

The Decision To Use Rhythm Should Not Be Made Lightly

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My husband and I are wondering about the advisability of using rhythm. We have had four children in fairly rapid succession and feel that a break of a year or two would prove beneficial for both our health and our finances. We've heard so many conflicting opinions that we're not sure what to do. Could you give us some advice?

The decision to use rhythm should not be made lightly. Besides medical and moral considerations, it involves a choice between different family values. Perhaps I can help you arrive at a prudent decision by pointing out the essential factors which enter into the total picture.

First, there are medical considerations.

This is the realm of the doctor. I merely point out that you will need the advice of a competent physician at least in the beginning. The method of computing the various periods is somewhat complex, and you will probably need his assistance if you wish it to be effective.

Second, there are moral considerations.

These can be broadly summarized under three headings. First, you must both agree to the practice. Second, you must both be capable of using it without putting yourselves in the proximate danger of sinning against chastity. Third, you must have sufficient reason for using it.

This latter point has been the source of some disagreement. Fortunately, Pope Pius XII has clarified the Church's official doctrine on this matter. He points out that couples who make use of their marital rights have a positive obligation to provide for the propagation of the race.

They may be excused from fulfilling this obligation either temporarily or permanently if solid reasons of a eugenic, medical, social, or economic nature indicate that this obligation does not bind them in their circumstances.

However, if without such reasons, they should make use of their marital right through out marriage and yet deliberately avoid pregnancy, they would be sinning against the very nature of marriage.

Third, even apart from moral considerations, the decision to use rhythm involves a choice



between different family values.

Children are one of the great "goods" of marriage. As a gift from God, they are a noble and an ennobling blessing. Marriage is a partnership in parenthood. The fulfillment and sanctification of the married couple is found primarily in child-bearing and child rearing.

THIS DOES not mean that a couple should have as many children as they are physically able to produce. The chief purpose of marriage is the propagation and education of children. Childbearing and child rearing, go together, and as the Pope has pointed out, child rearing is the most important of the two aspects.

Hence, the ideal family size is that number of children which the couple can bear and raise to Christian maturity. Since the family does not exist in a social vacuum or in an ideal order, this number will vary with the condition of the couple and the circumstances within which they have to raise their family.

Hence, the use of rhythm always implies a sacrifice. The blessing of another child is

postponed or avoided in order to secure some other good. The only other good which could reasonably match this blessing is the good of the existing family.

By this I mean that postponement or avoidance of a possible future pregnancy can be considered beneficial only if it enables the existing family unit to achieve its total purpose more adequately.

IN MAKING your decision, then you must weigh all of these factors. If you both agree to practice and honestly feel that you are able to use it, considerations of health and finances offer you moral justification to employ it for purposes of spacing. But you are not interested only in avoiding sin. You seek the best that your marriage vocation can give.

In using rhythm you are restricting your privilege of cooperating with God in creating new life, and with Christ in building up His Mystical Body. On the other hand, you must prudently consider the long range, total good of your existing family. Think on it prayerfully, and, if in doubt, consult your spiritual director.

Sacramental View Of Marriage Gains Among Protestants

NWC NEWS SERVICE

American Protestants, more and more, are coming to the belief that marriage must be regarded "almost as a sacrament," according to Father John A. Hardon, a Jesuit theologian and professor at West Baden College in Indiana.

Proposals calling for the restoration of marriage to the dignity of a sacrament of the New Law, are being advanced by Protestants, the Jesuit reports.

In a special study, called "A Doctrinal Evaluation of American Protestantism," Father Hardon considers American Protestant views on these fundamental questions:

- 1) the Divinity of Christ; 2) the nature of the church; 3) the character of marriage; and 4) the basis of Christian belief.

Father Hardon describes the changing Protestant attitude toward marriage as "revolutionary" and says that it is the result of concern over "the mounting divorce rate and the consequent disintegration of family life."

"What the Reformers had reduced to a civil institution over which the state alone has competence," the Jesuit observes, "is now being suggested for restoration to the dignity of a sacrament of the New Law, which Christ entrusted to the custody of His Church."

He maintains that among Protestants there is a rising tendency to speak of marriage as something sacred, which the churches have a long-neglected duty to point out to the people.

Father Hardon cites a "pastoral directive" to Protestant evangelists, which warns that "instead of frivolous jests about courtship and marriage, ministers need to treat it almost as a sacrament, and as the closest earthly analogy to the relation between Christ and His Church."

The Catholic scholar holds, however, that "the general and still official attitude" among American Protestants seems to regard marriage as essentially a civil contract, which may be accidentally ornamented by a church ceremony, but over which the churches have only delegated jurisdiction from the state.

HIS EXAMINATION of current Protestant stands on other fundamental doctrines, Father Hardon reports as follows:

- 1) On the divinity of Christ: "Many denominations describe the Incarnation in such ambivalent terms that almost any meaning can be attached to it. A typical device is to say that 'God lived in Christ as in no other man,' and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions."

"Underlying this widespread denial of Christ's divinity is a concept of the Trinity which represents the Father, Son and Holy Spirit not as three distinct persons, but as three aspects of one divine person."

"Parallel with a diluted Christology is the familiar attitude towards the Blessed Virgin. American Protestants almost universally ignore the Mother of Christ and dismiss the Catholic position of mariology. This ob-

scuration of Mary is dogmatically tied in with hesitancy about the divinity of Christ.

2) On the nature of the Church: Father Hardon points out "three basic theories... in American Protestantism."

The first, which Father Hardon says is peculiar to the "High Church segment of the Protestant Episcopal Church," "conceives the Church as a mystical and visible reality founded by Christ, which has a priestly, hierarchical structure and a sacramental system as the ordinary channel of grace." This view is close to the Catholic position, according to the Jesuit.

The second, "which is more common," holds that "the Church is not essentially a visible society founded by Christ. It was not Christ but His followers who may be said to have established a Church by their common acceptance of Him as their Saviour. Not even a common faith in a definite body of doctrine, but only a trustful hope in the mercy of God is required to belong to the invisible society called the Church Universal."

The third, "last growing in popularity," regards the Church "not as already existing, but as becoming."

"Its given unity, therefore, derives only from the fact that Christ, who initiated Christianity, is one, much as a family is united because all the children were born of a single father and mother. But sociological unity, as they call it, is still... to be attained in the Kingdom of Heaven, when the Church, for the first time, really comes into existence as a perfect society."

3) On the basis of Christian belief: Father Hardon points out two current Protestant theories concerning "the final ground of religious authority."

The first, he says, is traditional Protestant belief in the Bible as the infallible word of God. Scripture is regarded as "the unique channel of God's message to man."

The more common Protestant justification of belief, the Jesuit claims, is "self-verification of faith." It asserts the power of the human mind to pass judgment on the truths of revelation by an appeal to reason and personal verification. "This Protestant attitude is 'a euphemism for the denial of the supernatural order,'" says Father Hardon.

"THE PROTESTANT churches show promise of doctrinal revival that is quite unique in American history," he believes.

Current Protestant "interest in promoting religious education in the public schools, the success of the ecumenical movement in stemming the tide of sectarianism, the steady increase of church membership in conservative religious bodies, and the popularity of biblical evangelists like Billy Graham are symptomatic of an improvement which Catholics may honestly praise," the Jesuit believes.

"For we realize," he concludes, "that the more dogmatically vital is the atmosphere in which our people live, the more secure is their faith and the more will American Catholicism prosper."

'Rio' Cardinal Opposes Trade With Soviets

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil—(NC) His Eminence Jaime Cardinal de Barros Camara, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, urged the Brazilian government not to accept Soviet offers to renew trade relations with the two countries.

ACCORDING to reports the Soviet Union has offered to supply equipment to the Brazilian government's oil monopoly. Russia also is reported to have urged Brazil to enter into full trade relations with her satellites in an effort to expand Brazil's markets abroad.

Moscow reportedly offered to sell 5,000 Soviet-made Moskvich automobiles to the Brazilian army at prices below those of American and western European cars.

CARDINAL de Barros Camara addressed his message of protest and warning to Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek Red penetration of every sector of life in Brazil can bring nothing but oppression, the Cardinal said. He referred to persistent rumors of communist-conducted schools for spies and saboteurs who are being trained to aid in the Red infiltration of Brazil.

Earlier address by the Cardinal warned that the Reds have managed to infiltrate even Catholic organizations in this country in their drive to dominate Latin America.

Paulists' Church Now City Landmark

New York (NC) One of New York's historic Catholic Churches has been declared officially a city landmark.

St. Paul the Apostle church, was so designated. It is associated in memory with the Paulists society of priests founded in America; and with Father Isaac Hecker, their founder, with Orestes Brownson, 19th century Catholic convert philosopher, and with the Catholic World magazine.

Bishop Carroll Installation Set

Altoona, Pa. (NC) The Most Rev. Howard J. Carroll, fourth Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown, will be enthroned in his diocese at ceremonies in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament here on January 23.

Princess Asks Aid For Refugee Plight

New York (NC) Princess Grace of Monaco has issued a plea that individual workers toward the solution of the international refugee problem.

Princess Grace, the former Grace Kelly of Philadelphia, declared that "we must begin by informing ourselves of the problem and its possible solutions with just a little encouragement and interest on the part of all of us a permanent solution could be found."

WRITING in the January 4 issue of America magazine, a national weekly published here by the Jesuit Fathers, the Princess contended that the refugee problem is not "complicated beyond solution."

The response to the plight of the Hungarian refugees and their successful resettlement she declared are proof that "when we really make up our minds to provide a solution to the tragic problem of homelessness a solution can be found."

"But long before the Hungarian crisis unfolded with all its dramatic urgency," the Princess continued, "a refugee problem existed. It is symbolized by the refugee camps scattered throughout Europe offering only the most meager physical shelter to thousands of our fellow human beings."

SHE ALSO pointed to the plight of European refugees from communist China, stranded in Hong Kong or China itself. "Only \$6 million is required for a final solution to this problem," she declared. "Here is a case in which an outpouring of that has a ten-year record of success, shared by the UN High Commissioner's Office, the Migration Committee and the voluntary organizations, has bogged down for other reason than lack of funds."

"We can only hope that the repeated pleas of the High Commissioner and the ICM (International Committee for European Migration) to the UN member governments will be answered before it is too late."

"THIS IS A problem with which we are still faced," she said. "Though most experts agree



PRINCESS GRACE

that with a concerted effort we could clean out the refugee camps in a year's time, few concrete steps are being taken to do so.

"As individuals," Princess Grace concluded, "we feel powerless to help these unfortunate people. But this is a mistake, as tragic to our own souls as for the lives of our fellow men. The actions of governments and private organizations must find their origin in the hearts and minds of each of us."

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Research Report

'Marry Your Own'

Washington, D. C. (RNS) A Jesuit sociologist said here that "Marry your own" is the best advice for anyone, Catholic or non-Catholic, who is contemplating marriage.

Father Lucius F. Cervantes, S.J., director of the department of sociology at Regis College, Denver, Colo., addressed the convention of the American Catholic Sociological Society.

HE WARNED that the difficulties arising from mixed marriages occur frequently among Catholics because they seem to be "less adverse" to such unions than Protestants or Jews, even though the Church frowns most severely on them.

"Those who marry into different faiths," the Jesuit said, "have four times as many divorces and desertions and between two and three times as many children with at least one arrest for delinquent acts. They likewise have more trouble in keeping their children in the educational system after 16 years of age."

Father Cervantes said his findings were based on a study of "successful American families he has conducted for the past two years in collaboration with Prof. Carlo C. Zimmerman of Harvard University."

He said that although religious leaders always have stressed the

importance of confining marriages to people of the same faith, "astonishingly large numbers of persons marry into other faiths."

ONE THIRD OF Catholics marry outside their faith, the priest said, and of every ten Catholics who do so "four are lost immediately to the faith since their marriage is outside of the Church and hence invalid."

"Of the six out of the ten remaining in the faith at marriage to the non-Catholic," he added, "two more are ultimately lost because their interest and conformity gradually evanesce."

Father Cervantes said the study "shows that Jews who marry outside their faith have even greater difficulties than Catholics in maintaining successful marriages."

The Catholic educator also had some advice for those already married: "Protect your own by gathering about you family friends of similar backgrounds, interests and ideals."

He said the soundness of this advice had been "overwhelmingly substantiated" in the study made of successful families in six large cities.

"Successful American families," Father Cervantes said, "do protect themselves and their children by carefully surrounding

their domestic life with persons who have backgrounds, interests and ideals similar to their own. They have a certain few selected family friends who are permitted to visit in their homes over periods of years.

"These selected family friends form a protective filter, or 'cocoon,' or domestic barricade of social relations against the divergent, divisive and disintegrative influences of the outside world. The more careful couples are about the type of friends they invite into their homes, the more successful they are in their marital and parental relationships."

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