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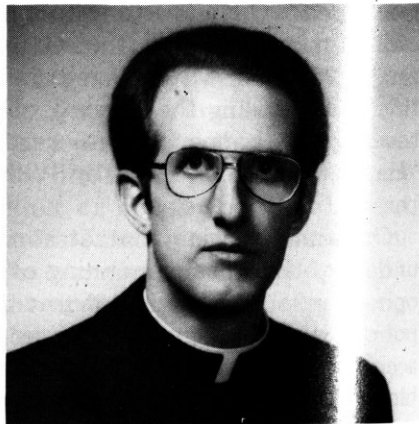
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Contraception and the Christian Institution

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A lot of water has gone over the dam, so to speak, since the issuance of the papal encyclical, *Humanae Vitae* over a decade ago.¹ This work of the magisterium was meant to hold back the torrent of voices clamoring for a change in official Catholic teaching on the subject of artificial contraception as a means of birth regulation. The immediate and subsequent controversies which have surrounded this document are well-known to all, though time alone will tell what lasting significance and ultimate bearing it will have on the history of Christian thought and practice in regard to sexual ethics and morality.

The tenth anniversary of the promulgation of *Humanae Vitae* appropriately should occasion mature reconsideration and reappraisal of this much impugned, nonetheless to my mind timely, document of the Apostolic See. My modest hope in this essay is to help dissipate the confusion and uncertainties surrounding the Catholic position as given in *Humanae Vitae* and allay the many misgivings numerous people have concerning it. This is a most formidable task considering the great minds of our times which have grappled with the problem. Humility accordingly counsels circumspection in dealing with this complex and delicate issue of human conduct. The attitudes we harbor within us indeed greatly condition and affect the outcome of all our inquiries and analyses into this sensitive area of morality due to its closeness and immediate relevance to all our personal and collective lives. Therefore we must be vigilant lest any trace of intellectual or emotional prejudice cloud our vision and stymie our investigations.

It is necessary to reopen what has been for many a closed discussion concerning the moral doctrine expounded in *Humanae Vitae*. The pertinence of this move becomes all the more apparent when we consider the disturbing fact that some authors² have gone so far as to

lament and maintain staunchly that this particular papal encyclical has not only weakened the Church's credibility in all areas of morality, but has also seriously undermined her authority in general. Also to be noted is the equally unsettling fact that contemporary sexual immorality appears to have hit an all time low. Granted that many non-Catholics and Catholics alike have been bewildered by the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* and ask why anything could be wrong with something apparently so harmless, we still cannot concede that the doctrine stated therein is "a kind of gnosis attainable only by the initiates of the mystery."³

The purpose of this study is to attempt to articulate what appears to be a rather fundamental intuition of Christian tradition. Evidently it is not possible for us to make a full historical study and evaluation of the question, so we must restrict ourselves to the contemporary scene. However, it is worth noting that contraception as an issue and practice is nothing new; it has been with us for a very long time, most certainly from the times of Christ and the Church Fathers. Secondly, it cannot escape our attention that its practice has always been interdicted by authoritative Church teaching.⁴ The prohibition of it, indeed, has been common to all Christian traditions up until relatively recent times when the Anglican Communion first rebuked this aspect of traditional Christian teaching.⁵ The momentum against this teaching has not ceased to abate and, therefore, it behooves us to reconsider the whole issue.

Problems of a special nature arise when we try to articulate Christianity's traditional insight concerning the illicitness of contraception. Since man's sexuality is such a deep, personal and intimate aspect of his personhood and existence, it is difficult for us to express its profound nature and sublime meaning for him in a simple, straightforward and honest fashion. Moral problems in this domain are doubly difficult to deal with precisely due to this fact. It is one thing to know that certain conduct should not be performed, but it is quite another to say exactly why it is wrong. To aid us in this endeavor we must adopt a prayerful attitude and listen to the voice of truth.⁶ We must pray to our heavenly Master that He infuse in us His light and illumine our minds so that we may discover and express His truth.

The Refutation of Biologism

The sensitive starting point whence many discussions of the issue of artificial contraception seem to go astray concerns the nature of human sexuality as an object of investigation. On its surface, sex in man appears to be nothing more than a mere biological process like any other. From the biological point of view, it is a dimension of man's physical existence geared toward reproduction. This natural finality of the act as a biological given appears to be contested by no

one. Contraceptionists and those opposed to *Humanae Vitae* otherwise would have no reason to endorse the use of contraceptives as a means of frustrating this biological orientation of the act of sexual intercourse in the first place. The point of controversy, however, revolves around the question of whether the physical structure of the act, i.e., its biology, should determine its morality. The objections by such authors as Bernard Haring and Charles E. Curran to *Humanae Vitae* emphasize this point.⁷ The moral problem for them and for others who share their critique⁸ is rather whether man with his reason and free will should not be able to regulate and determine the outcome of this particular biological process according to his reasoned need and overall welfare. Should not the principle of totality which governs the other biological processes and physical aspects of man also equally apply to this area of man's biology? Why should the human sexual process be considered sacrosanct when no other part of man is so treated?

These legitimate questions can only be properly entertained after due consideration is given to a differing point of view from which we may approach the topic of human sexuality. The biological perspective regards man *qua* man, the biological individual. As such, its methods of procedure and analysis follow those of the empirical scientist. To the biologist, there is no significant difference between the reproductive system in man and that in other mammals. The same basic principles, inductively observed and studied, appear to be at stake in both. There is, however, another viewpoint to the whole question of human sexuality, and its point of departure is not man as the biological individual or man, the animal, but on the contrary, man *as person* or *imago Dei*. Materially speaking, the object under investigation, human sexuality, would be the same. Formally speaking, however, it differs, because the notion, person is not an empirical concept, but a philosophical one. It accordingly brings the level of discussion about human sexuality to a different plane, one on which the pointers of biology are irrelevant in the long run.⁹ From the formal standpoint of the human person, we must now approach the discussion of the nature and meaning of human sexuality in an intuitive and deductive fashion in tune with the ways of philosophical inquiry and elucidation.¹⁰

The person is one who possesses himself by self-consciousness and self-determination. He is marked by intellectuality, and possesses the faculty of reason. He is a free subject able to pattern his own life by undetermined, free choices of his will. Finally, but certainly not least of all, he is one capable of love. He can transcend himself in the act of love, and reach out to the other, the loved one, in self-surrender with the hope of the requital of his love. More to the point however, the human person, man is, in addition, a unified being of body and soul.¹¹ He is unthinkable without his body; he is no pure spirit entrapped in

a body as Plato, to the contrary, would have it. His whole orientation to himself, to others, and to the world is ruled by this fundamental duality of his nature. His knowledge through his senses, the way his bodily passions may limit the freedom of his will, the fact of his sexuality as a means of expressing his love for another all reveal and testify to this dual dimension of man.

To push these reflections further, it appears that sexuality in man is to be differentiated from that in animals by its link to man's spirit — his reason, free will, and affective life. Thus, while sole deterministic instinct rules in the animal kingdom, in man natural instinct ultimately fades into the background with the conscious life of man governing, or ought to be governing, this important aspect of his life. Accordingly and more specifically we come to understand that because man is a unified being of body and soul his sexuality can never be considered as merely biological, but as an integrally personal dimension of his existence. This is precisely the anthropological understanding of man and his sexuality which appears to ground the development of the doctrine contained in *Humanae Vitae*.

Evidently, we are not persons who happen to have sexuality; rather, sexuality is one of the inherent dimensions of our personhood. For this reason we cannot attack the biological integrity of the conjugal act without at the same time violating its human integrity. To argue otherwise would entail a dualistic notion of the nature of man.¹²

Charge of Biologism

It is oddly ironic that the charge of biologism or physicalism has been leveled at *Humanae Vitae*. It would rather seem, from what has been said, that the very critics of the encyclical are the ones guilty of this charge. The reason for this is apparent. Only by assuming that the physiological dimensions of human sexuality are merely biological and *infrahuman* or *less-than-human* in the first place could the accusation of biologism against *Humanae Vitae* have any intelligibility. This stance implicates another strictly related presupposition, namely a dualistic understanding of the nature of man. There is, accordingly, a double irony in all of this, since some critics of *Humanae Vitae* label it not only biologicistic, but also dualistic.¹³ We say that the dissenting opinion to the doctrine of *Humanae Vitae* implicitly, even if not explicitly, affirms a dualistic understanding of man, because if the human person is one, a necessary unity, then the so-called biological level of man can be no less personal than the spiritual side of man. The biological in man can never be thought of as being subpersonal and only assumed into the realm of the personal by the free, spiritual acts of the will of man or by the meaning man's intelligence gives it. It is human and personal, because it is man's, a human person's.

There appear to be several confusions which militate against greater

clarity on these points. At root, a fundamental misunderstanding of the respective notions of person and personality is involved.¹⁴ The person cannot be equated with the spiritual dimension of man alone, for its concept refers to the whole man, to man in the full breadth and depth of his being. Personhood is a basic, ontological notion referring to man's being, unlike the notion personality, which points to the qualities like intelligence and moral freedom we like to see in a developed person. The biology of man may not directly refer to the spiritual personality, but it is nonetheless an integral dimension of man's personhood. Without it he is unthinkable, and accordingly, biology cannot be considered indifferent to the important issues of man and the expression of his personality.

A second confusion concerns the nature of the biological dimension of man. Because man's biology is his, no aspect of it can ever be thought of as being merely that of a brute animal. His biological integrity merits constant respect, and never can be taken lightly. Nonetheless, though the entire sphere of man's biology is fully personal, this cannot be taken to mean that no differentiation is possible in relation to the biological aspects of man and that no gradation of meaning is to be found in their regard. The sexual process in man is not to be equated with the other more strictly¹⁵ biological aspects of the human person, for instance, his circulatory, respiratory, and digestive systems. In brute animals, this equation may well hold true,¹⁶ but in man it does not due to sexuality's link to his spirit. Sex in man is tied to the spirit, and is meant to express his love for woman. At all times, accordingly, it should be subject, in a way his other bodily functions never are, to the free and conscious control of man in full conformity with his personal dignity as a free, thinking subject. The pangs of sexuality, it is true, may at times get the better of him, but this, as Christian doctrine teaches us, is the consequence of original sin and the concupiscence it entails and is not owing to the designs of the Creator for him. The sexual process in man is not destined in God's will to be a mere instinctual process of reproduction, but is truly meant to be a process of procreation, a process of creative co-activity with the Creator to bring about new life, new *personal* life. The end product of human sexual activity is not simply another biological individual, but a new person, a truly irrepeatable being, endowed by God with an intellect, free will, and heart.

These observations concerning the biological dimension of man further help unmask a third confusion referring to the concept of "interference with nature." Many equivocations abound when this term is employed.¹⁸ It is asked why we can interfere with nature when it comes to various medicinal applications and surgical procedures but not when it is a question of contraceptive practice.¹⁹ The reason for the permissibility of using of medicines to cure bodily ailments and surgical operations to remedy certain acute bodily ills or for cosmetic

purposes, on the one hand, and for the prohibition of contraceptive methods, on the other, seems clear. In the two cases, the "nature" involved is not the same. In the former instance, we witness interventions into the more strictly biological level of man, the level which underscores his similarity to brute animals, but which, as such, does not bear on his unique spirituality. In the latter case, that referring to the human sexual domain, however, we see an unmistakable involvement with the spiritual personality of man. Here sex is intimately linked to the life of his spirit, thus placing it in a dimension beyond the merely neutral or indifferent side of his nature. The singular value sex has as a mode of expressing the affective life of the human person gives it a fundamentally different nature from the formal point of view of value and meaning for man.²⁰ Hence, to consider it from a merely biological point of view as on par, materially speaking, with the other biological aspects of the person is to biologize it and thereby depersonalize and debase it.²¹ The practice of contraception, especially by means of the anovulant pill, cannot, therefore, be likened to the use of medicine, because the justification for the use of the latter is some pathological condition ailing the human body. The aptitude of the conjugal act for procreation, on the contrary, is hardly a malfunction or disease.²² On the other hand, if there are therapeutic reasons for inducing either temporary infertility or permanent sterilization, e.g., for reasons of regulating a woman's cycle or for removing a cancerous uterus, then, of course, the medicines or surgical procedures which entail these are legitimately employed in view of the overall benefit they bring about for the whole man. But, then again, their formality from the moral point of view is quite distinct from the adoption of contraceptive measures only to prevent possible conceptions of new human beings.

The refutation of biologism appears in sum to lie in the singularly personal dimension of human sexuality, the fact that sexual actuation in the conjugal act serves as the bodily expression, *par excellence*, of the deep and intimate love of man for woman.²³ It is equally grounded in the unified — and not dualistic — nature of the human person. Human sexuality is not something intrapersonal assumed into the fully personal by the conscious decision of the human subject; it participates by its very nature as the root of human fecundity in the dignity of the human person.²⁴

The Heart of the Matter

Our discussions so far have only hinted at why contraception as a consciously and directly willed act is considered inherently wrong in Christian tradition. They have not spelled out explicitly why it is an instance of immorality, but have just laid the foundation for a realization, a *prise de conscience* why this is the case. Hopefully, however, it

has been successfully indicated that sexuality is an integral modality of our beings as human persons, and that it consequently has a tremendous bearing on the great questions of love and life in human existence. In this same vein, Pope Paul VI has written that "each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life."²⁵ He thereby emphasizes the fundamental insight that an intrinsic link conjoins sex and love and love and life. The conjugal act is not just any act of coition which joins a man to a woman, but the ultimate act of physical embrace between husband and wife, the act in which spouses give full, bodily expression to their marital love. Evidently, in the order of possibility, sexual intercourse need not be a means to express love; it need not even be an act between two people married to each other. It could just as readily be an action of brute subjugation of the female to the male or the impersonal joining of client and prostitute. But its full human and personal meaning is not thereby lessened or abrogated. If sex in man is to be tied to his spirit, to be truly meaningful only in relation to his express love for another, no violation of its trust, as it were, can subtract from its ultimate significance for man and the human community at large.

The intimate connection between love and life must be explicated. All true love is an affirmation of existence, of life. It is essentially an act of self-transcendence wherein a person declares himself for his loved one, and sacrifices himself for that one's benefit. In marital love in particular, shared existence between spouses and their total reciprocal self-giving are specifically at stake. Spouses in their acts of mutual love affirm the married state, and totally engage themselves for the good of wedded life. In doing so, they imply a full, personal commitment of themselves in all the dimensions of their personhood for marriage. Intellectually, emotionally, and physically, husbands and wives must be dedicated to each other, and let their love blossom and bear fruit. All true love seeks to diffuse itself, and marital love is no different. To be genuine it cannot be self-contained, but must superabound and breed more love and continually reaffirm the essential goodness of existence.

Besides highlighting the joys of the married state, authentic conjugal love also points to the beauties and essential goodness of the one who loves, and emphasizes that the whole person is involved in the act of love and that each dimension of the person is inherently important for the success and perdurance of this same love. True marital love hails the whole man in all his dimensions, and promotes (and never prohibits) the development of all his potentialities. Man has many potentialities among which are his capacities for intellectual growth and affective development and his capacity for life-giving. To affirm man means, at the same time, to affirm all the distinct potentialities of man. Conversely, to negate all or any of the potentialities of man is, in effect, to negate man. We cannot be partially toward human

development; we must commit ourselves totally or our personal engagement will smack of insincerity.

The potentialities of the physical dimension of man and his sexuality are clear, and definitely involve spouses in a profound and lasting way. The physical side of sex is no mere, static juxtaposition of bodies with no greater finality than physical closeness, but is truly a dynamic compenetration of lives, intimately and indissolubly conjoined and oriented in their very dynamism toward new life, which is itself expressive of the fecundity of human love.²⁶ True love, it bears repeating, is fecund, and conjugal love, in that it participates in the essence of love, must reveal this quality if it is to qualify as love. Conjugal love, moreover, must display a double fecundity. It must be both spiritually and psychologically fecund and also fecund in a physical, biological sense owing to man's essentially dual nature. If we want to affirm and protect the unity of man, acknowledge the fully personal character of the biological side of man, and in no way biologize or slight this human dimension, we must assent to this understanding of his sexuality.

Distinguishing Expressions of Love

Fecundity or the life connection is, indeed, the very criterion which has traditionally been used to distinguish expressions of genuine love from all forms of perversity. Perversion, as seen in Christian tradition, is in its very nature a separation of love or intimate feeling from life and the possible conception of a child. Masturbation, homosexuality, oral and anal intercourse, bestiality, all have been condemned by Christians as having no orientation toward new life and closing their practitioners within themselves, imprisoning them in their egos. In this line, contraceptive intercourse has at times been labeled masturbatory, precisely because it does not enjoy a procreational finality. True, it may be argued that these practices offer spiritual benefits, and hence appear to possess a certain fecundity, but the objection falls short of the mark with its failure to consider the whole man as an essential duality of body and soul, matter and spirit and with its subsequent failure to promote the fullness of human fecundity. We must foster both dimensions of human fecundity as integral to man or else we shall betray a dualistic prejudice both in our theory and practice.

The Malice of Contraception

The intrinsic malice of contraception would then appear to lie in the deliberate repudiation of human fecundity in its fullness as an integral dimension of man's personhood. The moral prohibition of contraception seeks to check this negation, and aims at protecting the immeasurable, God-given dignity of man, a dignity in which the ability

to procreate necessarily participates. The volition for contraception would seem, in other words, to be a perverse orientation of the will that seeks to violate human dignity by introducing and promoting a fragmentation of the human person. Christianity's traditional doctrine opposes this move, and underscores man's essential unity and the necessity to advance the realization of all human potentialities.

Undeniably, man's capacity for self-transcendence in love is paramount among his potentialities. This inherent capacity of his does not evolve, however, without difficulties and ambiguities. What is true love anyway? How do we know when any apparent, external expression of love is truly self-transcending and not merely an exercise in immanent, personal self-gratification? What makes the act of love truly unitive of persons and not destructive of them by abject absorption of one by another? In a word, where does eroticism end and love begin? What is it, that is, that signals the difference between the mutual surrender of spouses in love and the mutual conquest of erotics and their joint subjugation? Is it not the creative openness of new life of the act of love that radically distinguishes the two? Is it not eroticism's ultimate indifference to new life and its possible — even inevitable — despoiling of it that place an abyss between itself and authentic conjugal love? Marital love demands the total and irrevocable, reciprocal donation of spouses and therefore poses the question how spouses can give themselves totally and unreservedly to one another, and at the same time hold back on one of their noblest potentialities, their ability to procreate, i.e., to collaborate with the Creator in bringing new human life into existence. While eroticism appears to be little more than a simulated giving which hedges its bets as it were, genuine conjugal love elicits an unconditional *fiat* from spouses.

An Uneasy *Fiat*

Wedded love's *fiat* is no mere slip into delusive romanticism. On the contrary, to be really operative it must be fully apprised of life's and love's exigencies, troubles, and uncertainties. Contraception is the answer some people give to them. Yet, we must not, if we wish to act in complete consonance with the dignity of the human person, adopt means of action which in their structure and orientation destroy the very goods they seek to protect. The burdensome difficulties — economic, emotional or otherwise — which too many offspring may impose upon parents, the awesome reality acute sickness may portend for spouses, even the temporary demands of one's job or profession all may counsel the regulation or even the avoidance itself of new conceptions of children on the part of spouses. The question remains, however, how are we to attain this desired and possibly necessary end?

Generically speaking, two ways are open to us: contraceptive intercourse by whatever means and total or periodic abstinence from inter-

course. In the opinion of some authors,²⁷ there is no essential difference between the two as they both are means of avoiding conception, and both achieve this same desired result. The former imposes *spatial* barriers between ovum and sperm, while the latter, so they argue, places *temporal* barriers between them. This distinction, however, does not readily convince other authors,²⁸ and many, including Pope Paul VI, do not even allude to it. It would appear that the chief difficulty with this distinction — possibly the reasons why it is often ignored — is that it has the character of an artificial construction, and accordingly, confuses the entire issue. Granted that there is no debate over the fact that sometimes in a given marital and familial situation it may be morally justifiable, even mandated, that new conceptions be avoided, it does not thereby follow that the selection of means to effect this result is simply a matter of personal preference, irrespective of moral considerations of licitness or illicitness. In fact, the whole discussion revolves precisely around this point. The question of means is of pivotal importance, because the inherent dignity of man is at issue. Only those means respectful of man's God-given nobility can be morally justifiable and worthy of human application.

The central question is what decides whether any particular means is morally permissible or reprehensible. Contraceptive intercourse has been perceived in Christian tradition as contrary to fundamental human dignity, because it actively assaults an inherent human potentiality, man's potentiality to procreate. Periodic continence, on the other hand, has not been so judged, since no active means is applied to negate man's essential fecundity, but only an advantageous observance of natural periods of sterility in female ovulation is pursued. The Church, thus, discerns a profound difference between a *sterile* act and a *sterilized* one. An act of intercourse during a naturally infertile period is a sterile one, but it has by no means been sterilized by the human hand nor, as such, actively deprived of its God-given potentiality.

These lines of thought should not be deprecated as exercises in moral nitpicking, but should be considered fully relevant to other difficult areas of human conduct. They analogously apply, for example, when we are confronted with the case of a hopelessly ill individual. We may lament his sufferings, refrain from all extraordinary means of artificially prolonging his life (or death, as it were), and may even pray that he die and thereby be relieved of his suffering, but we may not actively bring about his death by euthanasia. Certainly the *intention* to relieve human suffering is the same in both cases, but what we do is decidedly different. In the former instance, we do nothing to protract his suffering, while in the latter case, we actively intervene, and usurp God's dominion over life.

Man's fundamental right to life and his corollary right to the development of all his potentialities flow from his creation in the image and

likeness of God. These human rights are guaranteed him by God and man cannot abrogate to himself the power to determine their existence and exercise. To respect man is to protect his life and promote the development of his potentialities. If we fail to do either, we militate against the human good as willed by Almighty God. Of course, we shall never be capable of actively fostering all of them fully owing to our finite nature, but our will, as Germain Grisez rightfully emphasizes,²⁹ cannot be set against any one of them or we shall only demean ourselves and insult our Lord and Creator. In the case of the human mind, the potentialities of its development are most apparent. Yet, the possibilities of fostering education to cultivate the mind are certainly limited, and sometimes we may not be able to do anything to further it. However, we are never allowed to blunt the potentialities of the human mind nor unnaturally or artificially shape them by means of indoctrination or brainwashing. This same general line of reasoning is no less true when applied to the sexual domain and its inherent potentialities.

Dangers of Separation

The Church, in her vision of the integrality of man, has grasped that an *essential* relation, not merely an accidental one, exists between the sexual expression of love in the conjugal act and new life as a possible end of this love. If, however, one adheres to the premise that only an accidental link exists between them, one is forced to draw the inevitable conclusion that there is really no reason beyond personal preference (or prejudice) why not to divorce the two. In effect, one says that sexual relations need have no relation to love, let alone with the marriage of a man to a woman, nor need life have any connection whatsoever with love.

To engage prostitutes or to indulge in indiscriminate sexual relationships, accordingly, would acquire moral relevance only in regard to the question of whether prior, mutual consent has been obtained. In like fashion, to enter into a homosexual liaison could not be construed as a shocking or unnatural phenomenon, but only a simple case of opting for a legitimate sexual alternative. A similar aloofness would equally be required in questions relating to life and its possible severance from love. The child would need not be conceived in the context of the family and marital fidelity nor would conceptions from artificial insemination necessarily raise many moral questions as to its usage apart from considerations of possible incestuous conceptions. Furthermore, it would no longer be offensive to think of cloning human individuals.

The logic of all this seems very cruel, but these consequences would seem to be at least implicitly affirmed in the overt denial of the

necessary existence of an intrinsic link between love and life and life and love. The fact that in many quarters nowadays "anything goes" would appear to corroborate this thesis. Fortunately, pastoral experience, certainly mine, indicates that most people do not subscribe to this radically perverse worldview of love and life, though a majority of couples, if statistical reports are accurate (and surely they are), often sever the link in their practice of contraceptive intercourse. Their difficulty, it would appear, is not in their theoretical acceptance of the traditional understanding of human love and sexuality, but in fully and consistently embracing the demands of the love, which this understanding entails. In order to facilitate a more sincere and consistent praxis on the part of the faithful, it would seem that two areas of concern must be more adequately impressed upon them. First, the whole matter of conjugal chastity must be restressed, and its inestimable importance for the success of marriage must be put into clearer light. Spouses should always strive to grow in their love for each other, and attempt at all times to approach each other with complete purity of intention. This can only happen if a full integration of their sexual impulses into their married love has first taken place. Their conjugal expressions of mutual love ideally should be entirely immune from the charge of being mere means for the release of tension, and should only be indicative of their fullness of freedom in their marriage. Secondly, greater attention must be given to the methods of natural family planning. Both priests and physicians must promote these methods if the faithful are to receive the necessary practical help they will probably require in their earnest attempts to live up to the ideals contained in *Humanae Vitae*.³⁰ Due to the widespread acceptance of contraceptives as means of regulating conceptions and the attention they receive in discussions of the regulation of births, many faithful may well be unaware of the scientific advances in natural family planning over the old calendar rhythm method. We are thinking specifically of the Billings method and the full symptothermal method promoted by many NFP programs. In addition, scientists engaged in NFP research must be given all the support and encouragement they need, if we are to ensure further scientific advances in this field.

Conclusion

From all that has been said and implied in the above, it should be obvious that the moral standards enjoined by *Humanae Vitae* should not be readily impugned as inimical to love, but rather be upheld as the only real guarantees of the continued development in depth and intensity of true conjugal affection. They aptly serve as the best criteria for determining authenticity and truth in conjugal relationships. We admit, however, that the principal teaching contained in *Humanae*

Vitae concerning the illicitness of all measures of artificial contraception is not the object of easy intuition and problematic-free articulation. Nonetheless, we would not want to imply that the Holy Father, though influenced by a definite philosophical world-view in articulating his own perceptions in this matter, is in any way to be held philosophically accountable to the faithful. This, with Joseph F. Costanzo, S.J., we expressly deny.³¹ The motive for assent to the teachings of *Humanae Vitae* is not its philosophical coherency and conclusiveness as such, but the fact that it is an authentic teaching of the *magisterium* of the Church, and is thus ultimately sustained by Christ's promise of inerrancy to the Church.

The purpose of this study, however, has been to articulate a philosophical defense of the traditional Christian teaching concerning the artificial regulation of births. It is subject to philosophical refutation, but hopefully it has fostered a heightened awareness of the meaning and relevance of *Humanae Vitae* to our troubled times. *Humanae Vitae*, in our opinion, is a bold statement in defense and praise of life and, more directly, man himself. Based on a fundamental intuition of the God-given meaning and value of the conjugal sphere, its traditional Christian doctrine is not in the least superannuated, but is truly meaningful for contemporary society.

Indeed, its most striking feature, we would say, is its very prophetic character. It touches not only the traditional understanding of sexual morality, but also has immediate bearings on man's own understanding of himself and his own integral defense of himself. For all these reasons and the passing of ten years notwithstanding, we still respond to its message with gratitude and joy.

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2. One immediately thinks of sociologist and columnist Rev. Andrew M. Greeley, among others.
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4. Cf. the short historical resume of John F. Kippley, *Covenant, Christ, and Contraception* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1970), pp. xvii f.
5. On August 15, 1930 the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, which had previously interdicted the practice of contraception both in 1908 and in 1920, broke with tradition and henceforward permitted it. This position provoked Pope Pius XI's encyclical, *Casti Connubii*, which was issued on December 31, 1930 in order to reaffirm the traditional teaching.

6. Hamel, Edouard, S.J., "Di fronte all'enciclica 'Humanae Vitae,'" *Civiltà Cattolica*, 119 (1968), p. 109.
7. Haring, Bernard, "The Inseparability of the Unitive-Procreative Functions of the Marital Act" in *Contraception: Authority and Dissent*, ed. by Charles E. Curran (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), pp. 176-192, esp. p. 180; Charles E. Curran, "Natural Law and Moral Theology" in *Contraception: Authority and Dissent*, pp. 151-175, esp. pp. 159f; Charles E. Curran and Robert E. Hunt, *Dissent In and For the Church* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1969), pp. 155-195, esp. pp. 162f.
8. Cf., e.g., Jose de Vinck, *The Virtue of Sex* (St. Meinrad, Ind.: Abbey Press, 1970), pp. 115-119; Gregory Baum, O.S.A., "Can the Church Change Her Position?" in *Contraception and Holiness*, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
9. Numerous authors appear to miss this point. Cf., e.g., Julian Pleasants, "The Lessons of Biology" in *Contraception and Holiness*, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-108; Elizabeth A. Daugherty, "The Lessons of Zoology" in *Contraception and Holiness*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-130; Julian Pleasants, "A Biologist Asks Some Questions" in *The Catholic Case for Contraception*, ed. by Daniel Callahan (New York: Macmillan Co., 1969), pp. 30-40; Andre E. Hellegers, "A Scientist's Analysis" in *Contraception: Authority and Dissent*, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-236.
10. On this score, Charles E. Curran's methodological critique of *Humanae Vitae* appears to miss its mark. He does not adequately consider the nature and character of knowledge by intuition or insight. Cf. *Dissent In and For the Church*, *op. cit.*, pp. 163f.
11. This point distinguishes the human from divine and angelic persons.
12. Cf. Germain G. Grisez, *Contraception and the Natural Law* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 56, 108; William E. May, "Sex, Love and Procreation," *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, LXXVI (8) (1976), pp. 10-29.
13. Cf. e.g., Mary Perkins Ryan and John Julian Ryan, "Have You Thought It Out All the Way?," *The Catholic Case for Contraception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-127, esp. pp. 106-111.
14. This misunderstanding has also worked against greater clarity in the abortion debate. Cf. my study, "Created in the Image of God: Man and Abortion," *Linacre Quarterly*, 43(1) (1976), pp. 36-48.
15. The words "more strictly" are carefully chosen. There is nothing more biological in man, the human person.
16. This is why artificial insemination for breeding and experimental purposes causes no moral difficulties when brute animals are concerned.
17. If we were merely concerned with reproduction and not procreation, then our dominion over it would parallel that one which we have over the world around us. The procreative dynamism of man, however, is specifically subtracted from this power as it is an essential participation in our personhood. We can no more deny our fecundity as deny ourselves the right to life in the act of suicide. The notion of synergism as creative collaboration with God would not, therefore, give us the right to employ contraceptive measures; hence our disagreement with Chrysostom Saphiris, "The Morality of Conception: An Eastern Orthodox Opinion," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 11 (1974), pp. 677-690.
18. Cf. e.g., Julian Pleasants, *op. cit.*, 102ff; E.R. Baltazar, "Contraception and the Philosophy of Process," *Contraception and Holiness*, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
19. Cf. Sidney Callahan, "Procreation and Control," *The Catholic Case for Contraception*, *op. cit.*, pp. 60f.
20. Cf. Dietrich von Hildebrand, *The Encyclical Humanae Vitae — A Sign of Contradiction* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1969), pp. 38-41.
21. This identification was indeed the chief error and weakness of the various "perverted faculty" arguments against contraception. Dissenters to *Humanae Vitae* do not appear to overcome this difficulty.

22. One who does not see this difference is Michael Novak. Cf. his "Frequent, Even Daily, Communion," *The Catholic Case for Contraception*, *op. cit.*, p. 95. For an opposing view, cf. Mary Rosera Joyce, *The Meaning of Contraception* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1970), pp. 17-22.

23. Dietrich von Hildebrand writes: "Sex can indeed keep silence, but when it speaks it is no mere *obiter dictum*, but a voice from the depths, the utterance of something central and of the utmost significance. In and with sex, man, in a special sense, gives himself." Cf. *In Defense of Purity* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970), p. 5.

24. Cf. William E. May, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

25. *Humanae Vitae*, p. 11.

26. A successful metaphysics of love would, in my opinion, have to reflect a theology of the Trinity in order to explicate fully the essential finality of human love toward new life.

27. Cf. e.g., Kieran Conley, O.S.B., "Procreation and the Person," *Contraception and Holiness*, *op. cit.*, p. 67; Bernard Haring, *op. cit.*, p. 185; Chrysostom Zaphiris, *op. cit.*, p. 682.

28. Cf. e.g., William E. May, "Contraception, Abstinence, and Responsible Parenthood," *Faith and Reason*, III (1) (1977), pp. 39f.

29. Grisez, Germain G., "A New Formulation of a Natural-Law Argument Against Contraception," *The Thomist*, XXX (1966), pp. 343-361, esp. pp. 352-355.

30. For practical advice, instead of listing bibliographical entries, it seems more appropriate to give an address where practical help can be obtained. Cf. National Office, Couple to Couple League, P.O. Box 11084, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45211.

31. Costanzo, Joseph L., S.J., "Papal Magisterium, Natural Law and *Humanae Vitae*," *The American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 16 (1971), pp. 259-289, esp. pp. 259, 263.