

# Pope Condemns Birth Control to U.N.

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul, in a message marking the United Nations' 1974 "World Population Year," declared that population growth should not be curbed by the use of "radical measures" which are "in contrast" with the laws of God.

He also cautioned Roman Catholics not to be influenced by those "who claim to represent the Church's position, while omitting certain essential aspects of the teaching of the genuine magisterium (teaching authority) of the Church."

The papal statements were seen as reaffirming the Church's official condemnation of artificial contraception and abortion.

The Pope's message was prepared for oral delivery at a scheduled audience with Antonio Carillo-Flores, general secretary of the U.N.-sponsored World Population Conference in Bucharest, Romania, August 19-30, and Rafael M. Salas, executive director of the U.N. Fund for Population Activities.

Because the 76-year-old pontiff was suffering from what the Vatican described as a "slight indisposition," he had to cancel the audience.

The U.N. officials were received, instead, by Cardinal Jean Villot, Vatican Secretary of State, and given copies of the Pope's discourse. The Vatican, later, issued versions in English, French, and Italian.

"We are aware," the text read, "that the growing number of people in the world, taken as a whole and in certain countries in particular, presents a challenge to

the human community and to governments."

"The problems of hunger, health, education, housing, and unemployment," the text continued, "become more difficult to solve when the population increases more rapidly than available resources."

Pope Paul noted the "temptation" arising out of this situation.

"For some people, there is a great temptation to believe that there is no solution and to wish to put a brake on population growth by the use of radical measures, measures which are not seldom in contrast with the laws implanted by God in man's nature, and which fall short of due respect for the dignity of human life and man's just liberty."

"Such measures are, in some cases, based upon a materialistic view of man's destiny."

The pontiff insisted that "the true solutions" to problems stemming from population growth, "we should say, the only solutions" will be those that take account of "all factors taken together: the demands of social justice as well as respect for the divine laws governing life, the dignity of the human person as well as the freedom of peoples; the primary role of the family as well as the responsibility of married couples."

Reaffirming earlier Church pronouncements on population growth, Pope Paul referred to the Vatican II "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," his 1967 encyclical "On the Development of Peoples," and his 1968 encyclical

"Humanae Vitae" ("Of Human Life.")

These documents condemned mechanical contraception and abortion.

Observing that "it is not for the Church to propose purely technical solutions," the pontiff said the Church's role is "to bear witness to the dignity and destiny of man, and to enable him to rise to greater moral and spiritual heights."

He said the Church's teaching "assists the faithful to understand better their individual responsibility and the contributions they are called on to make to the solution of population problems."

"But, in the search for solutions," he warned, "we must not allow ourselves to be influenced by the affirmations of individual or groups who claim to represent the Church's position while omitting certain essential aspects of the teaching of the Magisterium of the Church."

"Any population program must therefore be at the service of the human person," he went on. "It must reduce inequalities, fight discriminations, free man from various types of servitude, and enable him to be the instrument of his own material betterment, his moral progress, and his spiritual growth."

"Hence, it must remove everything that is opposed to life itself or which harms man's free and responsible personality."

"Any population policy must likewise guarantee the dignity and the stability by insuring that the family is provided with the means to fulfill its true role."

Referring to parental obligations in the matter of child rearing, the Pope said that married couples "must exercise their responsibilities with a full awareness of their personal duties toward God, themselves, the family and society — in a correct hierarchy of values."

He said the decision as to how many children a couple wanted to have "depends on their right judgment and cannot be left to the discretion of public authorities."

"But," he added, "because these parental judgments presuppose rightly formed consciences," it is important that conditions should prevail "which will allow parents to attain a level of responsibility in conformity

with morality — a responsibility which, without neglecting the sum total of circumstances, takes account of the law of God."

Pope Paul called for a more equitable distribution of wealth and resources as a key factor in the solution of population problems.

"A fully human life, one endowed with freedom and dignity, will be assured to all men and all peoples when the earth's resources have been shared more equitably, when the needs of the less privileged have been given effective priority in the distribution of the riches of our planet, when rich individuals as well as groups seriously undertake fresh efforts in favor of the most deprived."

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## THE OPEN WINDOW

Father Louis Holman

Dear Father,

We have always been taught that anger is a sin. Then we are told that if we don't live up to what God has commanded, His wrath comes down on us. God cannot commit a sin, right? Well, if he can get angry and it's no sin, why then is it a sin for us?

Sincerely,  
K. L.

Dear K. L.,

Anger is an emotion, an important mechanism of our instinct for self preservation. It was put in us by God and is therefore good. What happens is that when we are confronted by certain stimuli which place us under attack in some way (something we perceive as evil) a reaction sets up in the brain which activates hormones which in turn impel us to resist the evil. Our whole body is made ready to resist and overcome the evil. At this time we become conscious of the reaction taking place within us and we must make a decision about it. If we perceive that it is a real evil which we should overcome, our anger continues or becomes even more intense but now it is under the control of reason.

Such was the case with Jesus Christ when He observed the money changers in the Temple. He perceived that they were desecrating His Father's house and reasoned that this should be stopped. But he did not lose His temper. All the time His reason was in control, but the anger was giving His body the energy to resist the evil. That is when anger is legitimate.

Sometimes we perceive something or somebody as evil and a threat to ourselves. When the hormonal reaction sets in we do not place it under the control

of reason but let it take its course. Then the anger becomes strictly animal and we have "lost our temper." Such would be the case if a child came in the house with dirty feet and a parent reacted with anger uncontrolled by reason and proceeded to strike the child in such a way as to do serious damage, say to the child's eye. Child beating cases of which we hear so much today, come under this heading. This is obviously sinful.

As far as God's "anger" is concerned, this is merely a way of speaking, because God is a Spirit and does not have hormones or adrenalin. Writers of the Scripture pictured God as angry for one thing because that's the way they saw it and for another because they wanted to dramatize the evil which was being perpetrated. But God transcends anger.

In summary, anger is an emotion created by God and therefore is in itself good. Anger is meant to be under the control of reason, and this is something we must work at all the time, by learning to stop before we act when we perceive the anger rising in ourselves. (That's where the count-to-ten bit came from). Anger is a sin when we refuse to try to control it or when we let it out on something or somebody that should not reasonably be attacked. Finally God does not get angry, rather, we project our feelings on Him. There is much more which could be said on this subject, but it would fill a book.

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