

Pro-life Basics

In response to “The pill kills marriage” (Celebrate Life, July-August), which reported one woman’s sad experience with contraception and her subsequent discovery of the beauty of naturally spacing children, an American Life League supporter wrote the following: “Do you not know that the holy Catholic Church has always taught that the institution of marriage is first and foremost for procreation and rearing of children for God? Further, any interference or undermining of this purpose, especially convenience, is immoral.”

American Life League’s official policy statement titled “Naturally Spacing Children” (see www.ALL.org) explains the following:

American Life League does not ever endorse any method of family planning designed to intentionally avoid one of the two meanings of the conjugal act, which are to be open to the possibility of a child (procreative) and to nourish the love between the spouses (unitive). We do recognize the distinct differences, however, between artificial methods, which are grievously sinful all of the time, and the occasions when, for just reasons, a couple may ask God to postpone bringing a new child into existence for a while. It must be clear that couples understand that, when they ask

God to not send them another child just now, they are also saying, “If it is Your will to send us another child at this time, we praise You for Your divine providence.”

The Catholic Church has affirmed the moral permissibility of periodic continence within marriage, *for serious reasons*, in the following Vatican documents: *Casti Connubii* (1930, section 53); *Humanae Vitae* (1968, sections 16, 21, and 24); *Familiaris Consortio* (1981, sections 32, 33, and 35); and *Evangelium Vitae* (1995, section 97). Moreover, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994, sections 2368 and 2370) states,

For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children. It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood. ... Periodic continence, that is, the methods of birth regulation based on self-observation and the use of infertile periods, is in conformity with the objective criteria of morality.

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