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Catholic Physicians' Guild

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CATHOLIC MORALITY MOURNS A DEFENDER

The death of Patrick Cardinal Hayes called forth universally the most profound feelings of sorrow. Beloved by all, even in his college days, his amiability, fervor, and character were evident to his classmates. As the years went by, he showed more and more his charity, judgment, firmness, courage, devotion to duty and unflinching exposition of the laws of God. Catholics of his diocese well remember his Cathedral sermon of Sunday, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1935, when he enunciated the teaching of the Church and denounced the Birth Controllers, thus: "As Cardinal Archbishop of New York, I rise to voice measured, deliberate, and emphatic condemnation of the effrontery of those who at this meeting (Carnegie Hall) advocated birth control for families on relief. . . . Contraception is wrong because it involves the unnatural use, the perversion of a human faculty. . . . I have not felt a bit comfortable in the pulpit talking on this subject. But the Church must continue to enforce the law of God as revealed in the Ten Commandments. . . . Canon law requires only that the primary end, which is the procreation of children, never be excluded, nor means be taken to prevent the natural consequences of the marriage act from ensuing. It is this positive interference with the normal processes of nature that constitutes birth control, or more accurately, birth prevention, as condemned by the Church." Again, ten days later, the Cardinal issued a statement: "To the thirteen Protestant and Jewish clergymen whose reply to my recent condemnation of birth prevention has been noted in the press, I say it is indeed surprising that a group of professed leaders of religious thought should make the sole test of the desirability of any program or policy, the utilitarian one, leaving out of all consideration any question of the moral values involved." The Cardinal went on to point out the consequences to the State—"a declining birth rate means an aging population."

A controversy followed in which the Catholic side was ably expounded by the Rev. Ignatius W. Cox, S.J., our Spiritual Moderator, whose arguments quickly confounded the Birth Controllers in their statements and pleadings.

—J. A. D., M.D.