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Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain Ex. 20:7.



Second Promise Of Our Blessed Mother Mary To Christians Who Recite The Rosary. I promise my special protection and the greatest Graces to all those who shall recite the Rosary.

J.M.J.

Contraception Versus Abortion

A Comparison and Some Implications

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Although officially "retired", Msgr. Foy still keeps up with current developments in the Church and maintains an active correspondence with many Bishops and Church leaders across Canada. He also continues to write booklets and contribute articles to many Catholic periodicals on issues affecting the Church. Among his writings are: "Tragedy at Winnipeg, parts I and II," "From Humanae Vitae to Veritatis Splendor," "From Winnipeg to Fully Alive," "The Arians of the Twentieth Century," "AIDS, Condoms and Catholic Education," and "Did Pope Paul VI Approve the Winnipeg Statement: A Search for the Truth." For further articles of Msgr. Foy see list of contents page]

"From man in regard to his fellow-man I will demand an accounting for human life." (God to Noah, Genesis 9:5)

Though his thinking in general is deeply warped, the philosopher Hegel in his Philosophy of History is not far from the truth when he says that human history is one vast slaughterhouse. Despite repeated warnings in God's revelation encapsulated in the command "Thou shalt not kill," the Culture of Death now permeates society as never before. We are not surprised to hear warning after warning from **our Holy Father** about this transcendent evil. **On Feb. 14, 2001, he said: "The promotion of the culture of life should be the highest priority in our societies... If the right to life is not defended decisively as a condition for all other rights of the person, all other references to human rights remain deceitful and illusory."**

The two principal causes of the Culture of Death are abortion and contraception. Abortion means death to the unborn. Contraception has been described as "creeping death." It is of paramount importance to assess the relationship between **these two killers of society and souls** to formulate plans and strategies to promote the Culture of life. The evaluation of the comparative roles of abortion and contraception in attacking human life is not as simple as might be thought. They are often intertwined in their intent. **Abortifacients are often called contraceptives. At first murder seems a more heinous crime than the prevention of life, but there are hidden factors.** Despite difficulties, some comparisons can be made which indicate how the whole pro-life movement should move. We consider some of these comparisons.



Abortion as Sin

Abortion is a grave or mortal sin against the Fifth Commandment of God: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). "God alone is the Lord of life from the beginning until it's end: no one can under any circumstances claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being" (Donum Vitae, Introduction, n.5). The person murdered through abortion has precisely the same right to life as the abortionist, or the one who cooperates in the abortion or the politician who legislates the "right" to kill. To speak of one's right over one's body as justification for abortion is sophistry. There is not one body, but two, not one person, but two, with an equal right to life. So the church calls abortion an "unspeakable crime" (Gaudium et Spes, n.51). Since it is a mortal sin, it carries with it, unless there is repentance, the frightful sanction of eternal death.

Abortion kills the body of the victim and the soul of the killer, but not the soul of the victim. That soul will live forever in God's love, with that degree of happiness which God's love and mercy bestows. The crime of abortion is nearly always a chain sin. A cluster of persons share the guilt: abortionist, assistants, office staff, hospital management, advertisers and responsible

politicians - and those who remained passive when they should have spoken or acted or prayed.

Contraception as Sin

Contraception is also a grave or mortal sin with the sanction of spiritual death. In this the Church's teaching - speaking with Christ's authority - is constant. Pope Pius XI, in the encyclical *Casti connubi* of Dec. 31, 1930, proclaimed: "Our mouth proclaims anew: any use of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of grave sin."

Numerous papal and episcopal statements underline the gravity of the sin of the contraceptive act. Here I quote only a few episcopal statements from the last century, before some bishops turned away from listening to the voice of Christ to the voice of dissenters:

(a) Contraception is "a vice against nature and a sin crying to Heaven" (Belgian bishops, June 2, 1909).

(b) Contraception is a "serious sin, a very serious sin, with whatever means and whatever way it occurs" (German bishops, Aug. 20, 1913).

(c) "The theories and practices which teach or encourage the restriction of birth are as disastrous as they are criminal" (French bishops, May 17, 1919).

(d) "The selfishness which leads to race suicide with or without the pretext of bettering the species, is in God's sight, a detestable thing. It is a crime for which, eventually, the nation must suffer" (Cardinal Gibbons on behalf of the U.S. hierarchy, Sept. 20, 1919)

(e) Contraception "whether within the married state or outside it, is an unnatural vice, sinning against the nature, which the Creator bestowed upon us, and therefore grievously displeasing in His sight" (Cardinal Bourne of Westminster, Oct. 9, 1930).

(f) "Contraceptive methods were, are and always will be a sin... it was reserved to our generation to glorify vice with the name of virtue" (Bishops of India, 1957).

In sum the Church has never deviated from the teaching that contraception is a grave violation of God's Fifth Commandment.

The Sanction for Abortion

Excommunication is the ecclesiastical sanction imposed by the Church on abortionists. "A person who actually procures an abortion incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication" (canon 1398, Code of Canon Law). This means that the excommunication is automatic. In the case of *latae sententiae* excommunications, those also come under the penalty if the crime would not have been committed without them (cf. canon 1319). So abortionists, those taking part in the abortion, and counsellors of the abortion, are also excommunicated.

It is within the authority of the Church to impose the penalty of excommunication on those who are cooperators in abortion in a more remote way, e.g. legislators who introduce, promote, or vote for pro-abortion laws. There is a rising chorus of voices calling for the excommunication of politicians who promote abortion and, therefore, have the blood of innocent children on their hands. Such Catholic politicians are a scandal and disgrace.



The Sanction for Contraception

In the matter of contraception, even "abortifacient contraception", although there is no specific ecclesiastical penalty, there remains the supreme penalty of the loss of God's grace. In some places and times there have been particular ecclesiastical penalties for contraception. In Spain in 1936, absolution from the sin of contraception was reserved to the bishop in eight dioceses (cf. Catholic Priests' Association Newsletter, Vol. III and IV, 1972, p.60). That there is an excommunication attached to abortion and not to contraception does not mean that the former is a greater crime. It means that the good order of the Church as a visible society is more obviously disturbed.

The Number of Abortions

Who can compute the number of abortions? God alone knows that tragic statistic. One report says that in 1995 there were approximately twenty-six million legal and twenty million illegal abortions performed worldwide (cf. Heritage House '76: Abortion Facts.com). The same source reports that in the U.S., there were 580,760 abortions in 1972 and 1,210,883 in 1995. In Statistics Canada, we read that Canadian women obtained 114,848 abortions in 1997, a 2.9% increase from 111,649 a year earlier. The national abortion rate for every one hundred live births in 1997 was thirty-three. Even worse are the Quebec numbers. We read in the Toronto Globe and Mail of March 13, 2000: "Over the past two decades the number of abortions in Quebec has more than doubled, giving the Canadian province one of the world's highest abortion rates outside of Eastern Europe. The Quebec Bureau of Statistics reported that forty-one abortions were performed for every one hundred live births in 1998."

Reported statistics are only a proportion of aborted persons. One must add the lives terminated by abortifacient contraceptives. "Throughout the world, an estimated 250 million abortions are caused by the IUD and pill each year" (Faith and Facts, Emmaus Road Publishing, 1999, p.114). Is it an exaggeration to describe the world as a slaughterhouse?

The Number of Contraceptive Acts

As large as are the numbers of those murdered by abortion, much more numerous are those deprived of human life and spiritual growth by contraception. One must number in these tragic statistics those millions who should have been and are not because of tubal ligations and vasectomies. Adding to the disgrace of this pandemic deprivation of human souls is that, in general, the contraceptive rate among Catholics is not lower that that of the general population.

The Effects of Abortion

The primary effect of abortion is the brutal termination of a human life at the time of its greatest potentiality. It is indescribably callous. When a baby is born there is rejoicing. Even the death of one baby brings great sorrow. The headline in The Toronto Star for Feb. 18, 2001, is: "Why did my baby have to die?" Even the stillborn child is the subject of mourning. Yet the aborted child is a pariah: it's tiny broken body cast away in a garbage bag shroud or incinerated. We are reminded of the words of St. Augustine in his Confessions, that, in this life, "The more they deserve tears, the less likely will men sorrow for them."

There is a worse death occasioned by abortion: the spiritual death of the participants. All those who participate in the abortion, and that includes those who legalize abortion, suffer this death. The aborted child will live forever in God's love; the abortionists become spiritual corpses. Abortion kills countries. In Canada, the fertility rate has been below the replacement rate since the mid-seventies. As Fr. Paul Marx wrote in a recent letter, the whole of Europe is dying except Albania. The average family size in Europe is 1.4 children. Even Ireland is down to 1.9 children per family.

Abortion places an especially heavy burden on the conscience of the aborting mother. She knows in her heart that she has murdered her own child. "Could a mother ever forget her own infant, and not take compassion on the child of her womb?" (Isaiah 49:15). It is true that through repentance, and God's mercy, there can be complete forgiveness and even a blossoming into a dedication to the pro-life cause. Abortion leaves great gaps in the family, in the Church and in society. There are missing brothers and sisters, sons and daughters; gaps in productive citizens, gaps in vocations to the priesthood and religious life and the professions. There are great gaps in those who ought to be listening to the Call to Holiness. Abortion leads to euthanasia. Laws permitting euthanasia would not have been possible had they not been preceded by laws allowing abortion.

These and other evils are the effects of abortion.

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[Jesus, Mary, I love you, Save Souls](#)