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Theological Reflections on Contraception

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Abstract

The contraception, as method of limitation giving birth to children, it is a complex theme which hasn't received unitary answers during Christian history. The Fathers who unilaterally pronounced themselves against contraception were right, at least regarding the following two aspects: first, as response to the pagan philosophical and religious mentality of the époque they lived and activated in, mentality that was by excellence against procreation, and then, for the procreation is mentioned as an inherent dimension of the man's creation and of his sexual capacity. The Fathers of the Church who nuanced the purpose of the marital sexuality, by not strictly subordinating it to the giving birth of children, they didn't ignore either the principles expressed by their forerunners, but they understood, on one hand, the weaknesses of the post-Adam man (of the fallen nature) and, on the other hand, they highlighted that the marital sexuality belongs to the person (to the love, to the relation) and, consequently, it can in liberty assume the primary determinisms of the nature, even if / when it is expresses through the passionate tendencies of the nature.

Keywords

Ascetism, contraception, contraceptive methods, familial planning, giving birth to children, sexuality

I. The Contraception and the Giving Birth to Children

In the modern meaning of the term, the contraception means the voluntary act of the spouses which they eliminate the conceiving of a child through, while they are having intimate bodily relations. There are many contraceptive

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methods. They have been categorized in natural methods and in artificial methods. No matter the category which they belong to, the contraceptive techniques get the spouses out of the unity of love, by transferring it in a self-standing dimension/reality. The bodily bond between spouses become artificial, and the marital sexuality becomes abstracted from the person's whole and unity and from the family's meaning. The sexuality is isolated from the other person's capacities by being thus transformed in a source of sensuality and of instinctual voluptuousness. The conjugal bond of the spouses it is got out from the ecclesial frame which Christ has placed it at Wedding and it is transferred in the biological determinism: the marital sexuality becomes sex. The Church Fathers approached the problem of the contraception both through the care for the family life's holiness and, especially, through the philosophical and religious mentalities of their times. On one hand, they didn't subordinate the bodily marital relations to the birth of children and, on the other hand, neither they accepted the contraceptive methods as solution to the limitation of the births in a certain family.

Facing the Gnostic ideas, the Manichaeists' ideas, and the ideas of the stoics, present in the pagan religious mentality hostile to the birth of children, and facing the presence of the prostitution and of the homosexuality supposing sterile intimate relations, the Eastern Fathers from the first Christian centuries, they most often stood against avoiding the birth of Children. Thus, in order to defend the Christian spouses against the customs which they left by adopting the faith in Christ, they proposed the procreation as the sole and fundamental purpose of the marital union. For instance, Clement Alexandrine, though he was defending the marriage and the spouses' sexuality (*the seed of the saints it is saint¹*), he though considered it as clean and holy only when used on the purpose of giving birth to Children: "the purpose of the ones who marry is the birth of children, and their target is to have good children, as to the plowman

¹ "How not to be defiled the ones who affirm that the marriage is defiled, when they were born out of marriage too? In my opinion, it is holy the seed of the saints. To us it must not be holy only our ghost, but also our behavior, our life and our body", CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, "Stromate", III, VI, 46.5, 47.1 in: CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, *Scriseri, partea întâia*, translation by Dumitru Fecioru, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1982, p. 278.

the cause of throwing the seeds is the care for food, and the target of the plowman which he works his field for, it is the harvesting of the crops”².

Any spouses’ bodily relation which doesn’t have the procreation as its purpose, or which doesn’t present the conditions which to allow the procreation to take place, it is a sinful relation and it must be excluded. Clement confirmed this principle, by specifying that “we mustn’t mock the seed”³, and consequently he rejected the “sterile insemination”⁴ and the “sterile couplings”⁵. Likewise, he excludes the conjugal relations too, when there are totally absent the conditions required by procreation: in case a spouse is sterile – due either to a physiological dysfunction, or to his old age –, during the monthly period of the woman⁶, or while the woman is pregnant⁷; “only the married one is allowed to saw, as to the plowman; and only when the seed can be usefully received”⁸. According to Clement the Alexandrine, the pleasure associated to the intimate relations of the spouses it is justified only when aiming to give birth to children⁹. In the case of the pregnant woman “a simple pleasure, even felt within marriage, it is lawless, unjust, and reckless”¹⁰. Searching for pleasure in the situation of lacking the fertility it indicates sexual “disorder”, which arouses a multitudes of passions, in the domain of the sexuality, and then in all the other domains¹¹. The ascetic rigor proposed by Clement must be related, on the one hand, to the context which determined the *Pedagogue* to be written, respectively the widely spread homosexuality in the Greek-Roman world, the adulterous relations from society and the prostitution houses frequented by some Christians too, and, on the other hand, his vision on asceticism¹² which he didn’t consider as a value in itself

² CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 83.1, in: CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, *Scrieri, partea întâia*, p. 278.

³ CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 83.3, p. 278.

⁴ CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 83.4, p. 278.

⁵ CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 87.3, p. 280.

⁶ CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 92.1, p. 282.

⁷ CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 88.3, p. 281.

⁸ CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 102.1, p. 288.

⁹ CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 91.2, p. 282.

¹⁰ CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 91.2, p. 282.

¹¹ CLEMENT ALEXANDRINUL, “Pedagogul”, II, X, 93.2-4, p. 282.

¹² The vision of Clement the Alexandrine was influenced, according to J. T. Noonan, quoted by J.-C. Larchet, by the stoic philosophy: “We can ask ourselves if this conception on procreation, as essential and even unique finality of the sexual relations, encountered also at the Eastern Fathers, as Clement the Alexandrine or Origen, it isn’t, on one

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but as element of the relation through love with God¹³. To Clement, the spouses' restraining from any bodily relation not bringing the procreation, it belonged to a broader vision on ascesis which the author was applying to all the desire forms which didn't seem to him as expressions of the love for God. Everywhere the *lust* manifested at, there must be applied the restraint, because the will's manifestation was overshadowed, and the nature was dominating the person¹⁴.

Clement's idea that the conjugal relations of the spouses must have as sole purpose the procreation has been shared by many Holy Fathers from East and West. Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher wrote: "we (the Christians) do not marry except on the purpose of raising up children"¹⁵. Athenagoras the Athenian affirmed, on the same subject: "with the woman

hand, exaggerate, as reaction to the Gnostic current which excluded the procreation, and, on the other hand, if it is not strongly influenced by the stoics' thinking, which the quoted Fathers often refer to. Thus, J. Noonan writes: "the suspicion which the stoics regarded the love and the affective relations with, it excluded the affirmation of the love as purpose of the sexual relations. The supreme norm was to them the nature and not the love. If we wonder where the Christian Fathers extracted their conceptions from, on the conjugal relations – conceptions which do not have a biblical explicit ground – we can answer that, mainly, from the stoics. In the case of such an original pundit as Clement the Alexandrine is, the filiation is obvious; his writing on the marriage's purpose it is a paraphrase to the works of Musonius. In the Second Century what Origen said on the sexual relations with a pregnant woman it clearly comes from Seneca. In the Third Century, the remarks of Lactantius on the obvious purpose of the sexual organs are an echo of what Ocellus Lucarnus said. In the Fourth Century, the majority of the austere affirmations of Jerome they have their origin in Seneca too", J. T. NOONAN, *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by Catholic Theologians and Canonists*, Second Edition, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 48, 56, apud Jean-Claude LARCHET, *Etica procreației în învățătura Sfinților Părinți*, traducere de Marinela Bojin, Editura Sofia, București, 2003, pp. 70-71.

¹³ "the restraint won't accompanied by virtue, it is not done out of love for God"; "the restraint cannot be achieved except by the grace of God"; "we embrace the restraint due to our love for the Lord, and due to our love for the good itself, sanctifying the temple of the Ghost", CLEMENT THE ALEXANDRINE, "Stromate", III, VII, 57.2, 59.4, pp. 212-213.

¹⁴ "... briefly, when it is about marriage, about food, and about all the other things, let's not do anything driven by lust, but let's want only the necessary things - for we aren't the children of the lust, but of the will. The one who marry in order to have children, that one must accustom himself to restrain himself, so that he not to desire his woman; he must love her, making children driven by a holy and temperate will... But it is inappropriate to regard the restraint only from one of its sides, namely only regarding the bodily couplings, but also the restraint from all the other things which our soul wants when dragged by senses, that isn't content with the forced necessity but it looks for delectation", CLEMENT THE ALEXANDRINE, "Stromate", III, VII, 58.1, 59.1, pp. 212.

¹⁵ IUSTIN MARTIRUL ȘI FILOSOFUL, "Apologia Întâia", XXIX, transl. Olimp Căciulă, in: *Apologeți de limbă greacă*, coll. *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești*, vol. 2, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1982, p. 44.

whom we have married, according to the Christian marriage's rules, we do not indulge ourselves in other reports than the ones related to the raising up of children"¹⁶. Saint Jerome considers the bodily love between spouses as passion: "fornicator is him, who passionately loves his wife", because of the coupling of the man with the woman, even in the marriage's frame, it is defiled by lust if isn't done in order to give birth to children¹⁷. On the same horizon of thinking, the Blessed Augustine said that "the first natural and legitimate reason of the marriage it is that of giving birth to children"¹⁸ and that "a conjugal wise union" takes place "in order to give life". He sees the procreation as the sole finality of the bodily union between man and woman and even as being the main purpose of the marriage: "the marriage unites the man with the woman in order to give birth to children"; "consequently, the marriage has been instituted on the purpose of giving birth to children; due to this motif it was practiced by the Holy Fathers. They mingled with women only due to their duty of giving birth to children, and not in a forbidden way; (some people) have sexual relations in a forbidden and shameful even with their legitimate wife, when they avoid conceiving their descendant"¹⁹. The clear attitude which Augustine had against any conjugal relation insubordinate to the procreation, it should be understood – thinks J. C.-Larchet²⁰ -, in the frame of the struggle against Manichaeism, a sect he belonged to in his youth, since he was eighteen and until he was twenty nine years old. The Manichaeists started again, during the Third and Fourth Centuries the attacks on procreation, launched in the First and in the Second Centuries by Gnostics, rejecting the giving birth to children as being a bad thing, because of making the soul prisoner to the body but, all of these while not excluding the intimate relations – so that they were recommending the contraception.

Using medicines in order to prevent the conceiving it is unanimously condemned in the patristic literature because of being reckoned as murderous. For example, Caesar of Arles, by inspiring himself both out of Saint Jerome's literature and out of that of Saint Augustine, he wrote:

¹⁶ ATENAGORA ATENIANUL, "Solie în favoarea creștinilor", XXXIII, transl. Teodor Bodogae, in: *Apologeti de limbă greacă*, pp. 380-381.

¹⁷ Cf. Jean-Claude LARCHET, *Etica procreației în învățătura Sfinților Părinți*, p. 64.

¹⁸ Fericitul AUGUSTIN, *Despre adulter*, II, 12, transl. Anca Meșoru, Editura Doxologia, Iași, 2019, p. 143.

¹⁹ Fericitul AUGUSTIN, *Despre adulter*, II, 12, pp. 142-143.

²⁰ Jean-Claude LARCHET, *Etica procreației în învățătura Sfinților Părinți*, pp. 72-73.

“who wouldn’t want to NOT teach the women to avoid using the medicines which impede from them having children, resisting thus their nature created by God as fruitful? Such a woman is to be considered as murderer as many times as she could give birth and to bring a human being on the world; and if she doesn’t obey a penitence on the measure of her guilt, she will be condemned to eternal death in hell”²¹.

The same condemnation, but more concisely expressed, we find it in another sermon of Caesar of Arles, in which the contraception is associated to giving birth to children:

“the women who constraint in themselves the nature which God wanted to be fruitful, they commit a grave sin, by drinking devilish liquors which to impede them from having children. Women like these ones, let them well know that they have committed as many killings as many children they could have and they didn’t have them”²².

Another aspect to be noticed is that at the time of the patristic writings the contraceptive medicines were often mostly obtained as “magic potions”²³ in the frame of the pagan religious rituals. Consequently, the contraception it was the more rejected as it was the more associated with those religious practices. The Blessed Augustine wrote on this: “Really sinful are the ones who, for the sake of pleasure, they resist the procreation, through lawless prayers or through totally devilish deeds”²⁴. Caesar of Arles taught that “the women mustn’t take devilish remedies which to make them totally barren”²⁵.

²¹ Cf. Jean-Claude LARCHET, *Etica procreației în învățătura Sfinților Părinți*, p. 74.

²² Cf. Jean Claude LARCHET, *Etica procreației în învățătura Sfinților Părinți*, p. 74.

²³ J. T. NOONAN, *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by Catholic Theologians and Canonists*, Second Edition, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 48, 56, apud Jean-Claude LARCHET, *Etica procreației în învățătura Sfinților Părinți*, p. 76.

²⁴ AUGUSTIN, *Despre căsătorie și concupiscentă*, apud Jean-Claude Larchet, *Etica procreației în învățătura Sfinților Părinți*, p. 76.

²⁵ CEZAR DE ARLES, *Predici*, XLIV, 2, apud *Etica procreației în învățătura Sfinților Părinți*, p. 76.

On the other hand, some of the Eastern Fathers, by taking in account the human weakness, they adopted a wide understanding concerning the conjugal relations between husbands and they integrated those relations to the dynamic process of the love, and they showed that these relations cannot be strictly subordinated to the procreation. The biblical urge: “grow up and multiply yourselves” it was interpreted in a wider sphere than that of the biological breeding. For instance, Saint Basil the Great said: “and if somebody remembers me the commandment grow up and multiply yourselves, I feel the urge to laugh in his face, for he is unable to discern between the times which the rules referred to”²⁶. Saint Basil the Great interprets the commandment of the growing up, or the *multiplication* and of the *mastery* as referring, after the mankind has multiplied themselves, to the growing up in holiness, to the multiplication of the virtues, and to the mastery of the body which is made of dust. The insistence which some of the Fathers accentuated the procreation with, as sole purpose of the conjugal union of the spouses, it was tied also to the cultural-religious context of their époque (the Gnostic and the Manichaeists currents, which were eliminating this purpose) and to the recipients whom they were addressing to, in order to defend them against the pagan manners, which the sexuality was perversely used in, especially outside the marriage, by exclusively searching for pleasure. When these imperatives weakened in intensity, some Fathers nuanced the theological approach on marital sexuality by integrating it to the general purpose of the Christian family, namely the consummation in holiness and love.

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II. The Contraception in the Perspective of the Contemporary Family Planning

The contemporary Christian family doesn't have other conceptual grounds and horizons that the family from the apostolic, post-apostolic and patristic times had. The Orthodox mode of being in the world it will remain unchanged to the end of the history for it isn't a conquest of the human knowledge and experience, but it belongs to the theandric mode unveiled to us through the Embodiment of Jesus Christ the Savior. But it is equally

²⁶ Sfântul VASILE CEL MARE, *Epistola 160*, IV, *Către Diodor*, traducere Teodor Bodogae, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2010, p. 250.

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obvious that the Christian family live in history, in cultures, and in specific mentalities, in societies and in political regimes, which exercise upon the Christian husbands conceptual pressures and restraints of individual and social liberties. Amongst these ones a well defined place is occupied by the cabinet of family planning. In the lay society each pair of young people who are following to found a family, no matter their religious beliefs, it is compelled to obtain from a cabinet of family planning a certificate attesting both a conceptual and physical sexual examining. The marriage is presented as a contract between the two spouses and the birth of children it belongs to a *planning* regulated by contraceptive methods.

The family planning dissociates the marital sexuality from procreation, through contraceptive methods. We have taken and we are going to presents here the array of these methods and their consequences upon the human organism, as the Physician Christa Todea-Gross mentions it in her work entitled *Îndrumarul medical și creștin despre viață al federației Organizațiilor Ortodoxe Pro-Vita din România*^{27, 28}. According to the mentioned author, the contraceptive methods can be classified thus:

- Natural methods – contraceptive;
- Barrier (local) methods – contraceptive;
- Feminine hormonal contraception – contraceptive and abortive;
- Emergency contraception – abortive;
- IUDs – abortive;
- Voluntary surgical sterilization – definitive contraception;
- Vaccines (immunological contraception) – contraceptive and/or abortive.
- Natural methods:
 - Interruption of the conjugal act before the seed (the masculine gametes) to reach in the woman's body;
 - Calendar's method – Ogino-Knaus;
 - Cervical mucus – Billings;
 - Basic temperature (thermal curve);
 - Symptomatic-thermal (combining 3-4).

²⁷ Medical and Christian Guide Book on Life, of the Pro-Vita Orthodox Organizations from Romania.

²⁸ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical și creștin despre viață al federației Organizațiilor Ortodoxe Pro-Vita din România*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, pp. 99-165.

We aren't going to describe the content of those contraceptive methods for it is not the target of this study, but we are interested in the medical and spiritual consequences those methods have upon the husbands and upon the familiar *self*. From medical point of view it has been ascertained the so-called natural contraceptive methods cause psychic and somatic disorders: the men complain about neurasthenia, disorders of sexual dynamics, frustration; the woman can present pelvic congestion, dyspareunia (pains during the intimate act), frigidity, sensitivity disorders, and lack of orgasm²⁹. From spiritual perspective these methods raise the problem of the conceiving morality as such. The Physician Christa Todea-Gross argues that, no matter the contraceptive methods used, the contraception is unacceptable. She leans on the affirmation of the Bioethicist Tristan Engelhardt:

“using the family planning, either through natural or artificial methods, it never is a norm, and it actually is something against the norm, and the contraceptive ethos must always be condemned. The norm is the ascetic trust in the Providence of God, while the contraceptive ethos stays in the center of the cosmopolite liberal trust in the man's power and in pursuing the comfort and the own satisfaction”³⁰; “the secondary effects of the contraceptive methods are as many harms done to the anatomical and spiritual integrity of the human being, they are harms of the temple of the Holy Ghost (namely of the human body) and sins which load up with guiltiness the woman's or the couple's soul”³¹.

III. Possible Somatic and Psychic Consequences

- The latex (the material which the condom is made of) can cause allergic reactions to the woman;
- The spermicidal cause AND structure modifications to the seminal masculine cells meaning, in case of accidental pregnancy, embryonic malformations;

²⁹ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, pp. 99-165.

³⁰ H. Tristam ENGELHARDT, *Fundamentele Bioeticii Creștine. Perspectivă Ortodoxă*, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2005, p. 353.

³¹ Pavel CHIRILĂ, Lucian GAVRILĂ, Cristina GAVRILOVICI, Andreea BÂNDOIU, *Principii de bioetică – o abordare ortodoxă*, Editura Cristiana, București, 2008, p. 199.

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- The use of condoms in the national programs of prevention against the sexually transmitted diseases, and especially against HIV/AIDS, it is a method used abusively, because it is known that the condom doesn't stop neither prevents the transmission of this malady, because the HIV virus crosses through the condom's membrane³²;
- The majority of the spermicidal can be absorbed in the systemic circulation of the organism, fact that can lead to toxicity upon the internal organs, to allergy, and even to carcinogenesis (process of forming cancerous cells) and teratogenicity (apparition and forming of embryonic monsters).
- The Feminine Hormonal Contraception³³

It represents the modality of pregnancy prevention by using the sexoids hormones, administrated: orally, parenterally, vaginally, or through intradermic implant³⁴ (the contraceptive pill).

The consequences of administrating the "contraceptive" pill:

- Dr. Rudolf Ehmann: "it have been never before administrated a so strong pharmaceutical product, with so many unknown adverse effects, to some healthy people, without existing a need determines by a pathological (medical) situation. It has been never before allowed the presence in commerce of a pharmaceutical product with so many and graver secondary effects, known as inhibitors of ovulations... Through the artificial hormones, the Anti-Baby pill, it has effect upon several organs of the feminine body, either by impeding the pregnancy, or by causing a premature abortion"³⁵;
- The synthetic estrogen from the contraceptive pill³⁶:
- It can inhibit the ovulation (contraceptive effect);
- It can inhibit the nidation (implantation) of the embryo on uterus by altering the uterine mucous – abortive effect
- The synthetic progesterone from the contraceptive pill³⁷:

³² Dr. John C. WILKE, Barbara H. WILKE, *Avortul - întrebări și răspunsuri. Să-i iubim pe amândoi!*, transl. Larisa Iftime, Editura Pro-Vita Media, București, 2007, p. 314.

³³ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, p. 109.

³⁴ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, p. 109.

³⁵ Dr. Rudolf EHMANN in cooperation with Otto DÖPPER, *Mijloace anticonceptionale. Efecte secundare fatale despre care nu se vorbește. Un bilanț critic din punctul de vedere al unui ginecolog*, transl. Asociația Pro-Vita Sibiu, Sibiu, f.a., p. 29.

³⁶ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, pp. 115-116.

³⁷ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, pp. 116-117.

- It has 4 contraceptive effects,
- It has 2 abortive effects: it creates an environment unfavorable to the embryo's implantation in uterus, fact that makes the embryo to be deprived of food and to die; it slows down the embryo's transport through the fallopian tube fact that causes a poor nourishing and the possibility of not reaching the uterus and to insert on the fallopian tube – extra uterine pregnancy – in which case the embryo won't be viable, and the fallopian tube will be ruptured in absence of a surgical intervention, fact that can be fatal to the mother because of the hemorrhage triggered by such an event;
- The contraceptive mini-pill (small concentration of estrogen and progesterin): *it impedes the implantation of the embryo in the uterine mucous*³⁸;
- The combined pill (estrogen plus progesterone) COC³⁹:
- The increase with 40% of the cardiac diseases;
- The cardiac infarct increases 3 or 4 times in comparison to the women who do not use COC;
- It favors the venous and arterial thromboembolic disease;
- The high blood pressure it two times more frequent to the woman who use COC;
- Increases the level of cholesterol favoring the cerebral vascular accidents and the myocardial acute infarct;
- Decreases the tolerance to glucose;
- The possibility of the apparition of a clinical diabetes (with 3,5 - 4%);
- Alters the liver's function of producing proteins;
- The possibility of the apparition of the hyper-coagulation of the blood fact that leads to the risk of producing thromboses;
- Triggers autoimmune diseases:
- Retaining of salt (Na) in organism and increase in weight;
- The post-contraceptive sterility after using COC for several years, and the risk of spontaneous abortions;
- Degradation of the thyroid's function;
- The possibility of apparition of the pituitary adenoma;
- Modifications on the skin's level – eczema, hives, allergic edema, hyper-pigmentation of the face;

³⁸ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, p. 119.

³⁹ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, pp. 118-146.

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- The excess of hair in places where, normally, we don't have hair (hirsutism);
- Ocular pathology: the apparition of thromboses and of hemorrhages of the retinal blood vessels, detachment of the retina and blindness;
- Decrease of the immunity to diverse infections and the apparition of the autoimmune diseases;
- Hepatic dysfunctions: forming of gallstones, chronic asymptomatic hepatitis, hepatic adenoma;
- Increased risk of apparition of the urinal infections;
- Increased risk of apparition of the breast cancer, of the cervix cancer, of skin cancer;
- Malformations of the embryos conceived during the administration of the COC;
- Headache, migraines, nervous depression, hyper excitability, and nervousness.
- Hormonal implants (Norplant) – introduced in Romanian in the program of family planning in the year 1983. Capsules with storage progestin, introduced under the skin and which liberate the hormone gradually and systematically. The Norplant contains 6 capsules administered in 5 years time. The secondary effects are similar to the ones of the injectable products.
- The emergency contraception or the pill on the next day – it is abortive⁴⁰. It doesn't act upon the pre-embryo (the first 10-14 days from conceiving) but upon the uterine mucous and upon the embryo's moving through the fallopian tube; it make the nidation impossible, fact that lead to the embryo's death.
- It is a method aiming not the preventions of the pregnancy but its elimination. Anti-Progesteron RU 486⁴¹ acts after nidation being directed against the placenta; it destroys the embryo, and the mother suffers a hemorrhage as bigger as the pregnancy will be more advanced.
- Intra-uterine devices – IUD – the IUDs – abortive method⁴²;
- The IUDs is a small piece, made of metal or of plastic, which is introduced in uterus in order to prevent the nidation;

⁴⁰ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, 147-152.

⁴¹ It has this symbol after the name Roussel-Uclaf, the laboratory where it has been this pill prepared at, in the beginning of the '80.

⁴² Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, pp. 152-159.

- Using the IUDs it means early abortion (hormonal) produced because of mechanical causes (barrier), either because of hormonal causes – by impregnating the IUDs with synthetic progesterone;
- IUDs enriched with hormones can have a contraceptive role too, because of the progestin which can impede the ovulation or the way of the masculine gametes towards the fallopian tubes.

Consequences:

- Hemorrhages from 4,4 – 15%;
- Infections – pelvic peritonitis (the infection of the genital area);
- The possibility of the uterus perforation;
- Ectopic pregnancy (the abnormal attaching of the embryo)
- Uterine pains:
- Abundant menstruations;
- Premature births;
- Extra-uterine pregnancies.
- The feminine sterilization⁴³ – it represents a surgical procedure, a voluntary one, done on the request of the woman and which consists of blocking the fallopian tubes by cutting them by cauterization, by using rings or clips; usually, it is a definitive and irreversible method;
- The masculine sterilization⁴⁴ – it represents a surgical procedure, a voluntary one, done on the request of the man and it consists of blocking or sectioning the canals which the seminal masculine cells circulate through.

Consequences:

- The sterilization represents the surest and the most efficient contraceptive method;
- Long time disorders of the menstrual cycle;
- Psychic disorders.
- Vaccines or immunological contraception⁴⁵ – it represents an attempt to prevent and/or to eliminate the pregnancy through immunization with vaccines. The contraceptive vaccine can be of two sorts:
 - Anti-spermatocidal vaccine – it is contraceptive, but it has a low efficiency;

⁴³ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, p. 159.

⁴⁴ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, p. 160.

⁴⁵ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, p. 162.

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- The anti-ovule vaccine – it is contraceptive but it is abortive too, whereas in case of conceiving it impedes the implantation of the embryo in uterus;
- The anti-chorionic vaccine – it is exclusively abortive and it is directed against placenta which can no longer develop; it is a means of early abortion.

IV. Christian Considerations on the Family Planning⁴⁶

“The women’s health has been sacrificed on the shrine of the population planning”⁴⁷.

- The dissociation of the sexuality from procreation it has inaugurated a limitless sexual libertinage – the sexual revolution;
- The exponential increase of abortions just there where the contraceptive medicines have been approved. The slogan *it is better to prevent than to treat* it has been proven a lie and a manipulation, and an unprecedented financial profit for Big Pharma;
- Increase in the number of the cases of sexually transmitted diseases;
- Destroying of the moral fundamentals of the countries with preponderantly Christian population. The changing of the mentalities in the modern society regarding the human sexuality, contraception, and family planning have promoted: the hedonism, the conjugal infidelity, the promiscuousness, the adultery, the divorce, the unhappy children, diseases with sexual transmission, sterility, abortion, suicides, sexual aggressions, virtual sexuality via Internet, the moral relativization regarding the sexuality and the abortion, the dramatic decrease of the births number (the demographic problem), the intentional confusion between contraception and the early abortion (hormonal), the sexual exploitation of the woman, the prostitution etc. When all of these become economically very profitable businesses and a source of political power provided by the upholding of the contraceptive and abortive conception, they are transferred in the national education as study discipline in order to create definitive structures in the general mentality.

⁴⁶ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, pp. 163-165.

⁴⁷ Christa TODEA-GROSS, Pr. Prof. Dr. Ilie MOLDOVAN, *Îndrumarul medical...*, p. 164.

V. Theological Considerations on Contraception

Saint Paul's teaching as presented in the First Epistle towards Corinthians, it remains the reference point: "it is good to the man not to touch the woman. But, because of fornication, let each one to have his woman and each woman to have her man. Let the man give the woman the due love, likewise the woman to the man. The woman isn't master upon her body, but the man is; likewise, neither the man is master upon his body, but the woman is. Do not deprive one another, but with good agreement, for a while, in order to occupy yourselves with the fasting and with the prayer and then be together again, in order not to be tempted by Satan, due to your lack of restraining" (I Cor. 7, 1-5). Jean-Claude Larchet concludes on this biblical text:

“we can notice the fact that not even for a moment the procreation is presented as the sole purpose of the marriage. The sole explicit purpose of the marriage is to be avoided the passions of sexual nature and the passions related to those (adultery, frequenting the prostitutes, homosexual relations). Saint Paul considers that the spouses' abstinence it is justified when it is provisory («for a while»), in order to fulfill some well defined spiritual duties. The perspective of a sexual abstinence not only definitive, but simply a prolonged one, in the frame of the marriage, is excluded by Saint Paul. Let's note too, that to him the abstinence, even for a short while, it must be agreed by both spouses: «with good agreement», and not by one alone («the woman isn't master upon her body, but the man is; likewise, neither the man is master upon his body, but the woman is»), not being manifested as an act of domination of one upon another, but as a reciprocal gift”⁴⁸.

Therefore, the contraception in the frame of the family it is a complex theme which hasn't received, during the Christian history, unitary answers. The Holy Fathers who pronounced themselves against it they were justified at least for two reasons: first, as answer to the pagan philosophical and religious attitude, by excellence opposing the procreation, from the époque they lived and activated in, and then, for the procreation is mentioned as

⁴⁸ Jean-Claude LARCHET, *Etica procreației în învățătura Sfinților Părinți*, pp. 83-84.

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inherent dimension of the human being's creation and sexual capacity. Giving birth to children defends the spouses against the risks and the deviations which they could reach at, through a conjugal life totally detached from this finality, and which would make of pleasure, in an absolute mode, a primordial and exclusive purpose. Rejecting the contraception, done by the Holy Fathers, it had also the purpose of reminding the spouses, on one hand, that in the marital sexuality it is inscribed the mystery of the life and of the human being's participation to the creation, and, on the other hand, it represents a modality of spiritualization which the body's state is accomplished here on earth through, as in the Kingdom to come.

The Church Fathers who nuanced the purpose of the marital sexuality, by not strictly subordinating it to giving birth to children, they didn't ignore by any means the principle expressed by their forerunners, but they understood, on one hand, the weaknesses of the post Adam human being (of the fallen nature) and, on the other hand, they highlighted that the marital sexuality belongs to the person (to the love, to the relation) even if it is actualized / expressed through the passionate inclinations of the nature. In this sense, in the conjugal bond it is expressed the love and the absolute thirst for eternal unity and community of the two spouses. Paraphrasing on Saint John Chrysostom, in the bodily bond of the spouses it is united the cleanest part of the one's gold (the love) with the most profound and cleanest part of the another, by melting down in an undefiled unity the identities of the two ones in the family's *self* (they are no longer two, but one). In this way, the marital sexuality is transformed in a modality of bodily and of the soul's sanctification which unties the spouses from any form of egotism, of searching for the self, and the family becomes, by excellence, the place of the chastity (the small church or the human nature united with Christ). The marital sexuality belongs to the spouses and not the spouses belong to the sexual impulses! The marital sexuality is subordinated to the spouses' spiritual life and not their life is subordinated to the passionate impulses. The conjugal sexuality has in its sight the love for the other one and the elevation of the family into God. In the horizon of the spouses' rules of spiritual living, the restraints and the bodily communion are integrated to the Eucharistic rhythm of the family. In this way, the spouses' bodily intimacy it remains always clean, holy, and undefiled. It is integrated to the liturgical rhythm, embracing, on will's (conscience's) level the restraint, and on the level of the liberty too, the

communion of the bodily intimacy and the giving birth to children. Thus, the procreation becomes a voluntary act, a free act, responsibly assumed, a time of a person and not some determinism of the instinctual nature. Being framed to Eucharist, the procreation becomes a spirituality theme. The contraception, namely the postponing of the conceiving of children, not by restraining from the sexual conjugal relations but through voluntary methods to avoid conceiving, it cannot be given a solution type *universal-recopy*! It differs from a family to another both as time between births and as conjugal modality. It finds its form and time accordingly to the spiritual age of each familial pair! In the spiritual dialogue of the Mystery of the Confession, each family reaches to understand the fact that the meaning of the marital sexuality mustn't be searched for in the senses' pleasure but in the purpose of the human being – the salvation or the likeness to God -, and the content of the intimate hugs belong to a register which only the eye of God and the eye of the husband have access to. That's why any objective norm trying to regulate the unique, unrepeatable, and absolutely personal reality of each conjugal bond, it risks objectifying the spouses' love and it is destined to fail. The contraception and the conceiving of a child are beyond *yes* or *no*, for the fact that they belong to the persons' ineffable and to the nature.