

Contraception --- How it Damages Sexual Intimacy

(thoughts passed on by a Godly Catholic Couple)

The Church teaches that there is a twofold purpose to marriage: 1) for the procreation of offspring and 2) for the betterment of both spouses. By reserving the sexual act for marriage, God ordained it as sacred and made it a manifestation of this twofold purpose. The use of artificial contraception defeats one, if not both, ends of marriage. On the one hand, it blocks the *natural* outcome of the sexual act, which is children. On the other hand, it impedes the total self giving of one spouse to another because it prevents them from being open to the natural outcome of the sexual act. This mentality can then lead to very selfish sex since it becomes merely an act of self-gratification.

The immorality of contraception manifests itself in many ways. One consists in separating what has been joined together by God in the plan of creation. The sexual act, ordained at least in part for procreation, becomes subject to radical perversion when separated from one of its proper ends. If sexual acts are viewed in an exclusively "relational" context and are separated from any teleology (that is, if they have no purpose or end that extends beyond themselves), any and all sexual activity can be justified, from sodomy and masturbation to bestiality and pedophilia.

There is another problem, which we might say is on the personalist level. Contraception reduces the gift of self between spouses. Fecundity, as a normal, healthy, and ontologically good aspect of the human person, is withheld through contraception. This transforms an act which should signify total self-giving into a caricature of itself. At the least, people who engage in contracepted sex fail to value and accept their spouses as persons in their totality. Contracepted sex signifies an apprehension on the part of one or both spouses to commit fully to a permanent bond between them, the bond incarnated in a child.

Another manifestation of contraception's immorality is its perpetuation of the pernicious myth of the "unwanted" child. A child is no longer seen as an ontological good (a "gift from God"), valuable in every and all circumstances, but rather as one of many possible options, valuable only on a functional level. This is the contraceptive mentality, and it has many negative ramifications. Children who are conceived when contraception fails may become targets of abortion since they are "unwanted" or, to speak more accurately, since the parents are unwanting.

Even children who are "planned" may experience the unfortunate effects of the contraceptive mentality. These children have become valuable to their parents and are sought only under certain circumstances. They do not experience unconditional love and acceptance; they experience affection only at their parents' convenience. A lack of total love and acceptance must be disconcerting to a young child seeking affirmation and a sense of value.