

The pill blamed for deterioration of morality in society

One of the best parts about writing a column is receiving letters from readers. In this edition, I will share with you information from two letters I received in the last couple of weeks from women I know.

In the first letter, my friend, Paula, told me about a recent visit to a doctor. Paula had just had her third child and was experiencing irregular heartbeat. Her obstetrician referred her to a family practitioner for diagnosis.

At the beginning of the visit, Paula mentioned that she had recently had a baby. The doctor, who was female, then asked, "How many children do you have?" Paula answered, "Three."

"This is entirely too many," the doctor said, "What kind of birth control are you using?" "Natural Family Planning, sort of," Paula said. "It's when you monitor the woman's cycle by reading biological signs and temperature."

The doctor, having no familiarity with Natural Family Planning, responded, "I don't recommend that at all! That's a good way to become pregnant! Three children is considered a large family by today's standards. All of your children are going to live. They'll become healthy adults. You have to be responsible and consider the limited resources that are available in the world today. We have to look at it as a pie, and all of us have to share a piece of the pie..."

At this point, the doctor's words became background noise as Paula began to pray about what she should say. She was shocked, unable to reconcile her joy over the birth of her new daughter with the tirade of this physician.

Paula wrote that this incident inspired her to speak for the children and the weak of our society. She and her husband intend to be more involved in pro-life activities, which include identifying doctors who are supportive of married couples who are generous with their fertility.

The second letter was from a woman named Kathy. She observed that in all the recent coverage of the 25th anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision legalizing abortion on demand in the United States, she never saw any references to birth control. She said that 20 or so years ago a friend had told



Tim Sullivan

Family Life Director

her that birth control had created a mentality that had led to abortion. Kathy instantly saw that this was correct and knew that she and her husband should avoid the temptation to ignore the teachings of the Catholic Church on the regulation of births.

Recently, Kathy had become aware that the divorce rate among couples who follow the Church's teachings on the regulation of births is less than 5 percent. In her letter to me, she said she now realized that the teaching she resented 20 years ago was a gift from her Church, and

that she wanted to offer it to all engaged couples. She observed that the marriage act and marriage must be seen as inseparable. Finally, she acknowledged that what had at times required so much discipline, practicing Natural Family Planning, had in fact strengthened her marriage and helped hold it together.

These two letters caused me to retrieve an article that appeared in U.S. News & World Report in July of 1996. The author, Lionel Tiger, was an anthropologist. He wrote that the relationship between men and women in our country began to deteriorate in the 1960's. He said that the cause of this was the birth control pill.

Tiger writes: "The pill emancipated women and placed into question existing moral and religious systems that focused on controlling sexual behavior. It allowed women to keep men in the dark as to whether sex could lead to pregnancy ... and men had less and less control of the impact of their sexuality." It was little wonder, Tiger concludes, that the role of men in begetting and raising children began to slide into irresponsibility or absence.

The bottom line in all this is that bad things happen when you separate the generation of life from the marriage act. The Church knew this. When we conform to the Church's teachings, which in turn conform to the natural process developed by our Creator, our society will be much better off.

Our closing verse is from I Thessalonians: "May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other, and for everyone else."