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Karol Wojtyła's Efforts and Contemporary Attitudes towards Parenthood. Success or Failure

Abstract

Not only during the period of his Pontificate, but also during previous years, the activity of Karol Wojtyła is worth recalling, appreciating and internalizing, and his preached and written teaching on responsible parenthood should be put into practice. The teaching about man, love, marriage, and parenthood is still relevant today. However, there are both those who support them as well as those who oppose them, particularly, opponents who avoid moral principles, especially in the field of the transmission of life. Therefore, a question arises about the effects of Cardinal Wojtyła's efforts to protect the dignity of a child and a woman – mother, as well as morality in the area of procreation. The victory of the truth, visible in the encyclical *Humanae vitae* promulgated by Paul VI, is a success, while the spread of demoralization experienced to this day by groups promoting abortion and contraception and especially the poor moral condition of future spouses and parents, creates new challenges.

Keywords

Karol Wojtyła, responsible parenthood, family planning methods, attitudes towards procreation.

1. Introduction

In May 2006, Pope Benedict XVI, at the start of his pilgrimage to Poland, said: “I am happy to stand in your midst today on the soil of the Republic of Poland. I have very much wanted to make this visit to the native land and people of my beloved Predecessor, the Servant of God John Paul II. I have come to follow in the footsteps of his life, from his boyhood until his departure for the memorable conclave of 1978.”¹

An important issue for Wojtyła was human life, which should be protected from conception until natural death, as well as love, because you cannot relate to a person except through it.² Children need special love and responsible care. It is out of love that an attitude of responsible parenthood is born, one that respects human dignity and prepares couples for the most appropriate time for conception and childbearing.

The need to deal with the issue of the transmission of life intensified in 1930, since the Anglican hierarchy (193 votes ‘for’, 67 ‘against’ and 47 ‘abstentions’) during the Lambeth Conference, voted that the use of any method of contraception. is allowed, except in exceptional circumstances.³ This caused a crack in the observance of the moral law, which triggered a further avalanche of blurring the existing ethical teaching in Christian communities. After the Anglicans, other Protestants opened up to contraception. A further wave of moral dominoes in these communities *in spe* led to the possibility of abortion or the possibility of experimenting on human embryos.⁴ Another reason for the necessary formation in the field of sexual and procreation was the sexual revolution and the invention of a hormone pill that temporarily eliminates fertility or acts as an abortifacient. Its producers and sellers were interested in its promotion

¹ Benedict XVI, *Pastoral Visit of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in Poland Address by The Holy Father Welcome Ceremony Warsaw Airport, Okęcie, 25 May 2006* https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060525_poland-arrival.html (21.07.2022).

² K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, Lublin 1986, TN KUL, p. 42.

³ M. Eberstadt, *The prophetic power of Humanae vitae*, “First Things” (2018), 4, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2018/04/the-prophetic-power-of-humanae-vitae> (08.07.2022).

⁴ J. Tomczyk, *Kontrowersje wokół Humanae vitae*, “Teologia i moralność” vol. 15 (2020), nr 1 (27), pp. 163–178; *Konferencja w Lambeth. Co wydarzyło się w 1930 roku?*, <https://doczz.pl/doc/3110848/konferencja-w-lambeth.-co-wydarzy%C5%82o-si%C4%99-w-roku-1930%3F> (09.07.2022).

and in its profitable sales, and therefore sought to obtain approval for the use of the new measures. The Catholic church, safe-guarding the deposit of faith and transmitting knowledge about the morality resulting from it, could not be indifferent to this issue. However, the situation became very serious when some bishops, succumbing to the propaganda of liberal journalists and putting pressure on the society by manufacturers of anti-pumping drugs,⁵ proved willing to approve the use of contraception. In the period leading up to the *Humanae vitae* encyclical, out of the sixteen bishops who were to assess the work of the commission on the acceptability of the hormone pill, nine voted 'for', four voted 'against', and three abstained.⁶ Archbishop Karol Wojtyła, soon to be Cardinal, argued in favour of the position expected by Paul VI. It was his efforts that saved the dignity of a woman-mother, man-father, an embroiled child, marriage and the family. This obliges people to gratefully remember and continue his endeavours work in the form of moral education, pro-health and pro-family activities.

The aim of the article is to serve as a reminder of Karol Wojtyła's contribution to shaping attitudes of responsible parenthood, as well as to present contemporary attitudes towards procreation and the moral principles that regulate it. This task will enable the analysis of source documents and the literature on the subject, as well as the questionnaire research of the author and other people dealing with this issue. Finally, an attempt will be made to draw pastoral conclusions and indications and encourage the reader to reflect upon what can, and should, be done to make modern parenting responsible. The recipients of the text should be theologians, psychologists, nurses, midwives, doctors, journalists, politicians lawyers, teachers, all people professionally involved in supporting marriages and families through pro-family counseling, as well as engaged couples preparing for marriage and spouses planning parenthood.

⁵ P. Gałuszka, D. Gospodarek. *50 rocznica publikacji encykliki "Humanae vitae" Pawła VI*, <https://m.niedziela.pl/artukul/36857/50-rocznica-publicacji-encykliki-Humanae> (09.07.2022).

⁶ M. Józwiak, *Humanae vitae, czyli trwale pęknięcie w Kościele*, 2020.07. 24, <https://misyjne.pl/humanae-vitae-czyli-trwale-pekniecie-w-kosciele/> (09.07.2022).

2. Karol Wojtyła and responsible parenthood

There were five important stages in the life and vocation of Karol Wojtyła: in 1946, when he became a priest; 1958, the year of receiving the episcopate; 1963, when he became archbishop, 1967, the year when he was created as a Cardinal and 1978, the start of his Pontificate. During Karol Wojtyła's ministry in Krakow, it is worth paying attention to the following achievements: pre-marriage courses for spouses-students of the Krakow University, jubileraseries of lectures for married couples in 1967. During the academic year 1967/68 there was the establishment of the Institute of Family Theology and in 1968 the establishment of the Pastoral Care of the Families.⁷ During his studies at the 'Angelicum' in Rome, he wrote his important doctoral dissertation (1948), and in 1953 to do habilitation at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow. From 1954 to 1978, Karol Wojtyła lectured at the Catholic University of Lublin.⁸ It is on the basis of these lectures that the book *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* (*Love and Responsibility*) was written.

In fact, the attitudes of a mature person should be characterized by responsibility. Karol Wojtyła's special contribution relates to the argumentation of procreative responsibility. Thanks to him and the Theological Commission convened by him, explanations and justifications for moral principles in the field of the transmission of life were developed.

The term 'responsible parenthood' appeared for the first time in Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae vitae on moral principles in the field of transmitting human life*.⁹ In the description of this attitude, in the 10th issue of the encyclical, attention is drawn to the fact that responsible parenthood requires: knowledge and respect for the biological functions that determine human reproduction; control by reason and will of innate drives and passions: taking into account physical, economic, psychological and social conditions in the fertility planning of the family and subsequent conceptions; making decisions about conceiving a child, or temporarily or permanently refraining from conception, preceded by prudent reflection, generosity, as well taking into account moral orders and other reasons considered important. Marital intercourse should

⁷ *Historia duszpasterstwa*, <https://wdr.diecezja.pl/historia/> (08.07.2022).

⁸ A. Zykubek, Ks. Prof. dr hab. Karol Wojtyła – Jan Paweł II, https://www.kul.pl/ks-prof-dr-hab-karol-wojtyla-jan-pawel-ii,art_60374.html (08.07.2022).

⁹ Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Humanae Vitae*, On the regulation of birth, Rome 1968, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59, pp. 257–299, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html (21.07.2022).

be intimate and clean, fair and dignified, morally correct, and not disturbing man's God-given fertility. "For God so wisely established the natural laws of fertility and its periods, that by themselves they introduce breaks between successive conceptions."¹⁰

Sexual intercourse is a sign of conjugal love and cannot take place without love; although it is possible on both fertile and infertile days, it cannot be associated with the deliberate impairment of fertility. Paragraph 14 of the encyclical clearly indicates which of the methods of limiting offspring are morally unacceptable: "one should unconditionally reject – as a morally unacceptable method of limiting the number of offspring, direct violation of the already begun life process, especially direct termination of pregnancy, even for medical reasons. Likewise – as the Magisterium of the Church has repeatedly stated – direct sterilization, whether permanent or temporary, of both male and female should be rejected. Any action which, whether in anticipation of a marital intercourse or during its fulfillment or in the development of its natural effects, would have the purpose of preventing or leading to conception should be rejected."¹¹ Development of these guidelines was not easy and required numerous consultations. For this purpose, a special body was convened, capable of expressing itself on this matter in a detailed and professional manner.

The Pontifical Commission for the Family and Birth Control (*Commissio Pontificia pro Studio Populationis, Familiae et Natalitatis*) was established by John XXIII in 1963. Pope Paul VI increased its membership. On February 16, 1966, Archbishop Karol Wojtyła (theologian and ethicist) was included in it, and his role turned out to be particularly significant. Not having obtained a passport to leave Poland for Rome, he gathered a similar commission in Krakow and directed its work to submit the prepared text to the Holy Father Paul VI. The main core of the group were moral theologians and pastoralists, professors of the Major Seminary in Krakow: Fr. Stanisław Smoleński, Fr. Tadeusz Ślipko TJ, Fr. Juliusz Turowicz, as well as prof. WSD in Tarnów, Fr. Jerzy Bajda, prof. of the Redemptorists in Tuchów, Fr. Jerzy Podgórski CSSR, and the Dr Fr. Karol Meissner OSB from Tyniec, (from 1972 from Lubin), was from 1966 to 2005, was a lecturer in psychiatry and psychology at the Catholic University of Lublin. The task of the group developing the text was to present and justify the Catholic

¹⁰ *Humanae vitae* 10.

¹¹ *Humanae vitae* 14.

teaching on the moral principles of marital coexistence.¹² As a result of their work, two important documents were created: Memorial Krakow and Introduction to the encyclical *Humanae vitae*.¹³ According to Fr. Andrzej Bardecki 60% of this study was included in the encyclical *Humanae vitae*.¹⁴ The topicality of the subject matter meant that after 45 years Karol Meissner agreed to make his typescript of the Memorial available to a wider group of recipients through the publication. The introduction to the encyclical was copied from the first edition that appeared in the internal bulletin of the Krakow Curia.¹⁵

As Fr. Paweł Gałuszka, the present head of the Pastoral Care of Families in Kraków writes, “Karol Wojtyła’s Christian personalism had pastoral connotations. The starting point for all research on the ethical problems of the human person was for the Bishop of Krakow a particular man who lives in a particular today, with all his conditions and problems.”¹⁶ According to Karol Wojtyła, it is not enough to point to the existence of moral norms, but you should also justify them.¹⁷ Standards are justified in the light of Revelation and reason. It is giving reasons for their rightness. Basing on value judgments, moral requirements, they “presuppose a theoretical cognition of the reality being evaluated”¹⁸. In justifying moral norms regulating human sexual and procreative behaviours, the Krakow commission of theologians took into account: persons, their dignity and development; conjugal love and the good of the family; equality between men and women in marriage. The ability to transmit life is a gift that people have received from God. Contraception is an action against conception by blocking

¹² K. Meissner, *Przedślowie. Historia i przedstawienie dokumentu*, in: *Memoriał Krakowski. Uzasadnienie katolickiej nauki dotyczącej podstaw moralnych życia małżeńskiego*, Kraków 1968 i *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, Kraków 1969, Poznań 2012, BONAMI, pp. 7–9.

¹³ *Memoriał Krakowski. Uzasadnienie katolickiej nauki dotyczącej podstaw moralnych życia małżeńskiego*, Kraków 1968 i *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, Kraków 1969, Poznań 2012, BONAMI.

¹⁴ M. Józwiak, *Humanae vitae* czyli trwałe pęknięcie w Kościele (24.07.2020). <https://misyjne.pl/humanae-vitae-czyli-trwale-pekniecie-w-kosciele/> (10.07.2022).

¹⁵ K. Wojtyła et al., *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*. “Notificacionese Curia Metropolitana Cracoviensi” (1969), 1–4, pp. 1–77.

¹⁶ P. Gałuszka, *Karol Wojtyła i Humanae vitae. Wkład arcybiskupa krakowskiego i grupy polskich teologów w encyklikę Pawła VI*, transl. K. Stopa, Warszawa 2018, Muzeum Jana Pawła II i Prymasa Wyszyńskiego, pp. 138–139.

¹⁷ K. Wojtyła, *Czym powinna być teologia moralna*, “Ateneum Kapłańskie” (1959), 58, p. 100.

¹⁸ K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienia katolickiej etyki seksualnej. Refleksje i postulatory*, “Roczniki Filozoficzne” 13 (1965), 2, pp. 6–7.

ovulation, destroying sperm, interfering with intercourse, creating barriers between gametes; it is a serious and unacceptable interference in human procreation, as well as a negative attitude to this gift. It constitutes “a violation of the person as a sexual being and his biological rule.”¹⁹

Another argument against contraception concerns personal relationships. In interpersonal relations, respect for the rights and dignity of the person, kind love, concern for the good and fulfillment of the vocation are obligatory. Therefore, “treating the other as an object of use that we use to achieve our own goals is excluded.”²⁰ Human dignity also creates obligations towards oneself. It is rational, free and responsible behaviour. Man should not succumb to impulses, but direct them, integrating them with his moral life. It is also meant to successfully overcome selfish tendencies and establish true love.²¹ Juliusz Turowicz and Stanisław Smoleński explain that “marital love can manifest itself both in the fertile act and in the normal, naturally sterile act, and in refraining from the act when fertility is prudently undesirable.”²² It cannot, however, manifest itself in the act that the spouses consciously and intentionally infertile. Is it possible for others not to take advantage of fertility, or to disturb, eliminate and destroy it. Acting against conception distorts the sexual act. Sexual action aimed only at achieving pleasure or an emotional experience of love “is tantamount to using a partner for one’s purpose, and therefore is against his personal dignity, against the virtue of conjugal chastity (by foolishly seeking sexual satisfaction).”²³ Such acts do not express love, but lead to its destruction. Intercourse, crippled by contraception, does not express devotion. It is an attitude with a personalized human being expressed in the position: ‘I want you, but I don’t want your fertility’. Parents’ nervousness and fear of having another child do not create

¹⁹ S. Smoleński, *Uzasadnienie moralnego zakazu antykoncepcji ze strony Kościoła. Osoba ludzka jej godność i rozwój*, in: *Memoriał Krakowski*, Poznań, 2012, BONAMI, p. 24.

²⁰ S. Smoleński, *Uzasadnienie moralnego zakazu antykoncepcji ze strony Kościoła. Osoba ludzka jej godność i rozwój*, in: *Memoriał Krakowski es*, p. 25.

²¹ Pastoral Constitution On The Church In The Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*. Rome 1965, “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 58 (1966), pp. 1025–1120, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (21.07.2022).

²² J. Turowicz, S. Smoleński, *Uzasadnienie moralnego zakazu antykoncepcji ze strony Kościoła. Miłość małżeńska i dobro rodziny*, in: *Memoriał Krakowski*, p. 26.

²³ J. Turowicz, S. Smoleński, *Uzasadnienie moralnego zakazu antykoncepcji ze strony Kościoła. Miłość małżeńska i dobro rodziny*, p. 26.

the atmosphere of love that is indispensable in raising children. Parents do not give act as proper role models. Lack of self-control breeds anxiety and a state of tension. Conditional and self-interested love is not real, it teaches comfort and does not direct behavior towards the good of the loved one.

A man and a woman are characterized by equality in humanity with simultaneous gender distinctiveness.²⁴ It serves a mutual personal meeting, building a bond in a community of two that enables conception and childbearing. “Gender is a biological fact related to the ability to transmit life and at the service of that ability.”²⁵ Involvement in procreation largely affects the female body. The changes taking place in her body related to the menstrual cycle, fertility, conceiving a child, pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, breastfeeding a newborn and infant oblige a man to properly care for his wife, respect her dignity and reproductive ability, sexual responsibility and committed participation in duties parental. Avoidance of these obligations testifies to the immaturity of a man, increases the feeling of injustice and harms both the mother and the child; it is a consent to the ‘erotic-hedonistic attitude’ towards sexual activities. This exacerbates the gender inequality exploited to the detriment of the woman as seen in terms of ‘use’ rather than ‘passing on life’, enabling a man to satisfy his sexual needs “without taking responsibility for the effects of sexual activity.”²⁶ Jerzy Bajda points out that “the danger of rape poses a threat to women,” and in this situation, allowing contraception means not only a threat of inequality, but ‘sexual slavery.’²⁷

The prohibition against contraception protects not only the physical, mental, and spiritual, health of potential users of these drugs²⁸, but also the dignity of women and men and the marital relationship they create.

²⁴ J. Bajda, *Zagadnienie równości mężczyzny i kobiety w dziedzinie małżeństwa*, in: *Memoriał Krakowski*, Poznań 2012, BONAMI, p. 28.

²⁵ J. Bajda, *Zagadnienie równości mężczyzny i kobiety w dziedzinie małżeństwa*, p. 28.

²⁶ J. Bajda, *Zagadnienie równości mężczyzny i kobiety w dziedzinie małżeństwa*, p. 29.

²⁷ J. Bajda, *Zagadnienie równości mężczyzny i kobiety w dziedzinie małżeństwa*, p. 29.

²⁸ U. Dudziak, *Miłość, małżeństwo i co dalej*, Częstochowa 2001, Edycja Świętego Pawła 2001; U. Dudziak, *Metody planowania rodziny a zdrowie kobiety*, in: J. Meder (Ed.), *Problemy zdrowia psychicznego kobiet*, seria “Biblioteka Psychiatrii Polskiej”, Kraków 2003, Polskie Towarzystwo Psychiatryczne, pp. 65–75; U. Dudziak, *Misterium ludzkiego życia od poczęcia do umierania. Studium dla duszpasterzy i doradców życia rodzinnego*, Lublin 2021, Wydawnictwo KUL.

Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, in his *Introduction to the Encyclical Humanae Vitae*, calls the encyclical a work of “strengthening the brothers”²⁹ in the difficult field of marital morality and the transmission of life.³⁰ The undertaken dialogue of preparing the publication of an unambiguous statement was to “serve a more comprehensive understanding of the truth.”³¹ The Cardinal writes that true marital love “corresponds to conscious parenthood, but contraception is not compatible with it.”³² Interference with physiological processes in order to prevent conception, “in the context of Christian truths has never been accepted in the teaching of the Church and under absolutely no conditions and at any cost can be accepted.”³³ The truth of *Humanae vitae*, as Wojtyła notices, reaches human consciences, sensitizes to personal values, indicates “controlling the sexual bof conception. The commentary to the encyclical prepared by him and the Krakow commission of theologians, is intended to serve both spouses in fulfilling their family vocation and priests who pursue their pastoral vocation. It also serves to broaden the awareness of the Church as the People of God called to participate in the prophetic, priestly and royal mission of Jesus Christ himself.”³⁴

3. Attitude towards parenthood

Despite so much effort to unequivocally formulate the truths about the moral principles of procreation, many still do not understand them, or do not or know this content; or he rejects it is rejected by many years of survey research on the acceptance of such standards as: premarital chastity, marital fidelity, the indissolubility of marriage and responsible parenthood against abortion and contraception. They show that the prohibition of contraception is the least accepted moral norm.³⁵ The statements of the catechized high school students prove that

²⁹ Lk 22:32.

³⁰ K. Wojtyła et al, *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, Poznań 2012, BONAMI, p. 69.

³¹ K. Wojtyła et al, *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, p. 69.

³² K. Wojtyła et al, *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, p. 71.

³³ K. Wojtyła et al, *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, pp. 87–88.

³⁴ K. Wojtyła et al, *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, p. 71.

³⁵ U. Dudziak, *Postawy wobec wychowania seksualnego a hierarchia wartości nauczycieli. Studium teologiczno pastoralne*, Lublin, 2009, Wydawnictwo KUL, pp. 152–153.

the approval of the ban on contraception has decreased from 17% of respondents reporting it in 1992, to 3% in 2000 and 2007.

Karol Furtak's research carried out in 2011 shows that before the course began, a significant group of engaged couples did not know about the symptothermal method that would make it possible to identify the fertile and infertile days in the cycle (60% of women and 97% of men); and the Church's documents on moral principles in the field of procreation was unknown to 67% of women and 90% of men.³⁶

Among the statements of high school graduates surveyed by Katarzyna Lis in 2015, the moral prohibition of contraception was approved by 15% of students, a relative attitude was expressed by 21%, and 64% did not accept this prohibition. Summing up the group of disapproving and responding relatively indicates that 85% of the surveyed youth attending religion classes at school expressed an attitude towards contraception that was inconsistent with the teaching of the Church to which they belong.³⁷

In the group of 542 high school graduates, surveyed a year later by Fr. Marcin Rola, contraception was allowed by 80%.³⁸

As Dorota Lewtak and Artur Lewtak, interviewing brides who signed up for the pre-nuptial course in 2019 stated, the thermal method was known very few or not at all by 81.5% of men and 70% of women.³⁹

An anonymous questionnaire carried out the author to engaged couples during the premarital course in April and May 2022, in two parishes near Lublin, showed numerous attitudes towards procreation inconsistent with moral norms. The use of contraceptives was allowed by 79% of the respondents, in-vitro fertilization by 68%, and abortion by 43%. Unambiguous plans for the use of various contraceptives in their marriage was reported by 53%. Some wanted to combine natural family planning with contraception, others had yet to discuss the options

³⁶ K. Furtak, *Postawy wobec planowania rodziny osób przygotowujących się do zawarcia sakramentu małżeństwa*, Praca magisterska, Lublin 2011, Archiwum KUL.

³⁷ K. Lis, *Postawy młodzieży naturalnej wobec moralności małżeńsko-rodzinnej*, praca magisterska, Lublin 2015, Archiwum KUL.

³⁸ M. Rola, *Wartości moralne w świadomości maturzystów lubelskich. Studium socjologiczne*, Lublin 2016, Wydawnictwo i Drukarnia Standruk.

³⁹ A. Lewtak, *Postawy nupturientów wobec ojcostwa*, praca magisterska, Lublin 2019, Archiwum KUL; D. Lewtak, *Postawy nupturientek wobec macierzyństwa*, praca magisterska, Lublin 2019, Archiwum KUL.

and did not know what to decide upon. Only 21, 5% of people displayed a positive attitude to learn and use fertility recognition methods in the future marriage.

This data proves that contemporary attitudes towards parenthood are not in line with moral norms. This may indicate a low knowledge of procreation and / or a lack of religious formation. This may be due to educational negligence and the lack of one's own activity in developing knowledge and religiosity. It is possible that parents, teachers, educators, catechists, pastors have neglected their tasks in shaping the right attitudes of children, in providing materials useful in education in the field of fertility and morality physiology, or bearing personal testimony of fidelity to commandments and a life of chastity, without consenting to sin. Perhaps, the influence of the environment and the media promoting immoral behavior contributed to the attitudes incompatible with morality. The crisis of procreative attitudes confirmed by research and low moral condition that is unfavorable to responsible parenthood requires taking corrective measures. According to the indications of Karol Wojtyła, the norms should be presented, but also justified. The known and interiorized truth has a greater chance of being implemented in everyday proceedings.

4. Pastoral indications

In moral education it is important to “recognize the supremacy of objective moral criteria in making decisions”⁴⁰. It is also advisable to “recognize the value of the sexual act in marriage as a moral human act, judged in the light of the call to parenthood and interpersonal love.”⁴¹

The responsibility of procreation should be ingrained in couples together with sexual responsibility. Self-mastery in this dimension is a sign of freedom and respect for the human dignity of a spouse, and an expression of a love that “seeks the good of the other person.”⁴² *Humanae Vitae* warns against reducing the person “to the role of an instrument for the satisfaction of selfish lust.”⁴³ It is

⁴⁰ K. Meissner, *Normy moralne dotyczące regulacji poczęć i ich uzasadnienie*, w: K. Wojtyła et al., *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, Poznań 2012, BONAMI, p. 105.

⁴¹ A. Lewtak, *Postawy nupturientów wobec ojcostwa*, praca magisterska, Lublin 2019, Archiwum KUL, p. 106.

⁴² K. Meissner, *Odpowiedzialne rodzicielstwo*, in: K. Wojtyła et al., *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, Poznań 2012, BONAMI, p. 103.

⁴³ *Humanae vitae* 17.

therefore necessary to distinguish between love and physiological desire and emotion-based love and infatuation. This content, heard at home and at school, should be established in many fields of study and during premarital studies.

The role of the Church is not only to teach about moral principles, but also to help in their implementation through counseling and pastoral ministry.⁴⁴ The first task is to make engaged couples and spouses aware that they are capable of love and supported by God's grace. They should cooperate with it by affirming the value of life and family, and by making prudent decisions and efforts to implement them. In order to implement moral principles, it is necessary to nurture a sensitive conscience, which does not try to 'establish' moral norms, but 'reads' them. The ethics of marriage in the *Humanae vitae* should be studied by the spouses, and if this is not the case, "it is difficult to speak of faultless ignorance or error in good faith."⁴⁵

The support of the spouses in the realization of the parental vocation should be shown by the public authority, which is not allowed to introduce laws "contrary to natural and divine law."⁴⁶ Instead, it is duty-bound to care for "more favorable conditions for the life of families"⁴⁷ The task of educators and the media is to create "a climate conducive to cleanliness"⁴⁸, including opposition to pornography and sexuality. The task of scientists is to develop a precise scientific basis for the natural regulation of conception. Healthcare professionals are obliged to "acquire the necessary and thorough knowledge of methods of recognizing fertility and marital life."⁴⁹ There is also a need for "family apostolate for families."⁵⁰ Stanisław Smoleński and Juliusz Turowicz explain that "well-formed and living families according to the principles of Christian ethics can especially effectively influence other spouses by passing on their own experiences to them."⁵¹

⁴⁴ S. Smoleński, J. Turowicz, *Wskazania duszpasterskie*, in: *Wprowadzenie do encykliki Humanae vitae*, Poznań 2012, BONAMI, p. 122.

⁴⁵ S. Smoleński, J. Turowicz, *Wskazania duszpasterskie*, p. 124.

⁴⁶ S. Smoleński, J. Turowicz, *Wskazania duszpasterskie*, p. 125.

⁴⁷ S. Smoleński, J. Turowicz, *Wskazania duszpasterskie*, p. 125.

⁴⁸ *Humanae vitae* 22.

⁴⁹ S. Smoleński, J. Turowicz, *Wskazania duszpasterskie*, p. 126.

⁵⁰ *Humanae vitae* 26.

⁵¹ S. Smoleński, J. Turowicz, *Wskazania duszpasterskie*, p. 126.

The role of priests is to teach the spouses about marriage and their moral obligations. Hence the need for a thorough knowledge of the encyclical and the conviction of its rightness also among clerics and priests. The task of priests includes not only conducting premarital catecheses, but also serving in the confessional and giving instructions on the formation of consciences. The role of the priest is to judge sin and help the penitent convert through the guidance of improving life and forming a righteous conscience. It is advisable to explain the duties of married life as the realization of God's creative plans, encouragement to pray, frequent Eucharist, order to seek help from Catholic family counseling center.⁵²

Karol Wojtyła's efforts to win the truth in the field of moral principles regulating sexual and procreative behaviors ensured the spouses not only protection of their physical health, building a proper bond and preservation of personal dignity, but above all faithfulness to God's law and protection against grave sin.

Paul VI invites all bishops "with all zeal and promptness, to devote themselves to the work of securing marriage and defending its sanctity, so that married life may attain ever greater human and Christian perfection."⁵³ They should treat this task as "the most important work and duty imposed on them today."⁵⁴ The Pope expects the bishops to coordinate the pastoral activities of Christian spouses.

The topicality of the content of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* is timeless. Karol Wojtyła and the priests cooperating with him, made great efforts to make the life of the spouses moral and parenthood responsible. Now, when all the members of the Krakow commission of theologians are on the other side of life, the representatives of the contemporary generation should ask themselves the question: What can we do today so that education in love, chastity and responsible parenthood brings about the expected fruit? Aggressive groups of opponents of life and the moral relativism of a large part of society do not prove the defeat of Catholics, but are a call to intensify educational activities.⁵⁵ One must not bend the standards to people's misconduct. These behaviours need to be changed to reflect the norms presented.

⁵² S. Smoleński, J. Turowicz, *Wskazania duszpasterskie*, p. 128.

⁵³ *Humanae vitae* 30.

⁵⁴ S. Smoleński, J. Turowicz, *Wskazania duszpasterskie*, p. 128.

⁵⁵ E.W. Kowalewska, *Módlmy się codziennie o nawrócenie przeciwników życia. Przeciwnicy życia potrzebują naszej modlitwy*, 12.04.2022, <http://dziennikparafialny.pl/2016/modlmy-sie-codziennie-o-nawrocenie-przeciwnikow-zycia/> (15.07.2022).

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