

# Review of: "The Gradual Growth of Man in the Freedom of a Child of God"

Piotr Mazurkiewicz<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

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## Article review of Inocent-Maria V. Szaniszło „The Gradual Growth of Man in the Freedom of a Child of God”

The article is very well written and correctly presents the Catholic Church's teaching on contraception. It seems that the theme signalled by the cited speech by John Paul II to participants of International Congress for Moral Theology in 1988 on the relationship between human and divine reason in relation to the acceptance or rejection of *Humanae vitae* could be developed a bit more.

What is missing is a reference to the fact of the two fundamentally different anthropologies represented in the dispute over *Humanae vitae*: the Christian one and the biologist one, i.e., the ultimately materialist one. This thread is only hinted at by evoking the spiritual and purely biological sense of contraception.

Another minor element that needs clarification is to add, when discussing the fact of the deification of the person through contraception, that this occurs objectively, i.e., even when contraceptive intercourse is consensual.

The fundamental issue, however, is that the analysis of contraception is limited only to the dimension of individual morality. Since the publication of the encyclical *Humanae vitae*, there have been two negative developments in this regard. The first was foreseen by Paul VI in n. 17, where he signals the expected development of anti-natalist policies pursued by national governments and international organizations and aimed mainly at reducing the population in developing countries. In the event that the Church finds contraception ethically acceptable, it would also not have the ability to criticize such policies from an ethical position. “Finally, careful consideration should be given to the danger of this power passing into the hands of those public authorities who care little for the precepts of the moral law. Who will blame a government which in its attempt to resolve the problems affecting an entire country resorts to the same measures as are regarded as lawful by married people in the solution of a particular family difficulty? Who will prevent public authorities from favoring those contraceptive methods which they consider more effective? Should they regard this as necessary, they may even impose their use on everyone. It could well happen, therefore, that when people, either individually or in family or social life, experience the inherent difficulties of the divine law and are determined to avoid them, they may give into the hands of public authorities the power to intervene in the most personal and intimate responsibility of husband and wife.” (HV 17)

The second is related to the blurring of the line between contraception and abortion with the advent of the early abortion pill. Since the combined oral contraceptive pill (COCP) is also potentially abortifacient, making embryo implementation

impossible or significantly more difficult, acceptance of the contraceptive pill would practically be equivalent to acceptance of the early abortion pill (cf. D.L. Jarczewska (ed.), *Harmfulness of oral hormonal contraception*, Medipage Publishing House 2015). After all, it is hard to imagine that big pharmaceutical companies would produce contraceptives only for Catholics. This leads to a fundamental objection to attempts to undermine the teaching of *Humane vitae*: for the Church to permit the use of hormonal contraception would be almost equivalent to the Church withdrawing its objections to abortion.