

Address of Pope Pius XII on Marriage, Fertility, and Ethics

Translation and Commentary
by Ronald L. Conte Jr.

Section I

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Address of Pope Pius XII to the Second World Congress on Fertility and Sterility

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Pope Pius XII
Address to the Second World Congress
on Fertility and Sterility
at Naples, France
19 May 1956

The Languages

This Address was given by Pope Pius XII in two languages. Initially, he spoke French to his audience, as the gathering was held in Naples, France. Then, towards the end of the Address, the Pope spoke in Latin, saying that the Latin language was a better fit for the subject matter. Finally, he concluded the Address in French.

In this first section of the booklet, I present my English translation of the Address, along with my extensive commentary. The second section of the booklet has the original text of the Address, in French and Latin, accompanied by my paragraph by paragraph translation, without the commentary.

I am an experienced translator of Latin. I have translated the entire Vulgate Bible from Latin into English. I worked on this project nearly every day for five years, from March 2004 to March 2009. The translation is published under the title: *The Sacred Bible, Catholic Public Domain Version*, original edition. I am the sole translator and editor of that version of the Bible.

More recently, I translated the doctrines of the Council of Trent from the original Latin. This work is published under the title: *The Doctrines of the Council of Trent: A New Translation* (May 9, 2017). I've also translated other Latin texts, as needed, in my work in Roman Catholic theology. In this, the 1956 Address of Pope Pius XII, I translated the Latin text from the version of the Address on the Vatican Website.¹

The entire text of the Address itself, in the original French and Latin is copyrighted by the Vatican. However, the text of the commentary is copyrighted by the author of this booklet: Ronald L. Conte Jr. I have already published the translated text of the Address online, at my website: www.catechism.cc Other authors may use that translation as they see fit. Please credit me as the translator of the English text.

The Subject Matter

This Papal Address was given to a meeting of physicians and researchers on the topic of fertility and sterility. The goal of the gathering was to promote research on infertility, and to make any new treatments more widely available.

Pope Pius XII had a related, but substantially different purpose to his Address. He did not speak mainly about infertility or artificial procreation. His comments on that topic were brief. Rather, he chose this occasion as an opportunity for an exercise of the Papal Magisterium on the topics of marriage, procreation, and sexual ethics. He taught on the purpose of marriage, and on the limits to the use of the sexual faculty within marriage. And he condemned a number of different grave sins in this subject area.

The Address

The paragraphs below, numbered and in quotes, are from the Address of Pius XII. Each section beginning with a paragraph marked "*Commentary*" is by the author of this booklet.

*[The first section of the Papal Address was given in French. For the original French text, see Section II. Here is the English translation.]*²

1. "You have expressed to Us, Gentlemen, the desire to come so that you may present your respects to Us on the occasion of the Second World Congress of Fertility and Sterility, which you are now holding in Naples. We have answered your wishes promptly, and we are telling you the very special pleasure we have in receiving an imposing group of scholars and practitioners from so many different countries. You are about to study a difficult and delicate subject, because it concerns one of the principle functions of the human body, and because the results of your work can lead to consequences of great significance for the lives of many persons and for the evolution of societies."

Commentary: The ability of the human body to produce offspring by means of procreation is one of its most important functions. (Of course, the mental and spiritual functions of the human person far exceed mere bodily functions.) Without that bodily capability, humanity would not be able to continue, from one generation to the next. Then, too, on a smaller scale, reproduction allows a family to continue from one generation to another, passing on the values and examples of the fathers and mothers to the children, again and again.

There are many sufferings in this life. Family often helps reduce the burden of those difficulties. Without offspring, the family is reduced to couples, to friends, to co-workers, and neighbors. The bond between parent and child, if it were absent to all of society, would bring great loss to the lives of many individuals, and cause inestimable harm to society at large.

2. "Involuntary conjugal sterility, for which you propose to provide a remedy, presents an obstacle to obtaining of the principle end of marriage and provokes a profound malaise in the couple, often veiled by an instinctive modesty, but dangerous for the stability of marriage itself. That is why, in the face of the powerlessness of modern medicine to successfully treat many cases of this type, you formed in 1951 this "International Association of Fertility", whose first Congress, held in New York in 1953, proposed in its agenda three main resolutions: (1) to assist by all possible means the study and research of fertility; (2) to promote and disseminate this specialty among physicians, so that a sufficient number of them may effectively help infertile couples; (3) to insist on the establishment of clinics, services, and fertility centers in hospitals, under the direction of competent personnel."

Commentary: The principle end of marriage is the generation and education of offspring (also phrased as the procreation and raising of children). Infertility is a personal matter, usually kept quiet by the couple. It concerns an area which ought to be veiled by modesty.

But if the couple are unable to overcome this problem, so that the marriage remains without children, the Pope rightly says that this represents a danger to the stability of marriage. The reason is that a marriage is often the beginning of a family, and the very purpose of marriage itself is to procreate and raise children. Without children, the marriage lacks its most fundamental reason for existing, and so it is in danger of collapsing.

Clearly, the Pontiff considers the goal of this specialty in research and medicine to be noble and worthy: to overcome infertility, so that marriage may attain its crowning glory, children. But a worthy goal does not imply that everything done to attain that goal is worthy and moral. The end does not justify the means.

3. "The present Congress, like the preceding one, is a response to the desire to develop and maximize the knowledge we possess, to spread it among physicians in all parts of the world, and to determine a coordination of work on certain points, where the convergence of efforts will permit more significant results. You will hear a remarkable number of reports and papers that examine endocrinal and metabolic factors of fertility and sterility, their occupational and toxicological factors, new methods of diagnosis and treatment for male and female sterility, the diagnosis of ovulation and spermatogenesis, and the treatment of their disorders, surgery for sterility. A series of dissertations will also consider experimental research carried out in this field and the problems relating to one of the principal functions of the human person. This set of studies brilliantly illustrates the interest which this Congress prompts, and all the ways in which eminent specialists have wanted to contribute to the common effort."

Commentary: The Catholic Church supports and approves of any scientific research aimed at helping humanity in various ways, as long as both the end and the means are morally good. Even in the delicate area of human reproduction, scientific research and medical treatments are necessary and useful. But the same rules of conduct apply to science as to any other area of human endeavor. Science is not above or outside of the eternal moral law.

4. "It does not belong to Us to pass judgment on the purely technical aspects of your work. On the other hand, We would like to briefly consider certain moral implications of the questions which you approach from a scientific point of view."

Commentary: The Church does not desire to pass judgment on various scientific theories and medical treatments, except when those areas of human knowledge overlap with matters of faith and morals. When science or medicine proposes acts which affect the intimate concerns of human life and the procreation of new life, the Church has the right, duty, and responsibility to teach and to intervene. The Church possesses the authority from God to decide when a proposal in science or medicine is contrary to the basic principles of ethics, or otherwise conflicts with fundamental moral truths.

5. "Your previous Congress pointed out, in its final motion, that involuntary conjugal sterility raises an economic and social problem of great importance: that it contributes to the lowering of the fertility index of populations, and, in this way, can influence the lives and destinies of peoples. It sometimes happens that one focuses on this point of view, which is more apparent and more easily controlled, so one may say that the birth rate should be promoted in order to ensure the vitality of a nation and its expansion in all domains. It is true that a high birth rate manifests the creative energies of a people or a family. It illustrates the courage of human persons before life, its risks, its difficulties. It underlines their will to build and to progress. It is right to point out that the physical impossibility of exercising paternity and maternity easily becomes a cause of discouragement, of withdrawal into one's self. Life, which ardently wills to prolong itself, to surpass itself -- falls upon itself, so to speak, and many homes, alas, succumb to this ordeal."

Commentary: The reasons given by researchers, scientists, and physicians to justify their work are based on the good ends which they pursue. They offer solutions to the problem of "involuntary conjugal sterility". They wish to "ensure the vitality" of families and nations. They work toward a higher birth rate, which is essential to cause a people or a nation to continue to thrive. And they assist spouses whose

discouragement in the face of infertility is a source of anguish for them in their lives and in their marriage. Life is inherently ordered toward surpassing itself, toward bringing new life into existence. Infertility is an obstacle to that good end. So far so good. But there is more to morality than a good intended end.

6. "It is with pleasure that We would like to mention here a consideration, which you have highlighted yourself. It is entirely true that your zeal to pursue research on marital infertility and the means to overcome it, if it presents a scientific aspect worthy of attention, also engages high spiritual and ethical values, which should be taken into account. We have indicated these above. It is profoundly human that spouses see and find in their child the true and full expression of their reciprocal love and of their mutual gift. It is not difficult to understand why the unsatisfied desire for paternity or maternity is felt as a painful and sorrowful sacrifice by the parents, who are animated by noble and healthy sentiments. Moreover, the involuntary sterility of marriage can become a serious danger to the union and to the very stability of the family."

Commentary: Solving the problems of infertility involves "high spiritual and ethical values." Spouses rightly desire paternity and maternity, as the procreation and raising of children is the highest and primary good of their marriage. When infertility cannot be overcome, the marriage might fall apart. Children are a result of the love of spouses, and they help to strengthen that love. But the end does not justify the means. Researchers, scientists, and physicians are not justified in using any means to achieve the good end of helping infertile couples conceive and bear children.

7. "But this social aspect in fact only conceals a more intimate and more grave reality. Marriage, in fact, unites two persons in a community of destiny, in their march towards the realization of an ideal that implies, not the fullness of an earthly happiness, but the conquest of spiritual values of a transcendent order, that the Christian Revelation, in particular, proposes in all its grandeur. This ideal, the spouses pursue together, by consecrating themselves to obtaining the primary end of the marriage, the generation and education of children."

Commentary: These truths are obscured in many discussions of the theology of the body today: that the primary end of marriage is the procreation and raising of children, and that marriage and family are ordered mainly toward happiness in the next life, not mere earthly enjoyment. Therefore, spouses cannot abandon moral truth and sacrifice the love of God in order to obtain the love of children.

8. "Several times already We believed it necessary to recall why the particular intentions of the spouses, their common life, their personal development, could only be conceived as subordinate to the goal which exceeds them, paternity and maternity. 'Not only the common work of exterior life,' We said in an allocution addressed to midwives on October 29, 1951, 'but also all personal enrichment, even intellectual and spiritual enrichment, all that is most spiritual and profound in conjugal love as such, has been placed by the will of the Creator and by nature at the service of the posterity'. (Radio Message Discourse, Vol XIII p. 348-349). Such is the constant teaching of the Church. She has rejected every conception of marriage that would threaten to turn it back on itself, to make it a selfish search for emotional and physical satisfaction, in the interests of the spouses alone."

Commentary: The personal enjoyment and spiritual enrichment of the spouses is subordinate to the generation and education of offspring. And, as the CCC teaches: "Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means...."³ The desire for children can be holy and selfless. But it can also be an expression of selfishness. When spouses are willing to contradict the highest goods of the eternal moral law in order to obtain offspring by any means at all, they sin gravely.

The crowning glory of marriage is children. But that good end must be pursued only by morally good means.

And this is one of the errors of the popular version of the theology of the body: a "conception of marriage" that turns "back on itself, to make it a selfish search for emotional and physical satisfaction, in the interests of the spouses alone." Self-sacrifice is inherent to all the goods of marriage and family. But it is all too easy to sell the general public an idealization of marriage which fulfills all of one's own selfish desires, and pays only lip service to sacrifice, self-denial, and children as the highest good of marriage.

9. "But the Church has also rejected the opposite attitude which claims to separate, in procreation, the biological activity from the personal relationship of the spouses. The child is the fruit of the conjugal union, when it is expressed in its fullness, by the implementation of the organic functions, the sensitive emotions which are connected to it, with the spiritual and disinterested love which enlivens it. It is within the unity of this human act that the biological conditions of generation must be proposed. It is never permissible to separate these diverse aspects to the point of positively excluding either the procreative intention or the conjugal relationship."

Commentary: Though procreation is the greater good, the loving union of the spouses is absolutely indispensable to the moral attainment of that good. Thus, human persons cannot morally use sex outside of marriage to obtain offspring. They cannot morally use artificial procreation (IVF, artificial insemination, human cloning, etc.) in order to reach the good end of having children. The good of procreation must be obtained by the moral means of the natural sexual union of the married couple. Therefore, the spouses cannot separate this unitive meaning from the procreative meaning, even though the latter is the greater good.

10. "The relationship that unites the father and the mother to their child, has its roots in biological facts but even more so in the deliberate advancement of the spouses, who give themselves to each other and whose will to develop flourishes and finds its true end in the being whom they send into the world. Only this self-consecration, generous in principle and difficult in its realization, by the conscious acceptance of the responsibilities it entails, can guarantee that the work of educating children will be pursued with all the care, courage, and patience it requires. It can now be affirmed that human fecundity, beyond the physical realm, has essential moral aspects, which must necessarily be considered, even when the subject is treated from a medical point of view."

Commentary: The parents are united to their children by biological facts, meaning by their blood relation. But even more so are they united in a family of love, which benefits all its members, despite the many difficulties that arise in this fallen sinful world.

However, it is not sufficient to assert that the spouses must love one another and their children, and must pursue good goals. Every individual human person, and every family and other group of persons, must act only within the confines of the moral law. When a physician or researcher pursues the good of procreation, there are "essential moral aspects" which cannot be ignored, denied, or contradicted on the basis of medical or scientific goods.

11. "It is quite obvious that the scientist and the doctor, when dealing with a problem of their own specialty, have the right to focus their attention on its strictly scientific elements and to solve it according to these data alone. But when one enters the realm of practical applications to the human person, it is impossible to ignore the repercussions that the proposed methods will have on the person and his destiny. The greatness of the human act consists precisely in going beyond the very moment when it arises, so as

to engage the whole orientation of life, to arrive at a position with regard to the absolute. This is already true of daily activity -- how much more of an act that engages, with the mutual love of the spouses, their future and that of their posterity!"

Commentary: Science cannot ignore the moral repercussions of its discoveries and its application to the lives of human persons. The scientist who leaves ethics to theologians and philosophers is like the business man who wishes his company to thrive, at the expense of harming the lives of his customers. Ethics is a matter of concern to each and every human person, not only to those who have chosen to write and speak on the subject.

Every good human act, every deliberate knowing moral choice of a human person, is ordered toward transcendent values (e.g. truth, love, justice, mercy, etc.), which extend far beyond the facts of the immediate temporal situation. The acts of human persons are so ordered because we are made in the image of God, having free will, reason, and an immortal soul. But this implies that the acts of human persons have a meaning that is subject to conscience and morality, to ascertain whether these acts are compatible with the love of God and the love of neighbor as self.

When next we consider the human act of natural marital relations open to life, this orientation toward higher goods is all the more evident. The natural marital act is inherently ordered toward the transmission of life, as an expression of the love of the spouses. To represent the marital act as a mere physical act, the greatest good of which were venereal pleasure or personal fulfillment, is a grave misunderstanding. The mutual love of the spouses, expressed in marital relations, is naturally ordered toward the procreation of new life, and supernaturally ordered toward the raising of holy children before God.

12. "Therefore, We believe it is important for you, gentlemen, not to neglect this perspective, when you consider the methods of artificial fertilization. The means by which one tends to the production of a new life, takes on an essential human significance, inseparable from the end which one pursues, and susceptible, if it is not in conformity with the reality of things and with the laws inscribed in the nature of beings, to cause serious harm to that very end."

Commentary: Artificial insemination, and, more broadly, any form of artificial procreation, is not in conformity with natural law (i.e. the law inscribed in our very nature). Human reproduction has a great significance because we are made in the image of God. So we cannot use any means at all to accomplish the good end of human procreation.

In Catholic moral theology, in every area of human endeavor, not only reproduction, both the end and the means to that end must be morally good. The end is the purpose or reason for choosing a particular act or behavior. The means is the act itself, which is chosen in order to achieve that end. For example, an infertile couple might choose the act of artificial insemination, in order to achieve the good end of procreation. But, according to the teaching of the Magisterium, any and all types of artificial procreation (artificial insemination, in vitro fertilization, etc.) are intrinsically evil and always gravely immoral. So the good end of procreating children -- the end of having a large family -- does not justify the use of an evil means to that good end.

13. "On this point likewise, We were asked to give some directives. On the subject of attempts at human artificial fertilization 'in vitro', it suffices for Us to observe that it must be rejected as immoral and absolutely illicit. On the diverse questions of morality which arise on artificial fertilization, in the ordinary sense of the word, or 'artificial insemination,' We have already expressed Our thoughts in a

discourse addressed to physicians on September 29, 1949 (Discourse and Radio Message, vol XI, pp. 221 and following). We reaffirm also the specifics of what We were saying then, and We limit Ourselves here to repeat the judgment given at the conclusion: 'As regards artificial fertilization, not only is there need to be extremely reserved, but it must be absolutely excluded. In speaking thusly, one does not necessarily proscribe the use of certain artificial means ordered solely either to facilitate the natural act, or to accomplish the end of the natural act performed normally.' But since the use of artificial fertilization is spreading more and more, and in order to correct some erroneous opinions that are spreading about what We have taught, We add the following:"

Commentary: There are three types of medical interventions considered in the above paragraph. The first is "in vitro" fertilization. This procedure, called IVF, has become widely accepted by secular society, and is today very common. However, even at that time, in 1956, the Roman Catholic Church, by the authority of Pope Pius XII, taught that IVF "must be rejected as immoral and absolutely illicit". In IVF, conception occurs "in vitro" (i.e. "in glass"), which is where the sperm and the egg are combined.

But with artificial insemination (the second type mentioned), the egg and sperm are combined "in vivo" (i.e. "in a living being"), specifically, in the woman's reproductive system. A sample of the man's semen is obtained, either by masturbation or by interrupting natural intercourse (similar to the "withdrawal" method of contraception). Then the sperm is combined with the egg in the reproductive system of the woman. Despite the differences in the first and second types of procedures, both are intrinsically evil and both "must be absolutely excluded." The reason is that artificial procreation is deprived of the unitive meaning needed to make any procreative act moral: the loving union of husband and wife in the natural marital act.

Now it might seem that artificial procreation does possess the procreative meaning. However, it is a severe distortion of that meaning. Although the act is objectively procreative -- a new human life is created -- it is not the type of procreation ordained by God for humanity.

The unitive meaning has two components, corresponding to the body and the soul: the physical union as one flesh, and the loving union of husband and wife, a love found in their souls. Mere physical union would be a hollow shell of the unitive meaning, if the love of the spouses is absent.

Similarly, the procreative meaning has two components: one of the body and the other of the soul. The bodily aspect is the mere fact that a child is procreated, or, in the case of natural intercourse open to life, that the chosen act is ordered toward that end. The spiritual aspect is choice of the spouses to use the means provided by nature and God: the natural marital act. This choice is of the heart and mind; it is a spiritual choice, in cooperation with grace. Thus, procreation is not merely a bodily fact, but a moral and loving choice to seek a good end by a good means.

When artificial procreation is chosen instead of the natural means to that end, then the bodily aspect of procreation is present, but the spiritual aspect is absent. There is no deliberate knowing choice of the couple to cooperate with the plan of nature and God for the transmission of life, and so to cooperate with the grace of God within the Sacrament of Marriage. Thus, the use of artificial procreation, of any kind, by Christian spouses, is not only an intrinsically evil act, but also a sacrilege.

The use of contraception is intrinsically evil and gravely immoral because contraception deprives the sexual act of its procreative finality. By comparison, the use of artificial procreation is intrinsically evil and always gravely immoral for two reasons: (1) it deprives procreation of the unitive meaning, and (2) it harms the procreative meaning by the use of immoral means to the end of conceiving new human life.

14. "Artificial fertilization exceeds the limits of the right that the spouses have acquired by the matrimonial contract, that is, to fully exercise their natural sexual capacity in the natural performance of the matrimonial act. The contract in question does not confer on them the right to artificial fertilization, since such a right is in no way expressed in the right to the natural conjugal act and cannot be inferred from it. Even less so can it be derived from a right to the 'child', as the primary 'end' of marriage. The matrimonial contract does not give this right, because its object is not the 'child' but the 'natural acts' which are capable of generating a new life and which are ordered toward it. It must also be said that artificial fertilization violates the natural law and is contrary to justice and morality."

Commentary: The primary end of marriage is not a child obtained by any means at all. Rather, the primary end is the use of the natural marital act to procreate children. So when we say that the primary end of marriage is the generation and education of offspring, we do not imply that the offspring can be generated by any means at all. The end does not justify the means. So the good end of having children does not justify an intrinsically evil means to obtain children, such as IVF or artificial insemination.

Sex outside of marriage is intrinsically evil and always gravely immoral. No human person has a right to extra-marital or pre-marital sexual acts. But which sexual acts are moral within marriage? Pope Pius XII teaches that "the right that the spouses have acquired by the matrimonial contract" does not extend to any type of sex at all. Instead, the marital right is "to fully exercise their natural sexual capacity in the natural performance of the matrimonial act." The matrimonial state confers on the spouses only "the right to the natural conjugal act", and not a right to any other sexual acts.

So now we see that the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church has in fact condemned unnatural sexual acts in marriage. Under Catholic teaching, only "the natural performance of the matrimonial act" is permissible. This "natural conjugal act" is nothing other than that type of sexual intercourse which is ordered in itself toward the procreation of new human life. And though new life does not result from each use of the marital right, sexual acts are only natural and moral when they retain that proper ordering. So when *Humanae Vitae* teaches that marital sexual acts must be unitive and procreative, that teaching is in full agreement with prior teachings of the Church on the same topic. Only the "natural conjugal act" is unitive and procreative. All unnatural sexual acts are intrinsically evil and gravely immoral, because they are inherently non-procreative and inherently non-unitive. Thus, according to Pope Pius XII, teaching by an act of the Papal Magisterium, married couples are only permitted to use "the 'natural acts' which are capable of generating a new life and which are ordered toward it."

Now, as the speech continues, the Pontiff expounds on this same point, that unnatural sexual acts are intrinsically evil and gravely immoral, even in marriage.

*[This second section of the Papal Address was given in Latin. For the original Latin text, see Section II. Here is my English translation.]*⁴

15. "Now another question occurs, for the treatment of which it is more fitting to employ the Latin language."

Commentary: This Papal Address was given by Pope Pius XII at Naples, France, in 1956. He began the speech in French, but at a certain point, he switched to Latin. The use of Latin in Church documents helps to maintain a continuity with past teachings, such that the same terminology is used to refer to the same ideas. It is also the case that certain Latin words have a meaning, well established by Saints and

past theologians who wrote in Latin. By comparison, the use of a vernacular language may be subject to change in the meaning of words, may have different meanings in different subcultures, and may be affected by the use of some words as slang. Thus, Latin is useful in magisterial teachings and in theology. The next several paragraphs were translated from the Latin.

16. "Just as our rational mind is opposed to artificial insemination, so the same ethical reasoning, by that norm of behavior which is proposed, altogether prohibits that human semen be procured by means of masturbation, not even so as to be subject to the examination of experts."

Commentary: Artificial procreation is morally wrong in itself. For it is contrary to the natural order established by God, such that children should result from the loving union of the spouses in the natural marital act. But when we consider the methods used in artificial procreation, there are additional grave sins.

IVF creates many human embryos, in vitro, and then destroys some immediately, implants a few (not just one or two), and then freezes the rest. The embryos that are frozen have little chance of being brought to development and birth. Then, as the implanted embryos grow, they often die in the womb, and another round of IVF is needed. By the time that a living child is brought to birth, over a dozen others have died along the way, sometimes a few dozen. The use of IVF is much more gravely disordered than mere artificial insemination. IVF is essentially a type of mass murder, the mass destruction of many human embryos, as part of the methods used to bring one child to birth.

In artificial procreation of any kind, masturbation is the usual means to obtain a sample of semen. But that sexual act is itself intrinsically evil and always gravely immoral. As Pope Saint John Paul II taught in *Veritatis Splendor*, every intrinsically evil act remains immoral, regardless of intention or circumstances.⁵ Therefore, the sin of masturbation remains immoral, even when the intended end is not sexual pleasure, but the eventual procreation of a child.

Some modern-day theologians have proposed that perhaps masturbation is only immoral when the purpose of the act is pleasure. They note the definition of that act, in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "By masturbation is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure."⁶ So they suggest that perhaps the same sexual act is not condemned when the goal is not sexual pleasure, but other purposes, such as to obtain a sample for medical examination. Some have gone so far as to say that the same sexual act should not even be called "masturbation", when it has a different purpose.

But the teaching of the Church is clear. The CCC goes on to teach that "masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action" and that intrinsically evil acts are "independently of circumstances and intentions...always gravely illicit"⁷ And the teaching of Pope Pius XII in this Address follows this same moral principle. Certain acts are inherently immoral, and such acts cannot be justified by a good intention, or a difficult circumstance.

17. "This norm of behavior we likewise mentioned in our Address before the Congress of the Association of Urological Physicians, on the 8th day in the month of October in the year 1953, in which we decided these things, saying: 'concerning the rest, the Holy Office has already decided on the 2nd of August, 1929' (Acts of the Apostolic See, vol. 21, year 1929, p. 490, II) that 'masturbation directly procured so as to obtain sperm' is not licit, no matter what the purpose of the exam may be. (Address and Radio message, vol. 15, page 368).'

Commentary: Is masturbation moral when there is a good purpose, or a difficult circumstance? No, it is not. And the same principle applies to every intrinsically evil act, whether it is a gravely immoral sexual act or some other type of inherently immoral sin. An inherently immoral act cannot be justified by reference to a good purpose or intention. This applies not only to masturbation, but also to the unnatural sexual acts that are widely promoted by sinful secular society and often used in Christian marriages. These acts are intrinsically evil and therefore cannot be justified by any purpose, nor by any circumstance.

18. "But when it was reported to us that this depraved mode of behavior had increased greatly in his place, we considered it an opportunity to warn, to recall, and again to instruct, now just as then. If this mode of behavior is being used to satisfy the libido, even the natural sensibility of man, by his own free will, rejects these things, and much more so the judgments of the mind, as often as he considers the matter, maturely and rightly."

Commentary: The phrase "depraved mode of behavior" refers to the sin of masturbation. The Pope notes that this behavior "had increased greatly". What would he say about the situation today? Mainstream prime time television shows mention masturbation and many other sexual sins as if these acts were normal, healthy, and a source of humor. These types of TV shows (principally comedies) are on at all hours of the day and night, when children might be watching. Secular society has accepted many grave sexual sins as if these acts were entirely moral and good. The phrase "depraved mode of behavior" can be applied to a wide range of sexual sins, and all of them seem to be increasing in our society, despite the teaching of the Bible and the Church.

When masturbation is used to "satisfy the libido", meaning as a way to obtain sexual release or sexual satisfaction, it is, the Pope says, plainly to be rejected by "the natural sensibility" of man and his mature and right judgment. Here we are discussing the intended end or purpose of an intrinsically evil act. But what happens if the intrinsically evil act is done for another purpose, one that is good, such as to obtain a sample for medical examination? The Pontiff answers this question next. And, as expected, a gravely immoral intrinsically evil act does not become moral when used for any purpose, no matter how good. For the intended end of an act, does not change the moral nature of that act from evil to good.

19. "Now the same acts ought to be likewise repudiated, even when they are used for grave reasons, which would seem to remove them from culpability: for example, for use as a remedy for those who are troubled by an excess of nervous tension or abnormal outbursts of emotion; for the medical inspection of the sperm, under the power of the microscope, to determine with which venereal or other kinds of bacterial disease it may be infected; for various types of examinations, from which, it is ordinarily agreed, the semen may be diagnosed by the vitality of the sperm, the presence of components, the number, quality, form, strength, and other conditions of that type."

Commentary: Some Catholic authors have claimed that it might be moral to use masturbation for some purpose other than sexual pleasure. What if this act is used to release "an excess of nervous tension", or in response to psychological or emotional problems, or for the sake of some type of medical examination? The Pope teaches what the Church has always taught, that the purpose for which an act is chosen does not justify an intrinsically evil act. When an act is wrong by its very nature, by the moral "species" (the type of act in terms of morality), then nothing can justify the choice of that act.

The phrase "same acts" refers to masturbation, but this teaching can be applied to any intrinsically evil sin, such as another type of sexual sin, or contraception, abortion, murder, theft, lying, etc. An inherently

immoral act is a deliberate knowing choice which is wrong by its very nature. And, as Pope Pius XII clearly states, no reason or purpose, no matter how grave, can justify an intrinsically evil act.

Pope Saint John Paul II taught the same doctrine, many years later, in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*: "If acts are intrinsically evil, a good intention or particular circumstances can diminish their evil, but they cannot remove it.... circumstances or intentions can never transform an act intrinsically evil by virtue of its object into an act 'subjectively' good or defensible as a choice."⁸ And John Paul II taught the same in the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*: "No circumstance, no purpose, no law whatsoever can ever make licit an act which is intrinsically illicit, since it is contrary to the Law of God which is written in every human heart, knowable by reason itself, and proclaimed by the Church."⁹

But this error, condemned by Pius XII and John Paul II, continues to spread among the Catholic faithful today. They justify certain intrinsically evil acts by reference to "grave reasons", that is, to the intended end or purpose for which the act is chosen. Yet the Church has condemned this claim, repeatedly over the years. No reason, however grave, can remove the culpability of a sexual sin, or the use of contraception, or the choice of direct abortion.

20. "This mode of procuring human seed, by the effect of masturbation, cannot be viewed as anything other than direct, for it is not in accord with nature, in its full exercise of the generative faculty in the human person. Indeed, because this full exercise was done outside of conjugal intercourse, it bears within itself the direct and improper usurpation of the use of this same faculty. In this way, the improper use of this faculty is rightly considered an intrinsic violation of the principles of morality. For by no means does the human person have the right to any exercise of the sexual faculty beyond a certain point, because he received the very same faculty from nature."

Commentary: An act is intrinsically evil when it has evil in its object. The moral object of an act is the end, in terms of morality, toward which the knowingly chosen act is inherently ordered. So, in the case of masturbation, the act is ordered toward the deprivation of the marital, unitive, and procreative meanings from a sexual act. Any sexual act which is deprived of any one or more of those three meanings is an intrinsically evil sexual act. In the case of contraception, the act is ordered toward a deprivation of the procreative meaning of sexual acts. In the case of direct abortion, the act is ordered toward the deprivation of life from an innocent prenatal human being.

In every intrinsically evil act, there is a direct relationship between the knowingly chosen act and its object. The act is inherently ordered toward its object, making the relationship direct and intrinsic. So, in Catholic moral theology, when we say that an act is direct, we mean the act is intrinsically evil as there is a direct relationship between the act and a certain end, its moral object. When Pope Pius XII says that masturbation, for any purpose, even for a medical purpose, "cannot be viewed as anything other than direct," he means that the act remains intrinsically evil, regardless of the intended end.

This same analysis of an intrinsically evil act can be applied to the use of abortifacient contraception for a medical purpose. No matter how good or compelling that purpose may be, the act remains intrinsically evil and always gravely immoral. Just as masturbation cannot be justified for a medical purpose, so also contraception cannot be justified for a medical purpose. And the same is true for direct abortion. The medical purpose of saving the life of the mother -- and saving innocent life is one of the highest purposes of medicine -- does not justify direct abortion. The medical purpose of relieving severe suffering in a terminally ill person does not justify the intrinsically evil act of euthanasia.

Pope Pius XII goes on to say that masturbation "is not in accord with nature" because it is a "full exercise of the generative faculty in the human person" which is "outside of conjugal intercourse." Thus, the act is intrinsically evil. It usurps the natural purpose of the sexual faculty, which is found in its procreative finality. And so masturbation is an "intrinsic violation of the principles of morality." And the same can be said of any other sexual sin, such as adultery, premarital sex, and unnatural sexual acts. They are a misuse of the sexual faculty, which is intended by God for use only in the natural conjugal act, and only when the sexual acts retain their proper ordering toward the unitive and procreative meanings, just as Pope Paul VI taught in *Humanae Vitae*.

21. "Certainly, to the human person (aside from other things which pertain also to irrational animals) the right and power for the use and exercise of the same faculty is bestowed only on those who have entered into a valid marriage, and then it is confined to the matrimonial right, as it has been handed down and received with respect to marriage itself. And this shows the human person that the sole reason for which he has received from nature this responsibility, with respect to the sexual faculty, is nothing other than to have the power and right to enter into matrimony."

Commentary: In many different magisterial documents, a sexual act is defined, as also here, as any deliberate use of the sexual faculty. When a human person exercises the gifts of reason and free will by a deliberate knowing choice, that choice is an act subject to conscience and the eternal moral law. And when the deliberate knowing choice concerns the use of the sexual faculty, it is a sexual act, which must be marital, unitive, and procreative to be moral. So the Pope teaches that the right to the "exercise of the same faculty" is only given to "those who have entered into a valid marriage."

But marriage is not the only requirement for the exercise of the sexual faculty to be moral. For the use of the sexual faculty is not only "confined to the matrimonial right." It is confined to that right exercised in a certain manner. This manner is just as stated in a previous paragraph (#14). For "the right that the spouses have acquired by the matrimonial contract," is nothing other than to "exercise their natural sexual capacity in the natural performance of the matrimonial act." They may choose to perform "the natural conjugal act", but no other sexual acts are moral, not even within the Christian Sacrament of holy Matrimony. Thus, the Pope and the Church condemn the use of unnatural sexual acts in marriage.

22. "Yet this right, which pertains to the object and scope of the natural law, has not been assigned to the will of human persons. By the force of this law of nature, the human person does not possess the right and power to the full exercise of the sexual faculty, directly intended, except when he performs the conjugal act according to the norms defined and imposed by nature itself. Outside of this natural act, it is not even given within the matrimonial right itself to enjoy this sexual faculty fully. These are the limits to the particular right of which we are speaking, and they circumscribe its use according to nature."

Commentary: The right to make use of the sexual faculty, within marriage, is not "assigned to the will of human persons". This means that the spouses cannot perform any type of sexual act to which the two spouses agree. Rather, there are limits imposed by God and natural law. The sexual acts of married persons are moral only when each spouse "performs the conjugal act according to the norms defined and imposed by nature itself." Any sexual acts which are contrary to "the norms defined and imposed by nature" are unnatural sexual acts and are therefore intrinsically evil. These types of acts, which by definition are inherently non-procreative, do not become moral when used in marriage -- no matter what the purpose might be.

Just as we discussed above, no sexual act, whether masturbation, or unnatural sexual acts in marriage, or adultery, can become justified when done for a good purpose. So the spouses cannot justify the use of

unnatural sexual acts for the purpose of foreplay. The intended end (or purpose) of preparing for natural marital relations does not justify the use of the sexual faculty outside of the limits imposed by nature. The sexual faculty has the inherent purpose of procreation, therefore all sexual acts must be, not only marital, but also unitive and procreative. Non-procreative sexual acts are inherently unnatural, and therefore inherently immoral.

So, when Pope Pius XII says that "Outside of this natural act, it is not even given within the matrimonial right itself to enjoy this sexual faculty fully," he means that no type of sexual act, whether masturbation, or oral sex, or anal sex, or any type of sex with a device (or "sex toy") is justified by its use in marriage. For all such acts are "outside of this natural act", the natural marital act, which alone is marital, unitive, and procreative.

In the present time, many Catholic authors justify the use of unnatural sexual acts on the wife to completion (to climax) and on the husband absent climax, as long as these sexual acts are done in the context of the natural marital act. But the Church teaches that the circumstances or context of an act never justifies an act that is intrinsically evil. Many authors also claim that the purpose of foreplay justifies the use of unnatural sexual acts. But the Church teaches that the purpose or reason for choosing an act never justifies an intrinsically evil act. Now, certainly any sexual act -- any deliberate knowing use of the sexual faculty -- must be considered intrinsically evil and always gravely immoral when the act is deprived of any of these three objects: the marital, unitive, and procreative meanings. But unnatural sexual acts are not procreative, and neither are they truly unitive or truly marital, even when done by married spouses. For this is not the type of act ordained by God for the use of the sexual faculty.

23. "Consequently, since the full exercise of the sexual faculty is circumscribed within this absolute limit of conjugal intercourse, the same faculty is intrinsically made fit to achieve the fullness of the natural end of matrimony (which is not only the generation, but also the education of offspring), but its exercise must be joined together with said end."

Commentary: The full exercise of the sexual faculty occurs in any sexual act to completion (i.e. to climax). Some full exercises of the sexual faculty are immoral: masturbation, adultery, unnatural acts, etc. The only moral sexual act is the natural marital act open to life. This is the "absolute limit of conjugal intercourse". Only when a sexual act is marital, unitive, and procreative does the act possess the goods required to make it "intrinsically fit" for the proper ends of marriage and of the sexual faculty. In other words, a sexual act is only moral, even in marriage, when it is inherently procreative. But of course inherently procreative sexual acts are also inherently unitive. And the only sexual act which meets these requirements is natural intercourse open to life.

Any full exercise of the sexual faculty, by either the husband or the wife, outside of the natural marital act, is intrinsically evil and always gravely immoral. Marriage does not confer on the spouses the right to any means to sexual climax or sexual pleasure.

24. "This being so, masturbation is entirely outside of the aforementioned natural capacity of the full exercise of the sexual faculty, and therefore it is also outside that connection to the end ordained by nature. For that same reason, it is deprived of any designation as a right, and also it is contrary to nature and the moral law, even if it is intended to serve a usefulness which is just and not improper."

Commentary: Masturbation is not justified, even in marriage. It is not justified when it is done by one spouse on the other spouse. It is not justified when done in the context of natural marital relations. It is not justified when done on the wife, to bring her to climax, if she does not reach climax during the

natural act. And this is true because masturbation is an intrinsically evil sexual act. No intrinsically evil act, whether in the realm of sexuality or some other area of human life, is justified by a good purpose, nor by a difficult circumstance.

Masturbation is condemned because it is non-procreative and non-unitive. But unnatural sexual acts (e.g. oral, anal, or manual stimulation, or the use of "sex toys") are also non-procreative and non-unitive. Therefore, neither the husband nor the wife has the right to this type of use of the sexual faculty. The popular claim that the wife may climax outside of the natural marital act, by any means at all, is entirely contrary to the teaching of Pope Pius XII and the teaching of the Magisterium.

25. "What has been said up to this point concerning the intrinsic evil of any full use of the generative power outside the natural conjugal act applies in the same way when the acts are of married persons or of unmarried persons, whether the full exercise of the genital organs is done by the man or the woman, or by both parties acting together; whether it is done by manual touches or by the interruption of the conjugal act; for this is always an act contrary to nature and intrinsically evil."

Commentary: The use of the sexual faculty or "generative power" includes any sexual act of any type, whether moral or immoral. All such acts are a deliberate knowing choice to exercise the sexual faculty given to human persons by God. The "full use" of the sexual faculty means any sexual act to climax. And what does the Pontiff say about sexual acts to climax? That the sole type of sexual act that is moral is the act which is marital, unitive, and procreative -- natural marital relations open to life.

This point could not be made more clear. The Pope plainly states that "outside the natural conjugal act" neither the husband, nor the wife, nor both spouses acting together, may reach sexual climax, no matter what the means, the purpose, or the circumstances. Any sexual act to climax, outside of the natural marital act, is contrary to nature (meaning unnatural) and intrinsically evil. And we know from the teaching of Pope Saint John Paul II that intrinsically evil acts are not justified by any purpose or intention, nor by any circumstance or context.

The Pontiff states that neither the husband nor the wife may attain sexual climax outside of the natural marital act: neither by manual touches, nor by the interruption of the sexual act. This teaching clearly refutes the popular claim that the wife may reach climax by manual touches (or by oral stimulation, or sex toys, etc.), if she does not reach climax during the natural act. Such a claim is absolutely rejected by the Roman Catholic Magisterium. For this type of act is unnatural and intrinsically evil.

Notice, too, that the Pontiff rejects the popular excuse, that these unnatural sexual acts occur about the same time as the natural act. For he says that even if this attainment of sexual climax occurs immediately after the natural marital act is interrupted, it is still contrary to nature and gravely immoral. And this implies the condemnation of another popular claim, that all the sexual acts of the marital bedroom are morally one act. If that were so, then Pope Pius XII would not have rejected unnatural sexual acts occurring immediately after the natural marital act is interrupted.

Does the above teaching on the "full use" of the sexual faculty imply that unnatural sexual acts are moral when they are not "full", that is, when climax is absent? No, it does not. First of all, these acts are termed intrinsically evil and contrary to nature (i.e. unnatural) by the Pope. And any act that is intrinsically evil does not become moral by a change of intention or circumstances. Unnatural sexual acts are gravely immoral because they are deprived of the unitive and procreative meanings. When you remove climax from those acts, they remain non-unitive and non-procreative. Therefore, the moral object does not change, and the act remains intrinsically evil and always gravely immoral.

I will also point out a passage from the same Pope's Address to Midwives, which was mentioned by Pius XII above (paragraph #8). That Address condemns unnatural sexual acts in marriage as well. First, he states the general moral principle: "no indication or need can convert an act which is intrinsically immoral into a moral and lawful one."¹⁰ And this principle can be applied to any intrinsically evil sexual act. No need or difficult circumstance or good purpose can justify the deliberate knowing choice of a sexual act that is intrinsically evil.

Then he speaks (in the same Address to Midwives) specifically about unnatural sexual acts. This point is occasioned by the case where a married couple cannot have natural marital relations, because pregnancy would endanger the wife's life, or perhaps would result in a child with a severe birth defect. If the married couple cannot have natural intercourse open to life (and of course they cannot use contraception, as that would be gravely immoral), the couple then "seeks an approval of a 'technique' of conjugal activity which will not give rise to maternity."¹¹ In other words, the Pope is saying that they hope to find a priest or theologian who will tell them that they can make use of inherently non-procreative sexual acts in their marriage. Thus, "conjugal activity" means sexual acts of the spouses, and the phrase "will not give rise to maternity" refers to the use of unnatural sexual acts.

The Pontiff could not be speaking here about abortifacient contraception, since the document is from 1951, before the invention of the birth control pill later that decade. And he could not be speaking solely or mainly about other methods of contraception, since those methods often fail, and the failure would have the gravest consequences in this type of medical case. He is therefore referring mainly to unnatural sexual acts. And we see from the later Address of 1956 (which is the main topic of this booklet) that the Pontiff is well aware that some married couples make use of this type of unnatural sexual act.

But the answer given by Pope Pius XII in the Address to Midwives is that the only option for the married couple, even in "these extreme cases," is "that of complete abstinence from every performance of the natural faculty."¹² The couple may not use the withdrawal method of contraception (which is not very effective, by the way), nor barrier methods of contraception, nor, as we know in the present day, any type of abortifacient contraception. And they may not use unnatural sexual acts, with or without climax.

I should also point out that the Holy See, in 1952, during the reign of Pope Pius XII, between the time of his Address to Midwives and this Address to the Second World Congress on Fertility and Sterility, ruled that a particular sexual act, done without climax on the part of either spouse, was gravely immoral. The act is termed "amplexus reservatus".¹³ And this decision of the Holy See proves that even when the sexual acts of spouses lack climax, they can still be intrinsically evil and gravely immoral. The lack of climax does not make the act "not a sexual act", nor does it make the act not possibly an immoral.

What about the case of a married couple who "need" to use unnatural sexual acts as a type of foreplay, otherwise the husband cannot attain or maintain the necessary arousal? What about a similar case for the wife, who has difficulty becoming aroused, or reaching climax? Does the fact that an act of natural intercourse occurs about the same time make these unnatural acts moral?

The answer is clear in the text above, as we have already discussed. Intrinsically evil sexual acts do not become moral when used for a good purpose, such as to prepare for the natural marital act, and they do not become moral when used in a dire circumstance, such as that the wife cannot reach climax in any other way, or that the husband cannot become aroused without this type of activity. Intrinsically evil acts are always immoral, no matter how good the intended end, no matter how difficult the circumstances. So unnatural sexual acts are not justified by any need or indication or difficult or purpose. And so the

teaching of Pope Pius XII stands in direct opposition to common claims on this subject, which are being spread on the internet.

In the Address to Midwives, the condemnation of unnatural sexual acts as foreplay, absent climax -- that is to say, when climax is delayed until the natural act -- is absolutely clear. First, Pope Pius XII mentions the "waves of hedonism" causing grave harm to society and to souls. Hedonism is a manner of living which emphasizes pleasure and personal satisfaction of every kind. Then he states the following, about marital relations:

"This anti-Christian hedonism too often is not ashamed to elevate itself to a doctrine, inculcating the ardent desire to make always more intense the pleasure, in the preparation and in the performance of the conjugal union, as if in matrimonial relations the whole moral law were reduced to the normal performance of the act itself, and as if all the rest, in whatever way it is done, were justified by the expression of mutual affection, were sanctified by the Sacrament of Matrimony, and made worthy of praise and reward before God and conscience. There is no thought at all of the dignity of man and of the Christian -- a dignity which restrains the excess of sensuality."¹⁴

Pius XII refers to "the preparation" for the marital act, meaning foreplay. Then he absolutely rejects the idea that, in acts of foreplay, as well as in whatever other sexual acts are done, "the whole moral law" can be reduced to "the normal performance of the act itself." So he is rejecting the idea -- nowadays referred to as "the One Rule" -- that as long as the husband completes the act during natural intercourse, everything else that is done is moral: "as if all the rest, in whatever way it is done, were justified...."

Therefore, the Church, in her official teaching, has rejected this "One Rule". The Pope calls this idea a type of "anti-Christian hedonism". So it is absolutely not true that the spouses can do whatever they want -- that they can perform all manner of unnatural sexual acts, absent climax for the husband, all done as foreplay ("in the preparation"), even including climax for the wife -- as long as there is one "normal performance of the act itself", i.e. one natural conjugal act, at some point. Pope Pius XII absolutely condemned any type of sexual act to climax outside of the natural marital act, whether on the husband or on the wife, even if this is done to the wife immediately after the interruption of the natural act. And he rejects the idea that everything is moral, as long as the husband only climaxes during natural relations.

Yet these condemned ideas are popular among Catholics today. Many Catholics are spreading these condemned moral errors online, often with the claim that these grave errors are Church teaching, and yet the Magisterium has taught the exact opposite! Some of the more prominent proponents of unnatural sexual acts in marriage receive boundless praise, as if their teachings were holy and orthodox, including: Christopher West, Gregory Popcak, and other theology of the body teachers. They are distorting the teachings of Saint John Paul II in order to approve of sexual acts already long condemned by the Church. Sometimes they go so far as to claim that John Paul II approved of the use of unnatural sexual acts in marriage -- which he most certainly did not! May God have mercy on married Catholic couples, being led into committing acts of grave depravity by false teachers.

[*The third and final section of the Papal Address was given in French.*]

Commentary: The final section of the Address given by Pope Pius XII at Naples, France, was spoken in French. So the Address has three sections: French, Latin, and French again. As he switches back to speaking in French, Pope Pius returns to the original topic of the Address.

26. "If fertility meets certain requirements of the organism and satisfies powerful instincts, it immediately engages, as We have said, the psychological and moral realm. The work of education still exceeds, by its scope and consequences, that of generation. Soul-to-soul exchanges, which take place between parents and children, with all the seriousness, the delicacy, the self-forgetfulness which they require, quickly constrain the parents to move beyond the stage of effective possession, to think of the personal destiny of those entrusted to them."

Commentary: The primary purpose of marriage is not only the generation of offspring, but also their education, that is, the raising of children. And this work of raising children far exceeds "by its scope and consequences" their procreation. Yet, in the distorted version of the theology of the body, the entire focus is on the pleasure of the procreation, with little said about the greater work of raising the children who are procreated.

How greatly varied are the relationships between parents and children! But the essential similarity, required by God and the moral law, is love. And this is most difficult when the other person does not reciprocate that love. Children can be selfish, not only due to immaturity, but, as they age, with some culpability. And no one can choose their parents. Some wonderful children have awful parents. Yet the Ten Commandments still require each of us to honor our father and mother, and to extend that respect to other relatives, to one degree or another.

So the importance of children to their parents' lives is not being ignored by the holy Pontiff. He knows how valuable children are to family and society and the Church. Yet he cannot approve of any form of artificial procreation, for couples who find themselves with unresolvable sterility. For intrinsically evil acts are always offensive to God, no matter how good your intentions may be.

27. "More often than not, when they reach adulthood, children leave their families, go away to respond to the necessities of life or to the calls of a higher vocation. The thought of this normal detachment, which is so expensive for them, should help the parents to rise to a more noble conception of their mission, to a purer vision of the significance of their efforts. Under pain of at least partial failure, the family is called to integrate into society, to widen the circle of affections and interests, to orient its members towards wider horizons, to think not only of themselves, but also of the tasks of social service."

Commentary: The vocation of parenthood is formidable. It has many obstacles and challenges. And the end result of raising children is usually that they leave the family, to start a life of their own as adults, perhaps as parents. And so the family grows and also engages with society at large. But this fact should cause the parents to realize that their mission in raising children extends beyond themselves and their family, having a profound effect on the world. And if the parents raise holy compassionate children, they will certainly contribute greatly to a world in dire need of holy compassionate adults.

28. "Finally, the Catholic Church, the repository of divine intentions, teaches the superior fecundity of lives wholly consecrated to God and neighbor. Here, the complete renunciation of the family is required, so as to allow spiritual action -- entirely disinterested and proceeding not from any fear of life or its commitments, but from the perception of the true destiny of humanity, created in the image of God, and in search of a universal love -- such that no carnal attachment may stand in the way. Such is the most sublime and the most enviable fecundity that humanity is able to imagine, one which transcends the biological realm, so to enter, in a sense, into the realm of the spirit."

Commentary: I don't think I've read that phrase before, describing the Church as "the repository of divine intentions". It is quite insightful. God has a plan for humanity, which we might view as a set of divine

purposes for each and all of us. And the Church is, to a great extent, the keeper of those intentions. For She teaches us the will of God concerning morality, to distinguish between goods to be pursued and evils to be avoided. She teaches us the truth about the nature of God, humanity, love, faith, hope, and the path of salvation. The Church is the keeper of the plan of God for each and all of us.

As Pope Saint John Paul II points out in his theology of the body lecture series, persons who consecrate themselves to serve God, as celibate clergy or religious, or merely as single laypersons, can find a higher calling than raising children and a family. For they have spiritual children and a spiritual family, one hundred times over:

"And anyone who has left behind home, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for the sake of my name, shall receive one hundred times more, and shall possess eternal life." [Jesus, The Gospel of Matthew, 19:29]

Pope Pius XII calls this a "superior fecundity", because the children of this life are souls brought to conversion, sinners brought to the path of eternal salvation, and a family that extends from earth to heaven. This type of holy life (if it is lived properly) is absolutely essential to the mission of the Church. The plan of God for salvation begins with the Virgin Mary, giving birth to the Son of God. And both Mary and Jesus remained ever-virgin. So then, the vocation to spread the Gospel as ordained persons or consecrated religious requires them to devote so much of their time and their lives, that they cannot also, in most cases, raise a family.

But even if time and energy permitted this, celibacy is essential to the plan of God for the Church and for salvation. For celibate persons choose a life-long sacrifice, which makes them more compliant to the grace of God. They set aside "carnal attachment" so as to love others more fully. They set aside the love of wife and children in order to love the Church and to serve and love the souls of those in spiritual need. Otherwise, they would not be able to complete the task before them as fully as they ought. As a result, many more souls would be sent to the fires of Hell.

I say again, if most priests were married, if most ordained persons and most religious were married by permission of the Church, a much larger number of souls would go to Hell, souls which otherwise would have gone to Heaven. The celibacy and/or virginity of ordained persons and religious, when chosen out of devotion to God, is more effective than fasting or any other type of penances in obtaining grace for souls in need. And this sacrifice makes the celibate person more fit for their spiritual role, more effective in helping others, and more effective as intercessors for sinners.

May God forbid the Church from increasing the number of priests who are married!

As for those deacons and priests who are married, may they be especially vigilant not to permit any grave sexual sins in their marriage. Already, there are some married deacons who publicly speak in favor of the perverse version of the theology of the body, the version that approves and recommends the same grave sexual sins condemned by Pope Pius XII in this very Address and in his Address to Midwives.

When we consider the good done for souls by the very fact that bishops, priests, deacons, and religious are celibate, we must also realize that the opposite, a marriage filled with grave sexual sins, will do immense harm to souls. A married priest or deacon who commits such sins with his spouse will cause great harm to other marriages, to the marriages of the unfortunate flock in their care.

This harm occurs in two ways, one obvious and the other hidden. The first way, obvious, is that married clergy who commit grave sexual sins, under the guise of "holy sex", will advise their flock to commit the same sins. As a result, many in their flock will fall out of the state of grace, due to the interior sin of lust (even if their exterior sins are committed with a sincere but mistaken conscience). "More souls go to Hell for sins of the flesh than for any other reason."¹⁵

The second way, hidden, is that clergy who are guilty of these "acts of grave depravity" will not be able to obtain much grace for their flock, and will not have as much providential help from God in their spiritual work. They will more easily fall out of the state of grace themselves, and return to that state with greater difficulty. They will not be of much use in guiding the faithful in matters of faith or morals, nor in any subject area, spiritual or temporal.

Such is the evil fruit of perverse teachings on marital sexual ethics, especially when it infects the marriages of clergy as well as the marriages of lay spiritual leaders.

29. "We did not want, gentlemen, to conclude this speech without opening these perspectives. To some, they may seem quite far away from the objectives that now occupy you. It is not so, however. Indeed, these perspectives alone make it possible to situate your works in their proper place and to perceive their value. What you want is not only to increase the number of human persons, but to raise the moral level of humanity, its beneficent forces, its will to grow physically and spiritually. You want to render a new fervor into the affection of so many husbands who are saddened by a deserted home. Far from obstructing their full bloom, you strive to place at your service all your knowledge so as to awaken in them these admirable resources, which God has hidden in the hearts of fathers and mothers to help them ascend to Him, in themselves and with their entire family."

Commentary: Pope Pius XII points out that his Address is not limited to the narrow topic of the Congress: fertility and sterility. He is teaching on marriage and marital ethics more generally. And so, when he states that the full exercise of the sexual faculty can occur only in the natural marital act, he is speaking about every human person, in any and all situations. He is speaking about marital sexual ethics in its entirety. And this perspective is needed to understand why the moral law places limitations on what science and medicine can do in the treatment of infertility. It is because the deliberate full use of the sexual faculty is only moral in the natural marital act. For that act alone is marital, unitive, and procreative.

30. "Struck by such a responsibility, We dare to hope that you will pursue with increasing ardor your scientific labors and the practical achievements, which you propose. By invoking on yourselves, on your families, and on all those who are dear to you, the most abundant divine favors, We bestow upon you, with all our heart, Our Apostolic Blessing."

Commentary: The Church supports scientific and medical research. But at the same time, She proposes moral limits on that activity, especially when it is applied to the lives of human persons. Thus, a married couple cannot use artificial procreation, even though children are the crowning glory of marriage. Neither can they use abortifacient contraception for a medical purpose, since every intrinsically evil act remains immoral, no matter what the purpose, no matter what the circumstances. And no area of human endeavor is immune to the eternal moral law, nor to the teaching of the Church on morality.

Pius XII

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Section II

Original Text of the
Address of Pope Pius XII
to the Second World Congress
on Fertility and Sterility

in French and Latin
with English Translation

Pope Pius XII
Address to the Second World Congress
on Fertility and Sterility
at Naples, France
19 May 1956

Original text in French and Latin from the Vatican website.¹⁷

[The first section of the Papal Address was given in French.]

1. Vous Nous avez exprimé, Messieurs, le désir de venir Nous présenter vos hommages à l'occasion du deuxième Congrès Mondial de la Fertilité et de la Stérilité, que vous tenez maintenant à Naples. Nous répondons avec empressement à votre souhait et vous disons le plaisir tout particulier, que Nous éprouvons à recevoir un groupe imposant de savants et de praticiens de tant de pays divers. Vous vous apprêtez à étudier un sujet difficile et délicat, parce qu'il concerne l'une des fonctions principales du corps humain et parce que les résultats de vos travaux peuvent entraîner des conséquences lourdes de signification pour la vie de beaucoup d'hommes et l'évolution des sociétés.

1. You have expressed to Us, Gentlemen, the desire to come so that you may present your respects to Us on the occasion of the Second World Congress of Fertility and Sterility, which you are now holding in Naples. We have answered your wishes promptly, and we are telling you the very special pleasure we have in receiving an imposing group of scholars and practitioners from so many different countries. You are about to study a difficult and delicate subject, because it concerns one of the principle functions of the human body, and because the results of your work can lead to consequences of great significance for the lives of many persons and for the evolution of societies.

2. La stérilité conjugale involontaire, à laquelle vous vous proposez de porter remède, fait obstacle à l'obtention de la fin principale du mariage et provoque chez le couple un malaise profond, voilé souvent par une pudeur instinctive, mais dangereux pour la stabilité du mariage lui-même. C'est pourquoi, en face de l'impuissance de la médecine moderne à traiter avec succès bien des cas de ce genre, vous avez formé en 1951 cette « Association internationale de la Fertilité », dont le premier Congrès, tenu à New York en 1953, proposait dans son ordre du jour trois résolutions principales : aider par tous les moyens possibles l'étude et la recherche concernant la fertilité ; promouvoir et répandre cette spécialité chez les médecins, afin qu'un nombre suffisant d'entre eux puisse aider efficacement les couples stériles ; insister pour qu'on crée des cliniques, des services et des centres de fertilité dans les hôpitaux, sous la direction d'un personnel compétent.

2. Involuntary conjugal sterility, for which you propose to provide a remedy, presents and obstacle to obtaining of the principle end of marriage and provokes a profound malaise in the couple, often veiled by an instinctive modesty, but dangerous for the stability of marriage itself. That is why, in the face of the powerlessness of modern medicine to successfully treat many cases of this type, you formed in 1951 this 'International Association of Fertility', whose first Congress, held in New York in 1953, proposed in its agenda three main resolutions: (1) to assist by all possible means the study and research of fertility; (2) to promote and disseminate this specialty among physicians, so that a sufficient number of them may effectively help infertile couples; (3) to insist on the establishment of clinics, services, and fertility centers in hospitals, under the direction of competent personnel.

3. Le présent Congrès répond, comme le précédent, à la volonté de développer au maximum les connaissances que l'on possède, de les répandre parmi les médecins de toutes les parties du monde, de

déterminer aussi une coordination des travaux sur certains points, où la convergence des efforts permettra d'obtenir des résultats plus significatifs. Vous entendrez un nombre remarquable de rapports et de communications, qui examinent les facteurs endocriniens et métaboliques de la fertilité et de la stérilité, leurs facteurs professionnels et toxiques, les méthodes nouvelles de diagnostic et de traitement de la stérilité masculine et féminine, le diagnostic de l'ovulation et de la spermatogénèse et le traitement de leurs désordres, la chirurgie de la stérilité. Une série de mémoires considérera aussi les recherches expérimentales menées en cette matière et les problèmes relatifs à l'une des principales fonctions de l'homme. Cet ensemble d'études illustre brillamment l'intérêt, que ce Congrès suscite, et la façon dont, de toutes parts, des spécialistes éminents ont voulu apporter leur contribution à l'effort commun.

3. The present Congress, like the preceding one, is a response to the desire to develop and maximize the knowledge we possess, to spread it among physicians in all parts of the world, and to determine a coordination of work on certain points, where the convergence of efforts will permit more significant results. You will hear a remarkable number of reports and papers that examine endocrinal and metabolic factors of fertility and sterility, their occupational and toxicological factors, new methods of diagnosis and treatment for male and female sterility, the diagnosis of ovulation and spermatogenesis, and the treatment of their disorders, surgery for sterility. A series of dissertations will also consider experimental research carried out in this field and the problems relating to one of the principal functions of the human person. This set of studies brilliantly illustrates the interest which this Congress prompts, and all the ways in which eminent specialists have wanted to contribute to the common effort.

4. Il ne nous appartient pas de porter un jugement sur les aspects proprement techniques de vos travaux ; nous voudrions par contre envisager brièvement certaines implications morales des questions, que vous abordez du point de vue scientifique.

4. It does not belong to us to pass judgment on the purely technical aspects of your work. On the other hand, we would like to briefly consider certain moral implications of the questions which you approach from a scientific point of view.

5. Votre Congrès précédent signalait dans sa motion finale que la stérilité conjugale involontaire soulève un problème économique et social de grande importance, qu'elle contribue à l'abaissement de l'indice de fertilité des populations et peut influencer par là la vie et la destinée des peuples. Il arrive parfois que l'on s'attarde à ce point de vue, plus apparent, plus facilement contrôlable. On dira alors qu'il faut promouvoir la natalité pour assurer la vitalité d'une nation, et son expansion dans tous les domaines. Il est vrai qu'une natalité élevée manifeste les énergies créatrices d'un peuple ou d'une famille ; elle illustre le courage des hommes devant la vie, ses risques, ses difficultés ; elle souligne leur volonté de construire et de progresser. On a raison de relever que l'impossibilité physique d'exercer la paternité et la maternité devient aisément un motif de découragement, de repliement sur soi. La vie, qui souhaitait ardemment se prolonger, se dépasser, retombe, pour ainsi dire, sur elle-même et bien des foyers, hélas, succombent à cette épreuve.

5. Your previous Congress pointed out, in its final motion, that involuntary conjugal sterility raises an economic and social problem of great importance: that it contributes to the lowering of the fertility index of populations, and, in this way, can influence the lives and destinies of peoples. It sometimes happens that one focuses on this point of view, which is more apparent and more easily controlled, so one may say that the birth rate should be promoted in order to ensure the vitality of a nation and its expansion in all domains. It is true that a high birth rate manifests the creative energies of a people or a family. It illustrates the courage of human persons before life, its risks, its difficulties. It underlines their will to build and to progress. It is right to point out that the physical impossibility of exercising paternity and

maternity easily becomes a cause of discouragement, of withdrawal into one's self. Life, which ardently wills to prolong itself, to surpass itself -- falls upon itself, so to speak, and many homes, alas, succumb to this ordeal.

6. C'est avec plaisir que Nous voudrions mentionner ici une considération, que vous avez vous-mêmes mise en relief. Il est pleinement vrai que votre zèle à poursuivre des recherches sur la stérilité matrimoniale et les moyens de la vaincre, s'il présente un aspect scientifique digne d'attention, engage aussi de hautes valeurs spirituelles et éthiques, dont on devrait tenir compte. Nous les avons indiquées ci-dessus. Il est profondément humain que les époux voient et trouvent dans leur enfant l'expression véritable et plénière de leur amour réciproque et de leur don mutuel. Il n'est pas difficile de comprendre pourquoi le désir insatisfait de la paternité ou de la maternité est ressenti comme un sacrifice pénible et douloureux par les parents, qu'animent des sentiments nobles et sains. Bien plus, la stérilité involontaire du mariage peut devenir un danger sérieux pour l'union et la stabilité même de la famille.

6. It is with pleasure that We would like to mention here a consideration, which you have highlighted yourself. It is entirely true that your zeal to pursue research on marital infertility and the means to overcome it, if it presents a scientific aspect worthy of attention, also engages high spiritual and ethical values, which should be taken into account. We have indicated these above. It is profoundly human that spouses see and find in their child the true and full expression of their reciprocal love and of their mutual gift. It is not difficult to understand why the unsatisfied desire for paternity or maternity is felt as a painful and sorrowful sacrifice by the parents, who are animated by noble and healthy sentiments. Moreover, the involuntary sterility of marriage can become a serious danger to the union and to the very stability of the family.

7. Mais cet aspect social ne fait en réalité que recouvrir une réalité plus intime et plus grave. Le mariage en effet unit deux personnes dans une communauté de destin, dans leur marche vers la réalisation d'un idéal qui implique, non la plénitude d'un bonheur terrestre, mais la conquête de valeurs spirituelles d'un ordre transcendant, que la Révélation chrétienne en particulier propose dans toute leur grandeur. Cet idéal, les époux le poursuivent ensemble, en se consacrant à l'obtention de la fin première du mariage, la génération et l'éducation des enfants.

7. But this social aspect in fact only conceals a more intimate and more grave reality. Marriage, in fact, unites two persons in a community of destiny, in their march towards the realization of an ideal that implies, not the fullness of an earthly happiness, but the conquest of spiritual values of a transcendent order, that the Christian Revelation, in particular, proposes in all its grandeur. This ideal, the spouses pursue together, by consecrating themselves to obtaining the primary end of the marriage, the generation and education of children.

8. Plusieurs fois déjà Nous avons cru nécessaire de rappeler comment les intentions particulières des conjoints, leur vie commune, leur perfectionnement personnel, ne pouvaient se concevoir que subordonnés au but qui les dépasse, la paternité et la maternité. « Non seulement l'œuvre commune de la vie extérieure, disions-Nous dans une allocution adressée aux sages-femmes le 29 octobre 1951, mais encore tout l'enrichissement personnel, même l'enrichissement intellectuel et spirituel, jusqu'à ce qu'il y a de plus spirituel et profond dans l'amour conjugal comme tel, a été mis par la volonté de la nature et du Créateur au service de la descendance ». (Discorsi e Radiomessaggi, vol. XIII pag. 348-349). Tel est l'enseignement constant de l'Église ; elle a rejeté toute conception du mariage qui menacerait de le replier sur lui-même, d'en faire une recherche égoïste de satisfactions affectives et physiques dans l'intérêt des seuls époux.

8. Several times already We believed it necessary to recall why the particular intentions of the spouses, their common life, their personal development, could only be conceived as subordinate to the goal which exceeds them, paternity and maternity. 'Not only the common work of exterior life,' We said in an allocution addressed to midwives on October 29, 1951, 'but also all personal enrichment, even intellectual and spiritual enrichment, all that is most spiritual and profound in conjugal love as such, has been placed by the will of the Creator and by nature at the service of the posterity'. (Radio Message Discourse, Vol XIII p. 348-349). Such is the constant teaching of the Church. She has rejected every conception of marriage that would threaten to turn it back on itself, to make it a selfish search for emotional and physical satisfaction, in the interests of the spouses alone.

9. Mais l'Église a écarté aussi l'attitude opposée qui prétendrait séparer, dans la génération, l'activité biologique de la relation personnelle des conjoints. L'enfant est le fruit de l'union conjugale, lorsqu'elle s'exprime en plénitude, par la mise en œuvre des fonctions organiques, des émotions sensibles qui y sont liées, de l'amour spirituel et désintéressé qui l'anime ; c'est dans l'unité de cet acte humain que doivent être posées les conditions biologiques de la génération. Jamais il n'est permis de séparer ces divers aspects au point d'exclure positivement soit l'intention procréatrice, soit le rapport conjugal.

9. But the Church has also rejected the opposite attitude which claims to separate, in procreation, the biological activity from the personal relationship of the spouses. The child is the fruit of the conjugal union, when it is expressed in its fullness, by the implementation of the organic functions, the sensitive emotions which are connected to it, with the spiritual and disinterested love which enlivens it. It is within the unity of this human act that the biological conditions of generation must be proposed. It is never permissible to separate these diverse aspects to the point of positively excluding either the procreative intention or the conjugal relationship.

10. La relation, qui unit le père et la mère à leur enfant, prend racine dans le fait organique et plus encore dans la démarche délibérée des époux, qui se livrent l'un à l'autre et dont la volonté de se donner s'épanouit et trouve son aboutissement véritable dans l'être qu'ils mettent au monde. Seule d'ailleurs cette consécration de soi, généreuse dans son principe et ardue dans sa réalisation, par l'acceptation consciente des responsabilités qu'elle comporte, peut garantir que l'œuvre d'éducation des enfants sera poursuivie avec toute le soin, le courage et la patience qu'elle exige. On peut donc affirmer que la fécondité humaine, au delà du plan physique, revêt des aspects moraux essentiels, qu'il faut nécessairement considérer, même lorsqu'on traite le sujet du point de vue médical.

10. The relationship that unites the father and the mother to their child, has its roots in biological facts but even more so in the deliberate advancement of the spouses, who give themselves to each other and whose will to develop flourishes and finds its true end in the being whom they send into the world. Only this self-consecration, generous in principle and difficult in its realization, by the conscious acceptance of the responsibilities it entails, can guarantee that the work of educating children will be pursued with all the care, courage, and patience it requires. It can now be affirmed that human fecundity, beyond the physical realm, has essential moral aspects, which must necessarily be considered, even when the subject is treated from a medical point of view.

11. Il est bien évident que le savant et le médecin, lorsqu'ils abordent un problème de leur spécialité, ont le droit de concentrer leur attention sur ses éléments proprement scientifiques et de le résoudre en fonction de ces seules données. Mais lorsqu'on entre dans la voie des applications pratiques à l'homme, il est impossible de ne pas tenir compte des répercussions que les méthodes proposées auront sur la personne et son destin. La grandeur de l'acte humain consiste précisément à dépasser le moment même où il se pose pour engager toute l'orientation d'une vie, pour l'amener à prendre position vis-à-vis de

l'absolu. C'est vrai déjà de l'activité quotidienne : à combien plus forte raison d'un acte qui engage, avec l'amour réciproque des époux, leur avenir et celui de leur descendance.

11. It is quite obvious that the scientist and the doctor, when dealing with a problem of their own specialty, have the right to focus their attention on its strictly scientific elements and to solve it according to these data alone. But when one enters the realm of practical applications to the human person, it is impossible to ignore the repercussions that the proposed methods will have on the person and his destiny. The greatness of the human act consists precisely in going beyond the very moment when it arises, so as to engage the whole orientation of life, to arrive at a position with regard to the absolute. This is already true of daily activity -- how much more of an act that engages, with the mutual love of the spouses, their future and that of their posterity!

12. Aussi croyons-Nous qu'il est capital pour vous, Messieurs, de ne pas négliger cette perspective, quand vous considérez les méthodes de fécondation artificielle. Le moyen, par lequel on tend à la production d'une nouvelle vie, prend une signification humaine essentielle, inséparable de la fin que l'on poursuit et susceptible, s'il n'est pas conforme à la réalité des choses et aux lois inscrites dans la nature des êtres, de causer un dommage grave à cette fin même.

12. Therefore, We believe it is important for you, gentlemen, not to neglect this perspective, when you consider the methods of artificial fertilization. The means by which one tends to the production of a new life, takes on an essential human significance, inseparable from the end which one pursues, and susceptible, if it is not in conformity with the reality of things and with the laws inscribed in the nature of beings, to cause serious harm to that very end.

13. Sur ce point également, on Nous a demandé de donner quelques directives. Au sujet des tentatives de fécondation artificielle humaine « in vitro », qu'il Nous suffise d'observer qu'il faut les rejeter comme immorales et absolument illicites. Sur les diverses questions de morale qui se posent à propos de la fécondation artificielle, au sens ordinaire du mot, ou « insémination artificielle », Nous avons déjà exprimé Notre pensée dans un discours adressé aux médecins le 29 septembre 1949 (Discorsi e Radiomessaggi, vol. XI, pag. 221 et ss.) ; aussi Nous renvoyons pour le détail à ce que Nous disions alors et Nous Nous limitons ici à répéter le jugement donné pour conclure : « En ce qui touche la fécondation artificielle, non seulement il y a lieu d'être extrêmement réservé, mais il faut absolument l'écartier. En parlant ainsi, on ne proscriit pas nécessairement l'emploi de certains moyens artificiels destinés uniquement soit à faciliter l'acte naturel, soit à faire atteindre sa fin à l'acte naturel normalement accompli ». Mais étant donné que l'usage de la fécondation artificielle s'étend de plus en plus, et afin de corriger quelques opinions erronées qui se répandent au sujet de ce que Nous avons enseigné, Nous y ajoutons ce qui suit :

13. On this point likewise, We were asked to give some directives. On the subject of attempts at human artificial fertilization 'in vitro', it suffices for Us to observe that it must be rejected as immoral and absolutely illicit. On the diverse questions of morality which arise on artificial fertilization, in the ordinary sense of the word, or 'artificial insemination,' We have already expressed Our thoughts in a discourse addressed to physicians on September 29, 1949 (Discourse and Radio Message, vol XI, pp. 221 and following). We reaffirm also the specifics of what We were saying then, and We limit Ourselves here to repeat the judgment given at the conclusion: 'As regards artificial fertilization, not only is there need to be extremely reserved, but it must be absolutely excluded. In speaking thusly, one does not necessarily proscribe the use of certain artificial means ordered solely either to facilitate the natural act, or to accomplish the end of the natural act performed normally.' But since the use of artificial fertilization is

spreading more and more, and in order to correct some erroneous opinions that are spreading about what We have taught, We add the following:

14. La fécondation artificielle dépasse les limites du droit que les époux ont acquis par le contrat matrimonial, à savoir, celui d'exercer pleinement leur capacité sexuelle naturelle dans l'accomplissement naturel de l'acte matrimonial. Le contrat en question ne leur confère pas de droit à la fécondation artificielle, car un tel droit n'est d'aucune façon exprimé dans le droit à l'acte conjugal naturel et ne saurait en être déduit. Encore moins peut-on le faire dériver du droit à l'« enfant », « fin » première du mariage. Le contrat matrimonial ne donne pas ce droit, parce qu'il a pour objet non pas l'« enfant », mais les « actes naturels » qui sont capables d'engendrer une nouvelle vie et destinés à cela. Aussi doit-on dire de la fécondation artificielle qu'elle viole la loi naturelle et qu'elle est contraire au droit et à la morale.

14. Artificial fertilization exceeds the limits of the right that the spouses have acquired by the matrimonial contract, that is, to fully exercise their natural sexual capacity in the natural performance of the matrimonial act. The contract in question does not confer on them the right to artificial fertilization, since such a right is in no way expressed in the right to the natural conjugal act and cannot be inferred from it. Even less so can it be derived from a right to the 'child', as the primary 'end' of marriage. The matrimonial contract does not give this right, because its object is not the 'child' but the 'natural acts' which are capable of generating a new life and which are ordered toward it. It must also be said that artificial fertilization violates the natural law and is contrary to justice and morality.

[*The second section of the Papal Address was given in Latin.*]

15. Alia nunc occurrit quaestio, ad quam pertractandam magis addecet latinam linguam adhibere.

15. Now another question occurs, for the treatment of which it is more fitting to employ the Latin language.

16. Quemadmodum rationalis animus noster artificiali inseminationi adversatur, ita eadem ethica ratio, a qua agendi norma sumenda est, pariter vetat, quominus humanum semen, peritorum examini subiciendum, masturbationis ope procuretur.

16. Just as our rational mind is opposed to artificial insemination, so the same ethical reasoning, by that norm of behavior which is proposed, altogether prohibits that human semen be procured by means of masturbation, not even so as to be subject to the examination of experts.

17. Hanc agendi rationem attigimus Nostra quoque allocutione coram Urologiae doctoribus coetum participantibus, die VIII mensis Octobris anno MDCCCCLIII prolata, in qua haec habuimus, verba : « Du reste, le St-Office a décidé déjà le 2 août. 1929 (Acta Ap. Sedis, vol., XXI a. 1929, p. 490, II) qu'une « masturbatio directe procurata ut obtineatur sperma » n'est pas licite, ceci quel que soit le but de l'examen » (Discorsi e Radiomessaggi, vol. XV, pag. 368).

17. This norm of behavior we likewise mentioned in our Address before the Congress of the Association of Urological Physicians, on the 8th day in the month of October in the year 1953, in which we decided these things, saying: 'concerning the rest, the Holy Office has already decided on the 2nd of August, 1929 (Acts of the Apostolic See, vol. 21, year 1929, p. 490, II) that 'masturbation directly procured so as to obtain sperm' is not licit, no matter what the purpose of the exam may be. (Address and Radio message, vol. 15, page 368).

18. Cum vero Nobis allatum sit, pravam huiusmodi consuetudinem pluribus in locis invalescere, opportunum ducimus nunc etiam, quae tunc monuimus, commemorare atque iterum inculcare. Si actus huiusmodi ad explendam libidinem ponantur, eos vel ipse naturalis hominis sensus sua sponte respuit, ac multo magis mentis iudicium, quotiescumque rem mature recteque considerat.

18. But when it was reported to us that this depraved mode of behavior had increased greatly in his place, we considered it an opportunity to warn, to recall, and again to instruct, now just as then. If this mode of behavior is being used to satisfy the libido, even the natural sensibility of man, by his own free will, rejects these things, and much more so the judgments of the mind, as often as he considers the matter, maturely and rightly.

19. Iidem actus tamen nunc quoque respuendi sunt, cum graves rationes eos a culpa eximere videntur, uti sunt: remedia us praestanda qui nimia nervorum intentione vel abnormibus animi spasmis laborant; medicis peragenda, ope microscopii, spermatis inspectio, quod venerei vel alius generis morbi bacteriis infectum sit; diversarum partium examen, ex quibus semen ordinarie constat, ut vitalium spermatis elementorum praesentia, numerus, quantitas, forma, vis, habitus aliaque id genus dignoscuntur.

19. Now the same acts ought to be likewise repudiated, even when they are used for grave reasons, which would seem to remove them from culpability: for example, for use as a remedy for those who are troubled by an excess of nervous tension or abnormal outbursts of emotion; for the medical inspection of the sperm, under the power of the microscope, to determine with which venereal or other kinds of bacterial disease it may be infected; for various types of examinations, from which, it is ordinarily agreed, the semen may be diagnosed by the vitality of the sperm, the presence of components, the number, quality, form, strength, and other conditions of that type.

20. Eiusmodi procuratio humani seminis, per masturbationem effecta, ad nihil aliud directe spectat, nisi ad naturalem in homine generandi facultatem plene exercendam; quod quidem plenum exercitium, extra coniugalem copulam peractum, secum fert directum et indebite usurpatum eiusdem facultatis usum. In hoc eiusmodi indebito facultatis usu proprie sita est intrinseca regulae morum violatio. Haudquaquam enim homo ius ullum exercendi facultatem sexualem iam inde habet, quod facultatem eandem a natura recepit.

20. This mode of procuring human seed, by the effect of masturbation, cannot be viewed as anything other than direct, for it is not in accord with nature, in its full exercise of the generative faculty in the human person. Indeed, because this full exercise was done outside of conjugal intercourse, it bears within itself the direct and improper usurpation of the use of this same faculty. In this way, the improper use of this faculty is rightly considered an intrinsic violation of the principles of morality. For by no means does the human person have the right to any exercise of the sexual faculty beyond a certain point, because he received the very same faculty from nature.

21. Homini nempe (secus ac in ceteris animantibus rationis expertibus contingit) ius et potestas utendi atque exercendi eandem facultatem tantummodo in nuptiis valide initis tribuitur, atque in iure matrimoniali continetur, quod ipsis nuptiis traditur et acceptatur. Inde elucet hominem, ob solam hanc causam quod facultatem sexualem a natura recepit, non habere nisi potentiam et ius ad matrimonium ineundum.

21. Certainly, to the human person (aside from other things which pertain also to irrational animals) the right and power for the use and exercise of the same faculty is bestowed only on those who have entered into a valid marriage, and then it is confined to the matrimonial right, as it has been handed down and

received with respect to marriage itself. And this shows the human person that the sole reason for which he has received from nature this responsibility, with respect to the sexual faculty, is nothing other than to have the power and right to enter into matrimony.

22. Hoc ius tamen, ad obiectum et ambitum quod attinet, naturae lege, non hominum voluntate describitur; vi huius legis naturae, homini non competit ius et potestas ad plenum facultatis sexualis exercitium, directe intentum, nisi cum coniugalem copulam exercet ad normam a natura ipsa imperatam atque definitam. Extra hunc naturalem actum, ne in ipso quidem matrimonio jus datur ad sexuali hac facultate plene fruendum. Hi sunt limites, quibus jus, de quo diximus, eiusque exercitium a natura circumscribuntur.

22. Yet this right, which pertains to the object and scope of the natural law, has not been assigned to the will of human persons. By the force of this law of nature, the human person does not possess the right and power to the full exercise of the sexual faculty, directly intended, except when he performs the conjugal act according to the norms defined and imposed by nature itself. Outside of this natural act, it is not even given within the matrimonial right itself to enjoy this sexual faculty fully. These are the limits to the particular right of which we are speaking, and they circumscribe its use according to nature.

23. Ex eo quod plenum sexualis facultatis exercitium hoc absoluto copulae coniugalis limite circumscribitur, eadem facultas intrinsece apta efficitur ad plenum matrimonii naturalem finem assequendum (qui non modo est generatio, sed etiam prolis educatio), atque eius exercitium cum dicto fine colligatur.

23. Consequently, since the full exercise of the sexual faculty is circumscribed within this absolute limit of conjugal intercourse, the same faculty is intrinsically made fit to achieve the fullness of the natural end of matrimony (which is not only the generation, but also the education of offspring), but its exercise must be joined together with said end.

24. Quae cum ita sint, masturbatio omnino est extra memoratam pleni facultatis sexualis exercitii naturalem habilitatem, ideoque etiam extra eius colligationem cum fine a natura ordinato; quamobrem eadem omni iuris titulo caret atque naturae et ethices legibus contraria est, etiamsi inservire intendat utilitati per se iustae nec improbandae.

24. This being so, masturbation is entirely outside of the aforementioned natural capacity of the full exercise of the sexual faculty, and therefore it is also outside that connection to the end ordained by nature. For that same reason, it is deprived of any designation as a right, and also it is contrary to nature and the moral law, even if it is intended to serve a usefulness which is just and not improper.

25. Quae hactenus dicta sunt de intrinseca malitia cuiuslibet pleni usus potentiae generandi extra naturalem coniugalem copulam, valent eodem modo cum agitur de matrimonio iunctis vel de matrimonio solutis, sive plenum exercitium apparatus genitalis fit a viro sive a muliere, sive ab utraque parte simul agente; sive fit tactibus manualibus sive coniugalis copulae interruptione; haec enim semper est actus naturae contrarius atque intrinsece malus.

25. What has been said up to this point concerning the intrinsic evil of any full use of the generative power outside the natural conjugal act applies in the same way when the acts are of married persons or of unmarried persons, whether the full exercise of the genital organs is done by the man or the woman, or by both parties acting together; whether it is done by manual touches or by the interruption of the conjugal act; for this is always an act contrary to nature and intrinsically evil.

[The third and final section of the Papal Address was given in French.]

26. Si la fécondité répond à certaines exigences de l'organisme et satisfait des instincts puissants, elle engage tout de suite, comme Nous l'avons dit, le plan psychologique et moral. L'œuvre de l'éducation dépasse encore par sa portée et ses conséquences celle de la génération. Les échanges d'âme à âme, qui s'opèrent entre les parents et les enfants, avec tout le sérieux, la délicatesse, l'oubli de soi qu'ils requièrent, contraignent bien vite les parents à dépasser le stade de la possession effective pour songer à la destinée personnelle de ceux qui leur sont confiés.

26. If fertility meets certain requirements of the organism and satisfies powerful instincts, it immediately engages, as We have said, the psychological and moral realm. The work of education still exceeds, by its scope and consequences, that of generation. Soul-to-soul exchanges, which take place between parents and children, with all the seriousness, the delicacy, the self-forgetfulness which they require, quickly constrain the parents to move beyond the stage of effective possession, to think of the personal destiny of those entrusted to them.

27. Le plus souvent, quand ils atteignent l'âge adulte, les enfants quittent leur famille, s'en vont au loin pour répondre aux nécessités de la vie ou aux appels d'une vocation plus haute. La pensée de ce détachement normal, si coûteux soit-il pour eux, doit aider les parents à s'élever vers une conception plus noble de leur mission, vers une vision plus pure de la signification de leurs efforts. Sous peine d'échec au moins partiel, la famille est appelée à s'intégrer dans la société, à élargir le cercle des affections et des intérêts, à orienter ses membres vers des horizons plus larges, pour songer non seulement à eux-mêmes, mais aux tâches de service social.

27. More often than not, when they reach adulthood, children leave their families, go away to respond to the necessities of life or to the calls of a higher vocation. The thought of this normal detachment, which is so expensive for them, should help the parents to rise to a more noble conception of their mission, to a purer vision of the significance of their efforts. Under pain of at least partial failure, the family is called to integrate into society, to widen the circle of affections and interests, to orient its members towards wider horizons, to think not only of themselves, but also of the tasks of social service.

28. L'Église catholique enfin, dépositaire des intentions divines, enseigne la fécondité supérieure des vies entièrement consacrées à Dieu et au prochain. Ici le renoncement entier à la famille doit permettre l'action spirituelle toute désintéressée et procédant non d'une peur quelconque de la vie et de ses engagements, mais de la perception des véritables destinées de l'homme, créé à l'image de Dieu et en quête d'un amour universel, qu'aucun attachement charnel ne vienne limiter. Telle est la plus sublime et la plus enviable fécondité, que l'homme puisse souhaiter, celle qui transcende le plan biologique pour entrer de plain-pied dans celui de l'esprit.

28. Finally, the Catholic Church, the repository of divine intentions, teaches the superior fecundity of lives wholly consecrated to God and neighbor. Here, the complete renunciation of the family is required, so as to allow spiritual action -- entirely disinterested and proceeding not from any fear of life or its commitments, but from the perception of the true destiny of humanity, created in the image of God, and in search of a universal love -- such that no carnal attachment may stand in the way. Such is the most sublime and the most enviable fecundity that humanity is able to imagine, one which transcends the biological realm, so to enter, in a sense, into the realm of the spirit.

29. Nous ne voulions pas, Messieurs, conclure cette allocution sans ouvrir ces perspectives. À d'aucuns, elles peuvent paraître assez éloignées des objets, qui vous occupent maintenant. Il n'en est rien cependant. Elles seules en effet permettent de situer vos travaux à la place qui leur revient et d'en apercevoir la valeur. Ce que vous souhaitez, ce n'est pas seulement d'augmenter le nombre des hommes, mais d'élever le niveau moral de l'humanité, ses forces bienfaisantes, sa volonté de croître physiquement et spirituellement. Vous voulez rendre une nouvelle ferveur à l'affection de tant d'époux qu'attriste un foyer désert; loin d'entraver leur épanouissement plénier, vous ambitionnez de mettre à leur service tout votre savoir pour que se réveillent en eux ces ressources admirables, que Dieu a cachées au cœur des pères et des mères pour les aider à monter vers Lui, eux-mêmes et toute leur famille.

29. We did not want, gentlemen, to conclude this speech without opening these perspectives. To some, they may seem quite far away from the objectives that now occupy you. It is not so, however. Indeed, these perspectives alone make it possible to situate your works in their proper place and to perceive their value. What you want is not only to increase the number of human persons, but to raise the moral level of humanity, its beneficent forces, its will to grow physically and spiritually. You want to render a new fervor into the affection of so many husbands who are saddened by a deserted home. Far from obstructing their full bloom, you strive to place at your service all your knowledge so as to awaken in them these admirable resources, which God has hidden in the hearts of fathers and mothers to help them ascend to Him, in themselves and with their entire family.

30. Pénétrés d'une telle responsabilité, vous poursuivrez avec une ardeur croissante, Nous osons l'espérer, votre labeur scientifique et les réalisations pratiques, que vous vous proposez. En invoquant sur vous-mêmes, sur vos familles et tous ceux qui vous sont chers, les plus abondantes faveurs divines, Nous vous accordons de tout cœur Notre Bénédiction Apostolique.

30. Struck by such a responsibility, We dare to hope that you will pursue with increasing ardor your scientific labors and the practical achievements, which you propose. By invoking on yourselves, on your families, and on all those who are dear to you, the most abundant divine favors, We bestow upon you, with all our heart, Our Apostolic Blessing.

Pius XII

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Endnotes

¹ Pope Pius XII, *Speeches*, 1956; Discours du Pape Pie XII aux Participants au Deuxième Congrès Mondial de la Fertilité et de la Stérilité à Naples; Salle des Bénédiction, Samedi, 19 Mai 1956;

http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/fr/speeches/1956/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19560519_fertilita.html

² French translation (first and third sections of the speech) done with the help of Google translate and my own (rusty) knowledge of French from my university studies.

³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2399.

⁴ Translation of the Latin text solely by Ronald L. Conte Jr.

⁵ Pope Saint John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 81.

⁶ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2352.

⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1756.

⁸ Pope Saint John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 81.

⁹ Pope Saint John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* 62.

¹⁰ Pope Pius XII, *Address to Midwives*, 27;

<http://www.catholicplanet.com/TSM/Address-To-Midwives-Pius-XII.htm>

¹¹ Pope Pius XII, *Address to Midwives*, 41.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Acts of the Apostolic See*, 30 June 1952, p. 546; Denzinger 3907, 43rd edition (2012).

¹⁴ Pope Pius XII, *Address to Midwives*, 68.

¹⁵ *The Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima*.

¹⁶ *Speeches and Radio Messages of the most holy Pope Pius XII*; AAS 48, 1956 (Series II, Vol. XXIII) p. 467-474.

¹⁷ Pope Pius XII, *Speeches*, 1956; Discours du Pape Pie XII aux Participants au Deuxième Congrès Mondial de la Fertilité et de la Stérilité à Naples; Salle des Bénédiction, Samedi, 19 Mai 1956;

http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/fr/speeches/1956/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19560519_fertilita.html