

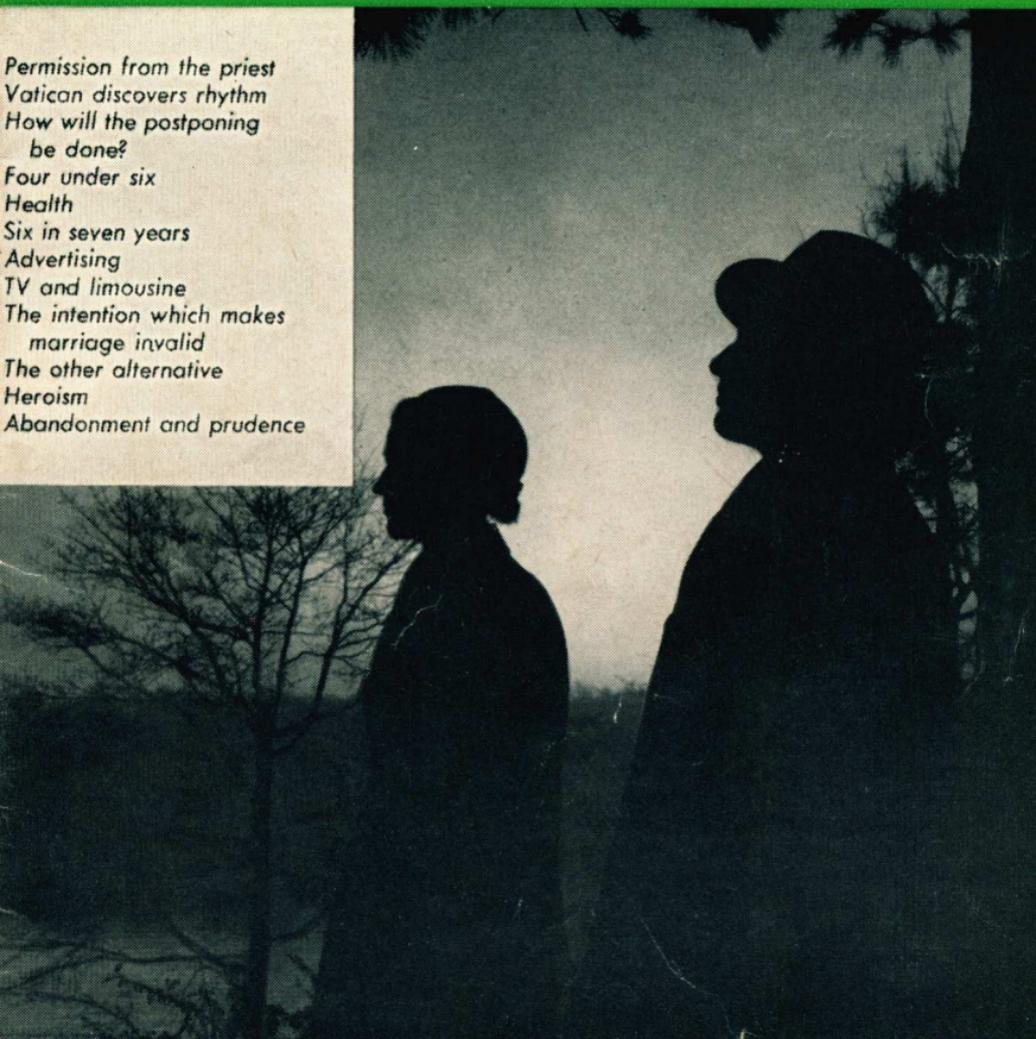
WHAT THEY ASK ABOUT

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THE RHYTHM

By Monsignor J. D. Conway

Permission from the priest
Vatican discovers rhythm
How will the postponing
be done?
Four under six
Health
Six in seven years
Advertising
TV and limousine
The intention which makes
marriage invalid
The other alternative
Heroism
Abandonment and prudence



What They Ask About

THE RHYTHM

By Monsignor J. D. Conway

(Author of: What They Ask About Marriage)



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THE RHYTHM

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donment and prudence.

Q. I have been having a discussion with a Catholic friend concerning the Church's stand on rhythm. Am I right in asserting that it is absolutely necessary to obtain specific permission from your priest in order to practice rhythm?

A. No you are not right. I presume, of course, that by "rhythm" you mean the practice of periodic abstinence from marital relations, during periods of more probable fertility, in order to avoid the conception of children.

In itself, such practice is not wrong. It is perfectly right for husband and wife to have marital relations during sterile periods; and there is nothing wrong in their abstaining from such relations at any particular time, for a good motive, as long as they are both perfectly willing to abstain, and are both able to do it without danger to chastity.

However, motives and circumstances may make the practice all wrong. If husband and wife are simply selfish and do not want to be bothered with children; if they are simply looking for a good time, with luxuries, laziness, and luscious freedom from responsibilities, then their practice of the rhythm method of birth control is sinful. They want marriage with its pleasures, but they are bent on frustrating its purpose. Rhythmic abstinence is the means they use to accomplish their evil purpose—so it becomes evil from their motives.

The abstinence required by this practice may often put a serious strain on the continence of husband or wife. If it seriously endangers chastity without grave reason, it is seriously wrong. It may put a strain on marital happiness, on nerves and tempers, on mutual love. If it does these things, without serious reason, it is wrong.

Sometimes motives are right and reasons are sound and serious. The number of children, or their frequency may put a strain on health or budget. All selfishness and softness aside, it just does not seem to be advisable to have any more children for a while. Maybe the doctor says so. Maybe the bank agrees. Such reasons will justify practice of rhythm for a time, at least. More serious reasons might be required to permit its practice for many years, or on a permanent basis.

In estimating whether reasons are serious we must always

take into account particular circumstances. More serious reasons are required to justify the practice in the beginning of married life than a few years later, because dangers to chastity are greater, and there is the threat to proper marital adjustment and happiness. More serious reasons are required if the couple have no children, or only one or two, than if they have a half-dozen, with the oldest in kindergarten. And always there must be an honest, personal estimate of the dangers to continence. We must always be careful not to place ourselves in immediate occasion of sin.

Since so many factors are involved, married people frequently find it advisable to talk their particular problem over with their confessor or with some other priest, so that they may be sure they are right in what they are doing. He has professional knowledge of moral laws. His advice is valuable.

But if they, themselves, are honestly certain of what they are doing, and have no doubts of its rightness, there is no need for them to talk it over with anyone. No permissions are required, just a sure, honest, well-informed conscience.

Q. A secular news dispatch recently said that the Vatican did not "recognize" the licitness of the rhythm method of birth control until the Pope's declaration in 1951. The news reports are making it appear that prior to 1951 the rhythm method was illicit. Is it true that the 1951 statement by Pius XII was the first mention by the Church of the permissibility of rhythm? If so, does not the silence of the Vatican prior to 1951 imply that at least it had never been condemned and could, therefore, be presumed to be licit—under the proper conditions, of course?

A. When we studied our moral theology in the seminary—away back in the roaring twenties—we were taught the same

basic principles the Holy Father explained in 1951, and the author we studied on the subject was Capellmann, whose book had been published in the nineteenth century; the French translation which we used was brand new, published in 1926. I have just now dug that worn paper-bound volume out of my library, for the first time in twenty years. It is interesting. Capellmann was a German doctor, and the correctness of his moral doctrines had been checked by Father Lehmkuhl, S.J., widely known as one of the greatest moral theologians of those days.

Doctor Capellmann had devised a theory of periodic sterility which gained wide acceptance for a time. According to his idea conception was practically impossible during nearly half of each month's cycle. The only trouble with his theory was that it was not in accord with facts—almost the opposite of the facts set forth in the more recent Ogino-Knaus theory. People who followed Doctor Capellmann's theory must have practiced abstinence during those days when the chances of conception were least, and then just about the time of ovulation they began to feel themselves safe and free.

The edition of this book which we used—the 19th—had been frequently revised by a Doctor Bergmann, and he made it very clear that this theory of periodic sterility advanced by Doctor Capellmann offered no guarantee whatsoever, and he put that warning in heavy black type. However, he quoted, unchanged, the moral principle stated by the good doctor, that “one could not place in doubt the liceity of this temporary continence”—today we call it periodic abstinence. And it is worth noting that Doctor Capellmann had cited as authority for his principle the great moralist, Cardinal Ballerini.

The point of all this is that MORAL PRINCIPLES DO NOT

CHANGE. They are perennial, the same century after century. And our secular news services could save themselves some red-faced errors if they would learn this simple fact. Scientific theories may change as new facts are discovered. Then the moralist has the task of judging in the light of the old principles.

I saw that news story to which you refer, and the person who wrote it was just plain ignorant.

The principle which we now apply to periodic abstinence—rhythm—with its thermometers and its menstrual calendars, is precisely the same as Doctor Capellmann applied to his erroneous theories in the nineteenth century—precisely the same as earlier authorities may well have used for earlier theories, long forgotten.

Q. Can one have good reasons to postpone children if they have financial difficulties or aging parents to take care of?

A. Yes, these might be good reasons, but how are you going to do the postponing? If you are planning periodic abstinence, you may be justified. If you are thinking of artificial birth control, no reasons are sufficient.

Q. I have four children, the eldest just six and the baby a month old. Would it be a mortal sin for us to use the rhythm system for just a year or two? We are both in agreement about it.

A. It would not be a sin. On the contrary, you would be quite justified in view of the difficulties of money, health, and work which you outline in your letter.

Q. I read your recent article on the use of rhythm in marriage. I would like to ask a question about ourselves. We live on a large farm, have three children, and my health is not very good at the present time. My husband is in favor of the practice of rhythm and complete abstinence at certain times. Would it be a sin for us to practice it occasionally for several years until I felt I could have another child?

A. Apparently, because of your health, you and your husband would be justified in the practice of rhythm, if you are both willing and able to abstain from marital relationships, as this practice requires. I notice that your oldest child is nearly eight years old and your youngest just about a year. Apparently your children are not coming too close together, and health is the only thing which justifies you in this practice.

Q. We have been married seven years and have six children. We have no savings. My health is getting very low. I feel we have a morally sound and sufficient reason not to have any more children now.

A. I agree with you. Just don't commit sin to avoid having them. In your letter you ask about the "rhythm" method of trying to avoid conception. You are certainly justified in using it. I would suggest that you consult your doctor or some good book on the subject.

Q. Recently the Question Box condemned the distribution of literature on the rhythm method of birth control. I have it on the advice of my confessor that the rhythm method, if mutually agreed upon by a couple, is approved by the Church. If this is true then why should the literature be condemned?

A. The literature condemned was false and misleading advertising material. Among other things it quoted Pope Pius XII completely out of context and meaning—making him a salesman for the “Menstro-Rhythm Routine.” I don’t know this book at all. Maybe it is all right. But its methods of advertising are unethical, unscientific, and subversive of Catholic doctrine.

Your own confessor has evidently given you very fine advice in your personal case. Your record of four children and two miscarriages in five and a half years of married life indicates a valid and sufficient reason for you and your husband to use this method of restricting conception. And your attitude of willingness to accept God’s will in the matter of future children is thoroughly Catholic and commendable.

The “rhythm” is essentially marital abstinence and consequently not wrong in itself if mutually agreeable to both parties. But its use may have bad effects, particularly as an occasion of temptation or sin to one party or both, and as a strain on marital love and harmony. Consequently its use should not be advocated, advertised and encouraged. It is to be recommended in specific cases with care and circumspection.

It should be practiced only where there is sufficient reason to justify it, and where its dangers are eliminated as much as possible. Usually you should consult your doctor as well as your confessor if you expect its use to be successful. Don’t fall for quacks, and their false advertising.

The claims of this particular literature are ridiculous. If the book is equally unscientific it has one good feature: Its trusting use may give life and immortal souls to some unplanned babies.

Q. What about the practice of rhythm by a man who drives a \$2,000 car and is paying on a television set?

A. I would hesitate to make any judgment in such an intimate matter of personal conduct unless the problem were brought to me by the person concerned. As you present the question, you make the case look bad for him. And yet, I wonder. How many children does he already have? What are their ages? What is the condition of his wife's health? How badly does he need that car? Where would he find one under \$2,000? Isn't TV becoming standard home equipment? How long does he intend to practice rhythm? Is his wife in favor of this practice? Do they find themselves guilty of sin during their periods of abstinence?

We should know the answers to these and many similar questions before we may either condemn or condone the practice of your friend.

In giving you this evasive answer, I am stating in simple words the instructions given by His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, in his talk to a convention of obstetricians. This talk attracted wide attention at the time, because many secular newspapers and non-Catholic churchmen persisted in misinterpreting his statements on this and other moral questions; and the Holy Father took occasion, the following month, in a talk to parents of large families, to clarify his remarks so that no one could have excuse for misunderstanding him.

The Holy Father strongly emphasizes the importance of the right attitude of husband and wife towards children. There should be a genuine love of maternity, a deep appreciation of the value of human souls, a generous attitude towards the obligations of parenthood. This sincere internal acceptance of the office and duties of parents is a basic demand of

right moral order in all those who are to enjoy the privileges of marriage.

Opposed to this generous attitude of love and acceptance of duty is the selfishness which simply does not want children because of the pain and inconvenience of bearing them, the trouble of caring for them and raising them, and the personal and financial sacrifices they involve. This selfishness may well be the cause of many sins in married life.

The Pope then poses the question of how we can reconcile the obligation of prompt and generous acceptance of parenthood with the growing recourse to natural sterile periods (rhythm), which seems to be a clear expression of contrary will.

He then points out that this practice of rhythm is essentially different from those practices of artificial birth control which are a perversion of the marital act itself. In the practice of rhythm the marital act is natural and proper. It is simply restricted to certain days, and avoided on other days.

In determining the morality of such practice, he says, the conduct of the married couple must be examined attentively. It will be morally right, if they have sufficient good reason for their practice. It will be morally wrong if their reasons are not good and sound.

It is not enough that the husband and wife (1) do not pervert the marriage act itself, and (2) are willing to accept and educate any child which may come despite their best efforts. Marriage is a state of life which confers certain rights and imposes certain positive obligations. Human nature and the Creator Himself impose on those who use the rights of marriage an obligation to preserve and propagate the

human race. The individual, society, the State and the Church depend, for their very existence, on the fertility of marriage. It is a general moral principle that we are excused from positive obligations of this kind only for grave reasons.

It is therefore a sin against the sense of married life for people to embrace that state, and make use of the privilege which it makes licit, and at the same time to deliberately and constantly avoid its primary duties—without serious reason.

Serious reasons can exempt from this positive obligation for a time—for a long time—or even forever. Among these reasons the Holy Father indicates four general classifications: medical, eugenic, economic, and social.

In his second talk (to parents of large families) he stresses the fact that the Church is not harsh or unfeeling, but knows how to consider with sympathy and understanding the real difficulties of married life in our days. He praises medical science for its progress in determining periods of fertility, and expresses hope for greater knowledge and accuracy. And he indicates that there are many reasons, indeed, which justify the practice of rhythm—that it can be legitimately used within broad limits.

Temporary observance of rhythm requires less serious reasons than its constant use throughout marriage. That is why I would want to look into your friend's situation thoroughly before I would condemn him—or approve his course of action.

Q. I have a question which is causing my wife and me a great deal of unrest. I think I have read somewhere that if a person gets married with the intention of not having children the mar-

riage is invalid. In our case, that seems to have been the intention, at least on my part. The war, and military service, and economic conditions were reasons for my intention. We began using birth control at the start of our marriage and continued it for eight months. Then we stopped it, and have never resumed the practice. The irony of it is that we never did have any children, though we have seen doctors about it, and done everything we could, especially these past several years.

A. You need not worry about the validity of your marriage. It is entirely valid. You entered into it with sinful intention. You were probably guilty of sacrilege in receiving the sacrament of Matrimony with such intention. You committed many sins during the first eight months of your married life. But you don't have to worry about any of those old sins, either; because you have long ago repented of them and been forgiven. And it looks like God may have punished you already. The absence of children in your home may not be a direct retaliation for your sins; the sins themselves were probably quite useless. But the absence of children is painful to you and a cause of sorrow; and God will be pleased that you accept it as a punishment, in a spirit of penance and reparation.

The procreation of children is the primary purpose of marriage, and a definite positive intention of absolutely excluding that purpose in marriage would make the marriage invalid. But on the other hand we know that not all men and women enter into marriage with intentions entirely pure. They fully intend a real marriage; but at the same time, in the back of their minds, or in the front of their minds, they have the intention of violating the terms of the contract they are entering into. They give the marriage rights and accept them;

but they expect to do a little chiseling on their obligations. Such intentions are sinful, but not invalidating. You may go to hell for them; but you can't get out of marriage because of them.

If it would help your own peace of mind, you and your wife could formally renew between yourselves, and without any witnesses, your marriage promises. If your marriage were invalid, that invalidity would be secret. It could never be proven in court. And such secret invalidity is healed by secret giving of promises with true intention.

But actually there is no doubt about it. Your marriage is valid.

Q. Will you please explain the two following passages from Pope Pius XII's comments on "rhythm" birth control:

1. "The other alternative would be the limitation on 'fertile' days of the use of the marriage right and not of the right itself."
2. "But the moral licitness of such conduct would be approved or denied according to whether the intention to observe these days continually is based on sufficient and secure moral motives or not."

A. You ask difficult questions; so you will have to accept difficult answers:

1. In order to understand the other alternative you have to recall the first alternative from the preceding paragraphs. The Holy Father said, in substance:

Suppose that two people enter into marriage with a definite positive intention or agreement that they will not have marital relations except on those days of the menstrual cycle on which the woman is considered sterile. Such an intention

or agreement might make their marriage invalid. In the valid marriage contract the husband and wife give each other rights to mutual acts which by their nature are directed to the begetting of children. These rights are by nature permanent, not intermittent. If the contracting parties were essentially to restrict these rights at the time of marriage they would not be making a valid marriage contract.

On the other hand these people might be getting married without any idea of restricting the rights they give each other. They give the full rights of husband and wife, but they simply make a little private agreement on the side that they won't use these rights except during certain phases of the moon's cycle.

So, the Pope says, if we want to know whether their marriage is valid or not we must examine their intentions very carefully. Do they restrict to certain days the marital rights they give each other (first alternative), or do they give the full rights without restriction, but simply plan not to use their rights on certain days (second alternative)?

The distinction will be clearer if we compare it to your right to hunt ducks. You get such a right when you buy a hunting license, and you have that right from dawn to dusk all during the open season. Now suppose that when you got your license you found that it restricted your hunting rights to Saturdays and Sundays (first alternative). You would be rightly indignant and feel you were cheated. On the other hand, when you get your license, you may have no intention of hunting except on Saturday and Sunday (second alternative). Such intention does not affect the rights given in your license.

The Pope doesn't say so, but if you have any idea of

getting your marriage declared invalid on these grounds, you had better pray for a miracle. The court will always hold for the second alternative unless you absolutely prove the first. And that is nigh impossible.

2. Then, supposing that your intentions represent the second alternative and your marriage is valid, is it right or wrong for you to restrict the use of your marriage rights to certain days, strictly avoiding relationships on more fertile days? The Pope says that depends on how good a reason you have. Are you simply trying to escape the pains, trials and obligations of parenthood? Or is there real danger to life or health or family welfare?

The rightness or wrongness of your periodic continence will depend upon your motives. Are they morally sound and sufficient?

Q. I once read that Tom Braniff's daughter had lost seven children in childbirth, and then had died trying to give birth to an eighth child. This woman was praised for her sanctity and heroism by a priest and a bishop. Don't you think she showed more rashness than heroism, more presumption than holy understanding of God's providence? Should we not cooperate with God's providence, rather than tempt it?

A. I'm afraid we ordinary people will never quite understand heroes. I suspect we may admire them far above us when we get to heaven.

Q. A number of articles which have appeared recently in Catholic papers have got my wife and myself all mixed up on

the subject of rhythm. There seems to be much disagreement between Catholic writers on the subject. Can you help us out?

A. If you are confused on this subject you are thoroughly normal. Doctors seem to be confused, or at least their answers are often diverse. And as you have observed, moralists view the problem from divergent angles.

I can readily understand the confusion of medical men. First in earlier days, there were theories on the subject of rhythm which were entirely false; so doctors became suspicious. Then when true theories were advanced exaggerated claims were often made for them; so doctors became disgusted. And after all false ideas are cleared up this business of counting days, keeping charts, and taking temperatures requires time and effort, and many doctors feel that they have more important things to do. And finally, even after the most thorough observation, there still remain so many variables that some practitioners consider it hardly worthwhile; and only Catholic doctors can be expected to appreciate the reason for so much fuss when more secure and practical methods are temptingly available.

It is more difficult to understand the confusion of moralists. They all operate on the same set of principles. It seems to me that the differences in their attitudes and conclusions arise from their diverse evaluation of the reasons or causes for practicing rhythm—those things which the Holy Father calls “indications”: medical, eugenical, economic and social.

All moralists agree that as an act—apart from all motives and circumstances—rhythm is morally indifferent, neither good nor bad. Certainly it is not wrong for husband and wife to have sexual relations at times when there is no possibility of conception. With equal certainty there is nothing wrong

with their abstaining from sexual relations at any time when they both wish to do so and are able to do so. And there, in that periodic use and abstention, you have the essentials of rhythm.

However, it is evident that when any couple take elaborate care and precautions in such periodic use and abstention they have some purpose in mind, and generally the essential morality of their activity will be determined by that purpose. If their motive is right and good the practice will be good. If their intentions are bad the practice will be a sin.

Of course we cannot forget the circumstances of their action either. The manner of their procedure or unintended results from it may make their action all wrong regardless of their good purposes. There are two basic requirements essential to the licit practice of periodic abstinence:

1. Both husband and wife must agree thoroughly on the practice. Otherwise one might be guilty of depriving the other of rights mutually given when they contracted marriage.

2. Both husband and wife must be able to stand the sacrifices involved in this practice without immediate danger of sin, and they must be able to carry it on without those tensions and resentments which might endanger their mutual love and happiness.

So far, I believe all moralists are in agreement, but then come a couple of points more difficult to evaluate:

- (1) Married couples who are fertile and make use of their marriage rights have a general obligation of producing some offspring for the good of the race and to fit their lives into the plan of God. The precise determination of this general obligation in a particular case is very difficult, and the wisest theologians may well be in disagreement about it.

(2) Children are one of the greatest blessings of married life; marriage is incomplete without them, and the married partners do not entirely fulfill their purpose in life, attain their own complete and mutual happiness, or achieve their highest destiny as spouses unless their union is fruitful. They must never disdain the glory given to God by a new soul made in His own image and destined to eternal happiness with Him in His own home, nor belittle the privilege they have of helping God create a new personality which will be able to know and love and live forever.

All moralists are aware that the practice of rhythm may have bad effects in eliminating or limiting these great blessings and purposes of marriage, and consequently that it must have good effects equally important to justify its use. Of course when there are already several children in the family the bad effects are not so pronounced, and the justifying reasons may be less. But no moralist, however lax, would advise a couple in ideal or normal circumstances to practice rhythm. It would be a selfish shirking of the ordinary obligations of their state in life. It would be morally wrong, because their intentions and purposes would not be good.

However, there are many young couples today who find themselves in circumstances which are far from ideal and normal, and I do believe that it is difficult for the priest who is not a sympathetic pastor or confessor to appreciate the reality and gravity of their problem. Here are a few typical examples:

People marry young today. It is the trend and you would fight vainly against it. It might not be advisable so to fight, because our modern social customs of dating and courtship may well make early marriage morally advisable. But in any

case, early marriage lengthens out the child-bearing period to problem proportions.

After marriage today there are often studies to complete or military service to perform. Maybe you find such situations deplorable, but deploring them will not change their reality nor lessen the acuity of the problems which result.

Young people today do not always have financial security. They usually have to start from scratch, and are often quite on their own. When wages are high the cost of living is equally high. And sometimes they must both work in order to eat and pay the rent.

Young families frequently live in tiny apartments, little adapted to the raising of families. Most of them live in cities where children cost much and earn little.

Modern education is an expensive thing, especially Catholic education—but it is a thing of increasing necessity.

Social status and living standards must be maintained, or there may be emotional revolt, with dire marital results.

Problems of health are frequent. Occasionally the mother's life is endangered by future pregnancies. More often she is simply worn out by frequent child-bearing and constant child caring. Sometimes the children present the health problem, and occasionally it is the father who is unable to do the work of supporting a larger family.

Sometimes there are inadequacies of character and personality: the mother who can't stand the emotional strain; the father who can't get away from his bottle.

Friends and neighbors of our young Catholic couples find an easy solution to these problems and dozens of similar ones; and they laugh openly or sympathize patronizingly with the repeated pregnancies of the young Catholic wife.

Some people are stronger than others, more able to face life's problems and take its hard knocks, more capable of sacrifice. Consequently the same set of reasons has different values for different people. And most of us are poor judges in our own complicated cases; we are apt to rationalize with ourselves and find excuses to do the things we want to do; or we may feel guilty about things which are quite all right. So many couples find it advisable to consult their confessor or spiritual director before deciding that they are justified in practicing rhythm.

I would be deeply regretful if anything I wrote were to detract from the honor and praise due those courageous and self-sacrificing couples who face a thousand problems of life with confidence in God and happily raise their large families for His honor and glory, without serious thought of any methods of restriction. But as a pastor I do have a deep sympathy for those couples who are maybe less courageous but still conscientious, who are more oppressed by life's problems but sincere enough to avoid the easy and sinful practices of their neighbors; and who are willing to take the trouble, exercise the self-control, and make the sacrifices required in the practice of rhythm—sometimes with disappointing results. They may not be heroic saints, but they are a good struggling lay variety of saint.

Q. I don't quite understand the practice of rhythm birth control, approved for Catholics. It is the same as the safe time, or just what?

A. It is the same. The Church teaches us firmly that all artificial methods of birth control are wrong, in themselves and by their very nature. And since we are never permitted

to do a wrong thing even to achieve a good purpose, there are no circumstances which will justify artificial prevention of conception.

However, by the nature of things, husband and wife are not bound to have sexual relations at any particular time; by mutual agreement they may properly abstain and deny themselves. So, if there are certain days during the month when conception is probable, they may avoid relations during those days and wait for periods of less probability. This is called the rhythm method of birth control—or periodic abstinence.

While there is nothing essentially wrong with this procedure, there are three circumstances or motives which might make it wrong:

1. It could be a cause of serious temptation to either husband or wife. Such abstinence is not easy, especially for young people, and they might seek satisfaction in some form of sin. For good reason you may permit a certain amount of temptation, as long as you are able to resist the temptation. No reason, however good, can justify sin.

2. This abstinence can cause irritation of the nerves, short tempers, quarrelling, and lessening of love, at least between the newly married. It takes good reason to justify these dangers.

3. Husband and wife are not justified in using this method of birth control simply to shirk the ordinary burdens of parenthood. They have a general obligation of reproducing themselves and continuing the race, if they are able to do so. Before the practice of periodic continence can be justified,

then, there must be some reason for it other than selfishness. Such reasons may be:

a) Health. The mother is all worn out from frequent child-bearing and constant child-caring. Sometimes her health may be gravely endangered by pregnancy.

b) Economics. Maybe that additional \$600 deduction from income tax doesn't mean a thing to harassed parents who are stretching income to meet grocery bills, doctor bills, and diaper service—to say nothing of payments on the home, the car, and the TV set.

c) Social or educational considerations. Rhythm is not justified as a vehicle for social climbing, but the maintenance of an established or customary position in society may be sufficient reason for its use. And parents may be justified in reasonable limitation of their families that they may give the children a proper education.

Q. In regard to married couples using the rhythm method, is it necessary for them to consult a confessor about it, or can they just use their own judgment as to when it would be right — as long as they do not deliberately intend not to have a family at all, but are willing to have a reasonably large family?

A. It is not strictly necessary for them to consult a confessor—as long as they are sure of the rightness of their own decision. The trouble is that the moral issues involved in this practice are complicated, and conscientious people often find that they need to talk their particular problem over with someone.

There are three things essential to the licit practice of rhythm in the manner you describe:

1. The parties must be in agreement on it. It would be wrong for one spouse to impose it on the other.

2. The parties must both be able to practice it without immediate danger of sin—and without any serious harm to their happiness, love and adjustment in their married life.

3. There must be a sound and sufficient justifying reason.

Probably the parties will be able to make their own judgment securely about 1 and 2, but when it comes to evaluating reasons the judgment of a prudent, disinterested third party might help very much.

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