

University of Notre Dame  
Religious Bulletin  
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"Birth Control and the Depression."

From an ex234er come the following paragraphs:

"In the Reader's Digest for January 1935 there is an article condensed from a larger one in Harper's Magazine by Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, one of our 'intellectuals'. This highly edifying article is called 'Birth Control and the Depression'. It is a very noble article which of course blames the depression on the fact that poor families have large families--a very original view of course.

"The point I am getting at is where this woman makes some nasty cracks at our Church, which cracks are products of a diseased mind. She states that the Roman Catholic Church is 'even a greater stumbling block than the medical profession' as far as allowing people to follow the tenets of Margaret Sanger.

"But she then comes out with this corker: 'Yet the Church is forced by circumstances and today is shifting her position.' She mentions books by Dr. Leo Latz, Very Reverend Valero J. Coucke and James J. Walsh (and a pamphlet by Rev. John A. O'Brien of the University of Illinois) and says 'Ecclesiastical sanction for such books would seem to suggest that the Church had accepted birth control.'

"I shall conclude with this choice bit from the article: 'There is no reason why the Roman Catholic Church should attempt to dictate to our legislators.....the Church is now attempting to dictate on a very vital subject to the majority of Americans who are not its communicants.

"I have no quarrel with the Reader's Digest because I think it is the finest, clearest condensation of current news that we have. I do think, however, that the public should hear from the Catholic press in regard to this stupid, vicious attack from a woman whose hardest work is pushing cards across a card table and writing those breath-taking bits of 'tea-cup' theology which are welcomed by the vast army of our 'social highbrows.'"

Distinctions are very odious to certain types of minds with certain purposes in view. To them, apparently, birth control is birth control, whether it be practiced in harmony with nature's own laws, or through the unreasonable and criminal frustration of the laws of nature.

It is calumny against the Catholic Church to say that she sanctions or will ever sanction birth control in this latter sense, or that she has condemned birth control in the former sense.

And it is utterly untrue to say that "there is no reason" why the Catholic Church should attempt to influence legislators against artificial birth control. Let Dorothy Dunbar Bromley look into Gen. 38, 10 and she will find a powerful reason in the Word of God, even if she does not see the plain argument from the natural law.

And let her reflect that, although bank robbing might, in individual cases, offset the effects of the depression, most probably she herself would not conclude to the goodness or advisability of robbing banks.