##



**AN INVESTIGATION ON THE FACTORS BEHIND THE NON-APPLICATION OF THE CHURCH’S TEACHING AGAINST THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL CONTRACEPTION.**

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**A Long Paper submitted as a requirement for the completion of a Bachelor of Theology (Honours) Degree**

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**DATE 25 JANUARY 2021**

# DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment in the program of study leading to the award of the Bachelor of Theology (Honours) Degree is entirely my work and has not been submitted for assessment for any academic purpose than in partial fulfilment for that stated above.

SIGNED: ………………………………………

CANDIDATE: (1708)

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# DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my beloved parents José Luís and Luciana Lapis who raised me and taught me the value of human life and also the sacrifice they had on me and my siblings by making sure that we experienced the glimpse of the Kingdom of God during our humble upbringing. I also dedicate it to my twin brother Julio and my two sisters Carlota and Celina. May God bless you and allow you to continue enjoying His favour.

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# ABBREVIATION

CCC Catechism of the Catholic Church

CCL The Code of Canon Law

CEM Episcopal Conference of Mozambique

Co Company

DV *Donum Vitae*

EV *Evangellium Vitae*

Ed Editor

Edn Edition

GS *Gaudium et Spes*

HV *Humanae Vita*

HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IUD An intrauterine device

MOH Mozambique, conducted by the Ministry of Health

No Number

NFP Natural Family Planning

NGO’s Non-Governmental Organisations

STDs Sexually Transmitted Diseases

UN United Nations

Vol Volume

YCS Young Christian Student

# Books of the Bible

Gen Genesis

Ps Psalms

Wis Wisdom

Dt Deuteronomy

Jn John

Matt Matthew

Rom Romans

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#

# ABSTRACT

Morality forms part of human life there is an increase in the number of the Roman Catholic faithful to defenceless human beings, especially in the Diocese of Beira, Mozambique. Their fundamental rights to live their faith well is not respected and recognized most times. Many faithful Christians are using contraceptive methods, some are forced by their social environment, others use them for pleasure.

We are to protect and fight for human rights and life at all costs. Using contraceptive methods and its practices are now affecting Christians in the Dioceses of Beira Mozambique. This may happen because of various factors, but every person has the responsibility to protect human life. However, this paper seeks to explore human life and dignity against contraceptive methods practices according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and how it views the bible scriptures, despite various delicate moral problems of today, as it contains the basis for moral truth. Although it may not be possible to apply all the literal interpretations of the Church alone to all the new problems facing morality in our times such as globalization in economics, communications, overpopulation, confusion in trades and professions, and the development of sophisticated military technologies, but the conscience of each Christians is the drive over their life and what they profess. It also examines the concept of human life and dignity beginning from the scriptures, the theologians, and Church documents. Thereafter, the paper gives moral recommendations on how to curb the practice of contraceptives. It uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in gathering information. It uses interviews with selected key informants to establish the extent of the problem and also library materials to achieve its purpose. The paper argues that human life is sacred because human beings are made in the image of God; hence, an act of contraception is wrong because it attacks human life and dignity.

# Background

The Church points to two major sources of moral teaching, one that is found in human nature itself (the natural law), the other is which is revealed by God (divine law). God has given the Church the gift to teach the truth about right living and correct believing. Following the etiquettes of the natural law and the dignity of the human body, the Catholic Church doctrine is against the use of artificial contraceptives because artificial contraceptives frustrates the procreative purpose of the conjugal act. This teaching is based on the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae* by Pope Paul VI; and the Theology of the Body by Pope John Paul II.

Concerning this matter of contraceptives, the faithful use the artificial contraceptive methods because they perceive them to be the better and more reliable family planning methods, hence they can easily choose when and how many children to have in their marital life. Also, people favour artificial family planning methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies outside marriage. This is against the doctrine of the church which encourages the natural method because they facilitate the fidelity of married couples in marital life. The church encourages the couples to read the signs of body in the menstrual cycle and know the right time to have intercourse.

Regardless of the fact that the Catholic Church discourages the use of artificial contraceptives, some observe in this research that the Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Beira Mozambique use artificial family planning methods. The faithful use these methods not because they are ignorant of the teaching of the Church on contraceptives, but they find them more reliable than natural family planning methods. It is in the light of this background that this paper seeks to investigate the reasons behind this discrepancy.

# STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the church’s teaching in the encyclical *Humane vitae*, which prohibits the use of artificial contraceptives under whatever circumstances. Practising Catholics are using artificial contraceptives either for birth control, protection from sexually transmitted diseases or to hide promiscuous activities. One wonders why such a deviant behaviour is found among devout Christians. To add on, this research seeks to investigate the factors behind the use of artificial contraceptives by church members and the community.

# PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The paper is aimed at finding out why the Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Beira use artificial family planning methods regardless of the Church teaching, which emphasizes the use of natural family planning methods.

# OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

* To investigate factors behind the non-application of the Church’s teaching on artificial contraceptives.
* To help people appreciate the reasons the Church is against artificial contraception.
* To expose the debates on the use of artificial contraceptives.
* To find out people’s traditional and religious understanding on contraceptives.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the official teaching of the Church on the morality of artificial contraception?
2. What are the arguments of the theologians who judge that artificial contraception is licit in certain circumstances?

# JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The paper benefits the people because it enlightens or reminds them of the moral teaching of the Catholic Church regarding artificial contraception. The reader will appreciate the comparison of artificial contraception at the angle of the Church and outside the Church. It benefits the people because it is going to present the stance against the use of artificial contraception. The research may unearth the factors behind non-application of the Church’s teaching on contraceptives. This information will inform the church’s action on the matter.

# LIMITATIONS

# This paper is going to focus on the Catholic moral perspective on artificial contraception. However, we will not dwell much on the view of the general populace, which is to support artificial contraception. To add on, it will not look at the general view on contraceptives since it is not our centre of focus, rather, the focus is going to be on Church’s teachings and it’s values concerning the artificial contraception.

# ASSUMPTION

The paper assumes is that the Church teaching against the use of artificial contraption is valid.

# METHODOLOGY

The methodology in this paper is going to be qualitative and focusing with library research. Data also will be collected by observing and interviewing the faithful of the Diocese of Beira, Mozambique. Getting views from some Parish faithful is field based. The paper will make use of questionnaires and interviews the concerning the topic and what the Catholic Church teaches regarding the morality of artificial contraception.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

The first source we are going to mention in our literature review is the Bible. This is because it is the primary source for all the teachings of the Church. However, some argue that Scripture does not mention the morality of contraception. Many people feel uncomfortable that Christianity involves moral teaching. It is important to keep in mind that the matters mandated by just moral laws, especially on human dignity are practical expressions of God’s love for us, since they articulate what is compatible with our happiness even though there are scholars who argue that the attack was not on contraception but on disobedience of the law.

This statement is utterly opposed to the moral life which is not open to life but simply for pleasure of the two parties involved, divine law and human law. This is the same view that other documents have like the Second Vatican Council’s document on Divine Revelation*, Dei Verbum by Pope Pius XI, the Encyclical Humanae vitae by Pope Paul VI, the Catechism (1691) of the Catholic Church, The Code of Canon Law*.

The research will also focus on some scholars who have written a lot regarding the teaching on contraception by the Church. For the sake of balance, the paper will also look at some scholars who argue against the stance of the Church regarding artificial contraception. These would include scholars like V. Genovesi and Fr Charles Curran, who strongly oppose the contents of the *Humanae Vitae*.

# OUTLINE

Introduction

Chapter 1: The general view on human dignity and use of Contraceptives in Moral life

Chapter 2: The Church’s Teaching on Human life and Moral life today

Chapter 3: The right and wrong way of behaviour on artificial contraception in the society.

Conclusion.

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The paper is going to present the teaching of the Catholic Church on contraception this is one of the most controversial issue in society today. This issue raises mixed feelings among people, yet every culture and society have its own rules that aim at protecting human life. The value of human life is a fundamental part of human existence. In as far as the practice of contraception is concerned, it is common that the strong impose their will on the weak for their own selfish reasons. Therefore, contraception according to the teaching of the Church is an evil practice worth fighting against. This is the reason the Church has tirelessly condemned abortion because it is murder.

 Some argue every human person has inherent dignity because he or she is made in the image of God, and no human person may evade the purpose of bearing fruit. First intercourse is for begetting life within couples, but it is open for pleasure for certain stages in married couples.

The first chapter discusses the concept of human life and dignity. It traces the understanding of human life and dignity from the Scriptures, the theologians, and then finally, the Church documents. It argues that every human person has dignity because he or she is made in the image of God, and this sets him apart from other creatures. This also implies that the human person possesses rationality and God trusted him or her with stewardship over all creation. Henceforth, he or she ought to be responsible for whatever he or she does. The second chapter is to discuss three major phases regarding the moral understanding on contraception, and two views; scientific and scriptural views. Also, it dwells much on the story of Onan, which is more vivid, for contraception, the present-day teaching on contraception by the magisterium and several arguments raised by certain theologians. We started by looking at the contraceptive methods developed in the last three centuries and how well advanced they have become by now. The third chapter will present the responses of some Catholic theologians to the Catholic Church’s continued prohibition of artificial contraception. This paper will start by looking at the developments and advancements in the methods used for artificial contraception in the past three centuries. After this paper will present the arguments from some Catholic theologians who argued against the prohibition of artificial contraception. In the last chapter will present my evaluation of the whole debate on contraception.

# Chapter 1.

# The general view on human dignity and the use of Contraceptives in Moral life.

# 1.0 Introduction

##

One of the most dominant and debatable themes in Moral Theology is the morality of artificial contraception. The report on the Strategic Assessment of Unsafe on artificial contraception in the diocese of Beira in Mozambique, conducted by the Ministry of Health (MOH) shows that artificial contraception is helping most people to control the number of children a couple may have in marital life and also to prevent sexually transmitted diseases. This chapter explores the general view of human dignity and the use of Contraceptives in Moral life. First, it gives a brief profile of Human dignity and the definition of contraception. Finally, the conclusion?

## **1.1 Human dignity**

This human capacity is crucial for the moral development of all humanity and human dignity. Equally cogent in contemporary society is the desire to attain full happiness together with unlimited liberty, freedom to act under one’s whims, without the constraint of any norms (The Bible and Morality # 19). For some people, such unlimited freedom is in fact fundamental for the attainment of true happiness. (Callahan 348).

However, for the Church, performing artificial contraceptive, abortion, and euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide is not justifiable because it goes against the natural inclination of life to preserve itself, it is also against natural law, namely against the cosmological and moral universal order which implies absolute respect for and protection of human life (Ziebertz 116). It goes against human dignity; where human life has an absolute value and cannot be harmed or minimized by institutions or positive laws (117).

Knowing that I have gained about the value of human life and human dignity, I was horrified to discover that there is much contraception in the world. It shows how human dignity is important. Although there is a lot of literature that deals with contraception and human dignity. The key document that the essay relies on is *Gaudium et Spes* [Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World]. It claims from a scriptural viewpoint that man was created in the image of God and can know and love his Creator, and was appointed by Him as master of all earthly creatures that he might subdue them and use them to God's glory (GS 12). To this effect, human dignity is rooted in scripture and comes from God. Human life is sacred because every human person reflects God most having been created in God’s image. From this assertion, an act of contraception infringes the dignity that a human person possesses.

## **1.2 Biblical Background and Understanding of Human Life and Dignity**

A person’s dignity comes from God and is of God because the human person is made in God’s own image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27). Human life is sacred because the human person is the most central and clearest reflection of God in the universe. Human beings have transcendent worth and value that comes from God; this dignity is not based on any human quality, legal mandate, or individual merit or accomplishment.[[1]](#footnote-1)

As stated above, the teaching on human dignity springs from the fact that a human person is made in the image of God. In the Book of Genesis, we read God created man in His own image and likeness (Gen 1:26f; 5:1; 9:6). The inspired author of this book uses the expression, "image and likeness of God” to imply that “man is the apex of God's earthly creation, and has been granted a special place in the order of earthly creation; first, in relation to other creatures and creations, and second, in relation to God Himself” (Slesinski 36).[[2]](#footnote-2) The Psalmist supports this assertion, thus, “God, you examine and know me, you know if I am standing or sitting, you read my thoughts from far away whether I walk or lie down, you are watching. You know every detail of my conduct [….]” (Ps 139). God, who is omniscient knows well the creature He made in His own image and likeness. He endowed such a creature with dignity and man cannot escape His presence. Certainly, an attack on human dignity given to him through creation is an attack on his Creator too. The treatment we give to human persons who are made in God’s image shows how we value God. The practice of contraception is a direct attack on the dignity of the human person. They violate the sacredness of this life, a gift that God gave to a human person whom he created in his image. Certainly, in exploring the mystery in the light of the fifth commandment, “you shall not kill” (Dt. 5:17), God “expects us to stand in awe of human life, to have a profound respect for the dignity of the human person” (254). Respecting human life and dignity implies that they adhere to the core value of humanity by looking again at life issues that are related to the fifth commandment. Among the prominent theologians to have written on human life and dignity are Thomas Aquinas, Greek Fathers [Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasios, and Origen], Joseph Ratzinger, and Avery Dulles.

Avery Dulles claims that at the basis of Christian morality lives within the dignity of the human person. Human dignity is the root of Christian ethical thought. According to this view, “even without the benefit of biblical revelation, many non-religious thinkers regard the dignity of the human person as practically self-evident, since human persons, being endowed with intelligence, and free will, are superior to mere things. Christians believe human beings were made in the image of God [Gen 1:26-27]” (133). Thus, freedom of choice and capability to reason out things set a difference from other creatures that God created. Only human beings did God create in their own image. Dulles complements that “when fallen, they were redeemed by the blood of Christ. Since all human persons have this dignity, they enjoy fundamental equality” (133). This means that all human beings are equal because of being made in the image of God, and no one can take away that privilege from them. This dignity[[3]](#footnote-3) is never lost.

## **1.3 Evangelium Vitae**

In the “Gospel of Life” (EV), John Paul II suggests that there are several life issues that attack human dignity and among them is abortion. He argues that “such attacks strike human life at the time of its greatest frailty, when it lacks any means of self-defence serious is the fact that most often, those attacks are carried out in the very heart of and with the complexity of the family—the family which is called to be the sanctuary of life” (EV 11). Definitely, contraception degrades and attacks human dignity then points to where procreation must be defended, still everyone is called to preserve and safeguard human life. Also, John Paul II asserts that the life which God gives man differs from the life of all other living creatures, because man, although formed from the dust of the earth [Gen 1:7] is a manifestation of God in the world, a sign of his presence, a trace of glory [Gen 1:26-27, Ps 8:6]. According to him, “… man has been given sublime dignity based on the intimate bond which unites him to the Creator: In man there shines forth a reflection of God himself” (EV 34). The Clergy and leaders of other denominations, religious men, and women all have the duty and moral responsibility to teach the faithful on the immorality of contraception and how this practice affects negatively on human dignity.

## **1.4 Contraceptives**

It is important, before we go further, to define our terms clearly to avoid future confusion. According to the Oxford Dictionary of English, contraception noun (mass noun) the deliberate use of artificial methods or other techniques to prevent pregnancy because of sexual intercourse. The major forms of artificial contraception are barrier methods of which the commonest is condom or sheath; the contraceptive pill, which contains synthetic sex hormones which prevent ovulation in the female; intrauterine devices, such as the coil, which prevent the fertilized ovum from implanting in the uterus; and male or female sterilization (378). According to the Colombo in the dictionary of theology, contraception/birth control is referring to any attempt to render heterosexual intercourse sterile or prevent the conception of a child by artificial means, there two basic types of contraception those that inhibit the union of the sperm and ovum (279).

 John Hall D. in the dictionary of ethics, contraception aims by various means to prevent conception or pregnancy after sexual intercourse. In the same line, some have distinguished contraception, as affecting the act of sexual intercourse, from sterilization, which affects the sexual faculty or power to procreate, but the more common understanding today views sterilization as contraception when it is used to prevent pregnancy (174). When we deal with “contraception, or the broader term “birth control,” certain images of pills may come into our minds. However, as we will see, birth control is a mind-set, an intention, more than it is a device that is used. In fact, it will be argued that the use of a device is unnecessary for a practice to fall under the category of birth control or contraception.

Birth control and contraception are similar, even though the former terminology is broader than the latter. I have done this mainly to remind the reader that the two familiar terms both have the same goal: the former “to control whether someone gives birth to a child” (and thus in our present discussion to control whether a child is conceived) and the latter to counter the conception of a child. The goal of these commonly used terms then is to prevent a child whose existence would normally result from a sexual act, from coming into the world. Therefore, the definition of this action, according to Bryan Hodge, birth control or contraception is any practice, with or without a device, that is used by an individual involved in the sexual act, to prevent the climax of that act (12). There is no clear passage or text in the Bible that can be said to tackle contraception, thus the debate on the use of contraception still lacks a general conclusion among the Christian churches. However, although the Scriptures do not touch directly on contraception, the story of Onan recorded in the book of Genesis certainly played a part in the debate's history on contraception. Briefly, the story is about Onan, the second son of Judah, who married Tamar, the widow of his elder brother, Er. The Levirate law of Judaism required that if the older brother dies, the second oldest brother should marry the widow to preserve the family line. Following this law, Onan married Tamar, but he knew that the children born of their marriage would not be counted as his, but as his brothers, thus whenever he had sexual intercourse with her, he wasted his seed on the ground. This made God angry, thus he punished Onan by taking his life (Genesis 38).

### **1.4.1 The Methods and kind of Artificial Contraception**

##

“This called for more advanced methods of birth control”. The call for more advanced methods was responded to in the 19th century by the development of the forerunners of modern diaphragms, spermicidal agents, cervical caps, condoms, and methods of sterilization. These methods were more acceptable; thus, they were widely used. The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the development of the intrauterine device known as the IUD in medical language. The latest of the new contraceptive methods was oral contraception, popularly known as ‘the pill’, which was first marketed in the 1960s (Allgeier 223). Though this method is said not to be fully effective, it has gained immense popularity amongst many people and is widely used. It is also being used outside marriage to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Though it has side effects for some women, it is easy to use and does not interfere with the sexual act. “The notion that people should may control the number of children they produce, independent of the frequency of their sexual intimacy, continues to be a topic of controversy” (Allgeier 223). With introducing the new, advanced, and effective methods of contraception, many scholars, theologians, activists, and others stood to support artificial contraception.

### **1.4.2 Natural Birth control methods**

Categorically, birth control can be divided between natural and artificial methods. Natural methods of contraception do not involve any outside chemical or device to implement and rely only on the restraint of the individual sexual partners to abstain or limit sexual activity when conception is most likely. Artificial methods do not require individual restraint and instead rely on devices or chemicals to prevent pregnancy regardless of when the sexual activity occurs. The specific methods include restricting sexual intercourse to those days of post-ovulation infertility; extending breastfeeding to postpone ovulation (known as the lactational amenorrhea method); coitus interruptus, and nonvaginal intercourse of these methods the first two, have been endorsed by all religious groups. The latter two methods are referenced in the Old Testament early withdrawal is showed as the sin of Onan, while nonvaginal intercourse is collectively labelled sodomy and both practices were identified as sins (Zorea Aharon W.4).

### **1.4.2. Natural family planning**

Restricting sexual activity to those days of post-ovulation is often called natural family planning (NFP). It is the only method explicitly endorsed by the Catholic Church because it relies on individual restraint rather than artificial contraception. Typically, women ovulate a little more or less than two weeks after the last menstruation. The ovum is viable for 12 to 24 hours, but sperm can survive for up to three days, so sexual intercourse in the days immediately prior to ovulation may still result in pregnancy (Zorea Aharon W. 4).

### **1.4.3 Artificial birth control methods**

Artificial birth control methods require some technological help, whether as a pill, an ointment, or a device. Any technology used to prevent conception, regardless of its form, is called a contraceptive. Although occasionally successful in killing or blotching some of them during intercourse, their effectiveness was unpredictable, and the side effects could be painful, including rashes, inflammation, and other infections. Experiments with oral contraceptives during the Middle ages, often described as potions, used arsenic or mercury, resulting in much more dangerous reactions. The last is the condom, which might be considered the first science-based contraceptive (Zorea Aharon W., 6**).**

### **1.4.4. Contraceptives in Moral life**

The sexual act is evil while using artificial pills or devices to prevent birth, and no circumstances or intention can justify one in using such methods. This denies not only children but also prevents total self-giving love from being expressed in such an act. It has the further result of introducing self-fulfilments as the primary value into the most important natural act of all, the one which leads to human life. Natural family planning is not contraception and so it is objectively completely different in its moral nature. The human decision to refrain from the sexual act is not contraception. Taken in the right circumstances and for the right intention, natural family planning is cooperation with justice in the transmission of life and not a denial of his rights. A physician who would help perform the sexual act in which the possibility of birth is excluded by prescribing some artificial means to prevent birth would cooperate with the evil of contraception. One could not do this with a correct conscience (HV 16).

The morality of any human action is determined by the object of the act, the motives, and intentions of the agent, the circumstances of the situation, and the consequences of that action. Non-conceptive motives for engaging in sexual intercourse include companionship, love, pleasure, celebration, and comfort. All these are morally worthy, without the concurrent occurrence of procreative significance. It is through the use of modern contraceptives that these motives are facilitated. Benefits of using modern contraceptives include simple family planning, lowering of maternal morbidity and mortality, infant and child mortality and ill-health, a substantial increase in women’s education and contribution to the common good and minimizing the probability of spreading HIV and STDs. Genovesi, in commenting on such Catholic theologians‟ responses to *Humanae Vitae*, concluded his discussion by highlighting that a good number of Catholic theologians maintained the possibility for any married couple to decide morally to engage in contraceptive intercourse. However, he argued that there should be three conditions: first, the couple should agree that contraception is a moral option given their circumstances; second, the method decided upon should be mutually acceptable; and third, the couple must remain open and honest in periodically re-evaluating their situation to avoid entrapment in the contraceptive mentality that remains a constant and basic threat to marital and family life (206). According to the Genovesi, this is the effect of the contraceptives in moral life and it’s against the mean of human dignity and also the creation, sense is above all in the entirely unmerited offer of a privileged, intimate relationship between human beings and God–covenant” (The Bible and Morality #4). However, according to what is described, morality is a dimension of the human behaviour and is not primarily the human response but a revelation of God’s purpose and of the divine gift of bringing up the likeness. For the Christian Scriptures, morality is the consequence of the experience of God, and more precisely the God-given human life. Therefore, to make it to be artificial contraception in the moral life, the leads to treating the other to one’s own selfish interests, even if there is the agreement by the couple to use contraceptives.

According to John Rziha, grace perfects nature, it is no surprise that divine revelation confirms and gives even greater meaning to the natural meaning of sex. In Genesis 1:27-28, the procreative meaning is revealed. And Genesis 2:23-24 reveals the unitive meaning of the sexual act. In the New Testament, unity within marriage comes from the love within God and is a sign of the love between Christ and the Church. The sexual act communicates the love between spouses, when God’s grace unites a couple in a marriage act, sexual act conveys the unconditional and eternal love of God. Artificial birth control (contraception or sterilization) also violates both the procreative and unitive end of sex. Contraception is not moral conformity with the good intention of avoiding pregnancy (John Rziha, 18).

## **1.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the view on human dignity and the use of Contraceptives in Moral life. It deliberated on the definition of Human dignity, contraception and the overview to make contraception in moral life. Thereafter, it looked at the root causes of the methods, the procedures for artificial contraceptives, and finally, how some authors defend the use of contraception to overcome human life and dignity, and moral life.

# Chapter 2.

# The Church’s Teaching on Human life and Moral life today

# 2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the Church’s Teaching on Human life and Moral life today and human dignity as it has been presented in the Catholic Social Teaching. This is to look at how the social teaching of the Church’s perception or comments what it concerning the dignity of a person. In addition, this chapter shall look at the understanding of the Church on human dignity. We will look at what some Popes and councils like the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council said concerning the dignity of a person. This paper will dwell so much on Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII. There are some theologians who also mention human dignity in connection to human rights, like Thomas Aquinas, who looks at the various rights that people have that promote their dignity.

## **2.1 The Source of Human Dignity**

That human dignity is the focus of human life is made clear by two beliefs. The first factor worth mentioning is that humanity was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) therefore it should be given special attention. The second factor is that God himself, through incarnation, assumed a human nature through the Son and he was human like any other human being besides sin. It is that nature which humanity assumed that is worth respecting. In another sense, the Catholic Church Teaching derives its notion of human dignity from Revelation Chapter in Bible. Section 22 of the Pastoral Constitution in the Second Vatican Council clearly states that, “… Human nature, because it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by his incarnation, he, the son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man…” Himes makes a similar statement when he claims that, “the doctrines of creation and incarnation, central affirmations of our creed, lead us to affirm the dignity of each person” (29). Reinhold Niebuhr, being a protestant theologian, argues that, because of man’s fallen nature due to ‘Original Sin’, we cannot have pure love for the other. In this sense, Neibuhr distrusts the human capacity which, he argued, was completely fallen, so it had lost that image of God. This also meant that, that human dignity is lost to Original Sin. The Catholic Church, however, argues that, though humanity fell, by God’s grace it did not fall completely. It kept the image of God through reason and the grace of God.

The creation story in the book of Genesis endows man with a certain level of dignity which distinguishes him or puts him at a higher level than all the other animate and inanimate creation. In the New Dictionary of Catholic Social Teaching there is an explanation that, “The OT theme of the conclusion of a covenant between God and humankind firmly establishes this dignity additionally by God’s unique devotion to those God created, who are therefore and definitively withdrawn from the arbitrariness of others” (Dwyer 455). When this covenant was made between God and the Israelites, it was not only limited to the Israelites but for all nations. It states that, “Human dignity is in this sense then, inviolable and inalienable. It cannot be taken from anyone endowed with it, nor can the person renounce it” (455). In this sense, the Church’s claim is that, in some situations, human dignity can be violated by the individuals themselves in their own actions or by other people’s actions upon them, but it will never be extinguished. Human dignity of an individual still stands despite any abuse.

## **2.2 Pope John Paul II**

In response to the above passage from the Vatican Council II, Karol Wojtyla comes up with four points, which he extracts from the passage. These four points begin with man who is undermined to the level of a scientific object to the level of a dignified man created in God’s image. First, he argues that this concept of the respect for human dignity can justifiably respond to the current two schools of thought rationalism and empiricism. “Rationalism and empiricism have led–and still try to do so–to the belief that man is nothing more than an object for scientific investigation… that same sort of belief has led to an awareness that man is an unknown being” (Wojtyla 102). Second, the same text makes clear the anthropological and anthropocentric character which was given to humankind by Christ. “This revelation is centred on man: Christ fully reveals person to person himself. But he does so by revealing the Father and the Father’s love” (102). This anthropocentrism comes in the sense that, through the love of God, man is given a nature close to that of God more than any other creature in that he (man) is created in the likeness of God.

This revelation through the incarnation is a reality, not just some ideology or theory. “It consists in a fact–the fact that by his incarnation the Son of God united himself with every man, became man himself, one of us: like us in all things except sin” (102). Wojtyla comments that the incarnation of Christ with all the joys and sufferings brought him close to people. Jesus enjoyed his humanity like all other human beings, and so he suffered as well and endured the pain. In his last point, Wojtyla drives his point home by stating that, “the incarnation of the Son of God emphasises the great dignity of human nature; and the mystery of redemption not only reveals the value of every human being but also shows the lengths to which the battle to save man’s dignity must go” (102).

It is this fourth point of Wojtyla at which the Catholic Church Teaching mainly aims. Every human being must be dignified, and that dignity should be safeguarded by everyone. Every individual handles the dignity of the other. In several cases, the dignity of the human person has not been respected considering “the voluntary spilling of semen outside of intercourse between man and woman is a monstrous thing, this is artificial contraception. For this is to extinguish the hope of the race and to kill before he is born a hoped for offering” (Wojtyla, 320). And also, the vast cases of abortion and euthanasia whereby human life has not been respected. Using the death penalty in some countries also diminishes the importance or value of human life, and so is the killing of innocent civilians during wars. There is also a debate on whether cloning is proper or necessary, especially human cloning, as it goes against the natural biological human development. There is also, in laboratories, embryonic stem cell research. These researches have reduced human beings to mere objects of scientific research, devaluing the sacredness of human life. The dignity of the human person has also been affected by the social oppression in everyday life whereby the rich oppress the poor and the poor try by all means to fight their way up the higher social status. Moral behaviour also influences human dignity as some people have resorted to prostitution because of poverty or just for the sake of having fun. Such people, mostly women, have reduced themselves to commodities. There are many factors which affect the dignity of the human person in our social life, and the Catholic Church Teaching calls for the safeguarding of human dignity against all these factors.

In the Catechism there is a section on the people we ought to pray for. The Council states that, “We are to pray for all humankind, without exception of enemies, nation or religion; for every man, be it an enemy, stranger or infidel, is our neighbour, whom God commands us to love, and for whom, therefore, we should discharge a duty of love, which is prayer” (488). This follows the call by St Paul in his First Letter to Timothy (chapter 2:1), whereby he calls for petitions, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving to be offered for everyone for the sake of peace lives. In the Catholic Church, there is a call for respect for each other as love, which goes to the extent of praying for each other. Praying for someone is a higher level of showing love and can only be done if the dignity of that person is respected. Therefore, the Church, in the calls for the respect for human dignity as praying for each other, that wishes each other well.

The Catechism also looks at the dignity of the poor; “Hardness and inhumanity to the poor we should also avoid” (494). This streams from Proverbs 21:13, “Whoever refuses to listen to the cry of the weak, will plead and not be heard”. There has been a great call from the teaching of Church for the consideration of human dignity. This is known as the ‘option for the venerable person at the society’. This common call is because of how much life before birth has been neglected, especially in our modern days. The Church’s call is that these issues should be respected in every way and that their rights should be respected. However, there has been a general cry from a feminist theology that the Church has neglected women and their dignity. As a result, it is their denial of their rights and dignity as human beings (121).

“Wherever there are people in need of food and drink, clothing, housing, medicine, employment, education; wherever men lack the facilities necessary for living human life or are tormented by hardships or poor health, or suffer exile or imprisonment, their Christian charity should seek them out and find them, console them with eager care and relieve them with the gift of help” (Peschke 195). He comments that this is an obligation not for a particular people, but an obligation for every individual and every nation. Peschke makes this statement in the light of the Second Vatican Council, which called for the respect of human life in that the needs of those who are lacking should be met. In this sense, the Church upholds human dignity in considering the needs of the life of human beings, not only limited to the material wellbeing of individuals but also to the spiritual wellbeing, the reason the Church has called for the teaching to humanity.

## **2.3 Various Theologians on Human Dignity**

 In talking about justice and just power, Thomas Aquinas talks about the freedom of the individual, the right to property and the right to life as the fundamental aspects which define justice within a just power. “William of Ockham, argues that, liberty and property (understood meaning a claim to those vital material things necessary for a minimum social standard of living) are rights endowed upon the human person by God, intrinsically bound to human dignity and therefore inalienable” (Dwyer 457). Robert Nozick, in Hacoois theory of justice, comments on the distribution of property claiming that, “whether a distribution is just depends entirely on how it came to be” (Lecture Notes). This is the same idea that the Church has on ownership of property. It is the right of each individual to own property, provided he gains it in the rightful way.

Pope John XXIII, in the 19th century, makes human rights the fundamental point for his ethical and social argument based on both biblical theology and the philosophy of natural law. Dwyer quotes the encyclical *Pacem in Teris* of 1963 which stated that, “Any society if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lie down as a foundation this principle that every human being is a person, his nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. Because of this, he has rights and duties, flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature” (460). The encyclical also emphasises the point that these rights are inviolable and inalienable. Pope John XXIII talks of quite several human rights which aid the respect for human dignity and these include the right to life, basic commodities, the right to freedom, opinion and information, the freedom to choose, migrate, freedom of conscience and religion. All these rights protect or safeguard human dignity.

##

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have seen that human dignity is central in the Catholic Church as the Teaching it forms its basis, thus much attention has been drawn to it. This makes the treatment of such a teaching difficult as it is very wide. It shows all members of the Christians faith as leaning from the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning some aspects of human dignity. Following the first factor, humanity was created in the image of God. The second factor is that God himself, through incarnation, assumed a human nature through the Son. The Church allows teaching of the right behaviour, which is led by the Spirit and yet seeking full possession of the truth. This dimension enables Christians and Catholics to work together in addressing some fundamental issues of human dignity in this present day, and especially those involving teaching the faithful in the Church.

This model or way of Church’s teachings above all originates from the ministry of the Church, which comprises the laity in small groups of people who worked hard to transmit the commandment of Christ to love one another and good news during times of religious persecution. Most of the Popes in Church history talk about human dignity, and some Catholic theologians. Substantial opposition has also been faced from other theologians, who argue that humanity lost its image of God therefore is not very dignified. The Catholic Church looks at the human person as an image of God who deserves to be dignified.

# Chapter 3

# The right and wrong way of behaviour on artificial contraception in the society.

# 3.0. Introduction

The previous chapter was a discussion on Human life and Moral life today. It argued that the human person possesses dignity because he or she was made in the image of God hence an act of contraception is wrong because it directly attacks this dignity. This chapter gives the right and wrong way of behaviour on artificial contraception in the society, the Church teaching on contraception, the individual theological opinions and Magisterium. Challenges in using contraceptives, particularly during youth and for married couples. Finally, the position of the church’s teaching and some recommendation programs in parishes, organized by the church but also government laws about these contraceptives and conclusion.

## **3.2 The right and wrong way of behaviour in personality**

In social evolutions, psychology endorses the idea of a naturalistic approach to ethics and moral behaviour. Evolutionary biology and cognitive psychology may be expected to explain the feeling of right and wrong and offer a basis for morality. Then right or wrong have beyond immediate worth pleasure or satisfaction, but if all life and existence come from God as we believers confess, then morality too comes from God.

## **3.3 The right way on use artificial contraception**

The right way of behaviour on artificial contraception or Birth control was started in Europe because the population was increasing and the use of birth control began as sexual intercourse is meant for procreation. People have always attempted in various ways to practice birth control using the given desired methods like withdrawal, vagina, post-coital douching absorbents, abortion, and even infanticide were employed. (Allgeier 223).

The argument was that women should may control their own reproductive capacity and not be a family of over eight or above. Intercourse for married couples if not under the use of birth control would lead to problems of uncontrolled members of the family and create demographical problems in society such as unwanted children and illegal abortions. With this in mind, married couples advocating for birth control methods also claimed that women died early because of childbearing (Metaxas).

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the development of the intrauterine device, known as the IUD in medical terms. The latest of the new contraceptive methods was oral contraception, popularly known as “the pill”, which was first marketed in the 1960s (Allgeier 223). In the same line, according to Middleberg, the population of IUD was followed, using a range of materials because of the association of pelvic inflammatory disease with the Dalkon shield version of the IUD (9).

Although this method is considered not to be fully effective, it has gained enormous popularity amongst many people, and is widely used. It is also being used outside marriage to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Though it has side effects on some women, it is easy to use and does not interfere with the sexual act. “The notion that people should may control the intercourses and the number of children they produce, independent of the frequency of their sexual intimacy, continues to be a topic of controversy” (Allgeier 223).

## **3.4 The right way on use artificial contraception**

The wrong way of behaviour regarding artificial contraception in society is seen to be morally acceptable. It has four conditions that are necessary and for those who use this method it can work well. The first condition according to the National Academy of Science (*Health Consequences for Women and Children in the Developing World*) mentions the existence of legal and reliable contraceptives. Contraceptive methods should be legalised tested, proven to be effective and should be openly used. The second condition is that there should be contraceptive education. This entails teaching people how contraceptives ought to be used, and who should use them, married couples. The third condition is easy access to contraceptives. This condition has some dangers, since these contraceptives can easily land in the wrong hands, especially those of teenagers. However, Allgeier’s point is that these contraceptives should be available in all appropriate places for easy access for those who want to use them. The last condition is that people should be motivated to use contraceptives. This encouragement to use contraceptives helps in the reduction of abortions and unwanted pregnancies. The problem, according to Allgeier, is that in most places, not all the conditions are met. Contraceptives are distributed, but without proper teaching. For him, if all these conditions are met, then there is no reason contraceptives should be condemned (227).

 In order to understand incorrect behaviour patterns regarding artificial contraception, we can look at the Church’s Tradition, known in history as the Church’s doctrine regarding contraception. John A. Hardon comments that, “In *Humanae Vitae,* Pope Paul II, appeals to the landmarks in the human Christian vision of marriage and to the teaching of the Church on the regulations of birth declaring that artificial contraception is forbidden by divine law.”

It is very necessary for every individual to understand this teaching, especially in this contemporary world where these words by Pope Paul II are questioned or challenged by many. Soranus of Ephesus (98-138) associated contraception with abortion hence he regarded them both as evil. He argued that abortion was a resort taken upon failure of contraception.

The Didache is said to be the first Christian reaction to the prevalent non-Christian custom of destroying unwanted human life or preventing it by physical or by magical means (Hardon). The Didache reminds the Christian of the two ways: the way of life and the way of death illustrating an appreciable difference between the two. It is in loving the neighbour that human life is respected, whether in actuality or in potentiality. The Didache does not directly talk of contraception, but it can be interpreted in that way. St Clement of Alexandria is also quoted by Hardon as having argued that, “To indulge in intercourse without intending children is to outrage nature, whom (we) should take as our instructor.”

## **3.5 The Magisterium’s Teaching on Contraception**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) is against some methods of contraception. It admits that there are instances whereby, for example, parents want to space their children. However, it argues that this desire should not be motivated by selfishness but should conform to the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood (506). On methods that are admissible, CCC talks of methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods as conforming to the aim criteria of morality. It argues that these methods encourage tenderness between the spouses, respect for the bodies of the spouses, and favouring the education of authenticated freedom. In contrast, the CCC argues that, “every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible is intrinsically evil” (508). According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, contraception because it hinders procreation is intrinsically evil.

According to Canon 1055 of The Code of Canon Law (CCL), “The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life and which of its own very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children” This point supports the above point in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that marriage should enhance procreation thus contraception would be a hindrance to such a gift. The Code does not state contraception directly, but it can be interpreted in that way.

*Gaudium et Spes* re-echoes the same words of canon 1055 that, “Marriage and married love are by nature ordered to the procreation and education of children” (Flannery 838). It quotes Gen 1:28 that humanity was given the task to be fruitful and multiply. Contraception is clearly against that task of multiplying. It is as well a hindrance to the multiplication of humanity. According to *Gaudium et Spes,* procreation should be regarded as a mission given to humanity by God. It states that, “Whenever Christian spouses in a spirit of sacrifice and trust in divine providence carry out their duties of procreation with generous human and Christian responsibility, they glorify the Creator and perfect themselves in Christ” (839). Procreation is one of the primary focus of marriage, though not the only focus as some spouses is not blessed with the gift of children but still ought to maintain their communion.

On 31 December 1930, Pope Pius XI issued a papal encyclical, *Casti Connubii*, (On Chaste Marriage), which for the first time explicitly prohibited Catholics from using contraception (Elaine Tyler May). It is interesting to recall that the use of contraception had not been a major problem in the past centuries for the Church, but the Lambeth Statement made contraception a burning issue, and brought chaos and division even within the Church. Pope Pius XI made two focal points against the new wave of contraception thinking. His first point was in defence of the institution of marriage against the new popular doctrine of free love. Here he argued that the conjugal act is primarily destined for the begetting of children, and mutual love is a secondary factor. His second point was against the new feministic wave, which attempted to defend women from the so-called slavery of begetting children. The Pope tried to do away with the perception of children being a burden in life rather than a blessing. Only a person who sees a child as a burden in life can view procreation as slavery. This was basically the response of Pope Pius XI to the Lambeth Conference, a response which received a lot of criticism not only from without but especially from within the Church. This included both the laity and the clergy. The methods of contraception available were more favourable and very effective, and were welcomed by many, including some members of the Catholic Church. This was just the beginning of a debate which might never end.

In the contemporary period, the only form of contraception that is accepted by the Catholic Church is Natural Family Planning. This form of contraception involves abstaining from sexual intercourse at the time that a woman is fertile during her menstrual cycle. This Natural Family Planning requires a closer attention and concentration on the changes of a woman during her cycle, especially regarding her body temperature and the composition of the cervical mucus, which tells if she is past her fertile period. “To Catholic theologians, this allows couples a measure of control over a female’s fertility without divorcing sex from its true purpose of procreation” (The Catholic Church and Contraception). However, this method is complex and very demanding, for it requires close examination plus a certain technique in observing the menstrual cycle. Following this method also entails that the couple has to go for quite several days without sexual intercourse, during the period in which the woman is fertile. These are enough reasons to make the method unpopular too many in our contemporary and advanced world. Many Catholics, including priests, do not agree with the Church’s position regarding birth control or contraception. This is clear in the way Pope Paul VI’s encyclical, *Humanae Vitae,* was challenged and criticised, even by some Catholic bishops. The article on The Catholic Church and Contraception gives an interesting comment on the bishops of Canada, who released the Winnipeg Statement shortly after the publication of the *Humanae Vitae*. In short, the Winnipeg Statement stated that couples who used birth control methods could be good and devout Catholics. This was another way of saying that there is actually nothing illicit in using birth control methods. If one remains a good and devout Catholic after using contraception, then there is nothing wrong in using it. Pope Benedict XVI talked of using condoms in a narrow range of permissible situations that are unavoidable, even though he was mistaken by others to have finally accepted contraception in the Catholic Church.

## **3.6 Dictions between Magisterium and the individual theological opinions**

### **3.6.1The Protestant Tradition on Contraception**

When discussing the individual theological opinions on contraception in the Christian churches from beginnings up to the present day. Their debate against contraception, in the Protestant tradition, as an example of how God forbade contraception. Most scholars have judged that the story does not speak directly against contraception, as it is understood in the contemporary world. The Protestant Tradition on ContraceptionOnan used the withdrawal method of contraception with Tamar and was punished by death. This story led to the conclusion among Christian churches that contraception is sinful in the eyes of God. The Protestant tradition used the story as an argument against any form of contraception. Fr. Saunders quotes Martin Luther in his work, *Commentary on Genesis*, when he stated that, “Onan… spilled his seed. That was a sin greater than adultery or incest and it provoked God to such fierce wrath that He destroyed him immediately”. In another work (name not given) that Fr Saunders quotes, Luther also comments that, “For Onan goes in to her, he lies with her and copulates, and for the point of insemination, spills the semen lest the woman conceive. Surely at such a time the order of nature established by God in procreation should be followed”. Here, Martin Luther links his argument to Genesis 1:28, in which God orders humanity to be fertile and multiply. Calvin also makes use of the story of Onan to bring out his point on contraception. Calvin commented that, as quoted by Fr Saunders, “The voluntary spilling of semen outside of intercourse between man and woman is a monstrous thing… For this is to extinguish the hope of the race and to kill before he is born a hoped for offering”. It appears as if Calvin equated the withdrawal method used by Onan to abortion and murder. For Calvin, all this was a monstrous destruction of hope. It is significant that two of the major figures of Protestantism condemned contraception as a practice which suppressed the procreative dimension of marital love. It should be noted that techniques of contraception at the time of Luther and Calvin were not as advanced as in the twenty-first century. on artificial contraception.

## **3.7 Magisterium and the individual theological opinions**

### **3.7.1 Magisterium**

 Dictions between Magisterium and the individual theological opinions by mentioning these considerations clarify that the received Catholic teaching on the morality of contraception was universally proposed by Catholic bishops in communion with one another and with the successor of Peter. Bishops and Popes repeated the teaching in official acts, and by their authority they guided, supported, and endorsed the teaching through the seminaries in its direct application. The other passion Christians of the teaching on the morality of contraception often were proposed as a moral norm, divinely revealed. Since it was proposed as revealed, *a fortiori* it was proposed as a teaching to be held definitively. Considering the research question, we denote whether the evidence alleged to show that the condemnation of contraception is divinely revealed shows this. The point we wish to make is simply this: when one who is proposing a teaching appeals to divine revelation to confirm the truth of what he proposes, he implicitly calls for an assent of divine faith, and thus proposes the teaching as one to be held definitively. Often those who proposed the received Catholic teaching on contraception explicitly appealed to Sacred Scripture. In making this explicit appeal when both those who were teaching and those who were taught regarded the passage cited as the revealed word of God—those who made it clearly implied that the teaching proposed was divinely revealed. The passage most often explicitly cited was Gen 38:9-10, concerning Onan. As we have said, it is safe to decipher from the question of what this passage shows. Whatever one thinks it shows, the fact is that this passage has revealed that contraception is gravely sinful. Two other ways of categorizing acts intended to impede procreation also imply that it is revealed that such acts are gravely evil in the characterization of contraceptive acts as homicide and adultery. From the Sermon on the Mount and the Didache down to today, Christians have used the Ten Commandments as a framework to be authentically developed by expansion and deepening for their own moral formation. To call contraceptive acts “homicide” or “anticipated homicide” or “quasi homicide” or “interpretively homicide” was to assimilate them to a species of acts everyone believed to be condemned by divinely given moral law, and so was implicitly to propose the condemnation of contraception as revealed. The same is true when contraceptive acts were characterized as adulterous. If one considers the explicit appeals made to Gen 38:9-10 together with the implicit appeals made to the same passage, to Rom 1:26-27, and to the Ten Commandments, one realizes that most who handed on the Catholic teaching on contraception claimed the authority of Scripture, which they believed to be the authority of divine revelation, to support this teaching.

## **3.8 Theology of the Body**

Pope John Paul II’s discussion on *Humanae Vitae* formed the culmination of his Theology of the Body. ‟ His discussion on contraception began on 11 July 1984. Pope John Paul was very much in line with his predecessors, Pope Pius XI, Pius XII and Paul VI, even though he introduced novel ways of looking at the marital act and its meaning. This involved his use of the analogy of ‘language’. Just as verbal language conveys meaning, so too the human person expresses meaning through acts of the body. This is now common with psychologists talking of body language. Pope John Paul used the term to describe the specific way that men and women speak to each other through the marital act itself (Williams 1). This approach of Pope John Paul II applies to the question of contraception. “If the marital act as language bespeaks total self-giving, the deliberate limiting of that gift would affect the truth of the act” (Williams 2).

## **3.9 Humanae Vitae’s Position on Contraception**

The commission assigned by the Council Fathers consisted, in its ultimate form, of sixty-five members, including social scientists, cardinals, bishops, priests, married couples, single men and women. This shows how intense the discussion was. For two years people awaited Pope Paul VI’s response to the suggestions of the commission. On 25 July 1968, the Pope issued an encyclical letter, *Humanae Vitae*. The opening section of the letter read, “However, the conclusions arrived at by the commission could not be considered by us as definite and absolutely certain… certain approaches and criteria for a solution to this question had emerged which were at variance with the moral doctrine on marriage constantly taught by the magisterium of the Church” (HV 6). With this remark, the Pope gave a judgment which was disappointing to many who had been waiting for an end to prohibition of artificial contraception. Thus, Pope Paul VI through his encyclical letter maintained the Catholic Church’s stance, which prohibited the use of artificial contraception. Genovesi states that the rationale of the encyclical is that every marriage act must be open to the transmission of life (HV 11).

## **3.10 Individual theological opinions**

*In Wojtyla, Karol’s Love and Responsibility Central to Wojtyla’s* argument is the contrast between the personalistic and the utilitarian views of marriage and of sexual relations. The former views marriage as an interpersonal relationship, in which the well-being and self- realization of each partner are of overriding importance to the other. It is only within this framework that the full purpose of marriage can be realized. Then Wojtyla argued that divorce, artificial methods of birth control, adultery, pre-marital sex, and sexual perversions are all in various ways incompatible with the personalistic view of the sexual self-realization of the human person. Martin *Rhonheimer* has helpfully written that “it does not seem that the difference between contraception and periodic continence is because of their different intentional relations towards ‘the beginning of a person’s life’ but to their different intentions regarding *sexual activity* and its being a *cause* of the initiation of new life” (84).

Natural family planning is called “natural” because it respects the inherent procreative meaning of the conjugal act and works with a woman’s cycle to avoid or achieve pregnancy. It recognizes in a woman’s nature not as an obstacle, but as the blessed intent of its creator. As Wojtyla wrote in *Love and Responsibility*: If a man and a woman use these methods with full understanding of the facts and recognizing the aim of marriage, natural methods leave them with a sense of choice and spontaneity (‘naturalness’) in their experience, and—most important of all the possibility of deliberate regulation of procreation.

 Wojtyla says against the Church teaching, apparatuses, disrespecting the natural, immediate conjunction of husband and wife. The Church’s opposition to “artificial” contraception would reflect its obscurantist distrust of technology and science. Yet this is a mistake. There is an important argument to be made regarding the artificial character of contraception, but it has nothing to do with the use of extraneous devices. In addressing the moral problems of contraception back in 1960 (prior to introducing an ovulatory pill!), Bishop Karol Wojtyla wrote: “Methods of birth control are of two general types… On the one hand, there are what are called natural methods, on the other artificial methods requiring the use of contraceptives.” Here, Wojtyla pointed out the ethical dichotomy between natural and artificial methods of birth control. Natural methods would be morally unproblematic, whereas artificial methods would be morally wrong. The problem is that many people use the terms “birth control” and “contraception” as synonyms, which they are not. The notion of birth control includes the natural methods of regulating birth (including the positive employment of this method for couples to get pregnant!) (284).

## **3.11 Government laws**

Contraception is legal in Mozambique every year the 26th of September is celebrated as the day of contraception, meaning that this practice is official in the country and people are noticing its methods, in 2020 the central ceremonies took place at the Health *Center 1º de Maio*, in the city of Maputo-Mozambique.

According to the document, (*Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique Article 12*) the aim of the celebration is to expand awareness of contraception. Hence, a lot of young people, can decide about when and how many children to have, postponing the beginning of sexual activity to adulthood, the negative aspect of it is that many young girls and boys might practice sexual intercourse like sport before getting married according to the teaching of the Church, sex is part of love sustaining the marriage act and “a man and a woman, who by their compact of conjugal love “are no longer two, but one flesh” (Matt. 19:ff), render mutual help and service to each other through an intimate union of their persons and of their actions. Through this union they experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day. As a mutual gift of two persons, this intimate union and the good of the children impose total fidelity on the spouses and argue for an unbreakable oneness between them” (48, #2). In the light of the Church’s teaching against artificial contraception, we argue to support the assertion that “to be valid, law must be derived from sound principles such as respect for human life” (Flynn 31). Law-makers who are the representatives of the people should ensure that any laws that they make should conform to aim norms of justice and such laws should aim at the common good rather than those that favour the strong in the society only. This is achievable through a dialogue between the Church and government.

In the light of *Gaudium et Spes* “government exists in the realization of the common good, thus to help bring those conditions of social life by which individual families and groups can achieve their own fulfilment in a relatively thorough and ready way, for instance, the preservation of life” (*GS* 74). We recommend that every law that sabotages the right of the innocent and the defenceless babies should not be tolerated. According to the Episcopal Conference of Mozambique (CEM), artificial contraception is an evil. Every law that the authorities make, by Magisterium to the Church assembly to the national level, should follow morality. Law-makers must speak for the defence on human dignity in the society regarding their fundamental right to life. Every law that contradicts the moral norms like the preservation of human life should be opposed because it never respects the dignity of human persons.

The Government has a major role in protecting and defending human life from all forms of injuries and injustices and ensure that the right to life is certain. The Government has to support pregnant women in whatever way possible until they safely deliver. Providing antenatal Care among them (26). To achieve this, government should put in place structures that promote human life and dignity through its various ministries like that of Health and Education. We propose that the Government of Mozambique takes a firm stand against Non-Governmental Organizations that advocate for contraception with a view of the campaign against the population boom. Instead, the government should dialogue with them to channel their money into poverty eradication programmes and the fight against various diseases.

## **3.12 Conscience Formation**

According to Daniel C. Maguire, some theologians who exercise the authority of church magisterium have been understood as rivals to its hierarchy Today in the face of divergent theological opinion, the Catholic laity has clearly chosen to implement traditional Catholic moral probabilism. Probabilism is a traditional Catholic practice Probabilism is a traditional Catholic practice under which, given theological doubt about the application of a moral law, one may follow any probable opinion of a theological expert (71) On artificial contraception opposition by moral theologians to the hierarchical teaching is so widespread that dissenting laity could claim to be practicing the stricter probabilism. Which requires that one follow the law unless it is more probable that one’s action is not subject to the law. The teaching of church is against this position and Danial quote *Humanae Vitae*, which argues the laity who could not in good faith accept this teaching were sinners. (71)

Every normal human person can do good. He or she can undoubtedly judge that some acts are right while others are wrong. Formation of conscience in people is one way of addressing the problem of artificial contraception in Diocese of Beira in Mozambique. A well-informed conscience in the light of Scripture respects the sacredness of human life in its various stages of development, thus, right away from conception. Such a person will surely respond to natural law principle as the Church teaches, thus, “deep within his conscience, man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice calling him to love and do what is good and avoid evil… for man has in his heart a law inscribed by God… his conscience is man’s most secrete core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depth” (CCC 1777). One way of helping them can be by giving them catechesis on the inviolability of human life to help in their conscience formation to ensure the teaching of Church in their community that their children are supported to grow with the culture of preserving life.

## **3.13 Conclusion**

This chapter has given a general overview of how some Catholic theologians responded or reacted to the continued prohibition of artificial contraception by the Catholic Church. The argument for the separation of the unitive and procreative dimensions; contraception as meant for the good of the entire family; the distinction between Natural Family Planning and artificial contraception; discussed proposals and recommendations that can be used in Diocese of Beira Mozambique and formation of conscience of the faithful. Henceforth, the Government of Mozambique should promote and make laws that aim at the preservation and promotion of human life and dignity. They are also to ensure that they accommodate human sexuality courses in their curriculum so that young people may learn how to handle their sexuality and know the value of life. The Church ought to speak in defence of human life and dignity through her teachings while the family, being the primary school of moral values, should informally educate their children about sexuality by being open to them about the topic. Medical professionals should adhere to their core values of preserving human life, not destroying it. The youth should be encouraged to live a life of chastity and abstinence and wait until they are mature enough and ready for marriage. Mass media should educate and inform the public in sensitizing them on the evil of contraception.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The paper has presented the teaching of the Catholic Church on contraception. An appraisal has been made of this teaching. This has been done in three chapters. The rationale was to explore how is human life and dignity against the practice of contraception in Diocese of Beira in Mozambique. It argued that every human person has inherent dignity because he or she is made in the image of God, and no human person has the right to deliberately against procreation. Human life begins at the moment of conception and ought to be protected and safeguarded with utmost care. The life belongs to God and only He has the mandate to end their lives.

The first chapter discussed the general view on human dignity and use of Contraceptives in Moral life. Can note that it is evidently impossible to apply the interpretation of Scripture in morality fact that a human person is made in the image of God. In the Book of Genesis, we read God created man in His own image and likeness. The second chapter discussed the Church’s Teaching on Human life and Moral life today. It traced the understanding of human life and dignity from the scriptures, the theologians, and finally, the Church documents. It argued that every human person has dignity because he or she is made in the image of God and this sets him apart from other creatures. This also implies that the human person possesses rationality, and that God trusted him or her with stewardship over all creation. Henceforth, he or she ought to be responsible for whatever he does. The third chapter gave the right and wrong way of behaviour regarding artificial contraception in the society. Moral recommendations on how to assist parishes induced artificial contraception in the diocese of Beira in Mozambique made suggestions and recommendations on how various organs in the society can play their role in this practice. Contraception is a major challenge that requires a united effort from the media, the Church, the government, family and the entire society at large so that the practice may be brought to an end.

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##

# Appendix 2: Interview Questions

# Question guide to selected interviewees

|  |
| --- |
| **VERSION A:** |
|  | Answer | Yes | No | Yes% | No% |
| 1. What is artificial is unnatural and wrong. | yes | No | 43 | 24 | 58% | 71% |
| 2. Contraception is artificial. | yes | No | 56 | 1 | 52% | 98% |
| 3. Therefore, contraception is unnatural and wrong | yes | No | 38 | 4 | 61% | 94% |
|  | Total |  |  | 137 | 29 | 30% | 67% |

|  |
| --- |
| **VERSION B:** |
|  | Answer | Yes | No | Yes% | No% |
| 1. It is wrong to interfere with the natural purposes of organs and acts. | Yes | No | 55 | 43 | 52% | 71% |
| 2. The purpose of sexual intercourse is reproduction (of the species). | Yes | No | **58** | **36** | **51%** | **62%** |
| Therefore, since contraception interferes with the purposes of sexual intercourse, contraception is wrong. | Yes | No | **57** | **52** | **51%** | **53%**  |
|  | Total |  |  | **170** | **131** | **26%** | **31%** |

|  |
| --- |
| **VERSION C:** |
|  | Answer | Yes | No | Yes% | No% |
| 1. It is wrong to impede the procreative power of actions that are ordained to the generation of new human life. | yes | No | 57 | 5 | 51% | 92% |
| 2. Contraception impedes the procreative power of actions that are ordained to the generation of new human life. | yes | No | **58** | **46** | **50%** | **56%** |
| 3. Therefore, contraception is wrong | yes | No | **60** | **59** | **50%** | **50%** |
|  | Total |  |  | **175** | **110** | **25%** | **35%** |

|  |
| --- |
| **VERSION D:** |
|  | Answer | Yes | No | Yes% | No% |
| It is wrong to impede the procreative power of actions that are ordained to assist God in performing His creative act that brings forth a new human life. | yes | No | 0 | 4 | 100% | 94% |
| 2. Contraception impedes the procreative power of actions that are ordained to assist God in performing His creative act that brings forth anew human life. | yes | No | **60** | **2** | **50%** | **96%** |
| 3. Therefore, contraception is wrong. | yes | No | **60** | **0** | **50%** | **100%** |
|  | Total |  |  | **120** | **6** | **33%** | **90%** |

1. According to Alva Reginald, “the United Nations (UN) in its charter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) gave a pivotal role to the concept of human dignity. Even though the charter does not refer to the transcendental nature of human person or Imago Dei (image of God) as the basis of human dignity, it maintains that all persons are born with equal and inherent dignity, irrespective of their class, caste, creed, religion, sex, and economic, political or social conditions” (221). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. John Sachs claims that Priestly Tradition has it that the human creature is defined primarily in relation to God, not in terms of its relationship to other types of creatures. As a result, it is this relationship with God which defines human nature and makes us different from all other creatures. It is also the foundation of the inviolable dignity of human life (16). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The dignity of human person gives rise to many rights in addition to the fundamental right to life itself. Some of the more basic rights are indirectly recognized in the ten commandments” (Dulles 134) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)