

# Wages of the Sexual Revolution

by Janet E. Smith 10/25/2014

It has long been known that the American way of life is being greatly threatened by the fragmentation of the family. A recent book featuring experts of all kinds who bemoan this phenomenon is Mitch Pearlstein's *Broken Bonds: What Family Fragmentation Means for America's Future*.

Jonathan Last, in a [review](#) of Pearlstein's book, states, "The social capital created by traditional families is what undergirds the rest of our society. Sociologists and economists now understand that when this social capital is diminished, it causes all sorts of other problems. The crises of the welfare state, wage stagnation, income inequality, unemployment, the prison-industrial complex — all of these, and much more, can be traced to the breakdown of the family."



The "fragmented family" refers to more than just the 50% of marriages that end in divorce, but also to the fact that many children never really have a family, since they are raised by mothers who have never married. It is not easy to come up with a precise number, but it is certainly true that, of the children who escape being aborted in the United States, the majority will not be raised by their married biological parents; one parent is likely to be missing, and it is usually the father.

The experts don't know what to do, I would guess, largely because they can't identify the causes. In fact, this book is not designed to propose solutions; its purpose is to get scholars, politicians and activists to realize that family fragmentation is a problem.

We in the Church are way ahead of the experts and activists. We have known for a very long time that to destroy the family is to destroy a culture. We also know a major reason for the destruction — and a workable solution.

We know that the major cause of the "sexual revolution" was the invention of the pill (even secularists such as Francis Fukuyama have written on the disruptive influence of the pill). When people remove the baby-making power from the sexual act, all hell breaks loose.

The fact that sex can result in a pregnancy has been the most powerful reason historically that minimally responsible people have waited until marriage to have sex. When that possibility is negated, people have sex outside of marriage, babies are born outside of marriage, people prepare poorly for marriage, and marriages break up, etc. Women — children and men, too — are more likely to be poor in this scenario.

To connect all of the dots would take a book (Mary Eberstadt connects the dots in her book, *Adam and Eve After the Pill*), but perhaps these dots are sufficient: The "sexual revolution" has led to too many children for several generations being raised without fathers; those children do not learn how to manage life well, and the cycle perpetuates itself. Many people who have not matured are raising the next generation, and the possibility of them maturing is negligible.

The other reason for not having sex outside of marriage is that to do so is a violation of God's plan for sexuality. Religious people, especially Christians — especially Catholic Christians — should know how wrong and harmful sex is outside of marriage.

But the culture and the availability of contraception have clouded people's intellects and weakened their wills, to the point that many Christians, Catholic Christians as well, conduct their sexual lives as foolishly as the rest of the culture.

Now, it is not likely that experts, scholars, politicians and activists are soon going to connect the dots. After all, they are just catching onto the fact that there is a problem.

But, as was said previously, those of us truly shaped by the Christian understanding of human nature and of reality are not in the dark about what the real problem is and what the real solution is. Even more than that, we have developed quite an abundance of good materials to get the job done.

Again, what is the job? The job is convincing people that sex outside of marriage is stupid, wrong and against their happiness and the well-being of their children. That requires that we teach them that contraception is stupid, wrong and against their happiness and the well-being of their children.

Do we have any hope of doing that?

Well, possibly yes, if it is done in the context of the New Evangelization. The New Evangelization means that we must help those who have been baptized Catholic to fall in love with Jesus and the truths that he teaches through his Church.

Many people, especially those from divorced households or those raised by unmarried mothers and parents, have a lot of misery in their being. We must introduce them to Jesus, the Divine Healer, and to the Church, aptly called by Pope Francis a "field hospital."

Our priests need to speak to those wounds from the pulpit: Are you broken and confused? We have what you need: Jesus. He will give you graces to cope with the madness of this world that has seeped into your lives.

Jesus gives us grace through the sacraments and instruction through the various teaching mechanisms of the Church. Take advantage of these gifts. Sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Ask Jesus to heal you with his love.

All of us who wish to bring people out of darkness into light and out of misery into joy must be radical disciples of Christ himself. We must keep working to cut any compromise with comfort-seeking out of our lives.

The fact that the beatification of Blessed Pope Paul VI took place during the closing ceremony of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family was interpreted by some of us as a manifest sign that the synod would closely ally itself with *Humanae Vitae*. That did not happen for the first part of the synod, which, as the [interim report](#) indicated, seemed preoccupied with how to deal with the question of the reception of the Eucharist by those who have been divorced and remarried without benefit of an annulment and with the proper pastoral response to those with same-sex attractions.

The [final report](#), however, rang a positive note about *Humanae Vitae*, so we can have some hope that the Ordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family, to be held in 2015, will pay significant attention to *Humanae Vitae* and how the failure of bishops and priests to preach and teach the truths of Blessed Paul VI's 1968 encyclical has been seriously detrimental to the family.

We can hope that, between now and next fall, the participants in the synod will come to realize what gold we have in St. John Paul II's theology of the body, which he wrote to defend the truths of *Humanae Vitae*. The many programs for youth, for the engaged and married based on the theology of the body are a true work of the New Evangelization.

There is one institution on the face of the earth that has the answers to the problems we face; if it does not use the resources available to it, the family will continue to fragment — and then woe be to us all.

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