

Doctors Have No Authority To Dispense From God's Law

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Is it possible that some Catholic couples do not recognize the immorality of sterilization? As a nurse I am well aware of the modern situation but always felt that Catholics knew what was right. Can you imagine my shocked surprise the other day when one of my Catholic friends calmly informed me that she had had the operation performed after her third painful delivery because her doctor advised it. Don't you think she should know better?

I rather think she does, though she's probably trying to fool herself into believing it's all right in her case because her doctor advised it. As you suggest, the point that is most shocking is her calm refusal to consider the moral implications of her act.

By some strange twist of logic she apparently assumes that her doctor's judgment in the matter frees her from any personal obligation.

Now granting that some doctors can be quite persuasive, no normally intelligent woman believes that members of the medical profession enjoy special facilities enabling them to dispense from the moral law when the health of their clients is involved.

As you probably know, sterilization is now being widely promoted as an approved



caused them to fall into considerable disuse in some instances.

Today, sterilization is being advocated as a superior, "safe" method of birth control or as the popular literature puts it, "a permanent protection against parenthood." In addition to the clinics established for this purpose, your letter suggests that it is also employed by a considerable number of doctors as a routine procedure when they judge a future pregnancy would be harmful to the health of their patients.

How do we determine the morality of this practice? Well, sterilization, whether in man or woman, constitutes a mutilation of the sexual organs and consequently frustrates the natural generative purpose of these faculties.

When used for either eugenic or birth control purposes, such direct sterilization is a gravely immoral act. Why is it against the moral law?

Method of birth control in former times it was recommended primarily to control reproduction among the so-called mental defectives and criminals.

Many states have such immoral laws although their ineffectiveness in reducing the number of mentally defective persons in the population has

Man's dominion over the members of his body is limited to using them according to their natural purposes as the order of right reason directs him. He does not have the power to destroy or mutilate them in order to frustrate the natural purpose they were designed to fulfill.

Whether the state or the individual attempt to do this, they usurp a dominion which

May Prayers Asked

(Continued from Page 1)
Therefore, we solemnly declare that we trust very much the prayers of the faithful whose hearts are alive with love for the Mother of God.

And since through a most praiseworthy custom special prayers and religious solemnities take place during the month of May dedicated to the Heavenly Virgin, we have decided to exhort the whole Christian world to pray to the Mother of God during this period for the happy success of an undertaking that is of very great importance and interest.

As we have in fact already publicly announced, it is our intention to convene an ecumenical council to deal with questions of greatest interest to the welfare of the universal Church.

We are fully convinced that to achieve an objective of such importance, human resources, whatever kind they may be, are of little value, but that on the other hand the fervent and insistent prayers of the faithful are very effective.

May the holy shepherds therefore strive to have their faithful raise ardent prayers in the course of this month to the great Mother of God, most powerful Help of Christians and merciful Queen of heaven and earth.

May this also be done by women religious who, far from the world, serve Christ in their convents.

Then also, in this month of the flowers, may the faithful endeavor to present themselves each day at the altars of Our Lady to offer their tributes for this intention and to recite the holy Rosary.

If it is not possible for them to go to Church, may the families raise their prayers in the privacy of their homes. And may the sick offer their sufferings as a very welcome sacrifice to obtain these favors from this Most Loving Mother.

Finally, may the little boys and girls, in the grace of their innocence, raise their prayers for this intention so dear to Our heart. She, resplendent with

the beauty of her virginity, welcomes and grants more willingly the entreaties of innocent souls.

Above all, it is our wish that the traditional novena in preparation for the Feast of Pentecost, which this year falls in the month of May, may be carried out with a particularly intense fervor.

May everyone, prostrate before the altars of the Virgin rightly called Spouse of the Paraclete, pray insistently for the abundance of gifts of the Holy Spirit so that the Christian family may be brightened by a new Pentecost.

May the August Queen of Heaven, implored by an almost unanimous voice with these prayers that rise to her throne from the whole Catholic Church, welcome with favor our entreaties and fulfill our hope.

Trusting confidently in you, venerable brothers, and in all those people who answer Our appeal with a willing mind, we impart in the Lord with all Our heart the apostolic benediction.

they do not possess.

Plus XII stated the Church's position clearly on this point. Direct sterilization—that is, the sterilization which aims, either as a means or as an end in itself, to render childbearing impossible—is a grave violation of the moral law, and therefore unlawful. Ever public authority has no right, whatever indication it may use as an excuse, to permit it, and much less to prescribe it or use it to the detriment of innocent beings.

In the light of this clear teaching from reason and authority, it seems to me that your friend's attitude serves as a good example of a peculiar frame of mind perhaps of the increase in our society.

People don't reject the moral law—they just deny that it applies to their particular case.

This really adds up to saying that Catholic moral doctrine is an excellent general ideal for the country or mankind as a whole, but individual couples cannot be expected to live up to it when doing so under their special circumstances or conditions would require great personal sacrifice.

After doing pretty much as they please, they explain, "We feel that God will understand." The only answer to that, of course, is found in Our Lord's own words, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

Hungry World At Kitchen Door

Dayton — (NC) — The magnitude of the world's suffering calls for a "daring response," Elizabeth Reid, Grail leader and former Far East correspondent, declared here.

Addressing the Cincinnati Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, she sketched the vast needs of the "world community." The former editor of a Hong Kong Catholic newspaper, The Sunday Examiner, urged the delegates to see the great tactical adventure in the struggle for the soul of man.

—Herself an eyewitness of communist tactics and human suffering in China, Korea, and Vietnam, Miss Reid declared that "we are not two billion, but 600 million points on a chart;

we are living, breathing people who desire to love and be loved — we are the family of man."

Fordham Plans Do-It-Yourself

New York — (NC) — A Jesuit "do-it-yourself" project will enable a \$1,250,000 addition to be built to the community residence hall of Fordham University, it has been disclosed by Father Laurence J. McGinley, S.J., university president.

Major purpose of the plan, Father McGinley said, is to reduce dormitory space now used by Jesuit faculty members to 600 million points on a chart; some 75 boarding students.

"But most of us are hungry," she continued. "Try and imagine a line starting at your kitchen door made up of the hungry people of the world."

"The line forms, then goes out of sight, over continent and ocean, around the world 25,000 miles, and returns to your kitchen door. On and on it stretches circling the earth, not twice, not five times, but 25 times — and everyone in that line is a hungry person."

Now a staff member of the U.S. headquarters of the Grail at Loveland, Ohio, Miss Reid cited other critical problems of the growing world community: refugees, sickness, communism, race hatreds.

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