

CONSECRATED LIFE AND EVANGELIZATION OF FAMILY LIFE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The author took a cursory look at Consecrated life and how they could impact the family life by their life of service. Consecrated persons are people called by God and haven been inspired by the Holy Spirit, they responded generously to this call of service in order to participate in the saving mission of Christ. They are people, among others, who are propelled by charity to serve the family life, albeit, they have their roots in the family. Family life in Nigeria is in need of renewal in all its ramifications and the consecrated persons are challenged to doggedly embrace the evangelization of the family life with the conviction that when the family is well, all the individuals in the society will be hearty. The work of Evangelization of the people is not for the priests alone and more so that this work calls for concerted efforts of consecrated persons. The paper will examine consecrated life briefly and expose how consecrated persons can participate in the evangelization of the family life in collaboration with ministers of the church through witness of life, Marriage preparation, marriage enrichment or on-going catechesis, paying attention to family matters which include the many forms of abuse ranging from sexual abuse to alcohol and substance abuse and battering of persons while not neglecting the issue of family planning. When the family life matters are well attended to, the church will grow not only in numbers but also of sound minded people.

INTRODUCTION

The topic is germane in our time when family life is undergoing manifold sufferings and the root cause of these sufferings is what the Bible traces to lack of knowledge. How can the people know unless there are people who will teach them?² The consecrated persons are called by God to participate in the mission of Christ and it is a bounding duty which cannot be ignored but that through the actions of men and women all may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Every consecrated person comes from a family. It is as if each one is challenged to go back and have a share in the work of healing his/her root in and by the work of evangelization. The church asserts that Evangelization means carrying forth the good news to every

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ENDNOTES

² Cf. Romans 10:14-18

sector of human race so that by its strength it may enter into people's hearts and renews the human race. The aim is to effect interior transformation of persons. Evangelization is the origin of the church for she exists to preach the Gospel so that sinners may reconcile to God and so that the sacrifice of the Mass, the memorial of Christ's death and resurrection may be perpetuated. The consecrated persons exist in the church for a special purpose first of all to be a sign of holiness of the church and also to be a sign of the future life to come.³ The work of evangelization is too numerous for one sector of priests to embark upon. By the work of charity which they undertake many souls are saved.

THE CONSECRATED LIFE

Consecrated life is a permanent state of life recognized by the church, entered freely in response to the call of Christ to perfection. It is characterized by the profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience.⁴ The laity state of life is distinguished from those in the consecrated life and from clergy who receive the Holy Order.⁵

The Church Law⁶ describes Consecrated life as a life consecrated through the profession of the counsels in a stable form of living in which the faithful follow Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit and are totally dedicated to God who is loved above all things. The law expatiated further that by that special title, "consecrated", they are more dedicated to seek the perfection of charity in the service of God's kingdom. That precisely describes what the consecrated persons do in the church. They serve as an energetic organ within the church and pursue evangelization of the people in collaboration with the ministers of the church so that the Kingdom of Christ may extend to the whole world.

Studies reveal that the life dedication is not restricted to one historical period but it existed in pre-Christian and non-Christian history in communities such as Pythagoreans, and Buddhists (as far back as 6th century B.C.). Similar life-style appeared in Judaism before the Christian era among some Essenes monks of Qumran. At that time, some men and women in various cultures chose to set their lives apart and dedicated their lives with activities devoted to meeting the needs of daily life in view of a particular transcendent end.⁷

In Buddhism, the end in view is freedom. For the Jews, the dedication was in preparation for messianic era. For the Christian men and women, dedication of their

³ Cf. Paul VI, *EvangeliiNuntiandi*, the Evangelization in the Modern World, (Dec 8, 1975), # 18-20.

⁴ Cf. Second Vatican Council, The Pastoral Constitution On the Church in the Modern world, *LumenGentium*. (21st November, 1964) # 44.

⁵ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *LumenGentium*. # 31

⁶Code of Canon, Pub. Collins for Theological Publications (Bangalore, India, 1983), # 573.

⁷ Cf. The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality (1995), s.v. "Religious Life." P. 817

lives is fundamentally a phenomenon of hope, that is, one experiences a dissatisfaction with what one now has and entertain, with confidence, hope in something better which is more than what is present, here and now.⁸

The Vatican Council II⁹ describes consecrated life as a way of following Christ in a singular mind of renouncing every other thing of this world in order to love Christ above all other things. A consecrated person lives the life of a religious. A religious, we know, binds himself/herself to God through the evangelical counsels by a sacred promise. By taking this bond, one is totally dedicated to God by an act of ultimate love, and one is committed to the honour and service of God under a new and special title- "consecrated."

The mission of such consecrated persons consists in making Christ present to the world through the personal witness of their lives and that precisely is the primary task of the consecrated life.¹⁰ The Pontiff, John Paul II, avers that the consecrated persons are called to contribute to the saving mission of Christ. The specific contribution of the consecrated persons both men and women to evangelization is to give the witness of a life given totally to God and to their brothers and sisters in imitation of Christ the Saviour. The church is saying to them that they have the task of making Christ present even among the non-Christians.¹¹

Pope Paul VI¹² imagined what the world would be without the religious; he thought the world would be suffocated in the whirlpool of the ephemeral; the charity which animates the entire world would grow cold; the salvific paradox of the Gospel would be blunted out and the "salt" of faith would lose its savour because the world is undergoing secularization. But thanks to the sign which the consecrated life stands for, which is to remind the entire world that we have a life, better than this profane world -- our life in heaven.

In consecrated life, the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole world finds fresh enthusiasm and power says John Paul II.¹³ The pontiff asks that the consecrated persons must be always ready to proclaim the gospel and must be faithful to Christ, the church and to their institute as well as to the men and women of our time.¹⁴ They are models for all Christians, a model of the "*sequela Christi*," the

⁸cf. The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality (1995), s.v. "Religious Life." P. 817.

⁹Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*.# 44.

¹⁰Cf. John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, The Consecrated Life, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (25th March, 1996) # 72

¹¹Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* # 44 and 46.

¹²Cf. Paul VI, *Evangelica Testificatio*, (29th June, 1971), # 3

¹³Cf. John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, The Consecrated Life, # 105.

¹⁴Cf. John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, The Consecrated Life, # 110

following of Christ, an example of how the bride must respond with love to the love of the Bridegroom.¹⁵

CONSECRATED LIFE AS COLLABORATIVE AGENT OF EVANGELIZATION

The Consecrated Life is a vibrant organ of the church and the persons are specially trained to share in the saving mission of Christ. The distinctive training they received in the way of charity disposes them to work assiduously and collaborate with the ministers of the church. The consecrated life is a way of participating in the sacramental nature of the people of God and in the mission of the church. The consecrated life places all the graces of its life, its Gospel witness and unique apostolic works at the service of the Gospel.¹⁶ They have the duty of working for the implanting and strengthening of the Kingdom of Christ in souls and for spreading it to the four corners of the earth.¹⁷

EVANGELIZATION OF THE FAMILY LIFE

There is that understanding that this evangelization to the family life consists of three moments:

Proclamation of the Gospel which begins at home and continues in many ways through homily and reading of the word of God; initiation into the body of Christ which takes place when a new baby is born and subsequently initiated into the faith of the parents; and the On-going maturing in faith or On-going Catechesis which must not be neglected after the reception of the sacraments.

The priority is to animate leadership, to foster mature discipleship and to promote vibrant community of faith. The families, together with other church members, provide foundation for making a lifelong and on-going communion to Jesus, engaging people in a journey of faith, instilling hope with compassion and mercy and transforming the world into an encounter of God's Kingdom as each person seeks to grow in holiness and charity.

The family is the center of evangelization because this is the place where faith is first encountered, lived, sustained and passed down.¹⁸ At different moments in the Church's history and also in the Second Vatican Council, the family has well deserved the beautiful name of "domestic Church." This is the first church for the child. This means that there should be found in every Christian family the various

¹⁵Cf. Pope John Paul II, "On the Dignity and Vocation of Women," *Mulieris Dignitatem*, (August 15, 1988) # 16 and 31

¹⁶ Cf. Roman Curia, *Lineamenta*, on "Consecrated Life", A Preliminary Study for the Synod of Bishops, (December 31, 1993), #27.

¹⁷ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, # 44

¹⁸Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* # 11.

aspects of the entire Church. Furthermore, the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates.¹⁹

The family life in Nigeria has gained much attention from the pastoral offices of various dioceses up till now. There are different committees in process of renewing the family life and each one is fortified and imbued with credible pastoral services. In almost all the dioceses in Nigeria, there are Family Apostolate services and many of the agents of evangelization for the sector are trained to organize seminars and marriage enrichment concurrently with family planning at different times. However, family life in Nigeria faces formidable storms and challenges. It is a known fact that the family in the church and in the society is buffeted with all forms of anomalies such as polygamy, divorce, selfishness, hedonism and many more.

THE TERRAIN OF FAMILY LIFE IN NIGERIA

1. Partisan Politics

In Nigeria, 'party politics' is the order of the day. This is the direct involvement in a political party; the intention of which --despite public declarations to the contrary--, in practice, is often not to serve the Country or the State or the Local Constituency which they represent but is all in a bid of reaping where they did not sow. An average politician joins a political party to acquire money illegally while he/she seeks any appointment or soliciting for 'contract' legally or otherwise all in a race to embezzle money within a shortest possible time. There are so many abandoned projects that could be avenue of creating lucrative jobs for the populace, but unfortunately, many heads of families who are responsible are jobless.

Moreover, the ideology of a political party sometimes mars the character of a person. Worse still, heads of families quarrel over a position in a political party, husband against the wife, brothers against brothers. Such feuds divide families, church societies and sometimes lead to killings of members of the same family, cousins and in-laws. The underlining issue is selfishness and unrepentant and unpatriotic attitudes which threatens the holistic growth of families in Nigeria.

2. Abuse

Family life is beset with various abusive issues ranging from drugs, to sex, to violence to alcohol. These serve as cantankerous weapons against the progress and peace of family life in Nigeria.

INTERVENTION OF THE CHURCH

¹⁹Cf. Paul VI, *EvangeliiNuntiandi*, the Evangelization in the Modern World,(Dec 8 1975), #71.

The Church being a good mother is always laboring for the sanctification of her own. The Church needs to provide an education which teaches critical thinking and encourages the development of mature moral values.²⁰The mandate of Jesus Christ to the Church is: "Go, make disciples of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and I am with you to the end of days."²¹

To fulfil this mandate, the Church is in need of pastoral agents such as Consecrated men and women. They are called by God in order to enjoy a special gift of grace and in order to contribute each in his/her own way the saving mission of the church and members of these families enjoy many helps towards holiness of life.²²The contribution that can be made to the apostolate of family life by men and women religious and consecrated persons in general finds its primary, fundamental and original expression precisely in their consecration to God. They are witnesses to that universal charity which through the chastity they embraced for the Kingdom of God dispose them to the service of God and to the works of the apostolate.²³

In any organized pastoral work, consideration for the pastoral care of the family is supreme. The apostolate of the family must be imbued with spiritual and material welfare. The religious must also collaborate with other Christian families to plan for rich spiritual programmes. This is in a way of fostering sense of solidarity and to stimulate people to perform works of charity for one another and for others with a spirit of openness which will make Christian families into a true source of light and a wholesome haven for other families.²⁴

Pope Francis in his encyclical noted that we can see deficiencies which need to be healed by the Gospel: machismo, alcoholism, domestic violence, low Mass attendance, fatalistic or superstitious notions which lead to sorcery, and the like. Popular piety itself can be the starting point for healing and liberation from these deficiencies.²⁵

Concretely, apostolate of the family life varies: consecrated persons could visit the families, look after the sick, foster relationships of respect and charity towards one-parent families or families that are separated; they can offer works of teaching and preparing young ones for marriage and help them towards responsible parenthood.

²⁰Cf. Pope Francis, *EvangeliiGaudium*, #64

²¹ Matt. 28:20

²² Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, # 43.

²³ Cf. John Paul II, *FamiliarisConsortio*, November 1981, # 74.

²⁴ Cf. John Paul II, *FamiliarisConsortio*, # 72.

²⁵ Pope Francis, *EvangeliiGaudium*, #69.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CONSECRATED LIFE TO EVANGELIZATION OF FAMILY LIFE IN NIGERIA

The contributions of the consecrated life in the evangelization of family life are manifold. Specifically they can help in the following ways:

1. Witness of life
2. Marriage preparation.
3. Marriage Enrichment: on-going catechesis
4. Attend to family matters: abuse
5. Teach Family planning according to the mind of the church.

1. Witness of life

Religious Institutes of Contemplatives and Active lives contribute greatly to the evangelization of the world.²⁶ It is expected of them to live their lives in a religious manner so that they might bear an outstanding witness among Christians and non-Christians to the majesty and love of God and in union with Christ. They are challenged to be present to the people so that their forms of life bear witness to the Gospel in a manner adapted to the mentality and circumstance of the people.²⁷

Albeit Christians by the virtue of sacrament of baptism, the consecrated persons are dedicated to God and by the example of their lives in wherever they live, they have the obligation to manifest the new person which they put on in baptism and to bear witness to Christ; they should establish relationship of respect and love and be identified with what is good, noble and beautiful by sincere dialogue so that people might learn the riches of the Gospel message;²⁸ religious men and women play an indispensable role in planting and strengthening of the Kingdom of Christ in souls by prayers and by active apostolate.²⁹

Consecrated men and women are disciples of Christ and they follow the Master wherever He goes in order to offer the people an authentic Christian witness and work of salvation even in places where they cannot preach Christ fully; they are challenged to bear witness to Christ and this they are obliged to do by their life and their words in the family, in their social group and in the sphere of their profession. They must be seen the new men and women created according to God in justice and holiness and truth. They must give expression to their newness of life in their own

²⁶ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, (7 Dec. 1965), # 40

²⁷ Cf. *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, #40^b

²⁸ Cf. *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, #11

²⁹ Cf. *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, #15

society that is in keeping with the traditions of their own land. They are challenged to be familiar with their culture, purify it, guard it and develop it in accordance with present-day conditions and perfect it in Christ so that the faith of Christ and the life of the church will not be something foreign to the society in which they live; but will begin to transform and permeate it.³⁰

2. Marriage Preparation

Intending couples must adequately prepare for their marriage to ensure a stable relationship and this preparation could help them live well in their matrimonial homes. There is an axiom that says “To fail to prepare is to prepare to fail.” This maxim cuts across every sphere of our lives. When so many marriages fail or run into serious problems, we have to look inwards and ask what is happening about preparation for such an important state of life, a state of life that is meant to be stable and indissoluble. When celebrated marriages collapse or when youths opt for trial marriage, we must ask what is responsible for these acts and enquire what the consequences are. Could it be that people are too busy that they do not have time for adequate preparation or could it be that the pastoral agents do not prepare the intending couple well in the way of catechesis?

For the Catholic Church, preparation for marriage is of prime importance so that the “I do” of the spouses may be a free and responsible act and so that the marriage covenant may have solid and lasting human and Christian foundations.³¹This preparation need not be postponed. It begins right at the youthful age. The church maintains that it is imperative to give suitable and timely instruction to young people so that they will be able at a suitable age to engage in honourable courtship...³²

Intending couples prepare for marriage for so many reasons. It could be to establish what is important in their lives and how they want to express these things. But for a peaceful relationship to be established among them before and after marriage there are values to be inculcated and it is imperative that they imbibe them.

Marriage preparation has to be seen and put into practice as a gradual and continuous process. It includes three main stages: *remote, proximate and immediate preparations*.

2.1. Remote preparation

³⁰ Cf. *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, # 21

³¹ Cf. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, (Nairobi: Paulines/St. Paul's, 2005), # 1632

³² Cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents Vol. 1, Flannery Austin, (ed.) (Dublin: Dominican Publication, 1975) # 49 par. 3

This preparation begins in early childhood. This is family training where children are led to discover their strength and weaknesses, a time when authentic human values are instilled both in interpersonal and social relationships, formation of character; manner of approach with the opposite sex, catechetical formation with exposition to vocations to marriage and priesthood and religious life.

2.2. Proximate Preparations

This phase involves specific preparation for sacraments, renewed catechesis for Christian marriage and thorough study of the nature of conjugal sexuality and responsible parenthood, financial management, notion of housekeeping and many more. Other things that must not be neglected are: repentance and its efficacy, teaching of pious doctrine and virtuous actions, Value of good conscience, and Purity. All these sound pious and spiritual but that is the essence of teaching the intending couples because if one neglect the pious and spiritual things, the marriage will seek after mundane and profane things only and lay aside the spiritual journey that should be concurrent with their marital life. The important thing is to seek for ways of imparting these values; how to teach them is the crucial thing.

2..3.Immediate preparation

The immediate preparation involves the celebration of the sacrament of matrimony in the months and weeks preceding the wedding. This involves the deeper knowledge of the mystery of Christ and the church and of responsibility of Christian Marriage.³³

3. Marriage Enrichment

Basic marriage catechesis must not end with the reception of the sacrament of matrimony. Faith formation must continue which could be given inform of seminar/workshop for the newly wedded couples. When the man and the woman are well prepared for marriage, their faith will be formed; they are in the better position to welcome Christ the Chief Bridegroom into their homes. In such a home, the faith is more likely for be strong and the couple are more like to pass on the faith to the next generation.

Marriage enrichment is the on-going catechesis for the family life. The family ought to be instructed deeply in the mystery of Christ which include the practical techniques that could help them in their difficulties; all according to the spirit and dictates of the church.

Furthermore, theological investigations that could explain facts of life and the word of God should be encouraged. This is done through seminar/workshops so

³³ Cf. John Paul II, *FamiliarisConsortio*, # 66.

that experts are invited to explain and enlighten their minds in lieu of everyday life experiences on how the family life, custom and culture of the people are interrelated and how they are to be understood in the light of the Gospel. This is a way to shed light on faith and culture of the people.

Functional marriage enrichment programme is necessary in Nigeria where people's faith are dwindling and where some people feel they must support and protect themselves against one another with one form of syncretic ideology or the other. For some people, faith is a given gift separated from the culture. Many have adopted the idea of drifting between faith and the praxis and that is the level of their understanding.

Moreover, our people in Nigeria are in need of more conviction of faith and trust in God and this cannot be done in a hurry or in a wishy-washy way. The pastoral agents, particularly the religious, men and women must be trained to take up this responsibility in collaboration with the priests in different parishes.

4. Attending to Family Matters: Abuses

In the second part of the *Gaudium et Spes*, some more urgent problems are listed and marriage and family is among the list. The Document states that the well-being of the individual person of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life. Therefore, pastoral agents, religious men and women must be properly trained to deal with family matters and to nurture the vocation of married people in their married and family life by different pastoral means, by preaching of the word, by liturgy and other pastoral and spiritual assistance. Marriage and family life ought to be strengthened sympathetically and patiently in their difficulties and comfort them in charity with a view to the formation of truly radiant families.³⁴

Abuses of all sorts abound in marriage and family life. Battering of persons with any available object is rampant among families. Parents often convince themselves that beating of children is the only discipline they could use. The right translation of the Proverb 22:15 adds whip of instructions to the injunction of disciplining a child and not just spanking with rod.

Many parents often quote: "spare the rod and spoil the child." When beating gets to the peak, the stubborn child gets used to being beaten and gets all the more stubborn. But the parents must look into another direction of counseling their wards with spiritual talk and sometimes use Psycho-Spiritual direction to help a child that seems to be obstinate.

Battering among the spouses is appalling in Nigeria and in anywhere in the world. This is a matter that calls for marriage counselling before it gets out of hand.

³⁴ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, # 52

When spouses begin to have wrangling among themselves, they must sue for peace and for amicable dialogue before it gets out of hand. Often, when they lack respect for one another, when they do not treasure one another, they will be quarrelling regularly. A lack of proper marriage counselling/ marriage preparation could be responsible. Sometimes, the couples do not know where to go for help. When there is a functional marriage apostolate in the parish, the problem and the cases will be minimal. The consecrated women and men must be available for the couples in their parish in collaboration with the parish priest.

Husband and wife quarrel over sexual intercourse. Conjugal love and the use of sex ought to be part of marriage preparation/ instructions. The intending couple ought to be taught that marriage is not merely for procreation of children but it also encompasses an indissoluble character of the man and woman who are joined together in holy matrimony. This demand that mutual love of the partners be properly shown, grow and mature.³⁵ According to Paul VI, the facts are, as experiences shows, that new life is not the result of each and every act of sexual intercourse.³⁶ The husband needs to understand that his wife may be tired sometimes and therefore may need to be patient with her until she is healthy enough to fulfil her conjugal obligation. Love is fully human, a compound of sense and spirit and not a merely question of natural instinct or emotional drive (that seeks satisfaction by all means). It is an act of free will that husband and wife together attain their human fulfilment through a love that is total, faithful, exclusive, and creative.³⁷ It is the responsibility of the consecrated men and women who are espoused to Christ to teach the husbands and wives other ways which they could express their love for one another in days when the woman is not ready for sexual intercourse.

Furthermore, drugs/alcohol and substance abuse is also common now. Little do the families realize that they will become poorer if the users continue to indulge the self. A functional marriage apostolate and an adequate marriage counselling can help the individual. Consecrated persons must not shirk their responsibility in helping such families.

Married people should be taught to realize that in their behaviour they may not simply follow their own designs and fancy but must be ruled by conscience. In any conflict of marriage, faithfulness is imperiled and the good of the children suffers; courage to accept more children and their education are

³⁵ Cf. Second Vatican, *Gaudium et Spes*, #50

³⁶ Cf. Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, (July 1968), #11

³⁷Cf. Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, #9

endangered.³⁸Consequently, the family that should be a school of human enrichment would be turned to a platform of deformation of the young one's character.

Therefore, the consecrated persons, men and women, among others, should devote themselves effectively to the welfare of marriage and family life. Through their concerted efforts, they will help the families to overcome obstacles to their life and make provision for their advancement.³⁹

5. Teaching of Family Planning

Obviously, the couple would desire to express their mutual love often. Some couple will get to the point where they could no longer increase the number of children. The issue of family planning comes in. On family planning, the stand of the church is very clear:

When it is a question of harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life, it is not enough to take only the good intention and the evaluation of motives into account; the objective criteria must be used, criteria drawn from the nature of the human person and human action, criteria which respect the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love; all that is possible only if the virtue of married chastity is seriously practiced. ⁴⁰

The consecrated women are mostly in charge of this singular apostolate in many dioceses. They ought to teach the married couples the basic truth of Christian doctrine of marriage which declares that the direct interruption of the generative process already begun and above all direct abortion even for therapeutic reasons are to be absolutely excluded as lawful means of controlling the birth of children.⁴¹ Other things to be avoided are: direct sterilization, whether of man or woman, permanent or temporary; sexual intercourse to prevent procreation, whether as a means or as an end; sexual intercourse which is deliberately contraceptive.⁴²

The Church is a good mother and a diligent teacher. She teaches that human life is sacred and everyone must recognize that fact and keep to it.⁴³ Paul VI reiterates many documents of the Church which states that when the couples have

³⁸Cf. Second Vatican, *Gaudium et Spes*, #51

³⁹Cf. Second Vatican, *Gaudium et Spes*, #52

⁴⁰ Cf. Second Vatican, *Gaudium et Spes*, #51

⁴¹Cf. Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, #14

⁴² Cf. Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, #14 ^b

⁴³Cf. Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, #13

reasons to space births whether from physical or psychological condition of the husband or wife or from both or from external circumstance, the Church teaches that the married couples may take advantage of the natural cycles immanent in the reproductive system and use their marriage at precisely those times that are infertile, and in this way control birth.⁴⁴ The Church is teaching the couples that there are certain limits beyond which it is wrong to exercise human power over one's body and its natural functions. This limit is set so that no one, private or public authority can lawfully exceed.⁴⁵

The true faith being taught by the church, she affirms that the right and lawful ordering of the births of children presupposes in husband and wife first and foremost that they fully recognize and value the true blessings of family life and that they acquire complete mastery over themselves and their emotions.⁴⁶

Conclusion

The consecrate persons being collaborators in the work of evangelization must be treated as people of repute and accord them the respect that is due to them. Having dedicated their lives to God, they must live up to the standard and fulfil their dedication in humble service to the people and serve as models to everyone in the family and inspire the young ones to desire to dedicate their lives to God. The work of evangelization will never end and therefore, consecrated persons should be adequately trained to take up special topics in family life so that wellness of the family life will be promoted at all times. When family life is assisted to find solution to their problems, the Church will grow not only in number but also of sound minded persons which will in turn have a ripple effect on the global society.

⁴⁴Cf. Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, #16

⁴⁵Cf. Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, #17

⁴⁶ Cf. Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, #21