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Book Review

Family Limitation

JOHN E. RYAN, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.

Review by

EDWARD F. KEEFE, M. D.

The plight of the Catholic gynecologist of the United Kingdom who participates in the National Health Service without conforming to its current attitudes on abortion, sterilization, and contraception was described to us by Mr. Ryan on his visit to the United States this summer. He solved the problem by staying out of the N.H.S. An even more difficult problem is faced by the British Catholic couple hemmed in by insufficient space for their families and materialistic standards of living. To help them, this booklet was written. The foreword by Rev. Alan Keenan, O.F.M., who has a sensitive understanding of the problems faced by Catholic couples, explains the moral background of systematic abstinence.

The booklet is not a layman's handbook — rather a guide for the physician and the patient under his supervision. It brings the system of periodic continence at the fertile time up-to-date. Now that basal body temperatures are known to be a valuable index of the time of ovulation, it is obsolete to estimate the time of fertility from menstrual records alone. Previous menstrual dates must still be used to estimate the possible dates of the next ovulation because no practical sign of impending ovulation has yet been described. The record of temperatures is used to great advantage to tell when each ovulation has occurred. The system is applicable to most women and simple enough for them to understand.

The balanced approach, neither cautious nor exuberant, bespeaks the author's experience. He is commended for having brought to publication this subject in which Catholic doctors have too often defaulted through ignorance, disinterest or evasion with the result that their patients drift out of the Church by using contraception. As part of his apostolate, every Catholic physician should own and read this booklet, and be able to discuss its contents. The advice to a patient, "now, don't get pregnant," carries with it the responsibility to advise her *how* not to, in accord with Catholic moral principles.

Family Limitation

Published by

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36 pages

50c a copy

