

18 Family matters - Birth control? Abortion?

Who is in control of your life?



Read Psalm 131:1-3; 32:8-11 and Matthew 6:25-34. What do you think these verses teach about our priorities in life, and about what our motives should be when we come to take decisions? How does this relate to the subject of birth control and abortion? Who should be in charge?



Contraception

Is sex only for the purpose of having children?



Thus amongst the blessings of marriage, the child holds the first place. And indeed the Creator of the human race Himself, Who in His goodness wishes to use men as His helpers in the propagation of life, taught this when, instituting marriage in Paradise, He said to our first parents, and through them to all future spouses: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth." As St. Augustine admirably deduces from the words of the holy Apostle Saint Paul to Timothy when he says: "The Apostle himself is therefore a witness that marriage is for the sake of generation: 'I wish,' he says, 'young girls to marry.' And, as if someone said to him, 'Why?,' he immediately adds: 'To bear children, to be mothers of families'."

Casti Connubii, Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian Marriage December 31, 1930



Look at the verses the pope was referring to, and see what you think they mean. The first reference is in Genesis 1:28, the second in 1 Timothy 5:14. Look at the preceding verses to see the context. What do you God is telling us?

What Roman Catholics teach about birth control and abortion

The Roman Catholic church teaches that all artificial forms of birth control are wrong.

... But the Church, calling men back to the observance of the norms of the natural law, interpreted by her constant teaching, teaches that each and every marriage act must remain open to the transmission of life.

... In fact, just as man does not have unlimited dominion over his body in general, so also, with particular reason, he has no such dominion over his generative faculties as such, because of their intrinsic ordination to the bringing into being of life, of which God is the principle. "Human life is sacred", John XXIII recalled; "from its very inception it directly involves the creative action of God."

Unlawful Means of Birth Regulation

In conformity with these fundamental elements of the human and Christian vision of marriage, we must once again declare that the direct interruption of the generative process already begun, and, above all, directly willed and procured abortion, even if for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as lawful means of birth regulation.

Also, to be excluded, as the Magisterium of the Church has on a number of occasions declared, is direct sterilization, whether perpetual or temporary, whether of the man or of the woman.

Similarly excluded is every action that, either in anticipation of the conjugal act or in its accomplishment or in the development of its natural consequences, would have as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible.

Humanae Vitae, Encyclical Letter of Pope Paul VI, 'On the Regulation of Births', July 25, 1968

Think of some situations in which people might consider abortion. In each case, think about the possible alternatives facing the parents.

An unborn child



Job 10:8-12; Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5. What is God telling us about the growing foetus in the womb?



Look at Psalm 127:3-5 & 128:3-4. What do these verses tell us about God's view of children?



Exodus 21:22. What light, if any, do you think this throws on the subject? Don't expect any easy answers!



Can abortion ever be justified? If so, when?