

February 1969

Letter from Canada

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Recommended Citation

Costello, J. Bernard (1969) "Letter from Canada," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 36 : No. 1 , Article 24.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol36/iss1/24>

Letter From Canada . . .

The razzle dazzle of political party conventions, the election of new leaders for our countries, the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the brutality of race riots, have all captivated our attention. The crisis of conscience precipitated by the papal encyclical and the attempts to resolve this currently dominate our thoughts.

Statements have been issued of profound acquiescence, by groups of clergy and hierarchy, as though none have doubts or reservations. Equally unrealistic have been the protestations of those who do not like this Papal pronouncement. They attack, with some validity, the lack of proof within the context of the Encyclical, but do not themselves propose a theologically acceptable alternative. I would guess that many doctors, patients and confessors have, in these years since the Council, resolved for themselves a course of action that satisfied their consciences. These are not now likely to be seriously troubled by a papal directive, that relies for its strength on papal teaching authority alone.

However, for those who face the problem of childbirth regulation, within the framework of that ruled as licit by the Church, there can be only a renewed interest in Rhythm, both natural and artificial. Because of these pressures, I would like again to present my current experience in creating an artificial rhythm by regulating ovulation.

Since I last wrote, I now have followed one hundred and sixty couples for a minimum of six months to a maximum of three years. The wives of these have been taking Ortho-Novum, (either 1 or 2 mg.) from day 15 to day 25 inclusively in each

cycle. Unless a pregnancy was intended, the couples avoided marital relations from day 9 to 16 inclusively.

Out of one hundred and sixty couples in this series, five pregnancies have been conceived. One has already delivered a normal baby. One may represent a failure of the system, but I cannot be certain of this. These five all document the fact that in these cases, when taking Ortho-Novum from day 15 to day 25, ovulation is not inhibited.

This artificial Rhythm requires less days of abstinence to avoid conception and is very accurate (as opposed to natural Rhythm) in that ovulation is controlled. Side effects are minimal, as is the risk of pregnancy. Patient acceptance of this system by peoples of all beliefs and other past contraceptive practices, has been good.

Collecting statistics is indeed slow and I would welcome hearing from other controlled series, so that our pooled efforts may warrant making this available to all who wish it.

I also believe, but have not yet proven, that the days of abstinence may be able to be shortened to days 11 through to 16 inclusively. When, (and if) the time of abstinence can be reduced to five days, it certainly should not be difficult to practice moral birth control.

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