

Benedict Approves Contraception

by Most Rev. Donald J. Sanborn

ON NOVEMBER 20th, 2010, the Vatican released excerpts from a new book by Ratzinger entitled *Light of the World*, which is an interview or conversation with a German journalist, Peter Seewald, whom Ratzinger has known for a long time. In the book, Ratzinger talks about many subjects, but the most shocking of his comments is what he said concerning the use of contraceptive devices.

In the original German, Ratzinger said this:

“There may be justified individual cases, as, for example, when a prostitute uses a condom, in which this can be a first step to a moralization, a first bit of responsibility, in order to again develop a consciousness for the fact that not everything is permitted and that one cannot do anything he wants. But it is not the authentic way to deal with the evil of HIV infection. This must really lie in the humanization of sexuality.

“Seewald: Does that now mean that the Catholic Church is not in principle opposed to the use of condoms?”

“Ratzinger: She regards it naturally not as a real and moral solution. In one or the other case, however, it can, with the intention of decreasing the danger of infection, be a first step on the way to a differently lived, more human sexuality.

There are a number of things to note here. The first is that he uses the word *begründete* in German, which translates to “well-founded, justified,” when researched in German-English dictionaries. The fact that he is using it in a context of morality, means that the translation “justified” is correct.

The second is that he refers to a prostitute by using the male gender in German. Is he referring to a male homosexual prostitute, or simply a prostitute of the male sex? Since he does not specify, one may assume that he refers to any male prostitute, whether heterosexual or homosexual. Or is he referring to a prostitute in general? In such a case the choice of the male gender in German would be correct. This last interpretation will be confirmed by two things: (1) the Italian translation of this text, which translated it as a female prostitute; (2) the Vatican clarification on November 23rd, that the exceptional case refers to any kind of prostitute, whether male, female, or transsexual. It is important to note that the Vatican published the *Italian* translation.

Preliminary Analysis

A condom is, by its very nature, a contraceptive device. Its job is to prevent the fertilization of the egg by preventing the male seed from ever reaching it.

When it is used in a sexual act which is already perverted, i.e., which by its very nature is not conducive to conception,

which is the case of homosexual acts, it is true that the use of a condom does not alter the morality of the act. However, when the condom is used in natural sexual acts, even in the case of prostitutes, whether male or female, the natural act becomes perverted, becomes an act against nature, because the natural processes are deliberately impeded.

Because the Vatican released on Nov. 20th the Italian translation of the book, which translated the German *male* prostitute as *female* prostitute, a lively discussion arose as to whether the Italian was a faulty translation or not. It certainly was a faulty translation. The pressing question was, however: *Does the exception also apply to the female prostitute, i.e., a woman engaged in a natural sex act?*

On November 23, 2010, because questions had arisen concerning what Benedict meant, and because the Italian translation of the book used the feminine for prostitute whereas the original German used the masculine, the Vatican spokesman, Rev. Federico Lombardi, made a clarifying statement to all of the news agencies. He said that he went to Benedict, and put the question to him whether it mattered if the person using the condom were male or female. "I personally asked the pope if there was a serious, important problem in the choice of the masculine over the feminine," Lombardi said. "He told me no. The problem is this...it's the first step of taking responsibility, of taking into consideration the risk of the life of another with whom you have a relationship."

By applying the "justified individual cases" to female prostitutes, Benedict changes everything. For if we assume that by the use of the term "male prostitute," he is referring only to those prostitutes who engage in homosexual acts, then the use of the contraceptive does not change the morality of the act because the act is not conducive to conception in the first place. On the other hand, however, if a female prostitute should use any kind of contraceptive device, it means that by the very use of that device, and regardless of her extrinsic motives, she is engaging in contraception, since the sexual acts which she would perform would ordinarily be conducive to conception. Despite whatever other motive she should have for using the condom, by the very use of it she intends to prevent the natural process by which the male seed enters her womb.

Benedict is therefore admitting that in certain cases it is permitted to practice contraception and to pervert the natural processes of a sexual act in order to prevent HIV infection. Such an admission utterly and thoroughly overturns all Catholic morality. Let me now explain why.

Catholic Doctrine on Sexual Morality

The Catholic Church has always upheld the natural law as part of its general moral teaching. It falls under what we call the Church's *ordinary universal magisterium*, which is the manner in which the Church teaches every single day in parish sermons, in catechisms, in approved seminary textbooks, and her sacred liturgy. This form of teaching comprises the bulk of Catholic teach-

ing, especially in the area of moral theology. An example of such magisterium is the doctrine concerning the Guardian Angels. What is different from this form of teaching is what is known as *extraordinary* or *solemn* magisterium, which is a definitive statement made either by a pope alone or by a general council in union with the pope, by which the faithful are bound to adhere to a certain doctrine, or to hold as condemned something which is contrary to Catholic doctrine. An example of solemn magisterium is the Immaculate Conception, defined by Pope IX in 1854.

There is a serious error which is common among the faithful, namely that we are obliged to give the assent of faith only to dogmas and moral doctrines which have been solemnly defined, and that the other doctrines are fallible and subject to alteration and reform. Nothing could be further from the truth. Doctrines taught by both forms of the magisterium are objects of divine faith, and are therefore both infallible and irreformable.

One would search in vain, for example, for a solemn definition that murder is evil or that stealing is wrong. Yet if a priest were to preach from the pulpit that it is not necessary to believe that murder and stealing are sins, the people would be shocked and would consider him a heretic.

The same is true of nearly all the teaching of the Church concerning sexual morality. It is based entirely on the law of nature, and the Church has always taught it by means of her ordinary universal magisterium. An exception to this would be Pope Pius XI's *solemn* condemnation of artificial birth control in 1937.

If a priest, therefore, were to say that the Church could make a dispensation in the case of fornication or adultery, people would be appalled. The same would be true if he said that the Church could one day change its mind about these sins. For they understand that the natural law concerning sexual morality pertains to faith, and that anyone who would doubt or deny it is a heretic.

The Church's teaching concerning sexual morality is based, as I said, on the natural law. It is obvious that the nature of the sex act is the generation of a child. It is clear if one analyzes the nature of the reproductive organs, and the acts which are necessary in order to achieve a completion of the marital act. The same may be said of the eye. If one analyzes the nature of the eye, it is clear that it is an organ which is made to be sensitive to light, to form an image of what it sees, and to transfer the image to the brain. The same analysis could be made of any organ. Each is created for a specific purpose, and its very nature is drawn from its end or purpose. We do not see with our ears or listen with our eyes.

The Church furthermore teaches that the pleasure which accompanies the sex act is placed there for a specific purpose, which is to encourage the performance of the sex act, in order that there be an abundant generation of children. Because the pleasure cannot be obtained without acts which are conducive to generation, the pleasure of sex is subordinated to the purpose of the generation of a child. Hence the pleasure may not be morally sought or obtained except in acts conducive to generation.

Since human beings have immortal souls and are therefore

in need of a moral education, generation many not lawfully take place, according to natural law, except within marriage. For human beings do not generate in the manner of animals, whose sole function it is to preserve the species. Animals obey their natural law, their instinct placed in them by God, when they engage promiscuously in sex acts with whatever partners they can find. Why? Because the species, and not the individual, is the all-important factor. Mother animals will coldheartedly expel into exposure what they consider to be faulty offspring, letting them die, lest the species be contaminated with a bad specimen.

Human beings, on the other hand, are more like the angels than like animals, inasmuch as what is principal in them is not their bodies but their immortal souls. So each individual is precious in God's sight and precious in the sight of the mother and the father.

Because there is the direct infusion of the immortal soul by God into the conceived child, we say that human parents *procreate*, that is, they participate intimately in the creative act of God. They do not themselves produce the soul, as the animals do, but they provide for God the matter, a fertilized egg, which is ready to receive a human soul. The fact that they are participating with God in the creation of an immortal human being makes sexual morality a very serious matter. The generation of a human being belongs primarily to God, and the human parents are merely secondary participants in the creative act. For this reason, contraception is immoral in the case of humans, as well as abortion, since the entire procreative act is under God's control. Since the animals were made for human beings, however, we are morally justified in applying contraceptive measures to them, aborting their fetuses, and even using artificial insemination. But all of these things are forbidden to human beings, since man does not exist for himself, but for God.

It is the natural law, therefore, that all human generation must take place within matrimony, for it is only in matrimony that the moral education of the child — the upbringing of his soul — can successfully take place. Human parents, unlike animals, cannot merely generate and feed their children for a while, and after a few weeks or months leave them to their fate, and move on. This is perfectly lawful behavior in animals, but not in human beings. Human beings must live according to right reason, according to the law of nature, must live in society, must be taught to act in accordance with the moral virtues. Given the elevation to the supernatural order, man must also be taught the Catholic Faith and Catholic morality. In order to inculcate all these things, and especially to ensure the stability of society, the family is necessary, and for this matrimony is also necessary.

There is another natural law governing sexual morality: that all sexual acts must be conducted in a manner which is in accordance with nature. There is an expression in moral theology: *Natura est quodammodo Deus*. (Nature is in a certain sense God). This should not be understood in some pantheistic sense, but in this way: that whatever pertains to nature is a reflection of God's essence. Consequently the natural law is a reflection of the eternal law, which flows directly from the essence of God. Hence to

perform something contrary to the natural law is to violate the law of God. When this violation concerns something serious, like the procreation of children, it always constitutes the matter of a mortal sin.

There is, therefore, a twofold natural law which pertains to sexual acts: (1) they must take place within marriage, and (2) they must take place according to nature, and not in a perverse manner.

(1) Since sexual pleasure is by nature subordinated to acts which are conducive to human generation, it follows that sexual pleasure may only be lawfully enjoyed when there is an ordered use of sexual acts, i.e., where they take place within valid matrimony and according to the nature of the marital act, that is, in such a way that they are conducive to the generation of a child. It is therefore a mortal sin to seek or obtain sexual pleasure outside of the marital act, or acts preparatory to it, performed by validly married couples. Therefore fornication is evil, which is natural sexual intercourse between two unmarried people, and adultery is evil, which is natural sexual intercourse with someone other than one's spouse. These are against the *first* of the natural laws regarding sexual morality, namely that the marital act take place only between two validly married persons. (2) If, on the other hand, the act of intercourse is somehow perverted by unnatural acts, then there is a mortal sin against the *second* natural law which governs sexual morality, which requires that all things happen according to nature. Consequently moral theologians list four sins against nature: masturbation, sodomy, bestiality (intercourse with animals), and onanism or contraception. These are considered the most serious sins in the category of lust.

It is therefore possible to commit two specifically distinct mortal sins in fornication: one against the first of the natural laws, which is the law of matrimony; the other against the second of the natural laws, which is the law requiring the observance of nature in sexual acts.

The malice of the unnatural sex act, performed whether inside or outside of marriage, is that it *subordinates to pleasure the natural end of the generative act, which is the procreation of a child*. For in all four of the cases mentioned, the pleasure of the sex act is sought and obtained while deliberately and physically excluding its natural end, which is the procreation of children. In such a case, the pleasure takes first place, and procreation is subordinated to it.

What Ratzinger Said

Now let us consider Ratzinger's statement. He permits a female prostitute to use a contraceptive device in order to prevent an AIDS infection. Ratzinger therefore permits a woman to perform *an intrinsically evil act of contraception* in order to achieve some good end that is extrinsic to the sex act, which is that the fornicating sinners not contract AIDS.

Such a statement *explodes* Catholic morality. The Church teaches that any human act which is contrary to the natural law

is *intrinsically* evil, that is, evil in its very nature, in such a way that it is *never* permitted to posit the act, even to achieve some great good. Under this category the Church places lying, stealing, murder, and all sexual immorality, including fornication and adultery, as well as all the sins against nature which I mentioned. This teaching of the Church comes under the general category that *the end does not justify the means*. A good end, in this case the prevention of AIDS, cannot justify an evil means, which is the perversion of the sex act.

The Catholic Church has been the *single* religion upon the earth to insist on this principle, and she has in her past preferred to let whole kingdoms go into schism or heresy and to let her faithful suffer death and persecution in the place of compromising this most important precept of the gospel. St. Thomas More, for example, lost his head for the fact that he would not recognize the false marriage of Henry VIII, accomplished for the good purpose, no doubt, of finding a male heir. Countless martyrs went to their deaths in the Roman Empire, rather than to commit an immoral act against the virtue of religion, which was to burn some incense to an idol. Many virgins went to their deaths in the place of consenting to fornication with their persecutors.

Benedict's statement (1) *absolutely ruins* this sacred principle of Catholic morality, and (2) opens the doors to the most vile forms of sexual immorality. I will explain why.

(1) If there are, in Ratzinger's words, "justified individual cases" in which contraception may be used in order to obtain a good end, such individual cases logically imply a higher moral principle: *that it is morally justifiable to posit an intrinsically evil act in order to bring about a good result*. Ratzinger's statement, therefore, thoroughly perverts all Catholic morality, since he is saying that the end *does* justify the means.

If the end justifies the means, then literally anything, even the most heinous crimes, could be done in order that some good effect come about. A woman could abort her child, for example, in order to protect her reputation or sanity. Euthanasia could be justified. Homosexual acts could be justified. The list could go on almost infinitely.

(2) By justifying contraception, Ratzinger is also positing the principle that, at least in the case he mentioned, *it is permissible to make the generative act subordinate to pleasure*. For if a contraceptive device is justifiable to prevent AIDS, it means that the end of generating a child can be thwarted, deliberately and with a positive obstacle, in view of some good end. But one can think of many good ends, apart from the prevention of AIDS, e.g., the mutual love of the couple, the avoidance of financial problems or health problems, the prevention of adultery. All of these are in themselves good ends. One could use Ratzinger's principle to authorize contraception in these cases.

His "justified individual cases" could also be drawn logically to apply to perverse acts, i.e., sexual acts performed not in accordance with nature. For in calling the use of the condom "justified," he is saying implicitly that it is justified to perform sex acts in a perverse manner if there is some good effect to be obtained by it. By this principle, all of the perverse sex acts

which I mentioned above (masturbation, sodomy, bestiality, and contraception) become justified if performed for the purpose of obtaining a good end. A “good end” can be widely and very subjectively determined.

Sigmund Freud, an atheistic Jew, said it perfectly: **“The common characteristic of all perversions, on the other hand, is that they have abandoned reproduction as their aim. We term sexual activity perverse when it has renounced the aim of reproduction and follows the pursuit of pleasure as an independent goal. And so you realize that the turning point in the development of sexual life lies in the subjugation to the purpose of reproduction. Everything this side of the turning point, everything that has given up this purpose and serves the pursuit of pleasure alone, must carry the term “perverse” and as such be regarded with contempt.”**

What an atheist can understand, Benedict cannot.

Put yet more simply: once you detach reproductive acts from reproduction, every conceivable perversion can be justified, not only the ones already mentioned, but also such things as necrophilia (intercourse with dead bodies). Now that the homosexual perversion is ensconced in civil law as a civil right, why should society deny these same rights to the necrophiliacs and those who practice bestiality? Why can't you marry a dead body,? Or your dog? Why not? Many love their dogs more than their spouses.

Ratzinger's opening to contraception provides the logical foundation for all of these things. Once the train derails from the natural law, there is no telling what ravine it will end up in.

That a new heresy fall from the lips of Ratzinger is not a shock. He is the man of heresy. His writings are full of heresy, one after the other. What is a shock is that this blatant pronouncement authorizing hardcore filth and perversion was blithely and blissfully accepted by the Novus Ordo conservatives.

The Reaction

The Modernists, of course, found Benedict's statement to be wonderful, and saw in it all of the logic which I have elucidated here. Some called the decision a “seismic shift.” Indeed it was. Neither Paul VI, John Paul I, nor John Paul II had ever made such a statement (although Luciani, John Paul I, had made statements as “Cardinal” of Venice in favor of contraception).

We must also recall that most Novus Ordo Catholics, indeed the vast majority of them, think that the contraceptive perversion is perfectly all right. Nearly all Novus Ordites of child-bearing age are on the pill. It is easy to tell from the size of their families. Whereas before the Council a sign of being Catholic was to have seven or eight children or more, today the average Novus Ordite couple has the typical two, and then stops. These Novus Ordite couples are given the green light for perversion by their priests and confessors, either by silence or by outright approval. However, they would practice the birth control even without their approval, since the Novus Ordo religion is a religion of freedom

of conscience, a religion in which there is no unity of faith, a religion in which there is no obligation under pain of mortal sin to submit to the teaching authority of the Catholic Church. Like Protestants, they think what they want, do what they want, and get away with it. Hans Küng is a perfect example of this. He denies the divinity of Christ and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but is still a "Catholic" priest in good standing, and is invited to lunch at the Vatican. Archbishop Lefebvre, however, who dared to condemn the new Modernist regime, died excommunicated. For the Modernists you can hold any heresy you want, but you cannot say that Modernism itself is wrong. If you criticize the Revolution of Vatican II, you get the ecclesiastical guillotine.

That there was, consequently, a hallelujah chorus from the bulk of the Novus Ordites was of no surprise, since they have been eating birth control pills for many decades now, and are no stranger to the condom either, and this in most cases with the blessing of their Novus Ordo clergyman.

What was appalling was the reaction of the Novus Ordo conservatives, whom we will call hereinafter the "nocons." These are the people who have remained inside the Novus Ordo religion and who pride themselves on being bastions of orthodoxy in a land of rampant heresy. They see themselves as being the guardians of the sacred city, accepting on the one hand Vatican II and the Vatican II hierarchy, and rejecting on the other hand what they consider to be "abuses" or doctrinal deviations from tradition. They claim to have taken the true middle road, and right road, between the radical Modernists to their left, and the radical traditionalists to their right. Among these last the most loathsome are the sedevacantists.

In order to maintain this position of what they perceive to be Catholicism bobbing in the waves of a Modernist ocean, they have to "interpret" the outrageous sayings and doings of the Modernist "popes." They somehow twist overtly heretical statements into "orthodoxy." In fact, owing to their efforts to cover the Modernist nakedness of the Vatican II "popes," they themselves have fallen into some very serious errors.

When Benedict released his condom statement on November 20, 2010, the nocon world became catatonic. They were silent for days. They were in a stupor, fearing that the shoe had finally dropped, and that the specter of sedevacantism was staring them in the face.

But courage and inventiveness did not fail them. The first line of defense was that Benedict was talking about only *male* prostitutes, *presumably* homosexual prostitutes, in which the use of the condom would make no moral difference. But there was the uncomfortable fact that the Vatican itself released the Italian translation, which clearly used the term "*female* prostitute." They tried to fend this off by having recourse to the original German, claiming that the Italian was a mistranslation. But they could not erase the fact that the *Vatican* had released the Italian translation, thereby giving it authority.

Then there was the use of the "forged document" refuge. Some said that in the original German, the expression "justified

individual cases" did not appear. This was a forgery concocted by the journalists. Yes, right.

Just to be sure, however, I ordered the book in German from Amazon, from which I have provided the quotation above. So much for the forged document.

The next bombshell was Fr. Lombardi's statement, on November 23rd, that the justified use of condoms applied to both male and female prostitutes. With this the nocons were brought straight back to the Kingdom of Catatonia where they spent a few more days. Once they recovered, they immediately launched the conspiracy theory that the "Holy Father" really did not say that, but it was his evil spokesman, Father Lombardi, who made up the whole story. This they maintained despite the fact that the "Holy Father" was seen smiling in pictures with Father Lombardi at his side, together with Peter Seewald, a "co-conspirator," no doubt. But what the public did not see, to be sure, was the gun sticking in Ratzinger's back, forcing him to take part in the pictures, so as to give credence to the whole fabricated story.

Things were so bad for the nocons that even the respectable and serious nocon website *Rorate* could only come up with a cartoon depicting Pandora opening her box.

The Elephant in the Room

The *Wanderer* (*The Nocon Gazette & Spintelligencer*) came to the theological rescue, or so to speak. In their December 2nd issue, a certain Jeff Mirus wrote an article entitled, "The Pope, the Condom, and the Elephant."

In his opening paragraph, he refers to Ratzinger's comments as an "elephant in the room," and that some of the commentators are "just a little bit afraid that the elephant is real." He explains that someone proposed the solution that Ratzinger was speaking only privately. But Mirus rightly points out that this does not absolve Ratzinger, but actually implies that Ratzinger contradicted Catholic doctrine. He also regards as inadequate the point, which another commentator brought up, that Ratzinger said that the use of condoms was not a "moral solution." He says: "But from the best to the worst, Catholic commentators seem to be rather deliberately ignoring the elephant in the room, as if to look at it directly could somehow endanger the Church."

So Jeff Mirus declares that we should "stare it [the elephant] straight in the eye." He explains that the elephant is the conviction among some that Ratzinger has in fact condoned the use of contraception in certain cases.

Mr. Mirus attempts to make the elephant dissolve by this incredible statement: **"The point to remember is that contraception is intrinsically evil only within marriage."** He continues **"Outside of marriage sexual intercourse itself is intrinsically evil; outside of marriage, there is no marital act that must be kept open to life and love; outside of marriage, the morality of contraception must be determined on other grounds, namely extrinsic grounds."**

When I read these words I was in utter shock. I have been

reading *The Wanderer* for over forty years, and although I found their attempts to reconcile Modernism with Catholicism to be downright absurd at times, I never thought that I would read such a statement on their pages.

Mr. Mirus understands Ratzinger, and has taken Ratzinger's logic to its proper conclusion: that sexual perversion, of which contraception is a species, can be justified by some extrinsic consideration, in this case the prevention of AIDS.

Mr. Mirus' comments can then be applied to other forms of sexual perversion: masturbation, sodomy, and bestiality, for according to all moral theologians, these fall into the same moral category as contraception. In other words, according Mr. Mirus' principle, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with perverting the sex act outside of marriage.

He says at the end of the article: "Unfortunately, there really is an elephant in the room, and this elephant does dominate the vision of both secularists and Catholics — if they do not properly understand the Church's teaching on contraception. But the moment they do, the elephant disappears."

Far from disappearing, Mr. Mirus, your elephant just had an accident all over the rug. Your "proper understanding of the Church's teaching on contraception" leads to the authorization of the most wicked sins. Could Mr. Mirus kindly provide us with references from pre-Vatican II papal magisterium and/or theologians which support his statement that, "contraception is intrinsically evil only within marriage?"

But hats off to Jeff Mirus for accurately analyzing Ratzinger, and for bringing him to his logical conclusions.

Conclusion

The saddest aspect about this whole episode is that the entire gamut of Novus Ordo conservatives, Motu Proprio organizations, and the Society of Saint Pius X did not make a single official public statement, to my knowledge, condemning Ratzinger's outrage against Catholic morality. *Not a single prominent voice was raised in protest.* Everyone just rolled over. Bishop Fellay should have blasted Ratzinger the very next day. Archbishop Lefebvre certainly would have. We all know why there was silence, however: they are hoping for the great day in which they will be reconciled with the Modernists.

This failure to protest Ratzinger's heresies boils down to a lack of supernatural faith. The faith is a supernatural virtue, that is, it is not from man but from God, and is a participation in God's own knowledge of Himself. When this virtue hears heresy, there is a natural and strong reaction of contradiction. It would be the same as if we heard someone say $2 + 2 = 5$. Our common sense rightly rebels against such nonsense. So our supernatural faith rises up against heretical statements and condemns them.

For this reason, the Church has been ever vigilant in condemning error. Most of the acts of the councils and of the popes have been condemnations. Just as the body, moved by its vitality, rises up against the invading virus by the production of anti-

bodies, so the Church, moved by the Holy Ghost, rises up against false doctrine and expels it. When this natural reaction is absent, it is a sign of lack of faith. Likewise, if a mathematics teacher saw no reaction in his students if he taught that $2 + 2 = 5$, it would mean that his students had lost their common sense. If a body no longer fights against disease, it is a sign of oncoming death.

I believe that the attempt of traditionalists to compromise with the Modernists has made Modernists out of the traditionalists. Sure, they have their traditional liturgy, but where is their doctrine? Where is their faith?

No one has to be a theologian to understand that Ratzinger's authorization of contraception is contrary to faith, and leads to the most frightening conclusions in the area of sexual morality. Yet because he is the "man in the white cassock" inhabiting the Vatican, the Catholic Faith is gradually being bent and perverted by the Novus Ordo conservatives in order to make sense of Ratzinger's Modernism. The effect is that the nocons themselves are becoming doctrinal Modernists.

May God help us all. Who would have thought that someone who purports to be the pope, and uses all of the papal insignia and uniform, and who is seen as the Catholic pope by nearly the whole world, could say that contraception is justified in certain cases? And who would have thought that not a whimper of protest would be heard from those who purport to have the Catholic faith?

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