

SCHEMA QUODDAM DECLARATIONIS PONTIFICIAE CIRCA ANTICONCEPTIONEM

Homines nostrae aetatis magni aestimant authenticitatem. Christiani quoque ad hoc adspirant, ut ipsorum vita illi fidei consonet quam profitentur. At non credentes ob hanc eandem plane rationem, non diutius parati sunt illa praescripta moralia ore adprobare quae intellectu iam admittere non possunt. Ideoque criteria moralitatis quibus non credentes adhaerent, ab illis quae Christiani profitentur criteriis constanter discedunt, a lege scilicet Christi, quae sibi legem naturae assumit ~~non~~ *sicut* ~~aliter~~ ac Persona Christi naturam Sibi humanam assumpsit.

Homines nostrae aetatis aerumnas ac calamitates non modo experti sunt sed ipsi quoque plurimorum exstiterunt malorum auctores. Immania etenim nostri saeculi bella causa fuerunt et origo illorum criminum quorum reatu nos omnes aliquo saltem modo inficimur. Sensus nostri de sanctitate vitae humanae hebetes redduntur: aequo fere animo frequentiores violentias huic sanctitati late diffuseque irrogatas contemplamur. Nos quoque perterret novi belli universalis vel mera imaginatio. Hic noster terror ad arctiores cum proximis necessitudines ineundas nos impellit; sicque pericula nobis imminencia oblivioni dare satagimus. Et ita fit ut vita familiaris magis magisque intima evadit, bono heic ex malo procedente; abusibus quantum hodie profanari, dum homines intimam pariter et effugium modo quasi desperato sectantur.

Homines nostrae aetatis, ob suum ingenium sese semper perficiens, immensum in campo technologico progressum perfecerunt. At ob hoc idem ingenium mundus instatibus minis exponitur; ideoque homines timent ne, eodem abutendo, propriam ipsorum perniciem moliantur. Utinam Deus huiusmodi exitialem avertet conflagrationem! Nos autem homines timorem experiamur oportet, cum non pauci vitam humanam respicere incipiant acsi esset merum humani ingenii opus, cumque alii loqui non dubitent de "natura humana mutanda" acsi fas esset eandem novo modo formaque interdum induere. Christiani tamen non ignorant Deum homines creasse una eademque instructos natura, ut unicam efforment familiam, licet utique vita culturaque humana, iuxta sapientissima Divinae Providentiae consilia, in statu constantis evolutionis constituentur. Profecto salus nostra ab hoc dependet, nempe ut eiusdem illius naturae participes efficiamur, quam Dei Verbum in Christo assumpsit.

Huius mundi homines - fide carentes at humanismum sincere profitentes - quosdam sane modos agendi adprobare sciunt; nam ad iudicium efformandum de actuum moralitate, prae oculis habent illas dumtaxat concretas sequelas quae, experientia id eos edocente, reapse occurrere soleant. Sub lumine talis criterii, moralitas non est nisi medium quoddam ad felicitatem humanam adipiscendam, subsidiumque ad ordinem ac progressum humanae societatis promovendos. Tales homines modo claudo ac deficiente perfectionem humanam considerant: nam nihil prorsus expectant praeter ea ad quae homines propriis viribus attingere valeant.

Christiani e contra persuasos se habent actum rectitudinem moralem requirere rectam rationem voluntatemque rectam; voluntatem vero hominis tunc tantum bonam esse ac rectam quando amore erga Dei Bonitatem captatur. Qui tali amore animatur, ad Deum uti in Se est contendit atque omnem Eius imaginem in natura creata, et in iis praesertim quae Eum cognoscere et amare valent creaturis, in seipso scilicet et in aliis personis, colit diligitque.

Iuxta placita Christianorum, moralitas est illa regula vitae quae hominibus conveniat qui consortes effici Divinitatis vocati sunt. Nos utique hoc intendimus, nempe ut perfectio humana realitatibus supernaturalibus aperta semper remaneat, ideoque limites statuimus qui non sunt praetergrediendi. Pro comperto habemus fornicationem, exempli causa, et abortum semper et ubique labe morali infici, etsi homines huius mundi aliter conseant. Cum autem fallat humana fragilitas, Deum in adiutorium advocamus; cum homines bonum ac rectum pro stulto habeant, Providentiae nos Dei committimus.

Christi Apostoli praecepta castitatis mundo proposuerunt in quo perpauci tantum hanc virtutem magni aestimare sciebant. Castitas enim coniugalis, amoris coniugalis fortissima tutela, optimus quoque promotor atque expressio maxime authentica, non modo prohibet quominus abusus personarum in proprios fines egoisticos verum affectum fecte simulet, sed mutuae responsabilitatis regulam etiam ac normam proponit. Nos vero a crisi quae, cum hoc caput doctrinae Christi praxi deducatur, occurrere solent, animis deprimamur non oportet. Humanum sane est censere ideale nimis sublime proponi; humanum item est aestimare ideale illud, cum non attingatur, necessario minus exigens reddendum esse. Attamen homines nunquam ante haec nostra tempora tanti aestimarunt matrimonium tanquam Christi sacramentum quod significationem genuini amoris coniugalis miro in modo perficiat compleatque.

Haec aestimatio semper crescens, quam Litterae Encyclicae Casti Connubii expresserunt ac promoverunt, a doctrina tandem Concilii Vaticani II, in iis praesertim quae amorem coniugalem ac progenitorum responsabilitatem respiciunt, ulteriorem etiam evolutionem obtinuit. Attamen hi actus Magisterii ecclesiastici finem operi perficiendo minime imposuerunt; immo, e contra, aliqua solummodo initia huius operis constituunt. Pensum sane nobis committunt atque ad futura prospiciunt. Et hic labor nobis est accipiendus ac complendus: nam ad partes nostras in opere salutis pertinet.

Qualis oportet esse gressus nobis nunc perficiendus? Sunt quidem Catholici, iique veri ac sinceri filii Ecclesiae, qui proponerent hunc gressum consistere in anticonceptione admittenda atque in illis praeceptis reformandis quibus Ecclesia anticonceptionem hucusque indesinenter reprobavit. Qui hanc opinionem

sustinent multimodis ducuntur motivis. Alii sane argumentis persuasibilibus hominum huius mundi permoti, perspicere non valent nos aliter iudicare debere. Alii vero, difficultatibus coniugum affecti, illisque subvenire cupientes, rectam tamen viam ad huiusmodi subsidium praestandum non dignoverunt. Alii demum, animis propter lapsus praeteritos fracti, iter illud sublime ac difficile, quod ad fastigium sanctitatis in matrimonio Christiano conducat, amplius tentare non audent. Huc accedit quod non pauci, disceptationibus quibus progressus in novis prolis evitandae methodis, his ultimis annis, ortum dedit, mente confusi sunt. Iamvero per breve spatium temporis dubium exstabat num forte quaedam ex his methodis ab illa anticonceptione quam Ecclesia semper condemnavit, nonnihilo differrent; quapropter Magisterium pronuntiare non potuit, priusquam factum fuerit studium extensivum ac diligens. Nunc vero constat novas illas methodos eundem ~~prope~~ valorem moralem ac priores praeserre.

Quid nobis dicendum est de illa ad quam iamiam rettulimus propositione? Predecessor Noster fel. rec. Pius XI perspicuas normas pastorales circa peccatum abusus matrimonii statuit: quae normae nunquam retractatae sunt. Qui tales proceduras adprobant quales cum praedictis normis componi non possunt, id certo certius faciunt ob rationes quae ipsis plene satisfaciunt. Ideoque nonnisi post accuratissimam investigationem ad hanc devinimus conclusionem, rationes nempe in medio allatas, ob quas viuentes hucusque normae pastorales seponendae essent, nequaquam sufficere dicendas esse.

Rationes propositae ideo non sufficiunt quia normae pastorales a Pio XI in Litteris Encyclicis Casti Connubii statutae, ab hoc legis divinae ac naturalis praeepto immediate descendunt: "~~(Ecclesia Catholica... promulgat:)~~ quemlibet matrimonii usum, in quo exercendo, actus de industria hominum, naturali sua vitae procreandae vi destituatur, Dei et naturae legem infringere, et eos qui tale commiserint, gravis noxae labe commulari (AAS, 22(1930) 560). Et Nos hodie, pari auctoritate muniti, declaramus ac statuimus laudatum praeeptum graviter infringi omni interventu anticonceptivo, vel in uno tantum actu commisso omnique pariter interventu, quo illi processus quibus vita transmittitur, sive actui rite peracto praecedant, sive eundem subsequantur, naturali sua novae vitae procreandae vi, de industria hominum destituantur.

Neque ob pecularia nostrorum temporum adiuncta fas esset hoc praeeptum repudiare, quippe quod non versatur circa valorem humanum ~~secundarium~~, sed "ipsos vitae humanae fontes attingit" (Paulus VI, 23 Iun. 1964: cf. AAS, 56 (1964) 588). Verba quoque Pii XII p.m. de hac materia totum suum valorem adhuc retinent: "Hoc praeeptum hodie plenum suum vigorem obtinet sicuti heri; et idem cras remanebit atque semper; nam humanae legis praeeptum non constituit, sed legem potius naturalem ac divinam exprimit" (AAS, 43 (1951) 843). Quin aliquid vi ac

directo ^

minoris momenti ^

robori derogetur huius "legis fundamentalis quae actum coniugalem relationesque inter coniuges moderatur" (ibid.), aliae etiam normae huic accedendae erunt ac simul cum ea considerandae: normae, inquam, quae aequalem compartium dignitatem personalem ulterius tuentur ac actuum coniugalium integritatem protegunt, quippe quod "donationem mutuam significant et fovent, qua sese invicem laeto gratoque animo locupletant" (Gaudium et Spes, #49). Actus vero coniugalis "obiectivis criteriis, ex personae eiusdemque actuum natura desumptis, determinari debet:", nam simul sumpta haec criteria: "integrum sensum mutuae donationis ac humanae procreationis in contextu veri amoris observent" (Ibid. #51).

Lex fundamentalis de actu et de intima consuetudine coniugum fundatur traditione perenni quae ab ipsis christianismi originibus derivatur. Ecclesia Catholica hoc praeceptum continenter docebat, iterum iterumque promulgavit; Magisterium vero inde ab initio usque ad nostrum saeculum a sanctis Doctoribus, theologisque eruditis, defendebatur quandocumque haec doctrina ~~impugnabatur.~~ ~~Consensus unanims quandocumque haec doctrina impugnabatur.~~ *Stat* → Consensus unanims adfuisse constat inter christianos primaevos qui de hac re agebant; quae praeterea explicita et inhaesitanter tractabatur a quibusdam ecclesiae Patribus, ut, v.g. SS. Augustino et Hieronymo in occidente, S. Joanne Chrysostomo in Oriente.

Nemo ex scriptoribus antiquis, ne antiquissimus quidem, hoc praeceptum tractavit ac si inter christianos esset novitas quaedam, a fonte non-christiano acceptata, vel ac si esset fructus ingenii proprii. E contra, hoc praeceptum semper tractabatur tanquam aliquid traditum; nam ejus materia considerabatur sub luce doctrinae inspiratae S. Scripturarum. Praeterea hoc praeceptum semper edocebatur christianis, vitam suam ducere exoptantibus juxta doctrinas evangelicas, non tanquam statutum quoddam humanum, sed utpote praeceptum legis divinae, praeceptum virtutis castitatis -- virtus quae apud philosophos infideles minime integra servabatur, dum in nova Christi Evangelii moralitate praeeminenter elucebat.

In Novo Testamento, sane, non datur locus explicita enuntians doctrinam quam hic perpendimus. Attamen, tum sacra Evangelia tum Epistolae Apostolorum clarissime illustrent normas essentielles perpetuo valentes vitae christianae, illam rationem agendi proclamantia juxta quam homo integram suam vitam non exclusa corporalitate et sexualitate dirigere debet si, vocationi suae respondens, ad vitam aeternam pervenire possit. Haec moralitas christiana, firmiter in divinis S. Scripturae eloquiis fundata, scutum exstat inexpugnabile eorum qui illud, inter hujus vitae proelium ejusque vicissitudines, prae manibus constanter retinent. Doctrina Catholica de actu maritali et de intima conviventia sponsum, inclusa lege fundamentali supra enuntiata, Patribus Ecclesiae visa est intime conjuncta novae Evangeliorum moralitati, quae moralitas valores excellentiores vitae, sexualitatis, castitatis humanae renovavit. Tam intime

quidem conjugitur hoc praeceptum castitati evangelicae, ut hoc semel relicto, deformationes semper majores progressive et inevitabiliter inducuntur; -- quod clare demonstrat tristis experientia multorum fratrum a nobis separatorum. Permissa contraceptione, iam nunc coguntur approbare, vel saltem tolerare, praxes notabiliter a nova moralitate Christi reaedentes, consociabiles vero sic dictae "Novae Moralitati" nostrae aetatis.

Haec "Nova Moralitas" inculcat sane authenticitatem et "communitatem", valores quae ad dignitatem humanam pertinent, attamen subinde hujus veritatis oblivisci videtur: "Corpore et anima unus, homo per ipsam suam corporalem condicionem elementa mundi materialis in se colligit, ita ut, per ipsum, fastigium suum attingant et ad liberam Creatoris laudem vocem attolant (Dan.3:57-90) Vitam ergo corporalem homini despiciere non licet, sed e contra ipse corpus suum, utpote a Deo creatum et ultima die resuscitandum, bonum et honore dignum habere tenetur." (Gaudium et Spes, n.14.)

Non semper exhibere videtur nova ista moralitas aestimationem justam naturae corporeae et sexualis hominis, quae elementa corporea, utpote essentialiter constituentia personam humanam singulariter unicam, dignitate quadam et sacralitate gaudent: "Indoles vero sexualis hominis necnon humana generandi facultas mirabiliter exsuperant ea quae in inferioribus vitae gradibus habetur; proinde ipsi actus vitae conjugali proprii, secundam germanam dignitatem humanam ordinati, magna observantia reverendi sunt." (Gaudium et Spes, n.51). Acceptatio corporalitatis suae pertinet ad habitudinem mentis secundum quam homo, ut creatura finita, se gerit erga Creatorem suum infinitum. Reverentia erga sexualitatem suam humanam et corpoream propria est Christiani qui per adoptionem est frater Verbi Dei Incarnati, nam hoc corpus resurrecturum, est, destinatum ad vitam aeternam cum Christo.

Nemo Catholicus dubitat competentiam qua gaudet Ecclesia docendi authentice in rebus moralibus sicut in rebus fidei. (Conc. Vat. I, Denz.n.3075 (1840). Quando Ecclesia de moralitate activitatis humanae et corporeae doctrinam pronunciat, praecipue de illa activitate "qua praeter morum disciplinam a Deo statutam, item humanae ipsius vitae procreatio violetur" (Ioannes XXIII, Mater et Magistra, AAS 53 (1961) 446); Quando declarat, explicat et proponit "divinas leges vitae transmittendi" (Gaudium et Spes, n.51); quando saepius reaffirmat "legem fundamentalem actus et relationum conjugalium" (Gaudium et Spes, n.47); quando filiis Ecclesiae conciliariter docet quod "in procreatione regulanda, vias inire non licet, quae a Magisterio, in lege divina explicanda, vias inire non licet, quae in Magisterio, in lege divina explicanda, improbantur" (Gaudium et Spes, n.51 cum nota 14); -- in his omnibus faciendis et docendis, Ecclesia non aliud facit quam implere missionem quam a Domino Nostro ei confidebatur:

"Data est mihi omnis potestas, in coelo et in terra. Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti: Docentes eos servare omnia quaecumque mandavi vobis. Et ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem saeculi." (Mt. 28, 18-20).

Antecessor Noster p.m. Pius XII plane et perspicue exposuit, juxta doctrinam Catholicam, legem moralem Christianam reperiri debere "in lege Creatoris, in uniuscuiusque corde impressa, et in revelatione, i.e. in complexu veritatum a divino Magistro edoctorum. Ambas leges, tum illam in corde inscriptam, nempe legem naturalem, tum veritates et praecepta revelationis supernaturalis, Jesus Redemptor confidebat, tanquam thesaurum moralem humanitatis, Ecclesiae suae, ut ab illa praedicarentur omni creaturae, illustrarentur et transmitterentur, intacta, et defensa ab omni contaminatione et errore, a generatione in generationem" (Pius XII, Allocut. de Conscientia Christiana, AAS, 44 (1952) 272). Idem Pontifex eandem doctrinam Christianam et amplius explanavit: "Ecclesiae potestas nequaquam 're~~rum~~ stricte religiosarum', uti loqui solent, finibus continetur, sed tota quoque legis naturalis materia, institutio, interpretatio, applicatio, quatenus moralis earum ratio attenditur, in eius sunt potestate. Observatio enim legis naturae ex Dei ordinatione spectat ad viam, qua homo ad finem suum, supra naturam tendere debet. Iam vero Ecclesia est hac in via, ad finem quod attinet supra naturam. Hunc modum agendi iam Apostoli, et postea, inde a primis temporibus, Ecclesia semper tenuit et etiam hodie tenet, et quidem non instar ducis et consilarii privati, sed ex mandato et auctoritate Domini..." (Pius XII, Magnificate Dominum AAS 46 (1954) 671-2).

Proinde ut missione legem moralem docendi fungamur quam Redemptor noster Ecclesiae mandavit, et ut omnis dubitatio et mentibus hominum rursus excludatur, Nos hoc praeceptum denuo promulgamus, certi Nos legem Dei ac naturae promulgare quae in terris homines obligat quia prius in caelis eos obstringit.

Etiam si pro certo habemus hoc praeceptum inviolabile esse non ~~ab~~ investigatione mere humana, sed ~~a~~ sp^{er}antia quam Ecclesia a Deo illuminata semper docet' (Paulus VI, All.ad C.I.F., 12.2.66) dum missionem a Christo acceptam implet docendi omnia quaecumque mandavit, tamen fides intellectum quaerit. Quem intellectum et nos desideramus non quasi voluntatem Dei reiciamus nisi eius consilia intellegamus; multo minus speramus nos posse ad significationem existentialem normarum moralium vitae christianae penetrare. Illae enim nos ad vitam aeternam cum Deo ducunt, quam diligentibus se praeparavit, quae omnem experientiam nostram et aspirationes cordium superat. Immo intellectum desideramus quo promptiore animo Deo grates persolvamus qui sua misericordia nos ad se ducat, quoque melius sciamus quem ad modum praeceptum divinum exsequamur.

Consilium perfectionis hoc praeceptum non est, verum con-

dicio essentialis virtutis castitatis christianae. Tantum abest ut amori germano coniugum minetur, ut eum protegat vitamque eius teneram florere sinat, et tamquam primum propugnaculum id circumdat quod sacrum et inviolabile est, vitam humanam innocentem. Quas considerationes cum brevitate percurramus et theologis quibus competit ac philosophis inter fideles discussionem pleniorum relinquamus.

Egoismus hominibus specialiter post-medievalibus, mala plurima intulit. Huic pesti litterae encyclicae Casti Connubii iure signa morbida attribuerunt quae iam per saecula matrimonium afficiunt. Attamen apud nostros coetaneos sentitur 'mutuarum inter homines necessitudinum multiplicatio...ad quam inducendam hodierni technici progressus plurimum conferunt.' (Gaudium et Spes, 23) Ideoque magis in dies intellegitur personam humanam vi existentiae suae subjectivitate transcendere oportere, non modo se realitati obiectivae subiciendo, sed etiam necessitudines cum aliis personis formando.

Matrimonium et familia communitates sunt imperfectae in quantum natura sua communitatem maiorem societatis civilis requirunt; praeterea in Corpore Mystico non constituunt nisi cellulam, in Populo Dei ecclesiam minimam. Nihilominus hae relationes maxime immediatae clarissime inlustrant quem ad modum personalitas uniuscuiusque nostrum non existat nisi in communi-
one cum aliis personis, non floreat nisi participatio nutua habetur mentium ac cordium inter personas communitatis. Itaque cum Deo placuit ut nobis Se revelaret, aliquid vitae eius interioris attingere valebamus, ex relatione inter patrem et filium uti nobis nota erat; et id quod hominibus proposuit intellegere poteramus ex relatione nobis nota quae inter sponsum *et* sponsam obtinet.

Ut amor humanus germanus sit, necesse est ut ligamina nostrae communitatis cum aliis non violentur. Nihil nisi vestigium individualismi hodiernos impedit quominus agnoscant quantum anticonceptio relationes intimas amoris humani violet: amorem creativum hominum viventium erga eos adhuc exstituras, et foedus coniugale quae natura sua ad hunc amorem creativum ordinatur et eo veluti suo fastigio coronatur. (cfr. ibid.48)

" In officio humanam vitam transmittendi atque educandi, quod tamquam propria eorum missio considerandum est, coniuges sciunt se cooperatores esse amoris Dei Creatoris eiusque veluti interpretes" (ibid.50). Actus coniugalis ab plures rationes in laude habendus est e quibus haec minima non est quod quotiescumque ad initium vitae personae novae ducere potest, tendit ad cooperationem divinam modo specialissimo conciliandam, nam unaquaeque persona quam Deo placuit ut ad existentiam vocet, expressio unica est amoris eius creativi. Itaque dum hic actus ejusque sequelae toti communitati humanae intersunt,

cum eius bonum agatur; curae singulari Deo sunt et communitati creaturarum quam ad se ordinat, et in primis illo Populo quem e creaturis elegit sibi singulariter dilectum.

Anticonceptio est fructus voluntatis quae inceptio[n]i novae vitae adversatur. Iamvero etiam inceptio vitae humanae sacra et inviolabilis est. Ea interventio quae ad conceptionem impediendam fit, non tantum actum ac processum biologicum aggreditur. (Gaudium et Spes 51) Talis interventio vitam humanam in antecessum aggreditur quia obstat quominus nova persona fiat. Cum bonitas in ordine morali non tantum ab eo pendeat ut sequelae bonae praevaleant, sed multo magis a rectitudine voluntatis, haec agendi ratio etiam prius immoralis est quam alicui nocumentum infert, nam voluntatem supponit quae inceptio[n]i vitae humanae potius adversatur quam sit aperta. Non nimis est asserere voluntatem ad inceptio[n]em vitae aggrediendam non multum distare a voluntate ad vitam ipsam aggrediendam. Cum bonum vitae tam fundamentale sit humanae personae, cumque inceptio vitae constituat continuum quid cum vita ipsa, (sicut profectio in iter sit continua cum ipso itinere), aggredi inceptio[n]em vitae, etiamsi non tam grave est quam vitam ipsam aggredi, huic assimilatur in eo quod peccatum grave est, neque componi potest cum spiritu amoris quo vita christiana animanda est, sine quo amicitia animae cum Deo rumpitur.

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"In deo vero
gratias
habentur."

Maximo sane rigore et sine ulla exceptione omnem actum damnamus qui vitam humanam inde a momento conceptionis aggreditur, sive ad nascentias moderandas sive alia quavis de causa ponitur, sive ad nascentias moderandas sive alia quavis de causa ponitur (cfr. Gaudium et Spes 27, 47, 51). Quia actus huiusmodi inter peccata gravissima sunt quae poenas spirituales gravissimas merentur, cum nullo modo componi possint cum corde quod ad Deum constanter conversum est, unusquisque catholicus tenetur non modo ut eos fugiat sed etiam ut obstet quominus fiant vel fieri sinantur. Contra hoc scelus foedissimum pugnare idem est ac generose pro vita innocenti pugnare, pro filiis Dei qui maxime defensione carent, qui maxime corda nostra ad se attrahunt qui maxime reverentiam merentur propter ius suum ad vitam ut ad Dei cognitionem, amorem servitium veniant.

Sunt qui iudicent interventus licitas esse possent, qui vitam humanam jam existentem non aggrediuntur, sed quorum obiectum est impedire inceptio[n]em novae alicujus vitae humanae, -- dummodo illi interventus ad aliquam congeriem totalem actuum maritalium pertinent, quae adhuc ad procreationem et proli educationem dirigi potest, imo et quae aliquo sensu adjuvari potest per evitatum conceptionem, quae maturo iudicio inopportunum putatur. In decisione de prole habenda necne, verum est quod "hoc iudicium ipsi ultimatum coniuges coram Deo ferre debent." (Gaudium et Spes, #50). Attamen, voluntas quae contra bonum in actu individuo dirigitur, non recta efficitur ex eo quod ille actus cum pluribus aliis qui sunt boni consociatur;

secus, omnis actus, etiam pessimus, bonus redditur statim ac invenitur aliqua actuum consociatio ad quam pertinet, quae ut totum quid ad bonum dirigitur. Saepe tamen consilium generale ea sola ratione vitiatur quod inter actus ad eius executionem necessarios, unus invenitur malus.

Conjuges "semper regi debere conscientia ipsi legi divinae conformanda, dociles erga Ecclesiae Magisterium, quod illam sub luce Evangelii authentice interpretatur." (Ibid.) Medium inhonestum a fine quantumvis bono in quem ducit, numquam justificatur; nam talis finis perfectae Dei bonitati numquam aequivaleret, e contra fiat malum praecise quia a voluntate procedit, quae ad illius bonitatem violandam paratur. Exempli gratia: eligere infantem in utero occidere, etiam ad vitam maternam salvandam, esset tale medium improbum, quae bonitatem divinam violat, violando vitam humanam innocentem. In ultimo iudicii die, Dominus dicet: "Etiam mihi illud fecisti". Eligere efficaciter intervenire ad conceptionem impediendam similiter ostendit voluntatem violandi divinam bonitatem, nam talis voluntas est contraria bono fundamentalis humano, nam ipsa vitae inceptio sane est bonum personae humanae maxime fundamentale et sine qua non omnium aliorum ejus bonorum.

Usus periodi agenesios, sicut decessor noster, Pius XII, p.m. clarissime exposuit, legem fundamentalem vitae conjugalis non violat. Talis tamen modus agendi a contraceptione toto celo differt. Conjuges mutuo consentientes, propter rationem proportionatam, licite possunt ab unione maritali ad tempus abstinere, quin voluntatem immoralem adversus vitae inceptionem induant; nam conjuges ad bonum novae vitae producendum non semper obligantur, sed quovis tempore requiruntur illam revereri. Nihilominus, hanc conjuges facere debent cum prudentia vere Christiana, quae fiduciam in providentia divina et spiritum generositatem et sacrificii implicat. (cf. ibid.)

Hodie, valde difficile est pro aliquibus conjugibus in sua vita maritali proportionem ordinatam et concordiam debitam attingere; attamen "veram contradictionem inter divinas leges vitae transmittendae et germani amoris coniugalis fovendi adesse non posse." (Ibid., #51) Compatitur sane Mater Ecclesia cum illis conjugibus qui, adimplentes castitatis conjugalis requisita, multa ardua inveniunt. Fundet orationes incessanter tota Ecclesia, ut Deus talibus conjugibus suam gratiam et fortitudinem largiatur. Illos, a quibus id Deus exigit, hortamur vitam degendam etiam heroicam. (cf Pius XII, ad Obstetrices, AAS, 43 847); cum illis laetamur qui ingressi sunt hanc "longam viam ad sanctificationem, quae nutritur gaudiis et sacrificiis cotidianis, vitae apparenter ordinariae dummodo a lege divina directae, et amore pervasae: (Paulus VI, Allocutiad C.I.F., Feb.12, 1966)

Illi sane qui mediis peccandi servatis, ~~in~~ ⁱⁿico ad peccandum dispositi judicari debent, ad sanctitatem eodem tempore progredi nequeunt. Sed conjuges, qui virtutem castitatis excolere habitualiter conantur, qui illam a Deo studiose de-~~po~~scunt, qui illud auxilium, quaerunt et suscipiunt, quod ex ~~hunc~~ eis magis magisque praesto erit ~~al~~libus conjugibus spem et animum dare oportet, etiam quando ex fragilitate lapsi sint; nec a sacramentis vivificantibus Penitentiae et Eucharistiae cohiberi debent. Contritio vera et sincera potius in dilectione Dei et in desiderio Ei placendi quam in repugnantia a peccato fundatur. Deliberata rejectio mandatorum Dei amantissimi non est nimis facile praesumenda in illis qui habitualiter Ei placere contendunt.

Verumtamen, ad veram significationem contraceptione intellegendam, conjuges Christianos animum intendere oportet ad hoc, quod actus, cujus culpabilitas propter debilitatem mitigatur, vix oriri potest ex vero amore, quem in amplexu maritali exprimere volunt; tali enim actui ~~deest~~ ^{deest} illa libertas, quae propria est communioni dilectionis inter personas genuinae. Quivis actus peccaminosus, quantumvis ejus gravitas ex debilitate mitigatur, eodem tempore et secundeum eundem gradum deficiet a norma comunions humanae, quae inter conjuges amantes et in Christo conjunctos debita est.

Ut conjuges multo vexati adjuventur, volumus informationes jam acquisite in unum colligi et coordinari; nova educationis curricula efformari et jam existentia large extendi programmata indagacionis scientificae ("research-projects") ad cogniciones utiles detegendas praeparari et ad executionem mandari. Indagationes scientificae omnino necessariae sunt, praesertim in physiologia, ad praebendum fundamentum adhuc solidius pro usu periodi agenseos; in psychologia, ad inveniendam rationem optimam colendi amore ⁱⁿ simul ac sui ipsius dominium; in theologia morali, ad plenius investiganda illa impedimenta libertatis quae a scientiis modernis deteguntur, ut, tali scientia illuminati, impedimenta ista diminui possint, interim vero nostra aestimatio deficientis responsabilitatis humanae accuratior fiat. Praeterea, ultiores investigationes theologicae requiruntur, tum eorum quae ad processus vitae generativos pertinent, (ut possibilitas legitime regulandi hos processus magis innotescat), tum totius doctrinae Christianae de sexualitate et castitate.

Conjuges, qui rem perlucide considerant, intelligent quod ~~usus~~ ^{usus} illiciti contra generationem ipsum amorem nuptialem profanant (Gaudium-Spes, 47) Christus Dominus hunc amorem instituit secundum normam et exemplar Suae unionis cum Ecclesia. Amor conjugalis, cum tali exemplo, "proprio matrimonii opere singulariter exprimitur et perficitur" (Ibid. 49). Unio Christi cum Ecclesia in actu absoluto amoris sacrificialis fundatur, quo Seipsum pro Ecclesia obtulit. (cf Eph.5:25). Simili modo, actus genuinus amoris conjugalis reflectere debet illam absolutam indolem mutuae donationis sui ipsius, quam amor ille exprimere et

colere desiderat; e contra, interventus contraceptivus hanc reflectionem vix potest intactam relinquere. Per consensum mutuum, quo pactum amoris conjugalis constituitur, conjuges non eo ipso jus ad quemlibet modum agendi dant et accipiunt, sed tantum jus ad veros actus maritales "quibus coniuges intime et caste inter se uniuntur" (Gaudium et Spes, 49), *vel quibus talis unio caste foretetur.*

Matrimonium et actus conjugalis inveniuntur inter relationes humanas maxime intimas. Relationes tamen inter personas assimilari non oportet rerum manipulationi, qua una res alia mere utitur. Relatio inter personas debet esse vera conversatio, quaedam communio corporis et spiritus, mentis et cordis. Matrimonium et actus conjugalis inventiones mere humanae non sunt; instituta enim sunt cum Dominus Deus virum et mulierem creavit: Hominis non est hanc institutionem a Deo datam emendare, ~~reconstituere~~.

"Hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis, et caro de carne mea; ... Quomobrem relinquet homo patrem suum et matrem, et adhaerebit uxori suae; et erunt duo in carne una." Gen.2: 23-24.

Neque hominis est statuere pro quolibet actu sensum seu significationem quam ille vult talem actum habere. Locutio equidem inventio spiritus humani est, qui sonis et signis suas significationes imponere potest. Unitas vero personae humanae realitatem etiam corporis sicut et spiritus continet; proinde dantur quidam gestus, ab hominibus non inventi, quorum sensus seu intentum ab homine pertractare vel mutare ad libitum non potest, quia sensus specificus est naturaliter insitus quibusdam actibus personae corporeis.

Spiritus hominis jactare potest se privare posse gestum singularem qui est actus conjugalis, significatione et efficacitate sua generativa quin simul privetur sua significatione unitiva amoris. Hinc sibi fingit se aggredi solummodo actum et processum biologicum, conservando istam reciprocam sui donationem quam actus exprimere vellet.

Re vera, tamen, aggreditur integritatem humanam sui ipsius actus personalis, falsificando foedus conjugale quo sponsi hunc actum sibi invicem voverunt. Nam vita hominis est reapse vita corporalis, et significatio huius totalis communitatis conjugalis, et communionis vitae inter coniuges, pendet ex significatione unitatis illius "duo in una carne."

Omnis Christianus etiam oportet semper recordetur suum corpus esse templum Spiritus Sancti. Temerarium est exspectare matrimonium sanctum et felix, virtus castitatis Christianae totis viribus si a pueritia non colitur. Omnes iuvenes Christiani compertum habeant oportet peccata contra castitatem ante matrimonium commissa grandi obstaculo esse posse illi felici matrimonio et bonae familiae quae iure meritoque desiderant. Si vero virtus castitatis assidue a pueritia colitur, nulla difficultas quae in matrimonio se manifestat, in solubilis ~~judicanda~~ esset. (cf. *ibid.* #51). *Consideranda*

Norunt omnes coniuges periodos plus minusve diuturnas evitare non posse in quibus cogentur prorsus abstinere ab actu coniugali; nam impedimentum oriri poterit vel ex absentia necessaria, vel ex rationibus psychologicis, aut ex morbo physico aut ex cautelis quae tempore puerperii imponuntur vel quae interdum durante praegnantia diu exiguntur, aut ex incertitudine de possibilitate conceptionis eo tempore quando responsabiliter iudicatur conceptionem non esse opportunam. Tantum in hoc ultimo casu anticonceptio videretur offerre solutionem illis qui talem gerunt morem. Coniuges, vero, qui secundum legem amoris coniugalis vivunt, videbunt hanc apparentem solutionem esse reiciendam, quandoquidem impedimentum morale, etsi invisibile verius et immobilius est quocumque alio.

Coniuges qui propter unam alteramve rationem abstinere ab acto maritali requiruntur, intimam vitam conjugalem plene interrumpere non coguntur; eam potius continuare debent omnibus aliis gestibus vitae conjugalis qui castitati sunt plene consentanei. Praeterea, coniugibus solatio esse potest consideratio quod tam abstinentia casta ab actu coniugali quam eius usus castus, vera expressio est donationis mutuae qua coniuges sese invicem locupletant. Haec amoris expressio quoque est specificè propria homini, cuius corpus et spiritus unam personam formant; neque angeli neque animalia hujus expressionis sunt capaces.

Ille qui incapax est abstinentiae eo quod nondum satis virtutem castitatis perfecit, non est plene capax amorem germanum in actibus suis conjugalibus exprimendi. Nam qui non est sui dominus, servus est cuiusdam automatismi genitalis qui, in humana natura sauciata, oritur, pro dolor, ex impulsibus male educatis et ex ambitu in quo illi impulsus omni parte venaliter corrumpuntur, vel saltem impudice concitantur. Perfectus actus amoris, tamen, debet esse totaliter liber; plenissimo sensu, esse debet actus ipsius personae. Illi soli qui iam adepti sunt dominium sui, possunt gestu amoris conjugalis exprimere plenam significationem quam hic gestus habere debet. Quando ille qui non est sui ipsius dominus, talem actum exercere contendit eius conatus ad perfectam expressionem amoris, (etsi nullum praeceptum in casu graviter violatur), certo deficiet. Actus eius quandam ambiguitatem exhibebit quia semper obscurum remanebit utrum homo sit dominus sui desiderii aut eius servus, utrum auctor sit actus vere humani an impulsui automatico respondeat, utrum se comparti donet, aut compartem egoistice in suam propriam utilitatem convertit. Coniuges qui se invicem vere amant, ut finem habeant oportet "caritatem reciprocam qua uterque quaerit bonum alterius, eiusque praevenit bona desideria, potiusquam alteri imponat voluntatem suam propriam" (Paulus VI, All. ad C.I.F., d. 12 februarii a. 1966).

Peccatum nos ne percellat, nam scimus nos esse debiles. Moralitas catholica admittit, immo asseverat hominem solum non posse adimplere legem moralem sicque bonum fieri. Illas exigentias adimplere homini impossibile est, Deo autem possibile, et

homini in Dei amicitiam vocato et in filium adoptato. Sic libertas humana realis est et gratia divina necessaria est. Doctrinae morali Catholicae fidei proprium est ut plene accipiantur ambae veritates; ut accipiantur, sincere admittatur oportet fragilitas humana. Homo debilis est et inermis; tamen quantumvis debiles ac inermes simus, fortes efficimur atque capaces quando Deus nos suos amicos facit. Qui vel minime diminueret visionem profundam et claram quam nobis praebet nostra fides de imbecillitate humana, perderet eodem momento fidem in mysterio gratiae divinae qua libertas hominis, quae vulnerata est etiam in capacitate perfectionem humanam adipiscendi, transformatur in capacitatem respondendi vocationi ad vitam divinam participandam.

Clarum est crism per quam transivimus non fuisse consequentiam difficultatum tantum intellectualium; eamque iterum atque iterum redituram esse nisi occurramus difficultatibus moralibus, earumque fontes multiplices investigentur. Verum sane est nos non posse sperare fore ut peccatum ex hoc mundo eradicetur, cum id ex nostra propria vita numquam eradicare possumus. Tamen ea quae hominibus impossibilia videntur, Deo adiuvante possibilia redduntur.

Vita Christiana non est "realistica" nec id fieri debet; Evangelium est stultitia pro hominibus huius mundi. Nos cum fiducia exspectamus id quod sine praesuppositis fidei est somnium irrealisticum adimpletum iri, nam vidimus id quod erat impossibile iterum iterumque accidere, decurrente historia mirificam quam Christus in Seipsum concentrat.

EXAMPLE OF A POSSIBLE STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE CONCERNING CONTRACEPTION

Contemporary man values authenticity. Thus Christians are ever more eager that their lives conform to their faith. But for the same reason, non-believers will no longer pay lip-service to moral norms they do not believe in. Consequently, the moral standards of the non-believing world are steadily diverging from the moral standard of Christians--the law of Christ, which assumes the law of nature to itself just as the Person of Christ assumed human nature to Himself.

Contemporary man has suffered and done much evil. The wars of our century have occasioned crimes the guilt of which somehow touches almost all of us. Our sensitivity to the sacredness of human life is deadened, and we look almost with equanimity upon widespread violations of it. We also tremble at the thought of another great war. In our trembling we draw closer to those near to us, and try to forget our peril. Thus family life becomes more intimate--good comes from evil--but at the same time man's sexual ^{ity} ~~capacity~~ is abused as never before in a desperate quest for intimacy and escape.

Contemporary man has achieved much by his technological genius. Yet that genius also threatens mankind, and we fear we may turn it against ourselves to our own destruction. May God never permit such a war! But we also should fear when many men begin to view human life as if it were a mere product of human ingenuity, and when some even speak of "changing human nature," as if a new model could be introduced from time to time. The Christian knows that however much human life and culture may advance according to the plan of divine providence, God created mankind with a single nature to be a single family; our salvation depends on this: that we share the same human nature the Word of God assumed in Christ.

Men of this world--sincere humanists who lack faith--~~are able to approve~~ ^{are able to approve} ~~certain practices,~~ ^{in contraception,} for to judge the rightness of acts they consider only the concrete consequences experience suggests may actually occur. In this view, morality is a mere means to human happiness, an aid to order and progress in society. Such men have inadequate visions of human perfection, for they hope for nothing beyond what mankind by itself might achieve.

^{of reason and} Christians, however, know that the rightness of acts requires rightness of will, and a man's will is good and right only when he is in love with the goodness of God. A person animated by such love strives toward God in Himself and cherishes every reflection of Him in creation, especially the image of God in those creatures who can know and love Him--in oneself and in other persons.

In our view as Christians, morality is the rule of life which befits men called to share in divinity. We want human perfection to remain open to the transcendent, and so we set limits which may not be transgressed. For example, we see that fornication and abortion are always wrong, though men of this world think otherwise. When human ability fails, we call for God's help; when human judgment asserts that the right is foolish, we trust in God's care.

The Apostles taught the precepts of chastity in a world where few appreciated this virtue. Conjugal chastity, the strongest shield, the best nourishment, and the truest expression of conjugal love, prevents exploitation of persons from masquerading as affection and sets for the couple standards of mutual responsibility. We should not be discouraged by crises that occur in the accomplishment of this aspect of Christ's teaching. It is only human to judge that the ideal is too high, and that rather than being realized, it must be lowered. Yet marriage, as a sacrament of Christ which perfects the meaning of authentic conjugal love, has been better appreciated in our century than ever before.

The encyclical, Casti Connubii, expressed and fostered this growing appreciation, which developed even further, especially in regard to conjugal love and the responsibility of parents, in the teaching of Vatican Council II. Yet these teachings do not finish the work to be done. Quite the contrary; they only begin it. They give us a task and point ahead. We must now accept the task and carry it forward, for it belongs to our share in the work of the Redemption.

What is the next step? Some loyal and faithful Catholics have suggested that it is to approve contraception, to change the precept taught uninterruptedly by the Church forbidding it. For this suggestion there are many motives. Some, moved by persuasive arguments offered by men of this world, fail to see that our judgment must be different. Some, affected by sympathy for troubled couples, and wishing to be helpful to them, have not discerned the right way to help. Some, discouraged by past failures, fear to test themselves any further on the high and difficult path that leads to the summit of holiness in Christian matrimony. In recent years many have become confused by discussions occasioned by the development of new methods of contraception. Some of these methods for a time were thought perhaps to differ from ^{that} contraception ^{which} ~~such as~~ the Church always has condemned, and so the magisterium could not speak decisively until extensive and diligent studies had been completed. Now, however, it has become clear that the new methods have the same moral significance as the old.

What are we to say of the suggestion that has been made? Pius XI laid down very clear pastoral directives regarding the sin of the abuse of marriage, and these directives have never been withdrawn. Those who approved practices inconsistent with such directives surely must have had reasons which seemed to them adequate. Hence only after the most careful consideration has it been concluded that the reasons given for setting aside existing pastoral directives are by no means adequate.

The reasons given are inadequate because the pastoral directives Pius XI laid down in Casti Connubii flow directly from this precept of divine and natural law: "Any use of marriage whatever, in the exercise of which the act is deprived through human industry of its natural power of procreating life, violates the law of God and of nature, and those who commit anything of this kind are marked with the stain of grave sin." (AAS, 22 [1930], 560) And we declare with equal authority that this precept is gravely violated by such a contraceptive intervention even against a single act or by any intervention by means of which the life-giving processes which precede or follow an act properly performed would be purposely deprived of their natural power of procreating life.

This precept cannot be denied because of the special conditions of our time. It is concerned not with any ~~value extrinsic to the human person~~ ^{subordinate human value,} but with the ~~very coming into being of a human person.~~ ^{touching the sources of human life. (Paul VI, June 23, 1964).} The words of Pius XII on this point remain true: "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 the human law but is the expression of a law which is natural and divine." (AAS, 43 [1951], 843) Without limiting the force of this "fundamental law governing the marital act and conjugal relations" (Ibid.), certainly there always should be added to it and considered in conjunction with it other norms which further protect the equal personal dignity of the spouses and guard the integrity of marital acts inasmuch as they "signify and foster the mutual gift of the spouses, that gift by which they enrich each other with joyous and grateful heart." (Gaudium et Spes, §49) The marital act "ought to be determined by [these] objective criteria drawn from the nature of the person and of his acts," for together these criteria "subserve the integral sense of mutual donation and of human procreation in the context of true love." (Ibid., §51)

The fundamental law governing the marital act and conjugal relations is warranted by an uninterrupted tradition which extends to the very beginning. The Catholic Church has continuously taught and repeatedly promulgated this precept, and from the earliest times even to our own day the sacred Magisterium has been defended by the Church's saintly Doctors and learned theologians whenever her teaching in this matter has come under attack. Unanimous agreement is found among the first Christians who reflected on this question, and it is treated explicitly and definitively by Fathers of the Church such as Sts. Augustine and Jerome, and by the great Father of the Church in the East, St. John Chrysostom.

None of the early writers, not even the very earliest, treats this precept as if it were a novelty among Christians adopted from some non-Christian source, or as if it were the work of his own ingenuity. On the contrary, the precept always is treated as something received, for the matter with which it is concerned is viewed in the light of the inspired teachings of Holy Writ. Moreover, the precept always was taught to Christians, who wish to live their lives in accord with these same inspired teachings, not as a human ordinance, but as a precept of divine law, as one of the precepts of the virtue of chastity, a virtue not found in its purity in other ideals of life, but prominently included in the ^{ideal} proclaimed in the Gospel of Christ.

True it is that no single passage of the New Testament seems to contain in explicit form the enunciation of the precept we are considering. However, the Holy Gospels and Epistles do contain, in very clear form, an essential and ever-valid guide of Christian life. They declare the manner in which man must live, in regard to his bodily existence and sexuality as well as in regard to many other important matters, if he is to attain eternal life in responding to his vocation as a Christian. This Christian morality, firmly anchored in divine teachings expressed in Holy Writ, is a lifeline which saves those who hold fast to it as they struggle through the torrent of life. The Catholic teaching in regard to the marital act and conjugal relations, ^{including} ~~especially~~ the fundamental law enunciated above, ^{was seen by} ~~is one strand~~

the Fathers of the Church as intimately linked with the new morality of the Gospels and Epistles, a morality which set a new value on human life, human sexuality and human chastity. In fact, it is linked so closely that to deny it leads progressively and inevitably to greater and greater denials of the norms of Christian chastity, -- as is clearly demonstrated by the experience of many of our separated brethren. Having permitted contraception, they now find themselves approving, or at least tolerating, practices very far removed from the new morality of Christ, though compatible with the so-called "New Morality" of our own times.

This "New Morality" indicates, it is true, authenticity and community, values which pertain to human dignity, but it seems to forget at times that "Man, though made of body and soul, is one. . . For this reason, man is not allowed to despise his bodily life. Rather, he is obliged to regard his body as good and honorable since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day." (Gaudium et Spes, §14) Nor does the "New Morality" always esteem rightly man's bodily existence and sexuality, which, even considered as bodily constituents of the uniquely one human person, enjoy a certain dignity and sacredness. "Man's sexuality and man's life-giving powers marvellously excel what is found in the lower forms of life; therefore, the acts themselves which are proper to conjugal life, and are ordered according to genuine human dignity, must be treated with great reverence." (Ibid., §51) The acceptance of his bodily condition belongs to the attitude that man, as a finite creature, should have toward his Infinite Creator. Reverence for his human, bodily sexuality is proper to a Christian, who is a brother by adoption with the Incarnate Word of God, for this body will rise again, and is destined to live forever with Christ.

No Catholic doubts the competence of the Church to teach authoritatively in matters of morals as well as in matters of faith. (Vat. I, Denz. 3075 [1840]) When the Church pronounces on the morality of human, bodily activity, especially that activity by which "the procreation of human life itself is violated (John XXIII, Mater et Magister, AAS 53 [1961] 446)"; when she declares, explains and inculcates "the divine laws governing the transmission of human life (Gaudium et Spes, §51)"; when she reiterates "the fundamental law governing the marital act and conjugal relations (Pius XII, Midwives, AAS 43 [1951]⁸⁴³)"; when, in accordance with that law, she rejects "illicit practices against generation (Gaudium et Spes, §47)" and teaches the faithful that "it is not permitted in the regulation of procreation to follow paths disapproved by the Magisterium in its explanation of the Divine Law (Gaudium et Spes, §51, with note 14)"; she is but fulfilling the mission entrusted to her by Our Divine Savior:

"All authority in heaven and on earth, he said, has been given to me; you therefore, must go out, making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all the commandments I have given you. And behold I am with you all through the days that are coming, until the consummation of the world." (Mt. 28: 18-20 [Knox])

Our predecessor, Pius XII, has clearly explained, in accordance with Catholic doctrine, that the Christian moral law is to be found "in the law of the Creator, engraved in the heart of every man, and in revelation, that is, in all the truths and precepts the divine Master taught. Both of these--the natural law written in the heart and the truths and precepts of supernatural revelation--Jesus, Our Redeemer, gave to His Church as the moral treasure of humanity in order that she might preach them to all creatures, explain them, and hand them on intact and safeguarded from all contamination and error from one generation to another." (Pius XII, Message on Christian Conscience, AAS 44 [1952] 272) The same Pontiff explained this Christian teaching still further: "The power of the Church is not bound by the limits of 'matters strictly religious,' as they say, but the whole matter of the natural law, its foundation, its interpretation, its application, so far as their moral aspect extends, 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 afterward 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 adviser, but in virtue of the Lord's command and authority. . ." (Pius XII, Magnificate Dominum, AAS 46 [1954] about 672)

And therefore, to fulfill the mission of teaching the moral law entrusted to the Church by Our Savior, and to exclude once more all doubt from the minds of men, We promulgate anew the precept stated above in the certain knowledge that we promulgate a law of God and of nature, which binds men on earth because it ~~binds~~ binds them first in heaven.

Though our certitude of the inviolability of this precept derives not from mere human inquiry, but from "a wisdom which the Church, illumined by God, always has taught," (Paul VI, All. to C.I.F., Feb. 12, 1966) as she has carried out her Christ-appointed mission to teach everything He had commanded, still faith seeks understanding. This understanding we desire, but not as if we would not accept the will of God if we did not comprehend His purposes. Much less do we expect to penetrate fully the existential meaning of the moral norms of Christian life, since these norms lead us to eternal life with God, which He has prepared for those who love Him, and which surpasses all our experience and the aspirations of our hearts. Rather, we desire understanding in order to stimulate our gratitude for the loving-kindness with which God leads us to Himself, and in order to help us to know better how to fulfill the divine precept.

The precept in question is not a counsel of perfection; rather it is an essential requirement for the virtue of Christian chastity. Far from being a threat to genuine conjugal love, this precept is a shelter under which its delicate life can flower. This precept, moreover, is the first line of defense in the protection which surrounds what is sacred and inviolable--innocent human life. Let us consider these points briefly, leaving a detailed discussion of them to those whose proper office it is: the theologians and the philosophers among the faithful.

Modern man has suffered very greatly from egoistic individualism. To this plague, the Encyclical Casti Connubii rightly attributed many of the morbid symptoms that have afflicted modern marriage. But contemporary man experiences a "growing interdependence of men one on the other, a development promoted chiefly by modern technical advances." (Gaudium et Spes, §23) For this reason, contemporary man has an ever-growing appreciation of the truth that the existence of the human person requires that he transcend his subjectivity not only in submitting to objective reality, but also in relating himself to other persons.

Marriage and the family are imperfect communities in that they naturally require the larger community of civil society. Moreover, marriage and the family form only a cell in the Mystical Body; in the People of God they are the littlest ecclesia. Yet these most immediate relationships are the clearest examples of the manner in which the personality of each of us exists only in bonds of communion with other persons, and can flourish only by a mutual sharing of minds and hearts between persons in a community. This is why, when God chose to reveal Himself to us, we were able to apprehend something of His inner life in terms of the relationship between father and son as we know it, and we were able to appreciate something of His proposal to mankind in terms of the relationship between bridegroom and bride with which we are familiar.

Authenticity in human love demands that we not violate the bonds of our community with others; nothing but a passing remnant of individualism prevents many men of today from discerning how greatly contraception violates the most intimate relationships of human love: the creative love of men now living for those yet to come, and the conjugal covenant which by its very nature is ordained to this creative love and crowned by it. (Cf. ibid., §48)

"Parents should regard as their proper mission the task of transmitting human life and educating those to whom it has been transmitted. They should realize that they are thereby cooperators with the love of God the Creator, and are, so to speak, the interpreters of that love." (Ibid., §50) The conjugal act must be honored with great reverence for several reasons, not the least of which is that whenever this act might lead to the beginning of the life of a new person it tends to enlist the cooperation of God in a very special way, for each single person whom God has wished to summon into existence is a unique expression of His creative love. ~~_____~~ (Cf. Pius XII)

All. to Newlyweds
March 5, 1941 ~~_____~~ Thus, while this act and its implications are of interest to the individuals concerned, and of great concern to the human community

at large, since its good also is at stake, they are of special interest to God and to the community of His creatures which He ordains to Himself, and especially to that People whom God has chosen from among His creatures to be ^His very own.

Contraception springs from a will turned against the beginning of a new human life, and even the beginning of human life is sacred and inviolable. Behavior which intervenes to prevent conception does not merely attack a biological act and process. "The sexual characteristics of man and the human faculty of reproduction wonderfully exceed the dispositions of lower forms of life." (Gaudium et Spes, §51) Such an intervention attacks human life in advance, by preventing a new person from coming into being. Because moral goodness depends not merely upon a balance in favor of good consequences, but much more on rightness of will, behavior such as this, even before it actually harms anyone, already is immoral, for it presupposes a will turned against the beginning of human life rather than a will open to it. It is no exaggeration to say that a will to attack the beginning of life is not far removed from a will to attack life itself. Since the good of life is so fundamental to the human person, and since the beginning of life is continuous with life itself just as the ~~departure~~ departure on a journey is continuous with the journey itself, an attack upon the beginning of life, though not so grave as an attack upon life itself, is similar to it in being a serious sin, incompatible with the spirit of love which must animate a Christian's life, the spirit of love without which the soul's friendship with God is broken.

Of course, We condemn most rigorously and without qualification every act which directly attacks human life from the very moment of conception, whether such an act be done for the sake of birth regulation or for any other reason whatsoever. (Cf. Gaudium et Spes, §27, 47, 51) Every Catholic not only must avoid such acts, for they are among the gravest of sins which truly deserve the severest of spiritual penalties since they can in no way be reconciled with a heart habitually turned toward God, but also must oppose such acts and their permission. To fight against this horrible crime is to fight a noble battle for innocent life, for the most defenseless and appealing of God's children, who most especially deserve respect for their right to live, that they may know God, love Him, and serve Him in life.

Some have thought that interventions which do not attack life already existing but which aim to prevent the beginning of a new human life may be morally licit in some cases, provided that such interventions belong to the whole group of marital acts, which may still be directed to the procreation and education of offspring, and even in a sense aided by the avoidance of a conception which responsible judgment considers untimely. In deciding whether to have a child, it is true that "the parents themselves should ultimately make this judgment in the sight of God." (Ibid., §50) However, a will directed against a good in a single act does not become right because that act is grouped with many others which are good; otherwise, every act, no matter how evil, becomes good as soon as one finds some group of acts to which it belongs that happen to have a right direction on the whole. Yet often the only defect of a policy is that there is a single evil act among the means essential to reach the end it proposes.

Spouses "must always be governed according to a conscience dutifully conformed to the divine law itself, and should be submissive to the Church's teaching office, which authentically interprets that law in the light of the Gospel." (Ibid.) An evil means is never justified by the end to which it leads, however good that end may be, for the end is never equivalent to the perfect goodness of God, while the means is evil precisely because it flows from a will ready to violate that goodness. The choice to kill an unborn infant, for example, even to save the mother's life, is such an evil means, and it violates divine goodness by violating innocent human life. On the last day, the Lord will say, "You did it also to Me." The choice to intervene effectively to prevent conception similarly is a will to violate divine goodness, because it is a will against the dignity of the human person, who is an image of God, since the very beginning of life is the most fundamental good of the human person, and the sine qua non of all the rest.

As Our predecessor, Pius XII, most clearly taught, the use of the infertile period does not violate the fundamental law of conjugal life. Such a mode of acting is completely different from contraception. For a good reason a couple may abstain from conjugal relations for a time by mutual agreement without assuming ^{an immoral} ~~a perverse~~ attitude toward the beginning of life, since ~~the~~ ^{the} married couples ~~are~~ not at all times required to achieve the good of a new life, but they are required at every moment to respect it. Even so, couples should make this decision with true Christian prudence, which includes trust in divine providence, and a spirit of generosity and sacrifice. (Cf. ibid.)

AAS 43[145]847
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At present it is very difficult for some couples to achieve the right balance and a proper harmony in conjugal life, but "a true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to authentic conjugal love." (Ibid., §51) The Church sympathizes with the plight of couples who face difficulties in fulfilling the requirement of conjugal chastity. Let the entire Church pray incessantly that God will grant His grace and strength to every such couple. We exhort those of whom God requires it to live with heroism (cf. Pius XII, Midwives, in 41); We rejoice with those who have embarked on this ~~long/and~~ "long path toward sanctification, which--when it is guided by the law of God and pervaded by love--is sustained by the daily joys and sacrifices, by the life that is outwardly most ordinary." (Paul VI, All. to C.I.F., Feb. 12, 1966)

Of course, those who keep themselves continuously prepared for sin cannot at the same time be growing toward holiness. But couples who habitually strive to develop the virtue of chastity, who pray earnestly for it, who seek and accept the help which from now on will be more and more available to them--such couples deserve encouragement and hope, even when through weakness they have failed; nor should they be excluded from the life-giving sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Sincere contrition is based more on love of God and the desire to please Him than on repugnance for sin; the deliberate rejection of God's loving commands should not be too readily presumed in those who are habitually trying to please Him.

In comprehending the true meaning of contraception, however, Christian spouses must bear in mind that an act whose sinfulness is mitigated through weakness hardly can spring from the love they wish to express in their marital embrace, for this act will lack the freedom which must mark the communion of persons in genuine love. Any sinful act, however much its gravity may be mitigated by weakness, will at the same time and to the same degree fall below the level of human communication between loving spouses united in Christ.

For the assistance of couples in distress, We desire that existing knowledge be gathered together and coordinated, that new programs of education be developed and existing ones greatly extended, and that research projects to uncover relevant knowledge be planned and launched. Research is necessary especially in the field of physiology, to provide an even more solid basis for the use of the infertile period; in the field of psychology, to discover the best manner of cultivating love together with self-mastery; and in the field of moral theology, to explore more

thoroughly the obstacles to freedom which the modern sciences of man have disclosed to us, and to apply this knowledge to our understanding of human responsibility. Moreover, there is required further theological investigation of the data pertaining to the life-giving process and of the possibility of its legitimate regulation.

Couples who consider the matter lucidly will perceive too that illicit practices against generation also profane married love itself. (Gaudium et Spes, §47) Christ the Lord has constituted this love on the model of His union with His Church. (Cf. ibid., §48) Married love, with such a model, "is uniquely expressed and perfected by the act distinctive of matrimony." (Ibid., §49) Christ's union with the Church is grounded in the unconditional act of sacrificial love by which He offered Himself up on her behalf. (Cf. Eph. 5:25) In like manner, the true act of conjugal love should reflect the unconditional character of the mutual self-donation it wants to express and cultivate, while a contraceptive intervention seems hardly to permit this reflection to be undistorted. By the mutual consent which constitutes their compact of conjugal love, a couple do not give and receive the right to any and every sort of behavior, but only to true conjugal acts "by which the spouses are intimately and chastely united to one another." (Gaudium et Spes, §49)

Marriage and the conjugal act are among the most intimate of human relationships, and relationships among persons ought not to be like the manipulation of things, a mere use of one another. No, a relationship of persons should be a true encounter, a communion of body and spirit, of mind and heart. Marriage and the conjugal act are not human inventions, for they were instituted when the Lord God created man and woman: "'Here at last is flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone.'" For this reason a man leaves his father and mother, and clings to his wife, and they are no longer two, but one flesh." (Gen. 2:23) It does not belong to man to revise this God-given institution.

Nor is it possible for man to endow whatever behavior he chooses with whatever meaning he wishes to communicate. Language, indeed, is a work of the human spirit, which can impose its own meaning on sounds and marks. But the unity of the human person includes the reality of his body as well as that of his spirit, and so there are certain gestures, not invented by man, whose meaning cannot be manipulated by him at will, because this meaning is inherent in bodily acts of the person. Man's spirit may imagine it can rob a gesture such as the conjugal act of the

foundation of its meaning as life-giving, while preserving its meaning as love-giving. Hence he pretends to attack only a biological act and process, while saving the mutual self-donation he wishes the act to express. But in reality he is attacking the human integrity of his own personal act, and is belying the conjugal covenant in which the spouses vowed this act to one another. For man's life is truly a bodily life, and the meaning of this entire conjugal community of life between the spouses depends on the meaning of the unity of two-in-one-flesh.

Every Christian also must bear always in mind that his body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. It is rash to look forward to a holy and happy marriage while neglecting the wholehearted cultivation, from childhood on, of the virtue of Christian chastity. All Christian young people should know that sins against chastity practiced before marriage can present great obstacles to achieving the good marriage and family they so rightly desire. On the other hand, if the virtue of chastity is assiduously cultivated from childhood, no difficulty that arises in marriage should be insoluble. (Cf. ibid., §51)

Every couple must expect that there will be times, more or less prolonged, when they will be called on to abstain completely from the conjugal act; for an obstacle may be set by a necessary separation, or by psychological factors, or by physical illness, or by the caution that is always necessary around the time of childbirth and sometimes necessary for a long period during pregnancy, or by uncertainty about the possibility of conception when responsible judgment indicates that it would be untimely. Only in the last of these cases does contraception appear to offer a way out for those who practice it. However, a couple living according to the law of conjugal love will recognize that the apparent way out is closed, since a moral obstacle, though it be invisible, is even more real and immovable than any of the others.

Couples who are required ^{to abstain} for one reason or another need not break off their intimate conversation altogether; rather, they should continue it by the many little gestures of conjugal life that are wholly compatible with chastity. Further, they may be consoled by considering that chaste abstinence from the marital act as well as chaste exercise of it is a true expression of the mutual gift of self by which the spouses enrich one another. This expression too is specifically proper to man, whose body and spirit form one person; neither angels nor animals are capable of it.

A person who is incapable of abstinence, because he has not sufficiently perfected the virtue of chastity, is not fully capable of expressing genuine love in his conjugal acts. For if one is not master of himself, then he is the servant of a certain genital automatism which, in man's wounded nature, arises from an unfortunate miseducation of impulses, and from an environment in which such impulses are flagrantly exploited. A perfect act of love, however, must be completely free; it must be in the fullest sense the act of the person himself. Only those who have attained self-mastery can express with the gesture of conjugal love the full meaning it ought to have. When one who has not attained self-mastery attempts such an act, even though no precept be gravely violated in that instance, his attempt to engage in the conjugal act as a perfect expression of love will fall short. For his act will have a certain ambiguity, because it will always remain unclear whether the person is in command of his desire or a slave to it, whether he is initiating an act or responding to an urge, whether he is giving himself to the other or only taking the other for himself. The couple who truly love one another should aim at "mutual charity, by which each one seeks the good of the other and anticipates his or her good desires, rather than imposing one's own will." (Paul VI, All. to C.I.F., Feb. 12, 1966)

We should not be dismayed by sin, for we know that we are weak. Catholic morality admits, in fact, it asserts that man by himself cannot fulfill the demands of the moral law, and thus become good. To fulfill these demands is impossible to man, but it is possible to God, and becomes possible to the man whom God befriends and adopts. Thus human freedom is real and divine grace is necessary. The special mark of the moral teaching of the Catholic faith is the full acceptance of both of these truths, and a necessary condition of this acceptance is the frank admission of human weakness. Man is weak and helpless, but weak and helpless though we be, we become strong and capable when God befriends us. To mitigate in the least the clear, sharp insight of our faith concerning human weakness would be at the same moment to lose faith in the mystery of divine grace, by which man's freedom, wounded even as a capacity to strive after human perfection, is transformed into a capacity to respond to the vocation to share in divine life.

It is clear that the crisis through which we have passed has not been the product of intellectual difficulties alone, and that it will recur again and again unless the moral difficulties are confronted and their complex sources investigated. True enough, we cannot expect to eradicate sin from this world, since we never can eradicate it completely from our own lives. But the tasks which seem impossible to men become possible with the help of God.

Christianity is not realistic and it must not seek to become so; the Gospel is folly to men of this world. ~~Reasoning~~ We confidently expect that what is an unrealistic dream apart from the suppositions of faith will be accomplished, for we have seen the impossible occur again and again in the unprecedented history which Christ focused upon Himself.