

The Contraceptive Mentality

And Its Consequences. The Prophetic Witness of "Humanae Vitae"

By K. D. Whitehead

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During 1978, ten years after the publication of Pope Paul VI's Encyclical "Humanae Vitae" on the Control of Birth, many commentaries have been written on the content of the Encyclical and the reaction of the world to its message.

"The Contraceptive Mentality and Its Consequences" is one such commentary. It has been written by K. D. Whitehead, Executive Vice President of Catholics united for the Faith, Inc. in New Rochelle, New York and was printed in the English Weekly Edition of the Vatican newspaper "L'Osservatore Romano" on 22nd June 1978.

Although the author is speaking about the American scene, the message would seem to apply also In Australia.

THE ENCYCLICAL "HUMANAE VITAE".

On July 29, 1968, the Vatican released to the world the Encyclical of Pope Paul VI on "birth control", Humanae Vitae. It soon proved that this papal encyclical was not exactly what the world had been waiting for. Perhaps no papal document of this or any other time ever occasioned a more immediate, public and negative response, from both inside and outside the Catholic Church. Yet insofar as the encyclical dealt with "birth control" - and it dealt, of course, with a great deal more than that - the Holy Father was merely restating the position which the Catholic Church had always held.

In the encyclical Paul VI reaffirmed the Church's teaching that "each and every marriage act (quilibet matrimonii usus) must remain open to the transmission of life" (Humanae Vitae, 11). This teaching thus excluded the use of the various artificial contraceptives developed by modern technology. For good reasons married couples might limit or regulate their offspring, but only by "renouncing the use of marriage in the fecund periods" (Humanae Vitae, 16), that is, by adapting themselves to what the Pope called the "natural laws and rhythms of fecundity" (Humanae Vitae, 11).

The Pope also declared that this teaching about the use of marriage, "often set forth by the Magisterium, is founded upon the inseparable connection, willed by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning" (Humanae Vitae, 12).

In other words, although the Church teaches that physical love between spouses has a meaning and purpose beyond the mere begetting of children, she also affirms that physical expression of this spousal love can never, morally, be deliberately separated from the possibility of procreation.

However, this teaching, reaffirmed in the encyclical, truly fell upon the ears of a "faithless generation" (Mk 9:19). How could married couples express their love for one another, it was protested, with the possibility of another baby always hanging over them? How could they raise many children in today's social and economic conditions hardly geared for large families? How could they educate them properly according to exacting and expensive modern standards? How could a mother work to supplement the family income once the youngest was packed off to nursery school, or a newly-wed put her husband through college or graduate school, if reliable contraceptives could not be used? Indeed how could any woman find the fulfilment as a modern woman which Women's Lib' and countless others proclaim is hers if she could not effectively escape from "the slavery of biology"? And what about the "population explosion"? And what about the poor who, as the rich were getting richer, kept getting children?

In retrospect, it seems that a papal encyclical which undercut in such drastic fashion so many of today's economic and social assumptions and arrangements was bound to have the controversial repercussions which the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in fact had.

THE GROWTH OF A CONTRACEPTIVE MENTALITY

Yet we should remind ourselves that, prior to 1930, all Christian denominations, not just the Catholic Church, condemned the use of artificial contraception as morally wrong. In America, "Federal law classified contraceptives among 'obscene or pornographic materials,' and until a few years ago the laws of many States restricted not only their sale but also the dissemination of information about them."

The Church of England at its Lambeth Conference in 1930 was the first Christian denomination to suggest that the use of artificial contraception by married couples might be morally licit in certain difficult circumstances; yet the Lambeth Conference still assumed that the non-use of contraception would be the norm for believing Christians and that its use would only be resorted to in extreme cases (1). [Resolution 15 of the Lambeth Conference of 1930.] But as Mr Justice Holmes is said to have remarked, hard cases make bad law. In the three decades following the 1930 Lambeth Conference many churches not only dropped their moral condemnation of artificial contraception; some gave endorsement to its use as a positive good. Whatever reasons Christians might formerly have had for condemning it became almost universally blurred in the public mind. Contraception became respectable where it had formerly been shameful and unmentionable - in the churches, in the medical profession, in "good" society, and in the social welfare and service agencies.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that, by the late 1960's, society at large not only saw "nothing wrong" with contraception; it saw the new artificial methods of birth control as among the most important benefits of modern technology. Recent studies have indicated that more than 90 per cent of non-Catholic married couples now use some method of artificial contraception. A few years back, 6.7 million American women were estimated to use some variety of the "the pill", while about 1.8 million were said to employ so-called intra-uterine devices (IUDs).

Even though the widely publicized deleterious side-effects of "the pill" and the IUD have motivated some women to abandon these methods, very recent studies still indicate that there has not been that great an absolute decline in the use of these methods, and, mean-while, surgical sterilizations,

especially among older couples, have increased dramatically: nearly seven million married couples now include at least one sterilized partner. There are now around one million male sterilizations (vasectomies) each year; and about 750,000 female hysterectomies! It seems clear today that most people see nothing wrong with separating the "unitive" and "procreative" meanings of sexual activity! Another poll has indicated that more than 90 per cent of its respondents firmly believed that "children should be planned".

We now begin to understand why so many people got upset when Pope Paul VI delivered *Humanae Vitae* to the world! Even though the Pontiff was restating nothing more on birth control than what the Church had taught with, as the Pope himself said, "constant firmness" (*Humanae Vitae*, 6), he was restating it to a world which had long since accommodated its moral views to take advantage of the new benefits supposedly conferred by the use of contraception.

This accommodation of moral views has been increasingly true also of Catholics. A widely publicized sociological study early in this decade [the 1970's] found that the percentage of Catholic women using methods of birth regulation other than "rhythm" increased from 30 per cent in 1955 to 51 per cent in 1965 to 68 per cent in 1970; 78 per cent of Catholic women under 25 were said to be using methods not approved by the teaching authority of the Church! [N.B. Catholic scientists and others have made significant advances in determining the fertile cycle of a woman, and these natural techniques, (I refer to the Billings method and others) are not opposed to the teaching authority of the Church. For the sake of comparison, these techniques have also been labelled "rhythm" in the fore-going paragraph.]

THE CHURCH'S TEACHING AUTHORITY

Considering how little today the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* seems to be heeded and followed, then, even by Catholics, many people have now concluded that the Church will eventually have to bow to the inevitable, and change her teaching. But why should this be considered to be the case? Everyone now alive commits, or has committed sin; yet the teachings of the Church against sin remain no less adamant and no less unalterable, for all that people go on committing it.

If the "actual practice" of humanity under the sway of Original Sin cannot be taken as a standard of right and wrong, as it surely cannot, what, then, can? Catholics have always held: the moral law of God, authoritatively interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church. When the Church does interpret the moral law, as in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, the proper course for Catholics would seem to be first to obey and then to make a greater effort to understand why the Church teaches as she does, if this is not apparent at first sight, as seems to be the case for so many with regard to her teaching on artificial contraception. Any such effort by Catholics to understand the "why" of *Humanae Vitae*, remains, I am afraid still largely to be made. Catholics seem content to conclude that, well, the Pope was just wrong about condemning artificial birth control. After all, who can be right all the time, even if he is the Pope?

So the difficulty of making an effort to understand the "why" of *Humanae Vitae* should not be underestimated when we consider how all-pervasive the contraceptive mentality has become today; its assumptions are accepted, all too often, without thought and sometimes without an awareness that they are questionable assumptions which very likely would have been rejected on their face by earlier generations of Christians which had not undergone the gradual and general conditioning process in favour of contraception which our generation has undergone.

Yet the consequences of not making an effort to understand that the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* is vital to any Christian future will be a further erosion of the Church's authority and credibility in areas far removed from birth control. It is unimaginable that God would place an authoritative doctrinal and moral Teacher in the world and then allow that Teacher to mislead the faithful for twenty centuries on a matter as fundamental to the Christian life as the moral laws governing the manner in which human beings must co-operate with their Creator in bringing new life into the world. If the Church could be wrong on this, she could be wrong on just about anything (this, indeed, seems to be the practical conclusion that some have reached).

I am convinced that a purely rational case can be made for the teaching of *Humanae Vitae*. Obviously, however, to make the complete case, far more space would be needed than is allotted here, so on this occasion I propose to show the encyclical's credibility from only one standpoint, from that of some of the consequences which result when the moral teachings of the Church on contraception are not followed, as is clearly the case in America today. What, then, occurs when the unitive and procreative functions of human sexuality - inseparably connected and "willed by God", according to the encyclical - nevertheless are separated by man on "his own initiative"? What happens when a society simply ignores what the Pope has tried to teach on this topic?

In treating of this subject, I must begin with apologies to St Paul who taught that "immorality and all impurity... must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints" (Eph. 5:3): for, as we shall see, the consequences of the contraceptive mentality in society at large amount to the virtual institutionalization of the very things which St Paul warned Christians against even mentioning among themselves.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONTRACEPTIVE MENTALITY

The Holy Father spoke of some of the consequences of the contraceptive mentality in the encyclical when he warned that "upright men... [should] reflect upon the consequences of artificial birth control. Let them consider, first of all, how wide and easy a road would thus be opened up towards conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality... men - especially the young, who are so vulnerable on this point - have need of encouragement to be faithful to the moral law, so that they must not be offered some easy means of eluding its observance. It is also to be feared that man, growing used to the employment of anti-conceptive practices, may finally lose respect for the woman... may come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment..." (*Humanae Vitae*, 17).

These were some of the consequences Paul VI warned about, if the teaching of the Church were not heeded. Have the years since *Humanae Vitae* was issued proved him to be a prophet in what he predicted, or not?

Infidelity

What about "conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality"? Well, I believe we have all heard about today's so-called "sexual revolution". It is not necessary to prove that there is a statistically verifiable absolute increase in sexual misdeeds today. The revolution is real enough. It is the case, for example, that even with today's wonder drugs venereal disease has nevertheless reached epidemic proportions. An article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* concluded a few years back that venereal disease could no longer be medically treated out of existence "unless a new element is introduced such as immunization or a change in the prevailing life styles of the population segments most affected" (Emphasis added) (2). [Neumann, Hans H.,

M.D., and Baecker, Janet M., M. Phil., "Treatment of Gonorrhoea". Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 219, No. 4, January 24, 1972. Page 473.] In other words, what is chiefly needed, as medicine throws up its hands, is a little more "encouragement to be faithful to the moral law", in the words of the Holy Father.

Public Acceptance

But more than to the evidence of vastly increased promiscuity which the epidemic of venereal disease indicates, I wish to point simply to the obvious public acquiescence, so evident in the press, media, books, and public discourse, in phenomena which, if they occurred in the past, were not only considered shameful and scandalous but, were indeed, mostly illegal.

It is impossible to open the morning newspaper or turn on the news without being bombarded with talk of companionate marriage, trial marriage, homosexual marriage, group marriage, or, most especially, with languid indifference to the question of whether any "marriage" at all needs to be connected with sexual "expression" or "fulfilment". Newsweek magazine recently reported that couples living together without marriage have doubled in the past few years, and Psychology Today, remarking on the same phenomenon reports, significantly, that "nearly all the women were taking the pill and most couples saw their life styles as viable only as long as there were no children". (3) [Psychology Today, August 1973, Page 81.]

So it is plain most of these new modes of sexual conduct could not even be considered, much less acted upon, if modern contraceptives (and legalized abortion in case of slip-ups) were not available to prevent the consequences which by nature are connected with the physical union of man and woman - the possible conception of a child! Without contraception, how could couples live together with the idea of deliberately not having children?

Effects on young people

One of the more egregious manifestations of "the sexual revolution" is the way it has been foisted on the young - whom the Holy Father singled out as especially needing encouragement "to be faithful to the moral law".

Nearly 30 per cent of all unmarried girls aged 15-19 in the United States are now said to have had full sexual experience. Between 1971 and 1976 the number of fifteen-year olds who had thus initiated sexual activity nearly doubled, according to a recent poll, and no less than 4 out of 10 American high school seniors now admit to engaging in pre-marital intercourse. An entire industry of "clinics", many of them financed by tax dollars, has sprung into being to "serve" these girls, mostly by providing them with contraceptives (abortion referrals are also included among their regular services). What formerly would have been considered "contributing to the delinquency of a minor" is now considered a positive medical "service" for teen-agers.

Many of the popular "hot line" telephone services for teenagers, incidentally, which community-minded persons often support as a help for troubled young people, are specifically designed to include contraceptive (and abortion) information or to tell inquiring teenagers where they can get information on these subjects. "Moral" judgements are "out"; "support" in what the teenagers want to do - whatever it is - is "in".

Nor is all this frank indoctrination and assistance in the practice of sex outside of marriage limited to clinics or "hot lines" for those young people who seek out their services. The same sort of contraceptive indoctrination is now being systematically introduced into many school classrooms,

mostly through courses in so-called "sex education", but also in social science courses, and in the new "population education". The very term "sex education" as an examination of the typical course in sex education will reveal, means "indoctrination in the use of modern contraceptive devices".

Sex without morality

What can be said of a view of sex which ignores morality and does not hesitate to debase and corrupt the young? Sex is now seen primarily as a matter of "self expression" or "self-fulfilment". The themes of responsibility, morality and sacredness which necessarily belong to any Christian view of sex are absent, certainly; and where these themes are forgotten or left out, the acceptance of the contraceptive mentality is probably inevitable.

Self Fulfilment

Just as the concept of "planned parenthood" really means planned non-parenthood, so the aim and result of encouraging sex just for fun and games can only be the destruction of any sound idea of family life, for human sexuality is exempted from the necessity of the self-denial necessary, for example, in any marriage. Sexuality is thus divorced not only from possible procreation but indeed, logically, from marriage itself. For once it is admitted that human sexuality is concerned primarily with "self-expression" or "self-fulfilment" - and not always in a profound and fundamental way with possible procreation - then sexual "self-expression", "self-fulfilment" and even what is understood today by "love" become quite thinkable and possible outside of marriage; and again, contraception is what makes them thinkable and possible in practice.

The institution of the family is inseparable from its function of first bringing offspring into the world and then bringing them up and forming them; but if no children are wanted... then "marriage" is artificially and wilfully wrenched out of the natural order instituted by God. The logical consequence is to go a step further and ask: why is marriage even necessary for the use of sex?

Divorce

For a long time people have been disturbed that so many marriages have been ending in divorce. It seems clear that the modern divorce of sex from possible procreation, which contraception makes possible, is an accelerating factor in actual marriage break-ups because marriage is no longer seen as necessary before the sexual faculty can be used. The fundamental assumption of the contraceptive mentality is that we need not be responsible for the possible consequences of our sexual acts; but in a broader sense, as Professor Charles E. Rice has observed, "contraception is the symbolic irresponsibility of our times", and the adoption of this irresponsibility can only contribute to further irresponsibility with regard to the fulfilment of marriage vows generally.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that the debate over contraception within the Catholic Church has revolved almost entirely around the question of whether spouses might morally use it; the fact that contraception, once admitted as morally licit in itself, makes possible and encourages sex outside of marriage has been very largely ignored.

Further consequences

For, if we can indeed morally separate sexual love from possible procreation, if we tear apart the God-given natural order, we will no longer clearly understand that homosexuality and sexual perversions, for example, are still further abominations and offences against that order. Surely we cannot say that these things are a "misuse" of sex if sex has no natural use and is nothing but self-

expression, not necessarily related to any other end such as possible procreation! Homosexuals claim, for example, simply to be carrying out their own way of "expressing love". It is therefore not surprising that society, having accepted the premise that there is no natural use of human sexuality, today tends to accept the homosexual claim, as espoused by so-called Gay Lib'. Even when homosexuality is still perceived as repugnant, society can still think of no reason to condemn it - if there is no necessary connection between procreation and sex. Society has forgotten, in other words, the nature and end of sex instituted by God, in which spousal love and its end, procreation, are indissolubly linked.

Thus we have the strange phenomenon of moral theologians today justifying conduct considered an "abomination" in the Scriptures, and thus, too, a commission on homosexuality appointed by another Christian church has drawn the strictly logical consequences of the new sexual morality which the acceptance of contraception has helped to usher in. "It is wrong and presumptuous", this statement by a Christian Church says, "to deny Christian value to any human relationship which involves attachment to another person in the spirit of sacrificial or self-giving love... Homosexuals seriously seeking to build such relationships with one another are surely as deserving as heterosexuals of encouragement and help from the Church and its ministry" (4). [Commission on Homosexuality, Episcopal (i.e. Anglican) Diocese of Michigan, quoted in Catholic Currents, Vol. 5, No. 5, September 1, 1973. Page 8.]

Such theologizing obviously goes back logically to a prior acceptance of the possibility of separating the unitive and procreative meanings of sex: it goes back to the acceptance of the moral licitness of artificial contraception.

Today's obvious public tolerance, not only for explicit sex outside of marriage but for perversions of sex, is similarly the result, whether it is realized or not, of a prior public tolerance of the view that there is no particular natural or moral use of sex; rather, everybody may use it according to his bent; no particular morality attaches to it; that would be a denial of "love" through narrow "legalisms".

EXPERIMENTS IN PROCREATION

Such, then, are some of the direct consequences - which we can see all around us in our society today - of artificially separating the use of human sexuality from marriage and from the possibility of procreation. But if we can morally separate sex from procreation, we can also separate procreation from sex. Modern society is taking that step too, and some even worse horrors are following from it than those we have already reviewed. We need not dwell on them at length, because they are being widely discussed, often with Frankenstein-monster sensationalism. What is not often noticed, however, is that experimentation of the types which we shall now enumerate involves the same original separation of sex from procreation of which contraception is the prototype:

- "TEST-TUBE BABIES" - The fertilization of a human ovum outside a woman's body, followed by the implantation of the resulting human embryo in a woman's uterus; this technique, of course, requires legal abortion, both to test the implantation techniques and to get rid of the defective "experiments".
- ARTIFICIAL PLACENTAS - The development of artificial gestation chambers where embryos can be experimentally observed as they grow.

- SURROGATE MOTHERS - The implantation of a fertilized ovum from one woman in the uterus of another.
- "CLONING" - The production of genetically identical beings by substituting the nucleus of a body cell of the adult organism in a mature but unfertilized ovum so that the latter will develop into an identical copy of the original adult. (Though cloning is theoretically possible with humans, experiments so far [1978] have involved only plants and animals).
- ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION - The fertilization of an ovum of a woman artificially with the sperm of a man (who need not, of course, be the woman's husband).

Commenting on the degree to which these procedures and experiments necessarily involve "playing God", Dr Leon R. Kass, of the National Academy of Sciences, was moved to reflect that "procreation is not simply an activity of the rational will. It is a more complete human activity precisely because it engages us bodily and spiritually, as well as rationally. Is there perhaps some wisdom in that mystery of nature which joins the pleasure of sex, the communication of love, and the desire for children in the very activity by which we continue the chain of human existence? Is not biological parenthood a built-in 'mechanism', selected because it fosters and supports in parents an adequate concern for and commitment to their children? Would not the laboratory production of human beings no longer be human procreation? Could it keep human parenthood human?" (5). [Kass, Leon, R. "The New Biology: What Price Relieving Man's Estate?" Science. Vol. 174, No. 4011, November 19, 1971. Page 784.]

Dr Kass presumably has no allegiance to *Humanae Vitae*, yet how prophetic the encyclical appears in the light of his conclusions about the inhuman new experiments now being conducted. In the article quoted, Dr Kass went on to comment pertinently on some of the other themes we have been concerned with: "Sex is now comfortably at home outside of marriage; child-rearing is progressively being given over to the state, the schools, the mass media, and the child-care centres. Some have argued that the family, long the nursery of humanity, has outlived its usefulness. To be sure, laboratory and governmental alternatives might be designed for procreation and child-rearing, but at what cost?"

One thing that has not been sufficiently reflected upon is how we reached the state of affairs Dr Kass describes. Considering the intimate connection between all the anti-family and anti-life phenomena we have been discussing, can we not say that society took one of its longest and most decisive steps towards the kind of world that has come into being when it discarded the moral prohibition against artificial contraception, once accepted without question by all Christians but now scarcely ever affirmed outside of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*?

Abortion

Yet there is one more consequence of the contraceptive mentality in our society today which must now be treated - abortion. Abortion - the killing of a living though unborn child - may yet serve to turn our society back from the road down which we have been travelling. People do stop and ask: how is it that we are now permitting the legalized killing of around a million of our children each year? How is it that in supposedly civilized and Christian America we have killed more since the Supreme Court abortion decision of 1973 than in all the wars of American history? [Figures to 1978!!]

Nevertheless, even among those most horrified by legalized killing, there has been a great reluctance to accept the plain fact that we have social acceptance of legalized abortion today because we had social acceptance of contraception first.

I am acquainted, I think, with all of the arguments that will be levelled at this statement. After all, it is argued, abortion is not the same thing as contraception. Abortion is killing; killing is wrong. Contraception, however, is something else; it merely prevents conception; it doesn't kill a child already alive and growing. So it is urged.

I am quite aware of these distinctions. But, as we shall see, some methods of so-called "contraception" are actually abortifacient, i.e., they do involve the killing of a living child already conceived inside the mother's body. Granted, however, that methods which truly prevent conception are not the same thing as abortion, we still have to consider whether these methods are not also morally wrong - even though they are not a violation of the Fifth Commandment "You Shall Not Kill". The Fifth Commandment, after all, is not the only Commandment. There are other things that are wrong besides killing.

Now if we agree that there are other things wrong besides killing, and if we can agree for a moment with the Catholic Church that contraception is perhaps one of them, then we can see that to accept the violation of the moral law in one instance (contraception) leaves us little ground on which to stand in attempting to invoke the moral law against another even though different practice (abortion). If the moral law may be violated in one instance, why may it not be violated in another instance?

If we admit that some may violate the (objective) moral law because their conscience sees nothing wrong with doing it, e.g., they see "nothing wrong" with contraception, we have merely admitted the premise incessantly trumpeted by the abortionists themselves that everyone should decide about contraception, abortion and presumably euthanasia according to his own "conscience".

Most people see the evil of abortion and they see that its acceptance is already opening the way towards acceptance of positive euthanasia, or "mercy killing", of the sick, aged, and "unfit". Much fewer people see how the evil of contraception and its new ethic of untrammelled sex apart from possible procreation have in fact led to legalized abortion. For even if contraception as such is not as bad as murder, it is an evil; and Our Lord himself teaches that "the bad tree bears evil fruit" (Mt 7:17). It is in this sense that abortion - the idea that we may even go so far as to kill in order to make effective the "control" man has assumed over his own "reproduction" - is one of the evil fruits of the contraceptive mentality.

Frequency of Abortion

Even as they recoil from abortion few people ask how it came about that so many others today do not recoil from it; obviously people are performing and undergoing abortions on a literally massive scale today so some must not recoil from it; and the answer to the question of why they do not is that they have first accepted today's conventional wisdom that man not only has sole control over his reproduction; he also has the right to employ indiscriminately his sexual powers while deliberately excluding the supreme end for which these powers were obviously designed by God.

The pro-abortionists and the votaries of universal contraception - who are verifiably the same people for all practical purposes - understand the link between contraception and abortion perfectly. There is no group or organization, public or private, engaged in so-called "family planning" today

which draws the line against the acceptance of abortion as a method of "post-conceptive" family planning once it has accepted artificial contraception as a valid means of family planning. Nor, really, do any of the existing courses in so-called "sex education" draw any such line either. The anti-lifers know exactly what sort of world they want, and it bears no resemblance to a Christian world.

Contraception and Abortion

Moreover, modern technology has for a long while been in the process of making "contraception" synonymous with abortion. Let us consider only these facts (they are now so well-known by everybody as to be virtually beyond dispute):

- One of the most publicized current developments in "contraceptive" technology today has been the development of a so-called "once-a-month" or "morning-after" pill for the female. This kind of pill would cause any embryo who might have been conceived to be evacuated from his mother's body. In other words, this kind of pill would be a method of very early chemically-induced abortion. The chemicals being developed for this purpose are already in use as abortion-inducing agents, although their full development in pill form seems to be [written in 1978] for sometime in the future. (Incidentally, legalized abortion is considered a necessity for the proper development of these abortifacient drugs since any embryos damaged but not successfully aborted through their use must then be aborted surgically).
- As is well-known, the Intra-uterine Device (IUD), long in use as a "contraceptive" is almost certainly an abortifacient (abortifacient) (abortion-inducing agent) in its action (6). [See, for instance, Hilgers, Thomas W., M.D. "The Intrauterine Device: Contraceptive or Abortifacient?" Presented at a seminar in Obstetrics and Gynaecology on October 17, 1972.]
- Some of the current contraceptive pills already in wide use are also known to have abortifacient as well as ovulation-preventing properties; in other words, like the "morning after" type pill, they actually cause a very early abortion of a fertilized ovum rather than merely "preventing" conception; this is especially true of the newer combination-type pills. It is not true, therefore, that so-called "contraception" necessarily only prevents conception; some forms of so-called "contraception" kill the embryo after conception instead.
- And, finally, there is the new medical procedure known as menstrual extraction or regulation, which is now being performed on women within five days after a missed menstrual period; this procedure uses a suction device to remove the uterine lining in which a fertilized ovum may or may not have become implanted. If one has become implanted, of course, the procedure amounts to abortion. (Legally, however, it would be impossible to prove that an abortion had taken place - and hence to prosecute anybody under the strictest possible anti-abortion law - since there would be no way to prove that the woman had even been pregnant).

All of these new "birth control" or "contraceptive" procedures and methods are either possibly or certainly abortion-inducing agents. If we are against abortion, we logically have to be against these forms of "contraception" as well.

If we are against abortion at eight months, we should be against it at eight days or eight minutes. Yet it seems that few doctors or women have declined to make use of these desired methods of "contraception" because they were actually methods of early abortion. Once artificial contraception

has become morally acceptable, in other words, the evidence seems to show that the transition from the prevention to the destruction of human life becomes easily, if not automatically, acceptable as well.

Abortion is Legalized Killing

One of the ultimate consequences of the contraceptive mentality, then, is abortion - legalized killing. I know this will be a "hard saying" for many, but I do not see how the facts can admit of any other interpretation; those who disagree with the conclusion should show us then how we did arrive at legalized abortion if not via the prior acceptance of the contraceptive mentality, as I have shown here. We now do have legalized abortion in America; and the fact that we had it only five years after *Humanae Vitae*, shows what a prophet Paul VI was. In the encyclical itself, as few care to recall, the Pope actually condemned abortion first: "... above all, directly willed and procured abortion, even if for therapeutic reasons, [is] to be absolutely excluded as [a] licit means of regulating birth", he said. Only after condemning abortion did the Holy Father go on to forbid direct sterilization and artificial contraception. (Pope Pius XI also condemned abortion in his 1930 encyclical against birth control, *Casti Connubii*, long before anybody ever dreamed abortion could ever be legalized).

How many of us were worrying about abortion in 1968 when Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae*? Or in 1930? The deluge has come in the past several years. [Written in 1978!] But the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, like the earlier encyclical of Pope Pius XI, was already on the record as a truly prophetic witness of the plague of abortions that has since been visited upon the human race.

Lesson from the Early Church

Actually, the American experience of seeing the acceptance of contraception lead to the acceptance of abortion was not the first time that the integral and consistent anti-life logic we have been examining here has worked itself out in human history. Consider this statement of St. Epiphanius, who was Bishop of Salamis, Cyprus, and who lived between 315 and 403 A.D. Writing of the contraceptive practices of the pagan society of his day, St. Epiphanius wrote against the idea that conjugal relations might be indulged in without any reference to their natural purpose: "There are those", he wrote, "who when they have intercourse deliberately prevent having children... Moreover if a man should by mistake deposit some of his emitted seed and his wife becomes pregnant, listen to what further crime they descend. They remove the unformed fetus from the womb anytime they please and actually grind the aborted child (infantem) with mortar and pestle. Then to avoid nausea they use pepper and other spices or ointments" (Emphasis added) (7). [Quoted by Hardon, John A., S.J. *Christianity in The Twentieth Century*, Doubleday Image Edition, Page 242.]

Thus the testimony of the ancient world too confirms our own experience: once man arrogates to himself the right to limit or control the consequences of sex without regard to the moral law or the natural use of sex - once, in other words, the contraceptive mentality prevails - moving on to what St. Epiphanius calls "the further crime" of abortion becomes both logical and perhaps inevitable.

AN AUTHORITATIVE MORAL TEACHER

So there we have it. With all the weight of the evidence now in favour of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*'s credibility let us begin to take the encyclical more seriously and begin to try to bear witness to its prophetic truth in our own lives. God did not place an authoritative Moral Teacher in the world for nothing. For Catholics who reflect upon the matter it can be no surprise at all that practically the

whole world fell into the modern birth control trap except that Moral Teacher, the Vicar of Christ on earth.

It was often said during the original controversy over *Humanae Vitae* that its teaching could nowhere be grounded in Holy Scripture. I think it can be grounded, for example, in St Paul's admonition to the Thessalonians, since it is fundamentally a plea to respect the moral law through self control: "Each of you must learn to control his own body" St Paul says, "as something holy and held in honour, not yielding to the promptings of passion as the heathen do in their ignorance of God" (I Thess 4: 4-5).

Trinity in Marriage

The key word in this passage is the last one - God. After all, we were created and brought into this world for a purpose, as the catechism used to say, "to know, love and serve God in this world, and to be happy with him forever in the next". If this is so, it follows that sex and marriage and procreation also constitute ways of knowing, loving, and serving God, as indeed we know from the fact that Christ elevated marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament. And God creates our children for the same purpose that he created us. We cannot therefore speak of love between spouses without always and without exception relating this spousal love to the love and purposes of the Creator. As Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen put it a few years ago, there are "three to get married"; and it is no accident that married love is thus realized after the same triune pattern of love... God-husband-wife in one dimension, husband-wife-child in the other dimension. Artificial contraception destroys this triune unity not only by cutting the couple off from the possible child, but by cutting the couple off from God.

In this connection, another scriptural passage comes to mind: "What... God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mt. 19:6). This passage has traditionally been applied to the marriage bond; but faced with the consequences of the contraceptive mentality - which, inter alia, we have seen to be one of the corrosive agents helping to dissolve marriage itself as well as corrupting the healthy and moral use of the God-given faculty of sex - can we not say that the passage applies equally to the unitive and procreative meanings of the marriage act? We have now abundantly seen some of the consequences of separating these two meanings by artificial contraception. Pope Paul VI authoritatively taught in *Humanae Vitae* that the two meanings were indeed "willed by God and unable to be broken by man". And in what we have covered we have now caught a glimpse at least of how that is so.

Let us therefore echo our assent to this teaching of *Humanae Vitae* in the words of Christ himself: "What ... God has joined together, let no man put asunder".

NOTES

- (1) Resolution 15 of the Lambeth Conference of 1930.
- (2) Neumann, Hans H., M.D., and Baecker, Janet M., M. Phil., "Treatment of Gonorrhoea". *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 219, No. 4, January 24, 1972. Page 473.
- (3) *Psychology Today*, August 1973, Page 81.
- (4) Commission on Homosexuality, Episcopal (Anglican) Diocese of Michigan, quoted in *Catholic Currents*, Vol. 5, No. 5, September 1, 1973. Page 8.
- (5) Kass, Leon, R. "The New Biology: What Price Relieving Man's Estate?" *Science*. Vol. 174, No.

4011, November 19, 1971. Page 784.

(6) See, for instance, Hilgers, Thomas W., M.D. "The Intra-uterine Device: Contraceptive or Abortifacient?" Presented at a seminar in Obstetrics and Gynaecology on October 17, 1972.

(7) Quoted by Hardon, John A., S.J. Christianity in The Twentieth Century, Doubleday Image Edition, Page 242.

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