BLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHING

The Second Vatican Council

One of the 16 documents composed at the Second Vatican Council, this pastoral constitution articulates fundamental Church teachings on the role of the Christian in modern society. Covering a broad range of political, social, economic, and theological topics, the Council fathers devote an entire section to marriage and the family.


Papal Teaching

This apostolic exhortation is the result of Pope Francis’s prayerful reflection on the discussions and outcomes of two synods of bishops held in Rome October 2014 and October 2015 on marriage and the family. Paragraphs no. 80-85, treat the Church’s teaching on “The Transmission of Life and the Rearing of Children.”

This papal encyclical reflects upon the theological virtue of love or Christian charity which is central to the whole of the Christian faith. While broadly teaching about love, the work is nevertheless applicable to all facets of the Christian life, including that of marriage. This encyclical provides fundamental principles for understanding the true nature of love that helps in grasping the anthropology behind the Church’s teachings about conjugal love and responsible parenthood. Recommended paragraphs are nos. 2, 5, 6, 8 and 11.

This papal encyclical teaches about the gift and value of human life. Threats to the value of life are discussed and Christians are urged to create a new Culture of Life, fostering a deeper appreciation and respect for all men and women. Included in the discussion of threats to human life is the subject of contraception [see nos. 13, 16, 17, and 91] which is
described as against God’s design for married love. In the text the goodness of the methods of Fertility Awareness Based Methods of family planning is discussed [see nos. 88, and 97].


This encyclical corrects numerous deviant moral theologies of the modern period. Among the subjects the Holy Father discusses are: the proper understanding of human freedom, conscience and its valid formation, the moral law (including the category of “intrinsic evil”), and the truth expressed in Humanae Vitae. Of particular interest are nos. 55, 56, 63, 64, 67, 68, 75, 76, 79-81.


This Apostolic Exhortation addresses the place of the Christian family both in the Church and in the modern world. At the service of both life and love, the Christian family must seek its identity in the Divine Creator, participate in the mission of the Church, and work to effect change in society. Catholic teachings on marriage, conjugal love and responsible parenthood and the methods of Natural Family Planning are also discussed (see especially nos. 11, 28-36.).

Theology of the Body is the title given to the collection of papal talks [addresses] on God’s design for human sexuality by Pope John Paul II during the course of five years. Appealing to the individual’s experiences of truth, the Holy Father discusses both Sacred Scripture and Catholic Tradition on the subject. This approach seeks not only to make understandable the rich theology of Catholic teaching on the nature of humanity created as man and woman, but also to communicate the truth and beauty of God’s design of human sexuality. Included in this series is a substantial reflection on the papal encyclical, Humanae vitae [Of Human Life] which treats married love and responsible parenthood.

1977. Blessed Pope Paul VI. *25th Allocution to the General Assembly of Pharmacology*. The Holy Father discusses the importance of the knowledge of the “biological laws of human fertility” which can help married couples healthfully regulate births when using the natural methods. He urges further scientific research in this area.


This papal encyclical teaches about God’s design for married love and the gift of life. The important modern question about spacing and limiting births in marriage is considered within the context of God’s design for marriage. Included in the teaching is a discussion of the immorality of contraception, direct sterilization, and abortion [which are intrinsically evil] and the morality of Fertility Awareness Based Methods of family planning.

1958. Pope Pius XII. *Address to Hematologists.* Included in the discussion of the Holy Father is the topic of the immortality of steroidal/hormonal contraception. He does, however, mention that such medical drugs may licitly be used to treat serious organic dysfunction.


This allocation treats the nature of the midwife’s profession which includes a profound respect for human life. Among the points made are those of the immorality of contraception and abortion.

1932. Pius XI. *Address to Physicians.* The Holy Father discusses his hope that physicians would take on the task of studying the problems as addressed in his encyclical, *Casti connubii*.

1930. Pius XI. *Casti connubii [On Christian Marriage]*. Vatican Website, December 31, 1930. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/it.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/it.html)

This papal encyclical teaches about the virtue of marital chastity. Included is a reflection on the threats to marriage. The dignity of marriage and its spiritual benefits are also treated.

**Documents of the Holy See**


This document provides a reflection on the major challenges facing the family in the early twenty-first century. The text serves to articulate the agenda of the 2014 Extraordinary General Assembly of bishops held in Rome.

This document grapples with a number of bioethical questions raised in response to modern technological advancements in the field of human fertility and infertility. Using the principles of Catholic moral teaching, the document brings clarity and truth to the debates surrounding both procreation and genetic manipulation.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM.
This comprehensive treatment of the Church’s teaching touches upon every facet of the Christian faith. The *Catechism* is divided into four main sections: the profession of faith [the Creed], the celebration of the Christian mystery [the Liturgy], life in Christ [the moral life], and Christian prayer. While references to marriage and family can be found throughout the entire book, one may find paragraphs 1601-1666 and 2331-2400 to be particularly applicable for education on marriage and conjugal morality.

This brief document provides guidelines for the administration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in difficult moral circumstances (particularly those concerning married life). Although addressed to confessors within the clergy, the document serves as a standard to guide all Christians in carrying out the call of Christ to live the virtue of chastity.


This statement notes that there are no value free methods of family planning. It then lists six ethical challenges of contraception, drawing on examples. The document also explains that though the world sees a family planning crisis, the Church sees the real problem as one of ethics. *(Note: The name of the Vatican Dicastery is not provided in this reprint.)*

Written in the midst of significant medical innovation on assisted reproductive technology,
this document defends the gift and dignity of human life [particularly in its earliest stages], against the onset of intrusive and immoral scientific innovation.


**Catholic Episcopal Conferences**

*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*


This short anniversary statement revisits the teachings of *Humanae vitae* on its twenty-fifth anniversary. It emphasizes the reverence due to human life and the responsibility of parents to defend such an invaluable gift. In protecting the great worth of human sexuality in God’s plan, the document has a section devoted specifically to Natural Family Planning.


**SCHOLARLY SOURCES**

**Marriage—Natural Reality and Sacrament**


**Conjugal Love and Responsible Parenthood**


Grisez, Germain. *Contraception and the Natural Law*. Bruce, 1964. NB: This is the author’s earliest effort to articulate what would later be called the “New Natural Law Theory” argument against contraception.

Grisez, Germain, Joseph Boyle, John Finnis, and William E. May. “‘Every Marital Act Ought To Be Open To New Life’: Toward a Clearer Understanding.” *The Thomist* 52 (July 1988): 365-426. NB: A groundbreaking article on contraception as “contra-life.”


_____. “*Humanae Vitae* and the Signs of the Times.” *Mosaic* (Summer 2008): 2-5. NB: The entire issue of the Archdiocese of Detroit Sacred Heart Major Seminary’s magazine is devoted to the 40th anniversary of *Humanae vitae*.


_____. “Conscience, Contraception, and Catholic Health-Care Professionals.” *The Linacre Quarterly* 77 (May 2010): 204-228.


**Sexual Ethics**


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**Theology of the Body**


**MISCELANEOUS SOURCES**


Notare, Theresa. “A Revolution in Christian Morals,” Lambeth 1930-Resolution #15, History & Reception. PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2008. Available through ProQuest, 1-800-521-0600. NB: This dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part treats the first phase of the modern sexual revolution. Notare argues that several critical messages combined to change the mentality of the average person to gradually accept contraception in marriage since core concepts of human goods were mixed with falsehoods. Part two covers the Anglican bishops’ discussion on birth control at Lambeth 1930 and analyzes public reaction to the decision to accept contraception in marriage.

