

Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

Why Contraception Is Wrong

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mk. 12:28-34. (R1) Dt. 6:2-6. (R2) Heb. 7:23-28.

Next Sunday's readings speak of God's commandments.



Fr. Shamon

Of all the hundreds of remarks by Pope John Paul II in America, the press seems to highlight only three: the ordination of women, celibacy and artificial contraception.

Michael Novak (10-18-79) in a column, The Pope and Contraception, implied that perhaps someday the Pope's stand on contraception might change. Regarding natural and evangelical laws, Paul VI wrote, "The Church was not the author, nor consequently can she be their arbiter" (Humanae Vitae, #18). If my watch and the sun do not agree, I do not try to change the sun—I change my watch.

Plato revealed that Socrates used a question-answer method to lead his disciples to knowledge. I would like to use the Socratic dialogue to show why artificial contraception is wrong!

"You have eyes. What is the purpose of the eyes?"

"To see with."

"How did you arrive at that conclusion?"

"Well, that's what the eyes do."

"Are eyes also beautiful?"

"Yes."

"You are correct. Today cosmeticists make millions selling mascara, Maybelline, false eyelashes, and so on, just to enhance the beauty of the eyes. Is that wrong?"

"Of course not. A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

"But suppose a doctor discovered that mascara was making you blind. Would you stop using mascara?"

"Yes."

"Would it be wrong for you to go on using mascara?"

"Why, yes."

"Why? Mascara would make the eyes beautiful"

"But beauty is not the purpose of the eyes. Eyes are to see with."

"You are right. To do anything deliberately that would induce blindness or prevent the proper functioning of the eyes would be wrong."

"Why is this so?"

"Because the inventor determines the purpose of his invention. The invention is good or bad if it does or

does not fulfill the inventor's purpose. God invented us whose bodies scientists have called 'the incredible machine.' He therefore determines our purpose in life and the purpose of every organ in the human body. Thus He determines the purpose of Man's speech, of his eating and drinking. Lying, gluttony and drunkenness are all wrong because they violate His purpose for speaking, eating, drinking. They are not wrong because the Catholic Church says so; she says so because they are wrong. The very same reasoning is valid regarding the sex act. What would you say, is the purpose of marital relations

"I see many purposes: the expression of love, pleasure-children."

"That is true. But what do you think is the purpose of marital relations? Eyes are beautiful, but beauty is not their purpose. Sex is pleasurable and can be an expression of love, but think — are these the purpose of sex? What in the ordinary course of events happens through marital relations?"

"Children are born."

"How true. In fact, sex is the gateway to life. That is the only way that life comes into the world—not through the nose or eyes or mouth. So geared to life is the sex act that there is no 100 per cent contraception short of bodily mutilation or murder. Only after God had created the sexes did He give the command for man to increase and multiply and fill the earth. Tell me, have you ever seen the Broadway play, Fiddler on the Roof?"

"No. But I've heard a song from it at weddings—Sunrise, Sunset."

"Well, in this play the wedding song is To life, to life, L'Chaim. The song reflects the 3,000 year old Hebrew tradition that life is the primary purpose of marriage, not love. In fact, in olden days, matchmakers, not love, brought couples together in marriage. In the play, Tevye's daughters sing 'Matchmaker, matchmaker, make me a match, find me a find, catch me a catch. After 25 years of marriage, Tevye sings to his wife Golde, 'Do you love me?' He explains why he asks 'The first time I met you was on our wedding day. I was scared ... My father and mother said we'd learn to love each other.'"

"But doesn't love and pleasure enter at all into marriage?"

"Most certainly, just as beauty is in the eyes. But love and pleasure are no more the purpose of marriage than beauty is the purpose of the eyes. As the beauty of the eyes must give way to the purpose of the eyes, so that it would be wrong for beauty's sake to induce blindness, so love and pleasure are intertwined with the marriage act, but must never supersede or prevent the purpose of the act, which is the transmission of life."

"I think I see what you are driving at."

"Maybe, this will help

clinch the matter. Do you wear glasses?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"To improve my vision."

"You see, whenever we interfere with bodily functions, we seek to improve them. The word physician comes from the Greek word physis, which means nature. The physician helps nature function better so that bodily ailments can be cured by nature herself. Isn't it strange that only in the life-function of the body have physicians intervened to prevent nature from functioning either by mutilating the body by vasectomy or tubal ligation or by murder: abortion."

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DePaul Opens Community Residence

The DePaul Clinic has opened a home-away-from-home for people coming out of the Rochester Psychiatric Center, and is planning one or two more. Bishop Matthew H. Clark will bless the house at 383 West Ave. at 4 p.m. Nov. 2, during an open house for the public that is scheduled for 2-7 p.m.

Charles Lytle, resident manager of the home, said it opened Oct. 15 and for him had been "a very rewarding experience." There are nine guests. The clinic hopes to have another community residence, and possibly two more, in operation by March 1, he said.

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