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the debate is to lead to a better knowledge of God's will, then surely it is necessary to review the issues and arguments periodically to discover what is the current state of the question. My own reading of the experience and literature of the past five years suggests that now is the time to respond as a community to Pope Paul's gentle invitation to dialogue.

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NOTICE:

THE 1974 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC PHYSICIANS' GUILDS WILL BE HELD
Nov. 30 — Dec, 1, 1974
PORTLAND, OREGON
(IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE AMA CLINICAL MEETING)
DETAILS WILL FOLLOW

Humanae Vitae Revisited
Vitale H. Paganelli, M.D.

"Human life is sacred, from its very inception it reveals the creating hand of God."

John XXIII, Mater et Magister

I. An Introduction

The fifth anniversary (7/25/73) of Pope Paul VI's controversial encyclical Humanae Vitae will be celebrated before these thoughts take final form and are published. It is my hope that this paper will contribute positively to a fuller understanding and acceptance of the teachings therein.

It seems unlikely that any reader, save one whose particular and limited interest is moral theology, will have read the incredibly large mass of literature written regarding this encyclical. It is my impression that in my capacity as a Catholic physician I have covered this literature more extensively than most of my physician colleagues. In fact, at times I am totally nonplussed to find that the most vociferous physician critics of the encyclical have never taken the time to read the document. It has distressed me more however over this five-year period to find that the preponderance of published material either is militantly critical of the teaching contained in the encyclical or at best makes an attempt to dilute its content so as to vitiate effectively its essential teaching, especially at the practical level of family life.

Let it be stated from the outset of this article that I place myself with those who think and believe that the principles and concepts contained in Humanae Vitae are true and that furthermore they are entirely worthy to be held by all the faithful as a preeminent ideal not only for human life in general

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but also for family life in particular; further, that the elemental principles and concepts of *Humanae Vitae* constitute a most fundamental level for developing and understanding a sound medical-moral theology which will best preserve the I-Thou relationship between man and God.

**II. Preliminary Discussion**

This attempt to provide a positive contribution to the discussion, understanding and development of the encyclical is grounded in my admitted predilection for the philosophy (and where applicable, the theology) of Aristotle, Thomas and Maritain. This is true particularly as regards the development of an understanding of the metaphysical concept of being (esse) and their understanding of the application of natural law theory to the medical-ethical problems covered by the encyclical.

This paper will try (perhaps too ambitiously) to relate the notions of (1) being (esse) as God's primary gift, (2) God's essence described as His existence and (3) the creation of man in God's likeness on the one hand with noncontraceptive marital intercourse on the other.

**A. Theology**

The basic theological premise of the traditionally oriented Roman Catholic physician is that in some fashion, as yet not clearly or completely elucidated scientifically, God is the author of all life and most specifically of human life when he bestows a likeness to Him. This has been revealed and therefore is indisputable. (For the purposes of this article I shall defer from any consideration of evolution, dualitiation, polygenism vs. monogenism, etc.)

A second theological point which prefaces my consideration of the encyclical is most succinctly stated by Jacque-Marie Potier and therefore I borrow his language. God makes a covenant with man that this act on God's part is the most important event in history of man and of humanity, and that the occurrence of human action and human existence to this covenant becomes the most important reference of all those which endow man's autonomy and existence with their true significance.

To summarize, God creates every man in His likeness and He has made a covenant with each of those whom He has created.

Let us consider further the covenant between God and man which is simply that if we acknowledge by our activity that we are His people then we shall participate in the eternity of His Being. There is nothing in man's conceptual horizon, not even the most existent or possibly existent which can or could take priority over the meaningfulness of the covenant relationship with God. This covenant relationship stands at the apex of all man's activity.

The covenant which God has made and continuously offers to man, however, is necessarily and absolutely conditioned by the fact that first and foremost (and almost too obviously to be stated) a man must exist, i.e., must have being before that individual man can enter into a covenantal relationship with God. Put negatively, if a man has never existed, then any form of covenant between man and God is clearly impossible. Thus, since the absolute *apriori* for any relationship with God by man is for a man to have being then it becomes necessary to affirm that God's most important gift to a man is precisely the gift of being as versus non-being.

To summarize again, God is the author of human life and also the author of a covenantal relationship with man. The latter is not possible without the former for each individual man in the order of time. Thus, the most necessary event for a given human person is first to be, to exist, to have being, and then as soon as he exists the covenantal relationship with God into which he is necessarily invited becomes the most important ground of all his subsequent activity.

**B. Philosophy**

Again, especially for the traditionally oriented Roman Catholic it must be seen that his being (esse) is a totally gratuitous and individualized gift. God's first and foremost gift is to give to the individual man the gift of participating in His essence which is to be (to exist) i.e., the very gift of being. Let us consider the fact that for a particular, a very unique man to have being, to exist, to be, one must confront the problem of contraceptive intercourse. One is inquiring then as to the nature of the being (esse) of a given man. Why does this particular man exist? Why do I specifically exist rather than any one of the other infinite possible Is who might have been? What must be sharpened into clearer focus are not only the notions of gift and gratuity in relationship to being and God but also especially gift and gratuity in relationship to this particular being. *This I and God.* Without participation in His existence, without having being, all theological consideration of the other gifts which God gratuitously gives to a man as His share of the covenant with man, namely, the Cross (His redemption of man), the Eucharist (His continuing presence to, for and with man) and the Resurrection (His promise of participation in and with God in eternity) become logically unnecessary to a non-being. This is to say quite simply that, important as Christ's redemptive Cross, His Resurrection and His continuing presence in the Eucharist are to a man who is, has been or shall be, they are totally useless to a non-being, to a man who does not exist, has not existed, or shall not exist.

Therefore, and this concept is central and vital to my contribution of a positive development of the encyclical, the fact that the individual man is given gratuitously by God the gift to be and thereby to participate in His essence which is precisely to be, demands a most profound and exhaustive consideration of the manner in which a man comes into being in the existential order. For it is clear that God has gifted being (esse) gratuitously to a particular "I" rather than any of the other infinitely possible Is to whom He might have presented equally gratuitously this unutterably precious gift. It is precisely
here that contraceptive intercourse forecloses the possibility of certain specific I's from coming into being.

Of course there is much to be added regarding the concept of the gratuity (taken in its most beneficent sense) with which a gift is given by God. I am certain that an extensive theological literature exists on the subject and I would like to stress the utter freedom of God in relationship with the subject under discussion.

C. The Practical

It is evident therefore that no matter how short or long a duration, how sordid or splendid, or how miserable or joyous a lifetime may be or has been, the fact that a man has been posited in existence opens to that man the potentiality of eternal existence.

In the practical order of family life the non-contraceptive conjugal act of the partners potentially provides the material matrix for the cooperative infusion of a soul by God. The non-contraceptive conjugal act is a concreative deed. Its meaning is not open to indefinite manipulation.

There is bilateral (God and Man) potentiality involved in the single conjugal act left open to conception and therefore it is essential that God and man cooperate in order that a new human person may be brought into being. Without that openness to cooperation on the part of both partners a share in the gift of being, of participation in God's essence, simply cannot occur.

It is of more than academic interest to note that if the natural biological order of the conjugal act is left open to conception during the so-called fertile period the predominant contributor to the development of new human life is God rather than man. Certainly it is true, at least at this stage, that the human knowledge, that is, the conjugal act which is in every technological sense fecund may be to result in conception. One must avoid the pit of determinism in this conjunction, but at the same time one needs to keep before the mind's eye God's creative act extended of the soul of the new human person vis a vis man's merely developmental contribution of that which already has being.

God wills to act in each instance of positing a very specific I in being. Man may will to posit a new being as a partner in existence.

In his action but may fail utterly to do so. Both in the logical order and the biological order which God has established (a Catholic theory of evolution might add that God has allowed to become established the meaning and purpose and goal of matter not solely by the implacable laws of thermodynamics, but also by the Incarnation, the gift of Life) it is necessary to place the creative act ex nihilo by God prior in importance (though not prior in time because it is a cooperative act with unequal responsibility) to the developmental conjugal act by man. It is in this aspect precisely that one finds the absolute and infinite gratuitousness on God's part.

As an aside it may be noted that things like cloning, test tube conception and artificial placemats and perhaps even artificial insemination likewise must recognize the priority of God in the God-man relationship noted above.

That God may withhold His creative power, namely, the gratuitous bestowal of participation in His essence, in His being, is intrinsic to the concept of God's freedom. However, contraceptive intercourse unilaterally abrogates by man the possibility of a participation by God in a generative or potentially generative act. That God wills a freedom on the part of man equal to His own in this matter is foreclosed: Man does not create, but concretes: his meaning is given him in worship and not otherwise. Since, however, it is God's essence which is being shared and further, since existence no matter how utterly desolate, opens the infinite horizon of eternal continuity with and in God, it seems to me far more reasonable to trust the all or nothing gift to the infinite wisdom of God rather than to the finite vision of man. This is neither to forego responsibility on the part of man, a notion I will develop later, nor to deny the continued presence of God's wisdom in His creation.

Thus, by contraceptive intercourse there is eliminated by the couple any possibility of opening to another (potentially new human person) God's most unique and precious gift, namely the gift of existence, the gift of being. There is also eliminated the possibility of God's sharing His gift. It is important to stress that it is man who excludes God by the contraceptive act. Note should be taken that in the conjugal act exercised in the ovulatory stage, God is in no way rejected as a partner. Conversely in the contraceptive conjugal act, man rejects the opportunity of partnership with God and concentrates instead narrowly on his own satisfaction in an act which, considered entirely in the material order, is seen at its very best as a contribution to his development as a human person.

To digress a moment, it is true of course that technological man has described in the nature of the act of intercourse a significance related to his development of a more profound understanding of himself as a person. This may be a good to be desired within the secular order. Unfortunately, this development of one's self as person has all too frequently been shallowed and exclusively understood to mean that it is only by the fulfillment of sexual drives that one becomes more of a person or understands himself better as a person. To accept this conclusion is, in my opinion, to have largely missed the point of the development of personality from within the Christian concept of personal development. Sexuality and conjugal intercourse may contribute to the development of the person and of a self understanding but it shall do so best when it is seen and understood as a donation of one's self for the good and love of the spouse and not merely for the development of one's own personality structure.

A further corollary of this consideration should and must include the insight that when by mutual agreement the marital couple ac-
cept the concept of a covenantal relationship with God in the fullest sense of that relationship, their offering of themselves to God in a voluntary and mutual self donation raises the meaning of the conjugal act into another order, the highest order to which a man may aspire. Their mutual consent, furthermore, to abstain from intercourse rather than to intervene artificially in the cooperative act with God represents an unparalleled opportunity to develop their personalities both in the psychiatric as well as in the spiritual sense, a fact which totally secular psychiatry usually overlooks and/or misunderstands. It is in these considerations of the act of conjugal intercourse that the true and ultimate development of man as a person in covenant with God will take place.

Thus, periodic abstinence may never be viewed in a true Christian understanding of sexuality and love as some sort of a stoic exercise of virtue but rather it must be viewed as man’s faith acceptance of his share in the ongoing covenant with God. On the other hand, the contraceptive act of intercourse fails not only to acknowledge God as a partner with an autonomous will of His own but also fails to recognize the potentiality of the gift of self and serves to the development of a new human person. It is of peripheral interest to this discussion, but worthy of note, that this gift of self which the couple makes extends in time so that human parents prolong their love for each other and for God into the adequate care, development and education of that new being to whom the possibility of sharing God’s eternal being flows from the voluntary and selfless act.

In periodic abstinence of conscience neither God nor man create the covenant of cooperation without the approval of the other side, a participation in God’s being in His essence, in His very existence has been denied to no potential individual by the practice of periodic continence. There need not be any selfishness involved, with the obvious exception of never risking the possibility of being with another. It is necessary to point out again that the Cross, the Resurrection, the Eucharist, have significance only to the man who is and that the most important gift God has given man is the gift of being, of existence which opens up the possibility of a share of eternity via the Cross, Eucharist and Resurrection.

It of course follows as a corollary from this approach that abortion is a terrifyingly abominable act, because, more than having never permitted another (the other to be) abortion cuts down a being whose gift of existence has already been bestowed before that person has the opportunity of full cooperation with God.

Technological man, late twentieth century man, has been teased by pure science into believing that Nietzsche probably was correct in his nineteenth century prophecy that “God is dead.” But twentieth century man still needs something to worship and, having advanced beyond the stage of a golden calf, he has turned scientism inward to himself. Having concluded that earlier man “created a god in man’s image” he now in his desire to be fully self sufficient and autonomous has managed in the late twentieth century to create man in God’s image. Thus man does not need God to participate in the decision of whether the indescribably precious gift of being (existence) shall be shared with another. Man will freely make this decision in the delusional grandeur of his own autonomy.

Perhaps another form of maturity, at least theological maturity, will demand that, in spite of our scientific and technological capability and capacity to prevent and destroy human life, we accept fully the responsibility for the meaning and consequence of our human acts as covenantal participants in a partnership with no less a being than God Himself.

It is not at all clear to me that we as humans have been invited by God to be the sole judges in the decision of who shall or who shall not be. God in His concreative role in this partnership cannot be assigned a secondary role in the decision making process. The gift of being, especially when viewed from the point of view of Christian eschatology, is far too precious to be left entirely in the hands of man. This does not avoid man’s responsibility (and therefore his mature decision making potential); it simply insists that this responsibility be shared with the author of the gift whose essence it is to be.

Conclusion

I conclude with two points. The first which I feel a compelling urgency to state is that, in keeping with the continuously developing philosophy of integral humanism initiated by Aristotle, Thomas of Aquinas and Maritain, it appears most reasonable to me that God indicates His will for created man by the effects in the world which He has created and permitted to evolve. Man does not lose his autonomy, as modern philosophy would lead us to conclude, by conforming his will to that of His creator. Quite contrarily, that act of the will by which covenanted man chooses to discover his personal will in that of His Divine creator is the most sublime and perfect autonomous act of which man is capable. Natural Law theory has come under much criticism recently by very respectable thinkers. Their critique unfortunately offers no satisfactory rational substitute which would or could lead man to a knowledge of God’s will for him, an act of willing which God must do; otherwise the Master’s invitation to pray “thy will be done” makes no sense at all.

The other thought is simply that I am very much aware of the fact that my text is at best in need of further development. If its general direction has any substantial value at all, it would be my hope that better intellects than my own would grasp these intuitions, these threads, and develop them as they properly could and should be developed. If, on the other hand, in the long run they are trivial, then let the critique be candid and con-
for their encouragement, and to Dr. Edward Betz and his wife, Johnna, for their solid constructive criticism.

Finally, but certainly not last, I add my heartfelt thanks to my secretary, Theresa Mangona, who has patiently born the labor of his and all other previous essays in addition to her other duties.

REFERENCES

1. For the reader whose interest do not normally include philosophy, being a sense may be interpreted generally as existence or presence-in-the-world. I shall be employing the term however in the same sense Mencken gives it in A Preface to Metaphysics: "Free and Ward", 1948.


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The Billings describe their program for introducing couples to the use of the mucus symptom as an indication of ovulation and the reaction to the program. A thorough explanation of the mucus symptom and its use in practicing periodic abstinence is also included.

Experience has shown that an overwhelming majority of women, probably nine out of ten, can immediately interpret their own mucus symptom, if it is accurately described to them in language that they understand. The remainder can also be taught to do so, if they can be persuaded to keep a careful daily record of their menstrual cycles, with individual assistance.

Women are superior teachers, and it is not necessary for them to have had medical training. A simple method of keeping the record, using colored adhesive stamps, is useful both to the woman under instruction and the teacher. It is essential that the teaching be kept completely separate from the teaching of other methods of birth control and it is recommended that widespread use of the method be promoted by the provision in each community of a small group of women who are well-informed, who possess the capacity to teach with confidence and who are motivated toward success.

There will always be very large numbers of people, who, when they consider that it is necessary to avoid pregnancy, will use only a natural method. During the past few years, interest in the natural methods has increased, and this has been due in part to simplification of the practical techniques and greater reliability.

The occurrence of a fertile ovulation is always accompanied by the secretion of mucus from the glands of the cervix uteri. It is possible to define days of infertility and possi-