

## **Pope Reminds Spouses of their "Responsibility To Generate New Children"**

### **Teaching Against Contraception "Does not Change"**

By Thaddeus M. Baklinski

VATICAN, May 12, 2008 (LifeSiteNews.com) - On Saturday, May 10, Pope Benedict XVI addressed participants in an international congress being promoted by the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome to mark the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of the Encyclical "Humanae Vitae".

"The truth expressed in Humanae Vitae does not change," he said, "quite the contrary, in the light of new scientific discoveries its teaching becomes more relevant and stimulates reflection on the intrinsic values it possesses".

The Holy Father recalled that the Encyclical was published by Pope Paul VI on 25 July 1968. The Pope explained how "the document soon became a sign of contradiction" and pointed out that "it constitutes a significant gesture of courage in the confirmation the continuity of the Church's doctrine and tradition."

"That text, often misunderstood and distorted, caused much discussion, also because it was set at the dawn of [an age of] strong dissents which marked the life of entire generations. Forty years after its publication that teaching not only manifests its truth unchanged, but also reveals the vision with which the problem was addressed."

The Holy Father affirmed that "in a culture suffering from the prevalence of "having" over "being", human life risks losing its value. If the practice of sexuality becomes a drug that seeks to enslave the partner to one's own desires and interests, without respecting the times of the beloved, then what must be defended is no longer just the concept of love but, primarily, the dignity of the person. As believers we could never allow the power of technology to invalidate the quality of love and the sacredness of life."

Emphasizing that remaining open to life is not only an affirmation of Natural Law, but also the genuinely given and truly lived spousal "yes" to which Jesus refers when speaking of human love (Matthew 19, 4-6).

"This word of the Lord remains unchanged with its profound truth and can not be erased by the various theories that over the years have succeeded and sometimes even contradicted one another. The natural law, which is the basis of recognition of true equality between people, deserves to be recognized as the source which also inspires the relationship between the spouses in their responsibility to generate new children. The transmission of life is inscribed in nature and its laws remain as an unwritten rule to which all must refer. Any attempt to distract our gaze from this principle itself remains sterile and produces no future."

"New life," said the Pope, "is the fruit of a love capable of thinking and choosing in complete freedom, without allowing itself to be overly conditioned by the sacrifice this may require. From here emerges the miracle of life which parents experience in themselves as they sense the extraordinary nature of what is achieved in them and through them. No mechanical technique can replace the act of love that husband and wife exchange as a sign of the mystery greater than themselves, in which they are protagonists and co-participants of creation."

After recalling the sad episodes that sometimes involve adolescents "whose reactions display their incorrect appreciation of the mystery of life and of the dangerous implications of their actions," the Holy Father expressed the hope that young people "may learn the true meaning of love and prepare for it with appropriate sexual education, not allowing themselves to be distracted by superficial messages that prevent them appreciating the essence of the truth at stake."

The Holy Father concluded by saying that the "teaching expressed by the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* is not easy. It is, nonetheless, pursuant to the fundamental structure by which life has always been transmitted, since the Creation of the world, in respect of nature and in conformity with its demands. The concern for human life and the safeguard of the dignity of the person impose upon us not to leave anything untried so that it may be shared with all people, the genuine truth of responsible conjugal love in full adherence to the law written in the heart of every person."