

Contraception: Why Not Transcript & Study Guide

Contents

TRANSCRIPT

Outline

Introduction: Precursors to Acceptance of Contraception

The Pill

Why Contraception Is Wrong

The Alternative: Natural Family Planning

Closing: Janet's \$1,000 Offer

Questions & Answers

STUDY GUIDE

Suggestions for Classroom Use

Study Questions

Teacher's Guide

Marriage Preparation Discussion Questions

Suggested Uses and Bibliography

"Contraception: Why Not" is a lecture by Prof. Janet E. Smith that was recorded in May 1994, at a Catholic Physicians Guild meeting at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio.

The message in "Contraception: Why Not" has captivated audiences on national and international levels. Add this presentation to the list of "musts" for married couples, those considering marriage, their counselors, priests, seminarians and physicians. "Contraception: Why Not" is a rich source of ideas and guidance for any audience.

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OUTLINE

Introduction: Precursors to acceptance of contraception

Fr. Emil's homily

All churches opposed contraception until 1930

Our culture strongly opposed contraception until 1960

The Pill

Society's hopes for the pill

Helping the population crisis

More opportunity for women in the workplace

Happier marriages

Fewer unwanted pregnancies and abortions

Problems predicted by Pope Paul VI, and their realization

Lowering of morality

Disregard for women's well-being

Coercive use of contraceptive methods by governments
Treating our bodies like machines

Other harmful outcomes from contraception

Increase of divorce

Bonding effect of children
Children help parents grow in virtue
Contraception facilitates adultery
Financial independence of women
Sexual involvement before marriage
Cohabitation

Increase of unwanted pregnancies

Increased abortions

Why contraception is wrong

Natural Law

The natural purpose for sex: babies and bonding

Harmful aspects of contraception

Babies are treated as burdens
Contraception excludes God from sex
Treating fertility as a disease
Harmful health consequences of contraception
Abortive action of hormonal contraceptives
Contraception prevents total self-giving

The alternative: Natural Family Planning

The difference between Natural Family Planning and Contraception

Using good means for good ends

Fear of NFP

Effectiveness of NFP
Not the rhythm method
Fear of abstinence

Blessings of NFP

Abstinence is a way of expressing love
Increased respect for self and spouse
Respect for God
Enhanced communication

Closing: Janet's \$1000 offer

Questions and answers

Priests and contraception

Loss of grace in marriage due to contraception

Hindering full involvement in church life
Distorting married life

Abstinence and chastity

Danger of sexually transmitted diseases
How our culture fosters impersonal sex within marriage
NFP helps focus sex as a support to the marriage relationship
Strong positive effects of chastity before marriage

Spreading the message about contraception

TRANSCRIPT

Introduction: Precursors to Acceptance of Contraception

Fr. Emil's Homily

Thank you. It's really very nice to be here.

Now, I've written quite a bit on this topic, so that means I have a lot to say. That's not always good news for an audience. And I do have a problem-I'm a non-stop talker, but I want you to know that I belong to a support group. It's sometimes difficult to get away from that support group. But it's called the "On and On Anon Society." And they tell us at the On and On Anon Society to make certain that we don't go on and on, and one way of doing that is to capture our thoughts in some short pithy statement. I borrowed this statement from Garrison Kielor, the radio humorist who does the "Prairie Home Companion" and talks about Lake Wobegone. He talks about Father Emil who is the pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Responsibility Church. And he gives a homily once a year on contraception. It goes like this: If you don't want to go to Minneapolis, what are you doing on the train? You'll have a whole hour here to think about that and get the gist of it.

All Churches Opposed Contraception until 1930

My topic tonight really is contraception, the Church's teaching on contraception, and various sexual issues. As you know, we live in a culture that thinks that contraception is one of the greatest inventions in the history of mankind. And if you were to ask people if they wanted to give up their car or their computer or their contraceptive, it'd be a hard choice to make. It's really considered to be something that has put us greatly into the modern age and one of the greatest advances of modern medicine and modern times. And there's this archaic church that tells us that, really, this is one of the worst inventions of mankind. It's one of the things that's plunging us into a kind of a disaster.

Now, what most people don't know is that every Christian church up until 1930 taught that contraception was wrong-a universal teaching within Christian churches. And it was only in 1930 that the Anglican Church first broke with that unbroken tradition and approved contraception within marriage for serious reasons. In 1930, Pope Pius XI wrote the Encyclical, Casti Connubii, which is usually translated On Christian Marriage, and there he reiterated what had been the constant teaching of the Church. And within the Catholic Church there was virtually no debate on this issue until the mid-1960's, really you can date it to about 1963. There was really a great acceptance of those in the Church of the teaching of the Church. In 1960, some 66% of Catholics were living by the Church's teaching. Sixty-six percent. And now they say some 80% of Catholics are contracepting. Thirty percent of Catholics are sterilized, which is the same rate as the rest of the population. And they say some 4% of Catholics are using Natural Family Planning. I personally think that might be a high estimate.

Our Culture Strongly Opposed Contraception until 1960

So how have we in the last 30 years gone from 66% compliance to at best 4% compliance? Well there are a couple reasons, I'll give you right away, why in 1960 it seems that 66% were compliant. One is that there really weren't very good contraceptives at the time. The Pill was not yet really on the market. It had just begun to be developed. And most contraceptives were illegal in most states, at least for interstate purchase. Those laws that made contraceptives illegal were put on the books by Protestant legislators. Contraception was always seen to be the source of great sexual license in

society and considered to be something a morally upright society would ban. But because of the doctrine of the "right to privacy" found in the "penumbra" of the Constitution, those laws were thrown out in the early 1960's. That was really the precursor to Roe v. Wade. That right to privacy is found in Griswold v. the State of Connecticut and then is reiterated in Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion. It was also at the time that, for Catholics at least, obedience was considered to be a virtue. It was not yet seen to be a pathological condition. So Catholics were prepared to accept what their Church taught simply because it taught it, in fact, whether or not they understood it.

The Pill

Society's Hopes for the Pill

Helping the population crisis

In the 1960's, the Pill became available. It was considered to be a great salvation of mankind for several reasons. There was the beginning of the belief that we were headed for a disaster as far as a population problem was concerned. In fact, when I was in high school, we had posters of globes with human beings falling off the globe, it was so crowded. But there actually have been no two people who have been more wrong than Malthus and Paul Ehrlich. I recommend books, one by a man named Julian Simon, and another named Ben Wattenburg, who are demographers. And there are many others such as Jacqueline Kasun, who have looked at their work.

Malthus said that the population would increase geometrically and the food supplies would only, at best, increase arithmetically. The population has increased enormously. That's not necessarily bad news. That's just a fact. It has increased enormously. The good news is that the food supply is wildly better off than Malthus ever dreamed. The United States could quite easily feed the rest of the globe. It's not a problem. Modern agricultural techniques have exponentially increased our food supply. And they say we haven't even begun to mine the ocean for food. And as for limited mineral resources, and that sort of thing, Malthus thought we certainly would run out of coal and copper and these sorts of things, but we actually have more coal and more copper now per person on the globe than Malthus thought we'd have at his time. We've discovered more resources, and we need them less because we have such things as atomic energy.

So I'm not here to argue against the population scare. I'm just here to tell you that there is good reason to doubt it. And you might wonder why we see these emaciated children on TV starving. And we must be overpopulated-look at all these starving children. It has little to do with population. It has a great deal to do with one tribal or ethnic group hating and starving out another tribal and ethnic group. It has a great deal to do with corrupt governments and a failure to distribute food. It has a great deal to do with natural disasters that we can have little control over. But that was one of the reasons that we thought the Pill was going to be a great thing. It was going to help us with population problems.

More opportunity for women in the workplace

And the second thing was feminism. There was a rapid growth of interest in feminism. And certainly we had to have contraceptives because women couldn't get in the work place and find their fulfillment unless they were having fewer babies, and the only way they could have fewer babies is with a better contraceptive.

Happier marriages

It was also believed that contraceptives, especially the Pill, would make for much better marriages-much better marriages-because, clearly, people could now use contraceptives within marriage and get rid of the fear of pregnancy that was dampening the spontaneous and blissful sex lives that spouses hoped they could have-take the tension out of sex life that was there because of the fear of pregnancy. And it didn't take people long to catch on. If you could wipe the fear of pregnancy out of sex within marriage, you could wipe the fear of pregnancy out of sex before marriage, and surely it would make sense to have sex before marriage.

I was a teenager in the 60's, and this became the wisdom of the times. Surely, none of you would buy a car unless you took it for a test drive. It's just as idiotic, of course, to get married without having sex with your prospective spouse. And none of you would really buy a car without test driving several cars. That would also be idiotic. You want to find out what model you like. You want to see how it drives. It was the same thing then in the 60's. This was the wisdom at the time. The earlier generations-it was unfortunate they, more or less, had to restrain themselves before marriage and sort of plunged into marriage because they were desperate for sex. And now we could be free from that kind of desperation by having sex

outside of marriage making a calmer, cooler, more collected assessment of our future spouse by being able to have a sexual relationship before marriage.

Fewer unwanted pregnancies and abortions

And, of course, we thought there would be an enormous decrease in the number of unwanted pregnancies. Surely contraception would help people not get pregnant when they didn't want to get pregnant. And, concomitant with a decrease in unwanted pregnancies, there would truly be a decrease in the number of abortions. Now, these were the expectations for the contraceptive pill in the 60's. And I think none of these were stupid expectations. It seems to me, on the surface, there is a great deal of plausibility to these expectations.

Problems Predicted by Pope Paul VI, and Their Realization

But the Catholic Church at the time said no, that won't be the case. It was in 1968 that Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae*. You might remember that it fell like a bomb on the Church and the rest of society. It was a shock to everyone that the Catholic Church reiterated its constant teaching against contraception. And Pope Paul VI, in Section 17 of *Humanae Vitae*, made several predictions about what would happen if contraceptives became widely available and widely used in society.

Lowering of Morality

He said, first of all, that there would be a general lowering of morality in society. Now, I don't know that I have to do a lot to convince you that there has been a general lowering of morality. I remember watching TV when I was a teenager in the 60's. We saw the Donna Reed Show, I Love Lucy, Father Knows Best. And now, I can hardly watch the advertisements on TV without being offended, let alone afternoon soaps which are surely soft porn, let alone MTV, which approaches being hard-core porn. I call this the "frog in the water" effect. If you put a frog into boiling water, it will actually jump out. But if you put him in a pot of lukewarm water and gradually raise the temperature to boiling, it will quite happily boil to death and not notice. And I think that's what has happened to us. In the 1960's, my father and every other father on the street, I think, would have taken the TV and smashed it on the pavement if MTV would have come into our homes. And now we are quite happily boiling to death with the TV that we have-not to mention, of course, crime in the streets; not to mention drive-by shootings; not to mention gangs and all the things we are all frightened about. You might say, "How can you trace any of that to contraceptives?" And I'll do it for you in a minute. But first, I want to go through his predictions.

Disregard for Women's Well-Being

Secondly, he predicted that there would be a general disregard for the physical and psychological well-being of females by males. I think pornography is a great assault on a woman's psychological and physical well-being. There seems to be an enormous outbreak of sexual abuse of women. The statistics are just overwhelming for how many women have been sexually abused by someone in their household. Not to mention the fact that 60% of the poverty in the United States is accounted for by single women with children. Most of those living in poverty in the United States are single women with children. That seems to me to be clearly psychological and physical abuse of women. And how did that happen? How did we get all these single mothers with children? I'll talk about that in a minute.

Coercive use of contraceptive methods by governments

The third prediction was that governments would use family planning programs for coercive purposes once contraception became widely available. And it's outrageous what's going on in this world. Some of you have been watching the deliberations of the UN, highly backed by the United States, to say that all economic aid to third world countries will now be tied to aggressive population programs. These countries must have aggressive distribution of contraceptives, sterilization, and ready access to abortion if we are going to feed and take care of the poor. The women delegates to the UN are outraged at this. They find this insulting and demeaning. Like they're being treated like breed cows. What they want is better prenatal care. What they want is better medical care. What they want is more access to education and food for their children that's not tied to contraceptive programs. And some of you may be familiar with the work of Steven Mosher-it's very well documented that there are forced abortions in China. In many areas of China, if a woman has more than one baby, the second pregnancy will be forcibly aborted. Women are actually dragged out of fields late in a pregnancy and forcibly aborted. Have you seen any sort of national outrage for what's going on in China?

Treating our bodies like machines

Pope Paul VI's fourth prediction was that we would begin to treat our bodies as though they were machines. We'd no longer have respect for the human person as an integral unity of body and soul, but the body would now be a machine that we can do to whatever we will. Now there is no greater evidence than our use of reproductive technologies, of surrogate motherhood, for instance, and many of these in vitro procedures. Some of you caught on to the story of a fifty-nine-year-old woman in England who conceived a child through in vitro fertilization. Now Erma Bombeck said that this would never catch on. She said that fifty-nine-year-olds would leave a baby in a room and forget where they left it. Or show up at a high school graduation and not know what they were doing there. But, the point is that any woman can buy a baby. Any woman can go to an in vitro clinic and simply buy herself some semen and get herself impregnated and get the kind of baby she wants. It gives a new meaning to the word "designer jeans." If you want a Nobel laureate, you go to Stanford. If you want a hot whiz kid from MIT, you go to a clinic outside of MIT. And you can buy yourself a baby-married, unmarried, homosexual, heterosexual-any woman can do this who has the money. Tell me we are not treating our bodies like machines.

Other Harmful Consequences of Contraception

Increase of divorce

What about the other predictions of the secular world who thought contraception would be so great? What about this prediction that marriages would be better? I think, in some respects, marriages are better, but the divorce rate shows us that there are a lot of very bad marriages, or at least marriages that end because people think they are very bad. In fact, the divorce rate doubled between 1965 and 1975. The divorce rate had been sort-of sneaking up all century long until in the mid 1960's it was at 25%, and then in 1975 it got up to 50%. And so in a short ten-year period, the divorce rate doubled. There's a demographer at the University of Stanford named Robert Michael who was kind of intrigued by this, and he wondered why it was that the divorce rate doubled in a ten-year period. And he actually discovered that as the contraceptive pill became more and more available, that line was parallel to the divorce line. In about 1975-1976 when every woman who wanted access to the Pill had it, that's when the divorce rate leveled off.

He says he can attribute 45% of this increase to increased use of contraceptives. His first observation is that the statistical data show that those who use contraceptives have fewer children and have them later in marriage. And his statistical data show that those who have the first baby in the first two years of marriage and another baby in the next couple years of marriage have a much longer lasting marriage than those who don't. Now I'm sure everybody here in this room can tell me of someone they know who's been married for twenty-five years with eight or ten kids who's gotten divorced and it's all very sad, but that's the rarity. His data show that those who have babies sooner in marriage have a longer lasting marriage than those who do not.

Bonding effect of children

And I'll give you about three seconds to figure out why. He gives no explanation. I think there are several. One is that, as blissful and as happy as those early years of marriage can be, they can also be very difficult. You've got two people with different habits and different expectations and different modes of communication trying to build a life together. And I've noticed with my friends who are newly married, at some point in that first year or two, it seems that one or the other gets in a car and goes for a drive around the block and around the highways and you don't really know if you are going to come back. You're pretty darn mad about something. But if Junior's in the house, there are somebody's smiles you don't want to miss in the morning. So you go back and you work it out with the person you're mad at. There are two people in the house you love-one you're mad at and the other whose smiles you can't think of missing. If you have another child, there are two people whose smiles you really want and one you're mad at. You may love like crazy, but you're mad, but you go back and you work it out. And that's very important in marriage-to work those things out early in the marriage.

Children help parents grow in virtue

I think it's also the point that people who have children become better people, I want to say, almost instantaneously. It's been my good fortune to have met several of my male friends as they've exited from the delivery room. Such individuals are generally delirious. They babble, and they say things like, "It's incredible. It's the most miraculous, marvelous, mysterious thing I have ever been a part of in my whole life. It's the best day of my whole life. I just can't believe it." And somewhere along the line they say, "Everything's different now." And that's absolutely true because yesterday they could care less who the mayor was, or who was chief of the police force or who was president of the school board and whether the playgrounds were safe or how they spent their money or how many movies were rated PG and what was on TV. But today they care. And today everything's different, and now they're going to be careful about all of these things. When you're single, who cares about these things? It doesn't affect you. When you have a child you're sending out to the world, all of a sudden you become protective of this child and you know that all these influences need to be attended to. You also become more

patient and generous and kind and hardworking, because this baby is very demanding. It takes a lot of your time and a lot of your effort. So you become a better person, and you're married to a better person and that makes for a better marriage.

That's his first reason. Those who contracept have fewer babies later in marriage and their marriages are weaker, and it seems clear to me why that's the case.

Contraception facilitates adultery

Secondly, he says since contraceptives have arrived on the scene, there is much more adultery than there was before. I'll give you two seconds to figure that one out. People have been tempted for the history of mankind. And it's easy enough to think about wanting an affair, but wanting a child out of wedlock is another story. But if most every woman is contracepting, then most every woman is available in a certain sense, and there is no real reason to say no. And adultery is absolutely devastating to marriages.

Financial independence of women

The third explanation is that women are financially more independent. They do have fewer children. They do go into the work place. And when they have difficulties in the marriage, it's much easier to say, "Take a walk," than it is to work it out, because they need their husband for one fewer reasons than they did before.

Sexual involvement before marriage

Now, I think there are several other reasons why contraceptives are damaging to marriage. It's hard to get really clear statistics on this, but just recently in USA Today I read that one poll shows that 37% of high school students are sexually active. Another said 57%. I saw another that said that 87% of college students have been sexually active. I think most of you know there are very few people who are going into marriage as virgins anymore. And I think all this sexual activity before marriage is not good for marriage. Most people have been lied to at some point. Most people have made promises and broken those promises, and had promises made to them and those promises have been broken. And they're marrying someone who has lied and made promises and had promises broken, and they don't trust each other quite as much. They don't even trust themselves quite as much. "I've said these things before, I've made these commitments before-can I keep them? He's said these things before, he's made these commitments before-can he keep them?"

And I've seen lots of people actually just slide into marriage. This whole notion that by having sex before marriage you could make a better choice of a spouse, I think, is absolutely erroneous. It seems to me that the sexual passion can obscure things rather than clarify things. You get used to the sexual relationship, and it kind of makes you ignore whether this person is selfish, or lazy, or egotistical-things that, another two years from now might really bother you. Right now, because of the sexual relationship, you overlook these things. I had a friend who had this boyfriend for whom there was an enormous sexual attraction between the two of them. And they did start to have a sexual relationship but found out that it was making both of them quite miserable. But they couldn't really get away from each other. That relationship went on for about five or six years even though they lived on opposite coasts. And they would telephone each other and have these very heated phone conversations. And at one point I asked, "Are you going to marry this man? I mean, it's just going on forever. You've been more or less not seeing anybody else because he has been in the picture for the last five or six years." And then she finally said, "You know, I just couldn't see him being a parent to my children. I can't see that. He's crazy. We have very different values. I'm a committed Catholic. He hates Catholicism." And when she said this, she finally realized she had to break it off. But, that sexual attraction and attachment, for years, had obscured this until she finally figured it out.

Cohabitation

As a matter of fact, cohabitation is one of the real clear signs that a marriage isn't going to work. I heard a statistic the other day, I'll have to check it out, but a priest told me that he did a workshop in his parish on cohabitation, and in his studies he discovered that 75% of those who live together before marriage-not having sex but living together before marriage-get divorced within the first three years. I've seen people who do this. They've been living together for two or three years, and everybody's bugging them, "Why don't you get married?" So, they ask each other, "Well, why don't we get married?" And they figure out they're not fighting that much, and they certainly don't want to start out all over again. This last two or three years was hard enough and who wants to start all, all over again and you might just as well get married. It seems to be time." And that's not the best path into marriage. So it hasn't made for better marriages.

Increase of unwanted pregnancies

So has it made for fewer unwanted pregnancies? The statistics on this are wild. In 1960, some 6% of white babies were born out of wedlock-6%! In 1992, 22% of white babies were born out of wedlock, almost a four-fold increase, and it's rapidly rising. In 1960, some 22%, the same figure, 22% of black babies were born out of wedlock. Does anybody know the statistic now? 68%-68% of black babies are born out of wedlock. That took thirty years. I don't think it will take thirty years for the 22% of whites to go up to 68%, if we follow down the same path we are currently following. Now, here's my connection: First of all, the world tells us that if we have more and better contraceptives we can solve these problems. There will be fewer unwanted pregnancies. But the point was, in 1960 there were almost no contraceptives available, especially to teenagers. You had to know some tacky gas station somewhere and have a few quarters and that's about the best you could do. But any teenager now can get a contraceptive from their guidance counselor, in fact, from some welcome-to-school kits in some schools. I mean we live in a culture in which condoms can be handed out in schools and Bibles can't. And I think that tells you everything you need to know about our society. So it seems to me, clearly, more and better contraceptives aren't going to help. Teenagers have incredible access to them. But teenagers are just as good at using contraceptives as they are at making their beds and doing their homework and doing their chores, at about the same degree of reliability.

I set up a pregnancy help center actually in South Bend and would talk with these young girls, and we'd ask them, "Did you use a contraceptive," and they would say, "No, no. I wanted to buy a Prince album this month and I had to use my money for that," or, "I didn't like the side effects so I stopped," or, "We broke up and I thought we weren't going to see each other again but he came around again." And they get pregnant, and they're surprised. And, of course, we have a million and a half abortions a year. And how did these happen? 50% of women who go to abortion clinics tell us that they're there because of contraceptive failure-50%! 80% tell us that they are contraceptively experienced, they know all about it and they've used it before but, for one reason or another, they've stopped.

Increased Abortions

But the real point, in my mind, is that contraceptives have launched people on a lifestyle that makes for sex outside of marriage-makes for sex in which babies and bonding are not welcome likelihoods. And when that happens, disaster strikes. People now say...when they're having sex outside of marriage and they get pregnant, what do people say? They use this wonderful phrase: "I got pregnant by accident." And I always am kind of mystified by this phrase, and I would say, "How did that happen again?" See, I'm kind of naive, you know, but I caught on to this some time ago, and I know you can't get pregnant by accident. You can get hit by a car by accident and fall off a cliff by accident, but you can't get pregnant by accident. It actually means that something has gone right with an act of sexual intercourse, not that something has gone wrong. But because people are using contraceptives, they get pregnant and they're surprised. "My gosh! We got pregnant! We didn't have that in mind. That wasn't a part of this picture. So we have to do something about it. What'll we have to do? We have to trot down to the abortion clinic."

I'll give you the highest authority of our land; the Supreme Court says so. There's an article out there, I wrote, that's on the table you can have for free. It's called, "The Connection between Contraception and Abortion," and I cite Planned Parenthood v. Casey. And in that decision it says: "In several important respects, the decision to have an abortion is the same as the decision to contracept." And it goes on to explain. "For two decades, couples have based their intimate relationships on the availability of abortion should contraceptives fail." Now in this whole Supreme Court decision, which is on abortion, there is not one mention of the humanity of the unborn child, not one mention of whether the fetus is a person or not. It's not even dismissed as a question. It's not even considered. But it does say we must have abortion because we have contraceptives. It's a necessity. For two decades, couples have counted on it should their contraceptives fail. The Supreme Court says so.

Why Contraception Is Wrong

Natural Law

I think, in the 60's, it was not a stupid expectation that contraceptives would make for better marriages, fewer unwanted pregnancies, fewer abortions; but I think the cultural evidence today shows absolutely the contrary. And it's very hard for us to see because, our culture tells us that more and better contraceptives and more and greater access to abortion is absolutely necessary in this society; it's a good thing.

Now the Church said otherwise. I told you, Pope Paul VI didn't predict this in great detail, but he certainly predicted the broad strokes of what happened. And you might say, "How did he see it when the rest of us couldn't? What did he know that we didn't know?" Well, he had a whole history of the church behind him, some two thousand years. And some of us, of course, believe he had the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and he couldn't miss because he wasn't using human wisdom here.

Human wisdom showed something quite different, and I don't think that human wisdom was implausible, but it has turned out, I think, to be dead wrong.

What did he know? Well the Church has always based its teaching, not on something private to Catholics, but on what is known as natural law. And, I'm going to give you about a three-minute course here on natural law. Natural law says that if you want things to prosper, you have to use them in accord with their nature. If you want things to prosper, you have to live in accord with the reality or the nature of the things you are using. If you want to grow good tomatoes, you have to treat tomato plants in accord with their nature. You have to give them sunshine and water and fertilizer and a good soil. And if you want your car to run, you have to put oil and gasoline in it. You can't put your tomato plant in the closet and expect it to grow good tomatoes. You can't put molasses in your car and expect it to run. And the Church has said human sexuality has a certain nature and unless you live in accord with that nature, chaos will result. You won't get your tomato plants and you won't get from here to Cleveland. It won't work if you don't live in accord with the nature. And the Church says that this is not revealed wisdom. This is something that man can discover by his own reason if he is not obscured by his culture, which we are. But if we strip away our cultural conditioning, I think you could see this.

The Natural purpose for sex: babies and bonding

You say what are the purpose and meaning and nature of sexual intercourse? It seems to me it's quite clear. It's for two things. It's for babies and it's for bonding. That's what happens when you have sexual intercourse-you have babies and you bond. My view is, if you don't want to have babies and you don't want to bond, then you shouldn't be having sexual intercourse. My view is that the babies and bonding that comes with sexual intercourse belong only within marriage. I would love some rap group to put together a little song for me on this. "If you don't want babies and bonding you shouldn't be having sex." You shouldn't be having sex if you're not married, because that's where babies and bonding is appropriate. We have a whole culture that says having sex, and having babies and making bonds, are two different things-absolutely two different things. Having sex you say, "I want to have lunch with you, I want to play tennis with you, I want to go to the movies with you, and I want to have sex with you." No big deal. It's the contraceptive that allows me to do this. If I find myself pregnant, I'm shocked. If I find myself attached to you, I'm shocked. We all know all these really wonderful women who seem to be attached to these terrible men. We say, "How does this happen?" She can't let him go. She's engaging in sex with him-that's bonding.

Our society has this view that these two things are separate, and the Church says, "No, they're together." Now some people want to say, "Well, no, no, no. You've left something out here. Clearly, sex is for pleasure. And those who are having sex, they're doing what sex is for; they're having pleasure. And I'll say, "No, no, no. You've missed the point." There are lots of things that have pleasure attached to them. Pleasure is not the purpose; pleasure is the motive; and pleasure is the consequence; but it's not the purpose. As a matter of fact, God attached pleasure to the things that he really wants us to do that are necessary for our survival and for our happiness. So it's pleasurable to eat and it's pleasurable to drink and it's pleasurable to sleep, and it's pleasurable to have sexual intercourse. It's pleasurable. That's not the purpose. That's not the reason we eat; though some of us do. That's not the reason we sleep; though some of us do. But that's not the real purpose for these acts. They're restorative in many ways. They're necessary for our survival. So God attached pleasure to everything he wanted us to do for our well-being. But we have to do it at the right time, and in the right place, in the right manner, with the right person, etc., etc.-in the right way. Sure, eating is pleasurable, but there are limits to what you should be eating. Sexual intercourse is pleasurable, but there are limits to what you should be doing, and you have to seek that pleasure in accord with the nature and reality of what you're dealing with.

Harmful Aspects of Contraception

Babies are treated as burdens

In many ways the modern world is completely at odds with the Church in viewing these things. We live in a culture in which human life is considered of absolutely insignificant value. Otherwise we would not be able to have abortion clinics.

It's on this point of the value of human life that you can see this huge difference between the Catholic Church and the rest of the world, or Christians and the rest of the world, or most religious traditions and the rest of the world. We see every human life as a new soul, as a new soul that God has brought into this world, one that's meant to exist with God for an eternity. You see, we don't really see human life as our culture does. Our culture thinks, of course, people can have babies. That's OK. We somehow have this primitive need to reproduce ourselves, so it's all right to have two. Certainly, we can understand you wanting your boy and your girl. We understand that. But you have more than two, and everybody begins to look a little bit suspiciously at you. What are you doing? I mean, we now think of babies, really, as environmental hazards. As little threats to the rain forest. My friends have told me that they're pregnant with their third child and the receptionist will say, "Mrs. so-

and-so, your pregnancy test is positive. Do you plan to continue this pregnancy?" Do you plan to continue this pregnancy? Or, "Mrs. so and so, would you like to schedule a tubal at this time? Surely you and your husband aren't going to have more than three." Or, "Here's a stack of pamphlets" (that you get when delivering your third) on different contraceptives, because obviously you and your husband don't know what you're doing. You need some help here. And those who have a third child or more will tell you that in elevators, doctor's offices, or grocery stores, people will approach them and say the most astonishing things: "Don't you and your husband know how to control yourselves?" "Lady, are these all yours?" Or, "How many are you going to have?" And they're just astonished that anybody would want more than two children. You're allowed to have three if your first two are girls, or first two are boys because obviously you want your boy and your girl. But more than three is out of sight in our society.

But, of course, the Christian view is not this. The Christian view is that the whole universe actually exists for us. It's our support system. We're supposed to be here. God made the universe for human life. And he wants souls. He wants lots of them. "Go forth and multiply and fill the face of the earth." Now, a little piece of evidence for this is that most women will tell you that their greatest sexual desires are when they're ovulating. Just like God giving you a shove in the back. Go for it. This is what we want here-nature's way. God made nature.

Contraception excludes God from sex

This is the most amazing thing when you think about it. A sperm, this little sperm, it does not have an immortal soul. And the ovum, you see, it does not have an immortal soul. And when the two come together, where does that immortal soul come from? The sperm doesn't carry it. The egg doesn't carry it. Where does it come from? It comes from a new act of creation by God. In each act of conception, there needs to be a new act of creation by God. One of my priest friends says that "when a new human life is created, the whole universe is changed because something has come into existence which did not exist before and will exist forever." It's just like when God made the whole universe, he made something from nothing. And now, he has made a new soul from nothing. It didn't exist. There isn't a group of souls out there that are sort of waiting around for a landing place. God actually performs a new act of creation. So when male and female participate in the sexual act, they have opened up this arena which God has designed for bringing forth new human life. And when they contracept, they are slamming that door in God's face. They're saying, "We want to enjoy this pleasurable act that you gave us, but we do not want to let you perform your creative act." Now, I'm not saying that couples who are contracepting are conscious that this is what they're doing. But, this is what the act itself means. It's much like drinking a little bit of poison in your orange juice. You might not know it's there, but it will have its effect on you. You're not intentionally doing that, but that's what the act itself means.

So, in the first place, the Church objects to contraception because it refuses to let God perform his creative act in the arena in which he chose to do it. You know, God could have created new human life in different ways. In fact, he has before. He made the first man, the first male, out of mud. And he made the first female out of the rib of a rational creature. Now, this explains a lot when you think about it.

Our society has a great disregard for the value of human life. We do not understand what a great gift it is to participate in this act with God. God has chosen spouses as his vehicle for bringing forth new human life, and new human life is precisely what he wants in this universe. As a matter of fact, every one of us should be putting forth most of our efforts, all of our efforts, to getting ourselves to heaven and helping others. That's our job. And spouses play a major role in this by bringing forth that new human life that all of us are meant to be forming. It's an amazing task that God has given us. It's not something to be dallied with. It's not something that should happen as an accident. Having babies, as an accident is not in God's plan. Having babies is meant to be within the loving act of spouses because God wants the parents to love the children in the same way in which he loves all of us, which means in a committed and unconditional way. God loves us in a committed and unconditional way, and he wants parents that are committed to each other for a lifetime relationship who are going to love these children in an unconditional way. And our society can't begin to see that. Babies are just options, burdens, environmental hazards, and something to be taken down to the abortion clinic and terminated.

Treating fertility as a disease

Now, along with our disregard for the value of human life, there is an enormous disregard for fertility. We don't have any high estimation of fertility. Contraceptives are manifestly related to a hostility to fertility. Think about the word "contraception." It means "against the beginning," against the beginning of a new life, and what makes a new life possible is fertility. So we talk about "the Pill." It's one of my favorite words: "the Pill." And when do you take a pill? You take a pill when you're sick. But pregnancy is not a disease, and fertility is not a disease. Fertility is a healthy condition in an adult person. It's those who are infertile who need assistance in becoming fertile. They are the ones who need the medication. Fertility is a perfectly healthy condition. I would like to challenge doctors in this way-and anyone who wants to straighten me out

afterwards, you're welcome to have a shot at it. But when I think of a fifteen-year-old boy who goes in the doctor's office and says, "Doctor, you know, I want to get the girls. I want the girls," he says. "And the way to get the girls is to have big muscles. So would you please give me some steroids?" Any doctor worth his salt will say, "Son, get out of here. Join the wrestling team. Lift weights. Do push-ups. I'm not going to give you steroids. They're bad for you. They could ruin you. I'm not giving you steroids." But a fifteen-year-old girl trots into a doctor's office and says, "Doctor, I want to have sexual intercourse with my boyfriend or boyfriends." And the doctor says, "I'll write you a prescription." And it's a whole lot worse for her health psychologically and physically in the long run to be launched on the kind of lifestyle that a contraceptive launches her on than that steroid is for the young man; and I want to know what's going on here. Why has our culture told us that this makes sense? Why has our culture told us that this is a sensible thing for a doctor to do?

Harmful health consequences of contraception

There's a wonderful book out by Dr. Ellen Grant called *The Bitter Pill*. She was very much in on distributing contraceptives in the 60's in London, but she saw woman after woman coming in with different pathologies that she found were Pill-related- high blood pressure, blood clots, cysts in the breast, all sorts of things, lumps in the breast. So she said, "I'm not going to prescribe these anymore." She looked into this, and she discovered that when they were first testing for the Pill, they were trying to find a male contraceptive pill and a female contraceptive pill. And in the first study group of males, they found that there was some slight shrinkage in the testicles of one male, so they stopped all testing of the male contraceptive pill. You might notice that there is no such thing. In the first study group of females, three females died, and they just readjusted the dosage. Now, I don't know what that tells you, but it tells me that there's something sinister going on here. Women are still dying from the Pill.

If you look at the insert in any set of pills- you can get this from a pharmacist if you can't find it elsewhere- it says such things as the Pill will cause blood clots, high blood pressure, heart disease, greater increase of some kinds of cancer, infertility. Now, these are very small percentages where this happens, but there are some sixteen million women in the United States on the Pill. Sixteen million. And even a very small percentage is still a very large number of women- not to mention the day by day side effects. These always fascinate me. Most women (in fact 50% of women) who start on the Pill stop within the first year because of unpleasant side effects. So these side effects are really largely those of the sixteen million who continue; so you can imagine how bad they must be for the 50% who stop. But what are they? Most women complain of increased irritability, increased propensity to depression, weight gain, and a reduced libido. Now, I don't know about the rest of you women, but I've been looking for a pill that will make me more irritable, more depressed, help me gain weight, and reduce my libido so I can have sex. And I'm sure all the men here would like the woman he's dealing with to be more irritable, more depressed, to gain weight more easily, and to have a reduced libido, don't you? Now, why does the Pill do this to a woman? Well, the fact is that the Pill makes a woman's body think it's pregnant. It gives it hormones that are there the first couple months of pregnancy. Women in the first couple months of pregnancy get irritable, depressed, gain weight, and have a reduced libido. And women are in this condition when they're on the Pill, for week after week, month after month, year after year. It's an astonishing thing.

Abortive action of hormonal contraceptives

Now, I haven't told you the worst reality about the Pill, which is really that it's an abortifacient. I've been talking about it as though it were a contraceptive, but it also works as an abortifacient. At least it says so in the insert that's with the Pill. It says that it works in three different ways: One is it stops ovulation, and that's clear enough. If it makes your body think it's pregnant, it will not ovulate because when you're pregnant, you don't ovulate because you have a new baby growing inside of you and there's no reason to ovulate. Or if that doesn't work, if there happens to be breakthrough ovulation (and no woman knows when that's happening in her body). A woman doesn't know month by month how her hormones are acting, whether she's not ovulating when she's on the Pill or if there's breakthrough ovulation. And the Pill can change the viscosity of the mucus. There's mucus that helps the sperm get to the egg and a certain mucus that prohibits the sperm from getting to the egg. And it will change the mucus. Or it will prevent the nidation of the fertilized ovum; that means fertilized ovum- a new little human being working down the fallopian tube, trying to implant itself in its mother's uterine wall, nests...nidates. But it prohibits that, and the woman sloughs off the new fertilized ovum. A woman doesn't know how this is working in her system. Norplant works this way. The IUD works this way. Depo-Provera works this way.

And think of the other forms of contraception, true contraceptives, the barrier methods. It's a wonderful word. I want to make love to you, but I've got to get my barrier in place. Sounds a bit like making war not love. I've got to get a good spermicide. "Spermicide" means "kill the sperm." I want to make love to you, but I'm going to kill any sperm that come my way. There's something hostile in that act, but I claim it's hostile primarily to a female's fertility because, you know, it's the males who can have sex and not get pregnant. So what the Pill does and contraceptives do is make a female like a creature that can have sex and not get pregnant. But, that's not what we are. And it's not a great burden and a great defect to be a person who can

have sex and get pregnant. That happens to be a great gift. But, we treat it as though it were a great deficit-something that needs medication, devices, etc.

Contraception prevents total self-giving

So for now I've given you two reasons why the Church teaches that contraception is wrong. One is that it locks God out of his procreative act. The other is that it treats a natural gift of life and fertility as if these were not gifts, as if they were burdens and defects. The third thing is John Paul II's observation. He claims that contraception violates not only the procreative meaning of the sexual act, but also the unitive meaning of the sexual act. It prevents not only babies, but it also prevents bonding.

John Paul II has very profound and beautiful things to say about this, and I can only give you the briefest of descriptions of this. But he says that the sexual act is meant to be an act of total self-giving. You want to give everything you've got to this person. When you're withholding your fertility, you're withholding something that belongs in this action; it actually belongs there. And to withhold it means that you're not giving of yourself completely. Now I compare contraceptives to someone who says, "You're having a bad hair day. Would you mind putting a paper bag over your head? I want to make love to you, but I can't stand looking at that hair. It's driving me crazy." That's what a condom is, and that's what a contraceptive is. It says "I love you, but I don't want a very important part of yourself here, something that actually belongs in this act."

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 the 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. First of all, we'd be bringing forth a new immortal soul, and we have an immortal link through this immortal soul that wouldn't exist if we hadn't engaged in this act. It also 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. "I want to have sex with you," we say that with the greatest of casualness. "I want to have babies with you," if you know what you're saying, it's an incredible act. So you have this incredible bond with a person when all of your acts of sexual intercourse leave open the ordination to procreation.

The Alternative: Natural Family Planning

The Difference between Natural Family Planning and Contraception

Using good means for good ends

And that moves me to my last point: the differences between contraception and Natural Family Planning. A lot of people say, "What's the difference?" You have two couples who don't want to have a baby and want to have sex, and they're doing the same thing. They're trying to have sex without trying to have babies, without wanting to have babies. That's a very common confusion and a very common complaint. I'm going to try to help you think about it. The first thing I want to say to such people is, "Well, if contraception and Natural Family Planning are the same, why not just use Natural Family Planning?" And you know what they say, "But that would be completely different. I'd have to change everything." I say, "Wait a second. You just told me there's no difference, and now you tell me it would be completely different." But, of course, what they mean is that there's no moral difference, but they recognize there'd be an enormous lifestyle difference. I say, "If there's an enormous lifestyle difference, then that may be a hint that there's some kind of moral difference as well." At first, I try to point out to them this simple principle in ethics that the ends do not justify the means. Stated another way: You must have good means to good ends. Not only must your goal be good, but also the way you get there must be good. So you have a couple who doesn't want a child for probably a very good reason—a couple who is contracepting. A couple using Natural Family Planning can also not want a child at this point for a very good reason. But one uses contraception and one uses Natural Family Planning. It's just like two individuals who want to support their family. One robs a bank and one gets a job. I want to say they're both doing the same thing—they're both supporting their family, but they've chosen very different means.

I've tried to indicate why I think contraception is wrong. It says no to God in his creative act. It says fertility is a bad condition as opposed to a wonderful condition. It puts a wedge between the giving between a husband and wife. And it has dreadful consequences for society. I want to claim that Natural Family Planning is not open to those same kinds of objections. It does not do those same things.

Fear of NFP

Effectiveness of NFP

Now most couples who are frightened about using Natural Family Planning (and "frightened" is the right word); they are frightened of using Natural Family Planning and largely for two reasons. One is they think it doesn't work. I would like to show all of you an article from the British Medical Journal, September 18th, 1993, where a doctor reviews the evidence on Natural Family Planning and says it's more effective than the most effective contraceptive. More effective! He cites studies from, of all places, Calcutta. And you know who it is who is teaching Natural Family Planning in Calcutta? This diminutive Catholic nun. He's found out that most of these are Muslims and Hindus to whom she teaches this. And they have what is called a virtual zero pregnancy rate, a 0.004 pregnancy rate.

Not the Rhythm Method

But that doesn't seem to convince people. They're thinking of the old "rhythm method," some 27% ineffective. And you have to tell them there's a huge difference between the rhythm method and the modern methods of Natural Family Planning. I can give a review course on them in a minute, but I'm talking about the moral business here.

Fear of abstinence

The second is they're afraid of the abstinence. They think the abstinence will just be too hard. It's mostly the women who are afraid of it, and they're afraid of it because of the males. They think, "my husband will get too irritable, he'll get too grumpy. He'll be removed and distant and won't be affectionate and will stay away from me during that time. How will we make up our fights? And how will we talk? I'm nervous about what's going to happen." And men feel greatly deprived. "Who can go that long? Who can go seven to twelve days? It's not right. That's not what I got married for."

My observation is this: that those who have used contraception before marriage and used contraception within marriage, are very frightened of the abstinence because sex has become key to their relationship. And they think that when you take the sex out of a relationship, where's the love going to be? Where's the intimacy going to be?

Blessings of NFP

Abstinence is a way of expressing love

But couples who've abstained before marriage have little or no problem with Natural Family Planning. Little or no problem. And that's for a very good reason, because they think that abstinence is a way of expressing love. It's not this huge deprivation, because the reason that they abstained before marriage was not because they weren't attracted to each other, not because they didn't have abundant opportunity, not because they weren't madly in love with each other and the hormones were raging, but because they loved each other. And they said, "I'm not going to have sex with you before marriage because I love you. I don't want to hurt you. I don't want to have a stronger commitment than I've made here. I don't want to put us in danger of having a baby when we haven't really prepared for that baby. Marriage is preparation for those bonds, and marriage is preparation for that baby. And I love you, and I can wait. That's how much I love you." Within marriage, abstinence has that same aspect. "It's not a good idea for us to have a child right now. We can abstain. We did it before. We know how to show our affection at this time. We know how to be loving to each other at this time because we've done it before." And they can do it.

Increased respect for self and spouse

Women who use Natural Family Planning have an amazing sense of self-respect and well-being. They think that their fertility is revered by their husbands, and they think they've got themselves particularly good husbands. "I've got my husband who's particularly good. He's a wonderful man. He's got high moral standards. He doesn't treat me like a sex object. I can trust him. He likes me even when we're not having sex together. He's a great guy. I got myself a good one." And males have a great reverence for their wives. They don't want to damage her body. They don't want her to take all these pills and use these devices. They say, "No. I love her. I wouldn't put her through those risks. And this willingness to have a baby for me, that's a wonderful thing. What a woman puts herself through! And I am going to respect that." So there is this deep bond between the two of them.

Respect for God

And it doesn't say no to God. You see, it respects a woman's fertility, has no bad social consequences (in fact, wonderful ones-there's almost a non-existent divorce rate among couples using Natural Family Planning). It doesn't say no to God because God has said, "I want to be there at the fertile time. I made the fertile time for bringing forth new human life. If you engage in this act, I want my option of making new human life. But I gave you a half of a month, three quarters of a month, where you're infertile, and if you want to pursue the bonding power of the sexual act without babies, do it then. I'm asleep. I'm out of town. I don't expect to be invited at that time. I'm not around. You can't even do it. I won't come. I can't. I made your body in a certain way." There's no saying no to God. There's respecting the fertility as if it's kind of sacred ground. You don't walk there unless you're prepared for the consequences.

People tell you Natural Family Planning is much like dieting. We have this phenomenon now of Bulimia. People eat and they throw up. That's a bit like contraception. You want the pleasure, but you don't want the consequences. You engage in the act, and you violate the act. Whereas, Natural Family Planning is a lot like dieting, but a lot better. When you diet, you can't eat the chocolate cake; you have carrots and celery. Sex during the infertile time apparently is a lot better than carrots and celery. Your options are better. There's a pinch in it. It's difficult, but it's not impossible, and it does great things for marriage.

Enhanced Communication

Those who use Natural Family Planning communicate better with each other. I've always wondered what that meant. I've figured this out, what they're talking about. It goes something like this. They have this conversation once a month, maybe twelve times a year. It happens on that weekend when the mother-in-law takes the children or you have a nice little business trip, and you're looking forward to this nice weekend together. And the woman gets up in the morning and she says, "Darling, I'm afraid I've entered the fertile phase." So there's this deflation, this disappointment. The weekend's not going to be everything we thought it would be.

This little conversation ensues which usually starts with the question, "Why are we doing this? Why are we abstaining?" And sometimes that provokes a conversation about contraception and why or why not, but usually that's settled. And usually the question means, "Why did we decide it's not a good idea to have a baby? Why are we abstaining?" The husband might say, "The reason we decided not to have a baby right now is you said you're too tired. You've got too many little ones or you've got a job now and you're really fatigued and you really can't imagine having another child. Are you still tired?" And she might say, "Well, no. As a matter of fact, I'm not too tired right now. The younger one's a little bit older and you know I think I might be able to handle another baby. Let's take a risk. Let's really enjoy this day in the way we planned." Or she might say, "Of course I'm still tired. You never help. You said you'd give the kids a bath. You don't give them a bath. You said you'd let me have Saturday afternoons free. I've never had a Saturday afternoon free. Of course I'm still tired." And he might say, "I'll start bathing them tomorrow, dear." Or she might say, "The reason we're not having a child right now is you said that your financial burdens are too great. You can't imagine supporting the family we already have, let alone any more. Are you still financially burdened?" And he might say, "Well, no, I'm not. We refinanced the house, and I was kind-of panicking. I'm getting a promotion. Things are OK. Let's take a risk." Or he might say, "Of course I'm still financially burdened. Your friend, Jane, gets a fence around the house; you have to have a fence around the house. Your friend, Jane, gets a new kitchen; you need a new kitchen. Your friend, Jane, gets new dishes, you need new dishes." And she might say, "I don't need those new dishes." But the important thing is that they're having this conversation, and it's a conversation that's focused around the most important things, which is why they're having babies and why they are not having babies. And how their life is going together and are they sharing the burdens or not.

And couples using contraception tell me that they can go for a very long time without having that conversation. They can say, "We're not going to have babies for another three to five years, and we'll talk about it then," and that's when they talk about it. And they go apart and to their jobs and come back for dinner and go to jobs and come back for dinner. And that's about what it is.

So I'm saying Natural Family Planning does not have bad social consequences. It's very difficult to use outside of marriage. It does not say no to God in his procreative act. It treasures a woman's fertility, and it enhances, not alienates the relationship between spouses. It is not subject to the same objections as contraception.

Closing: Janet's \$1,000 Offer

Now, I'll close with one thing here. I've taken to giving talks on premarital sex to my students with some frequency, and I've discovered that they are absolutely terrified at the notion of divorce. They hate divorce, because they've either been children of divorced households and have experienced the pain and trauma themselves or they've seen their friends go through it, and they don't want it. When they get married, they want to be married for good, and they're not all convinced it can be because they've seen so much divorce around them.

I make them this offer: I say I will give them a thousand dollars if they get divorced if they followed the formula that I tell them. I really like to tell people what to do, and this is what I tell them to do. I say, "First of all, I'm glad you've heard my talk. That's not necessary, but it helps. These are the four things you need to do if you want to get married and never get divorced. First of all, you can't have sex before marriage. If you've started, stop. And stop for at least a year and a half to two years before you get married, and start thinking about sex and what it's all about and why it's a good idea not to have sex before you get married. Second, when you get married, get married in a church, go to church every Sunday, and pray while you're there. Get married in a church and go to church. Third, use Natural Family Planning and do not contracept within marriage. And fourth, tithe-give ten percent of your money to church or charity." I said, "If you get God, sex, and money in the right place, everything else is easy."

So I've gone on and on and on as I promised. I'm only through about the second step in the twelve-step program in our non-stop talkers support group. But I would like to say, our culture thinks that contraception is one of the greatest things going. I think it's very hard to escape that perspective in the culture in which we live. But when one sees the deeper reality that the Church sees, you can begin to see why the Church has an explanation for the chaos that has resulted as a result of a contraceptive society; and the rest of the world can't even see the chaos, let alone know what the causal connections are. So I thank you very much, and I'd like to take any questions you might have.

Thank you for being so patient.

Questions & Answers

Priests and Contraception

How am I received by the Catholic clergy? Some studies show that only 35% of Catholic priests support the Church's teaching on this. I've seen as high as 47%. I expect it's as low as 35% or lower. I could be cynical. I think there are reasons for that—reasons why they might not be as culpable as we might judge them to be. In 1960, I said 66% of Catholics were living by the Church's teaching. Priests who were trained before *Humanae Vitae* were not trained to defend the Church's teaching or explain it. They were simply taught to assert it and Catholics, for the most part, accepted it. After 1968, very quickly dissenters got control over most of the seminaries, and most priests taught after 1968 were taught that the Church was going to change its teaching on this someday and that Catholics in good conscience could dissent from the Church if their conscience told them this was alright. That's a whole other question, I mean, how many Catholics have really consulted their conscience on this issue, but let's leave it at that. So, I'm speaking to an audience that has been, largely for twenty-five years actually, doing what they were told—telling people that contraception is alright if their consciences tell them so.

And I can kind of feel a real hesitancy when I start out, to say the least; in fact, usually the priests who support the Church's teaching, I can identify them quite quickly. They're marginalized, and they actually sit on the margin. I can find them. I often find that about twenty minutes into my talk, I sense this real drop of certain defenses (and this could be entirely subjective on my part) but it's what I experience. And I sort of sense like, "Alright, there's something here. I better listen to this." And about another forty-five minutes into the talk, I get this sense like, "Whoa! She's really starting to make sense. Maybe I'd better be nicer to those couples who use Natural Family Planning and give them more support." And that's about as far as I think I get sometimes. I'm much more confident about the upcoming clergy—those under forty years of age. I've found that they are much more likely to be supportive of the Church's teaching on this topic, partly because they have seen the consequences of a contraceptive culture. Many of these young men have stood on the picket lines protesting abortion, and you don't have to stand on that line for long to make the connection between contraception and abortion, and then other things start to unfold from that. And a lot of them are much more inclined to think that this Pope has some wisdom and are ready to line up behind him, and he has really made this a major part of his pontificate.

So, I think there's hope in both respects. I think, the older priests—priests have become priests because they want to lay down their lives and serve others. They're good souls. And their permitting contraception is not because they want to lead people down the garden path, because they are actually doing what they've been taught, for the most part, and I think it's up to the laity to go a long way in helping them see what contraceptives have done to marriages.

Loss of Grace in Marriages Due to Contraception

Hindering full involvement in Church life

Is there an impact of the loss of grace on marriages? I think obviously that 50% of marriages ending in divorce, among Catholics as well as the rest of the population, suggests that there's an impact of the loss of grace in this. I think that those

who contracept, even if they're confident that what they're doing is right, they can't feel quite as enthusiastic about their Church as otherwise. They can't be quite racing to be full-fledged members of this Church. Many of them are very active in their parishes and love their Church, but they've got this sort of, "My Church teaches something that's wrong." And you can't have that full embrace. You're not confessing this because you don't think it's wrong. You'll not get the healing graces and the empowering graces from confession that you would get. I think couples who use Natural Family Planning will tell you that prayer and the sacraments are at the heart of what they do. They need that help to be faithful to what they believe and to raise the children that they have. It's always hard to measure the impact of grace; I mean, it's an unseen reality. It's there, but to measure it...But, it can be seen as far as what is happening with marriages. I think that if you're around couples who use Natural Family Planning, you really do sense a quite spectacular closeness that they have and self-respect and mutual admiration that I think is not as often clearly there in couples who contracept.

And I think most contraceptors are what I would call subjectively innocent. They're doing something that is objectively wrong, but they are not getting up in the morning and saying, "I want to perform an offense against God, I want to be hostile to my fertility, and I don't want to give myself to my spouse completely." They're not saying that, but again, their act says that; and I think they are going to be suffering harmful consequences from what they do and kind of be surprised at this.

Distorting married life

Let me give this anecdote. I have a friend who has seven brothers and sisters. They were all raised Catholic and very few of them are practicing Catholics now and all of them are contraceptors except one couple. The couple that is not contracepting, using Natural Family Planning, has four children, all planned, etc. The other couples, again, have no children, all contracepting, two income households, lots of disposable income, lots of time for romance and fun. And one night the eight of them were having a very open discussion about their sex lives. And all of the women, the contracepting women, were complaining that they felt that they were just being used in the sexual act. They felt that this was just one more thing that was expected of them, and they felt used. And the men were complaining. They were complaining that they had been reduced to begging for sex, which they found demeaning, and that they were engaging in sex with a woman who just wasn't all that engaged. She might just as well be watching TV. The couple using Natural Family Planning were kind of looking at each other quizzically and saying, "What are they talking about? Is sex not interesting? Is sex not as interesting as TV? Begging for sex? I don't know what this is all about." They're doing just fine.

Now, if you were to look at these couples: I mean the contracepting couples-two incomes, fitness clubs, designer clothes; the couple with the four children-getting pudgy, gray, financially stressed, not as much sleep, etc. Say um, which couples are having a satisfying sex life? It's amazing, but it's the opposite of what one would expect. And I think there's something there, in Natural Family Planning, that causes this kind of closeness and love between a couple that is really the heart and soul of what makes sex good. It's not having a designer body and designer clothes and lots of disposable income. That won't buy you a good sex life. It's really trust and love and tenderness and really knowing and communicating with the individual with whom you are having sex. And that's what Natural Family Planning brings about.

And so, these contracepting couples, to suggest to them that contraception is the problem, it would be astonishing for them to think that that might be the problem. But it seems to me again there is good reason to think that maybe, in fact, that is what is making things flat in their relationship.

Abstinence and Chastity

Danger of sexually transmitted diseases

Now the abstinence message is largely: just refrain-largely because of unpleasant consequences of some sexually transmitted diseases-which, of course, should not be underestimated. You certainly have the death dealing AIDS. I think there are some thirty-five other strains now of sexually transmitted diseases, which are extremely damaging. There's apparently this huge increase in the amount of infertility, which is most traceable to these sexually transmitted diseases because women are having sex with more than one partner, getting these diseases, having scarring in their fallopian tubes, etc. All these things young people should know. They definitely should know all these things.

But your notion is that chastity is something different from abstinence. And chastity really is understanding what your sexual powers are for and, in a certain sense, ordering your life in such a way that those sexual powers will be reserved to the time when it's appropriate. This is something that Natural Family Planning, I think, really helps with.

How our culture fosters impersonal sex within marriage

This happens more often to the male individual, though it can also happen to the female. He's been at the office all day long, he's been assaulted by this when he drives to work, he turns on the TV, people tell dirty jokes, there are scantily clad women in the office place, and his imagination starts to run. And all day long, he's fantasizing about some woman. He comes home at night, and he's really ready to go. And there's the female in the kitchen, you see, who's quasi available. And now he has sex with this woman. He doesn't make love to this woman. He has sex with this woman. He's fantasizing about some other woman, hasn't thought about his wife all day long. And Natural Family Planning puts a kind of a stop to that because, you see, you're going to have to abstain some seven to twelve days a month, and you can't come home like that. So you've got to start shutting these things out. You've got to say, "I don't want to listen to that. I don't want to see this. I don't want to look at this magazine. I don't want to watch this movie because it fills me with thoughts that I'm not going to be able to act upon, and they're not fair to my wife anyway. I've started to appreciate this complex woman that I'm dealing with, and when I make love, I want to make love to her."

NFP helps focus sex as a support to the marriage relationship

And John Paul II says that Natural Family Planning brings about, what he calls, the virtue of self-mastery, which is the same as the virtue of chastity. And he says it actually makes people better lovers because now they're making love to the person they love rather than to some fantasy. Instead of satisfying some sexual urge, they can control those sexual urges, and now they're acting upon a love impulse and not a sex impulse. I think that's what young people have to learn is that they are virtually assaulted by their culture. Not to mention, I think young people need to learn about original sin: that all of us have disordered appetites in almost every angle of our life. We want to eat more, sleep more, drink more, and have more sex than is good for us-in ways, with people, etc., that aren't good. That's a result of our fallen nature. We can expect this, so we shouldn't be startled and astonished and upset that these things are happening to us. It's part of the course of things. But we have to learn to re-order ourselves. I think that young people need to say, "Yes, this is going to happen to you. A lot of it's not your fault. It's the fault of your culture. The other problem is you're a human being. But you have to work at this, and the rewards are great."

Strong positive effects of chastity before marriage

The couples I've known who've gotten married and have been chaste before marriage have this kind of innocence and euphoria in marriage which is absolutely enviable. There is real trusting of each other and a real sense that sex is clean and not dirty. That's one thing that happens with premarital sex-people often get to think of sex as being something dirty. It's something naughty. It's something you sneak around and do. Whereas couples who wait until they get married, for them sex is good, it's clean, it's pure, it's something I saved for this person. So all of that, that young people don't know what they're missing out on when they're letting culture just sweep them along. I think the young people just have not been led by adults. They've been led by adults down the garden path. And we've gone down some of those garden paths, some of those dead ends, and we need to warn them: "It's not any good, we tried that. Don't you try it, you'll see." And I think chastity is very different from the simple abstinence message. And our culture doesn't know how to teach abstinence because every single moment of the day, it works against abstinence, I mean chastity.

Spreading the Message about Contraception

It's very hard to evangelize, especially one's own friends and family. But a good way of doing it is to start giving them tapes and documents. "Listen to this, read this," instead of talking yourself. And say, "After you've read this and listened to this, let's talk." I think that's the first step, just opening up a line of communication with a lot of people about this. Because, as I said, very few people have reflected on this, and understandably so, because nothing provokes them to reflect upon it. Few Catholics have ever read any encyclical, let alone *Humanae Vitae*. We are the most literate society in the history of mankind, but we read *Newsweek* and *Consumer's Report* and *People Magazine* and never a Church encyclical. Well, this is a good one to start with. And *Familiaris Consortio* is great. They're all great. Once you get started, you start to learn how to wade through them and they're wonderful. So, I would start with that. Study groups, you have friends and especially young people. Let's meet once every other week and go through *Familiaris Consortio* together. Get together and read it, page by page. Don't make people read it ahead of time. Get together, read two pages and talk about it. Married couples do the same thing. Invite some of your friends in and say, "Let's read this together." You'll be amazed at what emerges from sessions like that. That's only one small suggestion, but I'm sure seminarians like you are going to make the difference for us.

Thank you all very much.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM USE

Teachers may adapt this study guide to any time frame and setting. It has been designed for Religion, Health, Pre-Cana, RCIA, and CCD classes, and is especially suitable for marriage and family classes. The focus and questions are intended to evoke higher level thinking skills, at the high school and adult level. A five-day presentation is recommended (approximately 15-20 minutes of "Contraception: Why Not" each day followed by discussion).

Here is a suggested daily format:

	Video	Audio
Day 1: "The Historical Context" and "The Church's Response"	11 mins	16 mins
Day 2: "Societal Impact"	14 mins	14 mins
Day 3: "The Church's Position"	19 mins	22 mins
Day 4: "Natural Family Planning and the "Formula for Success"	10 mins	13 mins
Day 5: "Questions and Answers"	12 mins	13 mins

Before showing this video, distribute the Study Questions to the students and preview each set of questions before showing related sections of the video or before listening to related sections of the audio recording, respectively. To encourage active viewing, require students to record answers while viewing the video. Review these questions and answers. Divide into small groups for discussion. A recorder from each group may share responses with the entire class. Proceed with this format each day.

We at One More Soul welcome your feedback with regard to the usefulness of these "Suggestions for Classroom Use." Please contact us at (800) 307-7685 or at omsoul@omsoul.com.

Note: All of these study materials are available at <http://www.omsoul.com/pamview.phtml?idnum=135>.
Please feel free to copy them for your own use.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Historical Context

1. List reasons why contraception was less widely practiced (compared to today) prior to the 1960's.
2. How was the issue of contraception viewed by Christian churches prior to the 1960's?
3. How was the issue of contraception viewed by the Roman Catholic Church prior to the 1960's?
4. What event revolutionized contraception in the early 1960's?
5. In what ways did society think that the use of contraception would be beneficial?

The Church's Response

1. What document issued by the Roman Catholic hierarchy has established our position on contraception after Vatican II? Name the author of the document and the year it was written.

2. Did the content of this document represent new thinking on the part of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to the use of contraception?
3. What did the author of this document predict would be the effects of widespread use of contraception?

Societal Impact

1. What effects has the widespread use of contraception had on society?
2. According to Dr. Smith, specifically how has the increased prevalence of premarital sex impacted marriage?

Study Questions continued

3. As presented by Dr. Smith, how did Pope Paul VI arrive at his predictions regarding widespread contraception?

The Church's Position

1. What is the basis for the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on human sexuality?
2. According to Dr. Smith, what is the nature and meaning of sexual intercourse?
3. What are the three main objections of the Roman Catholic Church to the use of contraceptives?

NFP and the "Formula for Success"

1. According to Dr. Smith, what are the main differences between Natural Family Planning and contraception?
2. State the four components of Dr. Smith's "Formula for Success in Marriage."

Audience Questions and Answers

1. Why have many older priests (over 40) permitted contraception by telling people that contraception is alright if their consciences tell them so?
2. How is there a loss of grace in marriages due to contraception?
3. Chastity is understanding what your sexual powers are for and, in a certain sense, ordering your life in such a way that those sexual powers will be reserved to the time when it's appropriate. How are chastity and NFP related?
4. What is a good way to evangelize (share) the message about contraception?

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Historical Context

Content Questions:

1. List reasons why contraception was less widely practiced (compared to today) prior to the 1960's.
 - a. No good contraceptives were available.

b. Protestant legislators had passed laws banning contraceptive use. Contraceptives were regarded as aiding sexual license (Griswold v. Connecticut overthrew these laws based on a "right to privacy" in 1965).

c. Among Catholics, obedience was viewed as a virtue. In 1960, 66% of Catholics were obedient. Now only 4% comply with Church teaching.

2. How was the issue of contraception viewed by Christian churches prior to the 1960's?

Every Christian Church taught that contraception was wrong until the 1930 Anglican Church's Lambeth Conference.

3. How was the issue of contraception viewed by the Roman Catholic Church prior to the 1960's?

In 1930, Pope Pius XI reiterated constant Church teaching that contraception was wrong in his encyclical Casti Connubii ("On Christian Marriage"). Pope Paul VI reaffirmed Church teaching in *Humanae Vitae* (1968).

4. What event revolutionized contraception in the early 1960's?

"The Pill" became available as a much more dependable and less intrusive contraceptive.

5. In what ways did society think that the use of contraception would be beneficial?

a. Over-population scare - Malthus predicted a geometric increase in population vs. arithmetic increase in food.

b. Feminism - More women could enter the work force.

c. Better marriages - Contraception would eliminate the fear of pregnancy, thus promoting happier marriages.

d. There would be an enormous decrease in unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

For additional discussion:

1. Before 1960, why do you think Christian Churches and American legislators, who reflected society in general, thought that contraceptives aided sexual license?

They thought contraception would make it far too easy to be involved in adultery, fornication, etc.

2. Dr. Smith stated that Catholics viewed obedience as a virtue in the past. How do you think most Catholics view obedience these days?

Catholics used to accept what their Church taught simply because it taught it. Today many Catholics pick and choose what to obey of the Church's teaching. They may rationalize the use of contraception, for instance, by stating that the Church is archaic and out of touch with the modern world. They don't like the Church infringing on their lifestyles. Their rebellion often is due to the fact that they do not know about or understand the Church's teaching on life-giving love and the marital bond.

3. Were society's predictions regarding contraception correct? Why or why not? Examine each prediction separately.

Society's predictions regarding contraception:

a. Contraceptives would eliminate overpopulation problems-Population has increased greatly, but the problems from population have not materialized. We have more than enough food and resources to provide for the world's population. Poor distribution of resources, not population, is the real problem.

b. Contraceptives would afford women more opportunity in the work place-Women now outnumber men in the workplace, but single women with children are still our largest poverty class.

c. Contraceptives would allow for happier marriages-Greatly increased rates of divorce are a strong indication of less happiness in marriage, not more.

d. Contraceptive sex would result in fewer unwanted pregnancies-Although it seems plausible that there would be fewer unwanted pregnancies and subsequently fewer abortions, this has not been the case. Actually there have been significant increases in the numbers of unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

The Church's Response

Content Questions:

1. What document issued by the Roman Catholic hierarchy has established our position on contraception after Vatican II? Name the author of the document and the year it was written.

Humanae Vitae - Pope Paul VI, 1968

2. Did the content of this document represent new thinking on the part of the Roman Catholic Church in relation to the use of contraception?

No, it reiterated the Church's constant teaching.

3. What did the author of this document predict would be the effects of widespread use of contraception?

a. General lowering of morality (Example: crime, TV, promiscuity, etc.)

b. General disregard for psychological and physical well-being of women by men (Example: pornography, increase in poverty, increase in sexual abuse).

c. Governments' use of coercive means of family planning (Example: China, Cairo conference).

d. Treating bodies as machines - lose respect for body as integral with soul (Example: "designer genes" - buy a baby, surrogate mothers, in-vitro fertilization).

"Tell me we're not treating our bodies like machines."

STOP - audio 11 mins/video 16 mins

For additional discussion:

1. Judge the accuracy of the Pope's predictions by comparing the state of American society today to that of the 1960's. For example, how is the content of TV shows different? Do you agree that he was on target? Why or why not?

Pope Paul VI's predictions were accurate. The following have come to pass:

a. the general lowering of morality in society, as exhibited by the acceptance of lewd and crude TV programming, rises in cohabitation and homosexuality, etc.

b. the general disregard for the physical and psychological well-being of females by males, as exhibited by the huge outbreak of sexual abuse of women; a larger number of single women with children living at the poverty level; increased rates of divorce, abortion, out of wedlock sexual relations and consequent births.

c. coercive contraceptive programs imposed by developed and lesser developed countries.

d. the treatment of our bodies as machines by using reproductive technologies such as surrogate motherhood, in vitro fertilization, etc.

2. How did Dr. Smith tie in the predictions of Pope Paul VI to the use of contraceptives? Examine each prediction separately.

a. Easier access to contraceptives did in fact cause huge increases in adultery, fornication, cohabitation, etc.

b. Cohabitation and pre-marital sex have led to increases in unwanted pregnancies and divorce of married couples. More and more people are being scarred by sexual chaos in our society, including children devastated by divorce and the loss of their innocence. Contraception helps a man use a woman without regard to her needs or desires.

c. Beyond replacement levels (on average 2.2 children per woman) additional children are seen as environmental hazards competing for limited resources. Therefore, contraception, sterilization, and abortion are touted as necessary (evils) to avoiding an overpopulation problem. Ready access to contraceptives made it easy for governments to create oppressive population control programs.

d. On one hand, our culture considers it OK to eliminate large portions of future generations through the use of contraceptives, sterilization, and abortion. On the other hand, many people suffering with infertility problems (often a result of using the Pill for a number of years or having abortions) are resorting to in vitro fertilization, etc. for the purpose of posterity. Once we are used to controlling our fertility with contraceptives, other dehumanizing reproductive processes are similarly attractive.

Societal Impact

Content Questions:

1. What effects has the widespread use of contraception had on society?

a. Divorce rate doubled in 10 years (1965: 25% to 1975: 50%)-Demographer Robert Michael noted that the use rate of contraceptives paralleled the divorce rate. This only leveled off when contraceptives saturated the market. Michael claims that 45% of the increase in divorce is due to increased use of contraceptives.

b. Fewer children later in marriage-(Children earlier in marriage help encourage couples to work out problems that arise in early marriage; children necessitate selflessness; makes each spouse a better person.)

c. Much more adultery (easier to have affairs when the perception is that there's no possibility of a baby)

d. Women are more financially independent.

e. More unwanted babies-In 1960, 6% of white babies were born out of wedlock, now it's 22%. In 1960, 22% of black babies were born out of wedlock, now it's 68%.

f. More abortions-There are enormously more surgical abortions with reports from abortionists and pregnancy support centers indicating 50-70% of abortions are done for women who claim they were using contraception). According to the Supreme Court, "For two decades, couples have based their intimate relationships on the availability of abortion should contraception fail (Planned Parenthood v. Casey, 1992)."

2. According to Dr. Smith, specifically how has the increased prevalence of premarital sex impacted marriage?

Pre-marital sex means that more people have been lied to and experienced broken promises. There is more loss of trust in others and self. (Can I keep a commitment?) Also, a sexual relationship obscures one's judgment in choosing a spouse.

3. As presented by Dr. Smith, how did Pope Paul VI arrive at his predictions regarding widespread contraception?

He had the history of Church teaching behind him. He was guided by Church teaching on Natural Law. In addition, the Holy Spirit guided him.

"It has turned out to be dead wrong."

STOP - audio 14 mins/video 14 mins

For additional discussion:

1. Why is a sense of trust so essential to marriage? How can pre-marital sex erode a sense of trust or the ability to make a commitment?

Trust is essential in a marriage because you must have faith that your spouse will be committed to you in a life-long relationship.

Pre-marital sex is not good for a marriage. Trust is broken after people have experienced lies and broken promises. People carry baggage of mistrust and broken relationship with them. Hence it becomes harder for people to commit to another person (in marriage) when they don't trust their partner or even themselves to live up to that commitment.

2. According to the Supreme Court (Planned Parenthood v. Casey), what is the link between contraception and abortion?

The Supreme Court decision Planned Parenthood v. Casey effectively stated that we must have abortion because we have contraception. In other words, the decision to contracept requires that abortion be the failsafe should contraceptives fail.

3. As defined in the video, contraception means "against the beginning." What similarities in attitude would you expect in those who favor the availability of contraception and abortion?

Most couples pursue "sex without consequence," believe that sex was made for pleasure instead of babies and bonding, and that abortion is an acceptable form of birth control. They believe that too many children can be hazardous to the environment; hence they are treated as expendable resources. The availability of abortion signifies a devaluation of human life. Also, contraception excludes God from the sexual act.

The Church's Position

Content Questions:

1. What is the basis for the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on human sexuality?

Natural Law: If you want things to prosper, you have to act in accord with their nature.

2. According to Dr. Smith, what is the nature and meaning of sexual intercourse?

Sexual intercourse is for babies and bonding. The Catholic Church bases this idea on simple reasoning: Why do we have sex? What is its purpose? To bring husband and wife closer together (unitive) and to bring babies into the world (procreative). Each act of intercourse needs to be open to both. Pleasure is not the purpose of sex; it's the motive or consequence of sex, as pleasure is not the purpose of eating or sleeping.

3. What are the three main objections of the Roman Catholic Church to the use of contraceptives?

a. Contraceptives do not let God perform His creative act in the "arena" he designed for it. New human life is His desire. Children are infinitely precious, not "options," "burdens," or "environmental hazards."

b. The contraceptive mentality implies (and acts in) hostility to fertility. Pregnancy is treated as a disease for which we need "the Pill." Fertility, however, is a healthy state and the Pill often has unhealthy side effects for women. (Example: blood clots, heart disease, irritability, weight gain, depression, reduced libido).

c. Contraception also violates the unitive meaning of the sexual act - "I love you, but not that part of you." You are withholding part of yourself, a part that belongs in an act meant to be totally self-giving.

"...when all of your acts of sexual intercourse leave open the ordination to procreation."

STOP - audio 19 mins/video 22 mins

For additional discussion:

1. From the videotape/audio, there seems to be a lack of concern in our society for women's health, especially when it comes to her fertility. Who do you think are more burdened with the consequences of contraceptive use and contraceptive failure, women or men? Why? If you add this to the negative consequences of divorce (sharp increase in poverty level for women and children), what can you conclude about the liberating effect of the Pill on women?

Women are more burdened with the consequences of contraceptive use and contraceptive failure because they are the ones harmed physically, emotionally, and spiritually by chemicals, STDs, and relationships that relegate them to being used as sexual objects. When contraceptives fail and children are conceived, abortion becomes an unfortunate and devastating option. Women who choose to parent alone are more likely to live in poverty with their children. Hence the Pill actually enslaves women to an unhealthy lifestyle, though it is touted as "liberating" women.

2. How does the Pill work as an abortifacient? What ramifications does this fact alone have on the morality of its use?

The Pill inhibits implantation of the fertilized ovum (by thinning the uterine lining) or irritates the endometrium so that the embryo sloughs off. Use of hormonal contraception therefore causes unacceptable danger to the lives of very young children.

Natural Family Planning

Content Question:

According to Dr. Smith, what are the main differences between Natural Family Planning and contraception?

<u>NFP</u>	<u>Contraception</u>
Open to God during intercourse	Prevents God's creative power during act
No bad social consequences	Increased divorce, more unwanted babies, more abortions, unhealthy side effects
Enhances relationship	Interferes with bonding aspect of sex
Respects fertility	Hostile to fertility

For additional discussion:

Dr. Smith compares contraceptive use to bulimia, and NFP to dieting. What comparisons can you draw between each of these?

NFP, like dieting, involves postponing gratification at times. Contraception, like Bulimia involves gratification at any time, but the results of that gratification must be avoided at all costs. Using this analogy, you could say that most

couples would rather lose weight by making themselves vomit rather than by dieting, thus employing more risky and unnatural behavior.

"Formula for Success"

Content Question:

State the four components of Dr Smith's "Formula for Success in Marriage."

- a. No sex before marriage. If you are sexually active, stop for a year or two years before getting married.
- b. Get married in a church, and go to church regularly.
- c. Use NFP, not contraceptives.
- d. Tithe. (Give 10% of your income to charities and/or church)
- e. "If you get God, sex, and money in the right place, everything else is easy."

"So I promised them this."

STOP - audio 10 mins/video 13 mins

For additional discussion:

1. Is each component of Dr. Smith's "Formula" essential? Why?

Dr. Smith's formula for a successful marriage is a sure-fire way of assuring that the marital bond is life-giving and sacramental, leaving little possibility for divorce. Each component is like a leg on a table-offering great strength and stability.

2. Do you think she'll be paying out many \$1000 bills?

No, if couples adhere to this formula, divorce would be improbable and Dr. Smith would not be paying out \$1000 to couples.

Audience Questions and Answers:

1. Why have many older priests (over 40) permitted contraception by telling people that contraception is all right if their consciences tell them so?

Those older priests have been doing what they've been taught, for the most part. After 1968, when dissenters the Catholic Church's teaching on contraception got control over most of the Catholic seminaries, most priests were taught that the Church was going to change its teaching on this someday. Hence they taught that Catholics in good conscience could dissent from the Church if their consciences told them this was all right.

2. How is there a loss of grace in marriages due to contraception?

Those who contracept do not fully embrace the Church and so cannot participate as truly enthusiastic members. There is a loss of grace on their marriages, with about 50% of marriages ending in divorce among Catholics as well as the rest of the population. Contraception often makes a couple's sex life flat. NFP couples generally have fulfilling sex lives built on trust and open communication.

3. Chastity is understanding what your sexual powers are for and, in a certain sense, ordering your life in such a way that those sexual powers will be reserved to the time when it's appropriate. How are chastity and NFP related?

John Paul II says NFP brings about the virtue of self-mastery, which is the same as the virtue of chastity. He believes it makes people better lovers because now they're making love to the person they love rather than to some fantasy. Instead of satisfying some sexual urge, they can control those sexual urges, and now they're acting upon a love impulse and not a sex impulse.

4. What is a good way to evangelize (share) the message about contraception?

One good way to start is to give people tapes/CDs to listen to and literature they can read, instead of talking to them yourself. Later open up a line of communication with them and reflect on what they've listened to or read. Another suggestion is to encourage the formation of study groups that could meet and read a Church encyclical, for instance, a few pages at a time and talk about it.

"Thank you all very much."