

## ETHICAL EVALUATION OF CONTRACEPTIVE MENTALITY ON THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE *HUMANAE VITAE*

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### **Abstract**

*In 1968, Pope Paul VI published the *Humanae Vitae* reiterating the nexus between marriage and procreation. He maintained that the Church should not and could not change her teaching on the use of contraceptives. Once contraceptive is accepted, God's plan for human sexuality will be inevitably set aside. It will usher in the mentality of anything goes with regard to the use of human sexuality. Once couples are allowed the use of contraceptives nothing will stop the government from stepping in and imposing its will on the people. The world did not heed to this caveat. The truth is that the prediction in *Humanae Vitae* is nothing short of prophetic. Today there is truly "Hell on Earth". The human family as a natural institution is under attacked. The words: "mother" and "father" are losing all meaning. Governments impose methods of contraception they judge most efficacious on their citizens. Homosexuality, oversex, abortion on demand, etc., have become acceptable and tolerable. 50 years after the rejection of the *Humanae Vitae*, how has humanity fared?*

**Keywords:** Human; Life; Responsible; Procreation; Marriage; Contraceptive; Mentality

### **Introduction**

Fifty years ago, precisely on July 25, 1968, Pope Paul VI published his encyclical – *Humanae Vitae* (on the Regulation of Births). The encyclical specifies the doctrine of marriage as defined by the Second Vatican II. It reaffirms the unbreakable connection between the unitive and procreative significances of marriage and the Catholic Church's ban on contraception. Earlier on, some erroneous reports and false speculations had insinuated a shift from the teaching of the Church on the use of contraceptives. When eventually the encyclical was published and nothing changed, all such hopes were dashed. This heightened the criticisms against Pope Paul VI and the Church in general. The Catholic Church was shaken in her ranks and files. The publication of the encyclical witnessed for the first time in the twentieth century an open and public dissent from the laity on teachings of

the Church. Majority of the lay faithful began to disobey the moral teachings of the Church. Doctors and even some pastors agreed with prescribing the pill as birth regulator. Also, among bishops who supported the teaching of the *Humanae Vitae*, some did so without much conviction.

For the liberals, the Church got so rigid for teaching that Marriage is for procreation. The women “didn’t pay a bit of heed” to it. The Church was seen as unprogressive, anachronistic and outmoded. She was not following the times by reiterating the age-long morals on sex and procreation. Many priests and lay faithful left the Catholic Church; some other priests were suspended from the priestly ministry as result of disobedience to the Magisterial teaching on the *Humanae Vitae*. Indeed, *Humanae Vitae* became a turning point not just in terms of the Church’s sexual teaching but maybe more broadly with regard to her exercise of authority generally.

It marked a new battle in the Church between liberals and conservatives: “The core issue, in fact, was not birth control but the nature of morality itself – more precisely, whether or not morality could change.

Whatever be the contention, today, “drug or oral contraceptives and abortifacients” are available everywhere with doctor’s prescription. The widespread has led to conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality especially sexual morality in the last 50 years. The increase in the number of divorces, abortions, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, HIV/AIDs and other venereal diseases are unbiased evidences of the contraceptive mentality in the society.

After 50 years of wide objections to *Humanae Vitae* and the acceptance of the contraceptive mentality, how has humanity fared? With her purported liberty and freedom, is man and his society better than before or has moral insensitivity injured man and his society gravely? What are the dividends of the rejection of *Humanae Vitae* and its repercussions on man and his society? Responding to these and more salient questions forms the thrust of this paper.

### **The Teachings of *Humanae Vitae***

In *Humanae vitae*, Paul VI reaffirms the Catholic Church's orthodoxy on marriage and the condemnation of "artificial" birth control. He laid down in categorical terms the Catholic Church’s ban on contraception. Christians understand marriage as an elevated calling, whereby God enlists spouses in the all-important

enterprise of bringing forth new life. The Church teaches that to use contraception is to reject God and his life-giving blessings. The teaching is not merely that contraception is wrong, but that it has bad consequences. In line with the Church's Magisterium, *Humanae Vitae* teaches that the acts by which spouses fully express themselves and which intensify their union are the same ones that generate life and vice versa. The inner structure of the marriage act is such that, while it profoundly unites the partners, it fits them for the generation of new life, according to the laws inscribed in the very being of the man and the woman" (*Humanae Vitae* no. 12). *Humanae Vitae* outlines the characteristics of conjugal love as; human and total, faithfully exclusive and fecund. For responsible parenthood, the encyclical affirms that:

The Church, calling men back to the observance of the norms of the natural law, as interpreted by their constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life<sup>64</sup>.

In the conjugal love, the spouses accomplish two great realities of unitive and procreative significances. The *Humanae Vitae* reiterates the nexus between these two realities. The unitive significance leads to the procreative significance and the procreative is the consequence of the unitive. The interconnectedness between the intimate relationship (unitive) of the spouses in its nature and manner and the procreative (begetting of new life) is indissoluble. Human sexuality permeates the entirety of the human person in its sensitive, instinctual and rational nature. Thus the conjugal act of husband and wife at any given time is geared toward procreation. The disaster comes in when one stops at the first two levels which man shares with other animals. Otherwise, the unitive love of man and woman which opens up to a new life (child) is an intentional act. Procreation therefore requires the entirety of the personality of the spouses in play. This is the intention of marital love relationship and the teaching of the *Humanae Vitae*.

By its intimate structure, the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, capacitates them for the generation of new lives. By safeguarding these essential aspects: the unitive and the procreative significances, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its ordination towards man's most high calling to parenthood. It is expected that the man and the

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<sup>64</sup>POPE PAUL VI, *Humanae Vitae*, Encyclical Letter on the Regulation of Birth Rome, 25th day of July, 1968, no. 11; *Casti Connubii*, p. 560; Pius XII, Allocution to Midwives, October 29, 1951, AAS 43 (1951), p. 853; The Allocution in The Human Body, no. 268, p. 160.

woman of our days be particularly capable of appraising the deeply reasonable and human character of this fundamental principle. Marriage is not for a hedonistic or selfish end. As a life rite, every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life<sup>65</sup>. Only on the basis of Responsible Parenthood<sup>66</sup> or for motive of prayers, spiritual contemplation or respect of their integrity and not purely for egoistic tendencies can spouses renounce or agree to desist on matrimonial relationship. Otherwise, they will be acting against the unitive and procreative significances of the conjugal love. Marriage responsibility is a call to the observance of the norms of the natural law<sup>67</sup>.

Accordingly, *Humanae Vitae* reiterates that transmitting human life is the most serious duty for which married persons are the free and responsible collaborators of God the Creator. The institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordered to the procreation and education of children, in whom parents find their crowning<sup>68</sup>. Couples must therefore recognize that an act of mutual love which impairs the capacity to transmit life which God the Creator, through specific laws, has built into it, frustrates His design which constitutes the norm of marriage, and contradicts his will. Hence, to use this divine gift while depriving it, even if only partially, of its meaning and purpose, is equally repugnant to the nature of man and of woman, and is consequently in opposition to the plan of God and His holy will<sup>69</sup>.

### **The Advent of the Contraceptive Mentality in the Human Society**

Until sometime after the World War II, population growth was a positive asset in the history of mankind in terms security. The birth of the International Planned Parenthood Federation founded in the Bombay conference of 1954, with eight national family planning bodies; the British Family Planning Association and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America included, the advent of the Population Council in New York, founded by John D. Rockefeller 111, began the story of hostility against the human population in our time. These organisations

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<sup>65</sup> PAUL VI, *Humanae Vitae*, op. cit., no. 12.

<sup>66</sup> The principle of Responsible Parenthood states that spouses can decide to suspend for sometime or completely procreation, considering: if they have got a good number of children, the physical, psychological health of spouses, the healthy situation of their relationship as spouses, economic situation, family situation, that is, the number of children already had, their education and maintenance, the extended family situation.

<sup>67</sup> POPE PAUL VI, *Humanae vitae*, nos. 23, 31.

<sup>68</sup> POPE PAUL VI, Quoted in A.C., IBE, Responsible Parenthood in Healthy Upbringing of Children. The Wisdom Pro-life Journal, vol. 4, no. 1, Sons Digital Press, Umuahia, 2017, p. 24.

<sup>69</sup> POPE PAUL VI, *Humanae vitae*, no. 13.

and other later ones like them were committed to spreading false alarm about the consequences of population growth, and to pressing for population control policies. Their vested interest behind the artificial birth control are varied and many. The real driving force however, is a mixture of politics, philosophy, demographic, economics, and elitism which has been propagated by this small dedicated group of men and women since the end of the last century<sup>70</sup>. They are absolutely convinced that the promotion of contraceptives is for the good of mankind and they are working hard towards this end in view.

The demographic factor behind the philosophy of contraceptive mentality ushered in governments and private organizations' funding and programmes to immediately contain over-population as imminent disaster facing mankind. At first, it was directly targeted to the school children. Later embodied in the agenda is a kind of social planning that actually mandates draconian control over families, churches and other voluntary institutions around the world. Though it is one of the false dogmas of our times yet, such anti-population propaganda diffused to many parts of the world. The message illustrated to them reads that: There are too many people in the world. We are running out of space. We are running out of energy. We are running out of food. And, though too few people seem to realize it, we are running out of time<sup>71</sup>. The emphasis is that "birth rate must decrease and/or the death rate must increase" since resources were all but exhausted and mass starvation loomed large.

Furthermore, the population lobbyists announced that mankind is entering a quantum leap into a "New Age", in which all traditional methods and values become useless and irrelevant. In this age of completely an unmapped future, all familiar human institutions will fail and will continue to fail in the "new" circumstances. First among the supposedly failing institutions is the traditional human family which will decline based on heterosexual marriage. Blood or adoptive relationships will be replaced by new, "optional" forms, such as communes and homosexual partnerships<sup>72</sup>. There will be massive provision of contraceptives to enable women around the world to control their fertility, increase the freedom of choice for women and improve the state of women's

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<sup>70</sup> M. GOLDEN, *All Kinds of Family Planning: Socio-Political Research towards a Better Future*. Second Edition, Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu, Nigeria, 1986, p. v.

<sup>71</sup> THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, Project book for the Exhibition, "Population: The Problem is Us". A Book of Suggestions for Implementing the Exhibition in Your Own Institution (Washington: undated, circulated in late 1970s), p. 9.

<sup>72</sup> M. S. CALDERONE & E. W. JOHNSON, *The Family Book About Sexuality*. New York: Harper & Row, 1981, pp. 132-135.

health<sup>73</sup>. Coupled with the above, the adolescent/teenage pregnancy they claimed is the single most common cause of school drop-out among young girls<sup>74</sup>. They also alleged that teenagers have higher maternal mortality rates than older mothers<sup>75</sup>. Thus they called for compulsory abortion for young pregnant teenagers<sup>76</sup>.

### **Pollution of the Christian World with the Contraceptive Mentality**

For 1900 years, Christians believed (and taught) that interfering with God's plan of procreation was sinful. The word "vice" was in widespread use by members of all denominations as a common euphemism for birth control. This pristine teaching survived even the major disruption associated with the Protestant Reformation.

The distortion of God's plan began in August 14, 1930. It was in this year that a drastic departure from this long standing teaching occurred. The members of the principal English-speaking Post-Reformation denomination - the Anglican Church, meeting in conference at Lambeth Palace in London, voted to do away with the old teaching. Anglican couples were told by their bishops that the use of contraceptives was no longer sinful.

The consequences of this revised teaching were colossal and widespread. It was as if an earthquake had struck, with its epicentre in the Anglican Church. So great was the influence of the Anglicans among the post-Reformation denominations, that the devastation of the earthquake spread rapidly from its Anglican epicentre to other Protestant denominations. Most of the latter eventually also retreated from the age-old Christian teaching that contraception is vice. Among the thousands of Protestant denominations existing today, it is virtually impossible to identify any that teach unambiguously the sinfulness of contraception.

### **Contamination of the Catholic Society by the Contraceptive Mentality**

With the arrival of the pill in 1960, there began the pressure for change of the Catholic Church's teaching on marriage and procreation. Thus, in 1963, John

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<sup>73</sup> J. KASUN, *The War against Population: The Economics and Ideology of Population Control*. Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1988, P. 115.

<sup>74</sup> SELECT COMMITTEE ON POPULATION, Report, "Fertility and Contraception in the United States", op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>75</sup> CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, *Education for Human Sexuality: A Resource Book and Instructional Guide to Sex Education for Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*, 2979, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> MCCL News, June 1980, in J. KASUN, *The War against Population...*, op. cit., p. 115.

XXIII set up an advisory Commission for the Study of the question of the contraceptive pill for Family/Birth Control. The consultative commission was later reconvened and enlarged by Pope Paul VI after the death of Pope John XXIII. The conviction that the Church needed to change was so persuasive that the Commission members eventually voted to retreat from traditional Catholic teaching. The vote was asymmetrical: about 64 members of the Commission voted in favour of change, and only about 4 members voted against it. The disagreement among the commission members resulted to two discordant reports by the majority and the minority groups respectively. The supposed confidential reports were passed on to Pope Paul VI for his final decision. Needless to say, word about the reports leaked out and became widespread "knowledge".

The majority group sustained that the use of artificial means of contraception was not intrinsically evil and that Catholic couples should be allowed to decide for themselves whether to use them or not. Some of the holdings of the majority group were as follows: they justified that the fundamental principle is that of responsible parenthood, thereby, contending that in the discharge of their responsibility, couples may find the control of conception necessary. To this end, the morality of sexual act between married people takes its meaning firstly and specifically from the ordering of their actions in a fruitful married life. They asserted that it does not depend upon the direct fecundity of each and every particular acts of sexual union within the marriage but the totality of the marriage. This means that some interventions in physiological processes ordained to the essential values of the marriage and first of all to the good of children, are to be judged permissible according to the fundamental and objective principles of morality. For them, it is natural to married couples as intelligent beings to use reason and skill to put under human control what is given by biological and physical nature. "Man is the administrator of his life and consequently of his own fecundity." Human physiology is at the disposal of human reason and not as a norm-giver to it, even in matters of reproduction. The commission held that:

If in the past, the Church could not speak other than she did, because the problem of birth control did not confront human consciousness in the same way. Today, having clearly recognized the legitimacy and even the duty of regulating births, she recognizes too that human intervention in the process of the marriage act for reasons drawn from the finality of

marriage itself should not always be excluded, provided that the criteria of morality are always safeguarded<sup>77</sup>.

For the commission, if an arbitrary contraceptive mentality is to be condemned, an intervention to regulate conception in a spirit of true, reasonable, generous charity does not deserve to be condemned. For, what is always condemned is not the regulation of conception, but an egoistic and hedonistic married life, that is refusing a creative opening-out of the family circle, and so refusing a truly human and therefore truly Christian – married love<sup>78</sup>.

Further than mere speculation, the majority group of the papal commission published their report in 1966. This work contrary to the teaching of Church endorsed the ban on contraceptive pill to be dropped. These criteria departed grossly from the moral teaching on marriage held with constant firmness by the teaching authority of the Church<sup>79</sup>.

The illegitimacy of this publication was not so clear to many that they thought there would be an opening-up of all those hard questions about marriage, divorce, contraception, etc. Many Church leaders had told their members that contraception and fertility issues were “going to be sorted” and relaxed, that change was coming<sup>80</sup>. Prominent theologians like Father Bernard Haring, C.S.S.R., et. al., despite their apparently impeccable Catholic credentials were behind the change.

Another factor that aided the spread of the contraceptive mentality among Catholics was a “climate of freedom” in the Catholic Church following the recently concluded Second Vatican Council at that period. People (liberals) expected the new, refreshed, post-Vatican II Church in which authority exercised in collegiality would be implemented like in the case at hand – the decision on the use of artificial means of birth regulation.

Furthermore, the silence and lapse of time between the publication of the majority group report and the publication of the *Humanae Vitae* favoured the contraceptive mindset. It took almost two years to publish *Humanae Vitae* after the publication of the majority report. This time lag was not to the advantage of the Church and her members. The publication of the *Humanae Vitae* later in 1968,

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<sup>77</sup> R.B. HOYT, (Ed.), *The Birth Control Debate*, Kansas City: National Catholic Reporter, 1968, pp. 106-107.

<sup>78</sup> R.B. HOYT, (Ed.), *The Birth Control Debate*, op. cit., pp. 106-107.

<sup>79</sup> POPE PAUL VI, *Humanae Vitae*, op. cit., no. 6.

<sup>80</sup> D. J. MULLAN, “Stem cell research: Down the slippery slope from contraception”, in *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, June 2002.



as the authentic Church's teaching raised turbulent situation for those who were already in accord with the dissent teaching.

### **The *Humanae Vitae* Controversy: Refusal to Change**

The majority group publication of 1966 had already created an expectation of change against minority group report which recommended no change. Pope Paul VI instead, published *Humanae Vitae* based on the report signed by minority members of the commission. In line with the minority group report, Pope Paul VI maintained that the Church should not and could not change its teaching on the matter of marriage and procreation in favour of contraceptives. This is the origin of the *Humanae Vitae* controversy and rejection.

The decision was seen as a stark contravention of collegiality in the Church's decision as defined by the Second Vatican Council. For liberal Catholics *Humanae Vitae* represents a little death. The 16th century hit back and old authority which had dominated in the Catholic Church was on top once more. Pope Paul VI was accused to have ignored the recommendations of a commission set up by Pope John XXIII in 1963.

Consequently, there was widespread of disagreement and variant actions by various bishops' conferences in pointing to the possibility and the obligation of the faithful to make their own decision in conscience on contraception<sup>81</sup>. Bockle rejected the notion of "intrinsically evil acts" that underlies the encyclical's position, which is grounded on biological processes as willed by God. For Bockle, given sufficient grounds for contraception, the choice of means depends on the health and personal values of the couple. What is immoral is actively to exclude birth from sexual love. Bockle like the majority members of the papal commission held that couples according to objective criteria must make the choice of contraceptive methods, including sterilization as a last resort. Father Charles E. Curran would extend the principle of totality to include the good of the whole person, not just his physical being. The good of the whole person would include his relationship to his family, community and the larger society. Curran also knows of the opinion that totality might be extended to marriage. For him, sterilization can be justified under the principle of man's stewardship over his sexuality and his generative organs<sup>82</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup>F. BOCKLE, "The Ethical Aspect of Voluntary Sterilizing Operations", in *Stimmen der Zeit*, 99 (1974), 755-60.

<sup>82</sup>P. J. BOYLE, *The Sterilization Controversy, New Crisis for the Catholic Hospitals?* Paulist Press, New York, 1996, p. 25.

### **Contraceptive Mentality: 50 Years after of the Publication of *Humanae Vitae***

“O tempora; O mores!” “How moral standards change with the times!” says Marcus Tullius Cicero (Roman Orator of the first Century B.C.), is proved true in our age.

Pope Paul VI in his *Humanae Vitae* pointed out that once couples are allowed the use of contraceptives, there will be serious consequences. Specifically, he asked: what is there to stop the government from stepping in and imposing its will on the people? What is there to stop the government from imposing whatever method of contraception that the government judges most efficacious? For the Holy Father, the widespread acceptance of contraception would place a dangerous weapon in the hands of those public authorities who take no heed of moral exigencies. The history of the family-planning programs in some parts of the developing World is an eloquent testimony to this reality. In some African countries today, people undergo sterilization unaware of what they are doing. The forced abortion program in China shows the stark extreme toward which governments will take population programs. The "anti-child" mentality now entrenched in many societies and the legislation by governments on the issue of procreation – a right strictly reserved to parents is a ruthless show of the abuse of power.

The prediction of *Humanae Vitae* is nothing short of prophetic. Long before the Chinese government imposition of coerced abortions on its people as a form of birth control, the Pope predicted that such an evil would occur once contraception was accepted as “normal” procedure by couples. Unfortunately, we do not need to go to China to see how the evil of contraception spread according to the Pope’s prophecy. There is today draw out and over-exaggerated governments’ incursion on birth regulation against the will and rights of parents.

In 1973, the judicial branch of the US government decreed that unlimited abortion was to be the law of the land. In one fell swoop, the US Supreme Court, in its “Roe v. Wade” decision, overruled the anti-abortion regulations of all 50 State legislatures. Never has such a vague basis been provided for a judicial decision in the Constitution<sup>83</sup>. It was in “Griswold v. Connecticut”, a case concerning access to CONTRACEPTION; that the US Supreme Court in essence decided in 1973 that abortion is legal because the Court had declared for contraception in 1965. Here we see in the most literal sense possible, a fulfilment of Pope Paul VI’s prophesy: Once you allow contraception (in 1965), you are

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<sup>83</sup> D. J. MULLAN, “Stem cell research, op cit.

opening the floodgates for other forms of birth control to be introduced by the government (in 1973). The fulfilment of this prophesy in the American Whitehouse contaminated the entirety of the human society.

In our day, marriages and society suffer for the use of contraception. Vast majority of spouses, as well as the unmarried use some form of contraception or the other. This revolution is behind the present day redefinition of marriage relationship by some national and international organizations “as simply a loving, romantic union between committed adults”<sup>84</sup>. Such redefinition has terrible effects on the time tested practice of fatherhood and motherhood and on the rest of us and the future of humanity<sup>85</sup>. In many parts of Europe and America, gender education has been passed into law to be taught in public schools from the age of 5. According to this teaching, no one should call father or mother any longer. It is now “parent 1” and “parent 2” in order to accommodate children of gay/same sex marriages who could have both parents as men or women respectively. And this has been passed as a law for all<sup>86</sup>.

The above mentality has already started to weaken marriage as an institution. After same-sex marriage was legislated in Spain in 2005, marriage rates plummeted. The same happened in the Netherlands. Redefining marriage obscures its meaning and purpose, thereby discouraging people from taking it seriously<sup>87</sup>. It has also affected education and parenting. After same-sex marriage was legalized in Canada, the Toronto School Board implemented a curriculum promoting homosexuality and denouncing “heterosexism”. They also produced posters titled “Love Knows No Gender”, which depicted both homosexual and polygamous relationships as equivalent to marriage. Despite parents’ objections, the board decreed that they had no right to remove their children from such instruction<sup>88</sup>. The same situation has ensued in Italy where gender education has been legalized in the public schools. There has been series of peaceful march by concerned parents known as “*Comitato*,” contesting the compulsory gender education in the public schools and its attendant consequences of unisex

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<sup>84</sup>B. VOGT, Rebuttals to arguments for same-sex marriage Examining the most common arguments for redefining marital unions, OSV Newsweekly, 1/2/2013, *BrandonVogt.com*; *www.churchandnewmedia.com*. Visited December 9, 2018.

<sup>85</sup>J. CAVADINI, A catechetical response to same-sex marriage, <https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly>, 2/5/2014.

<sup>86</sup>Cf. *Comitato* Articolo 26, Roma Italia.

<sup>87</sup>B. VOGT, Rebuttals to arguments for same-sex marriage..., op. cit.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibidem*.

bathrooms and urinary/toilet facilities<sup>89</sup>. With marriage redefined, its weight and consequences are forced on children, regardless of their parents' desires.

Redefinition of marriage threatens moral and religious liberty. In Massachusetts and Washington, D.C., for instance, Catholic Charities can no longer provide charitable adoption services based on the definition of marriage as a union of two adults. Again, Canadian Bishop Frederick Henry was investigated by the Alberta Human Rights Commission for simply explaining the Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality in a newspaper column<sup>90</sup>.

When marriage revolves around procreation, it makes sense to restrict it to a man and a woman. That's the only relationship capable of producing children. If it is redefined as simply a romantic union between committed adults, what principled reason would we have for rejecting polygamy or polyamorous (multiple-persons) relationships as marriages? Once severed from its biological roots, there is little reason to cease redefining the institution of marriage to suit the demands of various interest groups. This is already evident in countries that have legalized same-sex marriage. In Brazil and the Netherlands, three-way relationships were recently granted the full rights of marriage. In Canada also, a polygamist man launched legal action to have his relationships recognized by law. Even in America, the California Legislature passed a bill to legalize families of three or more parents<sup>91</sup>. Responsible procreation is the main reason civil marriage is limited to two people. When sexual lust replaces the primary purpose of marriage, restricting it to just two people no longer makes sense. If this mentality is allowed in any society, what will be the fate of human species in such a society? Such damaging consequences of the contraceptive mentality<sup>92</sup>, spawn other moral evils such as infanticide, prostitution, polygamy, pornography, abortion, premarital sex, marital infidelity, Big Brother Africa, liberal sex, paedophilia, transgender, etc.

Marriage, in all ages and under all forms, has been defined by the complementarity of male and female, and it was ordered toward procreation. When marriage is redefined so that it can include a type of couple that, by its very type, and not by the accidents of circumstance or

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Comitato Articulo 26, Roma Italia.

<sup>90</sup> B. VOGT, *Rebuttals to arguments for same-sex marriage ...*, op. cit.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*

<sup>92</sup> Rejection of God's dominion, viewing fertility as a disease, freedom from conception, and substituting lust for the love.

ill fortune, is incapable of procreative union, then we have endorsed a public and social declaration that procreation is completely accidental to marriage and not in any way intrinsic to its meaning and irrelevant to its identity.

If marriage, is no longer the same social institution that favours the complementarity of man and woman and procreation as the defining feature but instead, completely accidental to it, we are creating a society in which the natural unit of human procreation, the male/female couple, no longer has a social institution that is peculiarly its own. We are making the decision that this natural unit of procreation will have no social footprint, no social recognition, no social prestige, no social standing, and no institutional trace. We are forming our imaginations, and those of our young people, in such a way that the natural unit of human procreation, the male/female couple, has no special claim on our hopes and dreams as a society. We have decided that society no longer has an institution to which procreation is the primary end of the social unit called marriage. We are saying that, as a society, we have come to see or value no difference between natural human procreation and artificial production of human beings. This will mean the extinction of the human race.

With the contraceptive mentality, Paul VI also indicated that men will lose respect for women. Men will no longer care for the women's physical and psychological equilibrium. Women will be considered as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment and no longer as men's respected and beloved companions. This is the culture behind the present usage of women in all sorts of business: trafficking, pornographies, sex shops, advertisement, relaxation, etc.

Pope Paul VI's final warning was that contraception would lead man to think that he had unlimited dominion over his own body. The Church's teaching against contraception is designed to protect the good of conjugal love. When spouses violate this good, they no longer act in accord with their innate dignity and thus they endanger their own happiness. By treating their bodies as mechanical instruments to be manipulated for their own purposes, men and women risk treating each other as objects of pleasure. Today, individuals are so convinced of their rights to control their own bodies that they do not hesitate to alter even their own physical make-up. Sterilization is now the most widely used form of contraception in the U.S. Contraception, Abortion, Euthanasia and the unlawful harvesting of human organs are signs of unlimited dominion of over the body. We seek to adjust the body to our desires and timetables, rather than adjusting ourselves to its needs. Man does not have unlimited dominion over his

body in general. And for more particular reason, he has no such dominion over his specifically sexual faculties, for these are concerned by their very nature with the generation of life, of which God is the source. Human life is sacred. "From its very inception it reveals the creating hand of God"<sup>93</sup>. All men must recognize this fact.

### **Evaluation: *Humanae Vitae* is Right**

According to Janet Smith,

John Paul II affirmed that the Church's teaching on contraception is part of the "permanent patrimony" of the Faith. These years of neglecting *Humanae Vitae* has produced enough unpleasant consequences to help humanity recognize how naive and dangerous it is to desecrate that patrimony<sup>94</sup>.

On the desecration of the patrimony, Lundberg described our time as follows:

It was the age of overindulgence. It was the age of tolerance for anything in anybody. It was the age of fear of imposing one's own social value on someone else. It was the age of the trivialization of sex. It was the age of anti-celibacy. It was the age when homosexuality came out of the closet and became almost acceptable to those who once found it intolerable. It was the age of easy, irresponsible oversex, abortion on demand, Chlamydia, and genital herpes. And it was the age of AIDS<sup>95</sup>.

In the last 50 years, infidelity and moral decline has become the bane of the human society. The increase in the number of divorces, abortion, out-of-wedlock pregnancies, HIV/AIDs and other venereal diseases are evidences of unbiased conviction of sexual immorality strong in our society today as a result of the contraceptive mentality. Times and attitudes have changed in our society. Fertility is spoken about as a disease. Today in some parts of the world, medical insurance coverage includes, "drug or oral contraceptives and medicines" available with a doctor's prescription" to cure this "sickness or injury". One could ask: what is "the sickness" that is remedied by oral contraceptives?

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<sup>93</sup> JOHN XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*: Encyclical on Christianity and Social Progress. Rome, May 15, no. 194.

<sup>94</sup>J. SMITH, Pope Paul VI as Prophet have *Humanae Vitae's* Bold Predictions Come True? University of Dallas, Goggle research, 16/9/2018.

<sup>95</sup> G. LUNDBERG, (ed.), "The Age of AIDS: a Great Time for Defensive Living," in O.N. GRIESE, E.F DIAMOND., *The AIDS Crisis and the Contraceptive Mentality*, Massachusetts. The Pope John XXII Medical-Moral Research & Education Centre, 1988, p. 11.

Obviously, the disease is fertility. In contraceptive mentality, fertility is seen as merely an intervention in an extraneous biological process that has no other consequences in the life of the individual. After the birth of the second child many mothers are urged to get a tubal ligation as a convenience while she is still in the hospital. This is today “normal” procedure. Is fertility not part of the natural human make-up? Is it not part of the natural attraction toward the opposite sex that God has given to us? Is not the capacity to transmit life a valuable part of each of us? Shouldn't we grow to appreciate value and control this capacity as we become mature adults? Aren't these sacred powers in which we are madesharers in God's creative power?

Today there are all kinds of messages to young people that they must suppress fertility which is a natural power in life. Teenage girls are offered oral contraceptives in school-based clinics or in medical offices after a routine check-up. Contraceptive mentality is behind much of these troubles. It has made sexual activity a much more popular option than it was when the fear of pregnancy deterred a great number of young men and women from engaging in premarital sexual intercourse. The availability of contraception has led the youth to believe that they can engage in irresponsible premarital sexual activities. Today, teenagers are more responsible in their use of contraception than they are in all other phases of their lives. What is the moral message that is being given?

Contraception contradicts the full truth of the sexual act as the proper expression of conjugal love, and as such, it is opposed to the virtue of chastity in marriage. It is rooted in a hedonistic mentality of unwillingness to accept responsibility in matters of sexuality. It is therefore absurd, when killing and its likes which are shocking to humanity are taught, implemented and defended as rights while the support of the institutions of marriage and family that enhance the survival of human species on earth are legislated against.

### **Conclusion: Natural Family Planning as the Ethical Option**

In our age, science and medical understanding of bodily functions relating sexual powers and conception has greatly advanced. They all attest that natural family planning methodology is today more idoneous than the use of artificial means of contraception. Those couples who are properly educated in the methodology find it very effective.

Natural family planning could be defined as;

A way of life with a system based on sound understanding of the signs and symptoms of fertility and infertility in the human body which are observed throughout the menstrual cycle. The couple uses these observations to plan their sexual life during each cycle in order to achieve or avoid pregnancy<sup>96</sup>.

Natural family planning is unique in it works to achieve a desired but “hard to come” pregnancy. Families having problem with conception have achieved their hearts’ desire through the help of natural family planning, which is based on good plan and the just understanding of their sexual life. Another marvellous advantage of this approach is that it equally involves both the husband and wife in the planning.

The approach of the Natural Family Planning is one of marital chastity. Chastity is a virtue that enables us to control ourselves as sexual persons. It gives us the strength not to be controlled by our sexual impulses. We, with God’s help, become chaste men and women who are able to love and to be loved as Christ loves. Marital chastity on the other hand, brings about a deepening respect and a deeper love between the couple. It also brings about respect for the meaning of the sexual encounter in marriage and enables the couple to integrate that encounter and its deep meaning into their married life.

In conclusion, it is very important to state clearly that contraceptive for Family Planning in the strict sense is fundamentally a different concept. Family planning rightly known as “responsible procreation” is the decision of couples, in the light of their own beliefs and circumstances, as to the number and the spacing of their children, taking the advantage of a faculty provided by nature<sup>97</sup>. Contraceptive birth control is the decision taken by governments or other agencies to compel couples to have no more than a certain number of children, followed by their anti-life measures to enforce this. As a result, family planning and contraceptive mentality are not, as some like to make out only different in degree. They are fundamentally opposed to each other. While contraceptive mentality restricts freedom of choice for the individual, Family planning increases it.

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<sup>96</sup>DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY: THE HEALTH COMMITTEE CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT OF NIGERIA. *Information Sheet for Informed Decision-Making in Family Planning*. Centre for Training, Service & Research in Natural Family Planning, Lagos Nigeria, 2005, p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> POPE PAUL VI, *Humanae vitae*, nos. 16, 21, 24.