Slide: Picture of Contraceptives

Slide: Castrate Rapists

This talk is an updated version of “Contraception: Why Not?” originally recorded in 1994. Almost a million copies of that talk were distributed with both an audio and video version. Many years ago one of my godsons, Max, told me that when he missed me, he watches my video. He said, “You know that video of yours, I think it’s called “Contractions: Why not”? He was eight years old at the time. A boy eight years old and the oldest of five can explain what contractions five minutes apart and three minutes apart mean, but you can be sure he has never heard of contraception.

A couple years later I was in Trinidad and I was asked about a national problem in Trinidad. I was asked if I thought rapists should be castrated. I thought, “Oh, my gosh.” My knees kind of buckled and I said: “That’s a very difficult question, I haven’t thought about that. Rape is a terrible crime that deserves a severe penalty, but castration is permanent, it’s mutilation.” I added, “I have heard that there are drugs that can be used to control the sexual desire; maybe they should be explored, but I’m really not prepared for that question.” The next day I was leaving Trinidad and I saw the national Sunday newspaper. The headline said, “Castrate Rapists.” The subtitle said, “Drugs can be used to reduce the sexual drive, [says] U. S. professor.” At that point my knees really did buckle. I thought, “I sure hope there’s some other U.S. professor in Trinidad this weekend.”

So I want you to know that you can look forward to my three-part series of tapes: “Contraception: Why Not?”; “Contractions: Why Not?”; “Castration: Why Not?”

Slide: Modern vs. Christian View of Sexuality

I’m going to be talking a lot about the difference between the modern and the Christian views of sexuality. I am going to explain why natural sex is best. In fact,

natural sex is the sex that the Catholic Church promotes. Natural sex is sex between a man and a woman who love each other, who have made a lifetime commitment to each other and who are open to having children with each other. That's very rare in our culture. A lot of the sex in our culture is between people who barely know each other's last name and who certainly don't love each other. There's no love relationship; they have made no commitment to each other and any child that might result from their union would be considered a disaster. I'm going to explain why I think the Church's vision of sexuality – one shared by most traditional cultures -- is much better than the modern practice of sexuality. And I'm going to claim that contraception has been the major element that has altered our view of sexuality.

This slide shows the modern view of sexuality, represented by a young man and a young woman sharing a romantic moment with each other. She is somewhat immodestly clad and they are having an alcoholic drink. It is possible that they do not know each other's last names. It is highly likely they will have a sexual encounter before the evening is out. Tomorrow they may part and have nothing to do with each other thereafter. There would be nothing strange about that in our culture. This sort of thing happens all the time.

The other picture is of my brother and his wife and four of their now six children and my father and my mother. That is a picture that represents the Christian view of sexuality: a man and a woman who love each other, who have made a lifetime commitment to each other, and who welcome children. Such a relationship is meant to expand the circle of love. Just keep expanding and expanding the circle of love in this world where to a certain point one hopes we're almost all related.

Slide: Babies: Blessings or Burdens?

We now live in a culture in which we no longer know whether babies are blessings or burdens. The population control people are adamant that there are too

many children in this world. They point at a pregnant woman in the Third World and say "That is the problem; they will consume all of the world's resources. We need to deal with them before it is too late." One the other hand, the pro-freedom people say, "Those are future problem-solvers, they can produce more than they can consume. We need to help them reach their full potential before it's too late."

Until 9/11, when the World Trade Towers collapsed, people believed the worst problem in the world was over-population. Your children are being taught from kindergarten through college that there are simply too many people on the face of the earth. Every baby is treated as though it's a little environmental hazard, someone who's going to "take a bite of my piece of the pie." Some children think that they are one of those too many people on the face of the earth. I read about one little girl, nine years old, who came home and threw out all of her dolls. Her mother asked her: "Why are you doing that?" She replied: "Because there are too many people on the face of the earth. I'm never going to be a mother." She got the message: she's been taught that it is irresponsible to have children.

Slide: World Population

I'm going to give you a quick explanation why people think there is an over-population problem and why there is good reason to doubt whether that is true. Around the year 1750, there were about slightly more than a half a billion people in the world. By 1950, there were 2 billion people. So, between 1950 and the year 2000, the world's population tripled. It went from 2 billion to 6 billion. So in a short 50-year period, the world's population tripled, where it had taken about 200 years to do that before. The population controllers would have us believe that the world's population is going to continue to triple every 50 years. But they couldn't be more wrong. If the world's population were to double between the year 2000, when it was six billion people, by the year 2050 it should reach 18 billion people. Data from the UN tells us it is only going to

hit about 9 billion or 9.5 billion by the year 2050. If it had reached 18 billion by the year 2050, by the year 2100 we would expect there to be 54 billion people on the face of the earth. But UN data tells us that there will only be slightly more than 10 billion people by the year 2100. If we had reached 54 billion in the year 2100 and the population tripled again in 50 years, by the year 2150 it would be at 162 billion people. The UN tells us the world's population is barely going to be more than 10 billion people by the year 2150.

So we have two questions here. First: why did the world's population triple between the years 1950 and the year 2000? Second: why did it virtually level off? The major reason for the huge increase of population between 1950 and 2000, for its tripling, is largely the availability of better health care. Because of better hygiene, vaccines, better medical care, and antibiotics, fewer babies die in infancy and more people live longer. If a lot of babies die in the first year of life, the population is not going to be very large. As people live longer, the world population gets larger. In countries such as Pakistan, the average lifespan doubled during that period. If the average lifespan doubles, the population doubles. So the major reason for the huge population increase, surprisingly, was not that people were having more babies. As a matter of fact, the fertility rate has been going down all over the world for many, many decades. Why? Again, it's not that people are having more babies; it has to do with the fact that these babies are living longer.

Second question: Why does the world's population level off? In more developed countries around the year 2000, population started leveling off and even began declining. About 10 years ago, the UN held, for the first time, simultaneous conferences on what to do about overpopulation and what to do about declining population. Declining population is a major problem. It is in the news regularly. About 10 years ago it was a well-kept secret, but now it is headline material that Western Europe and countries such as Japan are simply not reproducing themselves. A country needs about

2.2 children per family to reproduce its population. Most of Europe is under 1.4 children per family. For instance, Italy in the year 2000 had 57 million people. Unless Italians radically change their reproductive practices, the population of Italy in the year 2050 will be 41 million people, down 16 million people. They will lose about a quarter or more of their population. We now have a world in which countries are not reproducing themselves.

As you know, there are many places now that have an aging population. Thus, it is going to be very difficult to provide for social security, retirement, etc. because we don't have children coming up whose wages will support the social security system.

That fact is populations tend to level off as a country becomes more industrialized. As a country industrializes, it needs a more educated populous. A more educated populous means people must stay in school longer. When people stay in school longer, they get married later. When they get married later, they have fewer children. In agricultural cultures, often girls marry and start having children at 14, 16, 18. They may have a lot of babies by the time their fertility runs out. The average age of marriage in the United States is 27 years of age. Many women don't start their childbearing until after 30. Women are less fertile after 30. Moreover, in industrialized countries, people want fewer children since they live in urban areas, sometimes in small apartments. They hope to provide a college education for their children and the expense leads them to have fewer children.

Certainly contraception and abortion have contributed to both the control and the decline of population. In fact, up until about 1993, in all of the UN conferences concerning what to do about overpopulation, the major proposal was to help countries industrialize because as they industrialize, again, they need a more educated populous. Now the world seems to think that contraception, and sometimes even just the condom, is going to solve all of the world's problems. Too few people know about natural family

planning that can assist families in limiting their family size when necessary. Moreover, natural family planning costs nothing and is perfectly healthy. Imagine all the good things we could do with all the money spent for contraception!

I went to Zimbabwe, one of the poorest nations on the face of the earth, a few years ago and I found myself apologizing to the people there. They're dying right, left, and center in Zimbabwe from AIDS and also now from starvation. In my talks, I said I don't know why it is that I come from a country that thinks that you can fill in sentences this way: "There are all these hungry people in this world…what they need is … a condom." "There are all these sick people in the world…what they need is …a condom." "There are all these jobless and homeless people in the world…what they need is …a condom." You know what, there's another way of filling in those sentences. "There are all these hungry people in the world…what they need is … food." "There are all these sick people in the world…what they need is …health care." "There are all these jobless and homeless people in the world…what they need are…jobs and homes." But the UN has now said that it will not give any kind of aid to Third world countries, no health care, no education, no financial incentive for industrialization, unless they have aggressive population control programs. The women I met in Zimbabwe were not so concerned to have fewer children. They wanted to have healthy and educated children. I believe we are imposing our view on the rest of the world that the best way for them to deal with their problems is to have fewer children rather than to help them have healthier children.

Slide: Total Fertility Rate

It is easy to see that the total fertility rate in the world has been going down. This chart shows that from 1950 to 1955, the total fertility rate – number of children per family worldwide-- was 5. By the year 2005, the number of children per family was about 2.7, a little bit above replacement rate. By about the year 2030 or so, the Total Fertility Rate will be below replacement rate. We need 2.1 to 2.2 children per family to replace the

population. Current studies show that by the year 2050, the world will be below replacement rate without question. We will not be replacing the number of people who are already on the globe.

You might ask: How many people can the world sustain? Obviously there must be a limit to the number of people that the world's resources can sustain. A couple of years ago I was in Australia and I spoke with a group of scientists who were working on exactly that problem. They said that their studies were totally inconclusive. In the history of mankind the food supply and the energy supply have always out- stripped the population increase. As long as we've been keeping records to show how much food we have per capita, how much energy we have per person available to us, these records show that we have more now than we ever had. Mankind keeps finding new resources for energy and for food. In fact, the United States could feed the whole world. We pay farmers not to farm. So when people say we're running out of resources, ask them for their evidence.

Slide: God is Love

Let's return to the main narrative.

The first principle of all first principles is: God is love. God created the whole universe out of love. To create, to give, is very natural for lovers. God is a lover. God is a Trinity of persons who love each other. There is no reason they shouldn't: they are perfectly good. It's hard for us to love each other because we are not perfectly good. Among humans, it is never the case that the lover or the beloved are perfectly good. But God is perfectly good and so there is perfect love among the members of the Trinity. Those of us who have been blessed to know very loving people, know that it is very natural for love to overflow. Love just gives, gives, gives. God wanted to share His goodness, His love, His wealth with others. So He created new beings. In fact, He made the whole universe for human beings; it is our support system.

Remember that the first commandment God gave mankind was: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Those are our working orders right there. “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Also remember that one of the miracles that Christ performed was multiplying loaves and fishes. Shouldn’t we have a little trust in the King of the universe, that if we were to meet His commandment to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth, He would provide?

Slide: Male and Female He Created Them

Male and female He created them. He said it is not good that man should be alone. God did this most incredible thing. He gave to spouses the great gift of transmitting human life. He could have brought life into existence any way he wanted to but he chose to work through spousal relationships.

I’m not a male basher, but I can’t resist telling a joke.

Consider the fact that the first male was created from mud whereas the first female was created from the rib of a rational creature.

I’ve always thought that that explained a lot…..

One man came up to me after one of my talks and said, “I know what it explains, it explains why I’m treated like dirt”!

Slide: The Importance of Marriage

God wanted spouses to be His emissaries of love in this world. He wanted spouses to be the symbol of love for their children. God is the source of all life. He is the source of all love. He want spouses to love each other in the same way in which He loves, in a committed and unconditional way. He wants spouses to be committed and unconditional lovers to each other and to their children. Because that is how God loves. God brings forth new human life through the sexual act of two human beings who love each other and have made a lifetime commitment. Isn’t it clear, then, that sex belongs within marriage?

This is a picture of my brother and his wife before they had their six children. You will notice that they were a lot better looking before they had six children. It is a fact that you will lose your looks having children. But you will lose your looks anyway, so you might as well do it having children! At least then you have all these beautiful creatures in your house that remind you of how attractive you were at one time.

Slide: Casual, Recreational Sex

We now live in a world in which we talk about casual, recreational sex. A young man meets a young woman and says, "Nice to meet you, would you like to have dinner, go to a movie, and then have sex?" She says, "Sure, why not?" The only thing that is strange is the element of formality in such an encounter.

Casual sex is very common in our culture. At one time people thought that you shouldn't have sex unless you were in love. You shouldn't have sex until you were prepared for babies. And you're not prepared for babies until you're married. It's a very clear equation. People thought these elements made up a package deal. And it's not hard to figure out the justification for those premises.

In our culture we think that having babies and having sex are two entirely different activities. You certainly don't need to be prepared for babies when you have sex. You certainly don't need to be in love when you have sex. You don't need to be married to have babies. In fact, you don't have to have sex to have babies! It's a very curious world. In fact, apparently people get married and don't have sex. We now have what are called "sexless marriages." You can read about them on Dr. Phil's website.

What was once a natural package, we have completely torn asunder. It is my contention that contraception has been one of the elements that has torn apart the natural connection between love, sex, marriage, and babies.

Slide: Accidental Pregnancy

We have come to the point where we talk about an accidental pregnancy. It's always been a phrase that has mystified me. You can fall on a banana by accident; you can fall off a cliff by accident; but you can't get pregnant by accident.

I used to work in a pregnancy help center. Young women would come in and would tell me that they got pregnant "by accident". I'm this left brained philosopher and thus very logical. It would make my brain start to cramp up when I would hear a woman say she got pregnant by accident. I would look at these young women in a mystified way and say, "Well, you were having sex, weren't you?" Then, of course, their brains would start to cramp and they would look at me like I was some sort of freak and they'd say "Of course I was having sex." And I'd say, "Well you know if you get pregnant through an act of sexual intercourse that actually means that something has gone right, not that something has gone wrong."

When you hit the gas pedal and the car goes forward you don't say, "Huh, how did that happen?" We know the cause and we know the effect. It is simply a fact that when an act of sexual intercourse leads to a pregnancy, it means that something has gone right, not that something has gone wrong.

Slide: Contraception Contribution?

What do you think has contributed the most good to our culture in the last half century? Contraception, cars, computers, iPods, cell phones? We cannot imagine ourselves without cars, computers, iPods, or contraceptives. We have become totally a contraceptive culture. If right now all contraceptives were taken off the shelves we'd hear the screeching of brakes all over the place because many people would not to what they were about to do, if they did not have access to a contraceptive.

Slide: Early Predictions

We've become a culture that's been defined by contraceptive sex. People hardly know anything else now. The contraceptive pill was not developed until the late 1950's.

Up until that point there was the condom, the diaphragm, and douches – some using Lysol. In the late 1950's, the contraceptive pill was developed, put on the market and people thought it was going to be – in fact they still think it is going to be -- the salvation of mankind. It would control the population crisis. It would reduce the number of unwed pregnancies and abortions. (We all know that that hasn't happened.) And we thought it was going to improve marriages.

I'm going to make an argument that as a matter of fact rather than doing a great deal of good, I think contraception has been very damaging to our culture.

Slide: Teen Sex Practices

Some people want to keep throwing more and more contraceptives at teenagers. They think that somehow this will stop them from getting pregnant. But all the evidence suggests otherwise. In 2003, 62 percent of 12th graders had had sexual intercourse. Of course, there's a significantly higher percent who have engaged in sexually activity -- the sort that President Clinton introduced into popular culture. I recently read that 70 percent of kids having left high school claim to have engaged in oral sex. The data about teen sexual experiences other than intercourse are more limited. In 1995, 53 percent of teen males ages 15-19 said they have been masturbated by a female. A full 49 percent had received oral sex, 39 percent had given oral sex, and 11 percent had engaged in anal sex.

Slide: Sexually Transmitted Diseases

There are three million new cases of Chlamydia every year, a major cause of infertility in the United States. Chlamydia is very much connected with a growing problem with infertility. Not so long ago, about 10 percent of couples were infertile; now more than 15 percent of couples are infertile. The major cause of the increase in infertility is sexually transmitted diseases. Often when a woman gets a sexually transmitted disease, she gets a lesion. When that lesion heals there is scarring.

Scarring in the fallopian tubes causes the embryo to implant in the tube rather than travel to the uterus. You might have noticed that there is a huge increase in ectopic pregnancies, more than 600 percent since 1970. Ectopic pregnancy is a life-threatening condition. The embryo cannot possibly come to term in the fallopian tube and if it continues to grow, it can cause the tube to rupture and the woman could bleed to death.

Another major STD is the human pampilloma virus (HPV); there are between 5.5 and 6 million new cases every year. The HPV is a major cause of cervical cancer. A vaccine for the HPV has been discovered, but it doesn't protect against all forms of the HPV.

The incidence of the HIV that causes AIDS is much lower than all the others – there are many fewer than 100,000 new cases each year. But that is where a disproportionate amount of the money for research is going.

Fifty years ago there were only two sexually transmitted diseases: syphilis and gonorrhea. Now there are about 35 to 50 different sexually transmitted diseases.

Slide: Unwed Pregnancy

The growth of the incidence of unwed pregnancy tells an amazing story. In 1960, 3 percent of white babies were born out of wedlock and 22 percent of black babies were born out of wedlock. In 1960 6 percent of all babies born in the United States were born out of wedlock.

In 1960 it was hard for a teenager to get a contraceptive. Teenagers had to go to a seedy gas station or hotel to find a condom machine and buy a few condoms. Now they can get condoms in their Welcome Back to School Kit.

In 2003, about 24 percent of white babies were born out of wedlock. Sixty-eight percent of black babies were born out of wedlock and 34 percent of all babies born in the United States are born out of wedlock. Metro Detroit actually has the highest unwed

pregnancy rate in the United States: 75 percent. If you want to try to discover the source of poverty and social dysfunction in Detroit, this is a place to start.

Most of those who live in poverty in the United States are single women with children. It's not that there aren't jobs; it's that when a woman has a child at home she can't get the education that will qualify her for the jobs that exist. She can't earn the money that will pay for child care and her job. So she has to live off welfare. Greater availability of contraceptives has not led to a reduction of out-of-wedlock pregnancy; in fact, out-of-wedlock pregnancy increases with availability of contraception.

It is a social disaster that one out of three babies born in the United States is born to a single mother. More than one out of four pregnancies ends in abortion. One out of two marriages ends in divorce. So what does this mean? Let's work out the stats. Only about 28 percent of the babies who are conceived in the United States will be born and born to a mother who is married -- to a mother who will remain married to the same man for the rest of her life. Every other baby conceived in the United States is either going to be aborted or born to a single mother, or born into a household that is touched by divorce. Do you wonder why we have the problems we have? This is a very good place to start looking for answers.

Slide: Children and Poverty.

About 68 percent of the children who live with a never-married parent live in poverty. Forty-two percent of those living with a parent who is separated live in poverty. About 38 percent of those living with parents who are cohabiting live in poverty. Only 12 percent of children living with parents who are in their first marriage are living in poverty. My guess is that most of those people are in the early years of their marriage. As they are married longer they build up some savings etc. so that they get out of poverty. So if you want to look at the major sources of poverty in the United States, a very good place

to look is at single parenthood: women having children out of wedlock and people cohabiting, getting separated, getting divorced.

Slide: Abortion

Does access to contraception reduce abortions? Roughly 63 percent of women who are getting abortions have never been married. Eleven percent are divorced, 6 percent are separated, and 1 percent is widowed. Eighty-one percent of those getting abortions are not living in the married state. Fifty percent of the women who go to abortion clinics claim that they were using a contraceptive when they got pregnant. They are seeking an abortion because of a contraceptive failure. The other 50 percent say that they have used a contraceptive in the past; they just weren't using it at this particular time. Often these are teenagers and sometimes women in their 20's. They break up with their boyfriend, they don't like the side effects of the contraceptive pill, they stop taking it, the boyfriend comes around or they get a new one and before they get on the new birth control regime, they have sex and they get pregnant.

Nineteen percent of those getting abortions are married. But so far as I can tell the major reason for the abortions of the married women is not poverty. There are many reasons. One is that 10 percent of babies conceived by married women are conceived with by someone other than her husband. We also have an enormous increase in the use of in vitro-fertilization. Three or four embryos are implanted and then two or three are selectively terminated and that means aborted. You'll also notice there is a radical decrease of individuals with Down syndrome in our culture. If pre-natal testing detects a baby with Down syndrome, the baby is often aborted. I can't tell you how many women call me and tell me that their doctors tell them that either because of their own health or because of some anomalies of the unborn child, they need an abortion. Of course I always recommend that they go to a good pro-life doctor and get a second opinion. Almost always they inform me that this doctor tells them that they can get through the

pregnancy alive and healthy and that the baby is either all right or they will be able to live with the challenges of having a baby with defects.

Slide: Contraception Leads to Abortion

Even the Supreme Court says that contraception leads to abortion in Planned Parenthood vs. Casey. Casey was the democratic pro-life governor of Pennsylvania; he and the people of Pennsylvania put certain restrictions on abortion. Most of those actually were upheld by the courts: for instance, a teenager had to get her parents' permission; a married woman had to at least inform her husband that she was getting an abortion. But Planned Parenthood, which is the biggest abortion provider in the United States, challenges all restrictions on abortion and challenged Casey. Pro-lifers were thrilled. We thought this is going to be an opportunity for the Supreme Court to look again at the question of when human life begins. Apparently all members of the Supreme Court had lost their library cards at the time of Roe vs. Wade, because they couldn't get to the library to discover when human life began. They didn't know. For some reason, they couldn't get access to the textbooks that have been saying for decades and decades that human life begins at conception. Embryology textbooks, gynecological textbooks, obstetrical textbooks, genetic textbooks all say human life begins at conception. We were hoping that maybe this time around, 20 years later, they were going to be able to go to the library, open a textbook, and find out. But instead the Supreme Court said that, in some critical respects, abortion is of the same character as the decision to use contraception. These are the words of the court: "For two decades of economic and social developments, people have organized intimate relationships and made choices that define their views of themselves and their places in society in reliance on the availability of abortion in the event that contraception should fail." So the Supreme Court was saying that they're not going to look at the question of when human

life begins because our culture has become absolutely dependent upon abortion: people need abortion should their contraceptives fail.

But is that true? Contraceptive failure doesn't mean a woman needs an abortion. If a contraceptive fails, then it is only just to give the baby life. The problem is not that the contraceptive has failed but that the women are having sexual intercourse with someone with whom they have no intention of having a baby.

Slide on Pregnancy

That is not God's plan. God meant the day that a woman first found out that she was pregnant to be one of the very happiest days of her life. When she gets that first positive pregnancy test, she would call up her husband and say, "Darling we're starting our family. I'm pregnant." The two of them go berserk. They paint the nursery. They spend a couple hundred dollars on phone calls. They buy a book with babies' names. They are deliriously happy. Their life has moved to a new level.

A couple years ago was the first year in the United States that the number of positive pregnancy tests to single women was higher than those to married women. The day a single woman finds out that she's pregnant is not the happiest day of her life. A lot of you have been there. Maybe your girlfriends have been there, your sisters, your friends. An unmarried woman gets a positive pregnancy test and thinks, "What do I do now? Do I marry him? Why would I marry him? I barely know him. He is a jerk. Why would I marry him?" Or maybe, she thinks, "Yes, I do want to marry him. I'm crazy about him." But you can't imagine how many women don't marry even the men who want to marry them, because they don't want to feel like they trapped him into marriage. A number of women will get abortions even though the man by whom they got pregnant wanted to get married.

Some women decide to become a single mother. Certainly, many women do an incredibly good job of it. Some men are also very good providers in those situations.

But generally it is difficult. All sorts of problems arise with being a single mother. Virtually every single mother would say she would like to have a husband to help her raise her children.

Some women have an abortion, the worst of all decisions and one from which it is very hard to recover.

Some few women put their babies up for adoption. Among my brothers and sisters there are three adopted children. We love these children like crazy. We love the mothers of those children who were generous enough to give up those children so that we could have the families that we wanted to have. But to give a baby up for adoption, although an incredibly generous and marvelous thing to do, is very painful.

Slide: Contraceptives as Abortifacients

Many people don't know that the chemical contraceptives in and of themselves are abortifacients. What does that mean?

The pill, Norplant, Depo-Provera, and the patch, are chemical contraceptives. They put in a woman's body synthetic forms of the hormones that she has when she's pregnant. A woman who is using a chemical contraceptive is in a state of pseudo-pregnancy. Her body "thinks" it's pregnant. Women don't ovulate when they're pregnant. There's no point in ovulation if a woman is already pregnant.

The body is designed to get pregnant. Month after month a woman's body functions in such a way as to accommodate a pregnancy. A pregnant woman produces hormones that are going to gestate and nurture the embryo within her rather than to create a new human being. In the insert that comes with the pill or any one of the chemical contraceptives, it is first called an "anovulant" because it stops a woman from ovulating. If there's no egg there, if a woman does not ovulate, she cannot possibly get pregnant.

Sometimes women who use contraceptives ovulate anyway. A healthy woman wants to ovulate. That's what her body is designed to do. She has a little war going on in her body if she's not really pregnant and she is using a chemical contraceptive. Her body is trying to produce the hormones that cause ovulation but the synthetic hormones are trying to suppress production of those hormones. Sometimes a woman's own natural hormones win out. If a woman doesn't take the pill the same time every day or if she's taking other medicine that might interfere with the hormones, she might produce her own fertile hormones. Some 2-10 percent of the time a woman who is taking the pill ovulates. The ovulation rate is even higher with Norplant and Depo-Provera, possibly as high as 40-60 percent of the time. A woman who is using those is still ovulating, but she's not getting pregnant. Why is she not getting pregnant? It may be because the fertile mucus is not there to help carry the sperm to meet the egg.

That is, chemical contraceptives work by "changing the viscosity of the mucus." The same hormones that help a woman ovulate also cause her to produce a certain kind of mucus, called fertile mucus, that helps carry the sperm to the egg. The mucus that is affected by chemical contraceptives is not as efficient in carrying sperm to meet the egg.

Sadly, a woman using a chemical contraceptive may be getting pregnant but self-aborting. As I mentioned, sometimes a woman woman's own hormones override the hormones in the chemical contraceptive; she ovulates and produces enough fertile mucus so that sperm does get carried to fertilize the egg. Now there is a new little embryo, a new little human being. That embryo tries to travel down the fallopian tube and implant in its mother's uterine wall. But the mother may not be able to sustain the pregnancy because she is not producing the progesterone necessary to sustain implantation. The same cluster of hormones that cause a woman to ovulate and produce fertile mucus are the same hormones that help her build up the endometrium wall, where the new little human being is going to implant. Yet, because the woman has

been repressing her natural hormones, her endometrium is thinner than it ought to be. She doesn't have the full production of the hormones that will produce a nice rich endometrium wall. So instead of implanting a new little human being, it is sloughed off. The pharmaceutical inserts for chemical contraceptives speak of them "preventing the nidation of the fertilized ovum". "Nidation" means "nesting." Chemical contraceptives prevent the fertilized ovum, the new little human being, from nesting in the uterine wall.

Most women taking a chemical contraceptive month after month, don't know how many times in any given year, in any given couple of years, they may in fact be conceiving, Although they conceive, they will not be gestating their child because it will not implant.

Slide: Cohabitation and Divorce

We live in a strange world in which people live together before marriage and get divorced after marriage. There is a much higher divorce rate for those who cohabit. The figures are just up and up. About 65 percent of those cohabit before marriage get divorced. About 50 percent of the rest of the people do, but since more and more couples cohabit, the divorce rate is just going to keep climbing and climbing.

As a matter of fact, I think some people get divorced before they get married! That is, some people have two or three extended cohabitations, get "divorced" from them, and then they get married.

I feel I must apologize to those in this room who are younger than I. I often feel that my generation – I am 55-- owes anybody younger than we are a big apology. They call my father's generation "The Greatest Generation", they lived through a depression; they worked very hard. My parents are of that generation: they have been married 60 years. It's just incredible. I think a good name for my generation would be "The Stupid Generation." Whereas, my parent's home is very well ordered, if you looked into my refrigerator, you wouldn't know when I last did anything in that refrigerator. It's kind of a

scary place. I find it hard to pay my bills on time. I find it hard to get the oil changed in my car. I have a hard time doing what my parents do with great ease. In fact, my whole generation is pretty much always stressed out. We were exceptionally stupid in our youth. We were the generation that started the whole drug and sexual revolution. We went off to college and experimented with drugs. We thought that that's what college is all about. We got to smoke marijuana, if not take a little bit of cocaine and LSD. Yeah, well, why not? That's what you do when you go to college. And certainly have sex. Our poor parents, they had to get married to get sex. They had to rush into marriage. We thought they probably married some totally unsuitable person so they could have sex. I remember hearing people say, "You wouldn't buy a car without taking it for a test drive, so surely you wouldn't get married without having a test drive. And you wouldn't buy a car without taking several for a test drive. So certainly you would do that in respect to marriage. You've got to find what model you like." We thought that way. That's my generation.

My generation went down a lot of dead ends and fell into huge potholes and we're having a hard time climbing out. I want to save other people from going down those same dead ends and falling into those same potholes. If you don't know exactly what you think would be the right direction at least, look at what we did and do something different. It doesn't much matter what it is, just do something different.

Slide: Divorce Rates

I would like now to make a case that contraception is a factor leading to the increase in divorce. In the 1960's, 1 out of 4 marriages in the United States ended in divorce. Compared to the rest of the world and the US itself for most of its existence, that is a very high rate of divorce. At the turn of the century in the United States, well under 10 percent of marriages ended in divorce. The divorce rate has been climbing up all century -- contraceptive use had been increasing all that time as well. Again, in 1960,

the divorce rate was 1 out of 4 marriages. By the mid 1970's, 1 out of 2 marriages ended in divorce. It has stayed right about there.

Why did the divorce rate double between the 1960's and the 1970's? That's a social revolution of unprecedented proportions. Never in the history of mankind has the divorce rate doubled in a 10 to 15-year period. Why did it? Robert Michael, an economist from the University of Chicago, studied this phenomenon. As an economist he was interested because divorce, just like unwed pregnancy, is terrible for the economy. For some extended period of time, people who are in divorced households often live on about half the income they had prior to the divorce. As an economist, Professor Michael finds financial explanations most persuasive for explaining the increase in the incidence of divorce. He says that he has the data to show that couples who have a baby in the first two years of marriage and another one in the next two years -- two babies in the first four years of marriage -- have marriages that will last a lot longer than those who don't. He explains that women who have babies early in the marriage become financially dependent upon their husbands. Even if things are going badly in the marriage, they're going to stick it out and work at the marriage because a woman with babies at home needs the support of her husband. Now women are delaying childbearing until four or five years into the marriage. By that time a woman is established in her own career. She's financially independent and so if the marriage goes badly and there are no children, she can kick her husband out. Even if they do eventually have children, she's established herself in a career and she can take care of the children.

I suspect there is great deal of truth in Professor Michael's explanations, but I would like to suggest a few others. I think that when people have babies, they become much better people. In another talk, I claim that the purpose of children is to make adults out of their parents. In fact, a person married to a parent, is married to a better

person. Being a parent nearly forces the parents to acquire certain virtues. Parents must become more disciplined, more charitable, more responsible, more hard-working. It's hard work to get up in the middle of the night to take care of someone who's crying and to change diapers and to plan for college and all the rest. That's hard work. Both spouses take life more seriously. It's as natural as can be.

One of my favorite people on the face of the earth is the first-time father. I have had the great privilege and pleasure of seeing several of my male friends shortly after their first baby was born. Within about 3 sentences they all say the same thing. They float about 2 or 3 feet off the ground, they're kind of dazed and they say: "Everything is different now." And they mean it. Yesterday they didn't care how good the school system is, who the chief of police is, whether the playgrounds are safe. Now that they have a baby, they do. They want to make this world safe for their children.

Robert Michael also says that adultery has skyrocketed since contraception has come on the scene. Can anybody figure out why that might be the case? If 80 percent of women are using some form of contraception, that makes a lot of women and a lot of men think that there is no problem with having sex with someone who is married to someone else. Many people had multiple sexual partners before they married. They don't see any particular reason to stop after they get married. Because, you see, sex was no big deal before they got married. There's no particular reason to think that it's a big deal after marriage. Before marriage, sex was not an expression of lifetime love. Sex was not exclusive before marriage. It was just a fun thing to do with another person. How, when you get married, do you all of a sudden turn sexual intercourse into something that is profound, something that is a deep, intimate, exclusive expression of love for one person? How to do that 180-degree turn?

That's why I want to talk about natural sex – which is not what people in our culture are having. The pattern in marriage in our culture is this: people have generally

three sexual partners or more before they get married. Most people have sex in high school. If not in high school, certainly before they leave college. Maybe by the time they leave college, they are on their second or third partner. They split up with their current partner because there's no real relationship there. Now they are out in the real world and it's hard to find somebody. They start dating, pretty quickly they have sex, if not right away, eventually. Before long they are spending all their time at his place or hers. So they move in with each other. Why pay rent on two places? After a period of time people are saying: "When are the two of you going to get married?" The couple looks at each other and say: "Why don't we get married? The sex is pretty good; we don't fight that much; and who wants to start all over again?" That's what I call "sliding into marriage."

Currently people have had several sexual partners before marriage: some of those break-ups were accompanied with some degree of heartbreak, probably much confusion, perhaps some regret and guilt. Nearly everyone brings some sexual "baggage" in a marriage. Nearly all of the sexual intercourse they have ever had and will ever have is contracepted sexual intercourse. They contracepted before marriage and after marriage. Within marriage, they stop for a short period of time to conceive a child and then contracept again. Then they stop for a short period of time to conceive child number two. Then they get sterilized and then they get divorced. That's the pattern in our culture, over and over again. People have had a very short period of time, if any, of what I want to call natural sex. They have never had a prolonged period of sex with someone whom they deeply love, to whom they have made a lifetime commitment, and with whom they are open to having children. Most of their sex life is contracepted, some of it in an uncertain relationship.

After one of my talks a man came up to me and said, "You missed a step in that little story you told." He said after the vasectomy or tubal ligation, one or other of the

spouse often engages in an adulterous affair. He said he saw it at his place of work all the time. Man after man came in after he had a vasectomy and before long he was having an affair and before long he was divorced.

What you need to know is that couples using natural family planning almost never divorce. This is the biggest selling point of natural family planning when I'm talking to college students. That fact is, young people hate divorce. Either they've grown up in divorced households and they know the pain of divorce very personally or their friends have. Even if a couple has been married for 25 or 30 years and they think they are never going to get divorced, their kids don't think that. The kids know someone else at school who went home and dad was packing up or mom was gone and they think it could happen to anybody. And so they're living in this very fragile world. "Yeah, I don't think Mom and Dad are going to get divorced, but Kevin didn't think his mom and dad were going to get divorced either and they did."

There is also an amazing difference for couples who don't have sex before marriage. People who don't have sex before marriage have an immensely lower divorce rate. Abstaining before marriage is one of the surest predictors of not getting a divorce. There is a study that shows that, of people who are born between 1933 and 1943, 83 percent of the males were virgins when they got married and 93 percent of the females were virgins when they got married. And every decade thereafter it goes down about 10 to 15 percent of those who were virgins when they got married. Staying a virgin until marriage is one of the surest predictors of a long-lasting marriage. Is that bizarre? Why would it be bizarre? You've waited for this one person. You have probably chosen this person fairly carefully. You said, "I'm saving myself for marriage, so I'm not just going to slide into marriage. I'm going to be very careful about this relationship. I am going to get to know someone slowly, let someone get to know me. The sex isn't going to be at the beginning of the relationship; the sex is going to be at the beginning of the marriage.

We've got a lot to know about each other before we can even begin to think about making that commitment."

Slide: Contraception's Bad Consequences

What are the bad consequences of contraception?

It facilitates sex outside of marriage.

It increases the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases.

It leads to unwanted pregnancy and single parenthood.

It causes and leads to abortion.

It contributes to divorce and it contributes to social chaos.

Does anybody think there might be a reason to rethink our enthusiasm for contraception?

Slide: Pope Paul VI's Predictions

In *Humanae Vitae*, published in 1968, Pope Paul IV said that four things would happen if contraception became widely available.

There would be a general lowering of morality. Has anybody noticed that in the last 40 years?

I grew up in a small town in Pennsylvania in the 1950's and we never locked our doors. We knew everybody who lived on our street. We were the only Catholics, but everybody on the street went to church. They all had 3, 4, 5, 6 kids. Most of the mothers were stay-at-home mothers. Every morning about 9 or 10 in the morning all the mothers with their babies would have a coffee break with each other. My parents could let us go into any house on the street. My mother would let us go down to Mulberry Playground every day and expect us back for lunch. In the afternoon we'd go back to the playground and be back for dinner. There was no concern about what we were doing in the meantime.

A few years ago when the oldest of her children was old enough to start wanting to play at other kid's houses, one of my sisters asked me what she needed to know about these households. I said: "You need to do an FBI background check." You need to learn if the mother is married to the man she is living with. Do they use pornography? Do they allow unsupervised watching of movies and use of the computer? Now parents need to be exceedingly careful about where they let their children play and visit.

Pope Paul VI predicted that if contraception became widely used, there would be less respect for women. Has anybody noticed that in the last 40 years? We'll say more about that in a moment.

Pope Paul VI said there would be coercive control by governments over sexuality and that we would start treating our bodies as machines.

Slide: Oppressive Governments and Population Control

As this slide says, in Africa it takes a village to educate a child: in China it takes the government to have them killed. China has a one child per family policy. If a woman gets pregnant a second time in China she may be forcibly aborted. If a couple is going to have only one baby, they nearly always want a boy and they more frequently abort their female babies or even commit infanticide. Thus, there is now an incredible disproportion of males to females in China. There are about 117 unmarried males for every 100 unmarried females in China because they are aborting or committing infanticide on their little baby girls. There are a lot of men who are never going to find a bride. When there is this disproportion of males to females, it means that you have a potential army of child stealers, bride stealers, or rapists.

Slide: Test Tube Babies

Again, Pope Paul VI predicted we would treat our bodies like machines. Test tube babies have given a whole new definition to the phrase "designer genes". Any woman in the United States can have a baby, heterosexual or homosexual, married or

unmarried, of child-bearing age or past child-bearing age. She can buy a super model's ova, a Nobel Prize winner's semen. She can rent out the womb of a surrogate mother and now she has a baby "of her own". We live in a culture where we say, "If I can't have children, I'm going to make children." The Church, in a document entitled *Donum Vitae* or *Gift of Life*, teaches that it is not right to make babies in a petri dish or through artificial insemination; it is moral to have babies only through a loving sexual act of spouses.

Slide: *Humanae Vitae*

Humanae Vitae was issued in 1968. It is fair to say that it dropped on the world like a bomb. It marked the beginning of a huge divide in the Church. Major theologians held press conferences and told Catholics they did not need to live by this decision, that it was based on inadequate understanding of natural law and that Catholics were free to do what their consciences told them to about contraception. It is certainly true that Catholics are obliged always to act by their conscience. But we must remember that the conscience is not an individual's opinion. The conscience is really the place within – it's called the inner sanctuary – where a person talks with God and tries to find out what God deems to be right. A judgment of the conscience should not be what the individual judges to be right, but what God judges to be right. If a Catholic is confused about contraception, he or she needs to ask: What does God think about contraception?

But how do we know what God thinks? Catholics naturally look to the Church to learn what God thinks since Catholics belong to a church that claims to be guided by God, the Holy Spirit.

After one of my talks, a woman told me that her conscience was perfectly comfortable with contraception. I told her I didn't want to be judgmental but there's a problem with that statement. If the conscience is the sanctuary where God speaks to a person, where the Holy Spirit guides us, what she is saying is that the Holy Spirit has managed to tell her that contraception is moral. That same Holy Spirit did not manage to

inform Pope John Paul II that contraception is moral. Pope John Paul II was on his knees praying for more hours in any given day than most of us are in a month's time. And he certainly did not want to place burdens on people. In his prayer he undoubtedly asked the Holy Spirit: What do you want me to tell your people? How do I guide them? How do I bring them closer to Christ? We know he did not hear the Holy Spirit tell him to teach that contraception is moral.

After his death the media coverage was incredible. Surprisingly, it was favorable for the most part. But there was the occasional editorial that actually said that John Paul II was responsible for more deaths than Hitler, Stalin and others because he would not allow the distribution of condoms to stop the spread of HIV. That is a claim I find really puzzling because, as far as I understand it, most of those who are in danger of transmitting the HIV are fornicators, adulterers, and individuals engaging in homosexual acts. So are these people really not using condoms because the Holy Father says they shouldn't? And tomorrow if the Holy Father stood on the balcony of St. Peter's and said; "All you fornicators, all you adulterers, and all those of you who are engaging in homosexual acts, you can now use a condom," would it change anything?

Are there governments and social service agencies that aren't distributing condoms because the Catholic Church says they aren't? As a matter of fact, one researcher, from somewhere in South America, did a study that shows that the countries that are the most Catholic have the lowest HIV rate. And those in which the most condoms are distributed are the ones that have the highest HIV rate. The data that has been compiled about this issue is not suggesting that the policy of the Church is wrong. There is only one country in the world that has had a decline in the spread of HIV and that is Uganda. Uganda is the only country in the world that has made abstinence and fidelity its primary message in attempting to stop the spread of HIV. So I don't understand why it is that people want one of the few if not the only institution that is

saying abstinence is the surest way to prevent the spread of any sexually transmitted disease, to say something else.

Slide: Catholics and Contraception

In 1950, 66 percent of Catholics did not contracept. By about 1975 or so, Catholics were contracepting at the same rate as the rest of the population. At any given time about 80 percent of Catholics are contracepting. Almost all of Catholics have contracepted at some time. Very few Catholics have ever heard a defense of the Church's teaching on contraception. Certainly not from the pulpit, neither in their high school education, nor during their college education have they ever heard an explanation in defense of the Church's teaching. It is my impression that this situation is changing; I myself in recent years have heard several excellent homilies against contraception and I know many marriage preparation courses that are trying hard to educate those who are about to marry about the evils of contraception. Yet, I believe it to be true that most Catholics are likely in a state of "invincible ignorance" in respect to contraception. Those not responsible for their ignorance about the immorality of contraception are not guilty of the sin of contraception – but they are still doing something wrong and something harmful.

Many years ago when I was first teaching at Notre Dame, I taught *Humanae Vitae* in my ethics class. I asked the students how many of them thought that contraception is moral. All of their hands went up. How many have read *Humanae Vitae*? None of their hands went up. I said how many have thought about the topic for three minutes or longer? None of their hands went up. Now these are college sophomores, so it's a bit unfair to expect college sophomores to have read *Humanae Vitae.* I was, however, making a point. They had made up their mind about contraception without having done any thinking or reading about it. They reported to one my colleagues that I was teaching *Humanae Vitae* and actually supporting it. It was okay to teach *Humanae Vitae* at Notre Dame if you were against it. But if you supported

it you got in big trouble. So I was in big trouble. One professor said, "I don't understand Professor Smith, she seems intelligent and educated and I don't see how she could possibly be against contraception." The students arranged a debate between the two of us, two weeks later. My opponent was a very gracious and wonderful man, a very good friend of mine, I loved him very much. But he and his wife had been contracepting for 15 years. At the beginning of my talk I mentioned that most Catholics have not read *Humane Vitae*, thought about it, prayed about it. My opponent had the good grace to blush bright red. He said he had not read *Humanae Vitae* until that afternoon. Even though he and his wife had been contracepting for 15 years and two weeks earlier he had agreed to debate *Humanae Vitae*. The students were shocked. Students think professors would never hold a position that wasn't well considered, well researched, well thought out. To learn that their revered professor was willing to debate something he hadn't even read was shocking to the students.

But most Catholics are in that situation. I think Catholics should be embarrassed that they read publications like Sports Illustrated or People Magazine and haven't read key documents of the Church like *Humanae Vitae*.

Slide: Philippine Bishops Apologize:

In the early 1990's, the Philippine bishops put out a statement apologizing for not having taught against contraception. They said:

> It is said that when seeking ways of regulating births, only five percent of you consult God. In the face of this unfortunate fact we, your pastors, have been remiss. How few there are among you whom we have reached. There have been some couples eager to share their expertise and values on birth regulation with others. They are saying that they did not receive adequate support from their priests. We did not give them due attention believing then that this ministry consisted merely of imparting a technique best left to married couples. Only

> recently have we discovered how deep your yearning is for God to be present in your married life. But we did not know then how to help you discover God's presence and activity in your mission of Christian parenting. Conflicted with doubt about alternatives to contraceptive technology, we abandoned you to your confused and lonely consciences with only an excuse, follow what your conscience tells you. How little we realized that it was our consciences that needed to be formed first. A greater concern would have led us to discover that religious hunger in you.

That apology is one of the most extraordinary things I've ever read. Bishops apologizing to Catholics because they have not taught church teaching! While there have been several bishops in the United States who have done a good job teaching *Humanae Vitae* – Archbishop Chaput in Denver is one of them, Bishop Galeone in Florida and Bishop Carlson in Saginaw are also on that list, in too many cases priests have been told that they should not be teaching against contraception to their people.

Slide: Reasons to Condemn Contraception:

The Catholic Church condemns contraception because it is against nature, human nature. Human nature is complex. Certainly we are physical creatures and we have an obligation to take care of our physiology. I made this claim once on TV and the interviewer insisted that the Church doesn't care about women's bodies. I asked where she got that idea? Today, I'm going provide evidence that contraception harms a woman's body. It also harms our psychological nature; it makes women think their fertility is a defect and that, therefore, they are defective.

Human beings are also relational creatures. We crave love. We crave both to give love and to receive love. Such desires are written into the human person. We want

to love and be loved. The Church teaches that contraception is an impediment to love relationships.

We also, by our very nature, desire to be in relationship with God. We are by nature spiritual creatures. We have a yearning to be in a good relationship and in a loving relationship with God. Contraception is also an obstacle for that relationship since we treat His great gift of fertility as a negative rather than a positive.

Slide: Fertility is a Great Good

Let us consider the effect of contraception on these various levels of nature.

First of all, fertility is a great good. An adult human being who is fertile is a healthy human being. Those who are infertile are unhealthy. This slide shows a number of people protesting hormones in food. A woman shouting at a pro-lifer who is arguing against the abortion pill says to her, "What are you, some kind of nut?"

We live in a culture that is beginning to realize that it's bad to put chemicals in the air and in the water supply and food. But women are putting chemicals in their bodies day after day, month after month, year after year, to stop something that's perfectly healthy. It simply doesn't make any sense, especially since women can control their fertility with the very healthy methods of natural family planning.

Slide: Violation of Physical Health

Women who take chemical contraceptives complain of liver troubles, strokes, migraines, high blood pressure, and ovarian cysts. There are all sorts of bad physical side effects of contraceptives.

Since I'm going to talk mostly about the chemical contraceptives, let me pause for a moment to say a few things about the so-called barrier methods. First of all, think of how incompatible barriers are with lovemaking. "I want to make love to you, but I've got to get my barrier in place." "I've got to get my spermicide going." "I want to give myself completely, but I'm going to kill your sperm." What is loving about that? Barriers

are clearly opposed to an act of real self-giving. Moreover, semen has within it certain proteins that are beneficial for women; they have a calming and assuring effect on the woman; thus condoms deny women one of the benefits for them from sexual intercourse.

Slide: Common Side Effects

The common side effects of the chemical contraceptives are: increased irritability, increased propensity to depression, weight gain, and a reduced sex drive. Most women who use chemical contraceptives complain of these side effects. I'm sure that every woman in this room would like to be taking a pill that makes her more irritable, more prone to depression, helps her gain weight, and contributes to a reduced sex drive. I'm sure every man in this room wants the woman he's dealing with to be more irritable, more prone to depression, to gain weight, and have a reduced sex drive. We have something for you: it's called the chemical contraceptive.

Slide: Dismissing Side Effects

When the Pill was first discovered in the later 1950's it was tested on women in Puerto Rico. And these are the reports that came back:

> Dr. Edris Rice-Wray, a faculty member of the Puerto Rico Medical School and medical director of the Puerto Rico Family Planning Association, was in charge of the trials. After a year of tests, Dr. Rice-Wray reported good news to Pincus. The pill was 100% effective when taken properly. She also informed him that 17% of the women in the study complained of nausea, dizziness, headaches, stomach pain, and vomiting. So serious and sustained were the reactions that Rice-Wray told Pincus that a 10-milligram dose of Enovid caused "too many side reactions to be generally acceptable."

Slide: Dismissing Side Effects

> Rock and Pincus quickly dismissed Rice-Wray's conclusions. Their patients in Boston had experienced far fewer negative reactions, and they believed many of the complaints were psychosomatic. The men also felt that problems such as bloating and nausea were minor compared to the contraceptive benefits of the drug. Although three women died while participating in the trials, no investigation was conducted to see if the Pill had caused the young womens' deaths. Confident in the safety of the Pill, Pincus and Rock took no action to assess the root cause of the side effects.

I first heard about this situation in Puerto Rico years ago when I read a book by a woman named Dr. Ellen Grant. The title of the book was, "The Bitter Pill." She was a physician in London in the 1950's and she started prescribing the Pill to her patients. She was dismayed when they returned with migraines, high blood pressure, ovarian cysts, and other maladies. She was perplexed since she wanted to make her patients' lives better, not worse. This led her to review the early studies of the Pill.

She discovered that there was an attempt to find a contraceptive for males as well as for females. As you will notice, there is no contraceptive pill for males. There is a reason for that. In the study group of males, one male had some slight shrinkage of his testicles. Thus, all testing on the male contraceptive pill was stopped, since that is intolerable. Among the female study group three women died. They simply adjusted the dosage of the hormone. What does that tell people? It may tell us that women are stupid. Women do things to their bodies that men won't do to theirs.

Slide: "Sexy" contraceptive patch fatality rate revealed

We read in this report of September, 2004 that 17 women between the ages of 17 and 30 had died since the release of the patch in 2002. The contraceptive patch is placed on a woman's abdomen so she can absorb into her body a chemical contraceptive. The

report tells us that, “These documents also revealed that 21 additional life-threatening conditions have been found, including heart attacks, blood clots, and strokes.”

If a 28-year-old woman dies of a stroke, they’re not going to put on the death certificate that she died because she was using a contraceptive. One doctor doubted these reports so he looked at the medical records of these 17 women between the ages of 17 and 30 that died and found out that he thought only 6 of them could really be attributed to the patch, that we had enough evidence to say that these deaths were caused by the patch. But he thought that was an acceptable side effect. The convenience of the patch is so great that it is worth risking death for. What other drug would get this pass from the pharmaceutical industry, from the FDA? Tobacco is treated more harshly.

Doctors have told me that we’ve seen nothing yet in respect to lawsuits. What the pharmaceutical companies will face in respect to contraceptives is going to be huge compared to what we had with the tobacco companies. The pharmaceutical companies know every bit as much how bad contraceptives are for women as the tobacco companies knew about tobacco. And some day there may be massive lawsuits.

Slide: An Insult to Women

I think contraception is an insult to women. Instead of women saying fertility is a great gift, fertility is healthy, I’m not going to mess with my fertility, I’m not going to put massive doses of anything in my body to mess up my fertility, women basically apologize for their fertility. “I’m sorry. When I have sex, I may get pregnant. Sure, I’ll be glad to mess with my body to correct this humiliating and inconvenient feature of my sex.”

Slide: Monkeys and Contraception

There is an amazing study reported from a book by a man named Lionel Tiger. Lionel Tiger is an anthropologist from Rutgers University who studies animal behavior to explain human behavior. He works with a colleague named Robin Fox, who also is an

anthropologist who studies animal behavior to explain human behavior. In the 1960's, as he saw contraception becoming more and more popular, he speculated that male/female relationships would change radically. He did a study in the early '70's that involved a tribe of monkeys. The alpha monkey of this tribe, named Austin, chose three female monkeys to be his exclusive sexual partners. Austin had a grand time with these three female monkeys. Then the researchers injected Austin's three females with the contraceptive Depo-Provera. Austin stopped having sex with them and chose other female monkeys to be his sexual partners. Then they contracepted all of the females in the tribe. The males stopped having sex with the females and started behaving in a turbulent and confused manner.

Male monkeys at least evidently prefer intercourse with fertile females. Studies also show that males – human males -- produce more testosterone when they are around women who have fertile cycles. In fact, men are more attracted to women when they are fertile and women are more attracted to men when the women are fertile.

Once when I mentioned this at a talk in Kansas, a man came up to me and said, "In Kansas, we don't need studies to show that males are more interested in females when they're fertile." He said everyone in Kansas grows up on a farm and we know that when a bull is in a pen with a cow who is not fertile, he is not at all interested. But if the bull is in a barn a mile away with metal fences in between, the bull will get to the cow when she is fertile.

Tiger speculates that one of the reasons that women are dressing so immodestly is because they're not attracting men because of their fertility. They have to act as though they will do bizarre things in order to attract a male. They aren't attracting them simply by their fertility since they are not having fertile cycles.

Tiger also reports on a study involving tee shirts. The study included two groups of human females, one contracepting, one not contracepting. It also involved a group of

males who had been rated for their evolutionary desirability. Men who are evolutionarily desirable are healthy and aggressive and responsible; the other group included those who can't hold a job, etc. These men all wore a tee shirt for a day. At the end of the day the women smelled the tee shirts. Without meeting the males the non contracepting women chose the evolutionarily desirable males as potentially attractive mates; the contracepting women chose the losers.

Mothers have approached me after my talk and said, "That explains a lot. It explains why my daughter is stuck with that loser." Other women say, "Now I understand why my son, who is such a marvelous young man, seems to be having trouble finding good young women."

Slide: Contraceptive may kill libido

Here we have an article that says contraception may kill libido. As mentioned, one of the side effects of contraceptives is that it reduces a woman's sex drive. Testosterone is also the source of a female's sexual drive and women who are using chemical contraceptives do not produce as much testosterone as when they are not contracepting.

Here we read that:

- When women on the Pill were tested, levels of a chemical that wipes out testosterone were found to be seven times higher than in those who had never taken it.
- Most worryingly, even those who were not on the Pill, but had taken it in the past, had levels up to four times higher than those who had never used it.
- Past studies had suggested taking the Pill could dampen a woman's sexual desire, but that if she came off it, her libido would return within a month.

- Dr Goldstein, former director of the Institute for Sexual Medicine at Boston University, Massachusetts, said that while his research seemed to suggest the effects could be permanent, more investigations were needed.

The website NBC10.com has featured a video that reported this information that the Pill reduces a woman's sex drive. So, of course, the solution to this problem was what? Give women shots of testosterone. Don't take them off the Pill: give them shots of testosterone. What a great idea!

Slide: *Elle*: Sexual Chemistry

This blurb from *Elle*, a woman's fashion magazine, advises that "For years Prozac and the Pill have given women emotional stability and sexual freedom, but new research suggests that these drugs can negatively affect everything from our sex drive to our choice of a mate." This article reports that contraceptives and antidepressants both reduce a woman's sex drive and also change their perception of males.

Why are women taking these antidepressants? One of the side effects of the Pill is depression. So doctors try to combat the effects of the Pill by prescribing antidepressant. But antidepressants also reduce a woman's sex drive. So a woman is taking the contraceptive Pill to help her have sex and supposedly be happier and then taking an antidepressant because she's taking a pill that causes depression. And she's not any happier and she doesn't even want to have sex.

What they're also discovering is that when women go off the Pill, they're no longer interested in the man that they're with. They picked him when they were in the state of pseudo-pregnancy. There was another video featured on NBC10.com called "The Divorce Pill". It reported that women who go off the Pill have a higher sex drive than they had when they were on the Pill, but they're no longer interested in the man they are with; they chose him under the influence of the pseudo pregnancy hormones in their bodies. I suspect there is more to the story than that. I suspect that many of these

women are going off the Pill because they want to have a baby. When a woman decides to have a baby, she starts looking at guys with a whole different set of eyes. Is this man going to be a good father to my children?

As a matter of fact, don't be too impressed if someone comes up to you and says, "I want to have sex with you." That's a saying that's not particularly flattering. But if someone comes up to you and says, "I want you to be the parent of my children," fall over. That's a marriage proposal. And a marriage proposal is one of the most incredible things that anybody's ever said to another person. A marriage proposal means, I want someone with your eyes, your laugh, the way you walk and most importantly your values. I'm going to trust my children to you. A lot of people have sex with people, but they won't entrust their children to them.

How many people in our culture court and get married with the view toward having a child? How many choose a spouse because that spouse will be a good parent? I tell my students when dating to consider whether the person they are interested in would be a good parent; that person will also make a good spouse, for good parents are generous and responsible and hardworking and such are the qualities that make for a good spouse.

One of my former students who had been a good Catholic went off to graduate school, became completely infatuated with a young man and started having sex with him. She realized that she was very confused and it wasn't right. She stopped having sex with him but was still crazy about him. It was an incredibly passionate relationship, though not sexual. He was a very lapsed Catholic and in fact, hated the Church. She remained in the relationship for about five or six years. At one point I said, either you have to marry him or you have to break up. She said she was still crazy about him and didn't think she could imagine finding another man that fascinates her as much as he did. But she said, "I don't want him to be the father of my children. I want to raise my

kids Catholic. He hates the Church. I can't have children with him." I recommended that she write those words down and look at them and see what conclusions she ought to draw. She soon broke up with him and a few years later met and married a wonderful, fascinating man and started a family.

Slide: The Magic of Sexual Attraction

There is some really good news for the ladies. Here we have an article that reports:

> They say female chemical messengers, known as pheromones, may help dupe men into thinking plain women are more attractive and beautiful women are less attractive than they actually are. Pheromones, the colorless, odorless chemical signals given off by the body, are thought to affect behavior in both animals and humans at a subconscious level.

This study involved showing men pictures of super models and having them rate the women for their attractiveness. Of course, they found them to be very attractive. Then they took something soaked in female fertile hormones and put that in the same room with the men. We exchange hormones through the sense of smell, although they have no discernable odor. Next the men viewed pictures of average women and under the influence of the fertile hormones, found the average women more attractive than the super models. Women don't seem to realize that they are naturally attractive to males and that using contraception works against, not for, that attractiveness.

Let us recall that whereas contracepting couples divorce at the rate of about 50%, couples using natural family planning almost never divorce. It seems men are living in households with women who are going through fertile cycles are less likely to stray. In fact, the men I know to be in marriages that use natural family planning are what I want to call very married. They do not look around. They are not interested in anyone else. They are very satisfied in their marriage.

After one of my talks, a woman came up to me and said that when she converted to Catholicism she stopped contracepting and started using NFP. She mentioned that many of her friends who were still contracepting complained that their husbands were having a problem with masturbation and pornography. She said none of her friends who use natural family planning complained of that problem. I think there is a reason. Again, I think the men living with women having fertile cycles are having satisfying natural sex. Men having sex with women who are contracepting seem to be turbulent and confused.

Slide: Pollution changes sex of fish

We have so much estrogen in our water supply it is unbelievable. Here we read of a study that reports:

> A third of male fish in British rivers are in the process of changing sex due to pollution in human sewage. Researcher by the environment agency suggests they surveyed 1,500 fish in 50 river sites and found more than a third of males displayed female characteristics. Hormones in the sewage, including those produced by the female contraceptive pill, are thought to be the main cause. The agency says the problem could damage fish population by reducing their ability to reproduce.

Comment [JES1]:

There is a massive amount of estrogen in our water supply, both from contraceptives and also from plastics that shed various estrogens. The modern era has a problem with premature puberty in girls; it may be because they are getting too much estrogen in their system. There is evidence of some difficulties with male development of boy fetuses whose mothers were using a chemical contraceptive when they conceived. Three percent of women conceive while they are on the Pill and continue to take the Pill for several weeks, if not months, after they conceive. Consequently, their male fetuses are getting a lot of extra estrogen into their system. We don't have full understanding of the effect of all that estrogen on male fetuses, but it may create some serious difficulties.

Slide: Impediment to Total Self-Giving

John Paul II maintained that contraception is an impediment to total self-giving. He maintained that it is a contradiction to say "I love you" and then to have contraceptive sex. He said the act of sexual intercourse is meant to be an act of complete self-giving; it means, "I give myself to you in a way in which I give myself to no other." How many in our culture can say that? It also means "I find you immensely attractive. I want to give you great pleasure and I want to receive pleasure." And it means "I'm open to having children with you." Contraceptive sex means, "I want to have great physical pleasure with you." It's a minimal statement.

Non-contraceptive sex, on the other hand, is a maximal statement. Males seem to understand this even better than females. Contraceptive sex is, as they say, supposedly safe sex. Not just safe from pregnancy but safe from commitment since pregnancy means commitment. If there is no openness to a pregnancy, there is no commitment. In fact, most men find the prospect of non-contraceptive sex scary. And why is it scary? Because it means a lifetime commitment. If you have a baby with someone else, you have a lifetime commitment with that person. And a man who is willing to engage in an act of non-contraceptive sex with a woman, who has any idea of what he's doing, any sense of responsibility, is saying to this woman I am willing to make a lifetime commitment to you. That's what it's all about. If we have a baby and we're going to be with each other forever, that's fine with me. In fact, that's what I want. And that's what a non-contraceptive act of sexual intercourse means. A contraceptive act of sexual intercourse you can have with just about anybody. It has nothing written into it of lifetime commitment.

Slide: Babies are bonding

Babies are bonding. It takes 23 male chromosomes and 23 female chromosomes to have a baby. Two really do become one in a very physical and profound incarnational

way. Not only one physically, but much more than that, since they have brought into existence a new human being who has an immortal soul. You have an immortal connection with someone with whom you've had a baby.

Slide: God creates every human soul

Conception is an astonishing thing for it involves a creative act by God. A sperm does not have an immortal soul. And an egg does not have an immortal soul. But human beings do. So where did we get that immortal soul? We didn't get it from the sperm. We didn't get it from the egg. Only God can create a human soul. And when God creates a new human soul He does what He did at the beginning of the universe. He brings into existence something that did not exist before. He makes something out of nothing.

There is no storeroom of preexisting souls. It is very important to realize that God created your soul and the soul of every other human being individually. He willed you into existence. And He wants you to exist for eternity. He entrusts babies to spouses. He is saying: "This soul belongs to me. I want this immortal soul to be part of the loving community that I am setting up for an eternity. And I'm giving this baby to you to do the best that you can to raise up to be a citizen of the heavenly kingdom. Certainly this person has free will and I don't expect you to make any guarantees. But I want you to do the best that you can to return this baby to me."

When spouses are engaging in an act of sexual intercourse during the fertile time of the month, they are sending an invitation to God to create a new human soul. When sperm meets egg, He answers that invitation. He answers that invitation if it's made through rape or if it's made through in vitro fertilization. He honors the rules that He has set up. He doesn't want babies conceived through rape. He doesn't want them conceived through in vitro fertilization. But when sperm meets egg, he says, "I've set up these laws; I'm going to respect them. But what I want is human beings to be

responsible. They should be sending me an invitation only when they are prepared to accept the gift of a child."

Slide: Contraception thwarts God's life-giving power

Contraception puts up a barrier not just between the sperm and the egg, but between the sperm and the egg and God. Contraceptive sex says we want to have sex on our terms. We're not going to allow God to engage in His creative act.

Slide: Responsible Parenthood

The Church doesn't teach that you have to have as many children as your body can bear. This picture is of the little old woman who lived in a shoe; she had so many children she didn't know what to do. The Church teaches that spouses should practice what is called responsible parenting. God wants parents to enjoy their children. Those who have children often find themselves really fatigued. That's normal. It's just that it should not be the dominant feeling in your life. You want the dominant feeling to be gratitude. Grateful for your spouse and grateful for your children. If you're starting to feel dragged down by it all, it's probably time to push the pause button and get a little bit of rest. Get the diapers under control. And you probably will be soon wanting at some point to have another one when you're feeling less overwhelmed.

Slide: Natural Family Planning

The Church approves of what is called Natural Family Planning or NFP. NFP is not the old rhythm method. It has nothing to do with counting days. I'm going to be explaining NFP by reference to days and numbers, but that's irrelevant really to what I'm saying here; any woman can use NFP no matter how irregular her cycles.

A woman is a relatively infertile creature. For a long time it has been said that a woman is born with all of the eggs that she is ever going to have. Now some researchers are saying women may produce more during their lifetime, but, whatever is the case, women have only a couple hundred thousand eggs, maybe at the most a

million or so. Males, on the other hand, are unbelievably fertile: any male has four to five, six to seven million sperm in any ejaculation. So, comparatively speaking, women are incredibly infertile.

Women ripen and release only one egg a month. That egg lives in a woman's body for only 24 hours. It can be fertilized for only 12 of those 24 hours. So there is only a 12-hour window every month when a woman can get pregnant. It's more complicated than that, of course. At the beginning of a month a woman has a few days of bleeding. That's because she didn't conceive the month before. During the last cycle she built up an endometrium which was prepared to receive a new little fertilized ovum, a new little human being. If there's no little human being, she sheds the endometrium. Then a woman has what are called dry days that can last for several days. There is no bleeding and there is no fertile mucus. Her body is resting from having bled for a couple days. She's got to restore herself. At the same time her body is preparing for the next cycle of ovulation. She is starting to produce hormones that are going to cause her ovaries to ripen and release an egg and send it down the fallopian tube. As those hormones are preparing that egg for ripening and releasing, the woman is starting to produce a certain kind of fertile mucus that she can recognize in her system. It is present throughout the whole fertile phase. It disappears about two or three days after she's ovulated.

If that fertile mucus appears on a Monday, but a woman doesn't ovulate until Friday, she can get pregnant from any act of sexual intercourse she had between Monday and Friday because the fertile mucus helps preserve the sperm and carries it to meet the egg. If she has sexual intercourse on Monday, but not Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday and ovulates on Friday, she could get pregnant from the act of sexual intercourse that she had on Monday although it is only about a three percent chance. On the day that she ovulates she has about a 43-47 percent chance of getting pregnant. Twenty-four hours later the egg dies if it is not fertilized. The woman cannot get

pregnant for the rest of the month. It's absolutely impossible. It's only during the fertile part of the month that a woman can get pregnant. She cannot possibly get pregnant during the first third of the month since there is no egg available. She cannot possibly get pregnant for the final third of the month because there's no egg available. The egg has come and the egg has gone. At about the same time the fertile mucus dries up. So a woman knows that she has ovulated and she's not going to ovulate again. Her temperature also goes up a bit and stays up for the rest of the month. So when a woman sees her temperature rise for a couple days in a row, she knows that she has ovulated, the egg has come and the egg has gone and she cannot get pregnant for the rest of the month. There's also a change in her cervix that alerts her that she has entered the fertile days and exited the fertile days.

Ninety three percent of women can learn how to read their bodily signs with one month of observation. Ninety-three percent of women figure out right away when the fertile mucus is present. The other seven percent, however, have some trouble reading their signs of fertility. Some of these women have a problem because they are infertile. If a woman is infertile the signs of fertility are not going to show up. She is not going to have the mucus because she is not producing the hormones to help her ovulate. A very good way for a woman to determine whether she's fertile or infertile is to use natural family planning. There may be other reasons for unreliable signs besides infertility. A woman, for instance, might be taking medication that dries up the mucus. She might have allergies that cause her to produce mucus during the infertile days. But almost every woman within 3 to 4 months of observing bodily signs can determine when she's fertile and when she's infertile.

Slide: Effectiveness of Natural Family Planning

Natural family planning is every bit as effective as any form of contraception. Dr. R. E. J. Ryder published an article in the British Medical Journal in 1993 in which he reviewed

studies done by world health organizations on natural family planning and concluded that pregnancy rates of couples using NFP have depended on the motivation of couples. He concluded:

> Increasingly studies show that rates equivalent to those with other contraceptive methods are readily achieved in the developed and developing world. Indeed a study of 19,843 poor women in India had a pregnancy rate approaching zero. Natural planning family is cheap, efficient, without side effects and may be particularly acceptable to and efficacious among of people in areas of poverty.

Of the women studied, one third were Christian, one third were Muslim, and one third were Hindu. Most of them were illiterate. Do you know who was teaching them? Mother Teresa's nuns. Mother Teresa had all of her nuns learn how to teach natural family planning.

NFP costs nothing and is perfectly healthy. A fraction of the money, a fraction of the billions of dollars recommended by the UN for contraceptives could be used to teach women NFP and there would be billions left for health care, antibiotics, hygiene, making the water supply safe, etc.

Slide: Benefits of NFP

One benefit of natural family planning is that there are no bad physical side effects. One of the reasons that NFP marriages last longer is that women using NFP are not as irritable, prone to depression and gaining weight and to having a reduced sex life as are women on contraceptives. The non contracepting woman is a healthier woman; she feels better. She is not taking drugs that mess with her system.

Secondly, using NFP requires mutual sacrifice. That is key. It takes two people to have sex. It takes two people to abstain. Not one or the other of the couple is bearing the contraceptive burden. In couples where natural family planning is used, wives generally think their husbands are exceptional men. She thinks, "I married myself an

exceptional man. He doesn't ask me or expect me to take all of these drugs into my body that are bad for me. He enjoys my company even when I'm not sexually available. He can control his sexual desires. He's probably not masturbating and using pornography. I've got myself an exceptionally fine man."

And when a man is married to a woman who thinks he's exceptionally fine, he tends to think he's exceptionally fine. It does good things for his self-esteem. We women can be very critical. When a wife thinks her husband is an incredibly wonderful man, that makes for an incredibly wonderful relationship. He respects his wife; she respects him.

NFP enhances communication between spouses and strengthens marriages. For some time I wondered how NFP enhances communication. I figured it out one day and some people now accuse me of hiding in their closets and listening to their conversations. I understand that about once a month, somewhere during that 7 to 10 day period of abstaining, a couple want to have sex, especially since she's fertile and males and females are more attracted to each other when the female is fertile. So they have a conversation that usually begins with the question: "Why did we decide it wasn't a good idea to have a child right now?" That's a very important question because if the answer is that having a baby would be acceptable, the couple can go ahead and do what they want to do.

Now if a couple has a good reason for not having a baby right now, that can go a long way to dampening the sexual desire. Spouses have some pretty revealing conversations about the reasons. The wife might say, "If we have another child right now, I'll kill you." That could lead her husband to remember that there is a sporting event on TV that he very much wants to watch.

Or she might say, "You said that you would do the dishes. You said that you would give the kids baths. You said that I would have time for shopping on Saturday.

When was the last time that you did the dishes or gave the kids a bath or gave me any time on Saturdays?" And he may respond, "I forgot; I'm so sorry. I didn't know. All right, I'm on duty." Or she might say, "I have been tired with three kids under 5 but the baby is out of diapers now. If we had another one I could handle it."

Or the husband might say to the wife, "The reason we're not having more babies right now is because I just can't imagine how I'm going to support the kids that I've already got. I am worried about paying for braces, tuition, and having to buy a bigger van. The way you spend money!! Your friend Jane wants a fence, you need a fence. Your friend Jane gets a new kitchen, you need a new kitchen. What's a man supposed to do? And she might reply, "I really had no idea that you felt that way. I don't need that kitchen. I don't need a fence." Or he might say, "I was worried about finances, but I have been getting raises along the way. My dad raised 4 or 5 children on next to nothing. If he could do it, I can do it. So, yes we can go ahead. If there's another baby around here, we can handle it."

That conversation takes place about once a month for couples who are using natural family planning. It makes them assess where they are in respect to these key questions: Why are we having children and why are we not having children? Who's carrying their weight around here? Who is not? That's the kind of conversation that marriage counselors want every couple to have, touching base with each other. Natural family planning couples have that conversation.

Most people who use natural family planning have contracepted at one time. They know the difference between a contracepted relationship and an NFP one. Nearly all of them testify that their NFP relationship is definitely better than their contraceptive relationship was. When they were contracepting they rarely had conversations about having or not having babies. They decided they were not having a baby for another 3 or

4 or 5 years. They just get all involved in their own world and don't talk about the mutual world they should inhabit.

NFP strengthens a couple's relationship with God. Catholics who come to accept the Church's teaching on contraception generally have a whole new respect for their church. It's an incredible Church that has this teaching. The Church clearly isn't trying to win a popularity contest. It teaches against contraception because this is God's truth, not man's truth. These are God's laws, not man's laws. Some of God's laws are very peculiar to us. But when we live by them, when we love our enemies, for instance, we're usually a lot better off than when we hate them. And it's counterintuitive to think you ought to love your enemies. But if we live by that then we've got a better world. We thought contraception was going to be great, but maybe it's not. My view is that if people stop using contraception, we will reduce the problems in society. Poverty will go down. Crime will go down. People will generally be happier and better off.

Slide: Coronation of Mary

Married couples are meant to represent the marriage of Christ and his Church. Christ is the bridegroom, the Church is the bride. Couples are meant to symbolize for the rest of us the devotion, the love, the commitment, the unconditional laying down of your life for your bride, which Christ, the bridegroom did for Mary and for the Church, his bride. It's an incredible thing. It's an incredible responsibility and one not accomplished by the 50 to 60 percent of the marriages in our culture that end in divorce. When I meet couples who have been married for 15 years or longer, I want to thank them. They've done something good for all of us. For their children, for each other, and for all if us. Divorce is hard on everyone; it is hard for the couple, for their children, and for the rest of us to see all that goes on. When we think of what it takes to have a marriage last, we realize it is very difficult. The spouses need to learn to forgive and to ask forgiveness. They need to learn to put up with disappointment both in their spouses and in themselves. It's

hard to when we are a disappointment to ourselves. I think that happens a lot in marriage. We want to be better than we are and we are not. And our faults cause a lot of trouble for other people. People who have been married for 15 years or longer have done a lot of the hard work it takes to get along in this world. I believe the rewards are great for such dedication; that the satisfaction they experience is incredibly deep. I hope that they are incredibly in love with each other and it just gets better all the time. My parents have been married, as I said, for 60 years. I think they are happier and more in love now than they've ever been. They are reaping the rewards of a life that was well lived. Let's stop there and get some questions in.

Q. How would you address the misuse of NFP to control family size for selfish reasons?

A. Some people say that couples using NFP can use it just as selfishly as couples who are contracepting. I think that's possible, but I'm going to actually argue that natural family planning is the solution to the problem.

Let me explain. Let's consider two couples who both want to control their family size. Both have been married several years. Let's say that they may have 3 children under 5, and want to wait awhile before they have another child. They are tired and need some time to work on household organization, etc. One couple decides to use contraception and the other couple decides to use natural family planning. Are they doing the same thing? While both couples have the same goal, they are using different means to achieve their goals.

The Church teaches that you not only have to have a good goal, and controlling your family size can be a good goal, you have to have a good means to that goal. I think contraception, again, violates a woman's health. It's a barrier between the spouses. It's a rejection of God, etc. Natural family planning couples are living in accord with God's plan. Very importantly – they are having to deny themselves, and it is a very good thing

to be able to deny yourself in pursuit of other goods. Let's consider two individuals who both need to lose weight, one engages in bulimia – in eating and throwing up, because that person wants the pleasure of food without the consequence. Another individual diets. That denies him or herself cake, ice cream, etc, because he or she is seeking a good, which is weight loss. Through that self-denial, that dieter is probably going to rise in self-esteem, feel better about him or herself, have more self-control, probably enjoy food more than the bulimic person.

The couple who is using natural family planning is like the dieter, the contracepting couple are like a bulimic person. The NFP couple appreciates the goodness of sex but refrains from fertile sex until they are prepared to have another child. The contracepting couple treats fertility as a great annoyance if not a bad thing and they are determined to have sexual pleasure without the consequences. They are engaging in an act and as they engage in it are trying to undo the consequences of it.

The couple using NFP treat the fertile period of the woman's cycle somewhat like sacred ground. They revere it and will not enter that sacred space until they are prepared to accept the gift of a child. If it is not a good idea for them to have a child at some time, they won't engage in an action that amounts to inviting God to send them a child and at the same time rejecting that invitation. NFP means that a couple is going to have sex during the infertile times and not during the fertile times. Remember, there is no obligation to have sex during the fertile times. If there is no obligation to have sex, those who are not having sex during the fertile times are not doing something wrong by not having sex during those times. Remember that it is perfectly all right to have sex during the infertile days. So a couple is doing nothing wrong in having sex during the infertile days. We all know that couples don't have sex for a lot of reasons, headaches, sporting events they want to watch on TV, visitors in the house. Now if it's okay not to have sex because you had a headache, or you want to watch a sporting event, or you

have visitors in the house, it's okay not to have sex because it's not a good idea to have a child. That's a good reason.

Couples who teach natural family planning say a lot of people coming to them have no more openness to life than those who are contraceptive. They just are sick and tired of the bad physical side effects. But in using natural family planning they start to have more respect for their fertility. They start to have more respect for each other. They start to appreciate fertility as a gift. And some of them will have more children and some of them won't. But they have a whole different appreciation of their fertility. That suggests that NFP is a cure for using natural family planning selfishly. Abstention is difficult. When people want to have sex, they want to have sex. If they don't have a good reason for not having sex, it is difficult for them to abstain. As they discuss their reasons for abstaining, they often discover whether they are being selfish or unselfish in their decision not to have a child. So NFP has in internal mechanism for helping spouses realize their selfishness if in fact they are being selfish.

Q. How did the Church arrive at the conclusion that NFP is a viable family planning practice as opposed to completely putting one's trust in God?

A. Putting trust in God does not mean not planning. God gave us our reason. And He gave us our reason to plan. I honestly don't know anybody who at the end of every month empties out their bank account and gives it to the poor. No one insists that "God will provide. Trust in God. I'm just going to give away every penny every month." We pretty much know that God doesn't ask us to do that. Save some, give some away. He gave us our reason to plan. We don't just eat whatever we want and expect God to keep us at our best weight. No one counsels: "Just eat whatever you want and trust in God. You won't get diabetes." Isn't it rather that God wants us to use our reason to live moderately? We have to govern all of our appetites, and

sometimes even the appetite for children needs to be governed. In marriage it's not always a good idea to have another child at this time. Hopefully, eventually, the parents will be able to have more children.

Humanae Vitae says that some couples make the prudent and generous decision to have a large family. But note that it speaks of a prudent decision. The spouses should be confident they can meet the demands of a large family. Some people are such good parents and so stable that it is a prudent decision on their part to "just let the babies come." I've got many friends who have very large families of 8, 9, 10, 11 children. Most of them are very stable people. I don't know where they came from. Maybe having children makes people stable. I don't know, there's something about them that's really special. Some of them might say everyone ought to do what they would do. But I don't think that is necessary true. Some people can have six children and go to daily mass and get a medical degree and run the local Right to Life group and go on missions to foreign lands and run in marathons. They have an energy level that defies belief and that not everyone has. Not all of us have the same gifts; not all are called to do the same things. We need to accept who we are and live in accord with the gifts God has given us.

On the other hand, it is easy for some of us to look for the easy life. A lot of us need to learn stretch ourselves in most every respect. Most of us need to give away more money than we do. Most of us have to volunteer more time than we do. And probably a lot of people should consider having a somewhat larger family than they are initially comfortable with. But I see nothing in Church teaching that says that we're supposed to let the babies come unless you make a decision that you can handle that.

Q. Isn't having sex only when one can't get pregnant, using NFP, not giving oneself completely in the act of marriage?

A. Again, it is possible to use NFP selfishly. Some couples simply don't want to have more children because they don't want to take on the additional responsibility. That's selfish. And those people are not giving of themselves completely.

But we also need to be clear that sometimes it is an act of self-giving not to have sex. Often having sex is the selfish act. People who don't have sex before marriage, for instance, are giving of themselves very completely. It's those who are having sex that are being selfish. They want a pleasure without commitment. I find that people who are chaste before marriage find NFP quite natural to use; they abstained before marriage precisely because they loved each other and it was not appropriate to give themselves to each other sexually. Their not having sex was a loving and self giving act. The same thing can be in marriage. One or the other spouse is tired. One spouse would like to have sex, the other wouldn't. "Not tonight, dear." There is considerable disappointment on the other end. But if the disappointed spouse doesn't pressure for sex, that is an act of self giving. That person doesn't put any pressure on you because it's not good. It's not good right now. That person walking out of the room is giving completely of himself or herself because it's not good to engage in this act at this time. So, I'm going to say yes, you can be giving of yourself completely by not having sex.

Q. How does cohabitation cause an increase in divorce rate?

A. Cohabitation is not a good preparation for many reasons. Consider how it begins. In our culture, those who begin serious relationships have often not made a very careful choice of a partner; they have not considered whether they want to have children with this person or to marry this person. Many couples start having sex fairly early in an intense relationship; if not early on, then eventually. They wonder why they are paying rent at two places. So they move in together. Pretty soon after they move in together they stop having the kinds of conversations they should have to build a relationship. When you move in with someone, it's very awkward to move out. Important

conversations are avoided because they might lead to fights and fights might lead to a separation. Moving out means that somebody has to find a new apartment. It's embarrassing and costly. So all of these conversations that couples should have, they don't have. They don't have them until after marriage and then they discover that they have huge incompatibilities about really important matters.

I saw a segment of Oprah one day featuring couples who had lived together for a year and a half and decided to get married. They spent a whole year planning their wedding, some huge extravaganza. When the wedding came, they just rolled out of bed in the morning, went off to the wedding, and experienced no real change in their relationship except that the wedding was over. These couples reported that as they were driving away from the wedding, they looked at each other and said, "What's next?" Their life had just been planning a wedding together, not a life together.

And then what happens? Two or three years after they get married one or the other says, "I think maybe we should start planning our family now." And the other one says, "What? What do you mean now? Why now?" The response: "I'm not getting any younger. I only had one brother. And I thought I'd like to have my kids have brothers and sisters. I'd like to have three or four kids." The spouse replies, "Three or four, where'd you ever get that idea? We've got college loans to pay off. Where did you get that idea?" The couple had no conversation about how many children they wanted to have previous to marriage. Or they might disagree about the practice of religion. One spouse decides to return to going to church on Sunday. That other asks, "Church, where'd that come from? You don't go to church. Why go to church?" The spouse replies, "Well once we start our family, that's how I'd like to raise the kids, in church." "What? You don't expect me to go, do you? What is happening? Are you becoming some kind of a fanatic?" Marriages break up over these sorts of things.

When I speak to college students I tell them that within the first few weeks if not days of dating someone they need to make it clear that they are not going to have sex before marriage, they want to have children and they will be practicing their faith. If the person they are dating doesn't agree, find someone new. Don't fall in love with someone and then find out that that person does not share your values. In our culture, people have sex, live together and then get to know each other. That is backwards; you should get to know someone, fall in love with the person, and then get married and have sex. Sexual intercourse should be moving the relationship to a new level, a relationship that already has a firm and solid foundation.

One problem is that too few people in our culture know what their values are. They don't know how many children they want to have. They don't know whether they believe in God and want to go to church. Years later they figure it out and they look at this person and think, "What I am doing with this person?? We don't have the same values and same aims in life."

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