired a moderate or a large family, although throughout their married life they had been trying to avoid pregnancy. Little wonder that they should complain of irritation and frustration regarding the physical expression of their love. How much better it would have been, and how much wiser, if they had allowed their natural inclinations to find normal expression, until the size of the family had made family planning truly essential. They have never known the joy of planning a baby.

14. Contraception

There seems to be no limit to the ingenuity with which newer methods of contraception are devised. Experiments are proceeding, for example, to devise a method of making the woman's body antagonistic to her husband's sperm cells, so that they will be rendered incapable of fertilizing the ovum. It does not require much imagination to recognize the danger to the child if conception should occur as the effect of this treatment is wearing off, so that the sperm cells are less severely damaged, and able to fertilize the ovum.

At the present time two main methods are in vogue: 1. The intra-uterine device. 2. The contraceptive pill.

The intra-uterine device interferes with the implantation of the fertilized ovum in the wall of the womb, so that deprived of maternal nourishment it dies. Some people try to distinguish the seriousness of this prevention of nidation from the ejection of the fertilized ovum after implantation, reserving the term abortion for the latter. However, the distinction is not of great importance; both processes involve the destruction of human life. Experts who use this method admit a failure rate of up to 15-20%, ['Current trends in population Control.' Nicholson J. Eastman, A Ford Foundation reprint from "Fertility and Sterility", 1964 15, 5.] and some unpleasant complications.

The contraceptive pill has three actions:

1. It tends to suppress ovulation. This is sterilization. It involves a good deal more than a purely gynaecological effect.
2. It disturbs the regular preparation of the womb each month for the reception of a fertilized ovum, and may precipitate the arrival of the fertilized ovum in the womb, so that for one or both these reasons the embryo is rejected even if ovulation and conception have occurred. Thus the pill is also abortifacient.
3. The chemical action of the pill disturbs the natural secretions of the woman's body which nourish the sperm cells and assist conception. Therefore the pill is contraceptive.

Most women bleed at monthly intervals, in an amount which approximates to that of the menstrual period, when they take the contraceptive pill according to the dosage and routine prescribed. It is unnecessary for them to follow this method of administration to avoid pregnancy, but it has the advantage of concealing from the woman that her endocrine physiology is suffering a violent assault.

Suppression of natural function

I have always held the opinion that the suppression of a natural function of the body, such as ovulation, will inevitably produce harm. I would hold the same opinion if the functions suppressed were, for example, unrelated to sexual function, such as the secretion of digestive juices. This is quite different from the matter of side-effects. It is well known that the pills produce various ill-effects such as obesity, nausea and vomiting, irregular bleeding, abnormalities of the skin, depression, loss of sexual desire etc.; the most serious effect recognized up to date has been the tendency to promote arterial and venous clotting. Some of these ill-effects may be truly side-effects and able to be eliminated by changing the chemical constitution of the pill. However it is likely, in my view, that the essential action of the pill in preventing pregnancy will be accompanied by ill-effects which are inevitable, so that the pill will be rejected in due course on medical grounds. The idea of "a perfect pill" is an illusion. No problem on earth will ever be solved satisfactorily by the prolonged administration of drugs to healthy people. It is obviously better to use a method which merely observes the natural processes than one which disturbs them.

As we are told in Ecclesiastes, "There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven ...a time for embracing, a time to refrain from embracing." [Ecclesiastes, 3: 1, 5.] St. Paul may have had these words in his mind when he said, "Do not refuse each other except by mutual consent, and then only for an agreed time, to leave yourselves free for prayer." [1 Corinthians, 7: 5.]

Consequences of using pill

Some women find that they do not bleed regularly when taking the pill. Whether they do or not, they tend to persist in their previous menstrual pattern when the periods become re-established after they have stopped taking the pill. In some cases the cycle pattern is disturbed so that the cycles are no longer regular, or are more irregular than they were previously. Occasionally protracted sterility requires special treatment.

The difficulties, complications, dangers and failure-rates of contraceptive methods of family planning are now being more generally acknowledged. It is also becoming a matter of general knowledge, that when intercourse is confined to the late safe days of the menstrual cycle, as defined by the Ovulation Method, pregnancy can be avoided with a degree of certainty which cannot be exceeded in any other way. The truth is that continuing opposition to methods of family planning which do not conflict with traditional Catholic teaching on the subject depends to a large extent for its vehemence upon an unwillingness to accept any restriction of the time available for intercourse, or upon resistance to the authority of the Church in matters of morality. {Moreover, there is a large vested moneyed interest in the promotion of so-called pharmacological solutions.}

THE CHALLENGE

Our beloved Pope John XXIII expressed his wishes about the Spirit he wished to permeate during his pontificate by quoting words from St. John Chrysostom, "It would scarcely be necessary to expound Doctrine if our life were radiant enough; it would not be necessary to use words if our acts

were witness enough. If we behaved like true Christians there would be no pagans". ["The Heart and Mind of John XXIII" by Louis Capovilla, A Corgi Book, Transworld Publishers Ltd., London. P. 57.]

Francois Mauriac wrote these beautiful words:

"Christ will give you a clear understanding of what you are; an immortal soul, not one living in isolation, but one surrounded by a great many other souls over whom you exercise power for better or for worse.

When grace diminishes in you, it diminishes in a great many others who depend upon you. If you are a friend of Christ, many others will warm themselves at this fire, will share in this light.

The darkness of sin in you will cast its shadow over those whom you now enlighten. And the day when you no longer burn with love, many others will die of the cold."

One of the challenges to all Christians in their imitation of Christ is that of permeating the world with the Christian idea of sexual love, inspired by the faith and purity of the Mother of the Church and her protector St. Joseph. Individual chastity is the essential action - continence for the unmarried, selfless generosity for the celibate, and for the married generosity towards God and towards each other, for their love has not two aspects but one. None of us know what difficulties and suffering may, in God's providence, befall us. God wills our holiness in our present situation. We know that God is a God of Love, and that in some ways His laws do service in the cause of love. We are living in a vale of tears, in a world where exist sickness, accidents, poverty, dissensions and hatred, as well as problems concerned with sexual loving. Faith is needed at times to see that strengthening the will to observe God's laws in the face of difficulty leads ultimately to the greater good of the individual and of all men. Ronald Knox tells the story of the three persons on the way to Calvary. The impenitent thief is bitter and resentful. The penitent thief makes the best of it, acknowledging his faults and accepting his due of suffering, Christ Our Lord, wholly innocent, accepts the cross, His heart overflowing with love. [Ronald Knox, "The Way of Love", in "A Retreat for Lay People", Sheed and Ward, London.] For here is the extraordinary fact to animate us as Christians, that the suffering of the innocent effects the salvation of mankind.

"Man cannot serve God unless he can impose self-discipline". A Moral law of the Moslems. "What is natural is good, what is unnatural is evil". A popular saying of the Chinese.

"Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away". An inspired Jewish poem, The Song of Solomon, 8: 7.

Dr. John Billings is already well known for his work in the field of family planning by the ovulation method.

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