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Third promise of Our Lord Jesus Christ to Saint Margaret Mary for those who have devotion to His Sacred Heart: I shall console them in all their sufferings.



Seven Sorrows of our Blessed Mother Contd: 5. The Crucifixion. 6. The taking down of the Body of Jesus from the Cross. 7. The burial of Jesus

Excerpts from the book **New Perspectives on Contraception** by Dr. Donald DeMarco

Bonding vs. Bondage

Central to a philosophy of individualism is the notion that intimacy between two people compromises individuality. According to this view, the distinction between bonding and bondage is academic. Even the bond of matrimony is regarded as a form of bondage.

Contraception promises to liberate couples from the bondage of pregnancy so that they can better enjoy each other as persons. But a person is not a bodiless soul, nor is pregnancy necessarily a form of bondage.

The denigration of bonding, because it is presumed to be incompatible with the freedom that is associated with liberation from the (p.43) body, is essentially anti-human. The body is an integral part of the human identity. It is primarily through the body that we are who we are and know others as they are. It is through the body that we meet others. Human beings do not function very well as disembodied egos. They suffer acutely from separation reactions. "No-relatedness", as psychiatrists aver, is both unnatural and unbearable. Contemporary novelists insistently and persistently call their readers' attention to the existential plight of modern man who is separated from community (isolation), from tradition (dislocation), from persons (alienation), from meaning (emptiness), and from hope (despair). Collectively these various separations create an illusion of freedom. This freedom, however, is a freedom from the very facts and forces that are the formula for his humanization.

"You are not free unless you are bound," as the philosopher Karl Jaspers exclaims. A tree is obviously not free to be itself if it is uprooted from the soil, shielded from the sun, shorn of leaves, and deprived of all nourishment. To be a tree, it must be bound to what feeds and sustains it.



The modern dilemma unfolds when people are freed from every form of connectedness in the interest of achieving freedom only to find that the resulting dissolution leads straight to misery. Is it possible to achieve freedom and yet escape misery? Or, conversely, is it possible to avoid misery without falling into bondage? Are freedom and happiness compatible?

Philosophy is entirely useless if it does not make distinctions. Bonding is not the same thing as bondage. The latter is restricting and frustrating, contrary to one's natural needs. It is in no way compatible with true freedom. Bonding, on the other hand, if it is directed by love to a good, can be the beginning of an expanding freedom. Bonding is an adherence to that which overcomes our isolation and alienation and completes us. Friendship is a bond that we cannot do without.

Bondage and bonding do have something in common; they both involve connectedness. But bondage is stifling, connecting people with something that hinders them. Bonding can be liberating if it is interpersonal and protected by love. ...

There is no disputing the fact that bondage exists. By contrast, bonding is far more subtle and mysterious, though the evidence for (p. 44) its existence is decisive. ...

Bonding between humans includes moral and spiritual dimensions that sometimes elude a strict materialistic analysis. Nonetheless, interpersonal bonding can be authenticated on a bio-chemical level where it appears in its most natural and spontaneous form.

There are essentially three kinds of such bio-chemical bonding between humans: sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and lactation. Each of these is ordered to the next in such a way as to promote the development of both the child as well as the relationship between the parents. In this sense, bio-chemical bonding is consonant with an emerging freedom.

It is well established, scientifically, that both male and female derive physiological benefits to their health by the absorption of each other's secretion during sexual union. The assimilation of hormones, which the female organs pass to the man's body through the permeable mucous membranes of the male organ, and the assimilation of the



male semen and its hormones through the mucous membranes of the female organ, play an important role in the satisfying functioning of other physical and emotional processes that contribute to a harmonious married life. ...

Contraception can be viewed, if not as a form of compromised intimacy between husband and wife, at least as an impediment to achieving a fuller two-in-one-flesh bonding. Sexual intercourse is ordered to ends other than procreation even on a physiological level. It confers a multitude of benefits on the partners that all contribute in their own way to facilitating the special bond of unity between husband and wife that is, in a very fundamental sense, the bond of matrimony.

(p.45) Regrettably, sexual intercourse is often viewed solely in terms of the psychological benefits it confers upon the individual. ...Apart from the evident relationship between intercourse and conception, intercourse has a crucial role to play in modifying a woman's immune system so that it does not regard semen as a foreign substance it must protect itself against. Male semen contains a mild immunosuppressant that instructs the woman's immune system to accept its ingredients as well as the child that may subsequently be conceived. In other words, the immunosuppressant carried in the semen signals the woman's body not to reject but to bond with her husband and the child to come. This is an indication that a special monogamous intimacy is taking place between husband and wife on as fundamental level of their being as their immune system. ...The father's semen, therefore, prepares the woman's immune system to "recognize" the peculiar chemical composition of her husband's semen and the forthcoming child as somehow belonging to her and therefore exempt from being attacked as foreign objects.

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