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Contraception - On the Eye of the Council's Decision

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Survey

Contraception—On the Eve of the Council's Decision

THE Fourth Session of Vatican II draws near and with it the long looked for Catholic answer to the raging controversy on contraception. As part of Schema 13—The Church in the Modern World, the decision on contraception will probably eclipse, at least for a while, all other pronouncements and will, no doubt, have the greatest immediate widespread fall-out. While no one professes to know in advance what the decision will be, it might be profitable to review the writings of the most articulate and/or authoritative advocates of the various positions the Church can take vis-a-vis contraception.

The various solutions proposed fit conveniently into three categories: (1) Nothing should be changed; (2) The whole current doctrine should be scrapped, leaving the couples to decide according to their own conscience if, when and how they shall practice contraception; (3) The anovulants and similar nature-imitating techniques should be allowed for those justified in practicing rhythm but unable to do so without some aid.

We will discuss these three positions and indicate some of the supporting arguments given. But first let us note some of the unique attitudes and convictions of the modern mind which provide the background for this crisis concerning con-

traception and by muddying the waters make the solution more difficult than it would have been a decade ago.

BACKGROUND OF THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY

As the Editors of *CATHOLIC MIND* (January, 1965) pointed out, the controversy on contraception is only the part of an iceberg that shows above the surface. The real issue, below the surface and out of sight, is the nature of morality itself. To overcome the natural law arguments against contraception some cast doubt on the natural law itself. Some proceed thus through invincible ignorance, not understanding the difference between the empirical and descriptive laws of science like biology and physics and the moral law that regulates human conduct. Through this confusion they are led to declare that progress depends on the violation of natural law. Others profess to find the solution only in Scripture, rejecting a natural law approach. This approach would destroy the foundations of the social doctrine of the Church. The Editors cite a Scripture scholar warning us not to look in the New Testament for *Mater et Magistra*, because it isn't there. The same must be said for *Pacem in Terris*, the most popular of all the encyclicals, which can not help but be a formidable stumbling block for any one who would try to prove that the natural law no longer is relevant for the modern mind.

Modern philosophies, especially existentialism and phenomenology attack the "essentialism" of the natural law theory, extolling the freedom of man to such a degree that they can not allow him to be bound by the abstract laws derived from his "nature". They allow man to act against his nature sometimes for the sake of a greater value but, as the editors point out, they leave him helpless before the "problem-solving utilitarianism of modern secular society".

Canon Leclercq in *Christ And The Modern Conscience* (1962) stressed the gravity of the crisis of conscience for contemporary man. In the second quarter of the twentieth century, he writes, a "corrosive flood suddenly cataracted down" on the moral philosophy which had been constructed so

carefully over a thousand-year period. "Abruptly it seemed that everything was dissolving. The indestructible slabs that had defied the centuries seemed to be turning to gelatine; the ancient edifice was shivering and quaking. . . . It was an appalling hurricane". He notes that the modern trend of thinking leads to a contempt for reason that is often disturbing. Influenced by non-Christian thinking, some Catholics lose respect for traditional moral philosophy but, having nothing to put in its place, "they become engulfed in a sort of anarchy which glorifies spontaneous judgments, as often as not alien to the virtue of prudence."

Other writers have made similar observations. Gustave Thibon in *Love Is Forever* (1964) scores this tendency of modern thought, "centered on existentialism and subjectivism, (which) tends more and more to fail to recognize or to ignore everything in our nature and our destiny which holds out against the onslaught of living experience and psychological analysis". The result is that "Laws, institutions—human or divine—are the first victims of this state of mind". The tendency is to judge them "by their evident psychological effects, their existential resonance". If perchance we can not observe these resonances, the institution itself is despised. Specifically with regard to marriage Thibon notes that "Today. . . we find growing up a kind of mystique about marriage which is pre-occupied more with the quality of the personal link between husband and wife than with its social preservation. The tendency is to see the essence of marriage more and more in acts of love. . . by which two beings join and mingle their destinies. The rest—fidelity to each other, procreation and upbringing of children, the welfare of society, etc.—flows from this source as the temporal flows from the eternal". This is the myth of "companions for eternity", a myth that is shattered by the reality of second marriages, after divorce or death of a spouse.

Basic to much modern writing on marriage is this mysterious malady and too much of this writing is suffering from it in "this period of morbid hyperesthesia of self and crass insistence on personal rights." One of these rights, most appealing to moderns, is the unconditional right to happiness

of the individual, and any contradiction of it is a "matter for indignation and scandal". It can be used to justify abandoning one's home and spouse and children: "Well, after all he [she] has a right to be happy".

Still another voice from the ranks of the laity, Eva Firkel, in *Woman In the Modern World* (1956) pointed out a defect in our modern Christian approach to life as she sees it. "Strangely enough, today the Christian conception of suffering joyfully accepted is quite foreign even to Christians. Saints, resigned in faith, have bowed to God's will; whereas we resign ourselves unwillingly, imagining our wilfull demands to be due to us as a sacred right". The same writer observes that the very existence of marriage as an institution is being questioned, that "the crisis of marriage has become a common-place". For her the decisive point is that the very structure of marriage is probably opposed to modern life. "For this life is being lived at a fearful pace, while marriage is stationary. The landmarks of modern life are sensational experiences, whereas those of good marriages are peaceful expression of an interior attitude and the various stages in the development of the children."

More than one writer has expressed concern over still another characteristic of the modern man—his loneliness. Dr. C. J. Trimbos in *Healthy Attitudes Towards Love and Sex* (1964) cites loneliness as being probably the all-important factor to modern man. "Lacking the confidence tradition gave his forebears, and lacking bonds in the present, many a human being today is looking for security, human fellowship, understanding and acceptance. The magic word for all this is love, and love is being sought nowadays more than ever before as the specific against a loneliness that turns a man cold and alienates him from himself and the world." Thus the modern emphasis on the mutual love of husband and wife having more value in our highly technological age than in previous centuries, and the corollary that it need not be linked necessarily to procreation.

If someone wishes more authoritative confirmation of the existence of the submerged part of the "iceberg" he has but

to turn to the first encyclical of Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, wherein he felt constrained to warn us that "Naturalism threatens to render null and void the original conception of Christianity. Relativism, which justifies everything and treats all things as of equal value, assails the absolute character of Christian principles. The tendency of throwing over-board every restraint and inconvenience from the conduct of life finds the discipline of Christian asceticism burdensome and futile." In another paragraph the pope reminded us that "The Christian life, which the Church interprets and sets down in wise regulations, will always bear the mark of the 'narrow way' of which Our Lord spoke (Matt. 7, 13ff); it will require not less moral energy of us modern Christians than it did of Christians in the past, but perhaps more. . . ."

These are strong words and give us an insight into the climate of opinion of the modern world which is so concerned with the great moral problem of contraception at the very moment in history when some of the most basic tenets of morality are being questioned. Articles on what has been termed the "Sexual Revolution" (AMERICA: March 6, 1965: 312-15) give us a clue to the size of this iceberg; a whole new approach to sex is being worked out in some quarters as a result of the scientific techniques which have broken the link between sex and procreation. The 1963 booklet "Towards A Quaker View of Sex", published in England rejected almost completely the traditional approach of the organized Christian Church to morality, with its supposition that it knows what is right and wrong.

Add to the above the pressure from those who are so much concerned with the population problem, and the holy desire of those who wish to put an end to the birth control controversy as an obstacle to the oecumenical movement and we can better appreciate the magnitude of the problem facing the Council in its next Session. Truly it is a problem that can only be entrusted to a Church guided by the holy Spirit.

Let us proceed now to examine briefly the main positions in the controversy.

FIRST POSITION

First, those who say that nothing should be changed. This might be called the conservative opinion. The best contemporary defense of this traditional position is probably the second volume of *Contemporary Moral Theology* by John C. Ford, S.J. and Gerald Kelly, S.J. (1963). Devoted entirely to contemporary marriage questions the volume reexamines the principles on which the present doctrine of the Church rests especially concerning the ends of marriage and contraception in the light of the modern emphasis by personalists on the love and happiness of the spouses. Their insistence on the importance and value of conjugal love does not prevent them from defending the traditional doctrine, correctly understood and properly nuanced, on the essential sub-ordination of the secondary end (mutual help, the fostering of conjugal love and the remedy for concupiscence) to the primary end (procreation).

Fathers Ford and Kelly sum up their chapter on the possibility of the Church changing her doctrine on contraception by stating clearly and unequivocally that "The Church is so completely committed to the doctrine that contraception is intrinsically and gravely immoral that no substantial change in this teaching is possible. It is irrevocable." They state that since the doctrine is at least definable, it must be included in some way within the object of infallibility. They give as the basis for recent papal condemnations of contraception the natural-law principle that the inherent procreative purpose, or procreative design, of the conjugal act must always be respected, a principle which has always been a part of the Christian teaching on conjugal morality; hence, in this sense at least, the condemnation of even modern contraceptive techniques may be called traditional doctrine.

These two renowned American moralists reject the anovulants when taken for contraceptive purposes. Their argument is that it is a direct sterilization and their position is that approved by Pius XII and reaffirmed by Paul VI as still in effect in spite of the storm of controversy which has arisen.

They consider the many other uses of the anovulants pills and take what some might consider to be liberal views, but they are views based on principles and show the careful thought and prudence for which they have been noted over the years.

We need not delay further on this traditional position because it is the best known and is found in nearly all the manuals of moral theology. But it might be well for the sake of balance and perspective to cite the words of Cardinal Suenens in his book *Love and Control* (1961). He states clearly and emphatically that the Church "will never say that the use of contraceptives is licit. . . . What was condemned as intrinsically immoral yesterday will not become moral tomorrow. No one should entertain any confused doubt or false hope on the point; the Church has not decided these practices are immoral, she has merely confirmed what the natural law already said about them. The use of contraceptives artificially perverts an act, which by itself, would be able to tend to its reproductive end. Contraception is an essential denial of conjugal communion which it secretly disintegrates and turns into deceit and self-seeking whereas it should be an act of reciprocal giving". No one can accuse this Belgian Cardinal of being a rigid conservative, blindly following the paths of tradition, and yet one could hardly find a firmer expression of the traditional doctrine of the Church on contraception.

To show that the laity can express themselves just as firmly in favor of the traditional position we might cite *Love Is Forever* (1964) wherein Daniel Rops, Michel Riquet, Gustave Thibon, and Jacques Madaule extol the traditional Christian approach to marriage. Their facile pens and rich insights embrace the best of modern thought on love and show that it reinforces the traditional doctrine by placing it in the total Christian perspective.

Dr. C. Trimbos, M.D. (*Healthy Attitudes Towards Love and Sex*) should also be cited in favor of the traditional view. A Dutch psychiatrist, he vigorously defends the orientation of all sexuality toward new life, and presents all sex morality as having meaning only in the light of the built-in purpose-

fulness of sex. He insists that marriage as an institution from which children result provides us with the finest and most important link to hold together the whole involved process of human living, and because of this it is of much greater significance than the personal feelings any couple have for each other. After noting the current objections against rhythm he states: "Nevertheless, I have become more and more convinced of its value and it seems to me that most of the objections are not of fundamental importance."

SECOND POSITION

The *second position* to consider is the most radical: it would leave the matter entirely up to the married couple to decide the problem for themselves in their own conscience before God. Fr. Gregory Baum, O.S.A., in his contribution to *Contraception And Holiness* (1964) puts it in the form of a question: "Would it not be in harmony with the total development just described to expect that the ecclesiastical magisterium will eventually acknowledge that in a well-ordered marriage (i.e. a marriage orientated toward children, mutual love and selfless service) sexual love as such is a good and that therefore married couples may regulate conception by any means agreeable to the conscience of the two partners?"

In the same book, Fr. Stanley E. Kutz, C.S.B., ends his contribution thus; "May we not hope that, while affirming the permanent values of Christian marriage, the council will discover a way of stating that these values can be realized even through actions which, if viewed in isolation might be objectionable, but which, in the total context of a given marriage, may be constructive and holy? Must we continue to exclude from the sacraments of reconciliation and unity those Christians who, after serious thought and prayer, have come to the clear conviction of conscience that they *must* [emphasis in the original] practice contraception if they are to make the best of a life that will never be perfect?"

Approaching the problem from the population angle, William V. D'Antonio, sociologist at Notre Dame University ends with questions favoring freedom of choice: "Will not a greater

good be served if they can be free to seek a means of control commensurate with their needs and abilities? Is not the question of goodness or evil in the act to be found in the motivation of the act?" In the course of his chapter he paid a tribute to rhythm: "it can not be easily dismissed as a means of family limitation. It does work. But the cost may be great." For those who find rhythm impossible or too difficult he goes so far as to suggest the diaphragm or the intrauterine ring.

But other contributors will not endorse such complete freedom of means. Rosemary Reuthers rejects the use of the condom and *coitus interruptus* as "morally intolerable" since they "definitely do not allow for the full completion of the sexual act as a relational act (between two persons)." The reasons that she finds them "morally intolerable" is an argument from reason, not from the authority of the Church. And yet, strange to say, one of the main points of the book is that the arguments from reason don't convince the modern mind! She also rejects permanent sterilization for a reason that Archbishop Roberts in the introduction is apparently unaware of or would find unconvincing! "Permanent sterilization is undesirable chiefly because of its finality. It takes from man his ability to choose in favor of procreation and leaves him only with his previous choice against it. It thus dehumanizes him by depriving him of his freedom to make authentically human choices." When she attacks the rhythm method "as very insecure" Mrs. Reuthers is at odds with Professor D'Antonio.

Those who would endorse any means acceptable to the couple would have to approve of the intrauterine ring device (IUD) which in the opinion of the doctors and theologians is most probably abortive in as much as it "may cause displacement of the fertilized ovum before it has time to settle in the wall of the uterus". (Felix F. Cardegna, S.J., "Contraception", *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*: December, 1964:617) Professor D'Antonio explicitly approves of the IUD; its abortive nature either escapes him or causes him no concern.

The advocates of this radical approach to the problem of contraception generally feel the need to explicitly defend them-

selves from the charge that they are advocating situation ethics or endorsing the principle that the end justifies the means. They are sometimes hesitant, questioning rather than affirming, seeking clarification rather than laying down sound guiding principles. They contradict each other on basic points at times and, in brief, fall far short of that certainty that the Church must have before making such a drastic change in her teaching. This does not mean that these writers have not made a contribution by forcing the theologians to reevaluate the traditional doctrine in the light of the insights and arguments offered by these writers along the way.

THIRD POSITION

We come now to the *third position*, that which advocates a change in the doctrine of the Church in as much as anovulants and similar nature-imitating aids may be allowed to couples who are justified in practicing rhythm. Writers who defend this change are unanimous in rejecting contraception and base their arguments on the fact that the anovulants complement nature, supplying for the defects which makes rhythm unreliable for some or too difficult for others.

Much of the strength of this position is in the respect that it pays to the basic structure of the marriage act. The failure to insist on the natural structure of the marital act is precisely what weakens the position of such writers as Luis Dupré. In his book *Contraception And Catholics* (1964) he abandoned the natural structure of the act and, as a result, "he found it logically impossible concretely to identify external rightness and wrongness in the performance of the act", as Fr. Richard McCormick, S.J. pointed out in his review in *AMERICA* (November 14, 1965:629). And once this distinction is not made, "everything else is possible; for example a blurred line between desirability of ends and permissibility of means, between the objective and subjective factors in moral conduct".

One of the most convincing and most carefully reasoned defenses of this third position is that by Fr. Felix F. Cardeña, S.J. in *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* (December, 1964). Re-

viewing the basic arguments against contraception in the light of papal teaching he concludes that "the conjugal act and the generative processes are substantially inviolable". But he notes an increasing number of interventions allowed by the theologians over the years (the various means to obtain semen for sterility tests, the techniques to assist insemination, what is allowed to a woman who has been raped, and the much discussed use of the anovulant by a woman in great danger of rape, etc.) all of them defended by various Catholic moralists as at least probably licit.

In the light of these increasing interventions in the conjugal act or generative process Cardegna logically concludes that there is now some question as to what is substantial and what is accidental intervention in this act. He expresses the conviction that there is no clear norm yet developed in moral theology which enables us to resolve all the cases which present themselves. He cites Frs. Ford and Kelly (*Marriage Questions*) in support of this claim for they admit in treating of the problem that "Contraceptive acts are absolutely forbidden, but we are not always clear whether a given act is contraceptive".

Considering the current methods of birth control from the point of view of intrusions in the marital act or in the reproductive system (excluding IUD as most probably abortive), he takes up the thesis of Fr. Janssens, the Belgian moralist, that the use of the anovulants can be likened to the practice of rhythm. Fr. Cardegna insists that there is a difference between the use of the pills and rhythm but suggests that there is room for development and extension of the principles of Catholic ethics with regard to sterilization and the reasons to justify it since our doctrine was developed in the light of surgical sterilization which is much different from the sterilization of the pill. Spelling out the possibilities in this area he sees the redefining of forbidden sterilization as the "suppression of the *natural* or *normal* capacity to conceive a child", rather than merely the suppression of the capacity.

Going a step further Cardegna sees the possibility of defining this natural or normal capacity not merely in terms of the physiological cycle of the woman alone, i.e., one ovulation every twenty-eight days or so, but "subordinated to values of the social, psychological, economic, eugenic, or demographic order." Thus the woman would be allowed to exercise dominion over her cycle pattern of fertility "to the point of changing the physiological periodicity for sufficient reasons of a *higher order*". Thus "normal" or "natural" would be extended to what is *humanly* normal or natural and not limited to the merely biological normal or natural. In taking this step he tries to meet squarely one of the key issues in the birth-control controversy—the difficulty that Catholic moralists have in showing that the physiological or biological aspects (procreative aspects) should be normative for the relational or personal aspect of intercourse.

The modern writings which show the intrinsic oneness of marital intercourse as a single whole with two aspects, its life-giving character and its nature as an expression of personal love between husband and wife, have done much to show the reasonableness of the Church's view on contraception in the terms of contemporary emphasis on personalism. But the licit practice of rhythm raises a problem immediately. If the couple practicing rhythm may deliberately exclude the life-giving aspect of intercourse, why not allow other means as well? It is here that the author invokes a principle that seems to explain well the liceity of rhythm and at the same time to show the reasonableness of allowing anovulants to aid those who find rhythm impractical or insufficiently reliable. The principle is that the intrinsic nature of the marriage act must be at all times respected. Rhythm does this and so do the anovulants. Most of the modern contraceptives would be immediately excluded by the application of this principle. All uses of marriage which would not respect the intrinsic nature of the act and, *a fortiori* any act among single people, would be clearly prohibited.

To support this principle Cardegna marshalls impressive arguments but admits that he does not have all the answers

since there are certain types of intervention in the marriage act (the use of the occlusive pessary) which do not certainly destroy the basic structure of the act, as well as certain type of surgical intervention (ligation of the tubes) . Would his principle force him to admit that these means of birth control would also have to be allowed, at least to those who found rhythm impracticable or not sufficiently reliable? He does not like to admit that they should be allowed but is honest enough to admit the difficulty and then offers some tentative solutions.

Another problem which such a change must face up to is the question of its relation to papal teachings. The clear statements of Pius XI and Pius XII are formidable obstacles for any Catholic Theologian. Fr. Cardegna faces the problem squarely. He believes that the official teaching on contraception which involves interference with the essential structure of the act is so deeply rooted in the teaching of the Church that change is extremely unlikely. But when it comes to interventions in the generative system which do not affect the essential structure of the marital act the official teaching is "somewhat less solemn". The difference centers around the meaning of sterilization.

Pius XII condemned the use of the anovulant pill for prevention of conception as a direct sterilization on September 12, 1958, some three weeks before his death. It is the only papal statement on the pill, reaffirmed by Paul VI on June 23, 1964 as valid "as long as we do not perceive ourselves obliged in conscience to modify them". The words of Paul VI indicate that he does not consider the doctrine immutable, much less infallible. Fr. Cardegna suggests that with our increased knowledge of the difficulties involved in judging the pill, with five or six more years of reflection we would put the question differently. As proposed to Pius XII there was little else that he could do but condemn the pill as a direct sterilization when taken to prevent conception. Today the question is "much more nuanced in its physiological and psychological elements".

Ending his article Fr. Cardegna expresses the hope that the Council will reaffirm even more strongly her opposition to those contraceptive acts which destroy the natural structure of the marital act, but that it will refrain from pronouncing on the question of interventions in the generative system, allowing the theologians more time to reflect on the meaning of human sexuality and the concept of sterilization. His last sentence is a "hope, therefore, that the use of pills as proposed by Janssens will be allowed by the Church, at least as a probable view among theologians and permissible in practice". Those who are aware of the actual widespread use of the pill among the laity, "selling like hotcakes" even in a country as Catholic as the Philippines, will second the hope of Fr. Cardegna.

An informal summary of a study on birth-regulation made by a Laval University theologian-philosopher team working at the request of Archbishop Maurice Roy of Quebec cautiously suggests the liceity of direct human intervention to procure infecundity under certain circumstances. The supposition is that nature wishes infecundity at certain times, e.g., during pregnancy, during lactation, and therefore it is a good intended by nature. However, nature is not always sufficient to achieve this and man could intervene as an instrumental cause, to help nature achieve the end desired, which is the good of the child already born, "good" being understood as a total thing involving not just life but also the manner in which the child is raised and educated.

In assisting nature to achieve this goal man would be an instrumental cause and he would have to learn the process of nature so as to follow it as closely as possible, staying in line with nature as a truly instrumental cause. According to the study what has been condemned by papal teaching is infecundity directly willed by man acting as principal cause, for his own reasons—that is, without regard for the principal natural end of marriage, and the total welfare of the child. But papal statements do not touch the question of man's intervention as an instrumental cause of infecundity to procure what nature desires for the welfare of the child(ren) already existing.

This study would thus offer a reason for a further development in the doctrine of the Church in the light of new knowledge, without doing violence to principles or traditional doctrine. Nature-imitating techniques are something that were not available before and not completely understood before, and so, according to the study, were not included in the papal statements even those of Pius XII who did not touch on "the question of whether man can ever act directly as instrumental cause of infecundity", with nature as the principal cause.

In this brief space and with only an informal summary available in the diocesan paper of Kingston, Ontario for December 5, 1964, we do not pretend to do justice to this study. But it does show the openness of theologians to new approaches and the efforts being exerted by them to reexamine the moral doctrine of the Church on this most delicate issue. The complete text of the study was given to many bishops, including close advisors of Pope Paul VI.

ON THE EVE OF THE COUNCIL'S DECISION

On March 27th of this year, Paul VI addressed the study group meeting in Rome on the problems of population and birth control. He stressed the importance of the task to which they are committed: "how exceedingly delicate and full of responsibility is the mission we have entrusted to you." He declared it a work "whose requirements, by virtue of your high competence in moral and pastoral theology, medicine, economics, psychology, demography and sociology, you cannot minimize". He praises them for the work already done and encouraged them to continue "with tenacity". He acknowledges the need to let certain problems mature but he also asks "with insistence not to lose sight of the urgency of a situation which demands on the part of the Church and its supreme authority very clear guidance." He insists that "the conscience of men can not be left exposed to the uncertainties which too often today prevent conjugal life from developing according to the design of God." And beyond the problems of the spouses he notes the economic and social problems which the Church can not ignore. These lead their research to be carried out on the level of science

with its "better knowledge of physiological laws, of psychological and medical data, of demographic movements and social upheaval" while at the same time they must work on the level "of the higher light which shines on these facts, the data of faith and of the traditional teaching of the Church."

In this speech Paul VI summarized the question thus: "In what form and according to what norms must married couples fulfill, in the exercise of their mutual love, this service of life to which they are called by their vocation"? And the Christian answer "will always be inspired", he notes, "by a consciousness of the duties and the dignity of the conjugal state, in which the love of Christian married couples is ennobled by the grace of the sacrament (Matrimony) and by the greatness of the gift which is called life given to the child." Reminding them that the Church is the custodian of God's law, both natural and positive the Pontiff states that "the Church will not permit that the price of life be minimized nor the sublime originality of love, which is capable of surpassing itself in the reciprocal gift of the married couple and therefore in the even more disinterested gift of each to a new being."

The very composition of the group was noted by the pope as providing the widest base to give expression to the various trends of ideological thought. Through the group the countries which experienced grave difficulties on the sociological plane would make their voices heard, and "laymen and particularly married couples would have their qualified representatives in such a great undertaking." After a second reminder of the urgency of their task, which in this case he said was really charity, the pope asked them to apply themselves wholeheartedly to the task and to "understand the anguish of so many souls and work with diligence without being concerned with criticisms or difficulties."

In this speech of Paul VI we see the compassion and concern of the Holy Father and his keen awareness of the issues involved. We also see an example of democracy that is probably unique in the history of the Church's approach to a moral problem. It is good for all of us to be aware of this approach so

that we will be more easily disposed to accept the decision of the Council even though it might not accord with our own hopes and desires. The experts of the world have been consulted either directly or indirectly. Books, articles, reports, studies have been available to them. The press of the world has forced all kinds of unsolicited advice on them. But in the last analysis we must remember the closing words of Pope Paul VI, for they are not just any commission or group but they "are in the service of the Church and the vicar of Jesus Christ, who invokes upon your commission the enlightenment of the Most High." Having heard them, the Council will give its decision, guided by the Holy Spirit. As such, whatever it be, we will accept it and defend it as the true doctrine.

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