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# **The Catholic Doctor, the Catholic Hospital and Contraception**

**Paul V. Harrington, P.A., J.C.L.**

When we are confronted by matters of substantial doctrine — whether of faith or of moral conduct — we must not judge on the basis of that which is expedient or useful, or that which is acceptable to a majority or large section of the Christian Community; we cannot seek what is merely comfortable, easy, or in line with what is fashionable. Rather, we must judge within that necessary frame-

work, which is at the very foundation of our religion and Church.

We cannot close our eyes to the fact that Christ preached a revelation that was entrusted to Him by His Father; that this gospel dealt in absolutes and in eternal and transcendent truths that were unchangeable; that His teachings were not subject to negotiation or compromise; that He founded a Church on Peter and that there

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*Monsignor Harrington, Offi-  
cialis of the Metropolitan Tri-  
bunal of the Archdiocese of Bos-  
ton, is a frequent contributor to  
Linacre.*

*In the following article, he re-  
views the position of the Catholic  
Church on contraception. After*

*affirming the Pope's supreme  
teaching authority, he outlines the  
papal attitude toward contracep-  
tion and stresses the objective  
evil of artificial birth control. The  
role of Catholic doctors and  
hospitals in combating a contracep-  
tive mentality is also examined.*

was given to him the responsibility to preserve the integrity of the divine doctrine, to teach it authoritatively and to interpret it authentically; that Peter was to have successors, who would be the Vicars of Christ and who, in turn, were to have the weighty trust of safeguarding the purity of the Gospel; that Peter and his successors were promised the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, Who would inspire, guide and direct them and preserve them from error.

We know Christ encountered dissent among His listeners and apparently even among His apostles. Some of the disagreement arose because of an inability to understand the sacred mysteries and some resulted from the difficulties and personal inconvenience involved in particular teachings.

Christ did not succumb to pressure; He was not swayed by the number of persons dissenting; He did not attempt to negotiate or to compromise His teaching. Rather, He took the stalwart and difficult stand — refusing to accommodate the doctrine of His Father to the wishes and the convenience of His audience — knowing that absolute and eternal Truth is unchangeable.

As the successor of Peter and as the Vicar of Christ, the Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of His office, has the duty of safeguarding and preserving intact the teaching of Christ and he, thereby, becomes the authoritative teacher and the authentic interpreter of this sacred doctrine.

The Pope has no alternative in conscience except to be loyal and faithful to the trust that has been committed to him.

When the Vicar of Christ teaches — even though not infallibly — he should and must receive something more than a respectable hearing, which may be accorded merely by condescension or by tolerance. The Pope is to be listened to sincerely and conscientiously, and a firm assent — both interior and exterior — must be given to his solemn pronouncements.

Pope Pius XII explained very clearly that a papal teaching changes things, so that questions that were open to theological debate before the encyclical are no longer open questions afterwards:

“Nor must it be thought that what is contained in encyclical letters does not of itself demand assent, on the pretext that the Popes do not exercise in them the supreme power of their teaching authority. Rather, such teachings belong to the ordinary Magisterium of which it is time to say: “He who heareth you, heareth me.” Very often, too, what is expounded and inculcated in encyclical letters already appertains to Catholic doctrine for other reasons. But if the Supreme Pontiffs in their official documents purposely pass judgment on a matter debated until then, it is obvious to all that the matter, according to the mind and will of the same Pontiffs, cannot be considered any longer a question open for discussion among Theologians.”<sup>1</sup>

In a time of dissent, the Supreme Pontiff must remain as firm as did Christ. He can only remain loyal to his trust to the extent that he preserves the integrity of doctrine and teaches the true gospel of



Jesus Christ. The Pope must be concerned with absolutes and with a trust that is eternal and unchangeable; even though the world and its peoples may be interested in the personal, the relative, the existential, the situational and the changeable.

The Supreme Pontiff must always recall the solemn words of St. Paul to the Thessalonians:

"It was our God Who gave us the courage to proclaim His Good News to you in the face of great opposition . . . it was God Who decided that we were fit to be entrusted with the Good News, and when we are speaking, we are not trying to please men but God, Who can read our inmost thoughts." <sup>2</sup>

Since when did the ease and comfort of a doctrine become the sign by which the Gospel of Christ is to be recognized and identified?

### **Christianity and Suffering**

If these were the signs of the Christian life, the sufferings and death of Christ would be an enigma; the hunger, nakedness, imprisonment, shipwreck of St. Paul would be unexplainable and the valiant sufferings and courageous deaths of the martyrs would have been worthless and in vain.

The Supreme Pontiff cannot remain loyal to his trust and teach only those doctrines that will be acceptable to the peoples of the world and which will not prompt dissent. The Vicar of Christ must be mindful of and guided by the observations made by St. Paul:

"Keep as your pattern the sound teaching you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. You have been trusted to look after

something precious; guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Accept the strength, my dear son, that comes from the grace of Christ Jesus. You have heard everything that I teach in public; hand it on to reliable people so that they in turn will be able to teach others." <sup>3</sup>

"Before God and before Christ Jesus Who is to be judge of the living and the dead, I put this duty to you, in the name of His Appearing and of His Kingdom: proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, call to obedience—but do all with the patience and with the intention of teaching. The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes; and then, instead of listening to the truth, they will turn to myths." <sup>4</sup>

"People must think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God. What is expected of stewards is that each one should be found worthy of his trust." <sup>5</sup>

"Since we have by an act of mercy been entrusted with this work of administration, there is no weakening on our part. On the contrary, we will have none of the reticence of those who are ashamed, no deceitfulness or watering down the word of God; but the way we commend ourselves to every human being with a conscience is by stating the truth openly in the sight of God." <sup>6</sup>

"Be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you the overseers, to feed the Church of God which He bought with His own blood. I know quite well that when I have gone fierce wolves will invade you and will have no mercy on the flock. Even from your own ranks there will be men coming forward with a travesty of truth on their lips to induce the disciples to

follow them. So be on your guard, remembering how night and day for three years I never failed to keep you right, shedding tears over each one of you." <sup>7</sup>

Pope Pius XI has summarized succinctly the responsibility of Christians to listen to, to accept and to follow the authentic and authoritative teachings of the Supreme Pontiff:

"The true Christian, whether learned or unlearned, will allow himself in all matters pertaining to faith and morals to be ruled and guided by the Holy Church of God, through its Supreme Pastor, the Roman Pontiff, who himself is guided by Our Lord Jesus Christ." <sup>8</sup>

Attention must be paid to the stern warning given by St. Paul to the Church and people of Galatia:

"I am astonished at the promptness with which you have turned away from the one who called you and have decided to follow a different version of the Good News. Not that there can be more than one Good News; it is merely that some troublemakers among you want to change the Good News of Christ; and let me warn you that if anyone preaches a version of the Good News different from the one we have already preached to you . . . he is to be condemned, I am only repeating what we told you before; if anyone preaches a version of the Good News different from the one you have already heard, he is to be condemned." <sup>9</sup>

The right and the responsibility to preserve doctrine, to teach authoritatively and to interpret the Gospel authentically was vested in the office and in the person of the Supreme Pontiff — not in any other individual or group — not in theologians, can-

onists, historians, psychologists, sociologists, economists or others.

The Vicar of Christ must seek the opinions, the views, the knowledge, the expertise of the professionals, and he must give careful and studied thought to the material he receives. He must analyze and evaluate it. But, in the final stage, after serious study, prayerful reflection and pleading for the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he alone is competent and qualified, by reason of his office and responsibility, to pronounce what is the true, authoritative and authentic doctrine.

After this pronouncement, all must give a firm interior and exterior assent — even the consultants, whose opinions and views were not accepted and whose suggestions were not followed. The professionals should be heard, but they cannot insist that their positions be adopted.

Pope Pius XII explained the teaching authority of the Church and its relationship to natural law:

"The power of the Church is not bound by the limits of 'matters strictly religious,' as they say, but the whole matter of natural law, its foundation, its interpretation, its application, so far as their moral aspects extend, are within the Church's power. For the keeping of the natural law, by God's appointment, has reference to the road by which man has to approach his supernatural end. But, on this road, the Church is man's guide and guardian in what concerns his supreme end. The apostles observed this in times past, and afterwards, from the earliest centuries, the Church has kept to this manner of acting, and keeps to it today, not indeed like some private guide or advisor, but by virtue of the Lord's



command and authority. Therefore, when it is a question of instructions and propositions which the properly constituted shepherds—the Roman Pontiff for the whole Church and the Bishops for the faithful entrusted to them—publish on matters within the natural law, the faithful must not invoke that saying: 'The strength of the authority is no more than the strength of the arguments.' " 10

We must ever be mindful that the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit was officially promised by Christ to His Vicar—not to professionals. Many well-intentioned professionals claim in good faith that they act with the Spirit, and yet they are in disagreement with the Pontiff, who has been promised the Spirit. It is inconceivable and impossible to believe that the Holy Spirit can be in contradiction with Himself.

### **Supreme Teacher**

All the Bishops of the United States—as indeed across the world—recognize the Supreme Pontiff as supreme teacher, and every Bishop gives a firm internal and external assent to the authoritative pronouncements of the Vicar of Christ in all matters concerning sacred doctrine. This must be our example and inspiration.

It is clearly presumptuous on the part of anyone to claim that a doctrine is in doubt when the Pope officially declares that there is no doubt, or to allege that the Pope is in doubt when he constantly and consistently insists that he is not in doubt.

Conscience can and must be our

guide to proper moral conduct but, to be such, conscience must be formed in a responsible fashion. This requires that the formation be in accordance with an objective code of morality, which is based on absolutes, and with definite reference to the doctrine and teachings of Christ as taught by the Supreme Pontiff, who alone has the responsibility and the competency in these areas.

A conscience, which is formed on a private basis and in accordance with subjective, relative, changeable, purely personal and situational norms, cannot qualify as a responsible conscience and, therefore, cannot be considered as a safe guide for moral conduct.

No responsible or authoritative voice in the Church has ever taught that a conscience, formed in such a private, or relative manner and in opposition to the authoritative teaching of the Church was a reliable guide for moral action. Certainly the documents of the Second Vatican Council do not teach this, and it is less than honest for anyone to present such a doctrine and to try to justify it as a teaching of the Council Fathers.

The Second Vatican Council explained that true freedom of religion is not a license to form one's conscience independently of the Church's moral teaching:

"In the formation of their consciences, the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church. The Church is, by the will of Christ, the Teacher of the Truth. It is her duty to give utterance

to, and authoritatively to teach that Truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by her authority those principles of the moral order which have their origin in human nature itself." <sup>11</sup>

With reference to the obligation of Catholics to assent to and to follow the teaching of the Pope even when it is not presented with the seal of infallibility, the Second Vatican Council declared:

"In matters of faith and morals, the Bishops speak in the name of Christ and the faithful are to accept their teaching and adhere to it with a religious assent of soul. This religious submission of will and of mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*. That is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme Magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known chiefly either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking." <sup>12</sup>

Having indicated how the authoritative and authentic teachings of the Catholic Church can be identified, it remains now to determine from recent Papal encyclicals and allocutions, the position of the Catholic Church with reference to the very important issue of contraception.

Pope Pius XII declared to a group of doctors and biologists that God has placed "mysterious energies" within men and women, that the primary purpose of these is to be used within the sacrament of matrimony for the "propagation of life" and that "whoever trans-

gresses and breaks the laws of nature will sooner or later have to suffer the tragic consequences in his own person and in his psychical integrity." The Supreme Pontiff warns that engaged and married couples will use many arguments "to induce and pressure the doctor to give a decision or to lend his aid in favor of following the instincts of nature while at the same time depriving the life-generating force of the possibility of attaining its goal" and that a doctor can only resist this pressure if he is firmly convinced "that the Creator Himself, for the good of the human race, has indissolubly bound up the voluntary use of those natural energies with their intrinsic purpose . . . a bond which can never lawfully be loosed or broken." <sup>13</sup>

### Church's Teaching

Pope Pius XI, in referring to the crimes, vices and errors which militate against the sanctity of chaste marriage, noted that children were considered to be a troublesome burden and were carefully avoided by "vitiating the act of nature" by those persons who wished to experience and enjoy the pleasures of marriage without incurring any responsibility. The Supreme Pontiff declared his great sympathy and concern for the ailing mother in poor health, whose life might be endangered by a pregnancy and for the extremely poor who experienced great difficulty in rearing children but he reiterated with tremendous clarity "the Christian teaching which had been handed down un-



interruptedly from the beginning”:

“But no reason whatever, even the gravest, can make what is intrinically against nature become conformable with nature and morally good. The conjugal act is of its very nature designed for the procreation of offspring; and therefore those who in performing it deliberately deprive it of its natural power and efficacy, act against nature and do something which is shameful and intrinsically immoral . . . 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 are guilty of a grave sin. Therefore, priests who hear confessions and others who have the care of souls . . . must not allow the souls . . . to be in error concerning this most serious law of God, and, what is much more important, that they must themselves be on their guard against these false doctrines and in no way connive at them. . . . No difficulty that arises can ever detract from the binding obligation of divine commandments which forbid acts intrinsically evil.”

The Supreme Pontiff recognized the right of husband and wife to exercise their marital rights even at a time when new life cannot be conceived provided they act in “a proper and natural manner” so that they might enjoy “mutual help, the fostering of reciprocal love, and the abatement of concupiscence . . . so long as the intrinsic nature of that act, and therefore its due subordination to its primary end, is safeguarded.”<sup>14</sup>

Pope Pius XII, in an address to midwives on October 29, 1951, spoke of the joys of motherhood, the rewards of parenthood, the honor of producing new life, the professional responsibility of the midwife, the value and the

inviolability of human life, the right to life of the unborn child, the supernatural life which is received by the new-born infant at baptism, the obligations that flow from the exercise of the marital rights, the proper subordination of the secondary ends of marriage to the primary purpose, the essential evil of contraception and sterilization, the propriety of recourse to the periods of natural sterility, the possibility of abstinence and periodic continence, the importance of personal values and the necessity of disciplined moderation to combat the hedonism of the day.

Pope Pius XII directed the midwives to

“instill into the minds and hearts of the mother and father the esteem and joyous desire of the newborn child so that it is welcomed with love from the moment of its birth. The child, formed in the womb of the mother, is a gift from God, Who confides its care to the parents. . . . It falls to you . . . to make the young mother realize the greatness, the beauty, the nobility of that life which now is awakening, and which is being shaped and quickened in the womb, the life that is born in her, that she carries in her arms and nourishes at her breast. It rests with you to help her to appreciate the greatness of the gift of God's love for her and for her child.”<sup>15</sup>

The Supreme Pontiff warns:

“Unfortunately, cases are not rare in which even a cautious reference to children as a ‘blessing’ is enough to provoke a downright denial and perhaps even derision. Far more frequently, in thought and in words, the attitude of considering children a heavy ‘burden’ predominates.”<sup>16</sup>

The Holy Father continued by relating that the midwives “must refuse any immoral cooperation”



with persons intent on violating the moral law and "to accede to such requests would be to abuse your knowledge and your skill by becoming accomplices in an immoral act; it would be the perversion of your apostolate. It demands a calm but unequivocal refusal to countenance the transgression of God's law or the dictates of your conscience." <sup>17</sup>

Pope Pius XII refers to the solemn proclamation of Pope Pius XI concerning the fundamental law governing the marital act and conjugal relations:

"he said that any attempt on the part of the husband and wife to deprive this act of its inherent force or to impede the procreation of a new life, either in the performance of the act itself, or in the course of the development of its natural consequences, is immoral, and furthermore, no alleged 'indication' or need can convert an intrinsically immoral act into a moral and lawful one."

"This precept is as valid today as it was yesterday, and it will be the same tomorrow and always, because it does not imply a precept of human law, but it is the expression of a law which is natural and divine." <sup>18</sup>

The Supreme Pontiff points to another moral evil — sterilization — and states that

"you have a clearly established rule in the Church's teaching which governs your behavior both internally and externally. Direct sterilization—that is, the sterilization which aims, either as a means or as an end in itself, to render child-bearing impossible—is a grave violation of the moral law, and therefore unlawful." <sup>19</sup>

### **Advice to MIDWIVES**

The Holy Father warned the midwives that they must be well informed as to the scientific, medical and biological information

concerning the use of periods of natural sterility for purposes of avoiding pregnancy but they must also know and defend the moral law to which this theory is subordinated.

"If the application of this theory means nothing more than that married people use their matrimonial rights even during the time of natural sterility, there is nothing to be said against it; by so doing they do not in any way prevent or prejudice the consummation of the natural act and its further natural consequences. It is precisely in this that the application of the theory we are discussing is essentially distinct from the abuse of it already mentioned, which consists of a perversion of the act itself . . . marriage binds to a state of life which, while conferring certain rights, at the same time imposes the accomplishment of a positive work which belongs to the very state of wedlock. This being so, the general principle can now be stated that the fulfillment of a positive duty may be withheld should grave reasons, independent of the good will of those obliged to it, show that such fulfillment is untimely, or make it evident that it cannot equitably be demanded by that which requires the fulfillment—in this case, the human race. . . . Hence, to embrace the married state, to make frequent use of the faculty proper to it and lawful only in that state, while on the other hand, always and deliberately to seek to evade its primary duty without serious reasons, would be to sin against the very meaning of married life."

"Serious reasons, often put forward on medical, eugenic, economic and social grounds, can exempt from that obligating service even for a considerable period of time, even for the entire duration of the marriage. It follows from this that the use of the infertile periods can be lawful from the moral point of view and, in the circumstances which have been mentioned, it is indeed lawful. If, however, in the light of a reasonable

and fair judgment, there are no such serious personal reasons, or reasons deriving from external circumstances, then the habitual intention to avoid the fruitfulness of the union, while at the same time continuing fully to satisfy sensual intent, can only arise from a false appreciation of life and from motives that run counter to true standards of moral conduct." <sup>20</sup>

Where pregnancy should be discouraged and the use of sterile periods does not offer sufficient protection, Pope Pius XII warned the midwives of those who "seek rather your approval of a 'technique' of marital relationship that is proof against the risk of motherhood" and cautioned:

"... even in extreme cases, every preventive practice and every direct attack on the life and development of the seed is forbidden and banned in conscience, and that there is only one thing to do, and that is, to abstain from any complete use of the natural faculty. In this matter your apostolate demands a clear and certain judgment and a calm firmness." <sup>21</sup>

Against the argument that abstinence is impossible and unrealistic, the Supreme Pontiff quoted the words of the Council of Trent and St. Augustine:

"God does not command what is impossible but when He commands, He warns you to do what you can and to ask His aid for what is beyond your powers, and He gives His help to make that possible for you"

and insists that

"heroism is being practiced to a degree and extent that in times past would have been thought impossible. Why then, if circumstances demand it, should this heroism stop at the limits prescribed by passion and the inclinations of nature?" <sup>22</sup>

The Holy Father insisted to the midwives that the primary end or purpose of marriage is not the personal perfection of the husband and wife nor the attainment and enjoyment of personal values but rather the primary purpose is the procreation and education of new life and all other ends cannot be superior or equal to this but, in fact, must be essentially subordinate to it. Pope Pius XII refers to the heritage of Christian tradition, repeated pronouncements of his predecessors, the definite statement of Canon Law, his own proclamation of March 10, 1944 — all to the effect that any denial

"that the procreation and education of the child is the primary end of marriage or teaches that the secondary ends are not essentially subordinate to the primary end, but rather are of equal value and are independent of it, cannot be admitted." <sup>23</sup>

Everything in marriage, according to the Holy Father, has been placed at the service of new life:

"Not only the exterior common life but also all the personal wealth, the qualities of mind and spirit, and finally all that there is of the more truly spiritual and profound in married love as such, has been placed by the will of nature and the Creator at the service of the offspring. Of its nature, perfect married life means also the complete self-sacrifice of the parents on behalf of their children, and love of husband and wife in its strength and tenderness is an essential need for the most earnest care of the child and the guarantee that this care will be taken." <sup>24</sup>

Pope Pius XII concluded his remarks by declaring that the Creator intended a husband and wife to find pleasure in and to enjoy the



sexual union in marriage but he urged a moderation so that they would not give themselves over completely to the promptings of their senses or "subject themselves unrestrainedly to their sensual appetite" and warned against positions that canonize the necessity of personal freedom and the value of the sexual relationship independent of the procreation of new life, that seek no restraint in the satisfaction of the sexual instinct and would substitute freedom to enjoy the inclinations of nature "for the moral obligation to master our passions" — all of which "must sooner or later result in harm to morality, to conscience and to human dignity." <sup>25</sup>

### **Hedonistic Approach**

The Holy Father also was critical of the hedonistic philosophy which places so much importance on the intensity of pleasure experienced in the preparation and in the act of conjugal union for the sake of the pleasure alone and in the unrestrained satisfaction of the sexual instinct without concern for man's dignity and his dignity as a Christian and without consideration for the seriousness and holiness of the Christian moral law; a philosophy which would require rational man to be dominated by the substance or the circumstances of the act and which would proclaim that "happiness in marriage is in direct ratio to the mutual enjoyment of marital relations" rather than "in direct ratio to the respect the husband and wife have for each other, even in the intimate act of

marriage."

The antidote to the hedonistic approach is to "make it clear that nature has undoubtedly given the instinctive desire for pleasure and sanctioned it in lawful wedlock, not as an end in itself, but in the service of life." <sup>26</sup>

Let us review the position of the Church on contraception as set forth in the recent encyclical letter of Pope Paul VI, *HUMANAE VITAE*.

With reference to the authentic and authoritative teaching authority in the Church, Pope Paul declares:

"No believer will wish to deny that the teaching authority of the Church is competent to interpret even the natural moral law. It is, in fact, indisputable, as our predecessors have many times declared, that Jesus Christ, when communicating to Peter and to the Apostles His divine authority and sending them to teach all nations His Commandments, constituted them as guardians and authentic interpreters of the moral law, not only, that is, of the law of the Gospel, but also of the natural law, which is also an expression of the will of God, the faithful fulfillment of which is equally necessary for salvation." <sup>27</sup>

To indicate that he did not prepare this encyclical in a theoretical vacuum, Pope Paul introduces his message by stating that his study takes into consideration the rapid demographic development, working and lodging conditions, the demands in the economic and education fields, the person of the woman and her changing position in society, the value of conjugal love in marriage and the importance of conjugal acts in relation to that love.

The Holy Father presents as a problem the fact that man is now attempting to apply to himself and to his life the mastery he has achieved over nature:

"Man has made stupendous progress in the domination and rational organization of the forces of nature, such that he tends to extend this domination to his own total being: to the body, to psychical life, to social life and even to the laws which regulate the transmission of life."<sup>28</sup>

With reference to the study commission, which was established by Pope John XXIII in March, 1963, and subsequently enlarged and augmented by Pope Paul VI, the Supreme Pontiff observes:

"The conclusions at which the commission arrived could not, nevertheless, be considered by us as definitive, nor dispense us from a personal examination of this serious question; and this also because, within the commission itself, no full concordance of judgments concerning the moral norms to be proposed had been reached, and above all because certain criteria of solutions had emerged which departed from the moral teaching on marriage proposed with constant firmness by the teaching authority of the Church."<sup>29</sup>

The Encyclical directs that birth must be considered not merely in relation to biological, psychological, demographic or sociological factors but also in reference to the totality of man and his vocation, natural and earthly, supernatural and eternal.<sup>30</sup>

Conjugal love must be considered in reference to God, Who is love and Who instituted marriage in order to realize in mankind His design of love. By the giving of themselves to each other in love, the husband and wife collaborate

with God in the procreation and education of new life.

This conjugal love, states the Holy Father, is fully human, involves the senses and the spirit and is an act of the free will by which the spouses become one heart and one soul and together achieve human perfection by and through the joys and sorrows of daily life. Marital love is total in that husbands and wives share everything with each other and the proof of the genuine sincerity of their love towards each other is demonstrated by the fact that they are interested in the giving of themselves for the enrichment of their partner as they are in receiving from their spouse. The love of marriage is faithful, exclusive, permanent and perseveres through life up to the moment of death. Finally, marital love is fruitful because it goes beyond the relationship of the spouses and extends to the procreation of new life.<sup>32</sup>

The love of husband and wife must be considered in relation to their vocation of responsible parenthood, which entails a knowledge of and respect for the biological processes; a dominion or mastery which reason and will exercise over instincts or passions; a decision to have many children or to avoid for the present or for an indeterminate period a new birth in accordance with the physical, economic, psychological and social conditions of the couple but always having due respect for the moral law; a profound relationship to the objective moral order



established by God, a full recognition by the spouses of their duties towards God, themselves, the family and society. Husbands and wives are not free to proceed in the transmission of life completely in accordance with their own will, but always with reference to the creative intent of God as set forth in the nature of marriage, in the acts of marriage and in the constant teaching of the Church.<sup>33</sup>

### Open to Life

Marital acts are termed noble and worthy and are perfectly lawful even if they are foreseen to be non-productive of life for reasons independent of the husband and wife, because they always bring about a union between the partners. It is known and understood that not every conjugal act will or can produce new life but they must be open to the procreation of new life in the sense that the spouses do not voluntarily and intentionally place obstacles in the path that would rob these acts of fruitfulness.

In accordance with the Divine Will and Plan, which must not be altered by creatures, conjugal acts are to be viewed under two aspects — insofar as they unite husband and wife and insofar as they result in procreation. Conjugal acts unite husband and wife and, at the same time, render them capable of creating new life, as collaborators with God, and in accordance with the laws of nature, which are “inscribed in the very being of man and woman.”

True mutual marital love is had only when the unitive and procreative aspects of conjugal love are safeguarded and harmonized:

“... a reciprocal act of love, which jeopardizes the responsibility to transmit life which God, the Creator, according to particular laws, inserted therein, is in contradiction with the design constitutive of marriage, and with the will of the Author of life. To use this divine gift destroying, even if only partially, its meaning and its purpose is to contradict the nature both of man and of woman and of their most intimate relationship, and therefore it is to contradict also the plan of God and His Will. On the other hand, to make use of the gift of conjugal love while respecting the laws of the generative process means to acknowledge oneself not to be the arbiter of the sources of human life, but rather the minister of the design established by the Creator. In fact, just as man does not have unlimited dominion over his body in general, so also, with particular reason, he has no such dominion over his generative faculties as such, because of their intrinsic ordination towards raising up life, of which God is the principle.”<sup>34</sup>

In applying these basic moral principles, Pope Paul VI concludes:

“... The direct interruption of the generative process already begun, and above all, directly willed and procured abortion, even if for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as licit means of regulating birth. Equally to be excluded ... is direct sterilization, whether perpetual or temporary, whether of the man or of the woman. Similarly excluded is every action which, either in the anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible.”<sup>35</sup>

The Holy Father declares that it is not allowable morally to use artificial birth control methods in order to "secure the harmony and peace of the family, and better conditions for the education of the children already born." Rather, if there are present serious reasons to space births because of "physical or psychological conditions of husband or wife, or from external conditions," recourse should be had to performing conjugal acts only in the sterile periods of the woman's cycle "and, in this way, to regulate birth without offending moral principles" because legitimate use is made of a situation controlled entirely by nature and apart from any direct and artificial intervention of the parties. They renounce the use of marriage in the fertile periods when procreation is not desirable because of serious, extenuating circumstances, but they manifest their conjugal love during the sterile phase and thereby "safeguard their mutual fidelity."<sup>36</sup>

The Supreme Pontiff points out that the use of artificial and immoral methods of birth control would lead to "conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality." Young people must be encouraged to live in accordance with the moral law and should not be given easy opportunity to violate it. In addition, the constant use of contraceptive techniques could cause a husband to lose respect for the person of his wife and come to look upon her merely as an instrument for his selfish pleasure rather than to have

a true concern for her as a "respected and beloved companion." Finally, if contraception were to be considered as licit for the solution of family problems, governmental authorities, who may not be sensitive to basic principles of morality, could impose contraceptive practices on marital partners as a solution for the ills and problems of society and this would constitute a grave invasion of the rights of marital privacy.<sup>37</sup>

In the conclusion of this particular presentation, Pope Paul VI states:

"... The Church is not surprised to be made, like her divine founder, a 'sign of contradiction,' yet she does not because of this, cease to proclaim with humble firmness the entire moral law, both natural and evangelical. Of such laws the Church was not the Author, nor consequently can she be their arbiter; she is only their depository and their interpreter, without ever being able to declare to be licit that which is not so by reason of its intimate and unchangeable opposition to the true good of man. In defending conjugal morals... The Church knows that she contributes towards the establishment of a truly human civilization; she engages man not to abdicate from his own responsibility in order to rely on technical means; by that very fact, she defends the dignity of man and wife..."<sup>38</sup>

In order to be able to follow and comply with the law of God and with the teaching of the Church, regarding the regulation of birth, there is required a seriousness of purpose on the part of married couples, individual, family and social effort, divine assistance, solid convictions concerning the true values of life and the family,



the following of ascetical practices in order to gain mastery over instincts and passions, docility on the part of spouses to the Church and her teaching, recourse to persevering prayer and a frequenting of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

### **Marital Enrichment**

Married partners, who conscientiously follow the Divine Law and Command, will not harm their conjugal love but rather will confer on it a higher human value. Thereby, they will "develop their personalities" and they will be "enriched with spiritual values." Their discipline will bring peace and serenity to the family, will allow for proper attention and consideration to one's partner, will eliminate selfishness, which is the avowed enemy of true conjugal love, will deepen their sense of responsibility, will enable the parents to have a "deeper and more efficacious influence in the education of their offspring" and will make it possible for them to inculcate proper values on their children. True and authentic conjugal love, which is sought and enjoyed in accordance with proper moral principles, will strengthen husband and wife in their vocation of marriage, will assist marital partners in the "faithful accomplishment of their proper duties, for the carrying out of their proper vocation even to perfection," will enable them to make "visible to men the holiness and sweetness of the law which unites the mutual

love of husband and wife with their cooperation with the love of God, the Author of human life," and will provide an opportunity for spouses to become "apostles and guides to other married couples."<sup>39</sup>

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors could very well heed the admonition of Pope Paul VI to doctors and medical personnel:

"... We hold those physicians and medical personnel in the highest esteem who value above every human interest the superior demands of their Christian vocation. Let them persevere, therefore, in promoting on every occasion the discovery of solutions inspired by faith and right reason, let them strive to arouse this conviction and this respect in their associates. Let them also consider as their proper professional duty the task of acquiring all the knowledge needed in this delicate sector, so as to be able to give to those married persons who consult them wise counsel and healthy direction, such as they have a right to expect."<sup>40</sup>

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors should consider seriously the directive of the Supreme Pontiff to priests:

"... by vocation you are the counselors and spiritual guides of individual persons and of families. Your first task ... is to expound the Church's teaching on marriage without ambiguity. Be the first to give ... the example of loyal internal and external obedience to the teaching authority of the Church. That obedience ... obliges not only because of the reasons adduced, but rather because of the light of the Holy Spirit, which is given in a particular way to the pastors of the Church in order that they may illustrate the Truth. You know, too, that it is of the utmost importance, for peace of consciences and for the unity of the Christian people, that in the field of morals

as well as in that of dogma, all should attend to the Magisterium of the Church, and all should speak the same language. Hence, with all our heart we renew to you the heartfelt plea of the great Apostle Paul: 'I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.' " 41

Shortly after promulgating the Encyclical *HUMANAE VITAE*, Pope Paul VI, in a general audience, provided insights into the preparation of the document. He stated that his objective was "to interpret the Divine Law that flows from the very nature of genuine human love, from the essential structure of married life, from the personal dignity of husband and wife, from their mission of service to life, as well as from the sanctity of Christian marriage." 42

He declared that he read and studied scientific papers on population, studies of experts, publications on scientific and social problems, that he was overwhelmed by the mass of documentation, that he consulted many people of "high moral quality in scientific and pastoral fields" and that he accepted all suggestions within the limits of what is lawful.

The Supreme Pontiff stated that, throughout the four years of preparation of the Encyclical, he honored the work of scientists while he recognized the responsibilities of married couples, he was guided by charity and by a pastoral concern for husbands and wives, he pondered over the consequences of one or other decision,

he reflected on the firm principles of the traditional doctrine in force in the Church, he evaluated a doctrinal tradition that was centuries old and recent, he followed the teachings of Vatican Council II which he, himself, had promulgated, he paid serious heed to the heated discussions and the "clamorous voices of public opinion and the press," he listened intently to the quiet voices of women who were distressed by this difficult problem and by difficult experiences, he prayed and he implored the Holy Spirit and placed "our conscience at the free and full disposal of the voice of truth."

### Difficult Decision

Pope Paul VI admits that, for four years, he was fully cognizant of the grave responsibility that was his to provide an answer on a problem of tremendous significance and of transcendental importance to the Church and to the entire human race, that he endured spiritual suffering, that he had a sense of a heavy burden and a feeling of personal inadequacy to cope with the "formidable apostolic obligation of having to make a pronouncement on this matter," that he trembled before the alternatives of capitulating to current opinions or of making a decision that society would find difficult to accept or married couples would find burdensome.

After all the study, consultation and prayer, after experiencing great anxiety, and after pondering



over the consequences of one or other decision, Pope Paul VI finalized the document and declared "We had no doubt about our duty to give our decision in the terms expressed in the present encyclical."<sup>43</sup>

Pope Paul VI concluded by saying that he issued and promulgated the Encyclical HUMANAE VITAE with hope: hope that the Letter would be well received "for its own intrinsic merit and for its humane truth" despite differences of opinion and difficulties of married couples and teachers; hope that "scholars would discover the genuine thread that connects it with the Christian concept of life" and hope that couples despite difficulties would recognize the document as "the interpreter of the genuineness of their love, called to be transformed by the imitation of the love of Christ for His mystical spouse, the Church."<sup>44</sup>

With reference to the Encyclical HUMANAE VITAE, the Catholic Bishops of the United States stated:

"Marital love, then, in its deepest meaning relates not only to the birth and rearing of children within the family society, but to the growth and well-being of human society on its every level and in its every aspect. It relates at the same time to the eternal life of those who choose marriage as their way to salvation. It is within this perspective of a total vision of man and not merely of isolated family considerations, narrowly conceived, that Pope Paul has written his Encyclical HUMANAE VITAE.

"Both Conciliar and Papal teaching, therefore, emphasize that the inter-

relation between the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning of marriage is impaired, even contradicted, when acts expressive of marital union are performed without love on the one hand and without openness to life on the other.

"The Encyclical HUMANAE VITAE is not a negative proclamation, seeking only to prohibit artificial methods of contraception. In full awareness of population problems and family anxieties, it is a defense of life and of love, a defense which challenges the prevailing spirit of the times. Long range judgments may well find the moral insights of the Encyclical prophetic and its world-view providential.

"The Encyclical is a positive statement concerning the nature of conjugal love and responsible parenthood, a statement which derives from a global vision of man, an integral view of marriage, and the first principles of a sound sexuality. It is an obligatory statement; it is an authoritative statement solemnly interpreting imperatives which are divine rather than ecclesiastical in origin. It presents without ambiguity, doubt or hesitation the authentic teaching of the Church concerning the objective evil of that contraception which closes the marital act to the transmission of life, deliberately making it unfruitful.

"The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World reminds us that 'in their manner of acting, spouses should be aware that they cannot proceed arbitrarily. They must always be governed according to a conscience dutifully conformed to the Divine Law itself, and should be submissive toward the Church's teaching office, which authentically interprets that law in the light of the Gospel. That Divine Law reveals and protects the integral meaning of conjugal love and impels it toward a truly human fulfillment.' We must not suppose that there is such conflict between authority

and freedom, between objective values and subjective fulfillment, that one can only prevail by the elimination of the other." <sup>45</sup>

In commenting on the Encyclical, *HUMANAE VITAE*, John Cardinal Wright stated:

"The Pope is not a Theological Referee in a crisis of this kind. Rather, mindful of apostolic responsibilities proper and special to him, aware of the requirements in conscience of his unique teaching office in the Church (as a matter of history), Pope Paul has heard all sides and now speaks not as a teacher among many teachers, under God, of the flock committed to him in Peter by Christ.

"What Pope Paul has done, what he had to do, is recall to a generation that does not like the word, the fact that sin exists; that artificial contraception is objectively sinful; that those who impose it, foster it, counsel it, whether they be governments, experts, or, God forgive them! — spiritual directors, impose, foster and counsel objective sin — just as they would if they taught racism, hatred, fraud, injustice or impiety. The Holy Father has pointed out what is, in fact, sinful, not who is, alas, a sinner. This is what Christianity always requires us to do, nothing more and nothing less. The Church denounces errors, not persons; it exposes false ideas rather than presumes to judge individuals or name names. The Pope has done his duty bravely and clearly, with prophetic service of human civilization and pastoral fidelity to divine faith.

"... Pope Paul has resisted the compulsions of the statistics, the economic determinism and the political absolutism of an age of computers and conformism destructive of the person. He has defended life and love against political controls and selfishness ultimately destructive of both. ... He cannot call light darkness or darkness light, what is false true, what is evil good. This was forbidden him, when

he was consecrated a Bishop, an authentic teacher in the Church, long before he acquired the awesome obligations which are his as Chief Shepherd of Christ's flock." <sup>46</sup>

Pope Paul VI has not presented a new or different doctrine. He repeated the teaching of his immediate predecessors who, in turn, stated that they were echoing the unchanging, immutable and traditional doctrine of Christ and His Church, which had been preached by the Vicars of Christ down through the centuries.

If anyone challenges the doctrine of Pope Paul VI, he must provide an answer to the gnawing question — how could the Popes and the Church of Christ, who have been promised the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the ever-abiding presence of Christ Himself have, in a doctrine so fundamental and so important, been so wrong for so long?

### **Traditional Teaching**

These Papal pronouncements clearly reveal the uninterrupted, traditional, authentic and authoritative teaching of the Church of Christ with respect to the eternal and immutable Divine Natural Law. By reason of God's creation of man and the Divine establishment of marriage: sexual relations are proper only with a valid marriage; their purpose is to unite a husband and wife in a relationship of love and provide for the procreation of new life; the act of intercourse may bring sensible enjoyment to the spouses but this pleasure must, at all times, be sec-



ondary to the more important purposes of union and procreation; that husbands and wives must learn self-mastery and practice disciplined restraint so that abstinence may be possible when necessary to postpone a pregnancy in a morally acceptable fashion; that any direct and deliberate intervention by one or both marital partners, whereby the act of sexual intercourse is closed to the possibility of procreating new life, is objectively sinful and immoral and no circumstance, however grave or important, can ever objectively justify such malicious tampering with the sacredness of the marital act.

Every Catholic has a special responsibility and a grave obligation to listen intently to the authoritative teachings of the Vicar of Christ, to accept them readily and without question and to give both internal and external assent. There can be no exceptions to this rule.

Theology has had a glorious history as a sacred science but theology, which teaches and explains faith and morals, can never become a substitute for faith and morals. Theologians have made a tremendously important contribution to the Church of Christ and to the People of God but theologians, however numerous or how ever eminent, can never replace the Supreme Pontiff as official, authoritative and authentic teacher in the Church of Christ.

It is presumptuous of any single theologian or any group of the-

ologians to stand against the Successor of Peter and the Apostles and to present and teach a doctrine that is contradictory to the authentic Magisterium of the Church. Thereby, they would become false prophets and false teachers, would betray their professional trust, would seriously lessen their credibility, would become a scandal to Christians and would do a great disservice to the community of man and to the People of God by sowing seeds of distrust, confusion, uncertainty and doubt by proclaiming erroneous and heretical teachings.

Conscience, properly and responsibly formed, in accordance with the traditional teachings of the Church, as preached and presented unchanged throughout the centuries by the Vicars of Christ, is a reliable guide for moral action. However, the personal whims or selfish desires of individuals, fostering a wished-for doctrine that contradicts the official teaching of the Magisterium or the subjective, prejudiced and biased judgments of people, attempting to formulate a doctrine that is contrary to the authentic, authoritative teaching of the Supreme Pontiffs, cannot qualify as conscience properly and responsibly formed and cannot be reliable guides for moral conduct.

In determining what is right or wrong, what is morally proper or improper, what can licitly be done or what is essentially immoral and sinful, Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors cannot use as a norm or criterion of evaluation what is

new or popular, what a large number of people are doing, what many people would want, what large numbers personally and subjectively think is right, what the government is recommending or attempting to impose by legislation or administrative edict, what is being offered by well-intentioned groups as the solution for grave social, economic and environmental problems or what science has succeeded in accomplishing in the research laboratory.

### **Norm for Doctors**

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors can only rely on one norm of moral evaluation — the authentic and authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church in respect to the Divine Natural and the Divine Positive Law. They must have an in-depth understanding and knowledge of the Law of God, they must be well acquainted with the relevant basic moral principles and they must know how to apply them.

Catholic hospitals, their administrators, staff members, personnel, technicians, and Catholic doctors must stand four-square on the moral law of God, must preach and teach it and make it known, must defend it against challenge and attack, must not make excuses or apologies for it and must not, under any circumstance, compromise the Catholic position or attempt to water it down or dilute it.

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors must expect a challenge to their position and bitter criticism when the position of God is different from the thinking, attitude

or practice of many people or is alien to the current social philosophy that is widely disseminated by the media of communications, conferences, conventions and conversations. They must have courage and perseverance, must be stalwart under attack and unbending under pressure from any side or level of society.

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors must take leadership in their communities in making known to its constituency the official, authentic and authoritative moral teaching of the Church on medical and social questions and must not be content to follow the thinking and the practices of large numbers of people in its midst. Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors must be the leaven in their area whereby they can have a wholesome impact and an influence for good on the attitudes, judgments and decisions of its neighbors; they cannot afford to be influenced by dissident groups, however well-intentioned; by erroneous and false conclusions, however much the holders are subjectively convinced that they are right; by the pleasure-seeking and pagan practices of those who have forsaken God; by the pragmatic solutions to serious problems of those public-spirited citizens who wish to make a useful contribution to the better life; by the utilitarian approach of those who are convinced that a good end or objective can be achieved by any means as long as the end-result is successful; by the efforts of those who wish things were or could be



different from what the reality of the situation sets forth.

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors must be the beacon-light and the radar directing all peoples in the community to the truth and the realization of the truth. Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors must stand firm, erect, determined, stalwart, courageous — without weakening and without compromise — on the moral law of God as manifested and as set forth in the authentic and authoritative teaching of the Church in the person of the Vicar of Christ, the Pope.

Rather than being influenced by false doctrines, false opinions, subjective judgments or sinful practices, Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors must strive perseveringly to teach the truth about God's law to the members of the community. Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors can accomplish this teaching role by sponsoring instruction classes, seminars and convocations; they must accomplish this task by practice and example — by insuring, without exception, that every member of the hospital staff and family and every employee is dedicated to firm, loyal and uncompromising commitment to the execution of the moral law of God as taught authoritatively by the Vicar of Christ.

### **Reasons for Contraception**

Usually, married couples resort to contraceptive practices to prevent the birth of a child too soon after the marriage so that the husband/wife might complete their

education, so that the husband might advance in his business or profession, so that the wife might work in order to supplement the couple's income, so that the husband might finish his military service, so that the newly married might be able to purchase their furnishings, so that they might be able to adjust and adapt to each other.

After the early stages of marriage have passed, married couples may resort to contraceptive measures in order to space their children — to insure that too many children won't be born too soon or too close to one another. After many years of marriage and after the size of the family desired by the parents has been realized, couples might use contraception in order to prevent the birth of any additional children.

Not all of these reasons for postponing, spacing, restricting or limiting the total number of children need necessarily be bad in themselves; many of them, as goals and objectives, may very well be good. While we might make observations about couples who marry too young and before they are ready or able to assume the responsibilities of Christian marriage or about couples who are more concerned with the material things of life or of marriage or who place too much importance on their personal comfort and convenience, we do recommend that each couple adopt a responsible attitude towards procreation in their marriage. While many people believe the erroneous myth that the

Catholic Church insists that every couple have just as many children as they can procreate, the truth is that God and the Catholic Church are as concerned for the proper rearing and the education of the children as they are interested in the procreation of children.

This being true, each married couple should adopt a responsible attitude towards procreation: that they will have that number of children that the health of the mother, her ability to give loving care and attention, the financial income, the housing accommodations will allow. This is certainly a plan that is sensitive to the existential needs of each individual couple, is reasonable and rational.

So, God and the Catholic Church are not necessarily opposed to postponement, spacing or limiting the total number of children. Depending upon the circumstances of each situation, God and the Catholic Church could very well recommend the spacing or limiting of children so that too much of a burden would not be placed on the parents and so that the children will receive sufficient love and affection, proper food, adequate clothing, provisions for education, etc.

While God may be in agreement with the goal or objective of spacing or restricting the number of children, the problem arises in the means that are chosen to accomplish this end or purpose. Recall that a good end may not be achieved by the use of illicit, immoral or sinful means. Even with

a good objective, only morally good or, at least, morally indifferent means may be used to obtain it. People cannot rely on the goodness of their objective to justify the use or practice of sinful means.

It is abundantly clear from Papal encyclicals and allocutions that artificial contraception is immoral, illicit and sinful and can never be employed, allowed, tolerated, condoned or justified from the point of view of sound objective morality. This means that no one — Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Moslem, Hindu, Mohammedan or otherwise — can ever have recourse with moral justification to any techniques or methods, whose direct and intended purpose is to prevent conception of new life.

### **Misguided Priorities**

In the present climate, all the attention is directed towards contraception as an aid in the solution of population problems and as an assist to married couples in regulating the size of their family. No consideration is given to the fact that artificial contraception violates God's Law and trespasses on God's Rights and Dominion. This is certainly an inversion of proper priorities and the granting of greater value to the matter of lesser importance.

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors cannot be involved in any way with immoral methods of birth regulation. In their regular out-patient clinics or in special community clinics, funded by grant, public or private, in which they



are responsible for providing personnel and in the private practice of medicine, Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors may not advise, counsel, prescribe or provide contraceptive paraphernalia — whether it be anovulant steroids, which are sterilizing agents; intrauterine devices, which may very well be abortifacients; condoms, diaphragms, spermicidal jellies, etc. Neither may they refer persons to other doctors, hospitals or clinics for this purpose.

Catholic hospitals may not justify or condone birth regulation services on the plea that the doctors involved have no conscientious scruples about counseling such methods or providing such materials. Catholic hospitals may not tolerate or allow such practices on the premise that the women who visit such clinics are in good faith and do not recognize any moral objection to artificial contraception because then they would be directly cooperating in objective evil and in objective immorality.

The Catholic hospital has a responsibility to follow the Divine Law scrupulously and conscientiously. Any exceptions to the above prohibition would create a great scandal and credibility gap that would cause serious anxiety to the conscientious members of the community. A Catholic hospital that compromises true doctrine, transgresses established moral principles and violates the Law of God is an enigma and a contradiction; it would be an institution that had lost its sense of apostolate and mission; an institution that

could not possibly fulfill the purpose for which it was established; an institution that could not offer to a community that particular dimension which historically warranted the founding of Catholic hospitals and which has been the crowning glory of Catholic hospitals — a value and respect for life, the safeguarding of health and the protection of life in accordance with Divine Law.

### **Positive Attitude**

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors, however, cannot be merely opposed to contraceptive practices; they cannot be satisfied with merely projecting a negative, seemingly obstructionist image. Through seminars, conferences, parents' classes and adult education programs they must present a positive and dynamic approach. Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors must counter the philosophy and attitudes of the day by teaching the true nature of marriage, the real meaning of conjugal love with its unitive and procreative aspects, the value of life, the privilege of cooperating with God in the procreation of new life, the opportunity to care for, rear and educate children that are entrusted to the parents' care, the challenge in the preparation of children, not merely for an earthly existence but for eternal happiness with God.

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors must reach out to married persons in their area and show a true concern, a sympathetic and understanding compassion for their worries and anxieties when they

are faced with the necessity of regulating, postponing or limiting the birth of additional children for the immediate present or the protracted future because of health, economic or social reasons.

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors, as mentioned by recent pontiffs, have a responsibility to present to such married partners detailed scientific information as to the calculation of ovulation so that they might regulate their families in a morally acceptable fashion by taking advantage of the natural sterile phase of the menstrual cycle.

Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors should have a special apostolate whereby, in accordance with the directives of Pope Paul VI, they can demonstrate the possibility of observing periodic continence without diminishing or damaging the conjugal love and give encouragement to Christian spouses who sincerely wish to follow the will and the command of God.

Finally, Catholic hospitals and Catholic doctors must make every effort, even in a pluralistic society and in an ecumenical age, to mold public opinion with reference to the essential evil of contraception as a contravention of God's Law — binding on all creatures of God, not merely Catholics. They must engage in public discussions; they must bring their positions to the attention of the citizenry and particularly voice opposition to legislation and governmental intervention whereby the privacy of married couples is about to be invaded

by pressure groups that will coerce them into the use of contraceptives, pressure them into limiting the size of their families and discourage them from fulfilling their loyal commitment to the Divine Plan.

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