

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

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Traditionally Speaking

by S. Casarotto, cs 8/3/08

In Defense of Human Life

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Forty years ago (July 25, 1968), Pope Paul VI published his encyclical On Human Life (*Humanae Vitae*). No other encyclical, perhaps, in the history of the Church has been so misunderstood and openly criticized as this document on the defense of the dignity of the human person, marriage, family and sacredness of life. The media, erroneously, focused on contraception and the Pill. Some “theologians” openly dissented with the Pope and taught Catholics to dissent. Bishops, save some rare exceptions, responded either with silence or muttered ambiguous comments. Catholics were often advised to follow their own conscience and feel free to line up for Communion. The “Principle of Totality” or global observance of God’s Law was introduced to bypass the morality of individual actions. The free-love revolution subverted society, the contraceptive mentality spread also in Catholic homes and developed countries plummeted into a below-survival birth rate.

About 35 years earlier, in the middle of the eugenic movement, the first attempts were made to chemically regulate human fertility. It is interesting to read the following remarkable statement criticizing a committee’s report opposing Pius XI’s encyclical On Christian Marriage (*Casti Connubii*”, Dec. 31, 1930). It appeared in an editorial by *The Washington Post* on March 22, 1931:

“It is impossible to reconcile the doctrine of the divine institution of marriage with any modernistic plan for the mechanical suppression of human life. The Church must either reject the plain teaching of the Bible or reject schemes for the ‘scientific’ production of human souls. Carried to its logical conclusion, the committee’s report, if carried into effect, would sound the death knell of marriage as a holy institution by establishing degrading practices which would encourage indiscriminate immorality. The suggestions that the use of legalized contraceptives would be ‘careful and restrained’ is preposterous.”

“Are we not praying together because we are divided or are we divided because we do not pray together?” (Italian philosopher Geppetto)

How prophetic the prediction and how wise the leadership of Pope Paul VI.

Hymn of Creation

Let the earth bless the Lord.
Praise Him and exult Him above all forever.
Everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord.
Mountains and hills, bless the Lord.
You springs, bless the Lord.
Seas and rivers bless the Lord.
You dolphins and water creatures, bless the Lord.
All you birds of the air, bless the Lord.
All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord.
You sons of men, bless the Lord. (Dan.5, 52)