



"You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works!" (Psalm 139: 13-14)

Where the Rubber Hits the Road Reflections on *Humanae vitae*

Contraception: the toughest teaching of the Church

"As you know, we live in a culture that thinks that contraception is one of the greatest inventions in the history of mankind. If you were to ask people if they wanted to give up their car or their computer or their contraceptive, it would be a hard choice to make. It's really considered to be something that has really put us, greatly, into the modern age and one of the greatest advances of modern medicine and modern times. Yet, there is this archaic church that tells us that, really, this is one of the worst inventions of mankind. According to the Church, contraception is one of the things that is plunging us into a kind of a disaster" (Janet, Smith, "Contraception: Why Not?")

Figure this out, and everything else is easy!

TOB was written precisely to help people "figure out" why contraception is wrong

Priests can "conceive", too!

A new way of looking at contraception: to love another partially – give 50% of my love – withhold "baby" while seeking "bonding"

Priests and religious can also "love partially," not giving of themselves totally to their parish or community, and hence have a "contraceptive mentality," their love for their parish is not total, but partial

Priests refuse to wear their clerical collar and be identified as priests

"Don't call me 'Father'"

Priests work "office hours" from 9 till 5

Priests demand two days off per week

Important qualifications

Priests need rest and recreation, days off, and "letting their hair down"

Not recommending priests become workaholics

Some priests who wear their collar are lazy, others who don't are very dedicated

Nevertheless, some clergy see their vocation as a "job," and

therefore limit their love

The "contraceptive mentality" can affect priests as well as married couples because it is not only about having fewer babies, it's also about "loving less"

Claim of *Humanae vitae*: inseparability of unitive and procreative aspects of sex

"[The prohibition of contraception] is founded upon the **inseparable connection**...between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning (*HV* 11-12)" (*TOB*, 11 July 1984)

True love in sexual intimacy always requires both unity and fertility; if you remove one, you lose the other as well

"[T]he conjugal act '**means**' not only love, but also potential fruitfulness, and thus it cannot be deprived of its...meaning by means of artificial interventions....It is not licit to separate artificially the unitive from the procreative meaning, because the one as well as the other belong to the **innermost truth** of the conjugal act" (*TOB*, 22 August 1984)

Do you remember what the innermost truth of sex is, what "sex the shadow" reflects?

Why do babies and bonding have to go together; why can't we separate them?

Some things come only in pairs: you cannot have a pair of scissors with only one blade, or an airplane with only one wing. Having only one makes the scissors into a knife and the plane into a missile. Sex has two components, to eliminate one changes it into a fundamentally different kind of thing

"One can say that in the case of artificial separation of these two meanings in the conjugal act, a real bodily union is brought about, but it does not correspond to the inner truth and dignity of personal communion, '*communio personarum*'" (*TOB*, 22 August 1984).

Whenever the pope uses the term "communion of persons" he always has in the back of his mind the communion of the Father, Son and Spirit in the Holy Trinity

Modern people look at babies and bonding as very "separable" parts of sex

"The marital act expresses love; it unites. It has, indeed, a possible procreational 'side-effect' which can result in children. But since this side-effect depends on biological factors, which science today permits us to control, the procreative aspect of marital intercourse can be nullified, while leaving its unitive function intact" ("Marriage and Contraception" in *Why Humanae Vitae Was Right: A Reader*, 154)

People who look at sex in this way believe that the two aspects of sex **can be separated**: you can have one without the other

Burke's thesis: to obstruct the procreative aspect **necessarily** obstructs also the unitive aspect of sex; if you lose the "baby" you also lose the "bonding"

To love another person 100% means to give one's seed

"The greatest expression of a person's desire to give himself is to give the seed of himself. Giving one's seed is much more significant, and in particular is much more real, than giving one's heart. 'I am yours, I give you my heart; here, take it', remains mere poetry, to which no physical gesture can give true body. But, 'I am yours; I give you my seed; here take it', is not mere poetry; it is love. It is conjugal love embodied in a unique and privileged physical action where by intimacy is expressed – 'I give you what I give no one' – and [not only a possible baby, but also] **union is achieved.**" ("Marriage and Contraception," 157)

To give your seed to another is deepest expression of love because it makes you a true reflection of love of Trinity

Think about your children for a moment: they have mom's eyes, they have dad's smile, hopefully they have mom's hair! Children are a living example of the inseparability of babies and bonding

It is conjugal love embodied in a unique and privileged physical action where by intimacy is expressed – 'I give you what I give no one' – and **union is achieved.** 'Take what I have to give. This will be a new me. United to you, to what you have to give – to your seed – this will be a new 'you-and-me', fruit of our mutual knowledge and love" ("Marriage and Contraception," 157)

Nothing causes greater inner angst in children than to see their parents fight, and even worse, to see their parents divorce

A father can give no greater natural gift to his children than to love their mother

If a child were presented with the following choice, which would he pick?

Big house, tons of toys, all the ice cream and pizza he can eat, but his parents are divorced

Live in a rickety shack, no toys, and eat bread and drink water, but his parents are deeply in love

Advice to best friend about whom he had chosen to marry:

you have chosen not only a certain spouse, but also certain children

"Think of the difference between these two phrases: "I want to have sex with you" and "I want to have a baby with you." It's awesome -- the difference. Our society says, "I want to have lunch with you, I want to go to movies with you, I want to play tennis with you, and I want to have sex with you." No big deal. But if someone comes up to you and says, "I want to have a baby with you," you should be knocked off your feet. Because if they have any

idea what they're saying, they're saying: "I want to be with you from now till forever. It...means, I like your eyes and your smile and the way you walk and I want to bring another one of you into this world. And I like the way you think and I want my children to think like you. And I'm willing to be there for midnight feedings and breakfast and PTA's and weddings and the long haul. I want to have a baby with you." That's an incredible thing to say to someone" (Janet Smith, "Contraception: Why Not?")

Why sex is so important? Why must babies and bonding go together? Simple answer: that is where **you** came from
Children have a right to be born from spousal sexual intercourse, not another way

"The child is meant to be not just the fruit of sexuality in a purely biological sense, i.e., the fruit of the union, however brought about, of two cells, but the fruit of human and spousal sexuality. The child is – has the right to be – the fruit of the living union of two persons, which means the union of two souls and two bodies, not just of two wills with no true bodily union" ("Marriage and Contraception," 167)

How would you feel if you were born from a rape, or a "one night stand"? Our own dignity is connected to our beginnings – our conception – the only beginning worthy of our dignity as human persons is the committed, total and faithful love of our parents

Sex is important because **YOU** are important

I explained "the birds and the bees" to my nephew; and at the end I told him that's where HE came from. That was too much for him to swallow. Even though he didn't say it, I could tell that he was thinking: "How could I come from that?!"

But that's the dignity of sex: it is tied to our own human dignity. This is why "babies" and "bonding" should always go together!

Appendix: "The Talk"

Parents have responsibility to explain mysteries of life to their children – why is the sky blue, where do the stars come from, who made God, what was God doing before He made time, etc. – and the mystery of sex

If parents fail in doing this, others will jump in: friends, media, other adults

Two things to remember about sex

Speak with confidence because you are sharing good news

Use proper terms, not "childish" terms

Begin with the Bible, not biology, not fear tactics of STDs, comparison with animals, not fairy tales, etc.

Gen. 2:18, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

Who did God make to be Adam's partner, friend? A woman, "Eve"

You will feel a desire in you to get closer to girls, something that you may not have felt before

This friendship between boys and girls is part of God's plan for you happiness

This feeling you have to get to know girls better is what motivated your parents to get to know each other better and finally to marry each other

So, these feelings to know and get closer to girls are good, they are not bad; actually, God gave them to you

Gen. 2:24, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife and the two shall become one flesh"

Adam (and all men since him) felt a desire to be together with Eve, and this desire to be with her is "love"

This desire to love will be felt in many ways, to want to hold hands, to want to kiss her, etc.

But this love *at its best* will be a desire to serve her, make her happy, protect her

Perhaps you've felt this desire, or you will begin to feel it, it will be felt as a "push" to get closer to a girl, you will be attracted to girls in a new way

One day you will love a girl so much that you will want to spend the rest of your life with her, and make her your wife

It is from this love – which lasts your whole life – that

children come. **YOU** came from this life-long love between your mom and dad
This love between your mother and father is sacred and holy because God also made it: we should always respect it and honor it
4th Commandment is "honor your mother and father"

This love between a husband and wife is shown in many ways: holding hands, a warm hug, giving kisses, with words like "darling" "honey pie" "sweetie"
But there is a way of expressing love between husbands and wives that is exclusively for married people and this is called "sexual intercourse"
I want to explain to you exactly what "sexual intercourse" is but first I want to remind you that it is sacred, holy

"There an angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in fire flaming out of a bush. As he looked on, he was surprised to see that the bush, though on fire, was not consumed. So Moses decided, 'I must go over to look at this remarkable sight, and see why the bush is not burned.' When the Lord saw him coming over to look at it more closely, God called out to him from the bush, 'Moses! Moses!' He answered, 'Here I am.' God said, 'Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground'" (Exodus 3:2-5)

Sexual intercourse is like that burning bush; it is holy, a place where we meet God, we should not go close to it without recognizing where we are and knowing that it is only for married people

One way we show respect for holy things is by covering them

We cover the tabernacle with a veil, nuns wear a veil to show that they are special; these are not ordinary things

This is why we cover our sexual organs: because they are special and sacred, not because they are bad or shameful

Now, I will tell you something about the bodies of boys and girls

The body of a boy is different from the body of a girl

This difference was created by God and is the way that a husband shows his love for his wife

The man has a sexual organ called a "penis," while the woman has a sexual organ called a "vagina"

These two organs are "complimentary" because they

“complete” each other; in other words, the husband puts his penis inside the vagina of his wife
Through the union of their two bodies in this way, the man produces and emits a liquid called “semen”
This semen stays in the body of the wife and sometimes comes into contact with her “egg” and causes conception, the beginning of a new human being
And this, my friend, is where you came from: you are the fruit of the love between your mother and father
(pause for dramatic effect)

Now, there are three things I want you to remember about sexual intercourse

In sexual intercourse, husband and wife experience a sensation extremely intense and euphoric, something more than you’ve ever felt before: it’s better than any hamburger, rollercoaster ride, winning the soccer championship, etc.

But because sexual intercourse is holy it is only for husbands and wives, not for anyone else

So, when people engage in sexual intercourse, or sleep in the same bed, on T.V. or in movies, that is very wrong

They are approaching the burning bush without taking off sandals and it’s like they are cooking marshmallows and hotdogs on it!

This is why any sexual intercourse outside of marriage is a mortal sin

Sexual intercourse is primarily an act of love, that means that you should want to make your spouse happy, not just looking for your own pleasure

Son, as you grow through your adolescent years and become an adult, you will have more and more curiosity and questions about sex

Your friends will talk about it, your teachers will say things about it, you’ll hear things on T.V and the radio, even doctors, professors will talk about it

Sometimes they will be right, sometimes they will be wrong

But always remember that sex is sacred and the only way to know what its really all about it to listen to the voices of the Bible and the Church

I want you to know that I will walk with you on this journey, and help you to understand this great adventure of love: I’ve “been there, done that!”