

Why I Am Catholic

Humanae Vitae.

This past week, the Church remembered the 40th Anniversary of this historical and earth-shaking document regarding the Regulation of Birth. On July 25, 1968, Pope Paul VI in an encyclical letter explained why the use of artificial birth control is morally wrong. And he warned of the consequences of the attitudes and mindset that went into not cooperating with God's plan for procreation.

Within the next two years, approximately one million American Catholics left the faith, without ever reading or praying about the Church's teaching. More people questioned the Church's authority than at any previous time in modern history and began ignoring the Church on many things. The thinking goes, "when the Church does not agree with my thinking: 'They cannot possibly be speaking for God.'" History proves they are.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body." (I Cor 6:19-20) "For I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me." (Gal 2:19-20)

Many Catholics believe that the Church still teaches the "Rhythm Method." The Church has not taught that in almost 30 years! Today the church teaches Natural Family Planning (NPF) methods that are scientifically-based and allow couples to cooperate with God's plan according to the way God made us.

The consequences of today's contraceptives are dramatic: Chemicals that change a woman's body and lead to infertility, Pills that are abortifacients (causing first week abortions if a pregnancy occurs), and evidence of increased risk of breast cancer and other illnesses. There is also evidence they are a direct causal factor in the rising rates of divorce, adultery, and teenage promiscuity.

Humanae Vitae speaks of "the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man is called."(12) And that the dimensions of unity and procreation in the marriage act cannot be separated. Sex outside of marriage leads to disunity and is irresponsible and selfish. The document speaks of: "the nature of marriage, the correct use of conjugal rights, and the duties of spouses."(4)

It warns: "Let them first consider how easily this course of action could open wide the way for marital infidelity and a general lowering of moral standards. Not much experience is needed to be fully aware of human weakness and to understand that human beings—and especially the young, who are so exposed to temptation—need incentives to keep the moral law, and it is an evil thing to make it easy for them to break that law.

"Another effect that gives cause for alarm is that a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman, and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for the satisfaction of his own desires, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection."(17)

Over the last 40 years, abortion has been legalized (1973), pornography has become the number one addiction among males, and now more than 50 percent of children in the U.S. are born out of wedlock. Maybe its time we listen.