**MARITAL SEXUALITY**

**RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THE HOLY FATHER**

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**I KNEEL BEFORE THE HOLY FATHER**

This fraise comes from a letter of St. Paul, where he writes about the relationship of family in the spirituality for marriage. The image of kneeling before the Father, describes the attitude of humility, trust and preferential love towards God the Father that is implicit in a marriage. Marriage is the only institution that conducts itself in this way before God, humbly asking for his mercy, his providence and his Creative Spirit or power, to act making himself present within their family and in society, through these same channels. To kneel is a sign of humility because St. Paul states, “I kneel before the holy Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth take their name “.

With God the Father and Creator: the institution of marriage is involved in the government of creation and the transmission of life. In the mission of governing creation, man plays the role of king on earth, where he complies with the job of sustaining the family. This becomes clear when in the story of Genesis; God creates and leads man to Paradise for him to name of all the things and creatures on this earth. In biblical language to name the creatures is a sign of this mission to transform knowledge and all that has been created. Man is not an absolute master, but more like an administrator of the Kingdom of God, called to continue the work of the Creator, and to govern the world in holiness and justice.

The second way to act with God the Creator is the transmission of life. The married couple has the privilege of being co-creator with God, to have children hand in hand with God, and to transmit his life. Something that is highlighted in the encyclical Humanae Vitae is: “The serious duty of transmitting human life has always been for the couple, as free and responsible collaborators of God the Creator". His Holiness Paul VI speaks of "serious duty" because of the huge importance that entails the wonderful mission of having children. However, it must be done in an atmosphere of responsible parenting. In the task of regulating each conception and the responsibility that has to do with answering and addressing the needs of another. On the one hand, the needs of the unborn child, in addition to that of those already born, plus the ability of parents to develop their parenting in all of its capacity and finally Gods needs to transcend within humanity.

God the Father has the need to transmit life and this mission is put in the loving hands of the married couple, of husband and wife. Are you willing to receive from God his children lovingly and responsibly and to educate them according to Christ and the Church? The celebrant asks us this during the Marriage ritual. When asked, are you willing? The Church reminds the couple that they are called upon to be parents, and to have a marriage open to life. Though this they are also reminded that they find themselves before the creative power of God to which they are called to cooperate with the Creator, giving life . John Paul II says: "You, who beget children for your nation on earth, never forget that at the same time you are bearing them for the kingdom of God."

With respect to this mission of co-creation with God , His Holiness Pope Paul VI illuminated in that the mission of transmitting life , spouses are not determined independently , but their conduct is subject to God's Creative Intent , this means: not that they own the spring from which life sprouts but that they are the administrators of this life. In order to interpret the intentions of a marriage from a spiritual point of view such as when and how many children to have , in addition to the intention of God towards them, they need to experience a process as administrators of sexuality with an appropriate body language. Besides the married couple is also administrator in the care of the life given by the Creator.

Spouses are invited to be " interpreters of God's Creative Intent " in the " task of regulating conceptions" which is achieved through the attitude of responsible parenthood a deliberation , which is the conversation between spouses , pondering over the considerations that weigh over the shoulders of each couple , and the generosity of the married couple , where God has a special place as Creator . In this family setting of paternity, it is suggested that the child is always considered as "someone" and that he was not put off as if he or she were "something”. That this child is not considered as a product to reject or get at all costs, but that the child is a gift, a gift of God, which is prioritized. The concept of prioritizing God's criteria comes from two comments: one, from his holiness Pope Paul VI, who says that preventing a new life should only be done "for grave reasons". The other one, in which John Paul II states in his "Letter to Families", calling to lay down selfishness and encouraging generosity and love with respect to parenthood.

Taking correct action is extremely important, to the point that His Holiness John Paul II's “Letter to Families " adds that, in the meeting in Heaven there will be a conversation about this truth that refers to the family. "Come, ye blessed of my Father" this will be the time when Jesus and God our father will thank the marriage, for its parental performance and conviction.

**SEXUALITY**

When it comes to sexuality, we are talking about an ability that involves the body.

The body needs food, rest, respect for its cycles and timing, exercise and activities to maintain it healthy, given that through it we may move and perform other activities along with communicate with others, making visible the invisible, that which is spiritually transcendent and divine, in other words our soul.

In the marital union, bodies are protagonists; they are the way of expression that guaranties the union and the generation of new life.

Bodies in their usual state fail the link with the other body. However, through intelligence, willingness, feelings of attraction and instinct this link is achieved. This faculty called sexuality is what causes physical changes in man and woman, especially in the sexual organs, and feelings that allow the union.

There are different conceptions of sexuality. For some sexuality is total surrender , body and soul , of a man and a woman who have joined their lives forever , while for others the body can be a mere instrument for obtaining pleasure, detached from the soul.

This is how sexuality it has come to be considered, as a human right, to have rewarding and enriching sex , without coercion, without fear of infection or unwanted pregnancy , birth control without the risk of unpleasant and dangerous side effects. This is the definition schools have used to educate students, they have disconnected sex from the responsibility of marriage, love and fertility and they have given teenagers the right to have sexual relations void of this love and responsibility.

To live marriage as a link between the two human beings and God, we must define sexuality as the power that a man and a woman have to receive from one another. Donating themselves to one another, exclusive and definitely united in the institution of marriage, through the mediation of the body with their sexual organs which are also their transmitters of life, through this act of loving happiness and mutual betterment, the marital union collaborates with God in the generation of new life.

Thus, we emphasize that the sexual connotation our body is integral to its original divine creation, in which man and woman were created in the image and likeness of God and are called to make a faithful and free communion, unbreakable and fruitful, as a reflection of the love of Christ for his Church.

In addition, John Paul II says: Words that are as deeply imbedded in the spirit such as love, donation of the self, loyalty, require a proper body language and without it their meanings cannot be fully expressed. The body, as such, does not talk, but marriage speaks with body language. Marriage is called to build their lives and their coexistence on the basis of that language, opening a dialogue based on what can only be expressed though the body .

**THE BODY**

Figuratively we know that God formed man, and after breathing the breath of life into him, man thus became a living being, there for the male and female body are printed in the divine image. Furthermore, when God formed woman, man exclaims. “This is flesh of my flesh, bone of my bones“. These words indicate that the human being has awareness of the meaning of one's body and sexuality. Thus, the body manifests itself as a visual intermediary for the person, so that man and woman may communicate with each other. The body and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and divine. It was created to transfer into the visible reality, the manifestation of the spirit.

Man is able to express with his body language his personal existence and his vocation. So the most profound words coming from the spirit such as, love, generosity, and loyalty require a proper body language . Man was endowed with a deep supernatural unity though his/ her body and from the beginning of creation there was the blessing of fertility, coupled with that of divine procreation.

Moreover, the unity which is mentioned in Genesis “and you shall be of one flesh" is expressed and realized during the conjugal act, there for it is a powerful bond. The body helps them both as a couple to be in communion of persons and becomes a special and unique constitutive element of their marriage, when they become husband and wife. This unity through the body has a sacramental dimension.

When love is expressed in a spousal manner, then love becomes a gift and thus for sanctifying in its significance.

The dignity of the body is due not only to the human spirit , but to the supernatural reality of the dwelling and continued presence of the Holy Spirit in man, in his soul and in his body , as a result of the redemption accomplished by Christ . Man’s body does not belong solely to himself but it is also a vestal and temple of the Holy Spirit .

**SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP – SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY**

Sex is an integral part of the sacrament of marriage. When the bride and groom say "I ... I take you ... as a wife (or) "the words with which the couple is married, are just words if the couple does not have intercourse afterwards. That is according to John Paul II in his letter to the family, "this formula is itself sacramental sign of marriage, which can only be accomplished through sexual intercourse” .

Sexuality is like an enclosed flower garden, which opens with the authorization given by God in the sacrament of marriage when he says: “I take you." If used before it destroys the possibility that God has to enter with his grace to that sacred garden. Confession and prayer, especially Hail Maries are like roses that the Holy Spirit could plant in this garden during the sacrament of matrimony in order to repair the damage done in case of this sacrilege.

**BODY – SACRAMENTAL GRACE**

“The two shall become one”. In this matrimonial "two shall become one", one’s body becomes the spouses, while at the same time they both become one with God. So much so, that St. Paul says, “You no longer belong to yourselves, for you have been purchased at a great price”. This means that the bodies of the spouses are the instrument through which God gives his blessings of love. However, in this language of the body, not all sexual acts are capable of transmitting Gods sacramental graces, since some conditions need to be complied for this to happen.

**CONDITIONS FOR THE SACRAMENTALITY OF THE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP**

Sexual relations are transmitters of grace, as described in the encyclical Humanae Vitae of Paul VI and reinforced by the writings of John Paul II. The two pontiffs define one great principle: every marital act must remain open to the transmission of life; consequently, each sexual relationship necessarily should consider its unitive and procreative significance. In addition, it is illicit for humans to eliminate their own fertility unnaturally.

**THE TWO MEANINGS IN THE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP**

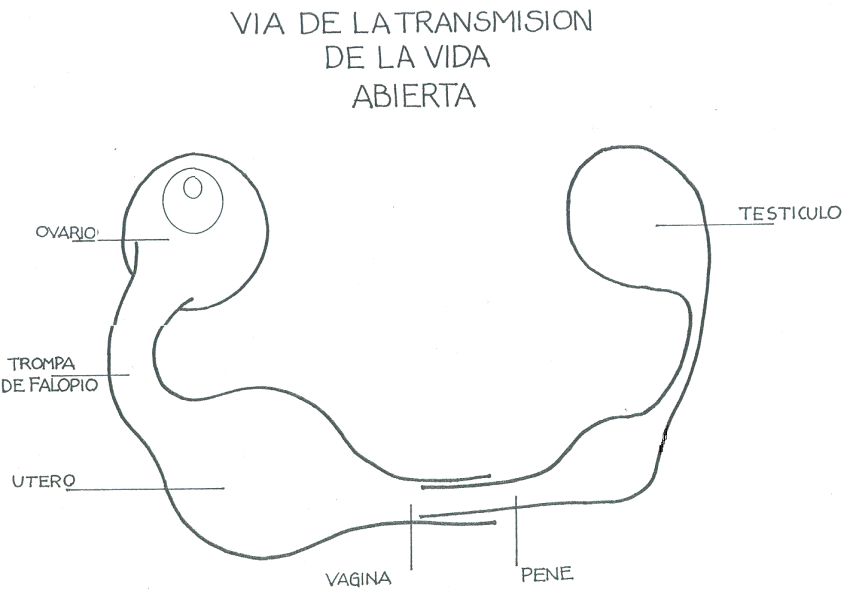
It can be misinterpreted when using the term procreative significance as meaning that every sexual relationship should necessarily permit a new life. In order to understand this difficult concept is necessary to focus on the word "significance” which comes from the word sign, which means: making the invisible visible.

In understanding this union of meanings it is necessary to know the invisible that is made visible with each sign, that of the unitive sign and the procreative sign. The unitive visible sign is the placement of the penis into the vagina, allowing the expression of an invisible union of the spouse’s souls. On the other hand, the visible procreative sign is the male and female fertility, their sperm and eggs, which give visibility to the unseen creative power of God.

**SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP OPEN TO THE TRANSMISSION OF LIFE**

"Any marital act must remain open to the transmission of life.”. This concept has been misinterpreted, as, all sexual relations must be “open to life ", refers to the possibility that every sexual act between spouses necessarily should produce a new life. This is an error in concept, which goes against the task of the marriage to regulating conceptions. The very encyclical Humanae Vitae states that a new life needs not follow each conjugal act. This is why God has wisely disposed of natural laws and rhythms of fertility, which provide fertile and infertile moments ,which in themselves distanced and sort births and though this the spouses may continue to express the union .

To understand that "every marital act must remain open to the transmission of life" we need to rename the genital apparatus. If instead of naming the genital apparatus, as a reproducing apparatus, we call them life-transmitting apparatus it is then easier to comprehend the idea of being open to the transmission of life. This is because when a man and a woman unite their bodies through their penis and vagina they then unite their life transmitting apparatuses thus for opening the way for the transmission of life. By not closing this path and permitting an open passage or circulation of the procreative significance, the sperm and the egg, the spouses are making the invisible creative power of God visible.



So much importance and attention to this pathway formed by the union of man and woman is because she transmits the creative power of God, who is a major player in the bodies of the spouses.

A sexual relationship with its pathway of the transmission of life closed is when something interferes with the track of one of the life -transmitting devices (or reproducers) of the marriage. For instance, the transmission of life closes when a condom prevents the passage of sperm. The path is also blocked when the transmission of life through the sperm is detoured by way of an ejaculation outside of the vagina. Another manner to close the route of the transmission of life is preventing ovulation through the ingestion of the hormone pill. Intrauterine contraception is widely used and it not only interferes with the creative power of God, but it is also a micro abortive method.

Therefore, for a marriage to fulfill the task of regulating the conceptions while still keeping open the route of the transmission of life, sex has to be at those times, when marital infertility is certain (an example of this is the method of billings).

Living in this experience not only keeps the grace of God but also the everyday demands of sexuality, well looked after, motivating an ongoing dialogue, deliberation and adaptation to life and the experience of sexuality of both spouses.

**DIFFERENCES IN SEXUAL RESPONSE**

The union of bodies in the conjugal act need individual psychobiological responses, which are different in men and women, and these also, vary throughout married life.

The junction of the bodies is through penile penetration of the vagina, but in their normal state within the body, those two organs cannot do this. Penis’s flaccid position does not allow it to fit into the vagina, thus an erection is necessary. Moreover, the size of the woman's vagina, does not allow the penis to enter erect. For this to happen it is necessary to stimulate through excitement, which lubricates the vagina, widens and lengthens.

The necessary changes are achieved by stimuli of thought, and the senses of vision and touch.

There are marked differences in the response of men and women. First off, man achieves his sexual response very easily to any one or all of these stimuli, especially visual, notwithstanding the erection is maintained for a specified period and needs time to reproduce itself again, although this time is different for every man. In contrast, women have a slower sexual arousal response in the beginning, being more sensitive to tactile sensation, and they need a more integrated sexual stimulus, particularly emotional and affectionate, but women can keep their arousal for more time and biologically they have the capacity to retake it at any time.

Another big difference is that women often need to be relaxed to surrender to her husband while man relaxes with sex.

**SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP – PLEASURE**

Pleasure is achieved when the two interpenetrate each other, without external stimuli other than themselves to achieve arousal; spouses experience enjoyment of body and spirit during sex, especially when the necessary physical changes in the women have been achieved in response to the union of the two souls.

**SEX LIFE DURING MARRIAGE**

**Dating:** The ideal is that the two stay virgins until marriage, however, these days that this is becoming less common, although there are still some couples that continue to follow this ideal.

To a bride and groom who have had sex with persons other than their future spouse, we suggest they discard the possibility of AIDS before the marriage. A person can be a carrier for 8 years without symptoms. Given that, there are families, mother and child with the disease because the father married being a carrier, having acquired the disease years before their engagement without him and the bride knowing.

**The first night:** Due to fatigue after the celebrations it could occur that neither of the two desire joining in sexual intercourse. However, the sacrament, which started at the altar, culminates in the sexual relation between the two, which will hopefully be in good spirits.

**Honeymoon:** Is the time following the marriage. It is believed that honeymoon comes from the Arab culture where the newlyweds enjoyed a lunar month after marriage. In Chile the newlywed couple leave their social and work surroundings with the objective of resting after the burden of marriage planning, this allows them to learn or strengthen their sexuality and recover energy for the return to daily life. The new marriage should be able to do what they desire a feel and "to test many times" sex without abstinence. In order to do this they need to be relaxed, with time on their hands and no outside pressure. The one who needs most of these conditions is the woman, who because of their psychobiological condition takes longer to concentrate then the man during sex. The stress caused by the overload of marriage preparations can generate some level of difficulty in achieving a better response from a woman’s body toward sexuality.

No doubt, it is also an opportunity to sightsee and do sports, but all in a spirit of rest and relaxation. However, what is most common is that tourist agencies tie the bride and groom to tours centered on visiting new places, as the only opportunity they will have to travel, organized to change places, which distract, but do not relax. The hustle and bustle of luggage, confirming planes and transportation generate additional stress and in quite a few occasions have caused post honeymoon depressions in some women.

If this were to happen it is important not to blame the marital union but to have the patience to wait it out, until such difficulties have subsided, be it taking time to really relax or seeking help from a professional.

**During pregnancy:** the married couple can have sex, and more still, it is an excellent time to reinforce the learning process. The man may find it difficult to have sex with a woman other that isn’t as "skinny" as before, or like in the movies or he may fear putting the pregnancy at risk. Nevertheless, women are much more willing biologically and it does the child good, because it increases the flow of blood to the uterus.

**Puerperium:** The first 40 days immediately after birth are an extraordinary period in a woman’s life, and all of her energy goes towards feeding and caring for the newborn, her body is recovering from childbirth. She may also fear having sexual relations once again due to vaginal pain caused by possible changes produced during labor. Therefore, it is necessary to start a new learning process. It is very necessary for women than men approach her in a very delicate manner at the end of this stage, acting tenderly and taking in consideration her fears and difficulties.

**During married life:** Throughout life there may be many changes, it may be that sexual response diminishes and this may affect the frequency, the urge to have sex or the body's response despite being stimulated may change, the loss of penile erection or not achieving vaginal changes produced by excitation in women. All of these things happen at different stages of married life and for different reasons.

At certain times in life women may not get excited about having sex with her husband due to the fact the sex for women is very psychological and she may be feeling pain or anger towards her husband for many reasons.

In men, the sexual response may decline, reducing the frequency of sexual relations, this often happens during intense professional stages, when there is stress or depression, these situations are reversible through specific hormonal therapy, and impotence often occurs in middle age or senior adulthood.

**Fertile days of the month:** Even though during certain days of the month the woman is considered fertile due to the presence of fertile mucus (clear, stretchy and very nutritious for sperm when in contact with it) in the cervix and vagina, sexual relations during this period won’t necessarily result in a new life. The chances of getting pregnant are higher than 60% at 6 months of trying. During these days, the psychobiological response in women is much better which makes it easier to form a union between the two.

**Infertile periods:** In some marriages, sexual intercourse exclusively during infertile periods may have a higher degree of difficulty. These difficulties may come from the man or woman or from the two; this is a way of life that requires a little more dedication to get to know each other under these particular circumstances, to renew the sexual response of both partners in order to live their sexuality to its fullest extent.

**In pre-peak:** Depending on the conditions of the vaginal mucus, sperm can last from a few hours up to 10 days, because of this fact, when spouses prefer to delay conceptions, they should not have sex during these pre-peak days, which are those days ranging from the first day of menstruation to the day of ovulation.

**ABSTINENCE FROM SEX**

Abstinence is to refrain or stop doing something. Here we are talking about abstinence from sex. There are periods when life obligates us to refrain from having sexual relations such as after childbirth, during an infectious disease, or when either of the spouses is not in physical or psychological condition to surrender their love and affection fiscally.

There is also the situation of voluntary abstinence, in order to prevent the conception of a child.

Sometimes abstinence is identified as a nuisance, a tragedy that almost hurts the marriage. However, fertile abstinence periods are times that can leverage to motivate other expressions of love, allowing the marriage to be enriched by loving affection, along with a more time for a cultural and social life.

No doubt, times of abstinence can be rewarding, but this is not a predominant behavior in the experience of marital sexuality. St. Paul is very clear when he says, “The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control".

The fact that St. Paul encourages to have sex and invites to moderate abstinence does not mean that these can be imposed, or that they are an obligation of sorts, nor that there is what has been called the "conjugal debit", which in the past has been interpreted as in the woman being obliged to have sex.

This definition of "conjugal debt" appeared in the days when it was considered that the man could not control the sexual need, so the wife must satisfy to avoid infidelity. As consequence to this interpretation, his Holy Father Paul VI says; “The conjugal act imposed upon a spouse regardless of their current condition and lawful desires is not a true act of love". Experience has also shown that men can control their sexuality and that they can live times of abstinence when necessary. We must also clarify that the words of St. Paul are not a rule to follow, but a motivation to consider in the spirit of self-analysis; due to love a women opens to the sexual union and in no case is this a man’s right to claim from her.

At the other extreme, it is said that the experience of sexuality with periods of abstinence causes a loss of spontaneity. When it comes to sexuality, the value of spontaneity is no more important than the growth in love that derives from married life and the love of God. Furthermore, the belief that contraceptives favor spontaneity is a magical idea that comes from the movies and is an urban myth. However, the fact with contraceptives is “since every day is possible then it never happens", this is because a woman has trouble giving herself completely because disconnecting from all the details of family and work is very difficult for her. For a fulfilling sexual relation she needs to be rested if possible every day, so if her husband is constantly insinuating that he wants to engage in sex she may wind up running away from the whole idea and end up being a fugitive from her husband. Sometimes women try to end the vicious cycle and give in to sex regardless of the fact that she has little desire and winds up faking her orgasm, not feeling anything, so as not to be reproached; this becomes a way of dominating the husband through sex.

Abstaining from sex is especially difficult for the impulsive man requiring more effort if he has weak will power. This is particularly true if the spouses return home late and their only communication is when they meet in the bed they share, this makes the drive to join sexually extremely strong. Dominating sexual drive is difficult in this case because you are tired; you have in this case lost the freedom of controlling your own person. Impulsivity is decreased when the marriage works together for example feeding the children, and going to the movies, it's easier to say no to the purely genital because there has been a new and different channel opened for being together and sharing with one another.

Another difficulty that sometimes arises is "When you want it you can’t have it and when you can have it you don’t want it", because it is possible that in infertile premenstrual periods women are more irritated with what is bothering them and they can get more tired. In this case, it is favorable to have had a learning curve of sexual relations during the fertile period, in this way she can transfer the sexual experience of the fertile to the infertile period stimulating herself mentally with the good memory. In infertile days, women can learn not to overload themselves with activities, rest more and learn to work their irritability. Moreover, let the heavy activities that can often times be planned wait for fertile days, for example sorting closets. Also recommended, that men learn to cope and give less importance when women have bad temper and are irritable.

Moreover, living ones sexuality when regulated by fertility can be very unpleasant when the union depends solely on the permission of the women, making her the only one in the relationship that is responsible. Therefore, it is appropriate that the husband also learns to observe his wife and write in his journal or date book the fertile and unfertile days. This helps the spouses to work as a team, so when they wish to distance the conception of a child neither of the two will pressure or tempt each other and they shall both be accomplices’ to the decision of abstinence and preventing in this way a defensive attitude by the wife.

It is also said that to live by respecting natural cycles of fertility "harshens sexuality, turning it into special days and not special moments." If the sex in a marriage were only to occur as special moments, you might never have sex, because the time may never come, however marriages can make infertile days, a special moment.

Another claim of some marriages is "when we can we have a fight then we miss out" what often times happens is that some conflicts cannot be solved with a simple conversation and to solve them you need more time and patience. Then, if the marriage knows that today is a good day to have sexual relations and they have fought they can still join, they can leave the fight behind the door and then see if it's worth picking it up again or make a fresh start. If the fight is resumed, it will in another context, with the idea to solve it, because there will be more grace from God through sexuality. Thus, marriage learns forgiveness for the sack of the physical union along with that of daily life, family and work activities.

This form of conjugal love is only for those living sexuality while respecting the rhythms of fertility. People with a contraceptionist mentality do not understand or accept, nor can they apply this, because to avoid male dominance through sex, for them there cannot be a fight before sex. This precaution not to have sex when you are angry, is excellent to prevent the domain of one of the two, but marriages with marital problems often remain in a vicious cycle, if there is a fight then no sexual relationship, but then the lack of sexual relations causes distancing to occur and increases marital conflict.

Living a marriage through fertility control with abstinence produces several advantages for the marriage. First it helps create and ensures dialogue; it organizes and enriches married life. Women learn to educate their irritability, and men learn to control their impulsivity and strengthen their will. The two learn to live for and with one another.

**MARITAL FERTILITY**

The association of sperm with female cervical mucus produces marital fertility. This is because depending on the friendly or aggressive characteristics of the mucus, which is called "mucus-sperm hostility", the sperm may die on arrival or last up to 10 days. Due to this we recommend that married couples who plan to distance the conception of a new life not have sex in the pre-peak days is.

**ELIMINATING MARITAL FERTILITY**

Living sexuality regulated by fertility Catholic marriages experience this but also those who prioritize living naturally, such as those denominated New Age. However, they are sterilized after the last planned child, because God is not in their perspective involved in the process. Instead, a Catholic marriage who before God decides not have more children continues to regulate births through female fertility because fertility should only be removed by God’s will and not our own.

**PARENTAL FERTILITY THE MISSION TO TRANSMIT LIFE**

Fecundity is the fruit of married love. It is living testimony to the gift of the spouses to one another, since conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. This means that the child emerges from the heart of the two. For most parents the child is a joy, but for some it is a jolt that disrupts life plans. Over time, however, the strength of that child's life ends up enchanting the world that surrounds it.

**CREATIVE INTENT OF GOD**

God our heavenly Father does not have a pre-planned number of children for spouses, if he did have a pre-conceived plan he would need to take in consideration the spouse’s decision. Just as the wife can have an intention of how many children, the father may have another, also God the Father has a proposal, God's idea for his new son, begins from the moment of conception of the new human being, and from that moment , it is now ordered to the eternity of God.

Through marital fertility, God calls asking: Why not another child? In the case that the spouses answer affirmatively then they shall join during the fertile period. However if the answer is no then they will also say "No" to sexual union during the fertile period and the union of the two is done during the infertile period. Not only is this a valid refusal of the spouses through abstinence, but it may even belong to the creative intention of God, given that He believes in the sense of responsibility of modern man to regulate conceptions. Hence, conjugal love requires from a husband and wife the awareness of their mission of responsible parenthood".

**MARRIAGE AS THE INTERPRETER OF GODS CREATIVE INTENT**

One is manager and interpreter of the creative intention of God when the spouses reflect deliberately and generously asking themselves the question “How many children does God want in our family?” This is an ongoing dialog between God and the spouses, where they can express their motivations for the creation or not of a new life. The creative intention is not a "creative obligation" God also listens. Taking in consideration of coarse that there is a criteria or good judgment, "responsible parenthood is not only avoiding a new birth, but also to grow prudently." Prudence means to always look for what may be best, before God, for example to have a large family or for serious reasons to avoid a new birth for some time or even indefinitely.

**MARRIAGE ADMIMISTRATORS OF THE TRANSMITION OF LIFE**

Through the transmission of life, parents not only find happiness, but also cooperate in the expansion of the love of God the Creator. For this reason, the spouses are not free to proceed arbitrarily in this mission as if they could automatically determine the paths to follow. Nor does it mean what is misnamed as "all the children God wants,” on the contrary, spouses are called to discover - day by day - the number of children. Discerning and weighing to prevent or generously open to new life, discovering through them, God's creative intention and in this way they can recognize themselves as administrators established by the Creator, of a plan.

Therefore, fatherhood and motherhood are a mission of conjugal love, carried out with responsibility before God, accepting children as his gift and avoiding new conceptions when they recognize that there are serious grounds, just and grave reasons to do so.

Some people think it is the same to distance births with contraceptives as it is through abstinence from sexual intercourse on fertile days. No doubt, one can achieve the same result through the two systems, which is the absence of a new conception. However, it is very different eliminating fertility, that is, the creative power of God, than it is respecting it, even though the ultimate goal is the same. What sets the attitude of the spouses apart is when by choice they eliminate fertility. They therefore eliminate God from the picture, as opposed to the willingness to remain as administrators by using their infertile periods, where the creative power is not active by God's own initiative, following the rhythm he created naturally and in this way keeping him as a full participant in the process. If the marriage needs to refuse the creation of a new life, they do so; from the prospective of Gods own image and likeness, through abstinence.

**A MARRIAGE GENEROUS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF LIFE**

Another person might say, "There are marriages that are childless by selfishly using the infertile periods and this is the same as using contraceptives". Although in both cases the result is the same, when this regulation is done using infertile periods, God maintains his presence.

There for both spouses are called upon to be generous considering that “when birth is controlled, for good and just reasons, they can distance the births of their children. They should consider that their decision dare not come from selfishness but from generosity.”

"Those who magnanimously choose, on common accord and dully pondered, to have a more numerous offspring to bring up suitably are worthy of special mention." Holy Scripture and the traditional practice of the Church see large families as a sign of divine blessing and generosity on the part of the parents.

John Paul II recalls, "take into account Christian parents that you are not intended solely for the propagation and preservation of mankind on earth, but to graft new offspring for the Church of Christ, bearing co citizens with the saints and of the household of God”.

**RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD - THE TASK OF REGULATING THE TRANSMISSION OF NEW LIFE**

Parenting is a privilege and not a right of marriage.

Exercising parenthood responsibly means recognizing duties towards God, towards the spouses themselves, towards the family and society in a just hierarchy of values. Due to this reason, the Humanae Vitae speaks of reasons to avoid conceptions as "serious reasons, just reasons and for grave reasons." In order to interpret these motivations to avoid a new child the spouses need to have a correct and well-informed conscience.

Paul VI says: Spouses must work out their decision not by doing their own will but governed by their conscience, taking in consideration Magistrate of the Church, in which human and Christian responsibility with docile reverence for God can come to agreement. The spouses must work hard to make a fair judgment taking their own good in mind, along with the good of the children who are already born and those to come. They should also bring to mind circumstances of the times, and the condition of their marital and spiritual life at that moment in time, all of these values should be placed in a just hierarchy.

To achieve the objectives in the distancing of conceptions, the marriage needs to diagnose female fertility with certainty and this means that they need training and ongoing assessment with a qualified professional, if necessary changing instructor from time to time and eventually helping with ultrasound to confirm what they learned.

**WHAT TO PONDER FOR RESPONSABLE PARENTING**

When pondering, a marriage is discerning the ability to respond to the needs and requirements that come with a child: from the biological laws of giving life, physical conditions, economic circumstances, along with psychological and social conditions.

For responsible parenting, it is necessary to know the biological laws of life:

- The fertile and infertile periods of the woman, the man's sperm and breastfeeding.

- Age of parents: "Like arrows in the hand of the hero so are children of the youth", says Psalm 127. This psalm, in addition to the biological reality of the conceptions motivate families to form, as young as possible, after 20 years of age.

**Physical conditions:** the leading cause for distancing pregnancies is that each birth needs time to recover from starting with the uterus, the mother’s emotional state and in order to achieve exclusive breastfeeding the child during its first year of life. Some reasons you need to distance definitely can be for example: diseases of the mother, "serious reasons" such as cancer, tuberculosis or risky age.

**Economic conditions:** if applied rigorously, when looking at economic impediments one could conclude that the poor have no right to have children. This means that each marriage should deliberate these impediments according to their own circumstances.

**Social conditions:** Since the advent of contraception, some governments have claimed the right to control paternity. This is so in China where the number of children is limited by the state, punishing those who have more than one child. On the other hand for a while now, in some countries in Europe who foresaw the catastrophe of low birth rates, financially reward families who have a higher number of children.

**RECOGNITION OF FEMALE FERTILITY**

Female fertility is the sign that permits the spacing of births thru a regulated sexuality. The first hint of recognition of female fertility began 1930 with the Oggino Knaus system, which indicated with certainty the fertility of the previous month, but the probable fertility calculations were made with a twenty percent failure rate and needed total regularity in the menstrual cycle. Currently, there are various different ways to diagnose symptoms of female fertility: the Billings system is a self-performed by the women to diagnose fertility by observing her own cervical mucus. It has huge differences with the first system because this fertility is diagnosed through visible signs, not the calculations of what happened the previous month. The system indicates that you are fertile when the mucus is clear, stretchy and slippery, and infertile when there is a lack of mucous, or it is sticky, cloudy or lumpy. This diagnosis is complemented by changes or variation in basal temperature. Temperature goes up 0.3°C for three consecutive days after ovulation. Another thing we know is the detection of a peak of the luteinizing hormone, LH, in morning urine in 90% of women. To confirm ovulation progesterone in blood and urine can be measured. These measurements can be helped with ultrasound monitoring of follicular maturity.

Moments of Training: To identify female fertility in the cervical mucus of the women it is necessary to be free of interference with semen, so the time before marriage, a time of abstinence anyway, is best suited for learning how to observe the fertility in this mucus. So a woman may know and understand the variables that interfere with fertility such as: emotional states, climate, seasonal factors etc. it is recommended that the study period be during six cycles.

The second stage of diagnosis is a learning process of postpartum fertility to identify changes in the symptoms especially during postpartum breastfeeding. Reviewing this is recommended after each pregnancy.

The third type or stage of the course is diagnostic fertility of symptoms in relation to age, maturity and menopause. It is also necessary to discard fungi and other interference.

**Subjects to learn in order to diagnose fertility:**

* Get to know the male and female genitalia
* The sexual physiology of women and interfering factors
* Identifying the cycle of fertility and infertility in women
* Identifying flows that indicate female fertility
* Differentiate flows that interfere with flows that indicate female fertility
* Extraction from the mucus flow
* Observation and recording of this flow
* Observation of other fertility indicators such as measuring for specific temperatures in order to make the correct diagnosis
* Entry in the monthly log of the days that can be used to conceive children
* Days when abstinence is necessary to prevent births according to the fertility indicators of women
* Days of abstinence according to the characteristics of the man's sperm
* Natural breastfeeding and diagnosis of fertility.

**Observations about the diagnosis of female fertility:**

**Male:** When the man learns jointly with the woman this determines a different attitude within marriage. Man helps when the woman is in doubt about the diagnosis of fertility and has specific chores such as taking the temperature. He approaches the biological aspect, along with the biological processes of childbirth and breastfeeding. This way the weight of sexuality not only rests on the shoulders of the women but both together as one. It has been observed that there is greater abandonment of the system when only women were trained.

Abandonment The abandonment of this way of life tends to occur when marriages have an obstetrician gynecologist who insists on the use of contraceptives and does not help in the care of the uterine neck and the proper production of mucus. Therefore, it is recommended to choose a doctor who knows the importance of this system.

**Courses:** There are various courses on the diagnosis of fertility, but not all are equally as good, nor have the same reliability. For example, a young doctor took a course with an instructor who never taught him that sperm could last up to 10 days in the female mucus (the female mucus is specially formulated to help sperm live while more methods that are antiquated only considered sperm survival in a common Petri dish). They had sex before the peak of female ovulation and ended up expecting when they wanted to delay pregnancy, this happened because of not considering the marital fertility, which is the joint fertility of both spouses.

We recommend saving the records of the diagnostic charts because they are a gynecological history for the future.

**INFERTILITY OR STERILE MARRIAGES**

Infertility is the inability to conceive after one year of sexual intercourse without the use of any contraception. Infertility in marriage presents itself by those who will never be able to have children and the infertility that all marriages have at the end of their childbearing years. The frequency of infertility is 10-15% between the ages of 20 and 29. As a woman increases in age, the probability of infertility also increases at 30 to 35 years of age its 15%, from 35-39 30% and from 40 to 45 years 60% chance of not having children.

Marital Fertility The man produces 300 million sperm a day. Marital fertility depends on the ability of sperm to survive in the female genital tract and viability of the female ova, which lives about 12 hours. A sperms life has a different life span depending on where it is in the female body: in the vagina 4 to 6 hours, in the cervix 5 to 6 days, up to 10 days in fertile mucus, in the uterus 2 to 2.5 days and in the fallopian tubes 2 to 2.5 days. The woman throughout her life does not produce ova; she is born with a certain number that diminishes in quantity and quality through the years.

**Causes of infertility:** there are numerous reasons for infertility such as; the older you are the higher your incidence of infertility, poor nutrition, infections, leucorrhea, radiation from X-rays, excessive alcohol and cigarette smoke. For young couples 20% of marriages are infertile due to anatomical or hormonal causes, or infectious among others.

Likelihood of achieving pregnancy: 25% after the first month of commencing sexual activity, 63% at 6 months, 75% at 9 months, 80%at a year and 90% at a year and 8 months. When a marriage starts experiencing infertility, it is necessary that the spouses study to see where the interruption is, in their route of the transmission of life, so that advances in medicine can help them. For example, there are infections that affect the epididymal duct in men that prevents adequate sperm viability.

Infertility treatments can be performed as long as the unitive sign of the penis into the vagina is maintained, and that the embryo or child is conceived in the womb. As John Paul II said in a speech: "Eliminating the mediation of the body from the conjugal act, as the place where a new human life may arise, means both degrading the act of procreation and the cooperation of God the Creator. This, means turning it into a technically controlled reproduction of a copy of a species and, therefore, losing all of the personal dignity of the child. Only when the conjugal act is a personal gift of the spouses fully respecting the essential characteristics of this conjugal act both bodily and spiritually then is there respect for the person of the child and thus recognizing it has its origin in God, as are all gifts."

We note that despite the lack of offspring, the marriage is still completely valid in their intimacy and communion of life and retaining its value and indissolubility ".

Also by living sexuality regulated by the rhythms of fertility, joining the procreative and unitive aspects, allows the marriage to reflect about their family situation and the number of children every day. Nearing the end of married life the couple then has a certain security that they have done the will of God in the formation of their family.

**EXAMPLES OF THE DELIBERATION IN RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD**

**Situations in the deliberation between children**

A couple with three years of marriage and who have had two children in a row, this woman and her husband learned to diagnose fertility and infertility before marriage. At the birth of their second child, they made the decision to distance a third. At that time, they were on vacation, which happened to be during a fertile time for her. In the morning, they felt the desire to unite, so they got out of bed and got on with their day to respect what they have already decided. At naptime they once again feel a great desire to join, they reason and decide to control it and as a result, nothing happens. In the evening of that the same day, they talk a reflect about how difficult it is controlling their urge, she wonders if it's so necessary to distance a new child, while he reminds her what the doctor said about cesareans. The next day in the evening, the force of desire comes again, and they remember that they had decided on not having more children for a while. The next morning, she said, "The doctor is a bit exaggerated and God wants us to have more children”, he reminds her that is not only a health issue but also the money is tight. On the fourth day - continue wanting to join - they succumb to their desire and conceived a third child even though they did not want to yet. Despite the fact that they dominated their sex drive for three days, the pregnancy was not according to their intention but due to the fact that their will was weak. The rest of their family would say, “That’s how billings babies are born”. However, in this situation no fertility diagnostic system failed, what really failed was the will power to maintain their conviction, so this child was not a “Billings baby” but a “lack of conviction baby”.

Another couple, who has been married for more years and has four children, is fertile during a holiday period. For a long time they had decided that four children was enough for the family, their youngest child is 5 years old. When they desire to join with one another, when on vacation, there are so many opportunities, and they feel so insistent, that they resumed the topic that many years ago was already resolved and the new question appeared; Are these all the children that God wants for us?

**TESTIMONY OF LIVING MATRIMONIAL SEXUALITY**

We lived our sexuality regulated through fertility for 24 years and have four children, according to our intention. On the recommendation of the course we took for marriage preparation before we got married, we attended to 6 sessions, once a month, with a midwife, who taught us to recognize female fertility and register the information.

After having our first child and during his lactation period, we put into practice what we had learned. Since I had some doubts I went back to the midwife and she analyzed my cervical mucus.

We always respected the days of abstinence and added basal temperature during the most complex periods of lactation and at menopause.

We still have our notes for those 24 years. At the beginning we lived with insecurities, also with fear, other times were with joy and dedication. It was not easy; but it was very rewarding for our marriage.

Now that we are no longer fertile, we look back and see the path taken as an opportunity to live our married love always open to the transmission of life, which allowed us to be in constant dialogue with our Father God; both when having a child and not having it. "Mission accomplished" If we were to choose again would do the same.

**Biography**

Lorenzo Cintolesi Galmez, was born in Santiago de Chile in 1942. He is an Engineer from the Catholic University of Chile, studied theology and philosophy at this university. Most of his career he has worked for construction companies.

Carla Ortiz Petersen, was born in Santiago de Chile in 1951. She is a Nurse from the Catholic University of Chile and holds a degree in sexuality and Bioethics at the same university. She worked as an attending nurse in Santiago, and taught at the University of Magallanes. Currently, gives personal coaching and marriage counseling.

In the year 1972 Lorenzo and Carla got married and joined the Federation of Schoenstatt. During their married life, they have raised four children and five grandchildren.

Together, they have studied and promoted in different ways, marital sexuality illuminated by His Holiness Paul VI and John Paul II. For example, in the Congress of Family in Chiclayo, Peru. Also, with publications in Humanitas Journal of the Catholic University of Chile and the magazine Alpha and Omega of Madrid, Spain.

Carla has published the following books: About breastfeeding "Happy She Who Breastfeeds", and about Mariology, “From Mary of Nazareth, to the Woman Dressed of the Sun”.

Since the year 1980, they have created and are teaching the program of preparation for the sacrament of marriage "A Single-Being", with the books "To Get Married" and "To Live in Matrimony". They have also create a monitor´s manual and a working guideline for fiancés. Along with other monitors trained by them, have prepared over two thousand marriages.

Fifteen years ago, Carla and Lorenzo created, and maintain their website [www.unsoloser.cl](http://www.unsoloser.cl/).