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The Population Problem: La Limitation Des Naissances

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charm. For priests themselves it offers a refreshing review of the theology of grace. . . . No brief summary can do justice to the skill with which difficult conceptions are put within the reach of the educated layman." Much credit is due to the translator, A. V. Little-dale, for a fluent and really excellent rendering which retains the accuracy and captures the grace of the original.

THE MEANING OF GRACE is something of a minor masterpiece in its genre. We hope that the success it meets with the English-reading public will encourage the publishers to give us the book's companion volume in the *Desclée TEXTES ET ETUDES* series, *THEOLOGIE DE L'EGLISE*, another remarkable compendium also written *propter occupatos*, by the distinguished and revered ecclesiologist of Fribourg.

C. G. AREVALO

THE POPULATION PROBLEM

LA LIMITATION DES NAISSANCES. By Stanislas de Lestapis, S.J. Paris: Spes, 1959.

Literature on the subject of marriage, the family and sexual relationships is now extensive, and reflects a growing awareness of current demographic problems. Spokesmen of Christian churches, Protestant and Roman Catholic alike, now speak of a population "crisis" and are actively trying to develop demographic policies which will be both doctrinally sound and realistic in a period of rapid population growth. In the face of the extraordinary multiplication of the peoples of China, India, Japan, Southeast Asia, Brazil, Egypt and South America, Roman Catholic demographers are becoming increasingly concerned with the need for a social program which will be practical as well as in conformity with traditional philosophy.

One of these demographers is Father de Lestapis of France, who has written of the threatened population crisis in those regions of the world already suffering from poor nutrition, lack of capital, and low labor productivity. In his book entitled *LA LIMITATION DES NAISSANCES*, Father de Lestapis turns his attention to the essential rights of men and women in matters of sex and rational procreation.

This book is divided into four major parts corresponding to what the author calls an effort at: (1) lucidity; (2) clear-sightedness; (3) reflection; and (4) action. Part I consists of five chapters listing the positions and arguments favorable to the planning of births in the world. The two chapters in Part II contain a critique of the

effects and implications of legalized contraception. Part III (Chapter 8-13) justifies the Catholic Church's stand regarding artificial methods of contraception. Chapters 14-16 in the fourth and last parts stress the role Catholics should assume in the world today as regards family planning and birth control.

The author apparently tries to reach two types of audience. Bowing to the non-Catholic, he dedicates his book to men of "good will who hesitate and who doubt." Turning his attention to the Catholic, he calls on them to be "a sign in the world", their position to be a "testimony, an appeal".

Concerning the population problem of under-developed regions of the world, Father de Lestapis exhorts the readers not to think that the only solution to this problem is contraception and birth limitation. He advocates the progressive mobilization of all educational forces within a country, to start with the family and emphasize the responsibilities of parents in order to develop a pro-creative sense that is not only reflective and responsible but also more altruistic. He calls on the community of nations to organize a world-wide development policy, with precise and well defined objectives and sees in the policy the hope of cutting the Gordian knot of insufficient resources in the face of an ever increasing population.

MERCEDES B. CONCEPCION

THE LOST CONSENSUS

WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS: CATHOLIC REFLECTIONS ON THE AMERICAN PROPOSITION. By John Courtney Murray, S.J. New York, Sheed and Ward, 1960.

There is a story that before the battle of Manila Bay in 1898 the seamen of the Spanish fleet were extremely confident of victory. The source of their confidence lay not in their seamanship or gunnery, but in the belief that at the first shot their American adversaries would mutiny and turn on each other in bitter internecine strife. They argued that the Americans, being of different religions and diverse national origins, must necessarily be divided into mutually hostile groups, each waiting for the opportunity to get at the throats of the others. The fate of the Spanish fleet illustrates the unreliability of this particular sociological prediction; yet the prediction itself, on the basis of European experience, was not an entirely unreasonable one. The building of a national society out of a diversity of ethnic and religious groups is not an easy or commonplace accomplishment,