

Catholic Teaching on Contraception

- For Pope Paul VI, marital relations are much more than a union of two people. They constitute a union of the loving couple with a loving God, in which the two persons create a new person materially, while God completes the creation by adding the soul.
- For this reason, Paul VI teaches in the first sentence of *Humanae Vitae* that the transmission of human life is a most serious role in which married people collaborate freely and responsibly with God the Creator.
- *Humanae Vitae* is clear about the intrinsic connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of the sexual act. It states: “There is an unbreakable connection between the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning of the conjugal act, and both are inherent in the

conjugal act. This connection was established by God and cannot be broken by man through his own volition’.

- *Humanae Vitae* explains that the Church condemns artificial contraception since it violates both the procreative and unitive meanings of the human sexual act.
- To engage in an act of sexual intercourse using artificial contraception is to engage in an act that has the potential for creating new life and tremendous emotional bonds between male and female whilst at the same time undercutting this potential.
- The sexual activity, in which husband and wife are intimately and chastely united with one another, through which human life is transmitted, is, as the recent Council recalled, ‘noble and worthy’.

- It does not, moreover, cease to be legitimate even when, for reasons independent of their will, it is foreseen to be infertile... The fact is, as experience shows, that new life is not the result of each and every act of sexual intercourse.
- God has wisely ordered laws of nature and the incidence of fertility in such a way that successive births are already naturally spaced through the inherent operation of these laws.”
- “If therefore there are well-grounded reasons for spacing births, arising from the physical or psychological condition of husband or wife, or from external circumstances, the Church teaches that married people may then take advantage of the natural cycles immanent in the reproductive system and engage in marital intercourse only during those times that are infertile, thus controlling birth in a way which does not in the least offend the moral principles which We have just explained.
- Neither the Church nor her doctrine is

inconsistent when she considers it lawful for married people to take advantage of the infertile period but condemns as always unlawful the use of means which directly prevent conception, even when the reasons given for the later practice may appear to be upright and serious.

- In reality, these two cases are completely different. In the former the married couple rightly use a faculty provided them by nature. In the later they obstruct the natural development of the generative process.
- It cannot be denied that in each case the married couple, for acceptable reasons, are both perfectly clear in their intention to avoid children and wish to make sure that none will result. But it is equally true that it is exclusively in the former case that husband and wife are ready to abstain from intercourse during the fertile period when for reasonable motives the birth of another child is not desirable. And when the infertile period recurs, they use their married intimacy to express their mutual love

and safeguard their fidelity toward one another. In doing this they certainly give proof of a true and authentic love.”

- It calls on priests to spell out clearly and completely the Church's teaching on marriage in this area.
- Janet Smith writes that “the last many decades have revealed that the Church has been very wise in its continual affirmation of this teaching for we have begun to see that contraception leads to many vicious wrongs in society;
- it facilitates the sexual revolution which leads to much unwanted pregnancy and abortion.
- It has made women much more open to sexual exploitation by men. In fact, '*Humanae Vitae*' predicted a general lowering of morality should contraception become widely available and I think it is manifest that ours is a period of very

low morality—much of it in the sexual realm.

- Western society has undergone a rapid transformation in terms of sexual behaviour and few would argue that it is for the better. Contraception has greatly facilitated this downward trend.

Dr Janet Smith writes:

- Sex is for babies and for bonding; if people are not ready for babies or bonding they ought not to be engaging in acts of sexual intercourse.
- The modern age tends to treat babies as burdens and not as gifts
- We speak about "accidental pregnancies" as if getting pregnant were like getting hit by a car — some terrible accident has happened to us. But the truth is that if a pregnancy results from an act of sexual intercourse, this means that something has gone right, not that something has gone wrong.

- Babies are treated as an unwelcome intrusion on the sexual act.
- Women now take a "pill" to thwart their fertility, as if fertility were a disease against which we need a cure. Contraception treats the woman's body as if there were something wrong with it.
- The use of contraception suggests that God made a mistake in the way that He designed the body and that we must correct His error
- Let us not fail to mention that many forms of contraception are abortifacients;
- Contraception, then, enters a note of tremendous negation into the act of sexual intercourse.
- But lovemaking should be a most wonderful act of affirmation,
This is conveyed by making a total gift of one's self to another.

'Familiaris Consortio'

by

Saint John Paul 11

- Precisely because the love of husband and wife is a unique participation in the mystery of life and of the love of God Himself, the Church knows that she has received the special

mission of guarding and protecting the lofty dignity of marriage and upholding the most serious responsibility of the couple in the transmission of human life.

(This is why the church doesn't stay out of the bedroom – Fr Paddy)

- People give all sorts of reasons why families should be limited through contraception. Some are guided by purely materialistic considerations, others believe that the world is overcrowded which is a lie. The ultimate reason for these mentalities is the absence of God in peoples' hearts which fuels and anti-life mentality.
- Pope Paul VI affirmed that the teaching of the Church on the two meanings of the conjugal act, the unitive and procreative willed by God are not allowed to be broken by man on his own initiative.
- When these two meanings are separated man and woman act in a purely subjective way, and without reference to the Divine plan, manipulate and degrade human sexuality and with it, themselves and their married partner by

altering its value of "total" self-giving. It is a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love.

- The choice of the natural rhythms when controlling a family involves accepting the cycle of the person, that is, the woman and thereby accepting dialogue, reciprocal respect, shared responsibility and self-control.
- Knowledge of NFP must be made accessible to all married people and also to young adults before entering into marriage through clear, instruction and education given by married couples, doctors and experts.