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Jesus asks you to love Him. Spend one quiet hour with him each week in the Blessed Sacrament. "For, where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also." "Could you not watch one hour with Me?" (Mt 6:21;26:40).



Our Lord to Berthe Petit, (July 2, 1940): "It is hearts that must be changed. This will be accomplished only by the Devotion proclaimed, explained, preached and recommended everywhere."

[The following testimony is presented with the kind permission of Steve Koob, the director of ONE MORE SOUL, 616 Oaks Avenue, Dayton, OH. 45406; 1-800-307-7685 or 937-279-5433; Fax: 937-2279-2370; Web site: www.omsoul.com; E-mail: omsoul@omsoul.com.]

J.M.J.

CONTRACEPTIVE MIND-SET ALMOST ENDED OUR MARRIAGE by Mike Cannon

I can't believe I am writing this in support of the Church's teaching against artificial contraception. **Up until 3 years ago, I was like 80% of American Catholics who rejected the Church's teaching against artificial contraception.** I was not vocal about it, but my wife and I were literally sucked into the "culture of death" mentality.

After our third child was born, my wife began using artificial birth control. Our family physician prescribed birth control pills, and neither my wife or I thought this was a problem, and **we certainly didn't see anything sinful about using them. In fact, my wife and I never remember being taught the Church's teaching concerning artificial contraception in either Catholic Schools or during our pre-Cana classes.**

After several months, my wife told me **she felt sick** and bloated when she was **on birth control pills. Her blood pressure skyrocketed, and her cholesterol level jumped to over 250. She also gained close to 20 pounds, and she experienced severe mood swings.** We began to think the birth control pills were adversely affecting her health. **Our family physician suggested sterilization. Since the vasectomy seemed like a safer procedure than a tubal ligation, we decided to schedule the surgery.**



I canceled the initial surgery. Something inside of me kept telling me I shouldn't go through with it. **I didn't know the Church's teaching on sterilization,** but I think the Holy Spirit was speaking to my heart. Finally, after my doctor convinced me that the Pope didn't know what he was talking about, **I had the surgery.**

For the next several years, life seemed to go pretty much like normal. However, something did begin to change. **My wife and I began to drift apart. It was very gradual and almost imperceptible at first. Our sexuality became more and more selfish, and less and less self-giving.**

Finally, **after talking about divorce for almost a year, the Lord intervened. I experienced a powerful conversion experience with Jesus Christ that awakened me from my spiritual slumber.** I guess I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. **After several months of intense hunger for God, I began to read Humanae Vitae. At first it did not hit me, but like waking up from a deep sleep, eventually my eyes became open to the truth.**

I immediately went to confession, and confessed my many sins to a Priest. **It was like scales falling from my eyes.** My heart experienced the loving embrace of Jesus and His Mother, the Church. **I began to talk to my wife about having my vasectomy reversed. She became very angry with me, and couldn't understand why I wanted to hurt her.** I told her I wanted to have it reversed because I loved her so much. The Lord asked me to trust in His mercy. **Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit I didn't talk to my wife about having my vasectomy reversed, but instead I prayed for my own conversion.**

The Lord spoke to my heart and told me it was my sinfulness that was preventing my wife from experiencing conversion. God made me realize how I was closed to His infinite mercy and grace. Just as my wife didn't want to receive all of my love, I was limiting God's infinite love for me. He made me realize that He had been so patient with me, and I should be patient with my wife. He was asking me to love my wife as He loves me. He told me to embrace my wife like He embraced the cross. He asked me to humble myself and become my wife's servant. He asked me to join all of my hurt and pain with His. There were times that I wish I were on a cross, rather than endure my broken heart.

In the midst of this pain I experienced a closeness with Jesus that I had never experienced before. Just as St. Paul said, "my outer self is being destroyed, but my inner self is being renewed each day." **As I died to myself, an ocean of mercy swept over me. Instead of being angry with my wife, the more I hurt, the more my love for her grew. "When you are weak, you are strong, for my grace is made perfect in weakness."**

Eventually my wife became more and more open to the idea of my reversal. She finally gave her OK! I sang praise to God! It was a true miracle! I eventually called the doctor and scheduled my surgery. Two days before the surgery, my wife panicked. She became irrational and angry. She said she was going to leave me if I went through with the reversal. I was crushed. I offered it up to Jesus. I asked for St. Edith Stein and St. Philomena to pray for us.

In the silence of my heart I heard the sweet voice of Jesus. He said, "If you do not go through with your surgery, your marriage will not last. Trust in Me! If I ask you for obedience, all you have to say is 'yes' ." **With the faith of a small child I handed my life over to Jesus. The day I was to leave for my surgery my wife gave her blessing for me to have my vasectomy reversed.** I could sense God's grace flowing over us both like a mighty waterfall.

Following the surgery, my wife and I struggled initially with how to express our love for each other. It was like we were newlyweds all over again. **Our love began to grow by leaps and bounds. We began to communicate with each other.** My wife began to wake up with me early each morning for an hour of silent prayer and scripture study. We began to live the words of Jesus, "with humility of mind, consider others as more important than yourself."



Our love had returned to the original self-giving love we once knew. Our three children immediately noticed a difference. They became less anxious and were filled with peace. **Each day began with prayer, and ended with prayer. We sang together, read scripture together, and worshipped together.** The Holy Spirit became like an overflowing fountain of love within us and within our family. **When we shared the gift of sexuality, we were open to the gift of life. The experience of self-giving love makes selfish love appear like a speck of dust.**

I plead with all the bishops, priests, and teachers of the Catholic faith to not neglect the Church's teaching against contraception and sterilization. If my wife and I had been taught this truth, it would have saved us from years of hurt and heartache. The culture of death almost ended our marriage, but like the resurrection of Jesus, our marriage was raised up from the grave. Husbands, wives and especially children are the real victims of the contraceptive mind- Please look around our Church and our society. The hurt and pain of divorce is all around us set.

Please do not think I'm being dogmatic. **My wife and I have been on the brink of the abyss. I am sharing our pain so that others can be directed to the truth. I plead with all bishops to proclaim this truth as boldly as you can. I plead with all of those involved with Pre-Cana classes to discuss Natural Family Planning. I beg all priests, religious, and catechists to proclaim the truth before our society crumbles to dust.**

The very survival of the family is at stake. We must learn to listen to Jesus and His Church, and not the changing winds of our secular culture. I pray every day for a New Pentecost. Come, Lord Jesus! Come!

[Editor's note. Mike and Denise are expecting their 4th child in January 2000!]