

Towards Zero

The Campaign Against Life

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Father B. Moore examines the current campaign on the strict limitation of population growth from the standpoint of modern Catholic thought and teaching. This pamphlet deserves careful study. It should provoke profitable discussion in many circles. We commend it to young people. - THE EDITOR

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WE are accustomed to seeing the fictions and fantasies of yesterday become the simple facts of today. For example, the developments, in this 20th century, in flight and in space travel fulfil and even surpass the seemingly visionary speculations of centuries past.

Unfortunately, it is also true that yesterday's nightmares have become for us waking realities - witness our success in developing the instruments of total war.

FACT OR FICTION?

In the 50s, a film was made of which the action was set in "the not too distant future". The plot was simple: the population of the United States of America has reached such a peak that a law has been passed according to which a married couple are permitted only one child. Should a woman attempt to have a second child, she is forcibly aborted or, if her pregnancy is discovered too late, is committed to a prison hospital where in due course the child will be born and, at birth, destroyed.

Shown on television recently, that film was chilling - not, as originally, because of its plausibility but, now, because of its possibility. [Webmaster's Assistant's note: It now HAS happened! The unfortunate folk in the People's Republic of China live with this tyranny.]

Talk of the "necessity" of such a law is becoming widespread; and, indeed, it would seem to be the logical next step for a world to take which has already promoted voluntary (and involuntary) sterilization programmes, has made the traffic in contraceptives an industry of enormous profitability, accepts in principle and attempts to implement in fact abortion on demand, drafts bills for the legalization of euthanasia, and in general in every possible way shows its complete contempt for human life. "None is fun" is the chosen motto of a new zero population growth group: no better illustration could be found of the fact that our age's desire for physical sterility is simply the expression of its spiritual sterility.

It is no longer beyond the bounds of possibility that a not too distant future generation of schoolchildren will be taught, simultaneously, how freedom-loving their ancestors showed themselves in overthrowing governments which attempted to touch their religious sentiment or their

purse, and how wise their parents were in accepting a law forbidding them to have the children they may have desired.

By then, no doubt, governments will have learned, in effecting the martyrdom of their opponents, how to eliminate the thunderous glory which so often surrounds its ignominy. Presumably, too, the eugenists will share in the triumph; for if the fittest are allowed only a child or two (if any at all) then the sterilization of the "unfit", or at least the prohibition on them from having children, will surely be taken for granted.

Economically, a country which has adopted such a law might find itself in difficulties, having a population graph roughly like an inverted pyramid - a small, young and productive work force supporting a large, ageing and unproductive population. Possibly, some form of legalized euthanasia will take care of that end. And, of course, an eye would have to be kept on those selfish nations which did not pass a like law: what else could they be aiming at but war and world domination?

How ironic it would be if, in the last analysis, the profit motive and the fear of unpreparedness for war were the salvation of a people.

WEB OF DEATH

We need to disabuse ourselves, at the outset, of the idea that a proposal to limit by law the number of children a couple may have can be discussed, or such a law be enacted, in isolation from other forms of meddling with human life and reproduction.

If we turn back to the propaganda of the eugenists of the '30s we find euthanasia and the sterilization of the unfit cheek by jowl with proposals to withhold all government assistance from the poor who insisted on having the children the rich did not want. So, too, the inhuman proposals of the modern humanist run the gambit of contraception to abortion and through to euthanasia. (In fact, of course, abortion carried out on the grounds that the child might be born physically or mentally defective is already the admission of euthanasia. There is nothing in the idea of euthanasia which limits it to the old and incurably ill.)

Another reason why these various meddlings with life cannot be separated is that for a law to have any chance of being obeyed there must be sanctions. If, for example, the law permits two children per family, what is to be done with a third conception? Again, obviously no society which so grudgingly admits new members to its ranks is going to give the same welcome to the unhealthy or defective child as it will to the healthy and normal. Nor can it consistently regard any and every couple as equally eligible to have offsprings, or as equally desirable progenitors.

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FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

Any proposal touching human life and reproduction must necessarily be based on some particular attitude towards human life itself and its transmission; and this attitude, this view of human life as such, is the only possible point of departure for any proposal regarding the continuation of life. Moreover, this basic attitude is the constant touchstone of such proposals: one must of necessity reject any proposal which is not in keeping with one's fundamental view of human life itself, whatever that view be.

The second fundamental question is this: What rights may a state claim or exercise over the reproductive powers of its citizens? Clearly, one's answer to that question will imply a particular

view of the state, its nature and its purpose; and will, moreover, raise more general issues - questions regarding the harmonizing of the rights of the state and of its individual citizens, questions regarding the family in relation to the state, and so on.

BROADSCOPE ANSWERS

It might be just as well at this point to set out in general terms the Church's teaching on these matters, closely related as they are.

Man is made for eternal life - and consequently, All must be convinced that human life and the task of transmitting it are not realities bound up with this world alone. Hence, these realities can not be measured or perceived only in terms of this world, but always have a bearing on the eternal destiny of men. Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes*

Man's right to marry is God-given and he cannot be deprived of it- Our predecessors Leo XIII and Pius XI taught that "no human law can deprive man of the basic right to marriage". Pius XII Address to the Rota

No human law can abolish the natural and original right of marriage nor in any way limit the chief and principal purpose of marriage, ordained by God's authority from the beginning, "Increase and multiply". Hence we have the family, the "society" of a man's house - a society limited, indeed, in numbers, but no less a true "society", anterior to every kind of state or nation, invested with rights and duties of its own, totally independent of the civil community. Leo XIII *Rerum Novarum*

Consequently, the family is more sacred than the State- The contention, then, that the civil government should at its option intrude into and exercise control over the family and the household is a great and pernicious error; Leo XIII *Rerum Novarum* rather, the well-being of the individual person and of human and christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community which is produced by marriage and family,

Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes*. and eugenists commit the error of forgetting that the family is more sacred than the state, and that human beings are born primarily for heaven and eternity, not for earth and time. Pius XI *Casti Connubii*

A person's bodily integrity, therefore, by which marriage and reproduction are made possible is beyond the power of the state to touch- The public authorities have no direct power over the bodily members of subjects, and therefore (in the absence of any crime or cause calling for corporal punishment) they can never directly injure or attack the integrity of the body on any ground whatever - eugenic or otherwise. There are those who would have the public authority forbid marriage to any persons : . . deemed likely, through heredity, to beget defective offspring. They even demand legislation to deprive such persons of that natural faculty by medical action . . . They are simply arrogating to the state, against all right and justice, a power which it has never had and never can legitimately possess. Pius XI *Casti Connubii*

Even public authority has no right, whatever "indications" it may use as an excuse, to permit direct sterilization, and much less to prescribe it or to use it to the detriment of innocent human beings. Pius XII Allocution to Midwives

Nor can individuals themselves arbitrarily deprive themselves of this physical capacity to transmit life- It is to be observed also that even the individual human being - as christian doctrine teaches and the light of reason clearly shows - has no power over the members of his own body, except insofar as he uses them for their natural purpose; he cannot destroy or mutilate them, or in any other

way render himself incapable of his natural functions except where there is no other way of providing for the welfare of the body as a whole. Pius XI *Casti Connubii*

The act by which life is transmitted cannot be artificially deprived of its natural power- The Catholic Church, to whom God has committed the task of teaching and preserving morals and right conduct in their integrity, standing erect amidst this moral devastation, raises her voice in sign of her divine mission to keep the chastity of the marriage contract unsullied by this ugly stain, and through our mouth proclaims anew: that any use of matrimony whatsoever in the exercise of which the act is deprived by human interference of its natural power to procreate life is an offence against the law of God and of nature, and that those who commit it are guilty of grave sin. Pius XI *Casti Connubii*

Once conceived, human life is inviolable- To these problems (associated with the limitation of family) there are those who presume to offer dishonourable solutions. Indeed, they do not recoil from the taking of life. But the Church issues the reminder that a true contradiction cannot exist between divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to the fostering of authentic conjugal love.

For God, the Lord of life, has conferred on men the surpassing ministry of safeguarding life - a ministry which must be fulfilled in a manner which is worthy of man. Therefore, from the moment of its conception, life must be guarded with the greatest care, while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes. Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes*

Marriage as an institution exists for the creation of the family unit- By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown . . . Hence, while not making the other purposes of matrimony of less account, the true practice of conjugal love and the whole meaning of family life which results from it have this aim: that the couple be ready with stout hearts to co-operate with the love of the Creator and Saviour who through them will enlarge and enrich his own family day by day. Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes*

Conditions may call for a restriction on the size of families- Let them (the parents) thoughtfully take into account both their own welfare and that of their children, those already born and those whom the future may bring. For this accounting, they need to reckon with both the material and spiritual condition of the times, as well as that of their state in life. Finally, they should consult the interests of the family group, of temporal society, and of the Church itself. Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes*

But, in effecting this limitation- The Church's children may not undertake methods of birth control which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church in its unfolding of the divine law. Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes*

Nor can the state coerce people into family limitation- The parents themselves and no one else should ultimately make this judgement in the sight of God . . . and those merit special mention who, with wise and common deliberation, and with a gallant heart, undertake to bring up suitably even a relatively large family.

Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes*

The extent of the state's competence in this- It is certain that public authorities can intervene, within the limit of their competence, by favouring the availability of appropriate information and by adopting suitable measures, provided that these be in conformity with the moral law and that they

respect the rightful freedom of married couples. Where the inalienable right to marriage and procreation is lacking, human dignity has ceased to exist. Finally, it is for the parents, with full knowledge of the matter, to decide on the number of their children, taking into account their responsibilities towards God, themselves, the children they have already brought into the world, and the community to which they belong. In all this, they must follow the demands of their own conscience, enlightened by God's law authentically interpreted, and sustained by confidence in him. Paul VI On the Development of Peoples

SUMMARY

Briefly, then, the Church teaches that a capable person's right to marry and to found a family is God-given and inalienable. No public authority can deprive him of that right; nor can it, despite any disadvantages that person labours under, render him, willing or unwilling, incapable of transmitting life. It cannot compel him to adopt any morally objectionable means to limit his family; nor, indeed, can it compel him to limit his family at all, but can only counsel such a course of action, and make available morally acceptable means of doing so, if he, for the right reasons, freely elects to do so.

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IMMORAL LAWS

Laws, therefore, which decree or permit abortion, sterilization, contraception or euthanasia (in the sense in which these things are condemned by the Church) are simply immoral laws and cannot be obeyed. Public counsel to adopt such procedures is likewise immoral and is to be condemned as such. No law decreeing the number of children a couple may have can have any binding force, since such a decision is beyond the competence of public authorities to take; and any kind of discrimination against people who choose to have even a relatively large family is blatantly unjust. Indeed, since The protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man rank among the essential duties of governments. Vatican II On Religious Freedom

A government is at fault if it does not facilitate a man's exercise of his basic, natural and inalienable right to marry and to found a family.

Immoral laws may not be obeyed, nor may they be used as an excuse for actions which are of themselves wrong, As Pope John XXIII writes in his Peace on Earth. If civil authorities legislate for or allow anything contrary to that order and therefore contrary to the will of God, neither the laws made nor the authorizations granted can be binding on the consciences of the citizens, since God has more right to be obeyed than man.

Pope John XXIII Pacem in Terris

In those last words, Pope John is referring back to the position established by Saints Peter and John when they refused to obey the command to preach Christ no more. It is a basic text in the development of the doctrine of christian rights in confrontation with an immoral law, and, historically, appealing to this text has sealed the fate of many a martyr to political tyranny.

The words of John XXIII quoted above are an echo of a number of statements of Leo XIII. In his letter on Human Liberty, Leo writes, If, then, by anyone in authority, something be sanctioned out of conformity with the principles of right reason and consequently hurtful to the commonwealth, such an enactment can have no binding force of law, as being no rule of justice but certain to lead men away from that good which is the end itself of civil society. Libertas Praestantissimum

"TO OBEY, A CRIME"

If immoral laws are "contrary to the will of God", no less is obedience to them. As John XXIII points out, citizens can not avail themselves of authorizations which are themselves immoral. In writing of The Chief Duties of Christians as Citizens, Leo XIII also touches on this point:

It is a high crime, indeed, to withdraw allegiance from God in order to please men; an act of consummate wickedness to break the laws of Jesus Christ in order to yield obedience to earthly rulers, or, under pretext of keeping the civil law, to ignore the rights of the Church. "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5.29.) This answer which of old Peter and the other Apostles were used to give the civil authorities who enjoyed unrighteous things, we must, in like circumstances, give always and without hesitation . . . ready to suffer all things, even death itself, rather than abandon the cause of God or of the Church. If the laws of the state are clearly at variance with the law of God . . . conveying injunctions adverse to the duties imposed by religion . . . then, truly to resist becomes a positive duty, to obey, a crime. *Sapientiae Christianae*.

"TO RESIST, A DUTY"

Of the duty to resist immoral laws, Leo writes elsewhere in that same letter: The Church has been assigned by God the duty not only to interpose resistance if at any time the state rule should run counter to religion, but further to make a strong endeavour that the power of the Gospel may pervade the law and institutions of the nations. *Sapientiae Christianae*

That is to say, christians are obliged to act positively in their political life to ensure that christian values (which being Christ-given are necessarily best for man) prevail in civil society and not be silenced, as too readily we tend to be, by the cry that we are trying to impose our values on all. Christians must labour that the mind of Christ be in men in all their activities and aspirations. This is quite a different thing from "imposition".

RESISTING THE LAW

Both the divine law and the natural law set limits to the power and authority of the state. It is left to the principles of christian sociology to indicate what courses of action are morally open to the citizen when the state transgresses those limits.

A christian, confronted with an immoral law, may choose simply to disobey and suffer the consequences, since for him there is no position of compromise between heroism and the crime of obeying an immoral law. It is not unreal of Leo XIII to speak of a readiness "to suffer all things, even death itself, rather than abandon the cause of God". And we need to remind ourselves that God who for our sake gave us life can demand of us that for his sake and ours we should be ready and willing to lay it down, remembering that Christ, whose words are never idle, warns us that saving our lives in this world can lead to the eternal loss of life.

An individual, then, may choose simply to suffer. However, he is entitled to make two further considerations. First, the law whose penalties would deprive him of liberty, goods or life is no law; and therefore he may by all moral means evade its penalties. Secondly, he has the right to witness to the injustice such a law does to others and assist them in not suffering from its injustice.

Resistance to an immoral law may be either passive or active. For effectiveness, passive resistance depends on there being a large proportion of a population involved in it so that sufficient pressure is brought to bear on the erring government to cause it to give way. Perhaps, the greatest obstacle to

the effectiveness of passive resistance is the means at the disposal of modern states to disperse such resistance, and thereby render it ineffective.

When it comes to active resistance, two courses of action are open, public protest or the overthrow of the criminal government. In regards to this latter, catholic social principles may be summarized as follows: (a) It must be established that the government has in fact degenerated into criminal tyranny, that appeal to a higher authority is impossible or without hope of success, and that the new conditions intended after the revolution do in fact correspond to the common good; (b) only so much force may be used as is necessary; all constitutional measures must have been tried to the extent of possibility and hope of success; the complicated apparatus of vital institutions, as well as public order and safety, must be safeguarded insofar as is possible; (c) the use of force must stem from those who are authorized to act in the name of the general body, and not from the presumption of an individual. (Cf. Joseph Hoffner, Fundamentals of Christian Sociology.)

THE GUARANTOR OF RIGHTS

The right of a person to marry and to found a family is acknowledged by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the words, Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family.

In fact, the Declaration does not acknowledge very much at all, since the limiting grounds it specifically excludes are race, nationality and religion. It does not specifically exclude the very grounds on which the right is most likely to be violated - that is to say, grounds of economic insufficiency, social unacceptability, physical, mental or psychological disadvantage, the need to limit population growth, the fear of hereditary disabilities and so on. Nor does it specifically reject the derisory yet likely contention that a compulsory limitation to, say, one child despite the couple's wishes, fulfils the concept of "family" as far as the "inalienable right" goes.

The Declaration is a good example of on how frail a support we lean if we look to laws, manifestos, statistical consensus of opinion or on any such things as the guarantor of human rights. Human nature itself, as constituted by the Creator and as restored in Christ, is the only sure source of discerning the rights of men, and God alone is their sure guarantor.

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A TOTAL VISION

It is only by considering human nature as such and in the light of natural and revealed religious truth that there can be had a true and full picture of man and his powers, his rights and his obligations. So, in his encyclical On The Regulation of Birth, Pope Paul VI writes, The problem of birth, like every other problem of human life, is to be considered beyond partial perspectives - whether of the biological, psychological, demographic or sociological orders - in the light of an integral vision of man and his vocation, not only of his natural and earthly vocation, but also his supernatural and eternal vocation. *Humanae Vitae*.

Now the only authority competent to pronounce upon what is in keeping with that total vision of man and his destiny and what is out of harmony, dishonourable to or destructive of it is the Church to which Christ our Lord committed the means of salvation and which alone he constituted guardian and authentic interpreter of all moral law- not only, that is, of the law of the Gospel, but also of the natural law which is also an expression of God's will, the faithful fulfilment of which is equally necessary for salvation. *Paul VI Humanae Vitae*.

Short of this total vision, there remain only those "partial perspectives" of which Pope Paul speaks. When, for example, in the face of a rising population a government promotes abortion, artificial birth control, sterilization programmes and the rest, it is, in effect, abandoning a total vision of man and his destiny for a temporary "solution" to a particular problem. To decree a compulsory limitation of family for married couples, therefore, is not only beyond the competence of any civil authority to do, but is also indicative of that authority's loss of any real vision of man.

CONSEQUENCES

In *Humanae Vitae*, Paul VI, in dealing with the likely consequences of artificial birth control, writes: Who will stop rulers from favouring, even from imposing upon their peoples if they were to consider it necessary, the method of contraception which they judge to be most efficacious?

In such a way, wishing to avoid individual, family or social difficulties encountered in the observance of the divine law, men would reach the point of placing at the mercy of the intervention of public authorities the most personal and reserved sector of conjugal intimacy. Consequently, if the mission of generating life is not to be exposed to the arbitrary will of men, one must necessarily recognize insurmountable limits to the possibility of man's dominion over his own body and its functions - limits which no man, whether a private individual or one invested with authority, may lightly surpass.

In so writing, the Pope is pointing out the probability that the acceptance of artificial birth control by men in general will lead governments to legislate or to act in an area where they have no competence. This he names as one of the grave consequences of a general acceptance of birth control. It is also true that such a piece of legislation would, to the dishonour and destruction of man, open the way to those other evils the Pope mentions- how wide and easy a road would thus be opened up towards conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality; and the fear that the man, growing used to the employment of contraceptive practices, may finally lose respect for the woman; and, no longer caring for her physical and psychological equilibrium, may come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer as his respected and loved companion. *Humanae Vitae*.

ALTERNATIVES

In the course of that encyclical, Paul VI points out that not everyone will accept his teaching, but that the Church is not surprised to be made, like her divine Founder, a "sign of contradiction" (Luke 2.34); yet she does not because of this cease to proclaim with humble firmness the entire moral law, both natural and evangelical.

What the Church teaches is truth; and what is true does not become less true because it is disbelieved, or because the Church herself is hated. What the Church condemns as intrinsically evil is evil for all men, and does not itself become good even where subjective guilt is lacking - as in the case of a man who does evil in ignorance or believing that he does good. The Church declares the natural law as well as the Gospel law.

In declaring the natural law, the Church gives us the truth about human nature itself - and thus the only sure source of discerning the rights of men, except where divine revelation itself declares those rights as well. Thus, for example, Vatican II in its Decree on Religious Freedom, bases the Church's right to religious freedom on the fact that she is divinely established to teach all men the way to

eternal salvation. Other religious bodies, the Council declares, also have religious freedom - but in their case this is based on the nature of man as such.

Even so, no concept of man is complete if it omits his creation by God and his restoration in Christ and his call to a supernatural destiny. Consequently, anyone who rejects the Church as a teaching authority or rejects belief in God or in the supernatural destiny of man is in an impossible situation when it comes to defending certain rights of man as inalienable.

Take, for example, the right to life. We have seen in print statements regarding abortion which come to this, that abortion is unjustifiable homicide and can therefore be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, such as saving the life of the mother, and so on. The fact is, of course, that if abortion is unjustifiable homicide it can never be allowed - by the very meaning of unjustifiable; and if abortion is ever allowed, it simply cannot be called unjustifiable in itself. So, too, with the right to have children. To say that the right to have children is basic to man and can therefore (setting aside questions of criminality) be denied only in exceptional circumstances is to say nothing. And, in fact, we find that the supposed "exceptional" circumstances turn out to be rather numerous and commonplace.

In passing, we might notice how much fear, rather than rationality, enters into considerations of population control, by whatever means; and how little freedom, therefore, the supporters of the various means to it enjoy. The Church rightly and wisely reminds us of the fact that in any consideration of man and his future the existence of a provident and loving God must be taken seriously, even while man bends his God-given faculties to solving his problems - which, in fact, can not even "be perceived or measured in terms purely of this world", as Vatican II points out.

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RIGHTS WITHOUT GOD

Since this is so, it follows that such problems cannot be solved if they are considered and solutions sought purely in terms of the partial perspectives of this world; for to attempt to do so is to omit dimensions essential to both the problem itself and its solution.

It follows, then, that the attempt to vindicate for man the possession of inalienable rights must fail unless the existence of God who so endows man is admitted; for without something both absolute and transcendent as their source and guarantor, such rights can not exist. To postulate some alternative transcendent absolute (such as the state, or human nature considered apart from the supernatural, or the agreement of opinion) merely deprives man of the possibility of possessing truly inalienable rights.

The possessor of rights must necessarily be subordinate to the source and guarantor of those rights. If, then, the group - the community or the state, for example - is said to be the origin of his rights, then a man is, in those rights, subordinate to the group, and possesses those rights only as long as the group wills it. This is the essence of totalitarianism. To attach the qualification "inalienable" to any right in such circumstances is merely derisory. If a man has no supernatural dimension, then he is merely and totally the product of "nature" or "society" and any rights he may be said to possess he has only by the will of nature or society. And if they are said to be "inalienable" they are so only by the will of nature or society. In other words, quite alienable, because subject to what is itself constantly changing - the concept of nature, the idea of society. So it is, too, if one grounds those rights in some "consensus of civilized opinion", some "sense of humanism": in such case, rights are

the creation of something which itself waxes and wanes and is subject to every passing wind of "thought".

Ultimately, a man has truly inalienable right only when it is acknowledged that he is something which exists and has its value independently of any role he may play in any human institution or enterprise; and that there is something in every man which is so free and so self-justified that it cannot be subordinated to anything less than or merely equal to itself. It is man's personal relationship to God his Creator which constitutes this inviolable something.

THE HUMAN SCIENCES

The "scientific" basis for the many-fronted attack on human life which we are witnessing is, for the most part, the "human sciences", the object of which is man himself.

If man's success in the other sciences and in technology has placed him in the position of being in danger of being himself their victim, no less are the human sciences shaping up that same way.

In 1971, Pope Paul VI issued a social encyclical, *Octogesima Adveniens*, to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of Leo XIII's epoch-making letter on the condition of labour, *Rerum Novarum*. In it, in paragraphs 38 to 40, Pope Paul writes a timely word of caution regarding the human sciences. What he says, in summary, is this: Having subdued nature, man himself has become the object of science, and the "human sciences" flourish. It is true that these sciences subject past views of man to critical examination; but their methodology and their presuppositions lead them to isolate certain aspects of man and yet claim to give a complete interpretation of him. This, in fact, mutilates man.

Another danger of these sciences is that human society may be compelled to conform to the models these sciences have elaborated. If so, man has become simply something to be manipulated.

Though the human sciences are, then, open to suspicion, Christians must play an active part in them, and begin a "dialogue" between them and the Church. Since each scientific discipline can grasp some aspect of man, each has a positive function in widening the horizon of Christian liberty. They can, too, assist Christian social morality in its function of taking an overall view of man, and to show that the behaviour and values exhibited by a particular society are only relative and not inherent in the very nature of man. These sciences are, at one and the same time, indispensable for a better understanding of the nature of man, and yet inadequate to provide a complete answer.

When, then, we are told on the authority of one or other of the human sciences that a particular course of action is necessary or desirable for the future welfare of the human race, we need to remember that what we are given as the whole truth is, in fact, merely a partial perspective, within the terms of which not only is no solution possible but even the true dimensions of the problem cannot be perceived.

Conclusion

The Church teaches that a capable person's right to marry and to found a family is God-given and inalienable. No public authority can deprive him of that right; nor can it, despite any disadvantages that person labours under, render him, willing or unwilling, incapable of transmitting life. It cannot compel him to adopt any morally objectionable means to limit his family; nor, indeed, can it compel him to limit his family at all, but can only counsel such a course of action, and make available morally acceptable means of doing so, if he, for the right reasons, freely elects to do so.

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