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EDITORIAL

From the Pope to the Priest

Beloved Priest Sons,

"By vocation you are the counsellors and spiritual guides of individual persons and of families. We now turn to you with confidence. Your first task—especially in the case of those who teach moral theology—is to expound the Church's teaching on marriage without ambiguity. Be the first to give, in the exercise of your ministry, the example of loyal internal and external obedience to the teaching authority of the Church. That obedience, as you know well obliges not only because of the reasons adduced, but rather because of the light of the Holy Spirit, which is given in a particular way to the Pastors of the Church in order that they may illustrate the truth (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 25).

You know, too, that it is of the utmost importance, for peace of consciences and for the unity of the Christian people, that in the field of morals as well as in that of dogma, all should attend to the Magisterium of the Church, and all should speak the same language. Hence, with all Our heart We renew to you the heartfelt plea of the great Apostle Paul: "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment." (*I Cor.*, 1,10)

To diminish in no way the saving teaching of Christ constitutes an eminent form of charity for souls. But this must ever be ac-

accompanied by patience and goodness, such as the Lord Himself gave example of in dealing with men. Having come not to condemn but to save (Jn., 3,17), He was indeed intransigent with evil, but merciful towards individuals.

In their difficulties, may married couples always find in the words and in the heart of a priest, the echo of the voice and the love of the Redeemer."

"We invoke the abundant graces of the God of holiness and mercy, and in pledge thereof We impart to you all Our Apostolic Blessing."

Given at Rome, from St. Peter's, this twenty-fifth day of July, Feast of St. James the Apostle, in the year nineteen hundred and sixty-eight, the sixth of Our Pontificate.

PAULUS PP. VI

DOCUMENTATION

PRECES EUCHARISTICAE

Prex Eucharistica I

seu Canon Romanus

Ut in Missali Romano

Prex Eucharistica II

V. Dominus vobiscum.

R. Ee cum spiritu tuo.

V. Sursum corda.

R. Habémus ad Dóminum.

V. Grátias agamus Dómino Deo nostro.

R. Dignum et iustum est.

VERE DIGNUM et iustum est, aequum et salutáre,
nos tibi, sancte Pater, semper et ubique grátias ágere
per Filium dilectionis tuae Iesum Christum,
Verbum tuum per quod cuncta fecisti,
quem misisti nobis Salvatórem et Redemptórem,
incarnátum de Spíritu Sancto et ex Vírgine natum.

Qui voluntátem tuam adimplens
et pópulum tibi sanctum acquirens
exténdit manus cum paterétur,
ut mortem sólveret et resurrectionem manifestáret.
Et ideo cum Angelis et ómnibus Sanctis
glóriam tuam praedicamus, una voce dicentes:

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dóminus Deus Sábaoth.

Pleni sunt caeli et terra glória tua.

Hosanna in excélsis.

Benedíctus qui venit in nómine Domini.

Hosanna in excélsis.

Sacerdos, extensis manibus, dicit:

VERE SANCTUS es, Dómine, fons omnis sanctitatis

Iungit manus est, eas expansas super oblata tenens, dicit;

HAEC ERGO dona, quaesumus,
 Spiritus tui rore sanctifica,
iungit manus
et signat semel super hostiam et calicem simul, dicens;
 ut nobis Corpus et + Sanguis fiant Domini nostri Iesu Christi.
Iungit manus.

In formulis, quae sequuntur, verba Domini proferantur distincte et aperte prouti natura eorundem verborum requirit.

QUI CUM PASSIONI voluntarie traderetur,
accipit hostiam ambabus manibus
eamque parum elevatam super altare tenens,
prosequitur:
 accepit panem et caput inclinat gratias agens fregit,
 deditque discipulis suis, dicens:
Accipite et manducate:

**Hoc est enim corpus meum,
 quod pro vobis tradetur.**

Hostiam consecratam ostendit populo, reponit super patenam, et genuflexus adorat. Tunc, detecto calice, dicit:

Simili modo, postquam cenatum est,
accipit calicem ambabus manibus
eumque parum elevatum super altare tenens,
prosequitur:

accipiens et calicem,
caput inclinat
iterum gratias agens dedit discipulis suis, dicens:

**Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes;
 Hic est enim calix Sanguinis mei
 novi et aeterni testamenti,
 qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur
 in remissionem peccatorum.**

Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.

Calicem ostendit populo, deponit super corporale, cooperit, et genuflexus adorat.

Deinde dicit:

Mysterium fidei:

Et populus prosequitur, acclamans:

Mortem tuam annuntiamus, Dómine,
et tuam resurrectionem confitémur, donec vénias.

Aliae acclamationes, p. 179.

Extensis manibus, sacerdos dicit:

MEMORES IGITUR mortis et resurrectionis eius,
tibi, Dómine, panem vitae et cálicem salutis offerimus, grátias ágéntes
quia nos dignos habuisti adstáre coram te et tibi ministráre..

Iungit manus et, profunde inclinatus, dicit:

ET SÚPPLES deprecámur
ut Córporis et Ságuinis Christi participes
a Spíritu Sancto congregémur in unum.

Erigit se et, extensis manibus, prosequitur:

RECORDARE, DÓMINE, Ecclesiae tuae toto orbe diffúsae, ut eam in caritate perficias
una cum Papa nostro N. et Episcopo nostro N. et universo clero.

In Missis pro defunctis addi potest:

Meménto fámuli tui (fámulae tuae) N.,
quem (quam) (hódie) ad te ex hoc mundo vocásti.
Concéde, ut, qui (quae) complantátus (complantáta) fuit
similitúdini mortis Fílii tui,
simul fiat et resurrectionis ipsíus.

MEMENTO ETIAM fratrum nostrórum,
qui in spe resurrectionis dormiérunt,
omniumque defunctorum,
et eos in lumen vultus tui admítte.
Omnium nostrum, quaesumus, miserére,
ut cum beáta Dei Genetríce Vírgine María, beátis Apóstolis
et ómnibus Sanctis, qui tibi a saéculo placuérunt,
aetérnae vitae mereamur esse consórtes,
et te laudémus et glorificémus
iungit manus
per Filium tuum Iesum Christum.

Discooperit calicem et, eum elevans cum hostia, cantat vel clara voce dicit;

PER IPSUM, et cum ipso, et in ipso,
est tibi Deo Patri omnipoténti,
in unitáte Spíritus Sancti,
omnis honor, et glória,
per ómnia saécula saeculórum.
Populus respondet:
Amen.

Prex Eucharistica III

Sacerdos, extensis manibus, dicit:

VERE SANCTUS es, Dómine,
et mérito te laudat omnis a te cóndita creatúra,
quia per Fílium tuum, Dóminum nostrum Iesum Christum,
Spíritus Sancti operánte virtúte,
vivíficas et sanctíficas univérsa,
et pópulum tibi congregáre non désinis,
ut a solis ortu usque ad occásum
oblatio munda offerátur nómini tuo.

Iungit manus, easque expansas super oblata tenens, prosequitur:

SÚPPLICES ERGO te, Dómine, deprecámur,
ut haec múnera, quae tibi sacrandá detúlimus,
eódem Spíritu sanctificáre dignéris,
iungit manus
et signat semel super hostiam et calicem simul, dicens:

ut Corpus et ✠ Sanguis fiant
Fílii tui Dómini nostri Iesu Christi,
iungit manus
cuius mandato haec mystéria celebrámus.

*In formulis, quae sequuntur, verba Domini proferantur distincte et aperte,
prouti natura eorundem verborum requirit.*

IPSE ENIM in qua nocte tradebátur
accipit hostiam ambabus manibus
camque parum elevatam super altare tenens,
prosequitur:

accepit panem
caput inclinat
et tibi gratias agens benedíxit,
fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens:

**Accipite et manducáte ex hoc omnes:
Hoc est enim Corpus meum,
quod pro vobis tradétur.**

Hostiam consecratam ostendit populo, deponit super patenam, et genuflexus adorat. Tunc, detecto calice, dicit:

*Símili modo, postquam cenátum est,
accipit calicem ambabus manibus
eumque parum elevatum super altare tenens,
prosequitur:*

*accipiens cálicem,
caput inclinat
et tibi gratias agens benedíxit,
dedítque discípulis suis, dicens:*

**Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes:
Hic est enim calix Sanguinis mei
novi et aeterni testamenti,
qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur
in remissionem peccatorum.
Hoc facite in meam commemorationem.**

Calicem ostendit populo, deponit super corporale, cooperit, et genuflexus adorat. Deinde dicit:

Mystérium fidei:

Et populus prosequitur, acclamans:

*Mortem tuam annuntiamus, Dómine,
et tuam resurrectionem confitémur, donec vénias*

Aliae acclamationes, p. 179.

Deinde sacerdos, extensis manibus, dicit:

MEMORES ÍGITUR, Dómine,
*eiúsdem Filii tui salutíferae passiónis
necnon mirábilis resurrectionis et ascensiónis in caelum,
sed et praestolántes álterum eius advéntum,
offérmus tibi, grátias referéntes,
hoc sacrificium vivum et sanctum.*

Iungit manus et, profunde inclintus, prosequitur:

RESPICE, QUAESUMUS, *in oblatiónem Ecclésiae tuae
et, agnóscens Hóstiam, cuius voluisti immolatione placári,
concéde, ut qui Córpoze et Sanguine Filii tui reficimur,
Spíritu eius Sancto repléti,
unum corpus et unus spíritus inveniámur in Christo.*

Erigit se et, extensis manibus, prosequitur:

IPSE NOS tibi perficiat munus aeternum,
ut cum electis tuis hereditatem consequi valeamus,
in primis cum beatissima virgine, Dei Genetrice, María,
cum beatis Apostolis tuis et gloriosis Martyribus
(cum Sancto N.: *Sancto diei vel patrono*) et omnibus Sanctis,
quorum intercesione perpetuo apud confidimus adiuvári.

HAEC HOSTIA nostrae reconciliaciónis proficiat, quaesumus,
Domine,

ad totius mundi pacem atque salutem.
Ecclesiam tuam, peregrinantem in terra,
in fide et caritate firmare digneris
cum famulo tuo Papa nostro N. et Episcopo nostro N.,
cum episcopali ordine et universo clero
et omni populo acquisitionis tuae.
votis huius familiae, quam tibi adstare voluisti, adesto propitius.
Omnes filios tuos ubique dispersos
tibi, clemens Pater, miseratos coniunge.

✠ Fratres nostros defunctos
et omnes qui, tibi placentes, ex hoc saeculo transierunt,
in regnum tuum benignus admitte,
ubi fore speramus, ut simul gloria tua perenniter satiemur,
iungit manus
per Christum Dominum nostrum,
per quem mundo bona cuncta largiris. ✠

Discooperit calicem et, eum elevans cum hostia, cantat vel clara voce dicit:

PER IPSUM et cum ipso et in ipso
est tibi Deo Patri omnipotenti,
in unitate Spiritus Sancti,
omnis honor et gloria;
per omnia saecula saeculorum.

Populus respondet:

Amen.

Quando haec prex eucharistica in Missis defunctorum adhibetur, dicitur:

✠ Meménto famuli tui (famulae tuae) N.,
quem (quam) (hodie) ad te ex hoc mundo vocasti.
Concede, ut, qui (quae) complantatus (complantata) fuit
similitudini mortis Filii tui,
simul fiat et resurrectionis ipsius,
quando mortuos suscitabit in carne de terra

et corpus humilitátis nostrae
 configurábit cörperi claritátis suae.
 Sed et fratres nostros defúntcos,
 et omnes qui, tibi placéntes, ex hoc saeculo transiérunt,
 in regnum tuum benígnus admítte,
 ubi fore sperámus, ut simul glória tua perénriter satiémur,
 quando omnem lácrimam abstérget ab óculis nostris,
 quia te, sicuti es, Deum nostrum vidéntes,
 tibi símiles érimus cuncta per saécula,
 et te sine fine laudábimus,
iungit manus
 per Christum Dóminum nostrum,
 per quem mundo bona cuncta largíris. ✠

Prex Eucharistica IV

V: Dóminus vobíscum.
 R. Et cum spírítu tuo.
 V. Sursum corda.
 R. Habémus ad Dóminum.
 V. Grátias ágámus Dómino Deo nostro.
 R. Dignum et iustum est.

VERE DIGNUM EST tibi grátias ágere,
 vere iustum est te glorificáre, Pater sancte,
 quia unus es Deus vivus et verus,
 qui es ante saécula et pérmanes in aetérnum,
 inaccessíbilem lucem inhábitans;
 sed et qui unus bonus atque fons vitae cuncta fecísti,
 ut creatúras tuas benedictionibus adimpléres
 multásque laetificáres tui lúminis claritáte.
 Et ídeo coram te innúmerae astant turbae angelórum,
 qui die ac nocte sérvíunt tibi
 et, vultus tui glóriam contemplántes,
 te incessánter glorificant.

Cum quíbus et nos et, per nostram vocem,
 omnis quae sub caelo est creatúra
 nomen tuum in exsultatióne confitémur, canéntes:
 Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dóminus Deus Sábaoth.
 Pleni sunt caéli et terra glória tua.
 Hosánna in excélsis.
 Benedictus qui venit in nómine Dómini.
 Hosánna in excélsis.

Sacerdos, extensis manibus, dicit:

CONFITEMUR TIBI, Pater sancte,
quia magnus es et omnia ópera tua
in sapiéntia et caritaté fecísti.

Hóminem ad tuam imáginem condidísti,
eíque commisísti mundi curam univérsi,
ut, tibi soli creatóri sérvienti, creatúris ómnibus imperáret.
Et cum amicitiam tuam, non oboédiens, amisísset,
non eum dereliquisti in mortis império.

Omnibus enim misericórditer subvenísti,
ut te quaeréntes invenirent.

Sed et foédere plúries homínibus obtulísti
eosque per prophétas erudísti in exspectatióne salútis.

Et sic, Pater sancte, mundum dilexísti,
ut, compléta plenitúdine témporum,
Unigénitum tuum nobis mitteres Salvacórem.

Qui, incarnátus de Spíritu Sancto et natus ex María Virgine,
in nostra condiciónis forma est conversátus
per ómnia absque peccáto;
salútem evangelizávit paupéribus,
redemptiõem captívis,
moerstitis corde laetitiam.

Ut tuam vero dispensationem impléret,
in mortem trádidit semetípsum
ac, resúrgens a mórtuis,
mortem destrúxit vitámque renovávit.

Et, ut non ámplius nobismetípsis viverémus,
sed sibi qui pro nobis mórtuus est atque surréxit,
a te, Pater, misit Spíritum Sanctum prínitias credéntibus,
qui, opus suum in mundo perficiens,
omnem sanctificatióem compléret.

Iungit manus, easque expensas super oblata tenens, prosequitur:

QUAESUMUS ÍGITUR, Dómine, ut idem Spíritus Sanctus
haec múnere sanctificáre dignétur,
iungit manus

et signat semel super hostiam et calicem simul, dicens:
ut Corpus et ✠ Sanguis fiant Dómini nostri Iesu Christi
iungit manus

ad hoc magnum mystérium celebrándum,
quod ipse nobis reliquit in foedus aetérnum.

In formulis, quae sequuntur, verba Domini proferantur distincte et aperte, prouti natura eorundem verborum requirit.

IPSE ENIM, cum hora venisset
ut glorificaretur a te, Peter sancte,
ac dilexisset suos qui erant in mundo,
in finem diléxit eos:
et cenántibus illis
accipit hostiam ambabus manibus,
eamque parum elevatam super altare tenens,
prosequitur;
accepit panem, benedíxit ac fregit,
dedítque discíplis suis, dicens:

Accípite et manducate:
Hoc est enim Corpus meum,
quod pro vobis tradétur.

Hostiam consecratam ostendit populo, deponit super petenam, et genuflexus adorat. Tunc, detecto calice, dicit:

Simili modo
accepit calicem ambabus manibus,
eumque parum elevatum super altare tenens,
prosequitur:
accípiens cálicem, ex genímine vitis replétum,
caput inclinat
grátias egit, deditque discíplis suis, dicens:

Accípite et bibite:
Hic est enim calix Sanguinis mei
novi et aetérni testamenti,
qui pro vobis et pro multi effundétur
in remissiónem peccatorum.
Hoc facite in meam commemoratiónem.

Calicem ostendit populo, deponit super corporale, cooperit, et genuflexus adorat. Deinde dicit:

Mystérium fidei:

Et populus prosequitur, acclamans:

Mortem tuam annuntiámus, Dómine,
et tuam resurrectionem confitémur, donec vénias.

Aliae acclamationes, p. 179.

Deinde sacerdos, extensis manibus, dicit:

UNDE ET NOS, Dómine, redemptionis nostrae memoriále nunc celebrántes,

mortem Christi eiúsque descénsum ad interos recólimus,
eius resurrectionem et ascensionem ad tuam dexteram profitémur,
et, exspectántes ipsíus adventum in gloria,
offérimus tibi eius Corpus et Sánguinem,
sacrificium tibi acceptábile et toti mundo salutáre.

Iungit manus et, profunde inclinatus, prosequitur:

RESPICE, DÓMINE, in Hóstiam, quam Ecclesiae tuae ipse parásti,
et concéde benígnus ómnibus qui ex hoc uno pane participábunt
et calice,

ut, in unum corpus a Sancto Spíritu congregáti,
in Christo hóstia viva perficiántur, ad laudem glóriæ tuæ.

Erigit se et, extensis manibus, prosequitur:

NUNC ERGO, DÓMINE, ómnium recordáre,
pro quibus tibi hanc oblatiónem offérimus:
in primis fámuli tui, Papæ nostri N.,
Episcopi nostri N., et Episcopórum órdinis univérsi,
sed et totius cleri, et offeréntium, et circum adstántium,
et cuncti pópuli tui,
et ómnium, qui te quaerunt corde sincéro.
Meménto etiam illórum, qui obiérunt in pace Christi tui,
et ómnium defunctorum, quorum fidem tu solus cognovisti.
Nobis omnibus, filiis tuis, clemens Pater, concéde,
ut caeléstem hereditátem cónsequi valeámus
cum beáta Virgine, Dei Genetrice, María.
cum Apóstolis et Sanctis tuis
in regno tuo, ubi cum univérsa creatúra,
a corruptióne peccáti et mortis liberáta,
te glorificémus per Christum Dóminum nostrum,
iungit manus,
per quam mundo bona cuncta largiris.

*Discooperit calicem et, eum elevans cum hostia, cantat
vel clara voce dicit:*

PER IPSUM et cum ipso et in ipso
est tibi Deo Patri omnipoténti,
in unitáte Spíritus Sancti
omnis honor et glória,
per ómnia saécula saeculórum.
Populus respondet:
Amen.

ACCLAMATIONES POST CONSECRATIONEM

ad libitum seligendae

1. Mortem tuam annuntiámus, Dómine,
et tuam resurrectionem confitemur, donec vénias.
2. Quotiescúmque manducámus panem hunc et cálicem bíbimus,
mortem tuam annuntiámus, Dómine, donec vénias.
3. Salvátor mundi, salva nos,
qui per crucem et resurrectionem tuam liberásti nos.

DOCTRINAL SECTION

MARGINAL NOTES ON THE MAGISTERIUM

● **L. Z. Legaspi, O.P.**

I. CRISIS OF THE MAGISTERIUM

Cursory readings of articles and news on ecclesiastical matters these past years reveal unmistakably the existence of a crisis of faith in the teaching authority of the Church. Members of the faithful are denying or doubting or outrightly ignoring both the teaching authority of the Pope and of the Bishops. Some who admit the teaching authority cast a cloud of doubt on the validity or obligatory power of papal doctrinal interventions.

It is in the light of this event that we should understand and find the reason why, especially, during these past eighteen years, the most emphatic and most discussed pronouncements of the Pope have been on the magisterium or the doctrinal authority of the Church. From the "Humani Generis" of 1950, the discourse to the Faculty Members and Student Body of the Gregorian University on the occasion of its IVth Centenary last 1953, the "Si Diligis" address to the Episcopate of May 31, 1954, the October 1, 1965 address to the Theologians attending the International Congress on the Theology of Second Vatican Council, the resounding profession of Faith of the "Credo of the People of God", to the recent "Humanae Vitae", the emphasis has always been "by the will of Jesus Christ, the immediate and universal norm of this unfailing truth—revelation—can be found solely in the authentic magisterium of the Church whose task is to safeguard faithfully and to explain infallibly the deposit of faith".¹

¹ *I Vatican Council, sess. III, ch. 4; D-B. 1798.*

This crisis of faith in the magisterium should be set in a wider perspective because no one factor can adequately explain the emergence of this present phenomenon.

Vatican II

Paradoxically Vatican II is partly responsible in giving rise to this crisis. The doctrinal development that took place at the Vatican Council was a surprise and even a shock to many. The new presentations, the new emphasis and modifications introduced by Vatican II inevitably raised many problems and, unfortunately, very few clear answers. No matter how much theologians explain that there was no real substantial change but merely a homogeneous development, that there was no repudiation of traditional positions but merely a new presentation, couched in more or less contemporary terms, doubts continue to linger in the minds of the faithful. And these doubts are directed on the magisterium.

Furthermore, the doctrinal questions which appeared in greater relief during the Vatican II are still being studied and solutions are not yet available. Opinions and theories are being favorably disseminated by the mass media. Conflicting answers are being offered to the faithful. And the sad result is confusion. Indeed, the voice of the Church has never been silent; but it is drowned in the sea of pronouncements from some theologians. Traditionally the Church allows opinion to mature before expressing approval or condemnation of theological speculations. And there is the rub of it. The Church probably will not be able to give the final verdicts on the theology arising from the Second Vatican Council much before the end of the century. The deeper meaning of the Council's teaching will appear only after full study of what preceded the promulgation of the Council's decrees. Theologians of tomorrow will know more about the council than those who took part was the observation of Cardinal Heenan. Meanwhile, at this stage, people are impatient and are waiting for the definitive answer. The prudence of the Church is interpreted as doubt, weakness and insecurity resulting to the discredit of the magisterium.

Critical Spirit of Our Times

Our age is characterized by two inter-related qualities: a *critical spirit* and *prejudice against authority*. These are responsible in a large measure in precipitating the crisis in the magisterium.

The man of today wants to see with his own eyes how matters stand: to obey, he must be convinced of the justice of what is told him. He does not accept anything imposed on him by authority. First he must evaluate the validity of the motives for a decision before he accepts. In our day we enter into a similar situation, because we all are inevitably affected by our environments and ethos. Consequently, it is not surprising that such attitudes be found among us even in regard to the teaching authority of the Church.

Differences in Cultural Environments

The Church embraces people belonging to different cultural environments. Now, the cultural environment influences the thoughts of men and their understanding of values. It is then inevitable that in the expression of the divine message, different pre-suppositions can be found. This phenomenon creates a situation where Catholics speak about an identical reality in different languages and concepts. Each group tends to suspect the other, while at the same time convinced that its own way of understanding and speaking about Faith is the **ONLY** and **VALID** approach.

Accordingly, it is said, since the ecclesiastical magisterium expresses itself in a way that is close to one particular theological tradition, others, belonging to another tradition, usually suspect partiality on the part of the magisterium.

The net result of all this is the weakening of the magisterium from the part of those who have to accept it. Rationalizations follow. Few Catholics really publicly refuse to acknowledge the authority of the Pope. But then they try to explain it away. The custom is to explain away his words on the grounds that they are not really authentic; living in a closed world, he is misinformed by the advisers who surround him. His frequent complaints against distortion of doctrine are attributed to failing health. The Pope was reported to have wept at a public audience when referring to the disloyalty of some who spoke in the name of the Church. This

was taken as proof that the Pope was not yet recovered from his operation. The press began hinting that Paul's resignation was indeed imminent.

The purpose of this article is very simple. This crisis of faith in the magisterium has not been helped by so much talk and confusing subtleties. Much muddy thinking exists, much confusion due to the admixture of what should be held as sacred and immutable with what this or that particular theologian has to say about it. It is time that we sit down and start drawing attention to the recollection of some basic facts on this topic. This is what we intend to do.

II. THE MAGISTERIUM IN THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

"The eternal Father, in accordance with the utterly gratuitous and mysterious design of his wisdom and goodness, created the whole universe, and chose to raise up men to share in his own divine life; and when they had fallen in Adam, he did not abandon them, but at all times held out to them the means of salvation, bestowed in consideration of Christ, the Redeemer, 'who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature and predestined before time began to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren' (*Rm.* 8:29)."²

This simple statement synthesizes a whole array of particular statements that can be made about the mystery of the Church. After the Fall, the return to God and the possibility of sharing in His riches would be through the Incarnate Son: "When God sent his son into the world, it was not to reject the world, but so that the world might find salvation through him."³ Faith is the fundamental requirement on the part of man in order to obtain that saving union with Christ. As a responsible being, an image of God in his own right, man must personally acknowledge the significance and the *efficacy* of the mission of the Son. He must believe that God re-establishes in Christ man's possibility of knowing and loving the three divine Persons.

² *Lumen Gentium*, n. 2.

³ *Jn*, 3:17.

Faith in the redemptive mission of the Incarnate Word and common sonship in Christ reveals another essential aspect of the salvific faith: its *communal* aspect. God reveals and hence communicates Himself in and through the historical Christ, the Incarnate Word. Every man, therefore, must come into living and personal contact with the Christ of history; and this takes place by coming into contact with and all sharing in the faith of that community to which was communicated once and for all and perfectly God's revelation in Christ, and which was sent to mediate that saving Word to all men. The imperative reason again is the fact that the life-giving divine Word has taken to himself a body and through it mediates his saving action.

This community, this body of Christ called together and living by faith in the Word, serves to continue the very mission of Christ, i.e. to mediate this saving Word to all men. It is the visible manifestation in the world of men's union with God and consequent union among themselves; and at the same time the means through which God achieves this communion.⁴

Sharing the same mission with Christ, the Church must necessarily share in the same functions or offices of Christ. What are the duties which Christ had to assume in order to fulfill his mission? He was sent to bring about salvation of the world discharging simultaneously the responsibilities of a *priest*,⁵ of a *king*,⁶ and of a *prophet*.⁷ If the Church has the identical mission of Christ, it is imperative that she share in these functions also.

That was what Christ had done. The whole community participated in the threefold prerogatives of Christ, establishing a structure more fundamental than the division of members into clergy and laity. But this distribution of the functions takes on a variety of forms in harmony with the variety of functions of those who belong to the visible structure of the Church, which is hierarchic.⁸

⁴ cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 1.

⁵ *Heb.* 2:17, 3:1, 4:14-15, 6:20.

⁶ *Mt.* 2:2, 21:5, 27:11; *Jn.* 12:13, 18:37; *Lc.* 23:2; *Acts* 17:7.

⁷ *Lc.* 4:17-22; *Mt.* 13:57; *Jn.* 6:14.

⁸ *Lumen Gentium*, chap. 2.

Just as we can distinguish the priesthood of the laity from the ministerial priesthood, so likewise we must distinguish the prophetic role of the laity from the *normative*, stable and authoritative prophetic role of the hierarchy. This one is the perennial, authentic, infallible teaching office committed to the Apostles by Christ, and now possessed by their legitimate successors, the college of bishops in union with the pope. This *magisterium* or doctrinal authority is truly a ministry, a service, to and within the community for the faithful transmission and preservation of the revelation.

So it is in this context of the mystery of the Church that we must seek to understand the real meaning and purpose of the authentic and infallible ministry of the Word, or *Magisterium*.

The first thing then we must note is that the Magisterium is not *above* the Word of God, but is at the *service* of that Word. The Word of God is the origin and the foundation of the Church. In fact, it must be acknowledged to have "a force and power so great that it stands as the support and energy of the Church, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life."⁹ Nothing and no one can take its place. The very hierarchical magisterium "is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit; it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed".¹⁰

The second thing is that the hierarchical magisterium is not a *natural* thing in its essence. It is not a natural fact, imposed by the need that the Church must be an authority on doctrine for the sake of order and unity. It is this, but this is not the prime consideration in its mysterious context. It is, rather a supernatural fact, freely willed by Christ who gave Peter as head of the Apostolic College, the command to confirm his "brethren" in the faith, that is, the other Apostles and, in and with them, all the faithful;¹¹ and invited the other Apostles to preach the Gospel to all the people. That is why we believe

⁹ *Dei Verbum*, n. 21.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, n. 10.

¹¹ cf. *Lc.* 22, 32.

that the hierarchical magisterium is a dogma of faith, which in essence means that Christ constituted the Pope, and the Bishops united with the Pope, as teachers of its faith, its guardians, its interpreters. And He promised them the special assistance of the Holy Spirit so that they do not fall into error when they propose for belief the truths contained in revelation.

The third thing to be noted is that the magisterium is not a *scientific* magisterium but a magisterium of *authority*. Most of the criticism against the "Humanae Vitae" seem to have lost sight of this perspective of the teaching authority of the Church. The critics expended too much effort analysing the justifying reasons for the decision taken by the Pope. Feeling dissatisfied with it, they conclude that ergo the decision is not binding at all! But they do not constitute the essential consideration of the Encyclical, or of the teaching authority of the Pope for that matter. The essential thing is that the Pope in this particular Encyclical is laying down a moral rule. The Pope, as the supreme doctor of faith, is authentically interpreting the divine law and teaching that its observance is binding "on all the faithful". In the light of the divine assistance which he possesses and which we believe on faith, the Pope is declaring, teaching that such moral rule is true and good. It is binding, not by reason of the justifications that might be given to support it, but primarily by reason of the divine authority of the Vicar of Christ, who commands through him. "He who hears you, hears Me." The justifying arguments certainly have their own meaning and role in this magisterium of authority; their value help to shape the papal decisions and interventions. But, the real foundation and reason for our obedience will not be because we see and we are convinced of these reasons or arguments but because it is an act of the Pope's supreme teaching authority backed up by the divine assistance of the Person Whom he represents, Jesus Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body.

III. THE MAGISTERIUM AND THE PROPHETICAL ROLE OF THE FAITHFUL

Some Catholics appeal against the decisions of the magisterium to the fact that the teaching or prophetic function in the Church does not belong only to the hierarchy but to all the People of God, as they

share in the teaching or prophetic function of Christ. This fact did not escape the attention of Pope Paul VI.

Speaking on the Church's magisterium last January, 1967, he said:

"A few who are actually within the Church today, several who are more or less faithful to it and many who surround it but are strangers, look with reservations and diffidence on the magisterium of the Church. Some would like to recognize in this magisterium more than anything else the task of confirming the 'infallible belief of the communion of the faithful'. Others — followers of doctrines which deny the Church's magisterium — would recognize in each of the faithful the capacity for interpreting Sacred Scripture freely according to their own intuition, which is all too easily assigned claim of inspiration".¹²

Again last March 18, 1967, during a general audience on the feast of the Chair of Peter, he laments:

"...unfortunately that nowadays certain trends of thought which still are described Catholic, attempt to attribute a priority in the normative formulation of the truth of the faith to faithful above the teaching function of the episcopacy and the Roman pontificate, contrary to the scriptural teaching and to the doctrine of the Church, which was openly confirmed in the recent council".¹³

The prophetic role of the faithful is undoubtedly an explicit teaching of Vatican II.

"The holy People of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office. It spreads abroad a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the tribute of lips which give honour to His name (cf. *Heb.* 13:5). The body of the faithful as a whole, anointed as they are by the Holy One (cf. *Jn.* 2:20, 27), cannot err in matters of belief. Thanks to a supernatural sense of the faith which characterizes the People as a whole, it manifests this unerring quality when 'from the bishops down to the last member of the laity' it shows universal agreement in matters of faith and morals..."¹⁴.

¹² *Filipinas*, February 4, 1967, p. 2.

¹³ *Filipinas*, March 18, 1967, p. 2.

¹⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, n. 12.

But the Council was also careful to note immediately that alongside this general prophetic role of the faithful exists the hierarchical, normative, definitive and stable magisterium:

"For by this sense of the faith which is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth, God's People accepts not the word of men, but the very Word of God (cf. *I Th.* 2:13). It clings without fail to the faith once delivered to the saints (cf. *Jude* 3), penetrates it more deeply by accurate insights, and applies it more thoroughly to life. *All this it does under the lead of a sacred teaching authority to which it loyally defers*".¹⁵

Consequently, although the whole Church — pastors and faithful — enjoy the gift of prophecy, there are also in the Church, the Pope and the Bishops who "have received through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth".¹⁶ Such a charism belongs only to them. In virtue of this charism the episcopal hierarchy must (1) *ensure that the doctrine of the faith comes to the faithful from Christ and the Apostles*, thus making possible that the community of the faithful may truly live 'upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets: Christ Jesus Himself being the corner-stone'¹⁷. (2) *it must judge the conformity with the deposit of faith of developments, expressions and applications that come to this doctrine through being lived, pondered and shown forth by the faithful*. To form and to guide the doctrinal and practical life of the faithful are functions of the hierarchical magisterium. This is one point we must not forget about the Church: community life in it is not purely a practical matter but is a life in unity of faith and based on that very unity: so that her public authority takes the form of a magisterium, as well as of jurisdiction or government.

There is no doubt that this hierarchical prophetic role is for the benefit of the faithful; it is an office of service inasmuch as it sees to it that the People of God do not fall into errors of faith. It is for the faithful, but it is also given ONLY to the hierarchy. It is for this reason that *Dei Verbum* concludes: "the office of interpreting authentically the

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, also n. 37.

¹⁶ *Dei Verbum*, n. 8.

¹⁷ Ephesians 2:20.

Word of God written or handed down is entrusted only to the living Teaching Authority in the Church, whose authority is exercised in the Name of Christ".¹⁸

The *Sensus Fidei* and the Magisterium

This same situation appears in the more concrete case of the *sensus fidei* or what *Lumen Gentium*¹⁹ calls the supernatural sense of the faith.

The right view of this supernatural sense is that it is *ordered to the apostolic hierarchy*. The body of the faithful, the Church believing and loving, has the help of the Holy Spirit to be faithful people, that is to remain firm in faith. But this faith, according to the divine economy, was brought to this people by the teaching of its hierarchs. Consequently, it is by necessity ordered to the apostolic hierarchy, the guardian of tradition in its reality and formation. Obedience and submission to the appointed organs of tradition handed down from Christ and the Apostles appears then as an essential element of the *sensus fidei*.

This right orientation, this reference and submission to the magisterium is so essential indeed to the supernatural sense of faith of the faithful that without such orientation it would not even be infallible. There are two cases in which we say that the body of faithful is infallible. The *first case* is when it listens to the teaching Church and thus partakes of *the teaching Church's* infallibility. In this particular case the Holy Spirit makes the hierarchy infallible, and the hierarchy, by subjecting the faithful to itself communicates the benefits of *its* infallibility to the body of faithful. The *second case* is when, through the Holy Spirit also, the body of faithful cannot err in the living possession of that faith. But here again, that faith necessarily relates them to the magisterium as its generative cause. So no matter how you view it, the *sensus fidei* always implies organic reference and submission to the magisterium.²⁰

The *sensus fidelium* then must never be viewed independently of the magisterium, and much less against it. History tells us what wide-

¹⁸ N. 10.

¹⁹ N. 12.

²⁰ Yves M.J. Congar, O.P., *Lay People in the Church*, translated by Donald Altwaters, Newman Press: Maryland, 1965, Part II, Chap. 6, pp. 290-91.

spread failures in faith happen in the Christian people when this occurs. England and the Scandinavian countries, superstitious devotions are only some of the vivid lessons of history.

And if these are not yet sufficient, compare the *sensus fidei* with the ordinary magisterium of the Church.²¹

The *sensus fidei* is not a teaching authority in the proper sense of the word. It is an experimental persuasion on a certain truth rooted in the theological virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Although this may be found in *all* the faithful and thereby constitutes a valid criterion for discerning a revealed truth, nevertheless, it is not a doctrinal definition in itself. A teaching of the *hierarchical ordinary magisterium* however is not a simple experimental persuasion, but a real magisterial or teaching act of the truth of doctrine. When this magisterium is universal and definitive, it is not a simple criterion of a possible definition, but is automatically a definition of faith.

The *sensus fidei* is obtained sufficiently in the state of grace or at least in the theological faith. While the *hierarchical ordinary magisterium* is found among those who have the episcopal succession, although they might not be in the state of grace.

Furthermore, a necessary distinction must be made between a universal agreement of the faithful on an *already* defined doctrine by the solemn or ordinary magisterium, and the same universal agreement on a *not yet defined* doctrine of faith and moral. The first one is definitely infallible; while the second is not yet infallible, but simply constitutes a clear criterion by which we may know that such a doctrine can be defined by the legitimate doctrinal authority of the Church.

From the foregoing considerations we can easily find our bearing on this delicate matter. The prophetic role of the laity does not exclude the hierarchical magisterium; it presupposes it and is its norm and guide. The hierarchical magisterium is not an emanation from the community; it comes directly from the Head of the Body, Christ.

²¹ Cf. F. Marin-Sola, O.P., *La Evolución Homogénea del Dogma Católico*, B.A.C., 1952, pp. 408-19.

However, both are ordained for the 'common good of that Body'. The obvious conclusion which can be drawn from this is that there must be a "dialogue" of some sort between the faithful and the hierarchy. There must be a cooperation between the pastors and the faithful, under the action of the Spirit whose work is precisely this — to lead the Church "to all truth".

It is not very unlikely to say that the root cause of the uneasiness of some Catholics in regard to the teachings of the Church can be due to the insufficient vital exchange between the Teaching Church and the Church Taught. It is along this line that the effort of the Church should be emphasized in this post-conciliar period.

(to be continued)

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THE HOLY FATHER AND THE REGULATION OF BIRTH *

● Mons. Mariano G. Gaviola, D.D.

Since the moment when His Holiness Paul VI had promised on June 23, 1964 to provide a definitive statement on the Church doctrine on the regulation of birth, the whole world, and not only those who glory in the name "Christian," was pregnant with all kinds of expectations. As the years dragged by, the patient expectations have developed into painful anxieties until these erupted into a vociferous accusation of foot-dragging on the part of the Holy Father, or that His Holiness simply had no backbone. Worse,—the Pope was accused of having led the children of God into a state of confusion by too much dilly-dallying.

On the other hand, as soon as his encyclical finally came out on the 27th of July 1968, the Pope was immediately accused of reckless imprudence, of culpable untimeliness; and many others found it inexplicable that he had to come out at all with such a document.

In short, the Holy Father did not have any escape at all. Silence on his part would have spelled out for Mother Church a spineless leadership. But precisely because he has chosen to speak out sans any ambiguity, the same Pope is now being branded as arbitrary, cruel; and that his encyclical is one of the most disastrous examples of papal weakness.

Worse still, had the Holy Father spoken in favor of artificial birth control, an avalanche of hilarious jubilation of even more people would have been inevitable. Those people would have been very eager to

* (Speech delivered at UST, Catholic Physicians' Guild of the Philippines September 8, 1968).

pounce upon the Pope, depicting him as a Church supreme leader that had collapsed from the sheer weight of public pressure at the expense of the traditional doctrine of Mother Church. From then on, how else can the faithful firmly believe what any Pope solemnly teaches and proclaims to be the doctrine on faith and morals? If one Pope can contradict another on the same doctrine through no less an instrument than an encyclical letter, then it was a most painful joke upon those Christians who kept the teachings of an encyclical with utmost reverence even until the recent past.

Going along the contention of many, the main issue is the intrinsic value and weight of an encyclical letter. Normally, the primary object of an encyclical is not to define a dogma or the faith of the Catholic Church. This is the proper object of what is technically called the "extraordinary magisterium of the Church." This extraordinary teaching of the Church enjoys, without any reservation, the grace of infallibility. Namely, the ecumenical council and/or when the Pope speaks "ex cathedra."

The proper object of the "ordinary magisterium" of the Church is to restate, diffuse, defend or apply the *infallible teachings* of the "extraordinary magisterium". The encyclical letters are the usual means and the highest expression by which the Popes exercise the "ordinary magisterium" of the Church.

To the extent, therefore, that an encyclical letter restates the infallible teachings of the Church, that particular portion of the letter enjoys definitely the grace of infallibility. On the other hand, to the extent that other portions of an encyclical explain, develop, apply to the problems of the day, or use them as a sure criterion in the condemnation of errors, such portions of an encyclical enjoy at least the special assistance of the Holy Spirit in which the supernatural gift of prudence plays a decisive part.

In short, an encyclical letter can by no means be considered an expression of mere personal opinion that can be held or rejected at will by any Catholic. Thus, even when not binding as to faith in all its entirety, the teachings of an encyclical are all directly or indirectly related to faith or morals by the supreme teaching authority and to reject them

can make any Catholic guilty of grave temerity—which, of course, is sinful. A Catholic must give internal assent to such statements of the Church and external obedience. Mere silence is not enough.

Referring to the encyclical “*Humanae Vitae*,” some theologians argue against its teaching on birth regulation by the contention that the document itself is not clothed with infallibility. They seem to ignore the fact that the main teaching in this encyclical is clearly a restatement of the solemn pronouncement of the Second pastoral constitution of the Church in the Modern World, regarding the nature of marriage and conjugal love.

The same encyclical merely brings into clear focus the solemn pronouncement of Vatican II when it states that while “the parents themselves, and no one else, should ultimately make this judgment in the sight of God,” it continues to say emphatically that “in their manner of acting, the spouses should be aware that they cannot proceed arbitrarily, but must always be governed according to a conscience dutifully conformed to the divine law itself, and should be submissive toward the Church’s teaching office which authentically interprets that law in the light of the Gospel.” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 50). And again, Vatican II solemnly teaches that the “sons of the Church may not undertake methods of birth control which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church in its unfolding of the divine law.” (*Idem*, no. 51)

At any rate, it would be interesting to know how these same theologians would have reacted had the Holy Father clearly spoken “*ex cathedra*” regarding the same subject matter. But it would not be hard to guess this, should we consider that the number is increasing of those theologians who now downgrade even some dogmatic teachings of the Church.

It is alarming to take note of those sons of God who seemingly desire that the great progress of science and knowledge must replace the extraordinary and ordinary Magisterium of the Church, as well as its supreme teaching authority on matters of faith and morals vested in the Holy Father by Christ Himself.

Other theologians even question the veracity of the doctrine enunciated by the Pope in the said encyclical. Would they want us to believe

that God has suddenly shifted into a splinter group of theologians the sure and authentic guidance for the faithful towards the fountain of truth and morals? I hope they do not yet claim infallibility for themselves! Then, why the temerity of guiding the flock against the teaching of the Holy Father, when, after all, the opposing opinion they are espousing might also be a mistake? Is this not tantamount to the blind leading the blind?

Why complain of imprudence and arrogance on the part of the Pope, as is being done when he is said to have espoused a doctrine beyond the sphere of infallibility, while in the same breath we arrogate unto ourselves the espousal of an opposite doctrine about which we cannot claim infallibility?

Verily, should we allow this trend of thought, necessarily there shall be as many popes as there are theologians of diverse thinking.

Indeed, the painful pinings and lamentations of some of our beloved brethren against the insistence of Mother Church on her traditional teachings are an eloquent proof that religious freedom and individual conscience without a supreme visible head and teaching authority can only lead to anarchy and utter confusion.

In vain shall one try to bring to naught the prayer of Christ, "that all may be one." (Jn 13; 17). This prayer inexorably shall come true, as it has already, at least in the sense that in so far as the genuine sons of God are concerned, "in the field of morals as well as in dogma, all should attend to the Magisterium of the Church, and all should speak the same language." (*Humanae Vitae*, n. 28).

Going back to the specific doctrine of the said encyclical, the Pope simply explains without any ambiguity, among other teachings, the following:

1. "The problem of birth... is to be considered, beyond partial perspectives — whether of the biological or psychological, demographic or sociological orders — in the light of an integral vision of man and of his vocation, not only his natural and earthly, but also his supernatural and eternal vocation."

For "what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, only to lose his own soul?" After all, "not by bread alone can man live."

2. The true characteristics of genuine conjugal love, namely, that it must be fully human, total, faithful and exclusive, as well as fecund.
3. The exact meaning of "responsible parenthood" and its relationship towards God, towards the spouses themselves, towards the family and towards society, "in a correct hierarchy of values."
4. The two inseparable meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning.
5. The illicit ways of regulating birth, to wit: direct interruption of the generative process already begun; directly willed and procured abortion, even if for therapeutic reasons; direct sterilization, whether perpetual or temporary, whether of the man or of the woman; finally, "every action which, either 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 precreation impossible."
6. The licit means of birth regulation; namely, the "therapeutic means truly necessary to cure diseases of the organism," and the recourse to the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions.

We shall not be honest should we omit the most commonly recalled objections to the papal encyclical, namely, that it offers no solution to the problem of population explosion, nor to the poverty of the vast masses who simply cannot afford the bringing up and education of their children.

With regard to the first objection, namely, the population explosion, I beg to deny its complete validity. In the first place, there are eminent scientists as well who maintain that the world's birth rate is bound to level off with the death rate in the not distant future. In fact, too, several members of the United Nations Population Commission, in their February 1959 meeting at Geneva, have stressed the opinion that because population situations and trends vary a great deal, even from a purely demographic point of view, "predictions cannot be made safely for more than ten or fifteen years ahead."

Thus, no less than a Harvard University professor, Edward M. East, predicted in 1923 that the United States population by 1964 would

be 214,000,000, a population "beyond the maximum agricultural possibilities set by the calculations made a few pages before." (Prof. John T. Noonan, Jr. — *Contraception*, p. 486)

It is easy to get a false impression if we consider only the black spots of the world population. The same can be true if density population or purely mathematical projections be our sole yardstick.

Thus, when in 1965 I was in Bombay, India, one would not have failed to see how the countless of its 4 million teeming population who were living in sub-human conditions, could not have dismayed the stoutest of heart. And yet, a mere twenty minutes auto ride outside the city will bring one into vast tracks of land, practically uncultivated and uninhabited.

As of 1963, India had a density population of 308 people per square mile; the Philippines, 205 people; and Japan, 627 people per square mile. But then, New York has 22,000 to the square mile, while Monaco bulges with a 40,000 per square mile. Yet, no one would shout "population explosion" within these two cities in the sense in which it is commonly understood. Conversely, no one would similarly scream before a square mile of desert with only one inhabitant, even if this one be dying of hunger. (A. McCormack, M.H.M., *The Population Explosion and World Hunger*) We might well add that there are only six persons per square mile in New Mexico!

Holland is only as big as our island of Samar; but the former's about 1 million population is among the healthiest and economically soundest in the whole world.

World renowned experts caution us from making extreme conclusions. World population should not be viewed solely through mathematical projections. People, space and food, as well as scientific advances, particularly in the industrial and agricultural fields, need be also considered, aside from social, psychological, cultural, political, regional and religious considerations.

With regard to the second objection, namely, that the encyclical is almost cynical about the poverty that weighs upon the masses of people, particularly in the developing countries, I beg to disagree.

Facing this problem squarely, Paul VI quotes no less than the famous "Mater et Magistra" of Pope John XXIII, f.m.; saying that no solution to these difficulties is acceptable "which does violence to man's essential dignity" and is based only "on an unutterly materialistic conception of man himself and of his life. The only possible solution to this question is one which envisages the social and economic progress, both of individuals and of the whole of human society, and which respects and promotes true human values." Having recalled his equally famous, encyclical "Populorum Progressio," Pope Paul VI continues: "Neither can one, without grave injustice, consider divine Providence to be responsible for that depends, instead, on a lack of wisdom in government, on an insufficient sense of social justice, on selfish monopolization, or again on blame-worthy indolence in confronting the efforts and the sacrifices necessary to ensure the raising of living standards of a people and of all its sons." (*Humanae Vitae*, no 23)

In short, the Holy Father suggests that poverty must be attacked through communal efforts, wisdom and sacrifices of individuals, of Governments, and of communities. It seems clear that we prefer an impoverished people provided it be rich at least and sound in its human dignity, just as our nationalists would prefer a Philippines rich in honor and dignity to a country that is beggarly and is bankrupt of sovereignty.

We also would like to point out what seems to be conveniently overlooked by many.

I refer to the propensity of many well-intentioned social crusaders, particularly those belonging to the upper class of society, the propensity, namely, of imposing or transplanting into the minds of the poor the anxieties and sophisticated concern of those people who, precisely, should not need birth control. In their great haste through high-powered propaganda of those means which are considered by the Church as illicit and immoral, I sincerely hope that my fear is farfetched that such noble crusaders might be unwittingly allowing themselves to become tools of instigation instead of genuine education, of upheaval, rather than of upliftment. There is no question here of riding on the crest of ignorance, nor of wilful hiding from the masses proper family education.

But let me hazard a safe guess that most of the poor who are genuine, albeit, simple Christians, find in their children true blessings of

God. Too, that they find their children to be means of comfort and consolation rather than unwelcome burdens. The under-privileged in the rural areas who cannot afford helpers and have no running water, electricity, gas stoves or farm equipment, will naturally find relief in their children, who, even at a tender age, already do all sorts of errands for their parents.

If through high-powered propaganda we shall hasten much too quickly general family limitation among the poor masses, they might realize too soon that we have robbed them of their ordinary means of security, while they burn with envy of those in urban areas who have all the conveniences of life.

Is it not significant that the countries that are most vocal against the papal encyclical happen to be the most affluent and sophisticated?

There seems to be a need of soul-searching among the highly educated and high-society people who frown upon the encyclical in behalf of the poor. Is it not possible that behind all this there lurks the desire of the rich to practice for themselves artificial birth control for worldly reasons?

There seems to be the conviction that artificial birth control through the "cafeteria system" of peddling all kinds of artificial means is the best and surest way to uplift the economy. Yet, eminent economists like Prof. Collin Clark, are just as emphatic in the assertion that the economy of a country will be adversely affected where birth control is universally practised. Social security conscious countries will soon enough be spending much more in pensions for the aged than the income expected from a drastically depleted younger generation.

Pills and IUDS are relatively young. Until the present the World Health Organization must have serious reasons for not having come out with any statement on them, so far. They have been extensively and intensively introduced into Puerto Rico only since 1963. They were approved for marketing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration only since 1960. Already there are rumblings about the ill-effects of such goods. A Canadian scientist has announced some findings among pill-takers of having become less womanly.

Obviously, it is too soon to sing the glories of such means. The devil might yet have his last laugh, to say the least. Certainly, prudence should be given more importance here.

But not to prolong this discourse, we kindly recall to memory the teaching of Vatican II as a reminder to all Sons of God, that holiness is a calling not only for the clergy and the religious, but for every baptized person. And the path to holiness and to one's salvation is not bedecked with all roses. The crown of eternal glory must be won through self-mastery and self-oblation. To the brave and only to those who persevere until the end, to them alone shall the gates of Heaven be opened.

address change ?

If you plan to move, please let us know 5 weeks before you change your address. This will save us time and money and troubles.

BIRTH CONTROL AND FAMILY PLANNING IN THE LIGHT OF HUMANAE VITAE

● M. Piñon, O.P.

I. The Encyclical "Humanae Vitae"

Shock and Disappointment

The much awaited Papal pronouncement touching on the anovulant Pill has finally come, but it has unleashed a storm of protests and criticisms. Many have been not only disappointed but shocked. They had expected a more lenient and modernistic pronouncement, a democratic one based on the view of an alleged majority. Now that the awaited pronouncement has come they would prefer it never came at all, and that matters should have been left to the conscience of couples as if a misguided conscience were a correct norm to follow and people had a right to follow it, or as if the proper moral principle is to let people follow a misguided conscience rather than to instruct them in the right way.

An erroneous conscience is not a rule for a morally right conduct, nor is it a safe guide for salvation; much less, if the conscience is a supinely erroneous one that has before itself good grounds to suspect its "assumed righteousness" but insists in holding onto its own judgment. In order to form right consciences the faithful have to align their consciences with the teaching Magisterium of the Church. "In the formation of their consciences, says Vatican II, the Christian faithful ought carefully to attend to the sacred and certain doctrine of the Church. For the Church is, by the will of Christ, the teacher of the truth. It is her duty to give utterance to, and authoritatively to teach, that Truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by her authority those principles of the moral order which have *their origin in human nature itself*."¹

¹ Decl. on Religious Freedom, n. 14.

Criticisms, Wrong Attitudes

Others have been more vitriolic, branding the Papal pronouncement as ill-advised, unrealistic and unmindful of the plight of couples. Matters would not have run so wild if dissenting groups did not receive encouragement from the conduct and action of many ecclesiastics the world over, who have also been vociferous in their dissent. Some have preached the right to disobey as if there could be a right to commit sin and do wrong. Others parading themselves as Theologians, while ignoring a basic principle of Theology that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ, have dared to act as teacher to the Pope and to pronounce him wrong. Now, who is the Teacher in matters of eternal salvation, and who is the disciple? The whole thing boils down to this: either the Pope speaking as supreme Shepherd of souls is the Vicar of Christ, or not: if he is not, then forget the whole issue; if he is, then every Christian who wishes to remain faithful to Christ must accept the pronouncement of His Vicar.

Subterfuges

The less pugnacious among the dissenters have sought recourse in subterfuges in order to excuse their non-submissiveness. All the subterfuges aim at undermining the binding force of the Papal pronouncement on the assumption that it is not an infallible pronouncement, as if infallibility constituted the essence of the teaching authority of the Pope and is not merely a guarantee of its correctness. The document is not infallible, it is alleged, because it is not a dogmatic pronouncement; it is not an ex-Cathedra pronouncement; it is not a solemn pronouncement.

Of course, it is not a dogmatic pronouncement. Dogma is a rule of Faith, Morals are rules of conduct. The Papal pronouncement under consideration is not concerned with a rule of Faith, but with a rule of conduct, and therefore, it cannot be a dogmatic pronouncement. The Papal pronouncement under consideration is not concerned with a rule of Faith, but with a rule of conduct, and therefore, it cannot be a dogmatic pronouncement. Nonetheless, Morals belong to the sphere of Papal infallibility just as Dogma. In the present matter the Pope has pronounced which is the correct rule of conduct to follow as conformable with the Law of the Gospel and of the Author of Nature.

What is an Ex-Cathedra and Solemn Pronouncement?

"It is not an ex-Cathedra pronouncement." Those who say so, reveal that they have not understood the meaning of this metaphorical expression. To speak "ex-Cathedra" with reference to the Pope means when he speaks as the supreme Shepherd and Master of Christendom in his capacity as Vicar of Christ, not precisely that, for the purpose, he should be seated on his Papal throne in St. Peter's Basilica. It is immaterial to the case, whether he should do so with the fanfare of trumpets and surrounded by Cardinals, or just seated at his desk penning his pronouncement. The important thing is that he speaks as the supreme Master of Christendom from the mandate of Christ and with His authority, as he has done in the encyclical "*Humanae Vitae*."² This is the formal solemnity to be considered and that carries weight in the matter, not the physical solemnity. To say, therefore, that the Papal pronouncement is not solemn and infallible because it was not accompanied with physical solemnity is a fundamental misconception.³

Neither is the solemnity of a stereotyped formula or of terms the essence of the formal solemnity in the Papal Magisterium. More weighty than the solemnity of words is the express requirement of unconditional and universal assent and acceptance, voiced out by the Pope.^{3a} In point of truth, there is no need for the Pope to make an explicit declaration of his intention to speak ex-cathedra on Faith and Morals, as long as he does so in effect. Neither is there any need for the Pope to intend to make use of infallibility, or not, when he ex-professo

² "We now intend, by virtue of the mandate entrusted to Us by Christ, to give Our reply to these grave questions" Ency. *Humanae Vitae*, N. 6, p. 6, St. Paul Publications, Pasay City.

³ Some consider a Papal pronouncement solemn and infallible when it threatens dissent with *anathema*. However, the latter is just an appendage and a sign of a solemn pronouncement. It cannot be the formal feature. Which is more important in a Papal pronouncement, to speak as Vicar of Christ and supreme Master of Christendom, or to threaten with *anathema*?

^{3a} "We now address Ourselves particularly to Our sons, from whom We expect a prompter and more generous *adherence*." H.V. n. 19.

"Be the first to give, in the exercise of your ministry, the example of loyal *internal* and external obedience, to the teaching authority of the Church." H.V. n. 28.

Humanae Vitae is the first case of a Papal pronouncement on Morals

speaks on Faith and Morals as Supreme Teacher of Christendom, because infallibility in the said conditions is a guarantee that attends to his pronouncement from the part of God.^{3b} And considering that the Holy Father proposes his pronouncement in *Humanae Vitae* as a declaration of the *Law of God*, it must be taken as something *final*.^{3c} His universal appeal for its acceptance is an endorsement of its final nature.^{3d}

The Pope could not have expressed otherwise considering the gospel

made expressly "by virtue of the mandate of Christ." Neither Pius XI nor Pius XII, when speaking on identical matters, invoked the mandate of Christ behind their pronouncement.

^{3b} Conf. *Pope: A Catholic Dictionary*, ed. by Addis, Arnold et al., 15th ed. by Attwater, D., 2nd ed., Macmillan N.Y., 1949, p. 254.

Let us put matters clearly. We should distinguish a) a teaching that is infallible because of the divine guarantee of truth attending to it; and b) a teaching that is infallible because it has been proposed by the Pope as an infallible pronouncement, dissent from which is threatened and penalized with heresy or anathema. The latter is the "infallible pronouncement" in the canonical sense, and it belongs to the Pope as institutional head of the Church. The former belongs to the Pope as Vicar of Christ and Supreme Teacher of the Divine Truth and Law.

There are teachings that are infallibly true, e.g., the immortality of the human soul, yet have not been pronounced in the infallible manner as an infallible doctrine, dissent from which is not penalized with heresy. Of this nature are the "authentic" interpretations of the Law of God made by the Pope. In like manner, the recently issued Papal Profession of Faith contains infallible teachings in the theological sense, although it is not an ex-cathedra or infallible pronouncement in the canonical sense and style. In *Humanae Vitae* the Pope does not speak just as the institutional head of the Church, but to all men as authentic interpreter of the Law of God.

We have not been speaking of an ex-cathedra or infallible pronouncement in the canonical or disciplinary sense. According to this sense, we agree that the Pope has not proposed his teaching in *Humanae Vitae* as an infallible pronouncement. It does not have the style of infallible pronouncements. A Papal pronouncement may be infallible as to style and substance, or as to substance alone though not as to style. Nonetheless, the substance is more important than the style.

^{3c} H.V., n. 20 and 31.

^{3d} H.V., n. 23 fol. It is in these terms that the Pope has reiterated his appeal for acceptance of his pronouncement in *Humane Vitae* in Bogotá and

of self-abnegation and self-renunciation that Christ preached;⁴ and considering the repeated instructions of St. Paul to Christians not to follow the desires of the flesh. "They who are in the flesh, says St. Paul, cannot please God" "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."⁵

The Binding Force of the Papal Teaching

The binding force of the Papal teaching is not to be premised on infallibility, nor on the opportunity and convenience of the doctrine as based on human criteria, nor on the scientific or sociological value of the arguments that may be adduced, but on the authority of the Pope as Vicar of Christ and commissioned by His Divine Mandate to teach the ways of salvation to men. In truth, infallibility is not therefore the essence of the supreme teaching authority of the Pope, but a guarantee of the correctness of its authoritative pronouncements as supreme guide of souls, for our consolation. Those, therefore, who premise the teaching authority of the Pope on infallibility are attaching the substance to the appendage.

In this connection, Vatican Council II says: "Religious submission of will and of mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking

to the Congress of German Catholics recently held at Essen, namely, because it is the Law of God.

⁴ Conf. Mat. 16, 24; 10, 38; Luke 14, 27.

⁵ Conf. Romans 8, 8 & 13. Conf. Gal. 5, 16. fol.

It is surprising to hear an ecclesiastic saying that the recent Papal doctrine has no basis in Scripture and Tradition. Says Paul VI: "Conformably to this mission of hers, the Church has always provided — and even more amply in recent times — a coherent teaching concerning both the nature of marriage and the correct use of conjugal rights and the duties of husband and wife." *Humanae Vitae*, N. 4, p. 4.

There has been a daring cleric who, appearing on TV, said, "We have to correct the Pope because he is wrong. Even St. Paul corrected St. Peter when he was wrong!" But, in what circumstances did St. Paul remonstrate St. Peter? Was it when acting as the supreme Shepherd of souls and speaking on Faith and Morals? No; but when St. Peter simulated to practise a judaical rite which was not in consonance with the truth of the Gospel. Conf. St. Paul to the Galatians 2, 11-14.

ex-Cathedra. That is, it must be shown in such a way that his supreme magisterium is acknowledged with reverence, the judgments made by him are sincerely adhered to, according to his manifest mind and will. His mind and will in the matter may be known chiefly either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking."⁶ This Conciliar document calls not only for external obedience in action to the supreme teaching authority of the Pope, but also for internal submission and acceptance of the mind. In other words, the faithful are also to accept the papal teaching as conforming to the Gospel teaching of Christ and to the design of the Author of Nature for men.

II. Moral and Immoral Birth Control

Not Every Birth Control Banned

No sooner had the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* been released and published, a married young man came to see me and expressed his perplexity and despondency in the following term: "Father, what shall teaching as conforming to the Gospel teaching of Christ and to the we do? The Pope has banned birth control!" It is the impression that many get from sensationalistic and irresponsible press catch-phrases "No, I answered, the Pope has not banned moral birth control. What he has banned is immoral and sinful birth control." The Pope has banned *contraceptive* birth control, which is the interpolation with the process of nature in order to evade a basic human responsibility, which is parenthood, while enjoying the privilege of married life.⁷ Evasion of responsibility in the pursuit of pleasure is contemptible; and the more so, the more basic the responsibility and the lower the kind of pleasure.

Misnomers, Root of Misappraisals

It is necessary to single out that the main obstruction to evaluating matters properly in the issue of Birth Control are the misnomers em-

⁶ Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, N. 25.

⁷ Conf. H. Q. Borromeo: RP Problem Isn't Overpopulation but under-production. The Philippines Herald, p. 21, August 2, 1968.

ployed and the confusions of thought thereby created. Take the terms: *Birth Control* and *Family Planning*. Control and moderation have always been synonymous with virtue; planning with reasonableness. Birth control and Family Planning, specially in consideration of the economic shortage of the family, or of the Nation, are perfectly acceptable. We control and plan our activities, particularly the important ones; so, why not the parental or procreational activity? There is no need of harping on the arguments in favor of birth limitation and control. We are well aware of them and agree with them. But, it is one thing to adduce those arguments in favor of Birth Control and Family Planning, and quite another thing to sell out those arguments and Birth Control itself in favor of contraception or to ethically justify its practices. A moral end does not justify immoral means.⁸

Mislabeleds

But, what is commonly sold out under the acceptable labels of Birth Control and Family Planning? Under the label of Birth Control is sold out the abolition of all self-control and virtuous moderation through the use of contraceptives. Under the label of Family Planning

⁸ "Men can and may control births through continence or by limiting their marital relations to the periods when conception is physiologically impossible or highly unlikely. No law constrains married couples to have as many children as they physically can, or as closely spaced as nature permits; other aspects of individual, family, or social life must here be taken into consideration. Provided then that the ends, means, and circumstances be good, everyone is in favor of birth control; in fact, such birth control is, as has been pointed out a dictate of reason itself which at all times should dominate instinct.

But Margaret Sanger (in America) and Marie Stopes (in England) substituted this morally neutral and euphemistic term for the older but harsher one of contraception, and they thereby, succeeded, thanks also to their proficiency in the other arts of propaganda, in breaking through the enfeebled moral and religious defenses of Anglo-Saxondom. Thus, *birth control* became synonymous with inherently immoral and thoroughly disgusting contraceptive practices! Consequently, we must sedulously distinguish 'natural' or 'lawful' birth control from 'artificial' or unnatural, sinful birth control." Thomas Hanley, OSB in *Marriage and the Family* by Jacques Leclercq (transl. 1949), p. 270. Cf. E. R. Moore, *The Case Against Birth Control*, p. 4 f. (1931); Murray and Flynn, *Social Problems*, pp. 156 f., 261 (1938); R. de Guchteneere, *Judgment on Birth Control*, p. 38 f. (1931).

and Planned Parenthood is sold a plan for stifling nature and for non-parenthood. It is selling moral rottenness under acceptable labels like selling rotten milk under good labels. The masses may be misled, but these things cannot be justified or made morally acceptable just because they are doled out under attractive and acceptable labels. There is plenty of mislabelling here. In most instance *planned Parenthood* is in reality *planned non-parenthood*; and *Family Planning* is a *plan for scot-free conjugal sensuality*.⁹

Control through Self-Restraint

We have to control the rate of birth, the population explosion. Yes; but through moderation and self-restraint, not by opening the sluice-gates to sensuality through the use of contraceptives. And precisely, in view of the urgency of action in this matter, we have to inculcate moderation and self-restraint. Let us say that we need to limit the production of beer because of over-production. Shall we say that the proper and correct method to achieve this is to continue the activity of production, but just block or sabotage one of the preliminary or subsequent processes? I wonder if any beer factory will subscribe to this method.

Not even Malthus, who is regarded as the classic exponent of Birth Control, approved of the contraceptive method. In his view the sane means for birth control and limitation, without incurring degradation is moral restraint. "I have never considered *any possible increase* of population as an evil, except as far as it might increase the proportion of vice and misery. Vice and misery, and these alone, are the evils which it has been my great object to contend against. I have expressly proposed moral restraint as their rational and proper remedy."¹⁰

(To be continued)

⁹ "Birth Control is not self control. What is not self control is self-indulgence. What is self indulgence is prostitution of functions. Prostitution in marriage is prostitution of marriage." Peter Maurin, "Birth Control" in Easy Essays in THE CATHOLIC WORKER, Vol. VII, no. 7, March 1940, p. 5.

¹⁰ Cf. Thomas R. Malthus, An Essay on Population, Introduction (Everyman's Library ed., 1914), I, p. X f.

HOW TO THINK ON THE "HUMANAE VITAE" AND ITS OBLIGATION ON CATHOLICS

● Antonio Piñón

Pope Paul's recent Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* reiterating the condemnation of all artificial contraceptives, including the anovulant pill, has, if one believes press reports, triggered off a worldwide spate of controversy. The Holy Father himself had foreseen that his decision would be met with criticism and rejection. The hostile movement of dissent, if one is again to believe the press, is spear-headed by priests and theologians. All of which leaves the Catholic layman, quite understandably, confused.

Are all Catholics bound in conscience by the Encyclical? Can you explain to me the reason given by the Pope for his decision? These are the two questions that plague the layman most of all.

In writing these comments, let me state at the outset that I have no wish to engage in controversy. I do not wish to prove anyone wrong, nor do I wish to add fuel to the fire. I have no intention of generating more heat, but I do wish to generate a bit of *light* to dispel the confusion.

To say that I have no wish to engage in polemics does not require me to straddle the fence comfortably. To say that I don't intend to prove anyone wrong, does not mean to say that I do not intend to arrive at any conclusions. That would be sheer waste of time and lack of considerateness for my readers. I do mean to arrive at some conclusions and to persuade the reader that such conclusions are reasonable, or even more reasonable than their opposites. But I mean to accomplish this without engaging in polemics.

The title — *How to think on the Humanae Vitae and its obligation on Catholics*—expresses with precision my purpose, which is not

to tell the reader *what* to think, but to show him *how* to think. This will involve testing contrary statements together with their presuppositions and implications. By doing this, the reader will learn *how* to pick his way through the maze of controversy. If he succeeds in doing this, he will find that he has arrived at formulating certain tenable conclusions, just as the man who succeeds in picking his way through the woods finds that he has finally arrived home.

The procedure suggested just now involves three stages. The first stage is to establish the areas of agreement between those who are against and those who are for the Encyclical. I shall call the former *dissenters* and the latter *assenters*. In the press they are respectively identified as *liberals* and *conservatives*. However, since *liberal* usually evokes approval and praise, while *conservative* usually brings disapproval and opprobrium, if we are to pursue our quest dispassionately with an eye to sober truth, I think it wise to avoid these and other similarly emotionally loaded terms, which are liable to becloud the issues and sway the judgment of reason.

Knowing the things on which people agree serves to eliminate the issues on which they falsely seem to disagree, and to define the issues on which they truly disagree. Often people debate mightily over things on which they would find themselves in agreement, if they cared to scratch a little below the surface, or they waste their effort over issues that are not really pertinent to the problem at hand. Clear thinking requires that we eliminate pseudo issues and pseudo conflicts from the start to enable us to concentrate on the real issues and conflicts. This constitutes the second stage.

The third stage brings us to the resolution of the conflict. A debate can be conducted reasonably only if there be some common ground between the disputants and the point at issue is clearly defined. The conflict can then be resolved by appealing to some principle or criterion on which both sides agree and showing the conclusions or implications to which both parties are logically committed by virtue of the ground on which they commonly stand.

This procedure is not polemical, since its focus is not on the disagreements (although it does not gloss these over), but on the agree-

ments. It generates light because it resolves the conflict and reconciles the disputants by shrinking the area of disagreement through the broadening of the original area of agreement.

In short, I aim at clarifying for my readers the implications to which they are necessarily committed by the positions they take whether for or against the Encyclical. Every clear thinking and reasonable man should be explicitly aware of the positions to which he is committed in upholding a certain view or opinion. To the extent that I succeed in my aim, I shall be offering my readers the opportunity and the means of reviewing their ideas if they find that some of their current views are inconsistent with other things that they hold to be true or reasonable.

Let us now begin with the first problem: Are all Catholics bound in conscience by the *Humanae Vitae*? Following the method just outlined, let us first find the grounds common to both dissenters and assenters.

AREAS OF AGREEMENT

1. The problem of birth control was one of the most important items on the agenda of Vatican II. Pope Paul VI took it out of the deliberations of the Council and announced that he was reserving the decision on the matter to himself alone. No one raised a protest. Both dissenters and assenters agreed on having the Pope have the final say on the burning problem. This could only mean that both sides agreed on the principle that *the Pope had the final authority in the Church to decide the question* one way or another.

It is further interesting to note that at the time no reservations were raised by either side against the Pope's future ruling. If my memory serves me right, no one made the reservation that the Pope's decision would be acceptable only if it conformed to the sentiments or opinion of the majority. Nobody proposed that the Council reserve the right to review the Pope's decision, if it proved unpalatable. No reservations tending to limit or curb the Pope's supreme authority were made at the time.

Each of the contending parties was supremely confident that its position was correct, yet they both agreed to submit their positions for final review and decision by the Pope *without reservations*. This could

only mean that the Holy Father's supreme authority in faith and morals was accepted without reservations by each and every one. After all the principle that the Holy See holds the *Primacy of authority* in matters of faith and morals is a basic article of Catholic belief.

2. Both dissenters and assenters further agree on the principle that the Pope possesses not only supreme, but also *infallible* authority in matters of faith and morals. For instance, a declaration reportedly signed by leading American Catholic theologians states that a Catholic may reject it and still remain within the Church precisely because it is not an infallible pronouncement. The implication is that, although it is not, it could very well have been an infallible papal pronouncement.

Needless to say, all Catholics are agreed on the principle of papal infallibility. After all, it is a dogma of faith solemnly defined by Vatican I.

3. Similarly, all Catholics concede, both dissenters and assenters, that papal authority and papal infallibility are *divine*, that is, that their immediate source is none other than God.

It is easy to see this with respect to infallibility. Men are fallible; consequently, the proper root of papal infallibility cannot be the faithful themselves, but only God, who is essentially infallible.

With respect to papal authority, we should recall to mind the distinction between the *man* and the *office*. Papal authority is vested in the Pope, but it is a prerogative, not of the man, but of the office viz. of the *Chair of Peter*. Men elect the man who is to sit on the Chair of Peter, but the Office of the Papacy, the Chair of Peter has not been instituted by men, but by Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Office of the Papacy is not like the Office of the President of the Philippines. The Filipino people not only elect the man who is to hold the office, but they are also the authors or of institutors of the Office of the President of the Philippines through their constitutional delegates. Thus, the immediate source of the authority of the Office of the President of the Philippines is the Filipino people. Not so with the Papacy: it was not instituted by either the Church or the faithful, but by Christ Who entrusted the care and the rule of His flock to Peter.

4. When the dissenters affirm that Catholic may disagree with the *Humanae Vitae* and still remain within the Church precisely because it is not an infallible pronouncement, they imply that no Catholic may disagree with an infallible pronouncement and still remain within the Church. In other words, even the dissenters affirm that an infallible papal pronouncement binds each and every Catholic in conscience, so much so that any Catholic who deliberately repudiates it has no option but to renounce the Faith and leave the Church.

Dissenters and assenters then both agree on the principle that the exercise of infallible Papal authority binds all Catholics in conscience.

5. Now, it is a well-known fact that since *Humanae Vitae* was published, numerous dissenting voices were raised around the world by both clergy and laymen alike. It is also common knowledge that Pope Paul has received calmly and mildly all criticisms levelled against his decision, including those couched in intemperate tones. It is a matter of record that the tenor of the Encyclical makes no claim to an infallible pronouncement. Neither does the Holy Father hurl *anathemas* or threaten *excommunication* against any of the dissenters, nor has he declared them guilty of *heresy*.

In other words, *the Pope has neither explicitly nor implicitly claimed to be making an infallible definition*. This is, then another point of agreement: *Pope Paul VI did not choose to exercise his infallible authority*. He could have, but he did not. This is not a matter of principle, but a historical *fact*.

To summarise briefly: Both dissenters and assenters concede the following principles: the Pope is personally vested with supreme authority over the whole Church; this authority is divine, and in certain cases infallible; where infallible papal authority is involved, it is binding in conscience on every Catholic.

There is also consensus on the fact that in the *Humanae Vitae* the Pope did not exercise his infallible authority.

The Pseudo Issues

With these areas of agreement clearly in mind, it should now be possible to rule out certain false issues that only sow confusion.

1. Let me refer again to the manifesto that declares that, since *Humanae Vitae* makes no infallible pronouncements, any Catholic is free to reject it and still remain within the Church.

The issue implicit here is that the assenters contend that *Humanae Vitae* is binding on every Catholic to such degree and extent that rejection of the Encyclical necessarily entails rejection of the Church itself.

That this is a false issue is obvious from the 5th point of agreement. The assenters concede, unless they wish to be more poppish than the Pope, that infallible authority is not involved in *Humanae Vitae*. They also concede that neither heresy nor excommunication are involved. Hence, Catholics who repudiate the Encyclical are not guilty of heresy, which would place them outside the Faith itself. Nor are they liable to excommunication, which would throw them out of the Church.

Consequently, there is no disputing the fact that a Catholic may reject the Encyclical and still remain a Catholic. This is not a point at issue, since both sides concede it.

2. There is also the charge that in forbidding and condemning all kinds of artificial contraceptives, specifically the steroid anovulant pill, the Pope had unipersonally reversed the majority opinion of his own Commission of experts.

The issue implicit in his charge is that Pope Paul was bound to follow the Papal Commission's majority opinion. And by being bound I mean that the Pope had no right or authority to disregard, much less to reverse, the opinion of the majority.

Now one can hold this view only if one is unmindful of both a principle and a fact.

The principle is one conceded by all, viz. that in the Church the supreme authority is held by the Pope, and not by any Commission created by him. No body created by papal authority can either have more authority than the Pope, or have authority over the Pope. The reason is clear: a body created by the Pope derives its authority, purpose and scope from the Pope's authority; hence, it can neither have more authority than, nor authority over, the Pope.

The fact is the historical fact that the Papal Commission created by John XXIII and subsequently expanded by Paul VI was simply a

consultative or *advisory* Commission; it was not created to decide, but to *advise* the Holy Father, on the question. In the words of Pope Paul VI, the Commission's purpose and scope was "the gathering of *opinion* . . . and furnishing opportune elements of *information*" to the Magisterium. (*Humanae Vitae*, no. 5; underscoring mine).

But the reader may insist. Granted that the Pope was not bound to follow the majority opinion, was it not more reasonable for him to adopt it? They were all experts. Twenty pairs of eyes see better than one. What makes the Pope think that he alone is in a better position to see the truth than all the others?

The honest answer to this is that if we consider the Pope on the same level as his advisers or experts, that is to say, on a purely human level, pitting his purely human mind against the human minds of the others, it would not be reasonable to argue that he alone was in a better position than all the others. Even if one were to admit, as I think one ought to, that finding the truth is not a matter of counting noses democratically, that would only mean that the majority opinion is not necessarily the true one, but it does not by any stretch of the imagination mean that the minority is in a better position to arrive at the truth than the majority.

What, then, puts the Pope in a better position? Only one thing: the *divine assistance* promised to him in virtue of his office, but not to his advisers.

Here the reader might insist: All right, if the Pope has divine assistance, what need has he of advisory Commissions? If he has God's help, surely he can dispense with all human help.

The answer to this requires the distinction between *divine revelation* and *divine assistance*. By revelation God tells man the truth, man has nothing to do but listen. In the case of mere assistance God does not tell man the truth; He only infuses light into his mind to enable him to find and recognize the truth. Since man is not simply told the truth, he has to exert effort, research, gather material, study, evaluate and judge, but divine light will be there to help him in evaluating and making his judgment. Since the Pope was guaranteed, not revelation, but simply divine assistance, if he is not to be recreant to his duty, he

cannot afford simply to wait to have the truth revealed to him. Instead, he must do his homework diligently, that is to say, research, consult, study, in short, employ all human means at his disposal in the search for truth, but comforted with the knowledge that in all these indispensable human endeavours God's helping hand is there to shore up his human deficiencies.

Now we can understand why the Pope creates human commissions to help him. They are part of the human means available at his disposal, part of doing his homework is to listen to sage and expert advice. Yet it is the Pope alone who has been guaranteed divine assistance in judging and recognising the truth in all material turned up by human study and research. This is the reason why the Pope is called on to deliver his personal judgment on the matter. This is a task that he cannot delegate to others. Whatever opinions and views are arrived at by others commissioned by the Pope, all such opinions and views are to be submitted finally to the personal judgment of the Vicar of Christ.

Now the reader will understand why the Pope writes: "The conclusions at which the Commission arrived could not, nevertheless, be considered by Us as definitive, nor dispense Us from a personal examination of this serious question..." (*Ibid.*, no. 6)

It is this divine assistance guaranteed to the Pope in the ordinary discharge of his Pastoral Office that is the foundation of the Catholic belief in the infallibility of the Ordinary Magisterium. It is precisely *this divine assistance which gives the Pope his advantage over others*, no matter how much wiser and more expert they may be.

3. Then there are many who assert that the licitude or illicitude of the pill should be left to the individual consciences of the couple concerned. This is a crisis of conscience and a crisis of conscience can be resolved only by the conscience concerned.

If a man did something which he sincerely thought was wrong, he would be guilty of wrongdoing, even if perchance the thing done was the right and proper thing to do. Again, if a man did something truly wrong but in the sincere belief that it was the right thing to do, he would not be guilty of wrongdoing either. Does this not mean that

the only thing that matters is a sincere conscience or sincere belief in the rectitude of what one is doing? Does this not mean also that if a Catholic couple sincerely believes that in their particular situation it is all right to take the pill, then they may do so despite the Pope's decision to the contrary?

What are we to say of this position? I think that it contains a part of the truth, but not the whole truth. The crucial term here is the term *sincere*.

When is a belief truly and honestly sincere? When a man holds it simply because he wants to? I would say that such a belief is best described by the term *arbitrary*, not by the term *sincere*.

The least we can say of a sincere belief is that a man holds it because he is convinced or persuaded of the thing he believes in. In other words, it is grounded on *reason sufficiently solid* to command conviction or persuasion. Otherwise we are back at arbitrary belief.

When a man presents reasons or arguments for his belief, he does so in the confident that his reasons can be scrutinised and tested by minds other than his own. To say that the reasons you present can be tested by other men is the same as saying that your reasons are subject to *objective* criteria, tests or norms. In short, a sincere belief, far from being purely subjective, requires *objectivity*. Without objective grounds or guarantees, sincerity degenerates into pure and simple arbitrariness.

If men are to behave reasonably, they must be able to say *why* they behave as they do, they should be able to *justify* their behaviour. But the moment they say *why* or attempt to justify themselves, they are giving objective grounds for their conscience. Hence, the *whole* truth in this matter is that the only adequate and sufficient rule for right moral behaviour is the *individual objective conscience*. By *objective* conscience I mean a judgment or belief concerning the rightness or wrongness of a certain behaviour that is supported by reasons capable of being tested by criteria equally valid for others; such criteria must, by the very nature of the case, be objective criteria.

That this issue between subjective conscience and objective norms or criteria of behaviour is a pseudo issue should be clear not only from

the analysis just given, but also from the attitudes of both dissenters and assenters. The dissenters have no wish to assert pure and unmitigated subjectivism in morals; indeed, they feel that such a charge is a misrepresentation of their position. On the other hand, the assenters who uphold the objective norms of morality similarly uphold the necessity of applying these norms to subjective individual behaviour, and in this latter field they uphold the exclusive competence of individual conscience.

How does this relate to the Encyclical? A truly sincere belief of conscience, as pointed out, is supported by or based on reasons that can be weighed by objective tests. Now, one of the objective tests of human behaviour is a ruling or pronouncement by the legitimate authority. Take for instance the legal age required for valid election to the Senate of the Philippines. The Constitution says: 40 years at the time of his election. The phrase admits of two interpretations: either the day when the candidate is voted for, or the day when the whole process of election is completed. Both sides adduce reasonable or objective grounds for their interpretation. Hence, Mr. Aquino could sincerely present his candidacy and fight for it, and the Nacionalistas could as sincerely press for his disqualification and the annulment of his candidacy. Now, suppose that when the case was brought to the Supreme Court, the tribunal had promptly taken the bull by the horns and come out with the decision that "time of his election" meant the day when the voting is held; in this supposition, I say, could candidate Aquino continue to pursue his candidacy in all sincerity? Obviously no. Why not? Because the Supreme Court which is empowered to interpret the Constitution had made a definite pronouncement on the matter ruling against Aquino's interpretation.

Is the *Humanae Vitae* similar to the pronouncements of private lawyers and constitutionalists, or is it similar to a pronouncement by the Supreme Court? In the former case, the Encyclical would leave the question of sincerity open; Catholics would still be free to follow what they sincerely believed in conscience whether for or against the Encyclical. In the latter case, the Encyclical would affect the sincerity of those who choose to go against it, just as the supposed Supreme Court

decision would adversely affect Aquino's sincerity if he chooses to disregard the tribunal's ruling.

The Real Issues

Having now cleared the ground of the more important pseudo issues, I shall now try to define the real issues.

1. Let me refer once more to the statement already mentioned that, since the Pope has made no infallible pronouncement, Catholics may reject the Encyclical and still remain within the Church. This statement can be equivalently couched in the form of two questions, thus:

a. Does *Humanae Vitae* bind all Catholics in conscience under pain of heresy?

b. Does *Humanae Vitae* bind all Catholics in conscience under pain of excommunication?

From all the above it is clear that the answer to both questions is no. *Humanae Vitae* does not bind Catholics in conscience either under of heresy or under pain of excommunication.

But there is a third alternative: Does *Humanae Vitae* bind all Catholics in conscience *under pain of mortal sin*? To make clear the distinction between heresy and excommunication on the one hand, and mortal sin on the other hand, consider this example: Catholics are told to abstain from meat on Fridays. If you eat meat on a Friday you are neither a heretic nor are you excommunicated, but as a Catholic you go to confession for having committed a mortal sin.

Similarly, then the question for Catholic consciences is the following: if a Catholic couple takes the pill, we all are agreed that they are liable neither to heresy nor to excommunication; but are they in a state of grace or are they in mortal sin? Catholics are rightfully disturbed over the prospect of heresy and excommunication, but they are also rightfully disturbed over the prospect of mortal sin. After all the majority of Catholics who go to confession do not accuse themselves of either heresy or of having incurred excommunication, but simply for having committed a mortal sin.

Does *Humanae Vitae* bind Catholics under pain of *mortal sin*? This is the true issue. But one hardly sees the issue couched in these

terms. If my memory does not fail me, I have yet to read a press report quoting a dissenter raising the issue, not of being outside the Church (heresy or excommunication), but simply the issue of mortal sin.

The assenters affirm that Catholic consciences are bound by *Humanae Vitae* under pain of mortal sin. The dissenters maintain that Catholics are still free. This requires them to deny that that Catholics are bound in conscience, period. Such a sweeping statement includes all possible alternatives, viz. Catholics are not bound in conscience either under pain of heresy, or of excommunication, or of mortal sin. This last alternative—under pain of mortal sin—is, I repeat, the only relevant issue at present.

The assenters affirm that Catholic consciences are bound by *Humanae Vitae* is an official decision by the Head of the Church, in other words, because it is invested with the *authority* of the Papal Office.

On the other hand, the dissenters claim that Catholics are still free to decide whether or not to take the pill precisely because the Pope has failed to utter an *infallible* pronouncement. They concede, in other words, that the Encyclical has authority, but it has no infallibility, and this lack of infallibility makes it non-binding.

2. Hence a second issue: In virtue of what does a papal pronouncement bind Catholics in conscience under pain of sin?

Assenters: in virtue of *authority*, and *not* of infallibility.

Dissenters: *not* in virtue of authority, but in virtue of *infallibility*.

Note that this second issue is more fundamental than the first. The solution of issue no. 1 depends on the solution given to issue no. 2. If we concede that the pronouncements of the Holy See bind simply because of authority, then all that is required to solve issue no. 1 is to find out whether *Humanae Vitae* is an authoritative pronouncement. However, if papal pronouncements bind precisely in virtue of infallibility, the solution to issue no. 1 will require not only the presence of authority but also the presence of infallibility.

Solution of Issues

Let us, then, consider issue no. 2 in the first place: In virtue of what does a papal pronouncement bind Catholics in conscience under pain of sin?

I shall begin by stating a point on which both dissenters and assenters agree, viz, that when the Pope exercises his infallible authority, all Catholics are bound under pain of mortal sin. No Catholic gainsays this principle. The trouble is that there are two crucial terms here, *infallible* and *authority*. The dissenters ground obligation on infallibility; the assenters, on authority. How do we test the reasonability of these opposed claims?

There are two tests that can be employed here: one is the test of logical analysis of the concept; the other is the empirical test of the common experience of mankind.

What is meant by an infallible pronouncement? A pronouncement is infallible when it *cannot err*, i.e., when it is impossible for it to state anything but the truth. That which is infallible is *absolutely not liable to error, falsehood or mistake*. The statement that is the object of an infallible pronouncement is so absolutely true that under no circumstances can it possibly be false.

An infallible truth necessarily implies two properties. In the first place, an infallible truth is altogether *indubitable*, i.e. it is not liable to any kind of doubt or questioning, its certainty cannot be subject to questioning or doubting. In the second place, an infallible truth is *incorrigible*, i.e., it is not subject to revision, amendment or correction at any later date. The reason is obvious: to say that the truth or certainty of a statement is subject to further questioning or revision requires one to say that there is some possibility of error involved. Now, the very notion of possibility of error formally contradicts the notion of infallibility.

Infallibility is the *raison d'être* of both indubitability and incorrigibility; is it also the *raison d'être* of moral obligation?

Let me first point out that moral obligation can have two meanings. In the first place, one can mean the obligation to *accept the truth or the*

certainty of the infallible pronouncement; I will call this the obligation to *assent*. In the second place, one can mean the obligation to *do* what has been infallibly prescribed; I will call this the obligation to *behave* or to *obey*. With regard to the pill, for instance, the obligation to assent means your obligation to hold in your mind as true that taking the pill is morally wrong, whether or not you decide to take it. The obligation to obey means your obligation to refrain from taking the pill, irrespective of your views on the rightness or wrongness of taking it.

How does infallibility relate to normal obligation in the senses just described? Infallibility directly determines the *kind* of assent that is given. If I choose to assent to an infallible pronouncement, my assent has to be both *indubitable* and *incorrigible*, i.e. it is the kind of assent that is not open to questioning or eventual withdrawal. An assent open to questioning and eventual withdrawal is the kind of assent given to fallible pronouncements. You begin to question when you begin to suspect the possibility of error, and you withdraw your assent when the fact of error is confirmed. Such a situation is absolutely excluded by an infallible pronouncement.

However, infallibility by itself does not determine the obligation to *give* assent. Let us imagine Einstein's relativity theory to be, not merely a theory, but an infallible truth. Am I, in this supposition, morally obligated to give it my assent? One of my readers might say: "Yes, you are morally obligated to give your assent." My next question will be: "Why? On what grounds?" My hypothetical reader will come back saying: "Because it would be foolish and irrational of you not to admit or assent to an infallible truth." Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that the reason is cogent. On close examination we will find that the reason advanced for my obligation to assent is not the infallibility of the relativity theory but the *folly* and *irrationality* of my not assenting to it. In other words, the real ground for my obligation to assent runs somewhat like this: I am a rational being: as such, I am obligated to behave rationally; rational behaviour requires me to assent to truth infallibly proposed. In short, the *raison d'être* of my obligation to assent is not infallibility, but *my rational nature*, or, as others would say, the *natural law*.

Neither does infallibility by itself determine the obligation to obey. Infallibility addresses itself directly to the mind or intellect. If even in this field of intellect it does not determine the obligation to assent, much less will it determine the obligation to obey, which lies outside or beyond the intellect. To illustrate: I am certain that putting a bullet through a man's brains causes his death. This certainty has a bearing on my obligation not to shoot my neighbour in the head. Note, however, that my certainty on the matter is not an infallible certainty; yet it does not detract from my obligation to refrain from shooting a hole in my neighbour's head. On the other hand, suppose I am infallibly certain that slicing a chicken's throat causes its death; still that infallibility puts me under no moral stricture to refrain from slicing its throat and having chicken for lunch.

The common experience of mankind lends ample support to the foregoing. Civil authority passes laws, issues commands, which the citizens are obligated to obey. Yet no one thinks that civil authority is infallible, but rather woefully fallible. Again, no one gainsays that every man is bound to obey the dictates of his own conscience; yet every one is uncomfortably aware that individual conscience, sad to say, is most liable to error and self-deception. If the obligation to obey essentially required infallibility, whether as its root or at least as its incapable condition, then no man, and I mean absolutely no man, has any obligation to obey the laws of the land, or the commands of legitimate authority, or even the dictates of his own conscience.

We see, then, that to base obligation directly on infallibility finds no reasonable support either in the analysis of the concept itself or in the fund of the common experience of mankind.

Let us apply the same tests to authority.

First, the test of logical analysis. What is authority? Authority is not mere physical power to command and coerce compliance. That is simply brute force and tyranny. Authority means the *right* or the *moral* power to command or to act. This right or moral power to command or to act necessarily involves in the subjects the duty or moral obligation to obey the command or to recognise the act as valid.

Without this corresponding moral obligation on the part of the subject, the very concept of authority becomes meaningless and nugatory. The test of logical analysis requires us to say that just as infallibility is the *raison d'être* of indubitability and incorrigibility, so authority is the *raison d'être* of duty or moral obligation.

The common experience of mankind cited above, not only establishes the absence of causal links between obligation and infallibility, but also establishes positively the *causal relationship* between authority and obligation. What laws and commands are the citizens required to obey? Only those that emanate from legitimate or true authority. Where no legitimate or true authority is involved, laws and commands are not true laws or commands and have no binding power in conscience. Where true authority is absent, there is only the constraint of sheer physical force to induce compliance. Again, why is each man duty bound to follow the dictates of his conscience? Because when conscience dictates it speaks with true, if derived, authority. Where conscience merely advises or counsels, it says: "It is better or wiser for you to do this or not to do that". Where conscience dictates, it says: "Do this; do not do that". In the former case authority is absent; in the latter case, authority is present.

In the case where we imagine relativity theory to be an infallible truth, the obligation to assent, if there be any, is seen to be grounded on the authority of the natural law, which is derived from God, the ultimate source of all authority.

Authority is of two kinds; one is the authority to *prescribe* what is to be done and to *forbid* what is not to be done. I shall call this the authority to *govern*. Another is the authority to define what is true or false, right or wrong. I shall call this authority to *teach*. An example of the authority to govern is the authority of Congress to frame laws, and the authority of the President to issue orders. An example of the authority to teach is the authority of the Supreme Court to interpret the Constitution and the other laws of the land.

The exercise of the authority to govern imposes on the subjects the obligation to obey or behave according to the prescription. Similarly, the exercise of the authority to teach imposes the obligation to assent

to the thing taught authoritatively, for instance, the authoritative interpretations of the Supreme Court are binding on all the practitioners of the law.

To summarise this discussion of issue no. 2: the tests of conceptual analysis and of the common experience of mankind make it reasonable to hold that:

1. *Authority*, not infallibility, determines *moral obligation*.
2. *Governing* authority determines in the subject the obligation to *obey*.
3. *Teaching* authority determines in the subject the obligation to *assent*.
4. *Infallibility* determines the *kind* of assent, i.e. the *indubitability* and *in corrigibility* of the assent given.

Let us now consider issue no. 1: Does *Humanae Vitae* bind all Catholics under pain of mortal sin? Before proceeding, however, it will be good to recall to mind the kind of authority the Pope has and how he exercises it.

1. The Pope possesses in virtue of his Office the two kinds of authority described previously. He has the authority to govern, i.e. to prescribe rules of behaviour, and the authority to *teach*, i.e. to define truths of faith and morals.

He enjoys this twofold authority over the *Church as a whole* and over *each every* individual member of the Church.

The fact that Papal authority is voluntarily accepted by the faithful does not mean that his authority is derived from them or from the Church. Papal authority is derived from Christ's institution; it is *divine*, God-given.

2. The exercise of authority is *indissolubly linked* to the exercise of the Office. This means that the exercise of Office is necessarily invested with authority. This principle holds true of both ecclesiastical and civil Office. In other words, every *official* act—whether ecclesiastical or civil—carries authority.

3. Infallibility is a prerogative of the Papal Office intended only for a very specific act of teaching, viz. the teaching of a truth as *revealed by God*. Whenever the Pope officially declares something as true, but not specifically as a truth revealed by God, he exercises his teaching authority, but not his infallibility.

In other words, although every official teaching is authoritative, not every official teaching is infallible. However, every infallible teaching is official and authoritative.

4. Official acts of the Pope carry authority in *varying degrees*. For our present purposes it is enough to mention two degrees. An official papal act either carries the *full* weight of authority, or *not*.

It should be obvious that when the Pope uses the authority of his Office only to exhort, persuade, or counsel the faithful to do something, he is not employing the full weight of his authority. But he would be using the *full* weight of his authority when he *firmly* and *definitely* commands or forbids certain behaviours. Similarly, when the Pope officially enunciates an opinion, or declares something merely as probable, he is not exercising the full weight of his teaching authority, as he would be doing when he *firmly* and *definitely* pronounces something as *true* and *certain*.

It should also be clearly unreasonable to say that Catholics are not free to do otherwise in a case where the Pope merely exhorts or counsels without either commanding or forbidding; or that they are not free to think otherwise in a case where the Pope merely enunciates an opinion. This means that the burden of obligation arises only when authority is exercised *in full*; obligation is non-existent where authority is not exercised in full.

Briefly: every official papal act (governing or teaching) carries divine authority, but not every official act is infallible. The obligation to obey or to assent does not arise when papal authority is not fully exercised, i.e. when the Pope merely counsels or enunciates an opinion. The obligation to obey and to assent arises only when papal authority is fully exercised, i.e. when the Pope issues a definite command or prohibition, or definitely teaches something as certainly true or as certainly false.

How can we know that *Humanae Vitae* is invested with authority? It is invested with authority if the Pope issued it in discharge of his Pastoral Office. There are three reasonable indications that this is the case.

1. There is a general consensus among theologians that Encyclicals are not private papal letters, but *public* or *official* documents issued by the Pope in the *ordinary* or normal *discharge of his Office*. On this count *Humanae Vitae* should be held as authoritative.

2. The circumstantial evidence points to the same conclusion. The problem of birth regulation and control was one of the gravest problems on the agenda of Vatican II scheduled for full-scale deliberations leading to a statement of the official position of the matter. Pope Paul VI excluded the problem from the deliberations of the Council and reserved to himself the statement of the Church's official policy on the question. He could not have done that unless he was acting in his *official* capacity as *Supreme Visible Head of the Church*. Obviously, too, the forthcoming statement on birth control, embodied in *Humanae Vitae*, would have to be *official* and *authoritative* as would have been the Council declaration that it subrogated.

Besides, the problems of conscience faced by Catholic couples required nothing short of an official and authoritative declaration. There was no dearth of unofficial and private theological opinions. The fact that private theological opinion was divided only emphasised the need for an authoritative decision.

3. Finally, the tenor itself of the Encyclical leaves no room for doubts. From the very beginning the Pope makes references to the *Magisterium* and to its *competence* to deal with the subject. He calls to mind the *mission* and *command* given to Peter by Christ to *teach* all nations His *commandments*. When Pope Paul finally settles down to grapple with the problem, he does so with these words: 'We now intend, *by virtue of the mandate entrusted to Us by Christ*, to give Our reply to these grave questions.' (*Ibid.*, nn. 4-6; underscoring mine).

It is, then abundantly clear, that in this Encyclical the Holy Father *explicitly* intends to exercise his *Christ-given authority* and *Pastoral Office*.

The Encyclical both *forbids* the practice of all kinds of artificial contraceptives, and *teaches* that artificial contraception is intrinsically immoral or wrong. It is not concerned only with matters of discipline or behaviour, or only with matters of doctrine. It is concerned equally with both discipline and doctrine, the doctrine being the foundation of the discipline. It is thus clear that the Pope here exercises both his authority to govern and his authority to teach.

If any confirmation of the authoritative character of *Humanae Vitae* is needed, it is furnished by the violent reaction of the dissenters. The very violence of the dissent more than suggests that the dissenters themselves regard the Encyclical as an authoritative pronouncement. Only seeing themselves *officially* declared wrong could have brought about such a sharp reaction. If the Pope had expressed exactly the same views in an address, say, to a Conference of physicians, he would have caused hardly a stir, since an address to a Conference of physicians could have been reasonably construed as nothing more than an unofficial statement.

Is *Humanae Vitae* invested with the *full* authority of the Papal Office? Let us turn once more to the circumstances attending the document and to its tenor.

The circumstances are well known. In the first place, the daily crises of conscience confronting Catholic couples. They want to be told in clear and unmistakable terms what they may and what they may not do. Evidently, a declaration which merely *persuades* a certain course of action, without definitely commanding or forbidding; a statement that merely says, "It is better and wiser for you to do this", without saying clearly, "You may do this, but you may not do that", such a statement, I say, falls pitifully short of the crises it aims to solve.

In the second place, the various opinions on the matter created an atmosphere of uncertainty and confusion crying to be dissipated. If the Encyclical only enunciated an opinion, it would completely fail to clear away the uncertainties and confusion.

Obviously, if the Pope is to achieve his own stated objectives, it is reasonable to hold that he cannot rest satisfied with the half-hearted attempts represented by persuasion, exhortation and opinion, he must both firmly prescribe (or proscribe) and firmly and definitely teach.

The tenor of *Humanae Vitae* reveals that he has done precisely this: Pope Paul firmly proscribes all kinds of artificial contraception, and firmly and definitely teaches that artificial contraception of any kind is intrinsically immoral. He knows that he is going against the climate of opinion, and yet the perusal of *Humanae Vitae* fails to reveal the slightest signs of vacillation or hesitancy in the Pope's utterances. He employs strong, energetic phrases; he leaves no loophole unplugged, he admits no pretexts or excuses to undermine or weaken the *positive exclusion of each and every* action which, whether as an *end* or as a *means*, whether *before, during, or after* the conjugal act, deliberately renders procreation impossible. (*Ibid.* no. 14)

The Pope has been accused of dilly-dallying, of being unable to make up his mind. But, as one press reporter (not a very friendly one) has commented, in *Humanae Vitae* he shows that he has certainly made up his mind, and with a vengeance.

The foregoing makes it reasonably clear, I think, that *Humanae Vitae* incorporates the *full* governing and teaching authority of the Papal Office.

A Counter Argument Satisfied

Here someone might counter argue: If the Pope intended to make full use of his authority, how do you explain the fact that he has been acting very mildly towards his critics who have challenged his authority? If he intended to oblige all and sundry, why doesn't he speak more forcefully against those who reject his Encyclical, why doesn't he threaten them with excommunication or with the other serious ecclesiastical sanctions at his disposal? He would then make it clear that he means business, that he wants everybody to toe the line. Can we not argue, from his present mild behaviour, that it is not clear that Pope Paul meant to oblige anybody?

To this I answer in the first place, that if the Pope never had it in mind to lay down an obligation in conscience, what could have been easier for him than to silence all criticism and hostility by simply saying: "Look here, what are you all griping about? I was only trying a little persuasion. I only meant to utter an opinion..." That would have

effectively stilled all protests or reduced them to faint murmurs. But the Pope did not do that. He never wavered, not once did he falter, he held on stoutly to his position. He was mild and charitable in the manner of addressing his critics, but strong and definitive in the *things* he forbade and taught. This is a classic example of the iron fist in a velvet glove.

In the second place, I wish to point out that authority can be exercised (whether fully or otherwise) at two different moments. The first moment is when the command is issued. Then, perhaps some subjects disobey the command. Authority is now brought to bear to enforce or sanction the command. This is the second moment. To say that authority is fully exercised in moment no. 1 does not require us to say that it is likewise fully exercised in moment no. 2. Again, to say that authority is not fully exercised in moment no. 2. does not require us to say that likewise it was not fully exercised in moment no. 1. The wielder of authority may have reasons to exercise his authority fully in moment no. 1, and to exercise it in a lesser degree in moment no. 2.

For instance, a law is passed over the strong objections of some sections of the country. As a result, some provinces start a secessionist movement. The state can very well employ the mailed fist right from the beginning, but instead it resorts to persuasion and negotiation. Is it reasonable to argue, from this circumstance, that the citizens were free to abide by it or not? I think that this is not a reasonable conclusion. The reasonable conclusion is that authority was fully exercised in moment no. 1; when Congress passed the law, Congress meant it to be obligatory on the citizens. If it were not obligatory there would be no need to secede; indeed, secession is employed as a means to escape the obligation of the law. But authority was not fully exercised by the Executive in moment no. 2, and for a good reason: blood should not flow, except in the last resort, when all peaceful means are of no avail.

I think it reasonable to say that this is exactly the case with *Humanae Vitae*. Pope Paul exercised his full authority, but decided instead on a course of mild and charitable restraint in the matter of *enforcing* the Encyclical. He had a reason for it: he did not wish to bring to a

head the faltering faith of many, nor strain to the breaking point their wavering loyalty. He wished to follow Christ's admonition not to break the cracked reed nor to put out the still smoking wick, so that in God's good time the dissenters, through God's grace and their own careful reconsideration of the subject, might be led to accept the papal teaching. This much is also evident from developments posterior to the issuance of the Encyclical.

Bearing in mind the distinction between the moment of *issuing* a command, and the moment of *enforcing* it, there is no inconsistency in holding that authority is exercised in different degrees in one moment and the other: full authority in the former, and a diminished authority in the latter, if there be reasons to warrant it, as I think there were.

Conclusion

We arrive, then, at the following conclusions:

1. The Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* is an *official* act bearing the *full authority* of the Papal Office both to *govern* and to *teach*.
2. All Catholics, being subject to the authority of the Pope, are under *moral obligation*, i.e. duty bound *under pain of sin*, both to *obey* the Pope's injunction against the practice of all forms of artificial birth control, and to *assent* to the Pope's teaching on the matter, viz. that all forms of artificial birth control are intrinsically immoral.
3. Since the Pope forbids artificial contraception as a grievous sin, all Catholics are bound to abide by the prohibition under pain of *mortal* sin.
4. Since the teaching of the intrinsic wrongness of artificial contraception is not proposed infallibly, the intellectual assent that Catholics are bound to give it is, not closed, but *open* to further inquiries and investigations, and even to possible eventual withdrawal, should the Holy See at some later time review and amend the present teaching and prohibition. Personally, I do not think this likely to happen, but the objective possibility is there all the same.

The *Humanae Vitae* does not close and bolt the door to continued studies by Catholic scholars nor does it forbid them from submitting their findings to the Holy See in the hope of securing a future review

of the whole matter. But the authoritative character of the Encyclical does require them to proceed in their studies and recommendation with the spirit of obedience due to Chair of Peter.

Two Further Problems

This last conclusion opens two further questions: How can a man obey the Pope if he does not believe in what the Pope says? And, how can a man give his assent if he thinks that the Pope is wrong in what he teaches?

To answer the first question: it must be allowed that the task of obedience is normally made easier if the subject believes in the rightness or reasonability of the command. Conversely, where this belief is absent, obedience becomes difficult, and the conflict might eventually grow to such an extent that obedience becomes psychologically impossible. It can be reasonably conjectured that this was one of the reasons that motivated the Holy Father not to compel through grievous authoritative sanctions immediate and strict obedience to his Encyclical. However, it is also true that both the difficulty and the conflict are frequently overexaggerated.

Obedience and assent are two different things; and, although they ought to be pulling together, it is not all uncommon to see them going their separate ways. The conflict thus created to a normally and reasonably flexible mind, viz, a mind that is not too much puffed up with the conceit of its own judgment and independence, is not such as to induce a neurosis or unbalance the personality. The majority of the citizens are not so disturbed as to be unable to live normally with their fellows. And yet we all have to put up with laws and regulations and social customs that we think ridiculous, inept, foolish. The laws and regulations passed by the authorities can neither please nor look reasonable to everybody. Yet, provided we are not cursed with a surfeit of ego, we obey and take them all in stride. Why don't we lose our mental balance? Because we clearly see that it is folly and unreason to demand that human authority be all-wise and infallible, and we equally see that it is folly and unreason to require that all laws and regulations passed by fallible authority be first approved by each and every indivi-

dual subject before complying with them. since this would lead by a short cut to anarchy, the dissolution of society and of civilised living and the destruction of one's own individual welfare, which is intimately linked to the good of all, and to the order of the community.

Granting, then, that the inherent reasonability of the command is not apparent to the individual concerned, still he can reasonably give his obedience on the basis that it is reasonable to obey even laws whose reasonability is not obvious because otherwise the society and many other genuine human values are in principle let open and unprotected to the deadly viruses of anarchy and disorder.

To demand that every man be given the freedom not to obey legitimate prescriptions that do not meet his individual approval is tantamount to saying: I give you the right to command me, but I reserve the right to disobey you. Obviously, this is a contradiction in terms, destroys at its very roots the principle of authority and erects in its stead the principle of *anarchy*: each man for himself and let the world go to pot.

The answer to the second question can be gleaned from the reply given me by a young man. He strongly insisted that he was unable to see the reasons advanced by the Pope, while the reasons for the dissenting side were only too clear to him. In other words, he could see nothing intrinsically immoral in the anovulant pill, and, thus, he thought the Pope was wrong in condemning it as intrinsically wrong. How could he in this situation give his assent?

I asked the young man how would he react if the Pope had infallibly defined *ex cathedra* the immorality of the pill. "In that case," he avowed, "I would believe myself to be absolutely wrong, and the Pope to be absolutely right." I congratulated my young friend on the strength of his faith. In the conflict between infallible authority and his own fallible judgment, he was ready to renounce his own views by an act of *absolute faith*.

An act of *faith*. This is the answer to the second question. I pointed out to my friend—and his case is typical of many honest dissenters who find themselves in conflict because of the absence of an infallible pronouncement—that surely he also believed in the divine assistance gua-

ranted to the Pope in the exercise of his Office. He said he did believe. I then pointed out to him that if there was no problem in making an *absolute* act of faith (with no strings attached) where the guarantee of divinely granted infallibility was involved, why should there be a problem in making an act of faith, not absolute, but *limited* and *restricted* in scope on the premise of guaranteed divinely granted assistance? The act of faith on the premise of infallibility would be couched in these terms: I believe myself to be absolutely wrong and the Pope to be absolutely right, since he has infallibility on his side. The act of faith on the premise of divine assistance would run somewhat like this: I believe myself to be more likely wrong and the Pope more likely right, since he has divine assistance on his side, whereas I don't. If we grant this perspective, as every Catholic does, surely it is not to demand too much or to demand the unreasonable of every Catholic to make this *limited* or *qualified* act of faith?

How can a man assent to the Pope's doctrine if he thinks that the Pope is wrong? The answer to that is: shift your viewpoint from the angle of mere natural reason where arguments are the decisive factor, to the angle of divine assistance behind the Pope's judgment. If you focus on this divine assistance shoring up the Pope's teaching you will not find it unreasonable to subdue your own judgment by making an act of *limited* and *qualified* faith. Is it not more reasonable to trust God's assistance than your own wits?

Summary

To conclude this whole inquiry. I will not tell my readers what they are to think on this whole matter. I will rather insist on the point that any rational man who thinks honestly and straightforwardly should, at the very least, be aware of the intellectual positions to which he is committed by his assertions. There is no point in conducting a dialogue—if by dialogue is meant an exchange of rational views—with any man who is not in the least bothered by inconsistencies. This article is not meant for such men.

The man who holds the notion of authority as the moral power or right to command or to act, cannot consistently claim for the individual the right to approve the commands or the acts prior to obeying

the command or recognising the validity of the act. This would invalidate authority at its roots.

In other words, he is committed to the position that authority, at least when exercised fully, engenders in the subject the *moral obligation* to either obey the command or to recognise the validity of the act.

Such a man will welcome the addition of infallibility, but he is committed to the position that the absence of infallibility does not detract from the obligation engendered by authority.

If he be a Catholic who sincerely believes in the Primary of authority vested in the Pope over all the Church, then he is committed to the assertion that the exercise of full Papal authority to govern imposes on all Catholics the duty in conscience under pain of sin to obey the Papal prescriptions, while the exercise of full Papal authority to teach enjoins all Catholics in conscience under pain of sin to recognise the validity of the teaching, i.e. to assent to it.

If he further believes that the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, by its tenor and circumstances embodies full Papal authority to both govern and teach, he is committed to the position that *Humanae Vitae* binds all Catholics in conscience under pain of sin to abide by its injunctions against, and to assent to its doctrine on, artificial contraception.

If he further believes in the assistance of the Holy Spirit guaranteed to the Pope in the exercise of his Office, he is committed to the position that where his personal judgment conflicts with the doctrine officially, but not infallibly, declared by the Pope, he is more likely to be wrong, whereas the Pope is more likely to be right.

If he also believes in the infallibility of the Pope when he defines *ex cathedra* matters of faith and morals, he is also committed to the position that where his personal judgment contradicts a papal definition *ex cathedra*, he is absolutely, indubitably and incorrigibly wrong, whereas the Pope is absolutely, indubitably and incorrigibly right.

On the other hand, any Catholic who deliberately claims freedom from any obligation towards the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* precisely and exactly because it is not infallible, commits himself to the position

that infallibility is either the proper and real basis of obligation, or, at least, that infallibility is the essential condition and prerequisite without which no obligation can exist.

If, on the social plane, he holds that civil authority is not infallible, he is committed to the position that no citizen is duty bound or obligated to obey any civil laws, ordinances, or commands issuing from legitimate authorities. Obviously, this commits him further to uphold the principle of anarchy with all its attendant consequences: lawlessness, disorder and the destruction of organised human living and of civilisation which is impossible without ordered and organised human living.

If the man wishes to retain some semblance of order without the support of moral obligation, then he is in principle committed to assert brute force as the sole mainstay of civil authority. This requires him further to uphold the impossibility of a free society which is based on a government of laws. The only society possible is one based on a government of men. Since this is only an euphemism for the tyranny of the mighty, such a society is obviously a slave society.

Or, if he wishes to restore conscience and duty to social living, then he is committed to the assertion that state authority is infallible. Thus the state becomes the infallible arbiter of what the citizens may or may not do, may or may not think. In other words, he is committed to the worst and most intolerable kind of State absolutism.

On the individual plane to say that no moral obligation can exist without infallibility, commits a man to either of two alternatives. One: if he admits the fallibility of individual conscience, then he is committed to the position that no man is duty bound to follow his conscience. Two: if he asserts in every man the obligation to follow his conscience, he is constrained to assert that every individual conscience is infallible.

Either of these alternatives commits him further to unmitigated subjectivism and unmitigated irresponsibility. If you say that, since individual conscience is not infallible, no man is bound to follow his conscience, you are simply saying that every man is free to do whatever suits his whims. If you say that each man's conscience is infallible, this is just another way of saying that he is free to do whatever he

wants. You can always find a reason to justify what you want to do; and in our supposition the reasons every man adduces to justify himself are infallible reasons. So we are back at every man's freedom to do as he pleases.

Briefly: the contention that no moral obligation exists where there is no infallibility necessarily commits a man to any of the following positions:

On the social plane: either to anarchy, or to the tyranny of brute force, or to state infallibility and absolutism.

On the individual plane: either to the denial of each man's duty to follow his conscience, or to the assertion of each and every man's infallibility of conscience. Either alternative commits him to unmitigated subjectivism and unmitigated individual irresponsibility.

I hope I have made clear the logical implications and commitments involved in the respective positions taken by the dissenters and the assenters. It is now time to leave my readers to chew the cud and draw their own conclusions.

PASTORAL SECTION

HOMILETICS

● D. Tither, C.S.S.R.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (DEC. 1)

CHRIST WANTS US TO LIVE HUMBLY

**“May we worthily prepare for the coming feast of your
Redemption.” (Post. Com.)**

Today we start our preparation for Christmas. We look into our lives and ask if we are measuring up to Christ's ambitions for us. Are we sharing His attitude to God—are we striving after His attitude to His Father and our neighbour—His humility?

These days, humility is not such a popular virtue. Many interpret humility as weakness. They will say that they have their rights and their privileges and they are not going to let people push them around. They reflect in greater or lesser degree the attitude of the leader of the Communist Party in Russia some years ago. He said: “Your gospel says if someone strikes you on the right cheek turn the other one and let him strike you there too. But I say that if anyone strikes my cheek I will strike him back on both cheeks.” No one, we say, is going to push me around.

True Christ does not mean that in the practice of humility we should lose our self-respect; but He does want us to be humble. “Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart”. What does it mean to be humble? It means many things. But perhaps we could say in intelligible modern terms that it means selfless generosity, or giving of oneself for the advantage and convenience of another. It means considering that our time, our talents, our gifts, since they come from God, are to be used for the happiness and wellbeing of others.

This was so true of Jesus Christ. He did all that He did for the goodness and glory of God. His whole life was a service of God the Father. “I do always the things that please Him”. “I do as the Father has commanded Me”. At all times, though He was the most perfect of men, with unlimited capability, He used all that talent and all His energies were devoted

to the furtherance of the will of God. That is how Christ wants us to live—recognizing that we are but sons of God our Father and all we do ultimately depends on Him.

If you leaf through the Gospels you will notice how Jesus practiced true humility with reference to his fellow human beings. This great Person, this most perfect of men, this God-man, the Gospel tells us, spent His whole life with His brethren. A man so sensitive, so brilliant, did not hesitate to give all His energy and all His time to the poor people around Him. He was constantly claimed by the needs of others. When the need arose, He answered it. Year after year, to put oneself at the disposal of the people, without murmur, year after year, to let others make demands on ones time takes real humility. A doctor or professional man knows this, yet if what he does is good and beneficial to the people, he will never lose his respect. Rather the people will respect him more for it.

On one occasion, Our Lord had worked a great number of miracles and then left the town. He went out to a lonely place and prayed. The disciples followed Him out there and said: "The people are searching for You". But he was not interested. He had done His work and should pass on, without seeking a reward. The time He used was God's, the work He was able to do was for God, and the instruments He used, His power was from God. He sought nothing for Himself.

A great man comes to a barrio or to a town. By his kindness to the people, by the way he speaks to them, by the way he puts up with inconvenience, the people are able to judge his character. If he passes the test they will say he is 'simpatico'. This must have been a remark often passed of Jesus. Of course some great men affect this attitude, but to maintain it at all times as Jesus did, requires real virtue... requires real humility. He took the part of the oppressed—the people who could expect that no one would take their part. He took the part of the people who were being maltreated. He did not side with the powerful but with the powerless and defended them. He defended the children when the apostles were threatening to drive them away because surely they were clambering all over Him as children are wont to do and causing Him considerable inconvenience. "Suffer the little children to come to Me".

Then He defended sinners against the self-righteous. The Pharisees said to Him "Why do You eat with sinners?" And He replied. "They that are whole have no need of a physician but they that are sick". And so on.

These are very simple things, giving our glory to God, giving of our time to others, and taking the side of the oppressed and lonely... these are only simple things, but they are the stuff of which humility is made. To do these things for a few days is easy perhaps. To do it for a life-time requires real virtue.

A girl in the office will not readily defend her companion who is unpopular and who is the butt of criticism. The child without humility or the teenager without humility will not readily submit to the seeming inconsistencies of his parents unless he recognizes that all he has from his parents and after them, from God.

The family without humility that has been offended by another family will not readily approach that family and say that they would like the quarrel to be patched up, they would like a reconciliation. Would not this mean a lowering of their own respect, and lowering of their dignity? In the eyes of their enemies, indeed, but in the eyes of God, he could only recall the example of Jesus Christ himself and His utter selflessness and self-giving. Pray for humility; that prayer... Jesus meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine... should be often on our lips. Recall the memory and the words of Pope John XXIII. I would be regarded as a fool, I would not mind only to stand by what the Gospel declares, the unalterable teaching of Jesus Christ... He wants us to be gentle and humble... (*Journal of a Soul*)....

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (DEC. 8)

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

"He has clothed me with garments of Salvation" (Intr.)

At the Consecration of the Manila Cathedral, rebuilt after the War, a very colorful ceremony took place. A cardinal, the personal envoy of the Pope, surrounded by over 100 bishops from many lands, dedicated the Cathedral to Mary's Immaculate Conception. Fittingly, the day chosen was this very day, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of the Cathedral and the City of Manila, and of the whole Philippines. Long before this doctrine was officially defined, the Philippines was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Mary, Mother of God.

What does Immaculate Conception mean? It does not refer to the conception of our Lord. Jesus Christ had no earthly father. He was conceived by the direct action of the Holy Spirit. But that event is honored on 25th March, the Feast of the Incarnation, nine months before Christmas Day.

Our Lady was not conceived by a miracle. She was conceived and born like every one else. She had a father and a mother like all have. She was the fruit of the beautiful union of two canonized saints, St. Joachim and St. Anne. The Immaculate Conception refers rather to her soul than her body.

Now to just say that Mary was preserved from original sin, in prevision of the merits of her Son, does not say everything, by any means. That is viewing the matter negatively. It was not just the absence of original sin that made her conception unique. It was the presence of the Divine Life. As a preparation for her being the Mother of God, she was given this Divine Life, not just before she was born, but from the very moment she was conceived, from the first instant of her existence.

In all history there was only one Son who existed before His Mother. Jesus Christ, as God, existed from eternity. Now, what son, having in his power to make his mother as beautiful as possible, would not do so? Jesus, the most dutiful of Sons, saw to it that His chosen mother would be in every way fitted for her role. Not only would she never, for an instant, be under the dominion of Satan, but she would be created pulsating with the Divine Life.

And, with every beat of her royal heart, in her complete receptiveness to the will of God, that Divine Life would grow and increase, until we find her, at the age of 16 or so, astonishing an archangel. The words "full of grace" mean being replete with divine life, so that there could be no more.

Mary was indeed, like everyone else, redeemed by her Son, Jesus Christ. But, whereas the redemption was applied to us after our birth, on the never-to-be-forgotten day of our baptism, with Mary it was applied before her existence began, at her conception. It was a fitting preparation for her dignity as chosen mother of the Divine Son, as the favorite Daughter of the Eternal Father, as the Beloved Spouse of the Holy Spirit. She was to be the mother of the Divine Word, she would provide the flesh in which He would become one of us, redeem us, be glorified and sit at God's side forever. If we ask why God gave her this unique favor, made this unique exception for her, the reason is this—the flesh in which God would become incarnate was to be derived entirely from her.

To hark back to the Consecration of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception—Our Lady, looking down from heaven must have been delighted. And yet, it's actually in the power of each one of us to give her far greater pleasure, more exquisite delight. We can, each of us, consecrate ourselves, wholly and entirely—our body, living temple of the Holy Spirit, a Sanctuary where the Holy Trinity may dwell, and our soul, to our Immaculate Mother. Dedicate ourselves, our soul with all its faculties, our body with all its members to Mary Most Pure.

Brethren, you know human nature well. You know the very best way to please a mother is to say that her child resembles her. Says "your baby is very like you," and a mother is thrilled no end. Mary, our Mother in heaven, is delighted when we, her children resemble her by living lives of purity. Purity, the virtue by which we live as dedicated children of God should, aware that our bodies and those of others deserve the deepest

reverence and respect. Aware that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, aware that Christ lives in our body, that our incorporation into Christ includes our body so that impurity would be an unthinkable profanation of Christ's body, aware that our body will arise glorious when Christ our Brother returns.

Ask her on this day, ask her everyday of our lives, for the spirit of reverence for our bodies and the bodies of others; ask her with confidence, through her immaculate conception, to make our bodies pure and our souls holy. Such a prayer, said in all sincerity, she will surely answer, as she has done and is doing for countless children of hers.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (DEC. 15)

CHRIST WANTS US TO LIVE JUSTLY

"Make straight the way of the Lord." (Gospel)

As Christmas approaches our preparation must grow more and more intense. Tomorrow the Aguinaldo Masses begin, and during these days, the picture of the tempestuous St. John the Baptist, calling for a change of heart, will be presented in each Mass. Making straight the way of the Lord involves two things—our relations with God and our relations with one another—qualities of the Bible sum up under the word Justice.

Justice is a thing we talk about much these days: just laws for the land, just decisions in the courts, just wage, just settlement of debts; just distribution of wealth.

The more we speak about it, the more elusive it becomes and the further we seem to get away from true justice. Perhaps this is because we do not know the meaning of true justice or understand properly where true justice is to begin. Justice is a virtue and it is a virtue that Christ wants us to practice. The politician, or the judge, or the school principal or the tax collector are not the only ones who must practice justice. We must *all* be just.

How? We must act justly towards God.

This is the example and teaching of Christ. Long before He came on earth the prophets foretold that His coming would bring an era of justice. Certainly He lived as a truly just man. Certainly He has given us an example of justice which if we would but strive to put it into practice, would solve difficulties and remove the lawlessness that we so vehemently deplore. He was a just man. This is the testimony even of pagans. The wife of Pilate spoke to her husband: "Have nothing to do with this just man". The centurion who witnessed his death on the Cross remarked: "Indeed this was

a just man". He was spoken of by the prophet: "I the Lord love justice. I hate robbery and wrong". (Is. 61)

This was first in relation to God. How did Christ set about bringing a reign of justice into this world? By setting forth clearly the rights of God and following them. He said of Himself: "I do always the things that please Him". He is the Lord and Creator of the Universe... as a man I am bound to follow Him. Many think that justice here on earth begins with men and ends with men. Not so! Unless we give God His honour and due we cannot hope to bring about a just society in which to lead lives of peace. How zealous Christ was for the honour and dignity of God. On the only record occasion that He was angry; He was moved to anger because of the sellers in the temple making of His father's house common market, He knotted a rope and drove them out headlong.

We have experience of the flagrant injustice shown to God in our own time. Consider the large number of people who take no interest in spiritual things, as if there were no God; the large number of people who refuse to honor God on Sunday even though His law expressly demands that. When we are tempted to complain that this is unjust and that is unjust, that the crying need of our country is justice, let us ask ourselves first how do we stand with God. So many treat Sunday as any other day, devoting it exclusively to profit making, the pursuit of their own satisfaction and pleasure.

A country is as good as its people. A country deserves the laws that it has. If we are inclined to complain, let us question ourselves and see whether what is not good here is due in large part to our lack of respect for God.

Christ wants us to live in justice with our fellow men

A sense of justice should be present always in our dealing with our fellow men. Let us learn to respect them... let us learn to respect all men. Whether they are poor, or rich, or whether they are feeble, or young or old... let us learn to see that they are creatures of God, and loved by Him. Unless we have this sense of justice for them, we will not be prepared to recognize that they have rights.

We clamor for social justice, for the equal distribution of wealth, but we are not prepared to practice charity towards our neighbour. Only charity makes a programme of social justice realistic. We clamor for equal distribution of wealth but we heed little the teaching of the Gospel. Whatever we have left over of our means or property, we should give to others who need our help.

We clamor for justice in the courts, but as fathers of families who display favoritism in the home. We refuse to allow our children to follow their own will even though that will is clearly the best suited for them. We stand in the way of their marriage or their employment, simply because it is

not what we want... As children we want our laws to be just; we might even demonstrate towards this end, but we forget the duties that we owe our parents at home. We clamor for justice in the courts, but as employers, or as managers in the office, we are prepared to resort to favoritism or calumny to place a person in a certain position or to remove him for it.

We are disturbed when we read of so much poverty in the world, of so much suffering and undernourishment, of a so-called population explosion, of the gap between the rich and the poor... and this notwithstanding all the advances made in science and technology and education. This, my dear people, proves only one thing.

We are appalled at the lawlessness in our country, despite the money spent on police agencies and reforms and group therapy and any other programmes aimed at reform. All this proves one thing only. That science and technology has not learned, despite the progress that it has made, to cure men of greed, and inhumanity to men. Only the tender love of God, only a recognition of God as creator and men as God's creatures, only the example of Jesus Christ Who gave us an example of true justice, only a constant attempt by all men to put this into practice is going to solve our difficulties.

"Amen, amen I say to you, unless your justice exceed that of the Pharisees." (Mt. 5.20.)

AGUINALDO MASSES

The Mass, A Gift (Dec. 16)

At the beginning of the Aguinaldo Masses, let me congratulate you who have made the sacrifice of being here this morning, to join Christ Our Brother in offering the Mass to our Father in Heaven in preparation for Christmas.

You noticed that the readings in this Mass are about the preparation done by St. John the Baptist before Jesus began His Ministry. The readings everyday till Christmas will be about different aspects of this preparation.

Once, in a city in South America, a policeman noticed a woman seemingly gathering something on the roadside. The road was in a populated place, and many children were playing and running about. The woman was bending down, then straightening up, and the policeman noticed she was putting something into her bag. Suspecting something, the policeman approached her and asked: "What are you putting in that bag?" The woman was startled and she did not answer at once. Said the policeman: "Open the bag and show me." The woman smiled, opened the bag, and showed the officer pieces of broken glass: "I decided to collect these," she said "so the feet of the children playing here would not be hurt."

The removal of harmful things along the road done by that woman is like the preparing of Our Lord's path by St. John the Baptist. It is just what we should be doing during these nine days.

I hope all of you will return each morning at this time, and that you will bring others with you tomorrow. Even though it is a little cold, let us make the sacrifice of getting up early, so we can be with Christ here, offering His sacrifice to God. This is the best possible preparation for Christmas. If we really mean what we are saying by the action of joining Christ in the Mass, then our lives will be pleasing to God — there will be nothing in our lives that could prove an obstacle to Christ's living in our hearts, we will come to know Him so well that we will see things through His very eyes, as it were, loving the things He loves hating the things He hates.

The Mass is a gift, the very best gift, that we make to God our Father. Why do people give gifts? Surely, to express their love for another person. Our love for another can be expressed in words, of course, but it is more emphatic, more purposeful and complete, if along with our words, we give a gift. A man can say to his wife: "I love you," but, if he gives her a gift while saying it, she is all the more certain that he means what he says.

But a gift is more than a message of love. In some way the gift stands for the giver. In the marriage ceremony, when the newly-married give rings to one another they mean: "I give myself to you. This ring represents me, it signifies my intention of giving myself to you completely."

Sacrifice, the highest kind of worship, means these two things. It tells God that we want to love Him, and that we want to give ourselves to Him. What better preparation for Christmas than this — to mean our Mass!

We'll be thinking during these days of the gifts we will give our loved ones during Christmas. What a perversion of right order it would be if the only one we forgot were the One whose birthday Christmas Day is — our Savior Jesus Christ who was born on December 25, 1968 years ago. Let our thanksgiving — present for that birthday be this Novena of Masses.

The Mass, A Sacrificial Gift (Dec. 17)

Suppose a couple of lovers have had a quarrel. Hasty words were spoken, hasty answers made, and unthinking anger led to a break. Suppose the young man, thinking it over, wants to make it up. He does not dare to visit her house and apologize in person. She is angry. She might refuse to see him or listen to him. What will he do? He buys the nicest box of candy and sends it to her. When she gets it she knows perfectly well what it means. He is saying by his gift: "I still love you. I'm sorry for losing my temper. Forgive me. Let's be reconciled."

What happens if she refuses the gift? She knows the gift stands for him, represents him. If she refuses it, he will know he is rejected and not forgiven. If she accepts it, it means she accepts him and forgives him. If she accepts the gift, the bond of love is restored as if there had been no break.

In practice, things won't stop there — hardly! Knowing he is accepted and forgiven, he comes to visit her. She receives him, thanks him for the gift and asks him to share it with her. She gives him what is now hers (because she accepted it) but was his (because he gave it.) The gift represented him, it became hers when she accepted it. There is a deep meaning in this — they have a common union expressed by the gift they are both eating — eating together connotes friendship. Even before Our Lord came and offered His perfect Sacrifice, the sacrifices God ordered His people to offer Him, ended with a community meal in which those present ate together what had been offered in Sacrifice. They became guests, as it were, at God's table. God's accepting the gift meant that friendship was restored or increased. But, the crowning act of the offers getting back the gift, which had become God's, as their own community meal, completed, perfected, rounded off the friendship. Men always felt that if they joined in eating a gift that had been accepted by God, they were again His friends.

It is exactly this way at Mass. We bring our desire for friendship with God. We bring our longing for union with God. We realize our dire need of a bond between us and our God. We will try our best to set up this bond by doing what men have always ~~felt to be~~ the normal, natural way of doing this — by offering God a sacrificial gift.

There has only ever been one perfect sacrificial gift to — God the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, true God — yes, but truly a man also — on the first Good Friday. That sacrifice achieved perfectly the reason for any offering of sacrifice — to bring about friendship between God and men. The Man who offered it was as truly human as you and I, but He was also God, so the sacrifice He offered of His own life — His own Body and Blood, to His Father, was of course, accepted.

So, on Calvary we have a gift of infinite value — the life of God became man, His death, freely accepted, made Him a victim. His life was a sacrifice of infinite value, giving infinite worship to His Father.

The night before He died, He made it quite clear that His death was to be a sacrifice. He had said long before: "This My Father loves in Me, that I am laying down My life to take it up again afterwards. No man can rob Me of it, I lay it down of My own accord. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again." And now, at the first Mass, He made of the bread His Body "to be given for you" and of the wine His Blood — "to be shed for you and for many."

And God, infinitely pleased with what we offer at Mass — the same Body that was nailed to the Cross, the same Blood that poured from His wounds, gives Him back to us our food as a sign of our friendship, with God and with one another.

That is why we should communicate at every Mass — not just on Christmas Day and big feasts, but every time we are at Mass. It ratifies,

confirms, perfects our union with Christ, and with one another in Christ—the purpose of every sacrifice.

The Mass, A Gift Entirely Pleasing To God (Dec. 18)

During the last War, there was a patrol of soldiers behind enemy lines. Suddenly, a hand grenade was thrown among them. An officer, seeing it, threw himself on it. It exploded, but he was the only one killed. Unless he had made that timely sacrifice they would all have been killed by the fragments. Those who owe their lives to his brave action, think of the words of our Lord: "Greater love that this no man has that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The greatest sacrifice ever took place on Mt. Calvary, where Jesus, as our Representative, offered His life to reconcile us with God. The Mass is the renewal of Calvary—it not only recalls what happened there, it makes it truly present here and now, and applies it to our souls, reminding us of its culmination, when Christ our Brother will come again to lead us Home to our Father.

Christ willingly laid down His life on the Cross. His last words were: "Father into Your hands, I commend my spirit." A man, *the Man*, the Representative of all men, offered His life as a sacrifice to God on that First Good Friday.

This Victim was accepted by God. Three times during the life of Jesus, the Heavens were opened and God Our Father said: "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." This Man pleases me, when I look at Him, I see all men, because He represents all. I accept His obedience till death, to make up for the disobedience of all the rest. I will take mankind back into my favor, because of this Man's sacrifice.

The sign of God's acceptance was the Resurrection of Christ. God raised Him up from the dead as a sign that His submission to death was completely pleasing to Him. The success of a sacrifice is its being accepted by God. God raised Christ, exalted Him, took Him up to Himself, and established Him as Son of God in power. It was in the person of Christ our Brother that union with God was first achieved.

But, because He is our Brother, His death and resurrection, recalled and represented at Mass, involves also the union with God of all of us, His brothers and sisters. That's why we come to Mass, to proclaim our oneness with Christ our Head, to secure the redemption He earned for us as our Brother.

Something very important that we must remember is this—He not only redeemed us—paid the price for our sinfulness and rejection of God; He also raised us up to live with His own risen, divine life. We were not only

freed from sin, we were made holy, brought into union with God, caught up into the very life of God "made sharers in the Divine nature," by reason of God's accepting His sacrifice, raising Him to His own right hand.

Everything was achieved by Christ's death and return to His Father. All that remains is for it to be applied to our lives. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself a Man, knew well man's need to offer sacrifice. He knew that the natural way of expressing worship was sacrifice. He would not have this natural need of ours frustrated. He left us the very same sacrifice — His own sacrifice of Himself, infinitely pleasing to God, to be our sacrifice.

That's what we are doing here every morning, as we gather round the Altar, and prepare for Christ's birthday anniversary. We recall all He did and suffered for love of us, especially His death and return to His Father; united most intimately with Him, we offer the reenactment of His sacrifice to God in perfect worship.

And God, infinitely pleased with the perfect offering of His Son, accepts the gift, and us too, in so far as we are striving to have Christ's attitude to God. To give us the grace and the strength to do that, He invites us into most intimate communion with Christ and with one another towards the end of Mass in the Sacred Banquet. He wishes to share with us His life, love and happiness. Let's not disappoint Him; let "No Mass without Communion," become our motto. Then we will share God's life, then will our union with Christ grow day by day.

The Mass — Our Sacrifice (Dec. 19)

You heard of St. Jonh of Arc. While still quite a young girl, she became the leader of the French Army and drove the conquering English out of her country. In gratitude to the little town of Domremy, from which she came, its citizens have never been asked to pay taxes. The sacrifice of Christ was much greater — it redeemed us all, without our deserving it, so that we are surer of salvation than ever.

We know, and please God we will come to realize more and more, that the Mass we're offering now, makes present once again the sacrifice of Christ. We do not *repeat* Calvary; it is not that the Passion, Resurrection, Ascension of the Savior happen all over again. They are made present here and now, and we, along with Christ, offer them again. He knew we would want to worship God perfectly, and He left us the means for doing so in the Mass.

We know there are differences between this sacrifice today and what happened on Calvary. We don't see His Blood flow from His Body — we don't see Him at all — we see the sign which indicates His Presence.

But there is another difference, and it is very important. On Good Friday in the year 33, Christ offered His sacrifice as He then was. Except

for His Mother and a few friends, He was alone. Now, in the year 1968, on the 4th day of the Aguinaldo Masses, He offers Himself, *as He is now*. That is to say, He is not alone, all of us who are baptized are united with Him in offering. It was with His physical body that He offered Himself on Calvary, it is with His Mystical Body that He sacrifices today. "And you are Christ's Body, members of it," says St. Paul.

We, all of us, (not just the priest who stands at the Altar, but everyone of us) are used by Christ. He offers the Mass through us. The whole Christ, Head and Members, offers the Mass. So, you are not just here, watching a sacrifice being offered by a Priest, as the visible representative of Christ, the Chief One offering Mass. It's not just being offered with your approval. No! you are the members of Christ, you are offering it with Him. You, the brothers and sisters of Christ, are not just spectators at His sacrifice, you are most intimately united with Him in His act of sacrificing.

For too long we've forgotten this. We've thought of the Mass as something the priest of the altar does for us, yes, on our behalf, yes but we regarded ourselves as prayerful spectators, and the sacrificing as the function of the priest and the priest alone.

You ask: Isn't Mass a sacrifice? Isn't sacrifice a priestly act? The answer is yes. But all who are truly baptized share in the priesthood of Christ. St. Peter, the first Pope, in his first Encyclical, tells us that the baptized laity are a chosen generation, royal priesthood. "You are now a holy priesthood, able to offer up that spiritual sacrifice which God accepts through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2.5.) And again: You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated people, whom God means to have for Himself. (1 Pet. 2.9)

And St. John, speaking on behalf of all Christians, says to Christ: "You have made us a kingdom unto our God, and priests."

What then, you'll ask is the need of an ordained priest? The answer is that only an ordained priest can *produce* a sacrifice, but once it's produced, all the baptized have a share in Christ priestly power to offer it."

We've noticed, now that we have the Mass in the vernacular, that the prayers of offering are always in the plural. The priest never says *I* offer, No, it's always *we* offer. He addresses us: "Pray brethren that *my* sacrifice and *yours* be acceptable to God." It's our sacrifice. We offer it

At our baptism, we became members of Christ, the Great High Priest, the one Mediator between God and man. Our highest dignity is our sharing in His Priesthood. Our greatest privilege is joining with Him in offering His Sacrifice — the Mass. How enthusiastic, how delighted we should be to do this, not just on these days before Christmas, but as often as we possibly can. Not just on Sundays, not merely when we're obliged to do so, but as frequently as our daily duties allow. Can we believe that we really offer the

Mass, that Christ wants us here, to use us as co-offerers, and find it in our hearts to be absent?

An early Council of the Church, exhorts everyone to be at Mass as often as possible "lest Christ be lacking in one of His members."

It's not just our prayers in Mass He wants, He wants our free loving gift of ourselves, our whole lives, all we do, all we suffer, united with His gift of Himself. Don't resist. Don't disappoint Him.

How We Should Participate In Mass (Dec. 20)

There is a town in Marinduque called Boac. Every year during Holy Week, the citizens conduct a Passion Play, and people come from far and wide to see it. Only those born in Boac take part. One takes the part of Our Lord, others the Apostles, His Mother, and so on. But others have the part of the crowd, speaking and sometimes even shouting together.

Now, let us suppose you had gone to Boac to see this Passion Play. But on this occasion all the main parts were spoken by one actor and the parts of the crowd done by one small boy. Even if they spoke every word of the script, you would be disappointed. And suppose that the other people of Boac who had been given a part of the play just stay at the back, or maybe each one is just reading some book, taking no real notice and no part, saying absolutely nothing. Wouldn't you think it strange, wouldn't you be disappointed?

Something very like this happens when people take no part in Mass. The people of God, assembled by the Holy Spirit, come to join Christ, not in offering a Passion Play, but the real thing, the Passion itself. Anyone, even a pagan, may watch, but only the baptized have the right to take part. And what do they do? They have their assigned responses, but many are content to leave them to the altar boy. Instead of answering, they are looking around, or reading their own prayer books, as though the Church were a library. It is indeed good to read spiritual books but not at the time of Mass!

By reason of our baptism, all of us, have a share in the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. This means that we have the right and the privilege, it is a real duty.

What we need is not just to change our way of acting, but our way of thinking. In the old days we either read something good, but not necessarily connected with the Mass, or prayed the Rosary because we felt we should be doing something. Now, we must change not just our way of acting, but our attitude. We must come to realize that we really share in the Priesthood of Christ, but we exercise the Priesthood by saying our proper parts at Mass and meaning what we say.

For instance, when at the beginning of Mass we ask Our Lord to have mercy on us, let us be convinced that it is to Christ our Brother that we are calling out, that He alone can help us, that He has commanded us to call on Him for help. Let it be a cry from the heart: Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy.

Then there are the greetings. The priests greets us, addresses us: The Lord be with you. Everybody is addressed, everybody should answer: And with your Spirit. These words are not addressed to the boy who happens to be serving the Mass, and he should not be the only one to answer. We are wished the greatest of all blessings, the closest possible union with Our Lord, how could we possibly ignore it?

And the Amens at the end of the prayers said in the name of all, especially at the end of the Canon—This Amen should be said with enthusiastic faith. In the early Church the Amen of the people used resound like thunder—let us not be of the number who whispered it or do not say it at all. To say Amen means that we agree completely with what is said and done, that we are wholeheartedly behind the prayer and action. Say your Amen as though you mean it. Make it sound as if you mean it.

Most important of all, offer yourselves, all you do, all you suffer, everything about you, along with Our Lord to God the Father. The ideal time to do this is at the Consecration when our gifts are transformed into the very gift of Christ Himself His immolated Body, His Blood poured out. Our miserable shabby offering is transformed along with the bread and wine, and seeing our willingness to try and be like Christ, God accepts us along with Him.

We have only 4 more mornings left before Christmas. Let's redouble our readiness to be one with Christ at the time of Mass. Christian till we meet again tomorrow to join Him once more as a sincere co-offerers of the Mass.

Prolonging The Mass (Dec. 21)

Some years ago, a priest from Nueva Ecija, named Father Guilas, was dying. A brother priest visited him, and asked was he still able to offer Mass. "No more," said Father Guilas, and gently tapping his bed said, "This is my Mass." What he meant was: "Every time I offered the Mass, I renewed my desire that God's will be done in me always. This illness, this suffering is God's Will for me now, this is my Mass." There is nothing phony in the life of a Christian if his every action is a continuation of his offering of the Mass.

Everyday for the last six days we've been coming here to join Christ in His act of sacrifice. We declare, by our action of offering sacrifice, that we realize we belong to God and that we're giving ourselves to him, not just at this time, but all throughout the day, all through our life. If sacrifice

means anything, surely it means that we're living for God, and want to be one with Him, in Christ, all day long. These would be something quite unreal, something false and insincere about our offering sacrifice unless we wanted to be like Christ, with whom we offer the Mass.

At the end of Mass each morning you are told to go in peace, the Mass is ended. This means far more than a dismissal. It really means, "Go, you are entrusted with an assignment. Go, and live out the Mass. Prolong your Mass. Let everything you do, be much a dying to yourself and a rising with Christ as to be a fitting renewal of what offering Mass implies.

Our Lord referred over and over again to the fact that He had been sent, entrusted with an assignment. "I do the work of Him who sent me." (Jo 9.4). And He said to His disciples: "As the Father has sent me, I also send you. (Jo 20.21). We have the same work to do as that assigned Jesus Christ by His Father.

Our union with Christ, our identity with Him is intensified in every Mass. Every communion confirms our right to say: "I live, not I but Christ lives in me." We've offered ourselves to God along with Christ, we now carry out the consequences of that offering, overcoming our sinful inclinations putting up with trials. And we do this also in and with Christ.

At the Last Supper, the First Mass, He prayed for us this very intention. "Father," He prayed: "You've sent me into the world on your errand, and I've sent them into the world on my errand." (Jo 17.18) Yes, we are to bear Christ into the world, carrying His truth and His saving action to other men. Our dealings with God do not finish at the end of Mass, they are to continue over into our daily lives.

Maybe we feel that we would like to remain forever before the Altar. But, that's not what God wants. St. Peter on Mt. Tabor saw a glimpse of Our Lord's glory and would have liked to stay there always, not returning to the workaday world. But Jesus led him down from the mountain, telling him about the Cross. He tells us the same after Mass: "There is work to be done, there is suffering to be borne, you must live out your Mass."

It is not easy to prolong the Mass into our daily lives. We would prefer not to have to work or study. We are not attracted to self-denial. Yet, we must not live like others who have not shared in Mass or been united with Christ in Communion.

Some of us even fail to see the connection between the Mass and our lives. We try to live on two levels — a special level for Mass and prayers and another "practical" level for ordinary things. Now, we are Christians all the time, everything a Christian does is, or should be, done by Christ; everything in our lives is a thanksgiving for our Mass, a preparation for the next.

At times this calls for heroism. We may find our work boring and monotonous, our companions tiresome, even insincere. We'll be tempted maybe.

and find it difficult to be kind, honest and pure. But we must mean what we do at Mass, and rely on God's grace to keep us true to that offering.

Maybe someone tricks us, double-crosses us, betrays us. But in Mass we offered Christ as a Victim and joined ourselves with Him. If only we use these trials to live out our Mass, we feel the truth of His words that His yoke is sweet and his burden light. He'll allow no cross to come our way that could be bitter or heavy, if only we offer it along with him, as an extension or prolonging, a living-out of our Mass.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (DEC. 22)

CHRIST WANTS US TO LIVE HONESTLY

"Windings ways shall be made straight and rough roads made smooth."

A group of friends were recently discussing an absent acquaintance whom everyone admired. They tried to analyse just what made him so truly likeable, just why everyone was so attracted to him. And then, one of them said: "He is just so truly genuine and sincere, there is absolutely nothing hollow or phony about him". All agreed that he had hit on it, their friend was a perfectly sincere man.

Higher praise could hardly be given than that a person is completely straightforward and utterly genuine. Our Lord told us: "If your eye be single, your whole body will be lightsome". He warned us not to have complicated motives, not to be phony, to have complete integrity. Sincerity is the quality most sought for by people of the present day. If they find Christians saying one thing but doing the opposite they decide there and then that if that's Christianity they have no use for it.

Christian integrity is not something we will learn out of books. Christian sincerity will unconsciously arise from a life of union with Christ. If we share and maintain His outlook and approach, we will be genuine, and our life be what it ought to be—a radiation of Christ, a reflection of His straightforward sincerity in all aspects of living.

To be practical—in regard to persons, ourselves first of all. Are we guilty of insincerity in our relations with God? If there be some line of contact that we know to be displeasing to God, but are determined *not* to give up? Are we perhaps even hypocrites, pretending to be what we are not? The one class of people with whom our Lord was most displeased were those who put an appearance of being good and holy while in reality they were anything but good and holy, those who lived by one standard while demanding another from everyone else. If we detect this vice in our heart, let us promise God to root it out. If for instance we find we have a sinful standard

in business and we want it not to appear in our relations with God, let's straighten that out—our relations with God cover *all* our life.

The same is true when others praise us. None of this humility-with-a-hook; none of this disclaiming qualities we have hoping to draw further compliments. Accept praise gracefully realizing that the qualities praised come from God and belong to Him, but be objective enough to know how much is true and how much is exaggerated in the praise others give us. No amount of praise makes us one bit better than all we are in the sight of God, and no amount of blame makes us worse. What we are in the sight of God, that we are and nothing more.

In our relations with others, are we sincere? Do we perhaps indulge in flattery, false exaggerated praise of those whose favor we seek? To praise beyond truth is not Christian.

If we saw others in the eyes of God, then we would realize that what makes for greatness in others is the degree in which they share the Divine life. Not incidental things like wealth of possession or any worldly consideration affects the esteem of a sincere Christian for others. The only degree to be looked up to is the degree of sharing in the Divine life. Mary, who attained the highest degree was called full of grace, full to repletion with the Divine life. Esteem others in proportion to their closeness to God.

The same is true about occupations. St. Paul points out that in the human body there are many members but not all had the same function. But, the various functions assigned to us by the will of God as members of Christ's body should not cause rivalry or division. "The eye does not say to the foot; I have no need of you". It does not matter what we do, it's how we do it that's important. If ever the tendency to jealousy were deliberately fostered in our lives, it would thwart the designs God has for us. Be glad that others have good qualities, be glad that God uses others to do His work.

An old doctor had a practice in a town in England. The town grew, and the work became too much for him. A young doctor arrived and hung out his shingle. And in time he became quite popular. The old doctor, sad to say, became jealous. Came a day when the young man was to perform an important operation on which his reputation would depend. The old man through jealousy, had him phoned several times during the night before the operation. The result was that the young doctor got hardly any sleep. He came to the operation tired. And the patient died on the table. God grant that we see the terrible consequences of jealousy.

Doing the will of God at all times and in all circumstances is the sum-total of holiness. Religion is a lot more than saying prayers or hearing mass at fixed times, and then living in a way that Christ would never approve. "Not every one who says to Me; Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven. "Our Lord told us that His blessed Mother, whom we have

so much in mind as Christmas comes near, was more blessed in fulfillment of God's will than even in being His mother.

So let us not live on too levels. Let us not try to have our relations with God in one sealed-off compartment and the rest of our lives in another. That of course is impossible, and would make our lives insincere, and make us phony.

There are only two days left before Christmas. Let us beg our Saviour to remove from our lives anything that is ungentle or insincere.

Rounding Off The Sacrifice (Dec. 23)

Our Lord told a story of a man who prepared a banquet and invited guests. But, at the time of the banquet, they were not interested. They refused to come, offering various alibis and excuses. The man then said: "The banquet is ready, but those invited were not worthy." And he sent his servants to invite everyone they met. He even sent them into the highways and hedges, telling them to compel people to come in. But those who despised the invitation were excluded from the festivities.

There is a lesson here for us. We give our gift to God during Mass. In the beginning it is just bread and wine, of little meaning and hardly any value. Christ makes it of infinite value at the Consecration by transforming it into Himself. We give meaning to it in the degree that we offer ourselves along with it. Together with Christ our Brother, we offer the gift, now rich in meaning and infinite in value, to God our Father in worship.

But, is that all? No! there is a return gift an exchange of gifts. (There has preceded an exchange of words — we first talking to God and then God talking to us in the first part of the Mass. Our words went to God, His words came back to us. We spoke, He replied.) And afterwards, there is a similar exchange of gifts.

Along with Christ, in Him and through Him, we offer the perfect gift to God. Our gift goes up to Him, and then His gifts come down to us. He prepares the banquet for us, and He earnestly invites us to take part. Holy Communion is integral to the Mass. Our sacrificial worship is somehow incomplete if we leave out Communion. We have not rounded out the Sacrifice, we have not had an exchange of gifts with God. Surely it is not natural not according to good manners and right conduct, if we refuse to accept God's return of our gift.

I'm not talking here of obligations, but only of what is right and seemly in our relations with God our Father. If you bring your earthly father a gift, say on his birthday, and he invites you to share it with him, could you possibly refuse to do so? It would be downright undutiful to refuse and he

would rightly be disappointed. We'd never be guilty of such conduct towards our earthly father. Much less, should be so to God our Heavenly Father. All who have offered the gift should join in the banquet to which all are invited. In other word, all should join in the banquet to which all are invited. In other words, all should communicate at every Mass.

If we miss Communion, we fail to avail ourselves of the most precious grace, the most wonderful blessing of all. Can we really believe in our hearts that Christ is there, not as a reward for being good, but as an infinite divine remedy to stop us being bad and not communicate? Suppose I were to promise that each communicant tomorrow on the Vigil of Christmas would be given a 100 pesos! How the word would spread around the parish, how many would make a real effort to be here and at Communion. Now, it would be blasphemous to compare a hundred pesos or a thousand or a million pesos with the infinitely valuable grace of communion with Christ and with one another in Christ.

This is the ideal, this was the practice of the early Church — everyone who offers Mass should receive Holy Communion. If there are 500 at Mass, there should be 500 Communions. If there are only 499 communions, someone has spoiled the perfect rounding-off of the sacrifice. Someone has omitted his gift exchange with God.

I'm sure that the explanation of this is not indifference, not with good people like you who have been coming here every morning for the last 8 days. It is rather that you don't realize that Mass and Communion belong together, that Mass demands Communion. Maybe you think that Confession and Communion belong together, that Confession is necessary before Communion.

That, of course, is a big mistake. We don't need Confession for each Communion. We only need Confession if we have a mortal sin, if we've been so wicked that we deserve hell. But, if we've only venial sins, no matter how many, and no matter how long since our last confession, our privilege is Communion at every Mass. Communion, of itself, forgives venial sins.

Don't say: "Even though I've no mortal sin, I don't feel worthy." Look, no one is worthy, not even the blessed Mother. But God invites us, Christ wants us at Communion, so as to be less unworthy, so as not to be undernourished, or worst, to die of starvation. Let's heed this invitation, let's not have Him disappointed, let Communion at each mass round-off our gift exchange with God our loving Father.

Full Participation (Dec. 24)

Tomorrow is Christmas Day. Many will attend Mass who have not done so far a long time. Let's give them good example. Sixty years ago, a young French writer, named Paul Claudel, attended Midnight Mass. He was not

the least interested in religion, but wanted to get atmosphere for a story he was writing. The crowded Church, the fervor of the people impressed him deeply. The way they sang and prayed together made him aware of the emptiness and the loneliness of a life where men are rivals rather than brothers. And when at Communion time, they rose as a body to receive back from God their Father the Gift they had offered, Claudel resolved to make a complete and thorough study of his religion. He did, and the next Christmas saw him there, not as an observer, not as an outsider, but making his first Holy Communion. Today, Claudel is one of the greatest living Catholic writers — thanks to the example of a Mass where people knew what community worship means.

If you visit this Church this afternoon, you will see many people occupied at various devotions. Some will be visiting the Blessed Sacrament, some praying the Rosary, some making the Way of the Cross, others near the Confessionals preparing for Confession or praying their penance. They will be busy with their private devotions as individuals. All good and proper, in the right time, and the right place.

But, once Mass starts, we are a Community. Our Lord Jesus Christ is present in a very special way in our gathering. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is not as individual that we are gathered at the time of Mass, but as a Body — the Body of Christ Himself. He Himself has laid down what we are to do at Mass, it would be a scandal if we were not willing to fit our activities into His plan. People who want to say their own prayers at Mass have not awareness of what being a Community means.

The first thing to do is to be here in good time. It is a real discourtesy to God and a distraction to others to come late. Think on what you are going to do — to offer a gift to God. The most important thing by far is to mean with all our hearts what we do and say at Mass, else we'll deserve the Savior's condemnation: "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."

Then, once Mass begins, join enthusiastically in the Community singing — there is no better way to make us realize we *are* a community. And answer the responses in a good firm voice that comes from the heart — it's downright rude not to, if we only realized it. At the time of the readings and sermon, listen! Close your books, even your missals, and use those ears, opened at baptism, to listen. God is speaking to you, awaiting your response.

I surely don't need to tell you to stand, kneel, and sit with the community. Anyone, who would walk *paluhod* while the Gospel is being read, or kneel reading a Novena during the sermon has not the remotest idea of what Mass means. We're not protestants who believe in private judgment, who believe, behave, and worship exactly as they please, in their own way and not

in God's way. Let's worship in God's way, in Christ way, as a body, and we'll give good example.

The last thing I'll exhort you to, and not just for tomorrow but always, is to make Communion a part of your Mass. Any other conduct towards God our Father would be unnatural and ungrateful. Imagine the impact on those who have some share of faith left alive, who put an appearance at Mass at Christmas, if every real Catholic advanced to the Altar rail, come Communion time. If we should our union with one another in Christ symbolized and brought about by our communicating. "The one bread makes us one body, though we are many in number. The same bread is shared by all." (1 Cor. 10.17.)

This is what God our Father wants, this is what Christ our Brother asks of us, this is what the Holy Spirit, who binds us into a Community at Mass will bring about in us, if only we grow out of our wrong individualistic approach to Mass and Communion, and realize that this something we do as a Community.

Christmas Day (Dec. 25)

It was evening when Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. There was no room for them at the inn, so they had to spend the night in a wayside shelter — a stable for beasts. There were actually beasts in it, we are told, but no better place could be found. There was the mystery of the ages to happen, there was Christ to be born.

Suddenly at midnight, without opening the sacred tabernacle of His Mother's Body Christ, true God, but truly also one of ourselves, came into His Mother's arms. There in the bleak coldness of that cave, she could look down on the Child in her arms and say: "My child and my God."

Outside, there rises and swells a heavenly harmony, the like of which the world had never heard. A choir of angels singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill." Shepherds watching their flock are startled. But the leader of the angels reassures them: "Do not be afraid. Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Savior... and this will be a sign to you—you will find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."

No wonder the shepherds exclaimed: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this word which is comes to pass." Follow them there, see them kneeling and worshipping that Child, that Emmanuel — "God with us." No longer need He seem utterly other and distant, no longer need be unduly afraid of Him, from now on He is one of ourselves — a baby for whom we can feel nothing but love, an obedient youth who made His home a happy one, a man of

sorrows with whom we can sympathize, a human reflection of the love and kindness of God our Father.

There is only one Christian Feast, the Feast of Easter, summing up all that God did and His doing in sending His Son, to be born in Bethlehem, to die on the Cross, for our salvation, to be raised up and enthroned in power so that we might share His Divine Life, and to come again in glory to lead us Home to our Father.

But, our finite minds cannot grasp all of this at once, so the Church has many feasts to recall its different aspects. Today's celebration, one of the most touching and joyful, recalls that day 1968 years ago, when God the Son was born as an infant. For all that the Mass is the high point of the celebration (the English Christmas means Christ's Mass) — it is not the birth of our Lord that's renewed here. It's not the Baby who was born in Bethlehem who comes on the Altar and enters our hearts in Communion,—no, it's Christ as He is now, Christ in His risen glory. But the event we specially recall is His birth. We've looked forward to it all Advent, many of you prepared for today by the Novena of pre-dawn Masses. And the urgency as the day came nearer—five days ago it was: "On the fifth day Lord would come to you." And yesterday: "Tomorrow you will see His glory." And now He is with us: "Thou art My Son, this day I've begotten thee."

We recall His birth into the world, we remember that He is still in the world, in the Church, especially in the Church's sacraments, and we look forward to the tremendous day, the exhilarating Day when He will come again to lead all who chose to belong to Him, to God His Father and ours, to an eternity of life, love and happiness in His Home.

On this wonderful day, may all of us reecho the words of the shepherds: "Let us go over to Bethlehem. . . . "May we, like they, find the Child with His Mother and offer Him the undying loyalty, the heartfelt love of our hearts.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS (DEC. 29)

CHRISTMAS WANTS US TO LIVE PURELY

The first crib ever made on earth was made by St. Francis of Assisi. To make real for people what happened on that first Christmas night he has a cave on hillside fitted out like that in Bethlehem, with the figures that are now so familiar to us—the infant Jesus at the center in a manger, Mary and Joseph at either side, the shepherds, the ox and the ass. St. Francis was the deacon at the Midnight Mass and preached on his favorite topic—the love we should have for God Who sent His own Son to redeem us.

Through Christ, the kindness of our Heavenly Father has appeared. At Christmas time especially we are reminded of the love and goodness shown by God's having become a helpless infant to demonstrate His love. "The Lord is little, and greatly to be loved." Our return of love is to be much more than sentiments or feelings, it's to be a heartfelt response.

Our Lord tells us clearly that our loving Him is independent of feelings and emotions. It's a matter of the will.—if we want to love Him then we will prove it the way He said we should. "If you love Me, keep my commandments". He that keeps My commandments, he it is that loves Me." Today let us consider the sixth and ninth commandments, in which He tells us He wants us to live purely and chastely.

All that God has created is good, if used in the way God intended when He created. Our bodies are good and everything about them is good. Christ, Whose birthday we honored last Wednesday had a body exactly like ours. He grew from childhood into adolescence and adulthood. His plans and purposes for propagating the human race are good and holy. But these powers given us by God must be used in accordance with God's purposes.

A Christian, whose body has been sanctified and consecrated by baptism, must, with God's help, control the rebellious desire of the body for sinful and unlawful satisfaction. Our body is really, for all that we can fully understand how, one with Christ's body. Provided we keep this oneness with Christ till the very end of our lives, our body will be glorified and enthroned forever with Christ's. These thoughts make impurity unthinkable as a defilement, a desecration of Christ's own body. Will preserve this reverence for our body by remaining close to Christ by frequent prayer, and especially by frequently deepening our union with our Lord through Holy Communion. "It is the boast of the Catholic Church that she can keep her children pure because she gives them Jesus for their food and Mary for their mother".

To be chaste to share in the victory of Christ over sin. One of the disastrous results of Adam's sin was the rebellion of our sexual urges. But Christ, the new Adam, overcomes sin and through Him, so do we. In frankness and reverence, let us consider the reasons for doing so, and the means to be used.

The Bible praises chastity in glowing terms. "No price is worthy of a continent soul." "How beautiful is the chaste generation with glory". Christ chose pure souls for His Mother, His foster-father, His precursor, His favorite disciple, and He praised purity so highly and demanded it so urgently.

A realization of what happened to us at baptism, when our bodies became one with Christ, Sanctuaries of the Adorable Trinity, due to be raised glorious at Christ's return, will prompt us to a real desire for purity, which is the most important element in obtaining it. "Know you that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit? Glorify God in your bodies". Christ has taken us entirely, even our sexual powers.

The first safeguard of chastity is humility—a complete distrust of ourselves, that make us avoid, by careful watch of our senses, any attachment or place or object that could lead us to sin. “Pride goes before a fall”.—This is nowhere so truer than in keeping pure. “If you want to be pure, be humble, if you want to be very pure, be very humble”. (St. Ambrose) Not a paralyzing terror that would petrify us but a complete distrust of our own weakness, together with an unlimited trust in God who assures us that He is faithful, that He will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able provided we have the humility to avoid all dangers.

Then there is prayer. A writer in the Bible says: “As I knew I could not be continent unless God gives it, therefore I went to the Lord and besought Him with all my heart.” Earnest prayer, prayer from the heart, especially in moments of temptation or when prompted by pride to take risks.

Self-denial of course is necessary. If, we indulge ourselves in every possible way, we will never have the moral fibre that is essential for resisting the invitations and allurements to forget our identity with Christ and yield to our impure inclinations.

Above all, the strength that comes contact with Christ in the sacraments. To have His precious Blood poured over ourselves in penance, purifying us, strengthening us. Then, the infinite divine help of Holy Communion! How many, who have fallen into unchastity, have regained purity of body and soul by frequent communion.

Devotion to the Blessed Mother, the Virgin most pure, the Immaculate Mother. To confide ourselves to her protection, as her property and possession is to commit ourselves to making her Christian life, her modesty, her chastity the model of our own.

With next Wednesday New Year's Day, may we be renewed by Him “Who makes all things new” in our appreciation of the fact that He wants us, and is infinitely ready to help us, to live purely.

CASES AND QUERIES

THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL ON BIRTH CONTROL AND THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

The long-awaited reply of the Pope Paul VI to the question of birth control was not to the liking of everyone, even in some Catholic circles. This is evident if you only read the press. In the open forum of our symposium on the teaching of the Encyclical, the opinion of the medical students, the nurses, and also of some doctors present there, were far from unanimous. One thing, however, seems clear from the papal document, that the ban on all artificial means of contraception and birth regulation is most definite and uncompromising.

Could we ask the Reverend Father to comment on the Encyclical contents and to indicate to us the practical course we should follow in the hospitals and clinics?

This question requires some discussions and some distinctions.

1. *The Encyclical's special relevance for doctors and medical personnel.*

Although the teaching of Pope Paul VI's Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, (*On human life*), shows an obligatory standard of conduct for all Catholics, this Encyclical bears a special appeal to the members of the medical profession. In this document the Holy Father has made two specific references to and two calls for help to doctors and the medical personnel. First, in so far as the only licit method of birth regulation has to be the, so called, *rhythm method*, the Pope calls on

the doctors as "men of science" to continue the work toward the perfection of this method in order that it may become easy to use and reliable for the greater number of couples. Says the Pope:

We wish now to express Our encouragement to men of science, who "can considerably advance the welfare of marriage and the family, along with peace of conscience, if by pooling their efforts they labour to explain more thoroughly the various conditions favoring a proper regulation of birth". It is particularly desirable that, according to the wish already expressed by Pope Pius XII, medical science succeed in providing a sufficiently secure basis for a regulation of birth, founded on the observance of natural rhythms. In this way, scientists and especially Catholic scientists will contribute to demonstrate in actual fact that, as the Church teaches, "a true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to the fostering of authentic conjugal love". (N. 24).

The Holy Father is, of course, well aware of the fact that contraception and birth regulation will ultimately become the responsibility of doctors and medical personnel. This fact is obviously conditioned by the essential unsplitness of human personality. In this most delicate and most reserved matter the actual practice adopted by a couple will have to count not only with human anatomy and physiology, but with the psychological and emotional setup of the human person as well. And this under pain of nature revenging itself as all doctors and psychiatrists well know. The problem, therefore, from whatever angle, shall spontaneously go into the sphere of doctors, psychiatrists, and medical practitioners. For this reason the Holy Father relies heavily on the honesty of the medical science and on the moral integrity of the persons committed to this most noble profession. The Pope's words:

We hold those physicians and medical personnel in the highest esteem, who, in the exercise of their profession, value above every human interest the superior demands of their Christian vocation. Let them persevere, therefore, in promoting on every occasion the discovery of solutions inspired by faith and right reason, let them strive to arouse this conviction and this respect in their associates. Let them also consider as their proper professional duty the task of acquiring all the knowledge needed in this delicate sector, so as to be able to give to those married persons who consult them wise counsel and healthy direction, such as they have a right to expect. (N. 27).

2. *The Church's stand on contraception and birth regulation.*

Even a perfunctory reading of the Pope's Encyclical will show that the teaching of the Church from the days of the Apostles has been reaffirmed in utmost conformity with the teaching of all former popes, with special emphasis on the formal teaching of Pius XI, of Pius XII and the norms laid down by the Second Vatican Council. Actually Paul VI, in unison with his predecessors, rules out as *seriously* immoral and sinful all *artificial means of preventing conception*, and, of course, any attempt to destroy human life already conceived. That definite and that terse. What remains as the only licit means of regulating births as it may be demanded by the responsible prudence of every couple, is the *rhythm method*, whenever serious motives indicate a spacing of children or an avoidance of them altogether.

3. *The ethical principles of this doctrine.*

In a solemn document like this Encyclical, the Holy Father can not fail to present the theological principles on which this doctrine is based. Two essential truths are at the bottom of the Church's teaching, (1) the *natural law* which has been imprinted on men by God in creation, and (2) the law of the Gospel by which Christ has instituted the marital union of Christians to be the fruitful *sacrament* of matrimony and thereby the essential foundation of human society and of the Church itself.

4. *The Natural law.*

From the natural law, the Pope proclaims that "*most serious duty of transmitting life, for which married persons are the free and responsible collaborators of God the Creator*" (N.1.). Doctors and men of science are exceptionally well equipped to understand how nature itself has ordered the intimate relations of couples towards human generation and towards life giving. Their familiarity with human anatomy and physiology, in the myriad situations of normal and abnormal functioning, make them realize the stability and inviolability of nature's laws. The daily flow of cases, each one with its characteristic somatic or psychic

malfunctioning reveals the palpable, perhaps tragic, consequences that avenging nature does inexorably impose of every abusive individual. On this respect, doctors and men of science may readily agree with the Holy Father:

In relation to the biological processes, responsible parenthood means the knowledge and respect of their functions; human intellect discovers in the power of giving life biological laws which are part of the human person.

In relation to the tendencies of instinct or passion, responsible parenthood means that necessary dominion which reason and will must exercise over them. (N. 10).

5. *The Law of the Gospel.*

In perfect agreement with human nature, yet, on top of it, is the law of the Gospel. Here the Lord has ordered the sacrament of marriage to be the channel of *grace* and *supernatural help*. The gravity of the duty of procreation and education and the difficulty of keeping it can not be underestimated. Thus, both from natural law and from the Gospel's revelation, the Pope ascends to the *total vision of man* to whom God has entrusted the pursuing of a happy existence on earth only to be continued in the actual attainment of "*his supernatural and eternal vocation.*" (N.7).

6. *Inseparability of marital union and procreation.*

From these fundamental truths the Pope formulates the principle which is valid for all marital relations:

In the task of transmitting life, therefore, they are not free to proceed completely at will, as if they could determine in a wholly autonomous way the honest path to follow; but they must conform their activity to the creative intention of God, expressed in the very nature of marriage and of its acts, and manifested by the constant teaching of the Church. (N. 10).

Indeed, by its intimate structure, the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, capacitates them for the generation of new lives, according to laws inscribed in the very being of man and of woman. By safeguarding both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fulness the sense of true mutual love and its ordination towards man's most

high calling to parenthood. We believe that men of our day are particularly capable of seizing the deeply reasonable and human character of this fundamental principle. (N. 12).

The Church, calling men back to the observance of the norms of the natural law, as interpreted by her constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marriage act (*quilibet matrimonii usus*) must remain open to the transmission of life. (N. 11).

This last sentence holds the key to the whole problem: "*Every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life:*" Indeed, as the Roman theologian, F. Lambrushchini, declared in a press conference at the Vatican (July 28, 1968):

This affirmation, the center, the nucleus, the apex, the heart and the key of the Encyclical, renews and confirms without the possibility of any ambiguity the traditional teaching of the Church in condemning any form of deliberate and planned contraception by the spouses in conflict with the biological laws which are part of the human person (cf. No. 10, with reference to St. Thomas, I-II).

7. *Ban of all artificial means of Birth control.*

The total ban on contraceptives and artificial birth prevention is, from the foregoings, only a logical application of the unfailing doctrinal principles of Church's doctrine. The Pope excludes all artificial means, *abortion, sterilization and contraception*, by these words:

a. *Abortion:*

In conformity with these landmarks in the human and Christian vision of marriage, We must once again declare that the direct interruption of the generative process already begun, and, above all, directly willed and procured abortion, even if for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as licit means of regulating birth.

b. *Sterilization:*

Equally to be excluded, as the teaching authority of the Church has frequently declared, is direct sterilization, whether perpetual or temporary, whether of the man or of the woman.

c. *Any other means of contraception:*

Similarly excluded is every action which, either 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. (N. 14).

8. *Practical examples.*

Our interrogators being mainly young doctors and nurses in the Philippines, the following examples might be in order in so far as they are familiar with the practices and devices, at times even imposed on the medical practitioners, by the unfortunate and unchristian *Family Planning Association of the Philippines*. Herein we indicate the means of birth control which are in use by the Association but which are formally excluded by the Pope.

a. Besides the *coitus interruptus*, condoms, vaginal douches, vaginal jellies and creams, aerosol, vaginal suppositories and foam tablets, sponges and foams are excluded because they, by intention and by efficacy, vitiate the marital act, either by preventing the meeting of sperm and ovum or by destroying the sperm's vitality.

b. For the same reason, cervical caps are ruled out as well as diaphragms where these are simply applied to or when they are combined with creams or jellies.

c. The attention of doctors, nurses, and practitioners is specially called towards the so called *loop* or Intrauterine Device (IUD). The use of this device is in any case seriously immoral, because, in intention and in fact, it is always a contraceptive. In the honest opinion of many doctors and scientists, the contraceptive effect of this device is due to its disturbing action in the uterus, which will make *nidation* impossible, and will, therefore, force the ejection of the already fecundated egg. Thus the loop or the IUD cannot be considered as simply contraceptive in nature, but rather as a true *abortifacient*. This point should be always stressed when dealing with these matters, for doctors and practitioners do run the risk of committing a great number of real murders, if they become instrumental in prescribing or applying the IUD to their patients. This consideration, serious as it is for all men of honesty, is specially ominous for Catholic doctors and nurses because they know that the tiny living-thing whose *nidation in utero* is denied is a human person with a human soul and eternal destiny. Eternal life is, most unmercifully denied to this soul. Human frailty may take consolation in its being kept unknown to men. Yet, God knows. And, at any rate, one can hardly think of something more cruel! The same should be said of the morning-after pill.

9. *The Pill.*

And what about the pill? The famous pill of our newspapers and magazines for years, the great expectation of many, even among some Catholic circles? The poor pill is not even mentioned in the Encyclical. This drug, as all know, is an *anovulant*. Its action is to inhibit *ovulation*. By preventing ovulation this drug makes its user *sterile* for as long as the pill is used. The pill is, therefore, banned as thoroughly immoral just as all other means which will induce *sterility*, be it temporal or perpetual.

An objection arises here by reason of the pill's therapeutic qualities. The doctor may see that this particular drug happens to be the indicated remedy for a certain sickness. In this case, this drug should be considered rather as a *true medicine* and not as a mere anovulant. When the doctor, therefore, prescribes the pill which is estimated as the proper remedy for the patient's sickness, both prescription and use are perfectly in order. The sterilizing effect, simultaneously accompanying this medicine, is rightly accepted on the principle of double effect. Doctor and patient should, in this case, aim at effecting the necessary cure without any scruple in their conscience. This particular norm of conduct is expressed briefly by the Pope in these words:

The Church, on the contrary, does not at all consider illicit the use of those therapeutic means truly necessary to cure diseases of the organism, even if an impediment to procreation, which may be foreseen, should result therefrom, provided such impediment is not, for whatever motive, directly willed. (N. 15).

10. *The 'Rhythm method', the only honest way of birth regulation.*

All the foregoing, with its stress on the illicitness of practises already accepted by thousands, can not but appear *strict* and even *negative*. Yet, no description could be farther from this Encyclical than to call it *negative*. The heart of the problem here is one of to be or not to be, one of human life or no human life in matrimony. The Church stands for the *positive*. There exists a positive duty of cooperating with God

in the procreation of human life. The nature of man and woman, somatic and psychological, with all its agonising attractions, and all its never-satiated thirst for love and complement in all moments of life, shows the positive hand of the Creator who will indefectibly do his part by creating an individual soul. The marriage union points most positively to this life-spring function.

That there exist innumerable situations in which the couple, either for a time or for ever, may not reasonably be ready for that positive duty is a fact well known to the Church. But God has wisely provided for all these situations in his wonderful constitution of human nature. Actually, as all men of science well know, the span of time when conception is possible is limited to rather a few hours along the monthly cycle of every woman. And here rests the truly positive and encouraging aspect of the remedy indicated in this papal teaching. There exists an abysmal difference between all the above-mentioned forms of birth control and the *rhythm*, where the couple limits the use of their matrimony to the *agenesic* days of the cycle.

The contraceptive practice, in intention and fact, perverts God's and nature's work. The practice of rhythm, on the contrary, accepts the wisdom of God and nature, and shows the due respect to them by abstaining on the *genesic* days, and accepts this rhythmic course of action only when motivated by serious reasons, and behalf of the health of the wife or the incoming offspring, or by conditions dictated by social environment or of family economy. All this may require enormous, perhaps heroic, efforts. But the Christian couple will accept them inspired by an eternal vocation, sure of an infallible divine help. The words of the Pope:

These acts, by which husband and wife are united in chaste intimacy, and by means of which human life is transmitted, are, as the Council recalled, "noble and worthy," and they do not cease to be lawful if, for causes independent of the will of husband and wife, they are foreseen to be infecund, since they always remain ordained towards expressing and consolidating their union. In fact, as experience bears witness, not every conjugal act is followed by a new life. God has wisely disposed natural laws and rhythms of fecundity which, of themselves, cause a separation in the succession of birth. (No. 11).

The Church is the first to praise and recommend the intervention of intelligence in a function which so closely associates the rational creature with his Creator; but she affirms that this must be done with respect for the order established by God.

If, then there are serious motives to space out births, which derive from the physical or psychological, conditions of husband and wife, or from external conditions, the Church teaches that it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infecund periods only, and in this way to regulate birth without offending the moral principles which have been recalled earlier.

The Church is coherent with herself when she considers recourse to the infecund periods to be licit, while at the same time condemning, as being always illicit, the use of means directly contrary to fecundation, even if such use is inspired by reasons which may appear honest and serious. In reality, there are essential differences between the two cases: in the former, the married couple make legitimate use of a natural disposition; in the latter, they impede the development of natural processes. It is true that, in the one and the other case, the married couple are concordant in the positive will of avoiding children for plausible reasons, seeking the certainty that offspring will not arrive; but it is also true that only in the former case are they able to renounce the use of marriage in the fecund periods when, for just motives, procreation is not desirable, while making use of it during infecund periods to manifest their affection and to safeguard their mutual fidelity. By so doing, they give proof of a truly and integrally honest love. (N. 16).

1. *Required reasons for 'rhythm'.*

The serious reasons necessary for the right use of *rhythm* are conditioned by the positive duty of the couple towards procreation. In all fields, for the dispensation of a positive obligation, a serious motive, in proportion to the duty, is required. In our case, the serious indication in favor of the limitation or avoidance of children may arise from multifarious avenues. The Pope does not go down to detail such motives. The Encyclical simply refers readers to the norms of Pius XII in his famous Address to the Midwives (1951). Those norms are well known by all in the medical field.

The conditions which will demand the use of *rhythm* may be *medical*, *eugenic*, *social* or *economic*. Any one of these fields is widely

extensive. If the indications may be *medical* or *eugenic*, they will be within competence of the doctor. He should evaluate both the condition of the mother and the health of the offspring which is expected, and should proceed according to his honest knowledge without undue qualms of conscience.

Social and *economic* motivations may be easily appreciated by the couple, who, if need be, may take advice from their confessors or counselors.

In this way, all who will take to heart the teaching authority of the Pope may obtain enlightenment from this Encyclical and proceed in this most serious matters with security and peace of conscience.

• Q. M. Garcia, O.P.

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