

There is no self-sacrifice to be found in contraception. And the bond between the couple becomes weaker and anemic.

If young people have not learned God's plan for human sexuality, which includes the virtue of chastity, then how are they to avoid falling into the same contraceptive trap? Indeed, if they have been fornicating, then they have already been using contraceptives. The cycle just keeps repeating itself. Our marriages will not improve and become stronger, until couples deepen in their love for each other. Our families will not become healthier and happier, until parents treasure the gift of the child and the children discover the strong bonds of family love.

Is it not time to separate ourselves from the values of the surrounding secular culture, and pursue God's plan for love, life, marriage and family? Have we not seen enough of where the contraceptive mentality and culture leads? Do not parents want to do what is in the best interests of their sons and daughters? Does not God want us to return to His plan for us, for our marriage and our family?

How do good parents teach chastity to their sons and daughters? Well, first of all by example. You can't give what you don't have. Pope Paul VI taught us "Discipline of this sort ... cannot be an obstacle to love. Rather, discipline imbues love with a deeper human meaning. Although self-control requires continuous effort, it also helps the spouses become strong in virtue and makes them rich in spiritual goods.

"And this virtue fosters the fruits of tranquility and peace in the home and helps in solving difficulties of other kinds. It aids spouses in becoming more tender with each other and more attentive to each other. It assists them in dispelling that inordinate self-love that is opposed to true charity. It strengthens them in an awareness of their responsibilities. And

finally it provides them with a sure and efficacious authority for educating their children. As their children advance through life they will come to a correct appreciation of the true good of Man and employ peacefully and properly the powers of their mind and senses" (*Humanae Vitae* #21).

Parents can read the section on chastity in the Catechism (CCC 2337-78). There are many fine resources available from One More Soul (www.OMSoul.com). They can read Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*, and John Paul II's *Love and Responsibility* and the *Theology of the Body*. By their example they can show their children the unmistakable values of chastity in how they regard one another. Then they gain the assurance they need to speak about these values to their sons and daughters. They can guide them into the possession of these virtues, steer them clear of temptations against chastity, and help them understand the banality of the culture's view of sex.

If we want to break the cycle of fornicating teenagers, co-habiting young couples, a 50 percent divorce rate, the destruction by abortion of one out of every four pregnancies, much heartbreak and many other human tragedies, then we must address the taproot of the entire culture of death: contraception.

For additional information go to:
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Can Contracepting Parents Teach Their Teenagers To Be Chaste?

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When South Dakota decided to restrict abortions only to situations where the mother's life was threatened, many reactions came from the secular press. In one article a situation was reported in South Dakota where a 21-year old mother of a one-year old child was now seeking an abortion and could not find a convenient place or time for the abortion, because of the recent limitations. The editors presumed that public sympathy would be with the young mother.

But wait a minute! The unborn child is just as precious and irreplaceable as the one-year old. If the mother valued the gift of her firstborn, then why would she be determined to kill her second child? Why would she presume that she had a right to make the decision to kill her baby? And why would many in the country at large agree with her? Something has gone awry with our values and our thinking.

But many Catholics have made a similar disconnect with the issue of contraception. They find nothing unusual, or immoral, about using the Pill, condoms, or even permanent sterilization. When the Church teaches that contraception is contrary to God's plan for spousal love, and therefore immoral, they do not understand.

The Church has a great challenge to explain her position on contraception and sterilization. With the writings of Pope John Paul II (e.g., *Love and Responsibility*, the *Theology of the Body*) we now have a rich body of writings which provide a profound analysis of God's Plan

for Spousal Love, and why contraception fails to measure up to that plan. Thus the teaching Church has done her job. Now the burden falls upon the spiritual leaders and moral guides, that is, the clergy and religious. Everyone who has access to the pulpit has a duty to teach moral truths, and the rationale behind these truths.

Those who have worked with the life issues for many years know that the taproot feeding the culture of death is contraception and the abuse of human sexuality. There are many ways in which this is seen, but let us examine just one. *Can contracepting parents teach their teenagers to be chaste? They cannot.*

If parents are not living the sexual ethic taught by the Church, then they cannot teach these values to their children. If parents are not living chastity in their marriage, then they cannot expect their sons and daughters to live chastity as single persons. If parents refuse to practice periodic abstinence, as required by natural family planning, then how can they expect their vibrant teenagers to practice total abstinence? Actions speak louder than words. If parents are contracepting, their teenagers know it. Today 85 percent (a conservative estimate) of Catholic parents use contraception. It would be unrealistic to expect them to foster chastity among their teenagers.

To ask them to do what the parents refuse to do would be hypocritical. Chastity then is reduced to “Be good, but if you can’t be good then be safe.” This is not parenting. By the same token, catechists who contracept cannot teach chastity to their students.

Thus the great silence in many of our families regarding chastity. But if parents are not providing true values and moral guidelines, then their children are left as victims to other forces in the culture who are very willing to promote their values. Our society has been heavily secularized, which means isolated and insolated

from the values of the Gospel. Sex is not considered a special act of making the total gift of self to another person, to whom you are deeply committed. Rather, sex is simply satisfying one’s sexual appetite, the pursuit of a powerful pleasure, and an indoor sport of body contact. The culture tells young people that there are no reasons for waiting until marriage. There are no benefits coming from self-restraint and self-denial. Instead, they say that abstinence and chastity are unhealthy.

Planned Parenthood, SIECUS (Sex Information and Education Council of the United States), and the Alan Guttmacher Institute (the research arm of PPFA) are the strongest shapers of our culture in matters of human sexuality. Their influence pervades our culture. They receive millions of dollars from the Federal Treasury. They draw up the curriculum for most sex education courses in public schools. Their lawyers challenge with lawsuits anyone who promotes a sexual ethic contrary to theirs. They promote every form of contraception and sterile sex (homosexuality). They advocate “reproductive rights” of adolescents. And when young women become pregnant because of increased promiscuity, then they provide abortions. PP is the largest provider of abortion in the United States. There is big money in what PP does, and we can understand why they encourage promiscuity at every opportunity.

Teenagers are looking for good directions in their lives. They want to understand their bodies, their sexuality, and how to give good direction to their sex drives. They want to know the Creator’s plan for human love and human life. The Catechism teaches us that adolescence is an “apprenticeship in self-mastery which is a training in human freedom” (CCC 2339). No one is exempted from this apprenticeship. Either we come into the possession of our

passions and learn the virtue of chastity as a young person, or we postpone this learning process to a later time when we have accumulated much baggage.

Chastity is the difficult virtue, because it regulates the most powerful of all our passions. It requires persistence and patience. We stumble and fall, and then must ask God for the strength we need to pick ourselves up. It is something that we grow into and come to understand. It requires encouragement, since it demands repeated effort and clear choices. Unless parents, guardians, moral guides, and respected elders encourage a young person to come into the possession of him or herself, it simply does not happen.

If parents are not teaching their teenagers how to be chaste, then we can expect present trends to continue, and even increase. Today, nationwide, there is an 80 percent co-habitation rate. When most couples present themselves to a pastor for marriage, they are already living together. Co-habitation is one of the greatest problems facing priests and deacons preparing couples for marriage. And why are so many young couples already cohabitating?

A young couple today faces the unpleasant prospect of a 50 percent divorce rate in this country. Many of them have experienced the pain of their parents’ divorce. They want to avoid the mistakes of their parents and the tragedy of divorce. But are they taking the right steps? Contraception is a huge influence in breaking up marriages. When couples contracept they are falsifying the meaning and reality of their great spousal act. Now it is no longer an unconditional, with no reservations, total gift of self to the other. Now it is adverse to the life-giving dimension of their sexuality, which is an integral part of the spousal act. Now the marital act has been redefined as the mutual pursuit of pleasure, with no further consequences.