

Mission Impossible?

*The Long and Winding Road of the
Catholic Church towards a Humane Sexual Ethics*

Cedara
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Jan Jans, *STD*
Associate Professor of Ethics
Tilburg School of Humanities



By way of introduction

1999	mars marzo marzo	11	12	maart march märz	1999
lundi lunes lunedì	15 maandag monday montag	① Talking Central 15.02 (OK) Rij 42 ABC UNISA +20.00 sleutel	→ Durban/Hurley	①	lundi lunes lunedì
marti martes martedì	16 dinsdag tuesday dienstag		Proefvlucht Kerolden Vrijdell		22 maandag monday montag
mercredi miércoles mercoledì	17 woensdag wednesday mittwoch	① AIRLOUKO C → auto MM. SWV-Den Bosch	↑ 16.30 → 16.30	20.00 UNISA	24 woensdag wednesday mittwoch
jeudi jueves giovedì	18 donderdag thursday donnerstag	UNISA (R)	Weekgroep Utrecht	↑	25 donderdag thursday donnerstag
vendredi viernes venerdì	19 vrijdag friday freitag	Personen tennis - tafel 20.00 Muskens & Abraham	MMR 10.15 Den Bosch	← Aldam	26 vrijdag friday freitag
samedi sábado sabato	20 zaterdag saturday samstag	C → Puck beta 19.00	C → Aldam	OK PoB	27 zaterdag saturday samstag
dimanche domingo domenica	21 zondag sunday sonntag	KWM Keinldag	→ Brussel 12.00 Sullegem OK	OK	28 zondag sunday sonntag

By way of introduction

Durban 22 March 1999: three theologians visiting archbishop Denis Hurley...



Nico Schreurs, Herman Beck and Jan Jans

“Oh - young man - moral theology, now that is a field full of dangers, especially after *Humanae vitae!*”

By way of introduction

Hurley's response to *Humanae vitae*: 7 August 1968 "I don't think I have ever felt so torn in half"

- * Accept the decision of Pope Paul VI?
- * Difficulties to accept the lack of change ~ personal conviction and the lack of consultation.

Exchange with Paul VI

- * Audience October 1968: a situation of great uneasiness...
- * Letter on 12 April 1969: implications of collegiality
- * Reply by Paul VI in July 1969: papal authority...

By way of introduction

Article by Hurley in *Theological Studies*, March 1974:
*Population Control and the Catholic Conscience:
Responsibility of the Magisterium*: “If the *magisterium* does not see to it that this total ecclesial effort [collegiality and expertise] is mobilized and deployed, it will not have the right to teach; for, invoking an old ally, natural law, no authority has the right to command the impossible, and it will be impossible for pastors and people to cope with the population issue without very full and effective leadership from the *magisterium*”.

Amoris Laetitia 80: The Transmission of Life and the Rearing of Children

Marriage is firstly an “intimate partnership of life and love”⁸⁰

Footnote 80, Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* 48:

“The intimate partnership of married life and love has been established by the Creator and qualified by His laws, and is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent”.

Amoris Laetitia 80

which is a good for the spouses themselves,⁸¹

Footnote 81, *Code of Canon Law* 1055 §1:

“[The matrimonial covenant] ... is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring.”

Amoris Laetitia 80

while sexuality is “ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman”.⁸²

Footnote 82, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2360:
“Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman”.

Amoris Laetitia 80

It follows that “spouses to whom God has not granted children can have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms”.⁸³

Footnote 83, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1654: “Spouses to whom God has not granted children can nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice”.

Amoris Laetitia 80

Nonetheless, the conjugal union is ordered to procreation “by its very nature”.⁸⁴

Footnote 84, Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* 48:

“By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown”.

Amoris Laetitia 80

The child who is born “does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfilment”.⁸⁵

Footnote 85, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2366:
“[Fecundity is a gift, an *end of marriage*, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful.] A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but springs from the very heart of that mutual giving, as its fruit and fulfillment”.

Amoris Laetitia 80

He or she does not appear at the end of a process, but is present from the beginning of love as an essential feature, one that cannot be denied without disfiguring that love itself. From the outset, love refuses every impulse to close in on itself: it is open to a fruitfulness that draws it beyond itself.

Amoris Laetitia 80

Hence no genital act of husband and wife can refuse this meaning,⁸⁶ even when for various reasons it may not always in fact beget a new life.

Footnote 86, Paul VI, *Humanae vitae* 11-12

Genital act? Sexuality ordered to conjugal love; conjugal union = love ordered to procreation and education; child springs from mutual giving; love refuses to close in on itself and is open to fruitfulness => “Hence no genital act ... can refuse this meaning”?

Humanae vitae tradendae (25 July 1968)

ENCYCLICAL LETTER
HUMANAE VITAE
OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF
PAUL VI

TO HIS VENERABLE BROTHERS
THE PATRIARCHS, ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS
AND OTHER LOCAL ORDINARIES
IN PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE
APOSTOLIC SEE,
TO THE CLERGY AND FAITHFUL OF THE
WHOLE CATHOLIC WORLD, AND TO ALL MEN
OF GOOD WILL,
ON THE [PROPER] REGULATION OF BIRTH

Humanae vitae tradendae: n° 11

Observing the Natural Law

11. The sexual activity, in which husband and wife are intimately and chastely united with one another, through which human life is transmitted, is, as the recent Council recalled, "noble and worthy". (11)

Footnote 11: Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* 49:

“The actions within marriage by which the couple are united intimately and chastely are noble and worthy ones. Expressed in a manner which is truly human, these actions promote that mutual self-giving by which spouses enrich each other with a joyful and a ready will”.

“... through which human life is transmitted...”? – no trace in *GS* 49!

Humanae vitae tradendae: n° 11

It does not, moreover, cease to be legitimate even when, for reasons independent of their will, it is foreseen to be infertile. For its natural adaptation to the expression and strengthening of the union of husband and wife is not thereby suppressed. The fact is, as experience shows, that new life is not the result of each and every act of sexual intercourse. God has wisely ordered laws of nature and the incidence of fertility in such a way that successive births are already naturally spaced through the inherent operation of these laws.

The Church, nevertheless, in urging men to the observance of the precepts of the natural law, which it interprets by its constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life. (12)

Footnote 12: See Pius XI. encyc. letter *Casti connubi*: AAS 22 (1930), 560; Pius XII, *Address to Midwives*: AAS 43 (1951), 843.

Humanae vitae tradendae: n° 11

Casti Connubii: “First consideration is due to the offspring, which many have the boldness to call the disagreeable burden of matrimony and which they say is to be carefully avoided by married people not through virtuous continence (which Christian law permits in matrimony when both parties consent) but by frustrating the marriage act - *sed vitiando naturae actum*”. (=‘definition’ of contraception! => ‘pill’ is the ‘Catholic Method’?)

Address to Midwives: “The matrimonial contract, which confers on the married couple the right to satisfy the inclination of nature, establishes them in a state of life, namely, the matrimonial state. Now, on married couples, who make use of the specific act of their state, nature and the Creator impose the function of providing for the preservation of mankind”.

“... each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life”. -- no trace in these sources!

Humanae vitae tradendae: n° 12

Union and Procreation

12. This particular doctrine, often expounded by the magisterium of the Church, is based on the inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act. *

Footnote *: ... no footnote to be found! No source in Scripture, Tradition or magisterial theology => *creatio ex nihilo*?

“Significance” is a new term // ‘tradition’ employs 3 goods (*tria bona* ~ Augustine) or primary & secondary ends (*fines*)

Humanae vitae tradendae: n° 12

The reason is that the fundamental nature of the marriage act, while uniting husband and wife in the closest intimacy, also renders them capable of generating new life—and this as a result of laws written into the actual nature of man and of woman. And if each of these essential qualities, the unitive and the procreative, is preserved, the use of marriage fully retains its sense of true mutual love and its ordination to the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man is called. We believe that our contemporaries are particularly capable of seeing that this teaching is in harmony with human reason.

Ref. n° 28: “In the performance of your ministry you must be the first to give an example of that sincere obedience, inward as well as outward, which is due to the magisterium of the Church. For, as you know, the pastors of the Church enjoy a special light of the Holy Spirit in teaching the truth. And this, rather than the arguments they put forward, is why you are bound to such obedience”.

Back to *Amoris Laetitia*

“Hence no genital act of husband and wife can refuse this meaning, even when for various reasons it may not always in fact beget a new life”.

BUT

What is the ‘weight’ of this statement after consulting the source referred to and after unpacking that source...?

AND

Please note: *AL* does not repeat the ‘condemnation’ of contraception in *HV* 14

Please remember: discernment, graduality, mercy are the guiding principles of *AL*...also with regard to “the proper regulation of birth” *aka* “responsible parenthood”

Back to *Amoris Laetitia*

June 2017: Francis established a commission to study *Humanae Vitae* in the light of *Amoris Laetitia*...

March 2018: Walter Kasper, *Amoris Laetitia's Message. A Brotherly Discussion*

* “Tradition is not a stagnant lake, but is like a spring, or a river: it is something alive ...the Church is a living organism and thus it always needs to validly translation the Catholic tradition into present situations”.

* “A paradigm shift that does not limit itself to allowing communion for the divorced and remarried, but ‘concerns moral theology in general and thus has effects on many analogous situations,’ including none other than recourse to artificial methods of birth control”.

* “Francis encourages the use of the method of observing the cycles of natural fertility,” and “does not say anything about other methods of family planning and avoids all casuistic definitions.”

Conclusion: *Mission Impossible?*

- Can the ‘paradigm shift’ in *Amoris Laetitia* with regard to “the discernment of irregular situations” spill over into the development of discernment with regard to methods of practicing responsible parenthood?
- Can the Catholic Church in her teaching on contraception move from arguments based on ‘nature’ towards an inviting vision based on the dignity of human persons?
- Can the impulse given by *Amoris Laetitia* and Pope Francis towards subsidiarity also been applied to the conscientious deliberations and decisions of spouses?
- => Can the 50th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae Tradendae* be the impulse for a step in the tradition of innovation?

