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Eight promise of Our Lord Jesus Christ to Saint Margaret Mary for those who have devotion to His Sacred Heart: Fervent souls will rise rapidly to great perfection.



Our Lord to Berthe Petit, Feb. 08, 1910 Contd. Love it [Devotion to the Heart of My Mother] and make it loved! This love will be for you and for the whole world a source of Grace, and will bring upon you great blessings."

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

Church Teaching on Contraception

Contraception negates the creative act of God. It also compromises the unity of the relationship between the marriage partners. For these two reasons, fundamentally, the Church teaches that contraception is disordered and morally wrong. It is wrong, according to the Church, because it separates the procreative and the unitive meanings of the marital act. In this way, the Church condemns contraception primarily because it violates the goods of marriage and procreation. In *Humanae Vitae* we find the following statement:

By safeguarding both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true marital love and its orientation toward man's exalted vocation to parenthood.⁸

(p.110) In the same document, the denunciation of contraceptives of every kind is most clear: " every action which, whether in 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" is intrinsically evil.⁹ Here, the Church is explicitly rejecting such forms of contraception as the Pill, condoms, and spermicides.

Sexual intercourse is naturally ordered to procreation. This order, like the way leaves are ordered to produce food by undergoing photosynthetic activity in the presence of sunlight, exemplifies the natural law. In the Latin text of *Humanae Vitae* (Latin is the official language of the Church), the expression "per se destinatus" (in itself ordered) is used to indicate the natural relationship that exists between intercourse and procreation. What Church teaching opposes is the violation of the natural ordination between intercourse and the initiation of new life that God, Himself, has established. The Church does not oblige people to have as many children as possible, or to engage in sexual intercourse every time the wife appears to be fertile. She teaches that if the married spouses do have sexual union, that they do not deliberately attempt to negate the natural order that God established between the marital act and His power to create new life. Contraception, so to speak, slams the door in the face of God and encloses the married couple in a world that is deprived of important avenues of grace and therefore to sources of supernatural help.



At the same time, the Church does not forbid married couples from enjoying conjugal love when they know that procreation is either unlikely or impossible. The Church has no objection whatsoever to married couples making love when the wife is already known to be pregnant, when the wife or husband are infertile, or when the partners themselves are infertile as a couple. As Pope Paul VI states in *Humanae Vitae*: "Marital acts do not cease being legitimate if they are foreseen to be infertile because of reasons independent of the spouses.

Similarly, the Church does not require people to pray all the time. But she does hold that whenever a person prays to God, he does so with reverence. Although we need not pray always, we are never permitted to blaspheme. This negative prohibition should not be difficult to grasp since it is readily understood in thousands of commonplace circumstances. For example, while it is not required that a husband always talk to his wife, it is required that when he does speak to her, that he should do so respectfully. A wife is not obliged (p.111) to prepare all meals, but when she does prepare a meal, she should not deliberately render it indigestible. ...

Throughout her history the Catholic Church has maintained a clear, forceful, and consistent position in her teaching about the essential evil of contraception. After surveying the Church's historical teaching on contraception, Paul VI's Minority Report offered the following statement:

One can find no period in history, no document of the Church, no theological school, scarcely one Catholic theologian, who ever denied that contraception was always seriously evil. The teaching of the Church in this matter is absolutely constant. Until

the present century this teaching was peacefully possessed by all other Christians, whether Orthodox or Anglican or Protestant.¹¹



In 1980, at the Synod of Bishops, representatives of national hierarchies from around the world addressed the issue of contraception. After giving the matter careful consideration, the bishops professed their agreement with *Humanae Vitae* and Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* on contraception. John Paul II ratified their statement and, reflecting on the significance of the matter at hand, stated: (p.112)

Consideration in depth of all the aspects of these problems offers a new and stronger confirmation of the importance of the authentic teaching on birth regulation repropounded in the Second Vatican Council and in the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.¹²

Scholars have provided highly detailed and lengthy argumentation that the Catholic Church's teaching concerning contraception has been infallibly taught by the ordinary magisterium under the conditions articulated by Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* 25.¹³ Moreover, if the Church had been wrong throughout the centuries on an issue of such fundamental importance as contraception, how could she maintain her claim to being the authentic interpreter of Christ's teachings?

In July of 1987, at a conference on responsible procreation, John Paul II reminded participants that the Church's consistent teaching has been vigorously expressed by Vatican II, *Humanae Vitae*, *Familiaris Consortio*, and *Donum Vitae*. He went on to say "The Church's teaching on contraception does not belong in the category of matter open to free discussion among theologians. Teaching the contrary amounts to leading the moral consciences of spouses into error."¹⁴ In the words of one bishop: "The Church has not changed its teaching against contraception. What is more, the Church cannot change its teaching against contraception, because the Church sees that teaching as based on God's moral order."¹⁵

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