

Majority Papal Commission Report

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Introduction

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) has not explained the question of responsible parenthood under all its aspects. To those problems as yet unresolved, a response is to be given in what follows. This response, however, can only be understood if it is grasped in an integrated way within the universal concept of salvation history.

In creating the world God gave man the power and the duty to form the world in spirit and freedom and, through his creative capacity, to actuate his own personal nature. In his Word, God himself, as the first efficient cause of the whole evolution of the world and of man, is present and active in history. The story of God and of man, therefore, should be seen that man's tremendous progress in control of matter by technical means, and the universal and total "intercommunication" that has been achieved, correspond perfectly to the divine decrees (cf. *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, I, c.3).

In the fullness of time the Word of the eternal Father entered into history and took his place within it, so that by his work humanity and the world might become sharers in salvation. After his ascension to the Father, the Lord continues to accomplish his work through the church. As God became man, so his church is really incarnate in the world. But because the world, to which the church ought to represent the mystery of Christ, always undergoes changes, the church itself necessarily and continually is in pilgrimage. Its essence and fundamental structures remain immutable always; and yet no one can say of the church that at any time it is sufficiently understood or bounded by definition (cf. Paul VI in *Ecclesiam Suam* and in his opening speech to the second session of Vatican Council II).

The church was constituted in the course of time by Christ, its principle of origin is the Word of creation and salvation. For this reason the church draws understanding of its own mystery not only from the past, but, standing in the present time and looking to the future, assumes within itself, the whole progress of the human race. The church is always being made more sure of this. What John XXIII wished to express by the word "*aggiornamento*," Paul VI took up, using the phrase, "dialogue with the world" and in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* has the following: "The world cannot be saved from the outside. As the Word of God became man, so must a man to a certain degree identify with the forms of life of those to whom he wishes to bring the message of Christ. Without invoking privileges which would but widen the separation, without employing unintelligible terminology, he must share the common way of life—provided that it is human and honorable—especially of the most humble, if he wishes to be listened to and understood" (par.87).

In response to the many problems posed by the changes occurring today in almost every field, the church in Vatican Council II has entered into the way of dialogue. "The church guards the heritage of God's Word and draws from it religious and moral principles, without always having at hand the solution to particular problems. She desires thereby to add the light of revealed truth to mankind's store of experience, so that the path which humanity has taken in recent times will not be a dark one" (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, I, c.3, par.33).

In fulfillment of its mission the church must propose obligatory norms of human and Christian life from the deposit of faith in an open dialogue with the world. But since moral obligations can never be detailed in all their concrete particularities, the personal responsibility of each individual must always be called into play. This is even clearer today because of the complexity of modern life: the concrete moral norms to be followed must not be pushed to an extreme.

In the present study, dealing with problems relating to responsible parenthood, the Holy Father through his ready willingness to enter into dialogue has given it an importance unprecedented in history. After several years of study, a commission of experts called together by him, made up for the most part of laymen from various fields of competency, has prepared material for him, which was lastly examined by a special group of bishops.

Part I: Fundamental Principles

Chapter I: The Fundamental Values of Marriage

"The well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family. Hence Christians and all men who hold this community in high esteem sincerely rejoice in the various ways by which men today find help in fostering this community of love and perfecting its life, and by which spouses and parents are assisted in their lofty calling. Those who rejoice in such aid look for additional benefits from them and labor to bring them about." (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.1, par.47).

Over the course of centuries, the Church, with the authority conferred it by Christ our Lord, has constantly protected the dignity and essential values of this institution whose author is God himself who has made man to his image and raised him to share in his love. It has always taught this to its faithful and to all men. In our day it again intends to propose to those many families who are seeking a right way how they are able in the conditions of our times to live and develop fully the higher gifts of this community.

A couple (*unio conjugum*) ought to be considered above all a community of persons which has in itself the beginning of new human life. Therefore those things which strengthen and make more profound the union of persons within this community must never be separated from the procreative finality which specifies the conjugal community. Pius XI, in *Casti Connubii* already, referring to the tradition expressed in the Roman Catechism, said: "This mutual inward molding of a husband and wife, this determined effort to perfect each other, can in a very real sense be said to be the chief reason and purpose of matrimony, provided matrimony be looked at not in the restricted sense as instituted for the proper conception and education of the child, but more widely as the blending of life as a whole and the mutual interchange and sharing thereof" (AAS, XXII, 1930, p.547).

But conjugal love, without which marriage would not be a true union of persons, is not exhausted in the simple mutual giving in which one party seeks only the other. Married people know well that they are only able to perfect each other and establish a true community if their love does not end in a merely egotistic union but according to the condition of each is made truly fruitful in the creation of new life. Nor on the other hand can the procreation and education of a child be considered a truly human fruitfulness unless it is the result of a love existing in a family community. Conjugal love and fecundity are in no way opposed, but complement one another in such a way that they constitute an almost indivisible unity.

Unfolding the natural and divine law, the church urges all men to be true dispensers of the divine gifts, to act in conformity with their own personal nature and to shape their married life according to the dictates of the natural and divine law. God created man male and female so that, joined together in the bonds of love, they might perfect one another through a mutual, corporal and spiritual giving and that they might carefully prepare their children, the fruit of this love, for a truly human life. Let them regard one another always as persons and not as mere objects. Therefore everything should be done in marriage so that the goods conferred on this institution can be attained as perfectly as possible and so that fidelity and moral rightness can be served.

Chapter II: Responsible Parenthood and the Regulation of Conception

To cultivate and realize all the essential values of marriage, married people should become ever more deeply aware of the profundity of their vocation and the breadth of their responsibilities. In this spirit and with this awareness let married people seek how they might better be "cooperators with the love of God and Creator and be, so to speak, the interpreters of that love" for the task of procreation and education (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.1, par.50).

(I) *Responsible parenthood* (that is, generous and prudent parenthood) is a fundamental requirement of a married couple's true mission. Illumined by faith, the spouses understand the scope of their whole task; helped by divine grace, they try to fulfill it as a true service, carried out in the name of God and Christ, oriented to the temporal and eternal good of men. To save, protect and promote the good of the offspring, and thus of the family community and of human society, the married couple will take care to consider all values and seek to realize them harmoniously in the best way they can, with proper reverence toward each other as persons and according to the concrete circumstances of their life. They will make a judgment in conscience before God about the number of children to have and educate according to the objective criteria indicated by Vatican Council II (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.1, par.50 and c.5, par.80).

This responsible, generous and prudent parenthood always carries with it new demands. In today's situation both because of new difficulties and because of new possibilities for the education of children, couples are hardly able to meet such demands unless with generosity and sincere deliberation.

With a view to the education of children let couples more and more build the community of their whole life on a true and magnanimous love, under the guidance of the spirit of Christ (I Cor.: 12, 31-13, 13). For this stable community between man and woman, shaped by conjugal love, is the true foundation of human fruitfulness. This community between married people through which an individual finds himself by opening himself to another, constitutes the optimum situation in which children can be educated in an integrated way.

Through developing their communion and intimacy in all its aspects, a married couple is able to provide that environment of love, mutual understanding and humble acceptance which is the necessary condition of authentic human education and maturation.

Responsible parenthood—through which married persons intend to observe and cultivate the essential values of matrimony with a view to the good of persons (the good of the child to be educated, of the couples themselves and of the whole of human society)—is one of the conditions and expressions of a true conjugal chastity. For genuine love, rooted in faith, hope and charity, ought to inform the whole life and every action of a couple. By the strength of this chastity the couple tend to the actuation of that true love precisely inasmuch as it is conjugal and fruitful. They accept generously and prudently their task with all its values, combining them in the best way possible according to the particular circumstances and of their life and in spite of difficulties.

Married people know well that very often they are invited to keep abstinence, and sometimes not just for a brief time, because of the habitual conditions of their life, for example, the good of one of the spouses (physical or psychic well-being), or because of what are called professional necessities. This abstinence a chaste couple know and accept as a condition of progress into a deeper mutual love, fully conscious that the grace of Christ will sustain and strengthen them for this.

Seeing their vocation in all its depth and breadth and accepting it, the couple follows Christ and tries to imitate Him in a true evangelical spirit (MT. 5: 1-12). Comforted by the spirit of Christ according to the inner man and rooted in faith and charity (Eph. 3: 16-17), they try to build up a total life community, "bearing with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience" (Eph. 4:2-3, cf. Col: 3, 12-17). They will have the peace of Christ in their hearts and give thanks to God the Father as his holy and elected sons.

A couple then is able to ask and expect that they will be helped by all in such a way that they are progressively able to approach more and more responsible parenthood. They need the help of all in order that they can fulfill their responsibilities with full liberty and in the most favorable material, psychological, cultural and spiritual conditions. By the development of the family, then, the whole society is built up with regard to the good of all men in the whole world.

(2) The *regulation of conception* appears necessary for many couples who wish to achieve a responsible, open and reasonable parenthood in today's circumstances. If they are to observe and cultivate all the essential values of marriage, married people need decent and human means for the regulation of conception. They should be able to expect the collaboration of all, especially from men of learning and science, in order that they can have at their disposal means agreeable and worthy of man in the fulfilling of his responsible parenthood.

It is proper to man, created to the image of God, to use what is given in physical nature in a way that he may develop it to its full significance with a view to the good of the whole person. This is the cultural mission which the Creator has commissioned to men, whom he has made his cooperators. According to the exigencies of human nature and with the progress of the sciences, men should discover means more and more apt and adequate so that the "ministry which must be fulfilled in a manner which is worthy of man" (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.1, par.51) can be fulfilled by married people.

This intervention of man into physiological processes, an intervention ordained to the essential values of marriage and first of all to the good of children is to be judged according to the fundamental principles and objective criteria of morality, which will be treated below (in Chap. 4).

“Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the begetting and educating of children” (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.1, par.50). A right ordering toward the good of the child within the conjugal and familial community pertains to the essence of human sexuality. Therefore the morality of sexual acts between married people takes its meaning first of all and specifically from the ordering of their actions in a fruitful married life, that is one which is practiced with responsible, generous and prudent parenthood. It does not then depend upon the direct fecundity of each and every particular act. Moreover the morality of every marital act depends upon the requirements of mutual love in all its aspects. In a word, the morality of sexual actions is thus to be judged by the true exigencies of the nature of human sexuality, whose meaning is maintained and promoted especially by conjugal chastity as we have said above. More and more clearly, for a conscience correctly formed, a willingness to raise a family with full acceptance of the various human and Christian responsibilities is altogether distinguished from a mentality and way of married life which in its totality is egotistically and irrationally opposed to fruitfulness. This truly “contraceptive” mentality and practice has been condemned by the traditional doctrine of the church and will always be condemned as gravely sinful.

Chapter III: On the Continuity of Doctrine and its Deeper Understanding

The tradition of the church which is concerned with the morality of conjugal relations began with the beginning of the church. It should be observed, however, that the tradition developed in the argument and conflict with heretics such as the Gnostics, the Manichaeans and later the Cathari, all of whom condemned procreation or the transmission of life as something evil, and nonetheless indulged in moral vices. Consequently this tradition always, albeit with various words, intended to protect two fundamental values: the good of procreation and the rectitude of marital intercourse. Moreover the church always taught another truth equally fundamental, although hidden in a mystery, namely original sin. This had wounded man in his various faculties, including sexuality. Man could only be healed of this wound by the grace of a Saviour. This is one of the reasons why Christ took marriage and raised it to a sacrament of the New Law.

It is not surprising that in the course of centuries this tradition was always interpreted in expressions and formulas proper to the times and that the words with which it was expressed and the reasons on which it was based were changed by knowledge which is now obsolete. Nor was there maintained always a right equilibrium of all the elements. Some authors even used expressions which depreciated the matrimonial state. But what is of real importance is that the same values were again and again reaffirmed. Consequently an egotistical, hedonistic and contraceptive way which turns the practice of married life in an arbitrary fashion from its ordination to a human, generous and prudent fecundity is always against the nature of man and can never be justified.

The large amount of knowledge and facts which throw light on today’s world suggest that it is not to contradict the genuine sense of this tradition and the purpose of the previous doctrinal condemnations if we speak of the regulation of conception by using means, human and decent, ordered to favoring fecundity in the totality of married life and toward the realization of the authentic values of a fruitful matrimonial community.

The reasons in favor of this affirmation are of several kinds: social changes in matrimony and the family, especially in the role of the woman; lowering of the infant mortality rate; new bodies of knowledge in biology, psychology, sexuality and demography; a changed estimation of the value and meaning of human sexuality and of conjugal relations; most of all, a better grasp of the duty of man to humanize and to bring to greater perfection for the life of man what is given in nature. Then must be considered the sense of the faithful: according to it, condemnation of a couple to a long and often heroic abstinence as the means to regulate conception, cannot be founded on the truth.

A further step in the doctrinal evolution, which it seems now should be developed, is founded less on these facts than on a better, deeper and more correct understanding of conjugal life and of the conjugal act when these other changes occur. The doctrine on marriage and its essential values remains the same and whole, but it is now applied differently out of a deeper understanding.

This maturation has been prepared and has already begun. The magisterium itself is in evolution. Leo XIII spoke less explicitly in his encyclical *Arcanum* than did Pius XI in his wonderful doctrinal synthesis of *Casti Connubii* of 1930 which gave a fresh start to so many beginnings in a living conjugal spirituality. He proclaimed, using the very words of the Roman Catechism, the importance, in a true sense the primary importance, of true conjugal love for the community of matrimony. The notion of responsible parenthood which is implied in the notion of a prudent and generous regulation of conception, advanced in Vatican Council II, had already been prepared by Pius XII. The acceptance of a lawful application of the calculated sterile periods of the woman—that the application is legitimate presupposes right motives—makes a separation between the sexual act which is explicitly intended and its reproductive effect which is intentionally excluded.

The tradition has always rejected seeking this separation with a contraceptive intention for motives spoiled by egoism and hedonism, and such seeking can never be admitted. The true opposition is not to be sought between some material conformity to the physiological processes of nature and some artificial intervention. For it is natural to man to use his skill in order to put under human control what is given by physical nature. The opposition is really to be sought between one way of acting which is contraceptive and opposed to a prudent and generous fruitfulness, and another way which is, in an ordered relationship to responsible fruitfulness and which has a concern for education and all the essential, human and Christian values.

In such a conception the substance of tradition stands in continuity and is respected. The new elements which today are discerned in tradition under the influence of new knowledge and facts were found in it before; they were undifferentiated but not denied; so that the problem in today's terms is new and has not been proposed before in this way. In light of the new data these elements are being explained and made more precise. The moral obligation of following fundamental norms and fostering all the essential values in a balanced fashion is strengthened and not weakened. The virtue of chastity by which a couple positively regulates the practice of sexual relations is all the more demanded. The criteria of morality therefore which are human and Christian demand and at the same time foster a spirituality which is more profound in married life, with faith, hope and charity informed according to the spirit of the Gospel.

Chapter IV: The Objective Criteria of Morality

The question comes up which many men rightly think to be of great importance, at least practically: what are the objective criteria by which to choose a method of reconciling the needs of marital life with a right ordering of this life to fruitfulness in the procreation and education of offspring? It is obvious that the method is not to be left to purely arbitrary decision.

(1) In resolving the similar problem of responsible parenthood and the appropriate determination of the size of the family, Vatican Council II has shown the way. The objective criteria are the various values and needs duly and harmoniously evaluated. These objective criteria are to be applied by the couples, acting from a rightly formed conscience and according to their concrete situation. In the words of the Council: "Thus they will fulfill their task with human and Christian responsibility. With docile reverence toward God, they will come to the right decision by common counsel and effort. They will thoughtfully take into account both their own welfare and that of their children, those already born and those which may be foreseen. For this accounting they will reckon with both the material and spiritual conditions of the times as well as of their state in life. Finally they will consult the interests of the family community, of temporal society, and of the church herself....But in their manner of acting, spouses should be aware that they cannot proceed arbitrarily. They must always be governed according to a conscience dutifully conformed to the Divine Law itself, and should be submissive toward the church's teaching office, which authentically interprets that law in the light of the Gospel" (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.1, par.50; cf. c.5, par.87).

In other questions of conjugal life, one should proceed in the same way. There are various objective criteria which are concretely applied by couples themselves acting with a rightly formed conscience. All, for an example, know that objective criteria prohibit that the intimate acts of conjugal life, even if carried out in a way which could be called "natural," be practiced if there is a loss of physical or psychic health or if there is neglect of the personal dignity of the spouses or if they are carried out in an egotistic or hedonistic way. These objective criteria are the couples', to be applied by them to their concrete situation, avoiding pure arbitrariness in forming their judgment. It is impossible to determine exhaustively by a general judgment and ahead of time for each individual case what these objective criteria will demand in the concrete situation of a couple.

(2) Likewise, there are objective criteria as to the means to be chosen of responsibly determining the size of the family: If they are rightly applied, the couples themselves will find and determine the way of proceeding. In grave language, Vatican Council II has reaffirmed that abortion is altogether to be excluded from the means of responsibly preventing birth. Indeed, abortion is not a method of preventing conception but of eliminating offspring already conceived. This affirmation about acts which do not spare an offspring already conceived is to be repeated in regard to those interventions as to which there is serious grounds to suspect that they are abortive.

Sterilization, since it is a drastic and irreversible intervention in a matter of great importance, is generally to be excluded as a means of responsibly avoiding conceptions.

Moreover, the natural law and reason illuminated by Christian faith dictate that a couple proceed in choosing means not arbitrarily but according to objective criteria. These objective criteria for the right choice of methods are the conditions for keeping and fostering the essential values of marriage as a community of fruitful love. If these criteria are observed, then a right ordering of the human act according to its object, end and circumstances is maintained.

Among these criteria, this must be put first: the action must correspond to the nature of the person and of his acts so that the whole meaning of the mutual giving and of human procreation is kept in a context of true love (cf. *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.1, par.51). *Secondly*, the means which are chosen should have an effectiveness proportionate to the degree of right or necessarily of averting a new conception temporarily or permanently. *Thirdly*, every method of preventing conception—not excluding either periodic or absolute abstinence—carries with it some negative element or physical evil which the couple more or less seriously feels. This negative element or physical evil can arise under different aspects: account must be taken of the biological, hygienic, and psychological aspects, the personal dignity of the spouses, and the possibility of expressing sufficiently and aptly the interpersonal relation or conjugal love. The means to be chosen, where several are possible, is that which carries with it the least possible negative element, according to the concrete situation of the couple. *Fourthly*, then, in choosing concretely among means, much depends on what means may be available in a certain region or at a certain time or for a certain couple; and this may depend on the economic situation.

Therefore not arbitrarily, but as the law of nature and of God commands, let couples form a judgment which is objectively founded, with all the criteria considered. This they may do without major difficulty, and with peace of mind, if they take common and prudent counsel before God. They should, however, to the extent possible, be instructed about the criteria by competent persons and be educated as to the right application of the criteria. Well instructed, and prudently educated as Christians, they will prudently and serenely decide what is truly for the good of the couple and of the children, and does not neglect their own personal Christian perfection, and is, therefore, what God revealing himself through the natural law and Christian revelation, sets before them to do.

Part II: Pastoral Necessities

Chapter I: The Task and Fundamental Conditions of Educational Renewal

When sometimes a new aspect of human life obtains a special place in the area of man's responsibility, a task of educational renewal is imposed in a seriously binding way.

In order that spouses may take up the duty of responsibly parenthood, they must grasp, more than in the past, the meaning of fruitfulness and experience a desire for it. In order that they may give to married life its unitive value, and do so in service of its procreative function, they must develop an increasingly purer respect for their mutual needs, the sense of community and the acceptance of their common Christian vocation.

It will not be a surprise that this conviction of a greater responsibility will come about as the effect and crown of a gradual development of the meaning of marriage and conjugal spirituality. For several generations, in an always increasing number, couples have sought to live their proper married vocation in a more profound and more conscientious way. The doctrine of the magisterium and especially the encyclical *Casti Connubii* notably contributed and strengthened this formation of conscience by giving to it its full meaning.

The more urgent the appeal is made to observe mutual love and charity in every expression of married life, the more urgent is the necessity of forming consciences, of educating spouses to a sense of responsibility and of awakening a right sense of values. This new step in the development of conjugal life cannot bear all its fruits, unless it is accompanied by an immense educational activity. No one will regret that these new

demands stirred by the Holy Spirit call the entire human race to this profound moral maturity.

Couples who might think they find in the doctrine as it has just been proposed an open door to laxism or easy solutions make a grave mistake, of which they will be the first victims. The conscientious decision to be made by spouses about the number of children is not a matter of small importance. On the contrary it imposes a more conscientious fulfilling of their vocation to fruitfulness in the consideration of a whole complex of values which are involved here. The same is true of the responsibility of the spouses for the development of their common life in such a way that it will be a source of continual progress and perfection.

The God who created man male and female, in order that they might be two in one flesh, in order that they might bring the world under their control, in order that they might increase and multiply (Gen. 1-2), is the God who has elevated their union to the dignity of a sacrament and so disposed that in this world it is a special sign of His own love for His people. He Himself will gird the spouses with His strength, His light, His love and His joy in the strength of the spirit of Christ. Who then would doubt that couples, all couples, will not be able to respond to the demands of their vocation?

Chapter II: Further Consideration; Application of the Doctrine of Matrimony to Different Parts of the World

(1) It seems very necessary to establish some pontifical institute or secretariat for the study of the sciences connected with married life. In this commission there could be continual collaboration in open dialogue among experts competent in various areas. The aim of this institute (or secretariat) would be, among other duties, to carry further the research and reflection begun by the commission. The various studies which the commission has already done could be made public. It would be in a special way for this institute to study how the doctrine of matrimony should be applied to different parts of the world and to contribute to the formation of priests and married couples dedicated to the family apostolate by sending experts to them (cf., *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.1, par.52).

(2) Universal principles and the essential values of matrimony and married life become actual in ways which partially differ according to different cultures and different mentalities. Consequently there is a special task for episcopal conferences to institute organizations for investigation and dialogue between families, between representatives of the different sciences and pastors of souls. They would also have the task of judging which may be in practice the more apt pastoral means in each region to promote the healthy formation of consciences and education to a sense of responsibility. Episcopal conferences should be particularly concerned that priests and married lay persons be adequately formed in a more spiritual and moral understanding of Christian matrimony. Thus they will be prepared to extend pastoral action to the renewal of families in the spirit of "*aggiornamento*" initiated by the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*. Under their guidance there should also be action to start in each region the genuine fostering of all families in the context of social evolution which should be truly human. The fostering of the role of woman is of special importance here.

There are many reforms and initiatives which are needed to open the way to decent and joyful living for all families. Together with all men of good will, Christians must approach this great work of human development, without which the elevation of families can never become actual. Christianity does not teach some ideal for a small number of elect, but the

vocation of all to the essential values of human life. It cannot be that anyone would wish to elevate his own family without at the same time actively dedicating himself to opening a way for similar elevation for all families in all parts of the world.

Chapter III: Demographic Facts and Policy

The increase of inhabitants cannot in any way be said to be something evil or calamitous for the human race. As children are "the most excellent gift of matrimony" (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.1, par.50) and the object of the loving care of the parents, which demands from them many sacrifices, so the great number of men pertaining to a certain nation and constituting the whole human race spread over the globe is the foundation of all social sharing and cultural progress. Thus there should be afforded to it all those things which according to social justice are due to men as persons.

The Church is not ignorant of the immense difficulties and profound transformations which have arisen from the conditions of contemporary life throughout the world and especially in certain regions where there has been a rapid rise in population. That is why she again and again raises her voice to urge various nations and the whole human family to help one another in truly human progress, united in true solidarity and excluding every intention of domination. Then they might avoid all those things in both in the political and in the social order which restrict or dissipate in an egotistical way the full utilization of the goods of the earth which are destined for all men.

The Church by her doctrine and by her supernatural aids intends to help all families so that they might find the right way in undertaking their generous and prudent responsibility. Governments which have the care of the common good should look with great concern on subhuman conditions of families and "beware of solutions contradicting the moral law, solutions which have been promoted publicly or privately, and sometimes actually imposed" (*Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, II, c.5, par.87). These solutions have contradicted the moral law in particular by propagating abortion or sterilization. Political demography can be called human only if the rights of parents with regard to the procreation and education of children are respected and conditions of life are fostered with all vigor so that parents are enabled to exercise their responsibilities before God and society.

Chapter IV: The Inauguration and Further Development of Means for Education of Couples and Youth

(1) Couples are burdened by multiple responsibilities throughout the whole of life; they seek light and aid. With the favor of God there will develop in many regions what has already been initiated often by the married couples themselves, to sustain families in their building and continual development. Maximum help is to be given to parents in their educational task. They strongly desire to provide the best for their children. The more parents are conscious of their office of fruitfulness, which is extended over the whole time in which the education of their children is accomplished, so much the more do they seek a way of acquiring better preparation to carry out this responsibility. Moreover, in exercising this educational office, the spouses mature more deeply in it themselves, create a unity, become rich in love, and apply themselves with the high task of giving themselves with united energies to the high task of giving life and education. (

2) The building up of the conjugal and family community does not happen without thought. Therefore it is fitting everywhere to set up and work out many better means of remote and immediate preparation of youth for marriage. This requires the collaboration of

everyone. Married people who are already well educated will have a great and indispensable part in this work. In these tasks of providing help to spouses and to the young who are preparing to build and develop a conjugal and family community, priests and religious will cooperate closely with the families. Without this cooperation, in which each one has his own indispensable part, there will never be apt methods of education to those responsibilities of the vocation which places the sacrament in clear light so that its full and profound meaning shines forth.

The Church, which holds the deposit of the gospel, has to bring this noble message to all men in the entire world. This announcing of the gospel, grounded in love, illumines every aspect of married and family life. Every aspect, every task and responsibility of the conjugal and family community shines with a clear light, in love toward one's neighbor—a love which is rich with human values and is formed by the divine interpersonal love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. May the spirit of Christ's love more and more penetrate families everywhere so that together with John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, married couples, parents and children may always understand more deeply the wonderful relation between love of God and love of one another (I John 4: 7-5, 4).