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[Book Review of] *Love, Fruitful and Responsible: Ten Years from Humanae Vitae, Proceedings of the International Congress Milan, June 21-25, 1978*

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For those physicians who have been in the forefront of the pro-life movement, Dr. Nathanson's grudging concessions will be a grim satisfaction and an additional vindication. It should be required reading for all the backsliders, fence-straddlers, and mugwumpers who have remained aloof from the battle while claiming to be "personally opposed." Dr. Nathanson has produced the ultimate "reductio ad absurdum" to those who profess to see two sides to the abortion issue.

— Eugene F. Diamond, M.D.
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Love, Fruitful and Responsible: Ten Years from Humanae Vitae

Proceedings of the International Congress
Milan, June 21-25, 1978

Centro Internazionale Studi Famiglia Edizione Paoline, 20145 Milan, 1979. xii + 572 pp. Text in English, Italian and French. \$18 postpaid to U.S.

The frontispiece of this massive volume shows an earnest and smiling Cardinal Wojtyla — familiar to us as Pope John Paul II — delivering the keynote address to the 1978 Milan Ecumenical Congress on the Tenth Anniversary of Paul VI's *Transmission of Human Life — Humanae Vitae Tradendae*, a scant four months before his unexpected election to the papacy. The Conference was attended by 350 delegates — 150 of them women — from 58 countries on six continents including Poland and Yugoslavia from the Communist world. In attendance were 22 married couples, 79 priests and bishops, 11 Protestant clergy and representatives, 11 nuns, 52 doctors and 15 nurses, numerous psychotherapists, social workers, marriage counselors, some lawyers, one engineer, one judge, one legislator, many teachers and students. There were 22 invited papers on the theology, sociology, biology and medicine of responsible parenthood. The book gives 30 complete texts — 13 in English, 12 in Italian and 5 in French — plus 15 summaries (6 English, 9 Italian). In addition, there are five conference summaries plus seven workshop resolutions in English and Italian both, and 19 Family Life reports (14 English, 5 French) from countries as varied as France, India, Thailand and Zaire. There is a section devoted to 13 short communications (6 English, 4 Italian, 2 French and 1 Spanish). An appendix gives the text (Italian) of the official communique released by the Conference as a clarification of misstatements in the Milan press, plus the list of delegates.

Eleven formal presentations are by doctors — two papers on love by British Catholic psychiatrist Jack Dominion and Indian surgeon Alfred F. A. Mascarenhas; Grenoble's Francois and Michele Guy on the history of fertility and contracep-

tion; three papers on NFP by Ob-Gyn's Mario Vignali (Milan), Adriano Bompiani (Rome) and John Bonnar (Dublin); one paper on the ST method by Claude Lanctot (Washington); two on the OM by Gabrielle Bonomi (Pavia) and Kevin Hume (Sydney); Harvard and Cali's Rodrigo Guerrero on aging gametes; and Ob-Gyn Anna Flynn (Queen Elizabeth Medical Center, Birmingham) on the return of fertility *post-partum*.

Highlights from this veritable treasure trove include Karol Wojtyla's keynote address, given completely in English and Italian, in which the future pope defends the primacy of the conscience in the achievement of responsible parenthood within the everyday living of married love. Pere Gustave Martelet, S.J., of Paris, a member of the International Theological Commission, was the author in 1967 of the theology of the indissolubility of the two significations of the marital union — on which Paul VI's HV rests (No. 12). In the present volume, Martelet develops the deeper meaning of HV, a document widely misunderstood by critics and supporters alike. He points out that HV 14, which reasserts the Roman Catholic Church's opposition on objective moral grounds to direct contraception, sterilization and abortion, had the unfortunate effect of "wounding many Catholic families by leaving them mired in a perpetual state of mortal sin." Martelet asserts that this was never Paul VI's intention — that the theology of subjective sinfulness, which HV does not discuss and leaves to the pastoral ministry of the priest (No. 29), would in any case absolve them from sin. He discusses the ethics of periodic abstinence and adds: "There is a natural organic pause in a woman's fertility. If this pause disappears or becomes confused, it should be brought back to normal by all means possible." Martelet defines the "objective disorder of contraception" as the "systematic destruction of normally occurring fertility." He concludes: "people, bishops and priests will have to ponder deeply Paul VI's difficult message to resolve the numerous problems of human love." Martelet urges us on to this task, and tells us that HV, written at a time of contestation, was never meant to be the final word on the subject. The Rev. Masamba ma Mpolo of Zaire and the World Council of Churches' Office of Family Ministries in Geneva, develop the ecumenical dimension of responsible parenthood and urge Protestant-Catholic cooperation in the formulation of programs of sex education for youth. Father McCormack of England and Rome spells out the world demographic problem — particularly acute in the developing nations where doubling times are as short as 20 years. He insists that this fact is "not a numbers game, but a part of God's truth." In the faster than exponential growth of the world population, the total number of humans alive today (over 4 billion) exceeds the cumulative total of all those who have lived in the past going back into the mists of time! In a short communication, U.S. sociologist Virginia Heffernan reports that NFP works best for couples who freely choose natural methods, and poorly for couples compelled by Church rules.

In a world of growing violence — direct abortion, mechanical and biochemical tampering with human fertility — dedication to the truly human and religious values of responsible parenthood was one of the key purposes of this Congress called together to honor the tenth year of Paul VI's HV. All persons concerned with family work — whether as clergy, doctors, counselors, or even parents — will find this volume a gold mine of information and encouragement. It should be on the shelves of every library concerned with family life. Over half of its text is in English; of the rest, mostly in Italian with some French, fully three-fourths is accessible to the English-speaking reader via English summaries.

— Andre J. de Bethune, Ph.D.
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