

TOWARDS THE DYNAMISM OF LOVING SEXUALITY

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THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE, WRITTEN BY A PRIEST, IS A PASTORAL REFLECTION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENCYCLICAL HUMANAE VITAE.



Because we are so prone to sexual activity, we are easily convinced that personal control of sexual desire is quite beyond us. So we are also easily persuaded that contraception is vitally necessary. Our neighbours often make us feel guilty if we are not promoting it. Catholics frequently feel a sense of shame at our teaching and constant propaganda does not help. We are sometimes induced to feel that this is a teaching that the Church somehow got wrong and will not own up to it. Yet the reality is that contraception is a tragic consequence of human despondency. It is false, unnatural and cosmetic. In saner moments, we see it. It is astonishing that Governments and those in health care have been induced to promote this, sometimes even by coercive means. They even point accusing fingers at education in abstinence as being wrong, unhelpful or unrealistic. For them, contraception is something really good! Our Lord warned us about such table-turning.

Of course our sexual desires and drives are strong. Yet the almost incredible truth is that personal sexual control is achievable and in time becomes a habit when we live God-centered lives through prayer and sacrifice. For families big or small, sexual control is a vitally necessary ingredient in the generation of love. It is especially necessary to help us cope with those inner puzzling conflicts. There is nothing to compare with this great inner liberation. Jesus announced it in His Mission. He underlined it in those first words He spoke after His Resurrection: "*Peace be with you.*" Sexuality is at the heart of this inner liberation. Under its powerful influence, even entrenched addictions can melt away. Without this sexual transformation, all other changes remain shallow.

To cope with the 'problem of over-population', the learned Sir David Attenborough overlooks all this. For him the panacea is promoting contraception. Perhaps by focusing on animals so much he has forgotten that we humans are quite different! He just does not see that unless birth control is rooted in self-control, it encourages promiscuity, infidelity and ultimately, boredom. Without self-control, the whole emotional bonding process is undermined and eventually destroyed. We yearn for deep, lasting and faithful bonding. Contraception eventually destroys this. For love to be deep, we need an interior change inextricably involving self-control. This inevitably catches on and becomes irresistible.

That phenomenon of human nature which makes us so different from the animal world, the immediate Voice of Conscience, is so clear. Deep down it rings out with clarity that sexuality is to do with reproduction.

Love flows from the liberation involved in assent to this truth. Trivializing sexuality leads to superficial joy. Teaching the young about contraception encourages pessimism. Eventually it leads to

the inability to bond deeply with anybody at all; we become more and more negative and despondent as our relationships are more and more superficial and meaningless. Contraception is a big aspect of the externalism Our Lord so strongly opposed. We need to be involved in providing the conditions necessary to assist growth into inner peace, love and joy through God's magnificent grace.

A woman once told me that her husband had given up using condoms. Instead the couple had taken up periodic abstinence (NFP). She said that she had discovered new areas of personal peace. Many testify similarly. We greatly need healthy self-control, the holistic medicine that treats the whole person. The right use of our sexuality leads to astonishing human fulfillment.

Love is by far our greatest human need. Cosmetic superficiality destroys relationships. Our Lord calls out from the rooftops that the best of our sexuality is in the internal peace and love that comes from growing into the Gospel teaching that those who are pure of heart see God (Mt5.8). It is ridiculous to speak as though human emotions and love are static. They need purification. This inner purification is vital. It cannot help flourishing into real love. In saner moments, we begin to see it.

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