

ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSIONSecond Meeting - Venice 21st - 28th September 1970.THE RELATIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN

1. There has been a notable change in recent years in Catholic writing on marriage. From a former emphasis on marriage as a contract, with primacy and secondary ends, there has been a broadening to include personalist values, to see marriage in terms of relationships of husband and wife, parents and children, with a wider opening to the community.
2. This reflects a general trend in Western experience and thinking linked with higher living standards, a lessening for so many people of the basic material pressures, and a consequent opportunity to be more consciously aware of the need for emotional fulfilment, with an emphasis on love rather than economic necessity or duty as a cohesive force within the family.
3. Concomitantly there has been the wider spread of literacy, of higher education for both men and women, the developing of psychology and sociology as sciences, the stimulus to biblical study within the Church through the acceptance of scientific methods, and the recognition, implemented in Vatican II, of the need for the Church to be continually updating if it is truthfully to fulfill a role for the world of today and tomorrow.
4. This updating involves an examination of what has been accepted as valid by the community in the past with attempts to disentangle the essentials from the accidentals, and to present the essentials afresh in terms of contemporary knowledge, experience and needs.
5. In the community of the Roman Catholic Church, which inherits an inbuilt reverence for what has been handed on from the past, this updating process necessarily involves tension.
6. Vatican II, which canalised and speeded the updating process, is still being assimilated by the community. Its formulations were proposed differently from previous Councils, with no dogmatic definitions, and this in itself enables the community to take its time, with rates of response varying in different parts according to the make-up of the local churches and their leaders. In general, dioceses with a homogeneous and settled community appear to be slow and more sensitive to the claims of "status quo", dioceses with more varied groupings and with more mobile populations appear to be fast, more easily accepting change. In both types of dioceses, there are likely to be many members frustrated by the local pace, too fast for some, too slow for others. Some tolerate their frustration and hope for happier times to come. Others join with those of similar thoughts and feelings and create reactionary or progressive groups.
7. A similar sort of polarisation, with groupings at the extremes, seems to be taking place among the members of the Church as a whole. The in-between majority vary in their acceptance of new modes, with varying degrees of conviction founded on reasoning and temperament. Many have accommodated themselves to the continuing efforts to make all things new. Many think and feel that the Church and themselves have had as much change as can be borne and would like the whole process to halt, at least for a breathing space.

8. The Roman Catholic Church at present cannot be as simply presented as it could have been before Vatican II, as a community with an easily checked code of faith and morals accepted by all who profess to be Roman Catholics. The easy check was authoritative pronouncement by the magisterium. Theologians might distinguish the different weightings to be given to pronouncements according to their degree of authority. In practice for members of the Church what was to be believed, what was to be done or not done, was easily checked by reference to the teaching of the priest in sermons or in confession, in agreement with that of the bishop, in turn in agreement with that of the Holy See, through its confirming of Councils, its instructions and answers from the Roman Congregations, encyclical letters and papal allocutions. In practical moral questions the priests and the bishops depended on the opinions of "reputable" moral theologians, accepted as safe guides where the magisterium had not pronounced or had not done so in detail.

9. Members of the Church could be confident, apart from minor variations or exaggerations, that what they heard in sermons or in the confessional, or read in journals or books with a bishop's "imprimatur", was in accordance with the official teaching of the Church.

10. Probably most Roman Catholics hold today that the "easy check" still operates and that it is a necessary and essential check. But the magisterium and its roles, and its methods of fulfilling these, are under scrutiny in the Church. There is discussion on the relationship between authority and reason on moral issues, especially on those not dealt with in revelation, and which have not been the subject of an infallible declaration by the Church (2). This discussion has been intensified by the encyclical "Humanae Vitae" of 1968, but this should not be seen apart from the general process of renewal and updating. The distinctions, long familiar to theologians, with regard to the magisterium's authoritative pronouncements, are now being applied by them with more confidence and less deference. They are also now known and applied by many lay people.

11. The situation today is different, at least in the West, from what it was in pre-Conciliar days. The uniformity of teaching has lessened. Opinions are debated in journals and newspapers, on radio and television, which previously would have been judged "temerarious" and, in an old-world but telling phrase "offensive to pious ears". Lightweight have been mixed with serious contributions. Members of the Church, lay and clerical, hear many voices where before they heard one. Those faced with the need to make a serious decision in a matter of morality may have the unaccustomed and for some the traumatic choice of differing-opinions, from which they may be told to make their own prayerful decision before God. A difficulty which many express in this sort of situation is that they recognise and mistrust their own self-interest, and want to be helped to test this against the gospel of Christ, as interpreted by the Church. In sexual relationships, where emotions and personal needs of self and other are acutely involved, the difficulty of making such a prayerful and lonely decision can be so intolerable for some that it is avoided.

12. The teaching of religion is a crucial area for the Roman Catholic Church if the renewal movement symbolised by Vatican II is to be assimilated by the community.

(2) cf. Richard A. Mc Cormick S.J.: Theological Studies. December 1969. Notes on Moral Theology (Summarised in Appendix).

Already before Vatican II there had been a renewal and updating of catechetics centred mainly on the Lumen Vitae Institute in Belgium. Since the Council this has been spreading through most of the Church. Reactions among teachers have been divided, ranging from enthusiastic acceptance of any new theory to automatic mistrust of any change in traditional content and methods. The reaction of the main body seems to be grateful acceptance and desire to play an effective part in this effort to enable the young to make their own the truths at present perceived by the Church. Some older teachers, and not so old teachers, express hesitations, judging that the needs ~~to be told~~ of their students are not being met. "They need to be told more clearly what is true and not true, what is wrong and right. Already they are subject to so much unchristian influence from T.V., magazines etc. Once they leave school they are on their own". The changing from a more definitive type of teaching is regretted by these teachers, and by many parents. This is another area of tension between old and new modes.

13. In many places it is linked with yet another change to which the Church is having to accommodate. For many generations, especially in the big cities religious, particularly women religious, have played an important role in the education of Roman Catholic children. A decrease in vocations to the religious life, and a preference by young religious for forms of service such as social work, is resulting in the lessening of a very potent influence, especially in the education of girls. Experts in religio-sociology may assess the effects of this, as well as the reasons for the drop in vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The latter has been attributed to a variety of causes e.g. increase of appreciation of marriage, a lessening of appreciation of celibacy, the wider opportunities of lay apostolate, the revolt against authority. Whatever the causes it seems safe to predict that a major lessening of the number of celibate Christians in the Church in general, and in the educational field in particular, will affect attitudes towards and understanding of sexuality in the Roman Catholic Church.

14. One last change is worthy of mention. It is common now in England, and this may be true in other countries, for priests to remark on the increase in recent years of the number and frequency of communions, and the decrease in the number and frequency of confessions. The easing of fasting laws, the celebration of Mass at more convenient times, the passing of the older tradition of not communicating without confession, all these help to explain the increase in communions. The lesser frequency of confession, especially among younger people is harder to explain. Penitents' dissatisfaction with their own routine and impersonal confessions, and with similar routine and impersonal attitudes on the part of confessors may be a cause. More communal and liturgical rites of penance may be part of a needed renewal. Of immediate interest is the fact that in the area of morality the reception of the sacrament of Penance has been for Catholics a major opportunity for examining, testing, and forming conscience in accordance with the gospel of Christ and the community's understanding of it. This particular opportunity is now considerably less used by younger Roman Catholics.

15. I have tried so far to indicate in a general way some attitudes and feelings within the Roman Catholic Church as it experiences a concentrated dose of renewal. I have tried to be conscious of the Church as a whole, but am inevitably more conscious of the Church of the West, of the English speaking part of that, of England, and perhaps even of a section of England.

And this is one of the present facts of life to be faced by the Roman Catholic brought up in the pre-Conciliar Church. We were grateful for and proud of the Church's universality as then experienced. It showed itself especially in the acceptance of the magisterium as a positive and negative teaching force in faith and morals. The individual the community took this as a major test of Catholicity. Now we are learning, or relearning that an anterior test is the commitment to Christ in baptism, the seeking of Christ individually and in community, the realisation as individuals and in community that we are brethen in Christ and sons and daughters of God. We are learning, or relearning, that we have coresponsibility in the Church. Our perspective of the magisterium must be affected by this, and the perspective of those among us who exercise the magisterium.

16. This different perspective must be a major factor making possible discussions like the present. It would have been easier a few years ago to give an exposition of Roman Catholic teaching on topical moral issues. In the most part this could have been identified from authentic documents and interpreted from "approved authors" One knew almost precisely where one stood, and where ones fellow Roman Catholics stood whether English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish or any other language-speaking. To-day, this is not so. There are still the authentic documents, but as can be seen with Humanae Vitae, they do not make their way as guides for many members of the Church on authenticity alone. There are many authors with great reputation and following, but if the test is automatic acceptance of authentic documents, few could be called "approved", and many would have to be listed among the "adversaries", whose views were summarised and dismissed in a few sentences in the old manuals of theology.

17. Many of us are uncertain about the implications and practical applications of some of the new approaches. We appreciate the emphasis on our individual response to Christ, but feel the difficulty as individuals in discerning the validity of this response in isolation from the Christian community, not least in moral and sexual relationships. Having recognised as individuals the need of the test of Christian community experience and judgment, we see the wider difficulty of a totality of communities of all nations in discerning its total experience and judgments, and making its communal response to Christ. This brings us to a renewed realisation of the individual's and the community's need for the magisterium and for the assistance of the Spirit, while acknowledging the vital need for a continuing updating of understanding both of the functioning of the magisterium and of the assistance of the Spirit.

18. This lessening of assuredness and the emergence of differing views may seem to bring the Roman Catholic Church or at least many Roman Catholics, closer to some Anglican positions. Roman Catholics ^{more} ~~more~~ intelligible to Anglicans, and vice versa, and discussion ^{more} ~~more~~ profitable.

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19 For this paper I was asked to deal with some severely topical and practical issues connected with the relationship of men and women in the hope that these might help in identifying common ground and differences between our Churches. As practical issues, with which we are concerned in the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, I would like to take (1) Faithfulness in Marriage, (2) Responsible Parenthood, (3) Sexual Relationships before and apart from Marriage, (4) Pastoral Care for men and women in difficulties arising from personal relationships, (5) Education in Sexuality as an ongoing process.

(1) Faithfulness in Marriage.

20. Vatican II in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) devotes a chapter to Marriage and the Family. A most significant feature is the avoidance of the familiar legal and abstract terms such as "contract" and "primary and secondary ends". "Nature" is used but in a remarkably restricted way compared with former Church documents on this subject. In the first paragraph marriage and the family are described as "this community of love" (47). The love between the married couple, and the married relationship seen as a covenant, are central themes of the Council statement.
21. Vatican II strongly affirms the belief of the Church in faithfulness as an essential quality of Christian marriage. Marriage is a relationship rooted in consent. This consent is irrevocable, once the bond is in being it does not depend on human decision. The mutual gift itself imposes total fidelity. As God was present in the old covenant of love and fidelity, so Christ is present in the lives of married Christians through the sacrament of matrimony.
22. He abides with them, as he does with the Church, so that through their mutual self bestowal they may live in perpetual fidelity. Through their covenant of married love they give each other mutual help and service. God gives their married love special gifts of healing and perfecting. This love remains steadfast in bright days and dark, sealed by mutual faithfulness and blessed by Christ's sacrament. It will never be profaned by adultery or divorce.
23. In the Council Statement there is a constant emphasis on the continuing covenanted relationship of married love, the ongoing sacramental living of marriage, the dynamism which comes from the oneness of the married couple, helping and serving and healing and perfecting each other. The faithfulness of marriage is bound up with all this, depends upon it and flows from it.
24. In the opening sentences on marriage, the Council commends "the various ways in which men today find help in fostering this community of love and perfecting its life" (47). With the Church so committed to faithfulness as central to Christian marriage, and at a time when the span of lives and of marriages are longer, there is an obvious incentive to look to these various ways, and especially to psychology in the hope that we may further identify factors which hold a marriage together, factors which make it vulnerable, or which may prevent it from being even recognisable as marriage.

- 25 Dr. J. Dominian, a Roman Catholic psychiatrist well known for his studies of marital interpersonal relationships, describes the Council's chapter on marriage as "paving the way for a break through in the understanding of marriage". He considers that the essence of marriage is to be found in its relational characteristic. "Christian marriage... is based on a series of relationships of love which in a chronological order are those of the spouses, the spouses and the children, the children among themselves, and the whole family with other members of society. It is upon the physical, psychological and social integrity of these relationships, participating in the sacramental life of grace, that the essence of marriage ultimately rests" (3).
26. What holds a marriage together is "the matching of mutual needs which change with the various phases of marriage and have to be recognised and met in an intimate relationship... Marriage seen as a relationship recognises that allowance must be made for change and growth, which are essential features of the human personality and which can only be dealt through a flexible and dynamic inter-personal relationship".
- 27 "Here we are at the very core of the challenge of an inter-personal relationship of love in which the words healing and perfecting used by Vatican II can be interpreted. Since no upbringing is perfect or complete marriage provides the spouses with a second opportunity for the "healing" of wounds left behind from childhood and the opportunity of further and new growth in personal maturity so that the word "perfecting" comes to mean offering oneself to one's spouse as a source for his or her growth. In this way, spouses provide the means of restoring or promoting in each other the richness of the image of God on which they were created and which they are striving to achieve.
28. Where the marriage relationship is not governed by rigid social rules which bypass emotional considerations an essential characteristic is the ability to get close, to become one with another person while retaining one's separateness, one's unique identity. Such closeness requires a basic "trust" that the spouse will not take over so that one loses the freedom of being one's self. Through freedom and self-esteem, perhaps gradually acquired, the donation of self to spouse "becomes an expression of choice rather than compulsive compliance out of fear, duty or the dis-integrating anxiety of aloneness which pushes people into closeness out of urgent necessity followed by a rapid withdrawal through the fear of being overwhelmed".
- 29 "Another constant human need is the desire to feel accepted, of which the opposite characteristic is the fear of rejection. . . . We cannot accept ourselves until we have first been accepted by another person and it falls to the husband or wife to provide such loving acceptance for their partner for the first time when it never existed before, and to deepen it day by day through generous mutual acceptance whatever its initial level has been"

(3) J. Dominian: Marriage an Interpersonal Relationship. CMAC Bulletin 1969 Vol 9 no.4. The quotations which follow are from this paper, given at the CMAC Annual Conference, September 1969.

30. "All this is intimately connected with an awareness of feelings and the ability to express and share them. Marriage is no longer likely to function merely as an encounter of bodies and minds which is implicit in so much of the philosophy of our Western Society. Whole persons have bodies, minds and feelings and in my view feelings are of the greatest importance, a factor which naturally did not have much place in a legal and canonical view of marriage"....
31. "All this requires a relationship which can promote and sustain a mutual personal growth through the facilitating availability of the spouses. The presence of such a relationship provides a continuous safeguard that, however often they will find themselves in disagreement, in experiences of mutual or unilateral rejection, in conflict, misunderstanding and anger, they can ultimately feel recognised wanted, appreciated and loved by each other. Without such feelings forming a minimum component of any marriage relationship, marriage cannot truly exist whatever the external appearances may suggest.
32. "Such positive feelings are repeatedly reinforced by the sexual act described in the declaration in Vatican II as "noble and worthy promoting that mutual self giving by which spouses enrich each other".
33. "Thus fidelity is not primarily a matter of avoiding sexual intercourse outside marriage, it is concerned rather with the capacity and obligation to sustain reliable, satisfying, unifying, growth-promoting relationships which render extra-marital intercourse irrelevant and superfluous.
34. "Having established and sustained a mutually satisfying relationship, sexual intercourse leads to procreation on the basis that the parents, secure in their personal relationship, can offer to the child the unconditional care and attention it requires.
35. "This availability of the spouses to each other and to their children and of the whole family to the community, appears to me to be the channel of sacramental grace, human love caught up in the divine. The exacting gifts of healing and perfecting (or in my terms of healing and growth promoting) which Vatican II refers to, are to be found in the personal encounter which established and deepens bonds of love.
36. "Marriage offers an increasing opportunity to do just this, to love the most precious neighbour we each possess our husband or wife, and through this to respond and participate a little in the gift of God offering Himself to us which is the meaning of grace. Marriage has been called the "poor relation" amongst the sacraments, it may yet become the paradigm by which we can understand all the others as the mysterious encounters of love between man and God."

37. I think we can see in these quotations a tribute to the liberating work of the Council, especially in its avoidance of a restrictedly juridical and institutional perspective of marriage. For Western Christians especially the Council's summary of the Church's belief corresponds more closely to their ideals of marriage, ideals admittedly not always realised. Dr. Dominian's interpretation of the Council's teaching in psychological terms raises questions which have to be put if we are realistically to probe the implications of the personalist and relational emphasis, especially ~~for~~ faithfulness as a quality of Christian marriage.
38. Is it realistic to presume that every one who comes to Church to be married understands what Christian marriage is now seen to involve? What practical obligations have we got to enable young people to prepare themselves for Christian marriage, understood in this wider and deeper way? What practical helps should be available for married people to enable them to progress in their mutual service, and their healing and perfecting of each other, as spouses and as parents? What pastoral care should the Christian community provide for those who fail, temporarily or permanently, in their covenanted relationship? If marriage is now seen as more than a contract, for validity requiring principally free consent and a capacity for sexual intercourse, what is the state of those who fulfilled those requirements, but who have demonstrated that they have no capacity for the making and fostering of the relationships essential for marriage? I would like to look at this last question now, and at the others later in the paper.
39. Priests, psychiatrists, and marriage counsellors, who try to help people whose marriages have failed sometimes meet the couple for whom marriage never seems to have begun. Consent was lawfully given, intercourse took place once or a few times, and then the man or the woman left and never returned. Until recently many canon lawyers would initially react by saying that nothing could be done to free the couple. The bond had been lawfully made, was confirmed by intercourse and the marriage was therefore indissoluble. It might however be possible to prove that there was such a gross lack of understanding about marriage that the contract could not validly be made, or there might have been a condition made by one or both parties which was contrary to the ends of marriage, or there might have been unjust fear, or insanity. If any of these factors could be proved then following the ordinary laws of contract the marriage would be found null. But if the parties were free to marry, understood about marriage, made no conditions, were not under undue pressure, and not insane, nothing could be done. Lately there has been a move to take a wider view. Church courts are beginning to recognise that while people may be intellectually capable of understanding the contract, and willing to make it, and physically capable of sexual intercourse, they may yet be psychologically incapable of making the relationship.
40. Much greater difficulties of principle and proof arise in cases where the initial relationship is satisfactorily made, but there later appears to be incapacity to sustain it, or to make a later relationship needed in the marriage e.g. parenthood.

Dr. Dominian argues that "if Christian marriage is to be considered a life-long union, as the scriptures insist is the appropriate model for man, then clearly men and women must carry within themselves the minimum human characteristics, realized, or in potential, which will meet each other's needs throughout the duration of marriage. The life-long ~~views~~ taken at the commencement of the union commit each partner to fulfil the minimum requirements of the relationship over a number of years, meeting personal and interpersonal needs which evolve and alter." He maintains that "while marriage truly begins at this initial moment of commitment, it is not actually realized until the second phase when the manifested relationship confirms or denies the promises rendered at that initial moment. Such a conceptual development of marriage would incorporate the present view which accepts that marriage is made by the exchange of consent but would extend the Church's ability to declare certain marriages as null and void at a later stage if the minimum requirements are not fulfilled." 4

41. It would be more accurate to say that this would involve an extension of the understanding of matrimonium ratum et non consummatum, and of the Church's ability to declare not nullity but divorce for a marriage truly begun but not consummated.
42. The same argument as Dr. Dominian's has been put in a biblical context by R.W. Catterall: "It would seem that the purely legal concept of consummation falls far short of the biblical conception. Are we then justified in juggling out one particular act - the initial act of intercourse - and saying: "Now your marriage reflects the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church and is in consequence absolutely indissoluble? I suggest that on exegetical grounds we must answer "No" and that the "one flesh" of Genesis 2:24 refers to the union of man and wife as a whole - the "human reality, the essence of which we must try to clarify in its historical context". It is the human reality as a whole that reflects (or perhaps fails to reflect) the union of Christ and the Church" 5 ("Divorce and Remarriage" in The Clergy Review, November 1967, p. 890).
43. Recently Morris West, a Roman Catholic, and Robert Francis, an Anglican, have taken another line 6 They urge that there should be a revival of the "Tolerances" to be found in the Eastern and parts of the early Western Church, whereby relying on Matthew 19:3-9, divorce and remarriage are accepted because of adultery. Personally I hope that our discussion may look more directly at the implications for "faithfulness" of the wider relational understanding of marriage affirmed by Vatican II.

4 J. Dominian: The Nature of Marriage in Future of Christian Marriage edited John Marshall. London 1969 page 27.

5 R.W. Catterall, Divorce and Remarriage: Clergy Review, Nov. 1967.

6 M. West & R. Francis, Scandal in the Assembly, London 1970.

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44. Responsible Parenthood

Vatican II devoted a fair part of the chapter on Marriage and the Family to responsible parenthood. The chapter is obviously the result of keen debate and this part of it shows effort to balance the old and the new understandings. Although the statement as a whole is very personalist in tone, here it uses some of the older language. "Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained towards the begetting and education of children". (50). One is prepared for the term "primary end", but in an inspired phrase children are then called "the supreme gift of marriage".

45. The same careful stepping between old and new formulations occurs soon afterwards. "While not making the other purposes of marriage of less account (non posthabitis ceteris matrimonii finibus), the true practice of conjugal love, and the whole meaning of family life which results from it, have this aim: that the couple be ready with stout hearts to cooperate with the love of Creator and Saviour, who through them will enlarge and enrich His own family day by day." (50).

46. Parents are cooperators with the love of God the Creator and the interpreters of that love. They must consider their own welfare, and that of children already born, or yet to be born. They must consider the material and spiritual conditions of the times, and of their state of life. They must consider the wider interests of the family group, of society, of the Church.

47. It is parents who must make this judgment in the sight of God. They must not act arbitrarily, but according to a conscience "conformed to divine law, and should be submissive to the Church's teaching office, which authentically interprets that law in the light of the gospel". (50).

48. The difficulties are recognised of those who at least temporarily should restrict the size of their families. "The faithful exercise of love and the full intimacy of their lives are hard to maintain". "Where the intimacy of married life is broken off, it is not rare for its faithfulness to be imperilled and its quality of fruitfulness ruined. For them the upbringing of children and the courage to accept new ones are both endangered." (51).

49. Having recognised the difficulties the Council reminds that "a true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to the fostering of authentic conjugal love." "The moral aspect of any procedure does not depend solely on sincere intentions or on an evaluation of motives. It must be determined by objective standards. These, based on the nature of the human person and his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love. Such a goal cannot be achieved unless the virtue of conjugal chastity is sincerely practiced. Relying on these principles, sons of the Church may not undertake methods of regulating procreation which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church in its unfolding of the divine law."

50. "Everyone should be persuaded that human life and the task of transmitting it are not realities bound up with this world alone. Hence they cannot be measured or perceived only in terms of it, but always have a bearing on the eternal destiny of men" (51).

51. In a footnote to this section the Council emphasized that it did not propose concrete solutions to "certain questions" These had been handed over at the command of the Pope to a Commission "in order that, after it fulfills its function, the Supreme Pontiff may pass judgment".

B. Humanae Vitae.

52. In July 1968, Pope Paul gave his judgment, in the encyclical Humanae Vitae. Responsible parenthood is required by married love, but the means must correspond with God's will. The natural law is interpreted by the Church's constant doctrine and this requires there may be no separation of the unitive and procreative significances of the marriage act. Deliberately to separate them by impairing the capacity to transmit life would frustrate God's design and contradict his will. Man's dominion is limited. In this area he is not master but minister of the Creator's design. Periodic continence respects nature and does not obstruct the generative process. The truth of the Church's teaching is underlined by consequences to be feared from contraceptive methods: opening the way to marital infidelity and general lowering of moral standards especially for the young, lessening of respect and consideration by husbands for wives, the imposing of these methods on couples by governments. (7)

53. Reactions to Humanae Vitae

Many received the encyclical with relief that the question had been settled. Modifying emphases were given by several episcopal conferences. Theologians have engaged in discussion of the function and exercise of the magisterium in moral matters. The Holy Father described the encyclical as involving a great work of education and asked the bishops to see this as their greatest responsibility. The response has not yet been notable. A serious difficulty, implied in the encyclical, but not sufficiently faced up to pastorally, has been the utter inadequacy of practical help for the majority of married people on the use of the infertile period, the one means of birth regulation proposed as being in accordance with natural and divine law. Doctors & nurses were asked to prepare themselves to advise married couples, but the majority of them have only rudimentary and out of date knowledge. Understandably they are reluctant to advise a method in which they are not competent, and have little confidence. The encyclical stresses that presuppositions for the practice of periodic continence are an acceptance of Christian family values and self-discipline. Even the best teaching of the most up to date technique of determining the infertile periods will not provide these. The teaching must be incorporated in a much wider and deeper educational effort to include the rich, the middle-classes, the educated as well as the poor and the illiterate.

(7) A precis of Humanae Vitae is given as an Appendix.

There have been responses to this call of the Pope, but they have been few and scattered. For the most part they are continuations of work already started before Humanae Vitae, initiated by lay people and so far with little or no moral or financial support from Church leaders.⁽⁸⁾ Many bishops were understandably preoccupied with efforts to keep unity among their priests and people, and to contain the reaction both reasoned and emotional of those who had expected a difference in official teaching.

55. The general lack of any concerted pastoral action, including the provision of sound and easily available practical help on periodic continence, makes the priest's role difficult as preacher, counsellor or confessor. Even with the most sincere adherence to the encyclical he is at a loss when married people turn to him for help in accordance with the encyclical's teaching, and he knows that at the practical level no help is available in the area. In these circumstances, he must rely much more on the encyclical's insistence on the mercy of the Redeemer, the recourse to prayer, to the Eucharist and Penance. With those who are uneasy with, or cannot accept the detailed teaching of the encyclical, he does his best to avoid comment or discussion.

56. It would be misleading to attempt to make a simple assessment of the situation in the Roman Catholic Church at present with regard to control of birth. One can say that the confrontation of the Church with this question has precipitated debate at theoretical and practical levels which ranges through the whole area of moral behaviour.

3. Intercourse apart from Marriage

A starting point can be that of the non-believing humanist. Sexual pleasure, like all bodily pleasure is of itself good. It is the quality of sexual experience that counts. The main qualitative difference is between heterosexual relationships and substitutes and deviations, such as masturbation and homosexuality. These latter are not to be condemned unless injurious to others, but qualitatively heterosexuality is to be preferred. Sexual pleasure is well used when it enhances the quality of life and develops personality, when it is reciprocal, honest and loving. It is badly used when it exploits others and degrades personality, when it is egocentric or seductive. A loving sexual relationship brings physical satisfaction and renewal emotional stimulation and fulfilment, mutual discovery and development, comfort and reassurance and the strengthening of trust. Procreation is a supplementary and independent component. Marriage involves a new element, commitment to an enduring relationship. It requires maturity, a developed capacity for generous and reciprocal love, an already developed personal bond between the couple for the sake of children. Marriage should be self-sustaining and complete, but in some cases trust could accept extra-marital sexual relationships. An affectionless marriage is dead, and each should be free to seek other fulfilling relationships.

(8) Among the better known examples of integrated informational and educational work are the Serena Movement in Canada (634, 20th Avenue, Lachine 65, Montreal 32). The Natural Family Planning Movement in U.S.A. (12 Montclair Drive, West Hartford, Conn.)

The Catholic Marriage Advisory Council (Medical Section) in Great Britain and Ireland (15, Lansdowne Road, London W 11).

57. Much of this can be found in Gaudium et Spes and more in J. Dominian's interpretation of it - the acceptance of sexuality as good, the components of the honest and reciprocal, healing and perfecting relationship, the enduring commitment of marriage and the service of children. The difference is the Church's belief that sexual relationship with intercourse is only valid and true within marriage. This stems from the belief about marriage itself: that it is an exclusive but comprehensive covenant founded by God the Creator, through which Christ the Saviour comes into the lives of married Christians, so that through their giving of themselves to each other, they may love each other faithfully, and be helped and strengthened as parents, and show and share Christ's saving love in the community. For the Church the full meaning of the sexual relationship is here, and only partially to be found in terms of personality development, fulfilment, mutual discovery, comfort and reassurance. The sexual union expresses and strengthens the commitment of the covenant, it does not prepare for it. The procreative function is essentially part of the covenant, which is not for the individual but for the spouses, not just for spouses but for the family, not just for the family but for the community.

58. The sexual relationship is truly unitive in the covenant sense when it involves the giving of oneself as a sexual being to the other with all one's potential as life-giver, and the receiving of the other with all the other's life-giving potential, realised or yet to be realised. It is truly unitive in the covenant sense when it looks outward to the community, when it accepts, and is accepted by the community through the affirmation of commitment.

59. If "unitive" is to be understood in this sense then it must include "procreative". This gives "procreative" a wider meaning than intention here and now to have a child, or even openness to life-giving in any particular act of intercourse. But this wider meaning seems to correspond to the experience of married people for whom intercourse expresses not only fulfilment of personal needs but loving commitment to each other as husband and wife, and to each other as life-givers through love, to children born or yet to be born. In this sense the unitive and procreative significances of intercourse are not separable. They are one. Unitive is the comprehensive description, which includes procreative. The procreative component will only rarely be explicitly expressed in actual life-giving. If this is a valid expression of Christian belief it points to why intercourse apart from marriage fails in its unitive significance, and thereby fails to correspond to the truth we try to perceive from Christ in the Church.

The Centre de Liaison des Etudes et Recherches in France, (C.L.E.R., 39 rue du Cherche Midi, Paris 6). This last group sponsored in 1963 the most effective programme of all, Action Familiale in Mauritius (Rose-Hill, Mauritius, Indian Ocean).

Here the work of birth regulation (through the basal temperature method as with the other named groups) is integrated into a comprehensive programme of education in sexuality and family life. A few doctors work with several hundred educators, themselves married people, who regularly and systematically instruct couples in their homes until they are competent in the method. Although inspired and strongly supported by the local Roman Catholic Church many of the educators are Hindu and Muslim, as are 40% of the clients. A large proportion of the client couples cannot read or write. The movement is supported financially partly by Government as is the local Family Planning Association which offers the pill, coil and condom.

60. The community dimension of sexual relationship has been underlined recently by C.J. Snoek who points to a weakness, which he calls unilateralism, in the personalist view. "It sees only the 'I' and the 'thou'. And yet for sexuality to be fully human and salvific it is not enough for the 'I' to be torn from his solitude by a 'thou'; the two then have to have the courage to insert themselves into the history of their people, dedicating themselves to its future in acceptance of the fact that they will become its past. In the final analysis, this social dimension of sexuality contains a reference to the Absolute. And it is important to note that this appeal to the ~~social~~ legal aspect is not a fortuitous element, but constitutive of sexuality itself"(9).

61. In different sorts of sexual relationships apart from marriage, extra-marital, amarital, premarital, we can distinguish degrees of approximation to the covenant unity which is the Christian norm. The extramarital is furthest away, one or both partners having already made a commitment which objectively and subjectively stands in the way of a full giving of themselves. Amarital situations, where the couple could in theory marry, vary. Ones where the sexual relationship is implicitly or explicitly used as a means of developing or fulfilling personality, while acknowledging the incapacity as yet or ever for the full unitive commitment, can be honest and mutual, but in the covenant sense are only 'a kind of loving'. Sometimes a couple desire marriage but are hindered by circumstances like family opposition or the prospect of losing position or money, which one or other is unable or unwilling to overcome. They settle for a less committed sexual relationship as a substitute for marriage. Closer to marriage seems the sexual relationship of those who openly cohabit 'as man and wife', sometimes seeking or accepting parenthood. Their reason for not marrying may be the reluctance of one or other for an enduring commitment, but by their way of life they declare an at least limited commitment. In some cases, couples claim an enduring commitment, but maintain that their lives are sufficient witness to this without need for an authenticating certificate from the community. Canonists would probably hold that if they are non-Christians these last couples are not in an amarital situation but are truly married. The situation closest to marriage is the premarital one of engaged couples. The full personal commitment before and with the community has been decided upon, though not yet made. Their sexual intercourse looks towards and presumes the covenant, but it is as yet uncovenanted and cannot claim to express the full covenant unity.

62. Unity in this full covenant sense appears to be the test for the Christian in discerning the validity of the sexual relationship. This will not be a convincing test for the non-believing humanist, or for those who find a satisfactory test in the couple's own judgment whether their relationship is the best of which they are capable, as long as the relationship does not harm themselves or others. However our present task is not to convince those who do not know the gospel, but to seek as Christians to identify the good news of the gospel to which we can and must bear witness.

(9) C.J. Snoek C.S.S.R. Marriage and the Institutionalization of Sexual Relations: Concilium, May 1970.

63.

4. Pastoral Care

(i) The pastoral care to be considered first is for those in need through difficulties in personal relationships, particularly in marriage. People with this need may have sufficient resources within themselves or within the marriage to cope successfully with the difficulties. They may have to turn to others, priests, social workers, psychiatrists, marriage counsellors. It is essential that those to whom they turn can be trusted, as emotionally secure persons, and as competent to help through the continual developing of the necessary skills.

64.

This area of human need is one where the emotions are acutely involved. A highly intellectual person can often be blind to the causes of his personal difficulty. A simple and uneducated person can have deep insight. The one who counsels helps according to the needs, which may be complex and not readily discoverable. The counsellor must be able to listen (an essential but difficult skill) to accept the person in need, to appreciate the value of ventilation of feelings, to use true and avoid false expressions of reassurance and confidence, to respect the person's right to self-determination, to engage in the reflective discussion which is the heart of counselling, to work with the person in tentative and ongoing diagnoses. Pastoral care in helping people with these needs has to be seen in wider terms than priestly work. Some priests may have the basic personality qualities required, but need training. Priests usually do not have the time needed to establish the relationship within which this work is done. There is a temptation to take a shortcut, to make a quick diagnosis on the immediately presented symptoms, and to prescribe accordingly. People in need do turn with confidence to priests. Usually the wisest course is to build on this to encourage them to obtain more lasting and effective help.

65.

There is a great need in the Christian Community for the clergy to be sensitive to those emotional needs, which seem to be more and more felt in our present society. This is an obvious area of cooperation between our Churches in making joint local opportunities for learning from the usually limited sources of professional knowledge and experience within the community. In Great Britain and Ireland the Roman Catholics have since 1946 developed their own marital counselling service, though not in isolation from similar services in the general community. We believe there has been a benefit of confidence as the service is offered and accepted against a common background of faith, while keeping respect for the person's responsibility for determining his own conduct.

66. (ii) A pastoral care of common concern between us is the promoting of the faith and hope and love of the invalidly married. In a careful article (10), Fr. Bernhard Häring, starts from the standpoint of current Catholic teaching and seeks pastoral solutions within possibilities that already exist. In his opinion well intentioned Christians who are truly sorry for their sins and have done their best to maintain order in their lives should be readmitted to the sacraments. This readmission should be a demonstration of St. Augustine's principle that "God does not ask the impossible, but through his commandments admonishes us to do what we are able to do, and for the rest, to pray".

67. Before readmission there should be a differentiation between various situations. Where it is canonically possible to regularise a marriage this should be desired by the couple. If the legal process is made unreasonably difficult, or is unduly prolonged, absolution should not be ~~be~~ delayed. Where the couple are unable to prove conclusively that a first marriage was invalid, but they are for good reasons convinced that it was invalid, they should be absolved. In cases where their reasons are inadequate or doubtful absolution may sometimes be given, for no good but harm might come from an attempt to disturb their conviction. "Where it is a question of sacramentally proclaiming God's mercy and not of sanctioning a second marriage, the important consideration is an acceptable disposition, by which we mean sorrow for past sins and an earnest resolve to do God's will in the future." If scandal had been caused by the collapse of the first marriage care must be taken to avoid further scandal when determining the circumstances in which one of the former partners may be admitted to communion.

68. Education in Sexuality as an ongoing Process

The four issues already considered all stress the need for this fifth one. Education is taken as the learning process in its widest sense, used in different ways according to the immediate needs. Sexuality is also taken in its widest sense, the fact that we are sexual beings, and the different ways in which we respond to this fact.

69. The Church, especially where it is involved in or influences the education of children has a task of encouraging the appreciation of sexuality as a "good" of God's creation. Parents and teachers often need help themselves to appreciate this "good", and to convey it to children. It is of little use to affirm a parental right and duty of "sex education" within the home, if no help is given to those who may lack what they consider a usable vocabulary. True the most important part of their educational role is in their example and showing of love, but some talking is also needed. Teachers can evade the school's complementary role with that of the home, by hiding behind parental rights and duties. The practical solution is for school and home to combine, and for teachers to provide help for the parents, and to enlist the parent's understanding and cooperation in the school's continuing work in sexual education and personal relationships. Not all teachers are ready and willing for more direct work in this educational field, and some selection and training for it is obviously desirable.

(10) Bernhard Häring, C.S.S.R. Pastoral Work Among the Divorced and Invalidly Married: Concilium, May 1970.

69. Here again is an obvious area for valuable cooperation between Churches. In London a Consultative Group of the London Council of Churches is very usefully working on this issue.

70. The discussion of personal relationships in school and post-school groups soon moves into the area of sexual morality and Christian teaching. There is a pressing need here to examine and seek to integrate the sources of Christian morality. There is a danger in using the community experience, when it suits, to underline the Christian belief, and in putting it out of court when it seems to oppose. This is an area of education where the Churches have a duty to help the educators by accepting the difficulties and perhaps the danger. Theologians and philosophers need encouragement to work towards contemporary "Responses" to a perennial dilemma.

71. An important educational opportunity is work with engaged couples, both for clergy and Christian married layfolk. For the most part they respond to the opportunity if it is made practical and enables themselves to play an active role. Clergy sometimes fail by a too routine approach to these pastoral occasions. Again here is an area for cooperation, and learning with and from each other. In England recently there have been some joint efforts by different Churches to provide meetings for engaged couples. The benefits for Christians making inter-church marriages can be great.

72. We can no longer act as though, once they are married, Christians no longer need help in understanding their life in terms of the gospel. It has almost become an irritating commonplace to blame the Christian Church for a lopsided view of sexuality and marriage from St. Augustine on. The past years of discussion and debate in the Roman Catholic Church show the intense desire of married people to know the gospel teaching and to contribute to its understanding from their own experience. Various family movements, of Christian couples meeting in small and usually neighbourhood groups, have contributed to this. The fostering of these movements gives an opportunity for married couples to reach out from themselves, and to give to and to learn from others. It enables a developing and communal understanding of the meaning of the covenant of married love. These movements seem mostly to be Roman Catholic, but here is another means whereby as Christians we can share in our receiving the good news and bearing witness to it.

73. Conclusion

It has seemed to me in preparing this paper that we can identify much common ground in our understanding of faithfulness in marriage. We have difficulties which are not easy to resolve with regard to responsible parenthood. These may be bound up with differences in assessing relationships apart from marriage, but I believe these latter differences may be reconciled. In pastoral care and in education our common ground seems more clear and firm.

MAURICE O'LEARY

Port-Louis,
Mauritius,
August/September 1970.

Competence of Magisterium in the Area of Morality.

This is an attempt to summarise part of Fr. R.A. McCormick's digest, in Theological Studies, December 1969, of recent writing on this question. It only seeks to pick out certain key points and does less than justice to the authors and to Fr. McCormick.

Fr. McCormick says the discussion is still immature with many loose ends.

Peter Huizing of Nijmegen holds that the magisterium has a proper mission of competence in ethical questions in so far as these can be answered in revelation. In natural law, however, it has only a negative competence i.e. it can teach that ethical assertions are contrary to revelation. More positive statements belong not to the magisterium but to the pastoral office. This is a subsidiary function to be ceased when men reach sufficient maturity to be left to their own judgment. The Christian has a commission to form the world according to a Christian vision, but the development of a natural ethic is the task of the laity, not that of the hierarchy.

Alfons Auer of Tübingen also believes that the imposition of detailed norms of morality is a subsidiary function for the Church, taken on when it was culturally and historically necessary. When a society reaches intellectual maturity this task must be abandoned, otherwise there is the danger of jeopardising the essential mission for the sake of the only putatively essential. However, the Church has a criticizing function because man is sinful, and can flounder in his notions of morality.

Louis Janssens of Louvain notes that the material content of Christian morality is identical with that of the natural law, and asserts that it is man's task to decipher and regulate the laws and values of created things. The Church has competence here because sinful man needs authoritatively proposed moral norms, and because as the People of God the Church is the living conscience of mankind. But to discover and propose concrete norms dialogue is obviously needed, because we are on the plane of human knowledge, where what finally counts is not authority but the validity of the reasons proposed. Dialogue is also demanded by the fact that concrete moral norms develop in community between those joined by fidelity to conscience. "The magisterium can intervene only after the fact, to compile norms which have developed in the life of the community, and to communicate them universally".

Philippe Delhaye of Louvain distinguishes two areas where the magisterium operates, doctrinal and pastoral. In the doctrinal area statements are made of truth or falsity. In the pastoral area statements are rather prudential determinations, where basic principles confront social structures of the moment, and hence are variable. Where morality is concerned the magisterium is generally involved in the pastoral area.

Walter Kerber, S.J. suggests that to restrict the teaching competence of the Church in moral matters to revealed morality is to misunderstand the ethical message of the New Testament and to imply that its morality is a transtemporally valid moral system. This is not so. Many scripture statements are concretizations of the *lex Christi* in a definite time and culture. The transtemporal has to be disengaged from the historically conditioned. Underlying all moral obligation is the general knowledge of what man should be, which is only seen and felt in concrete situations. "Natural law" is the basic inner assumption provided by man's understanding of himself.

Christ's coming and his acceptance as model profoundly affects this understanding which underlies all obligations and persists though all concretizations. It is on this basic inner understanding of man now deepened by Christ that New Testament morality builds, not on everlastingly valid concrete propositions ex clara scriptura.

Frantz Bückle derives the teaching competence of the Church from this same notion of natural law. In Christ something decisive has been revealed to man about himself. The Church therefore has to make an important contribution to man's true understanding of himself. This self understanding, concretized at different times and in different cultures, is not simply one of natural man. It is suffused by the influence of Christ, and therefore deeply influenced by revelation. The Church then has a genuine competence in natural law, understood in this sense. But when this self-understanding is translated into norms and directives we are dealing with fallible reasoning and therefore the competence is not final or infallible. And since man's understanding is the source of concrete norms the exercise of Church competence demands a process of dialogue.

Donald Wuerl. Our knowledge of a natural moral order is limited and conditioned. We perceive through our own experience but develop in a community and inherit its values. Christ's intervention in history has given a direction to human existence, and the Christian expects the Church to teach officially in the area of the natural moral order. This teaching is a living re-evaluation and application of the meaning given to human life by Christ.

The Assistance of the Holy Spirit.

A common theme of the above authors is emphasis on human experience, reflection, and analysis in the establishment of concrete moral norms, and a consequent insistence on broad consultative and collegial procedures. But, says McCormick, in ecclesiastical documents appeal is made to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in asserting their authoritative character. The following is a summary of McCormick's own discussion of the meaning of "the assistance of the Holy Spirit" to the magisterium, when teaching non-fallibly.

Two extremes must be avoided. The first would explain the assistance of the Spirit in a way which dispenses with human processes. The second would reduce this assistance to human processes. The first would be equivalent to claiming a new and arcane source of hierarchical knowledge impervious to criticism from experience and reasoning. The second would identify the action of the Spirit with the shrewdest thinkers in the community and imprison it in the best reasons they can unravel. This bypasses the communitarian aspect of moral knowledge, and especially of the *sensus fidelium*.

APPENDIX

A Summary of Humanae Vitae

1. The Commission, originally appointed by Pope John in March 1963 finished its work in June 1966. Pope Paul issued his judgment in July 1968. In the introduction to the encyclical he shows his acute awareness of the gravity and complexity of the problem, and of the burden he carries in making his judgment.

2. The encyclical begins by stating that the problem is too large to be solved by limited criteria, biological, psychological, demographic, sociological. The whole man and all his responsibilities must be considered, natural and temporal, supernatural and eternal (7).

3. Marriage is created by God. Through their mutual gift of themselves, married couples perfect each other in order to cooperate with God in new life. For the baptised marriage is a sacramental sign of grace (8).

4. Married love is human, total, faithful and exclusive, and creative of life (9).

5. Responsible parenthood is required by married love. It is concerned with biological processes, and so involves a knowledge and observance of their functions; with innate drives and emotions, which must be dominated by reason and will; with physical, economic, psychological and social conditions, which involve a prudent judgment of circumstances; with the objective moral order, which involves the married couple in duties to God, to themselves, to society, to be interpreted by a right conscience.

6. And so married couples are not free to act as they choose, to decide for themselves. They must ensure that what they do corresponds with the will of God. The nature of marriage and its use, and the constant teaching of the Church affirms this (10)

7. Sexual activity of husband and wife is honourable and good. Even when indeliberately infertile it expresses and strengthens their union. Each and every act does not result in new life. "But the Church nevertheless, in urging men to the observance of the precepts of natural law, which it interprets by its constant doctrine, teaches as absolutely required, that any use whatever of marriage must retain its natural potential to create new life" (11).

8. This teaching is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, between the unitive significance and procreative significance, which are both inherent in the marriage act.

9. "The reason is that the marriage act, because of its fundamental structure, while uniting husband and wife in the closest intimacy, actualizes their capacity to generate new life, and this as a result of laws written into the actual nature of man and of woman. And if each of these essential qualities, the unitive and the procreative, is preserved, the use of marriage fully retains its sense of true mutual love and its ordination to the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man is called" (12).

10. An act of mutual love which impairs this capacity to transmit life, frustrates God's design and contradicts his will. To use this divine gift and to deprive it even only partially of its meaning is repugnant to the nature of man and woman, and so is in opposition to God's plan and will. But to use the gift of married love while respecting the laws of conception is to acknowledge one is not master but minister of the Creator's design (13).

11. And so human and Christian principles oblige the Pope to declare that the following are absolutely excluded: direct interruption of the generative process already begun, direct abortion, direct sterilization of man or woman whether permanent or temporary, any action intended to prevent procreation before, during or after intercourse.

12. One cannot justify deliberately contraceptive intercourse by arguing that it may be the lesser of two evils, or that it may merge with past and future normal intercourse and share in a general moral goodness. One may sometimes tolerate a lesser evil, but may never do evil so that good may come from it. One may never intend positively that which contradicts the moral order, even though the intention is to protect and promote the welfare of an individual, a family, or society. Consequently, it is a serious error to think that a whole married life of normal relations can justify sexual intercourse which is deliberately contraceptive, and thereby intrinsically wrong (intrinsic dishonesty) (14).

13. It is lawful to cure organic diseases by therapeutic means which have a contraceptive effect, provided that this effect is not directly intended (15).

14. If they have reasonable grounds for spacing births couples may use the infertile period. They then use a facility provided by nature (legitimate faculty utuntur, sibi a natura data). But by contraception they would obstruct the natural development of the generative process (16).

15. The consequences of methods and plans for artificial restriction of increases in the birth rate can underline the truth of the Church's teaching:-

Easily the way can be wide open to marital infidelity and a general lowering of moral standards.

Human weakness reminds us that we need encouragement to keep the moral law, especially young people who are so vulnerable. It is evil to make it easy to break that law.

It is to be feared that a man grown used to contraceptive methods may lose respect for a woman, cease to care for her physical and emotional equilibrium, and may treat her not as a beloved partner but as an instrument to satisfy his own desires.

People who try to avoid the inherent difficulties of the moral law, by acknowledging the lawfulness of contraceptive methods to solve a family problem, may make it easier for Governments to favour such methods and even to impose them on the community.

16. If the mission of giving life is not to be handed over to the arbitrary will of men, we must recognise the limits of man's dominion over the body and its functions which no one, private individual or public authority, may violate. The limits are set by the reverence due to the whole human organism and its functions (17).

17. This teaching will not be easily received by all, the Church is not surprised to be "a sign to be contradicted", but must proclaim the entire moral law, both natural and evangelical. Of this, she is not author or arbiter, but depository and interpreter. She cannot declare lawful what is opposed unchangeably to the true good of man. In defending the moral law of marriage in its entirety the Church is promoting a truly human civilization. She defends the dignity of man and wife by urging them not to abdicate their own responsibility by relying on technical expedients (18).

18. Pastoral Directives.

Having urged men to keep the divine law of marriage, the Church must support them in the proper regulation of birth, especially today when conditions can be so hard for families and nations. Like Christ the Church knows human weakness and welcomes sinners, but at the same time she must teach the true law of human life, restored to its original truth and led by the Spirit (10). To many it may seem difficult ~~over~~ even impossible to observe. It demands from individuals, families and society, resolute purpose and hard effort. It cannot be observed without God's help. But this effort enhances man's dignity and benefits society (20).

19. A right and honest regulation of birth presupposes in husband and wife a recognition of the values of family life and the effort to secure perfect mastery over themselves. Self discipline is necessary for the practice of periodic continence. This self discipline enhances married love and makes it more truly human. It fosters consideration for each other and deepens their sense of responsibility. It gives them a greater capacity to be an effective influence in the education of their children (21).

20. There then follows a series of seven appeals:-

1. To educators, to create an atmosphere favourable to chastity so that true liberty may prevail over licence. Obscenity in the written word and indecency on stage and screen should be condemned. It is absurd to defend depravity in the name of art and liberty (22).

2. To governments, not to allow morals to be undermined, not to allow laws which would introduce practices against the natural and divine law into the family. Population problems, especially in developing countries are acknowledged but no solution is acceptable that does violence to man's essential dignity (23)

3. To scientists, to try to elucidate better the conditions favourable to a lawful regulation of procreation, particularly by providing a sufficiently secure base for birth regulation based on the "natural rhythms". In this way may be demonstrated the Council's claim "that there can be no contradiction between two divine laws, that which governs the transmission of life and that which governs the fostering of married love" (24).

4. To husbands and wives, reminding them that while the Church teaches the inviolable divine law, she also offers through the sacraments channels of grace whereby man is made a new creature responding in charity and true freedom to the design of his Creator and Saviour. Their vocation as Christians in baptism is made more explicit by the sacrament of matrimony, whereby they get strength to fulfill their duties and bear witness to Christ by showing "the Holiness and joy of the law, which unites inseparably their love for each other and their cooperation with the love of God, the author of human life".

The difficulties are acknowledged, but for married as for all Christians, "the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life" (Mt. 7:14). Efforts are necessary, supported by faith and hope, persevering prayer, and above all the Eucharist. If sin still keeps its hold, let them not be discouraged but seek God's mercy through the sacrament of Penance (25). Couples faithful to God's law often wish to share their experience with other married couples. This Christian apostolate is strongly ~~commanded~~ ^{re commended} (26).

5. To doctors and nurses, "to support lines of action which accord with faith and right reason", and to prepare themselves to give proper advice to married couples (27).

6. To priests, to expound the Church's teaching in its entirety and without ambiguity, to give an example of sincere obedience (exemplum sinceri obsequii) both internal and external to the magisterium. For the pastors of the Church enjoy a special light of the Holy Spirit in teaching truth. This rather than the arguments given is why obedience is due. The peace of soul and unity of Christian people demand that all speak with one voice in moral as well as dogmatic theology (28).

Priests must have the love of the Redeemer for those in difficulties. The Holy Spirit is not only present to the magisterium but illumines the hearts of the faithful and invites their assent. Teach them to pray, and to approach with great faith the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance. They must never despair because of their weakness (29).

7. To bishops, to look on the safeguarding of the holiness of marriage as their greatest work and responsibility. It demands concerted pastoral action in all fields, economic, cultural and social. If progress is made in these different ways, the lives and parents and children will be easier and happier and society will be more peaceful, as God's design for the world is faithfully followed (30).

21. Finally, the Pope calls bishops, and all men of goodwill, to this great work of education, progress and charity. He relies on the unshakeable teaching of the Church, which together with his fellow bishops he faithfully guards and interprets. He is convinced this great work will bring blessings on the world and the Church. For man cannot attain true happiness unless he keeps with intelligence and love the laws ~~of~~ God has engraved on his very nature (31).