



## CONTRACEPTION, STERILIZATION, & ABORTION

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. (*HV*, #14)

[If contraceptives are promoted] Let them consider, first of all, how wide and easy a road would thus be opened up towards conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality. (*HV*, #17)

It is also to be feared that the man growing used to the employment of anticonceptive practices may finally lose respect for the woman and no longer caring for her physical and psychological equilibrium, may come to the point of considering her as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment and no longer as his respected and beloved companion. (*HV*, #17)

No difficulty can arise that justifies the putting aside of the law of God which forbids all acts intrinsically evil. There is no possible circumstance in which husband and wife cannot, strengthened by the grace of God, fulfill faithfully their duties and preserve in wedlock their chastity unspotted. (*CC*, #61)

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes. Man's sexuality and the faculty of reproduction wondrously surpass the endowments of lower forms of life; therefore the acts proper to married life are to be ordered according to authentic human dignity and must be honored with the greatest reverence. (*GS*, #51)

In questions of birth regulation the sons of the Church, faithful to these principles, are forbidden to use methods disapproved of by the teaching authority of the Church in its interpretation of the divine law. (*GS*, #51)

The varieties of crime are numerous: all offenses against life itself, such as murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and willful suicide...they poison civilization; and they debase the perpetrators more than the victims and militate against the honor of the Creator. (*GS*, #27)

The regulation of births represents one of the aspects of responsible fatherhood and motherhood. Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means (for example, direct sterilization or contraception). (*CCC*,

#2399)

[E]xcept when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended amputations, mutilations and sterilizations performed on innocent persons are against the moral law. (CCC, #2297)

In order to promote wider use of interceptive methods, it is sometimes stated that the way in which they function is not sufficiently understood. It is true that there is not always complete knowledge of the way that different pharmaceuticals operate, but scientific studies indicate that *the effect of inhibiting implantation is certainly present*, even if this does not mean that such interceptives cause an abortion every time they are used, also because conception does not occur after every act of sexual intercourse. It must be noted, however, that anyone who seeks to prevent the implantation of an embryo which may possibly have been conceived and who therefore either requests or prescribes such a pharmaceutical, generally intends abortion. (CDF, *DP*, September 8, 2008, #23)

Direct sterilization—that is, the sterilization which aims, either as a means or as an end in itself, to render child-bearing impossible—is a grave violation of the moral law, and therefore unlawful...[W]hen sterilization began to be much more widely used the Holy See was obliged to declare openly and explicitly that direct sterilization, permanent or temporary, whether of men or women, is illicit in virtue of the natural law, from which the Church herself, as you know, has no power to dispense. (Pius XII, *Allocution to Midwives*, October 29, 1951)

Direct sterilization is not authorized by man's right to dispose of his own body, and cannot, therefore, be considered a valid solution to the problem of transmitting unhealthy heredity. (Pius XII, *Allocution to the Members of the Seventh Congress on Hematology*, September 12, 1958)

Contraception deliberately deprives the conjugal act of its openness to procreation and in this way brings about a voluntary dissociation of the ends of marriage. (CDF, *DV*, February 22, 1987, II A 2)

The contraceptive mentality causes the will to become detached from its tendency towards the good and therefore towards true love. Thus sexuality and corporality become trivialized; their links with transcendence and the mystery at the origin of human life are overlooked or rejected. In consequence, human values such as chastity, fidelity, fertility, the gift of self, come to be despised and are not rightly understood. (PCF, *IL*, April 20-22, 1991, III)

The Church has always taught the intrinsic evil of contraception, that is, of every marital act intentionally rendered unfruitful. This teaching is to be held as definitive and irreformable. Contraception is gravely opposed to marital chastity; it is contrary to the good of the transmission of life (the procreative aspect of matrimony), and to the reciprocal self-giving of the spouses (the unitive aspect of matrimony); it harms true love and denies the sovereign role of God in the transmission of human life. (PCF,

*Vademecum for Confessors: Concerning Some Aspects of the Morality of Conjugal Life*, February 12, 1997, 2; 4)

It is not in conformity with God's design that couples should neutralize or destroy their fertility by artificial contraception or sterilization, and still less that they have recourse to abortion to kill their offspring before birth. (PCF, *The Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Population Trends*, March 25, 1994, #73)

The artificial methods of birth control as well as sterilization do not respect the human person of a woman and man because they eliminate or impede fertility, which is an integral part of the person. (PCF, *The Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Population Trends*, March 25, 1994, #76)

While acknowledging and being aware of the difficulties that society imposes at times on couples in accepting a new life, contraception, which impoverishes and corrupts conjugal intimacy by separating the unitive dimension from the procreative dimension of the conjugal act, is not a human or a valid answer to the problem of birth control. On the contrary, contraception, together with sterilization, is unfortunately one of the preferred methods of the birth control policies often imposed on populations. (Participants in the Meeting of European Politicians and Legislators on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, *The Rights of the Family on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, March 10, 1993, II 4 b)

Contraception has been promoted as a way of regulating conception and of preventing abortion. It is clear, however, that far from preventing abortion and its consequences, contraception actually guarantees the acceptance and spread of abortion as "post-contraceptive" birth control. It is also now known that many devices and substances alleged to be "contraceptive" are in truth abortifacient (that is, they cause early abortions). Therefore, women's rights must be respected to know that many substances and devices, presented as means for preventing conception, have adverse effects on their health and/or are in truth abortifacients. (Congress on the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Encyclical *HV*, *All Couples Have a Right to Know*, November 26, 1993, #3)

Formal cooperation in the grave evil of contraceptive sterilization, either by approving or tolerating it for medical reason, is forbidden and totally alien to the mission entrusted by the Church to Catholic health care facilities. (NCCB, *Statement on Tubal Ligation*, July 3, 1980, #3)