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Religious Crisis and Civic Transformation

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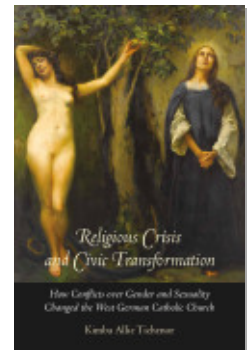
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Artificial Contraception German Angst and Catholic Rebellion

Like mandatory celibacy for priests, contraception is an issue that has plagued the Church almost since its inception. However, on this matter, unlike celibacy, the official Church has never wavered in its position. At no time in its history has the Catholic Church taught that contraception is a good thing. However, the constancy of the Church's position does not mean that the rationale for this condemnation has always been the same or that there have not been significant revisions of the position over time.¹ In the second half of the twentieth century, the most significant shift in the Catholic position occurred in 1951 when Pius XII approved the rhythm method as a means of natural family planning. This change in the official Catholic stance reflected two theological developments: growing recognition of mutual love as a primary purpose of marriage and a new emphasis on responsible parenthood. It also suggested the Church's growing awareness of the altered realities of contemporary life—the increased cost of raising a family, the longer time required to educate children in technically advanced societies, and world population growth. But as we shall see, in endorsing natural family planning, Pius XII inadvertently opened the door to a religious and secular debate on the moral acceptability of artificial contraception in the 1960s.

In Western Europe in the 1950s, the Christian churches, particularly the Catholic Church, promoted a public discourse of sexual conservatism. In Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and West Germany, Christian political parties gained power; these parties promoted sexual conservatism as part of an effort to restore normalcy in war-torn Europe. The war and its immediate aftermath, as Dagmar Herzog noted in *Sexuality in Europe*, provided “the context in which millions of people had experienced premarital and extramarital sexuality, and crossed boundaries or experimented with relationships that might never have been possible in the more closely monitored and stable environments of peacetime towns.”² Postwar Chris-

tian political leaders saw this sexual experimentation as indicative of the very secularization that had allowed fascism to gain a foothold in Europe. They utilized this interpretation of fascism to promote youth defense laws and to block the efforts of those who wanted to liberalize the laws governing sexuality (e.g., contraception and abortion). The onset of the Cold War gave conservative Christian political parties in the West an additional ideological advantage over their opponents. In promoting sexual conservatism and the restoration of traditional gender roles, they contrasted a re-Christianized and democratic West with a godless and Communist East. Communist and Social Democratic parties in the West had to tread lightly, lest they become associated with Stalinism in the mind of the public. As a result, most Social Democratic and Communist parties in 1950s Western Europe endorsed positions on gender and sexuality that did not differ significantly from those of their conservative opponents.³ But controlling public discourse and legislating morality proved easier tasks for the Christian churches and their political allies than controlling Western European attitudes and behaviors, including those of the Christian faithful.

Among Catholics in West Germany and elsewhere in Europe, the mid-1950s witnessed growing public dissatisfaction with the Church's teachings on marriage and family. The initial relief experienced by Catholic married couples and their confessors following Pius XII's acceptance of the rhythm method in 1951 dissipated quickly. Many Catholics complained that the method was ineffective; others lamented that it took the spontaneity out of sexual intercourse. Still others questioned the distinction that the Church drew between natural and unnatural means of regulating fertility. By the early 1960s, some theologians and bishops also questioned the Church's stance on artificial contraception on theological grounds. This theological debate, in turn, emboldened an already disenchanted laity. Paul VI's attempt in 1968 to end this debate by reaffirming the Church's ban on artificial contraception provoked an unparalleled crisis of authority in the Catholic Church as laypersons, theologians, and even some bishops throughout Western Europe and the United States publicly criticized the encyclical.

In West Germany, mainstream Catholics rejected Paul VI's encyclical at the biennial Catholic Congress in September 1968 and demanded that the pope revise his position. *Humanae Vitae's* negative reception marked the end of an era; no longer would West German Catholics unconditionally obey papal edicts. Like their non-Catholic counterparts, Catholics in late

1960s West Germany were rethinking their attitudes toward sexual morality and more generally their relationship to secular and religious authorities. In particular, German youth were demanding increased democratization of German society, and this call for greater democratization extended to the religious sphere. Unlike their elders, many German youths did not see Christianity as an antidote to fascism. Instead, they pointed to church leaders' complicity in the Nazi past. They also condemned the sexual conservatism promoted by the churches and legislated by the West German government under CDU-CSU leadership. Because Catholic politicians and religious leaders had played a dominant role in shaping the family/youth policy of the 1950s, against which protesters now directed their ire, the concurrent debate within the Catholic Church on artificial contraception attracted the attention of rebellious youth, the secular media, and the broader West German public.

German Catholic leaders were acutely aware that the Catholic faithful no longer lived in an insulated milieu. They knew that many Catholic couples practiced some form of family planning and that a reiteration of the ban would be ill received in Germany. Most German bishops supported revision, and when revision did not materialize, they issued the Königstein Declaration to ease tensions within the West German Catholic community. The declaration called for obedience to the pope, while also affirming spouses' right to make their own decision of conscience on artificial contraception. The declaration succeeded in diffusing tensions in the German Catholic Church and preserved the credibility of the German bishops with their lay congregants.

However, the Königstein Declaration also had negative consequences. The declaration set a precedent for so-called loyal disobedience, whereby Catholics acknowledged papal authority while opting to disregard certain nonfallible teachings. In the West German context, loyal disobedience increasingly characterized the lay response to many Church teachings that the laity deemed outdated. Moreover, as we have seen in the chapters on celibacy and women's ordination, German Catholics now expected their bishops to issue documents comparable to the Königstein Declaration on controversial topics such as clerical celibacy and women's position in the Church. When the German bishops did not or could not countermand Vatican teachings through such documents, the credibility that they had preserved with the Königstein Declaration was seriously compromised. Many reform-minded

German Catholics ceased to believe in the Church's ability to reform itself. Still other German Catholics redoubled their efforts to bring about desired reforms.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the birth control debate acquired a new dimension when new concepts of womanhood began permeating Catholic women's organizations. These new concepts came from religious feminist circles and the secular feminist movement. Mainstream West German Catholic women's organizations now perceived the Church's intransigence on artificial contraception as indicative of the Church's negative attitude toward women. They demanded that the Church recognize women's intrinsic worth rather than define women exclusively as wives and mothers. Additionally, some feminist theologians demanded women's admission to the priesthood. For these women, a Church ruled by celibate men was incapable of representing women's interests. When concrete changes failed to materialize despite the promulgation of multiple ecclesial documents proclaiming women's dignity, the West German Catholic Church experienced both an alarming drop in the number of women engaged in Church life and increased engagement by those women who stayed.

The interrelated debates on birth control and celibacy in the 1960s and early 1970s sparked a cascading series of crises that came to encompass among other things women's ordination, abortion, and NRTs. These new controversies, in turn, accelerated the dual processes of exodus from the Church and inner migration within the Church. This inner migration manifested itself not only as indifference to the Church, but also in the formation of subaltern communities with radically opposing and irreconcilable visions of the future of the Catholic Church. By the 1980s, reconciliation of these diverse views appeared unrealistic. The issue ceased to be one of reconciliation or compromise; instead, the focus shifted to the acceptable limits of dissent. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, many who believed the Church could be saved only through greater centralization of authority advocated a "smaller but purer Church."⁴

Natural Law, Marriage, and Contraception

On October 29, 1951, Pius XII introduced a significant modification of the Church's teachings on contraception. In an address to the Italian Catholic Society of Midwives, Pius XII became the first Roman authority to endorse the rhythm method as a means of controlling family size: "Serious motives may exist, such as those frequently mentioned in so-called medical, eugen-

ic, economic, and social 'indications' that may exempt married couples from carrying out their positive and obligatory duty [to beget and rear children] for a long time or perhaps even for the duration of their marriage. From this it follows that the observance of natural sterile periods may be lawful, from the moral viewpoint: and it is lawful in the conditions mentioned."⁵ One month later, in an address to the Congress of the Family Front and the Association of Large Families, Pius XII reaffirmed the rhythm method as a licit means of regulating births.⁶

Pius XII's endorsement of the rhythm method reflected two developments in the Catholic Church. First, Catholic authorities increasingly recognized that a real tension existed between the two primary purposes of marriage—procreation and the education of children. As the American Jesuit John Lynch explained in a 1963 address to the Catholic Theological Society, until Pius XII's allocution, Catholic authors failed to recognize the inadvisability of promoting large families for all Catholic couples: "This maxim is not universally applicable to each individual marriage; it obtains, in truth, only in circumstances wherein the decent raising of a large family is reasonably possible."⁷ Providing an adequate education for children might require regulating the time between births. Second, as noted in Chapter 1, in the 1920s a growing number of Catholic philosophers and theologians, such as Dietrich von Hildebrand and Herbert Doms, were reconsidering the nature of the marital relationship in response to the emergence of a more companionate model of marriage in late-nineteenth-century Europe. Both Hildebrand and Doms rejected elements of the Augustinian/Thomist conception of marriage that had shaped Church teachings on marital morality for centuries.

Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas advanced a hierarchical and patriarchal conception of marriage in which the primary purpose was procreation. Neither Augustine nor Aquinas acknowledged a connection between marital love and marital intercourse.⁸ With the emergence of a more companionate model of marriage, many Catholic laypersons and some theologians no longer accepted this view. In a 1925 lecture, Dietrich von Hildebrand, a professor of philosophy in Munich, rejected a strictly biological approach to marital sex. Sexual intercourse, he argued, had two primary purposes: procreation and the expression and fulfillment of marital love.⁹ In his 1935 book, *Vom Sinn und Zweck der Ehe*, Herbert Doms discarded the language of primary and secondary purposes and redefined marital intercourse as an ontological act in which the spouses attained completion in

their union with each other. He also shifted the frame in which marital sexual pleasure was understood; he no longer treated it as an animalistic drive that fueled procreation; instead, Doms saw sexual pleasure as reflective of the metaphysical change that occurred when the married couple found completion in one another.¹⁰ Although Doms did not reject traditional gender roles, he seldom referenced them. The absolute difference between man and woman, which the Church justified through the language of complementarity of the sexes, did not play a central role in his analysis.

Doms's theology of marriage represented a comprehensive alternative to the natural law approach. It had the advantage of providing a coherent rationale for many common practices in Church life, which the Augustinian/Thomist theory could not. For example, if the primary purpose of marriage was ontological completion rather than procreation, then the Church's teaching on the moral permissibility of sexual intercourse between sterile married partners and its rejection of artificial insemination made sense.¹¹ But the Rota Romana condemned Doms's theory in 1944.¹²

However, a modified version of the personalist approach did gain currency in the Catholic Church during this period. The modified approach merged the new positive conception of marital intimacy with the traditional language of sexual complementarity, thereby preserving the Church's emphasis on the hierarchical ends of marriage. For example, Pius XI took this approach in his 1930 encyclical *Casti Connubii*, which described marriage as an intimate life partnership sanctioned by God, affirmed the primary and secondary purposes of marriage, and condemned birth control.¹³ According to this approach, sexual complementarity unified the couple in marriage and in sexual intercourse by bringing the masculine and feminine biological and psychological elements into an undivided whole. The masculine elements were understood to be greater strength, physicality, and orientation to the secular world. The feminine elements were receptivity, domesticity, and motherhood. Through the joining of these two elements, the married couple fulfilled their true vocation to receive and to care for new human life. Although this approach gave a more positive valuation of marital sexual intercourse, it still defined the marital relationship in hierarchical terms. The primary purpose remained procreation, and the husband's final authority was justified by his greater physicality and capacity for reason; he must guide his wife, whose leadership capacity was circumscribed by her narrow focus on children.

Casti Connubii extended no mercy to those who willfully limited family

size: "Small wonder, therefore, if Holy Writ bears witness that the Divine Majesty regards with greatest detestation this horrible crime and at times has punished it with death. As Augustine notes, 'Intercourse even with one's legitimate wife is unlawful and wicked where the conception of the offspring is prevented.'"¹⁴ It described birth control as a "grave sin" that constituted "an offense against the law of God and nature."¹⁵ Priests were instructed to inquire about the use of birth control in the confession box. The encyclical warned that priests who exercised tolerance in such cases placed their souls in jeopardy.¹⁶ Pius XI's condemnation of birth control permitted no exceptions. Neither economic nor social hardship justified contraceptive use: "There is no possible circumstance in which husband and wife cannot, strengthened by the grace of God, fulfill faithfully their duties and preserve in wedlock their chastity unspotted."¹⁷

In light of the Anglican Church's qualified acceptance of birth control by married couples at the Lambeth Conference on August 14, 1930, Pius XI wanted to send a clear message that the Catholic Church would not tolerate contraception or any affront to the patriarchal family: "This order includes both the primacy of the husband with regard to the wife and children, the ready subjection of the wife and her willing obedience, which the Apostle commends in these words: 'Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife, and Christ is the head of the Church.'"¹⁸

Thus, Pius XII's approval of the rhythm method in 1951 represented a major shift in the Church's position. However, in opening the door to one form of contraception while condemning others, Pius XII inadvertently opened a theological Pandora's Box. If the end result was the same (preventing pregnancy), why did the means matter? How could such a position be justified theologically and lay Catholics be made to see the moral distinction between different methods? These theological questions became focal points in the 1960s debate on "the pill."

Ideology versus Reality: Contraception and Morality in 1950s West Germany

In public discourse, the topic of contraception remained taboo in 1950s West Germany, since it explicitly challenged the ideology of marriage and family promoted by conservative Christian politicians and religious authorities. Conservative Christian politicians and the Catholic Church, in particular, argued that only a return to traditional family values could save Germany

from the resurgence of a totalitarian state, whether National Socialist or Communist. Whereas in the late 1940s West Germans had engaged in lively discussions of the viability and advantages of alternative family forms, the 1950s saw the emergence of a far-reaching public consensus that “incomplete” families and “mother families” were legacies of war and the National Socialist past—a past that West Germans wanted to move beyond.

In *What Difference Does a Husband Make?*, Elizabeth Heineman detailed the frank discussions of divorce and illegitimacy in the late 1940s that took place in women’s journals. For example, in an article entitled “A Dangerous Phrase between Spouses: ‘For the Children’s Sake,’” *Constanze* urged readers in unhappy marriages to divorce and expressed admiration for those women who did: “We . . . want to bow down before the women who—despite the legal codes, which stand on the side of the men—muster up the courage and the strength to end marriages gone awry.”¹⁹ In the women’s journal *Sie*, Walther von Hollander wrote that the state should amend its laws banning cohabitation by unwed couples: “The days when a woman uncomplainingly dried up into an old maid, a sexless being, are gone and will not come back.”²⁰ He advised married women to support their single sisters by tolerating their husband’s affairs or even to befriend their husband’s mistresses!²¹

Hollander was not alone in endorsing open marriages and extramarital sexual relations. A 1948 survey conducted in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein asked, “Is ‘free love’ immoral?” Sixty-one percent of respondents replied no.²² Similarly, a 1949 Allensbach survey found that 71 percent of those surveyed approved of premarital sexual relations. The survey also noted that 89 percent of men and 69 percent of women admitted to having had premarital sexual relations. Approximately the same percentage admitted to having had sexual intercourse with someone other than their future spouse (89 percent of men and 70 percent of women).²³

Although female authors expressed less enthusiasm for short-term and open marriages than male authors, they supported alternative living arrangements for single-mother households. For example, *Constanze*’s female readers suggested communal housing with on-site daycare facilities for single mothers. As Heineman noted, proposing that the state expend substantial funds on housing for single women communicated an acceptance that singlehood was not necessarily a temporary stage of life for women and that single women constituted a population worthy of investment.²⁴ Both were radical ideas for the time.

By the mid-1950s, this openness to “mother families” and “free love” had

disappeared from West German public discourse, a victim of efforts to leave behind the recent Nazi past. As Dagmar Herzog explained, sexual conservatism became a “crucial strategy for managing the memory of Nazism and Holocaust.” By emphasizing the very real link between sexual licentiousness and mass murder under Nazism, Christian conservatives could claim with some legitimacy that turning away from sexual pleasure constituted a rejection of Nazi morality.²⁵ An Allensbach survey from the early 1950s indicated a dramatic reversal in West German attitudes toward extramarital relations. Fifty-two percent of city dwellers and 62 percent of those living in rural regions now rejected extramarital sexual relations. Concomitantly, women’s magazines such as *Constanze*, *Brigitte*, and *Das Blatt der Hausfrau* changed their editorial direction. They discouraged discussions of alternative family forms and filled their pages with stories and images that characterized the feminine ideal in terms of women’s role as stay-at-home housewife and mother.²⁶ An editorial in the Catholic women’s journal *Frau und Mutter*, the largest women’s journal in 1950s Germany with a readership of five hundred to six hundred thousand, deplored the state of West German families, for which it held women accountable: “If the family is shattered today, if it is torn apart, if it is rejected by many as an antiquated way of life, one cannot avoid the following conclusion: the woman, the mother, the wife is in many cases not present and is not what she should be.”²⁷

This changed attitude also found expression in the political sphere. Although the 1949 Basic Law (Article 3, Paragraph 2) guaranteed the equal rights of men and women, Article 6, Sentence 1 of the Basic Law placed marriage and family “under the special protection of the public order (*staatlichen Ordnung*).” For Christian conservatives, marriage necessarily preceded family, and the CDU-CSU constitutional draft emphasized this connection: “Marriage is the form of communal living between man and woman sanctioned by law. It forms the basis of the family. Marriage and family and the rights and duties associated with it stand under the protection of the law.”²⁸ The SPD successfully prevented this narrow understanding of family from being incorporated into the Basic Law. However, the SPD proved less successful when discussion turned to the legal status of illegitimate children. Article 6, Sentence 3 of the Basic Law safeguarded the physical and spiritual development of children born out of wedlock, but it did not guarantee them legal equality. Marital status still determined the legal standing of women and children.

In revising the Civil Code to align with the Basic Law, Christian con-

servatives proved adept at using the constitutional protection accorded marriage and family to restore the difference between the sexes. Following the 1953 elections, the CDU-CSU coalition held the majority of parliamentary seats, and in 1954, the new government created the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs under the leadership of Josef Wuermeling—a committed Catholic. Wuermeling believed that strong families provided the best defense against Nazism, Communism, and “a liberal-inspired decline into individualism, materialism, and secularism.”²⁹ He defined family in patriarchal and hierarchical terms and vehemently denounced any conception of women’s equality that might undermine “the Christian foundation of the family authority exercised by the father.”³⁰ Moreover, Wuermeling and CDU-CSU parliamentarians, such as Helene Weber and Adolf Süsterhenn, argued that the family was a pre-political unit; women’s equality in the family meant moral equality; political equality, they maintained, had no bearing on the familial sphere.³¹ For the welfare of the children, someone must have final authority, and that someone should be the father. Although Social Democrats and former Weimar feminists argued that this solution violated women’s rights, they lost the battle. Until a 1959 high court decision struck down inequality within marriage, the husband’s authority over the children was absolute.³²

Christian conservatives also advanced pro-natalist policies. Wuermeling drew a close connection between any failure of West German married couples to be fruitful and multiply and a potential takeover by populous “peoples of the east.”³³ As Hanna Schissler noted, “Amid the highly charged anticommunism of the 1950s, single women often were accused of being *Flintenweiber*—communist subversives who sought to undermine the sanctity of marriage and family life.”³⁴

Anti-Communist fervor also influenced SPD policy. Wanting to distance the party from Communism, Social Democrats were as inclined as their conservative Christian colleagues in the 1950s to emphasize women’s roles as wives and mothers so as to avoid being tainted by the rhetoric of the “forced emancipation” of East German women. Consequently, throughout the 1950s, consensus existed across the political spectrum that women’s ideal roles were those of housewife and mother. The Bundestag imposed measures against households with two wage earners and mandated “money for children” (*Kindergeld*). The CDU-sponsored law attached money for children to the (usually) male wage, rather than making the payment to the mother for use in managing household expenses. Payments began with the birth

of the third child. Because female-headed households rarely exceeded two children and many single mothers did not earn regular wages but pieced together an existence from domestic labor, welfare payments, and pensions, few single mothers benefited from the child allowance.³⁵ Instead, the child allowance awarded “complete families,” reinforced married women’s dependence on the male breadwinner, and hardened “the symbolic and material divide of marital status.”³⁶ For women, economic security meant marriage, and by the late 1950s, popular discourse inculcated marriage and family as the natural progression for women.

Yet population politics represented a potential political minefield for the newly created West German state, which wanted to distinguish itself from its Nazi predecessor. To broach population politics without risking comparisons to National Socialism, policymakers had to redefine the terms in which the topic was discussed. To this end, they employed the language of capitalism, domesticity, and natural law.

CDU-CSU policymakers contrasted the goals of family politics in a free democratic and capitalist nation with those in totalitarian states—understood nondifferentially to be National Socialist and Communist. Whereas Communists and Nazis attempted to transform the private family sphere into public spaces, conservative Christians maintained that they wanted to protect the boundary between the two spheres by using public policy to buttress the family’s ability to resist incursions by the state.³⁷ In addition to family policies intended “to channel female desire into marriage and child-bearing,” CDU government officials, such as the Protestant minister of economic affairs, Ludwig Erhard, promoted the housewife as the guardian of consumption, whose thrift and rational consumption served as “the engine” of the economic miracle.³⁸

As Erica Carter convincingly argued in *How German Is She?*, the social market became the “displaced space of the nation” in 1950s West Germany.³⁹ Women, as wives, mothers, domestic laborers, and arbiters of household purchases, were expected to play an active role in the nation’s physical and moral reconstruction and in fighting the specter of Communism.⁴⁰ However, the consumer aspect of women’s domestic identity posed potential dangers. Social commentators warned women against the pitfalls of unlimited materialism, especially when it came to determining family size. In striving for economic prosperity, women should not succumb to the temptation of contraception and abortion, endangering both their health and the existence of future generations of West Germans.⁴¹

Although the language of capitalism and the free market played a crucial role in distinguishing West German family and population politics from those of so-called totalitarian regimes, Catholic natural law theory provided the moral underpinnings for a family policy that praised large families, frowned on birth control, and consigned women to the role of wife and mother. Immediately following the war, a booklet published by the Düsseldorf CDU declared, "Each family—indeed, this cannot be disputed—each family needs paternal power [*patria potestas*], the master who carries the burden of all-encompassing worry."⁴² Similarly, the 1945 Frankfurt Guiding Principles described marriage "according to its inherent law of nature" as a "life covenant" that culminated in the "blessing of children" and over which a benevolent father ruled: "The man must be the head in the fullest sense; he can do that only when he is not the object, but the subject of his life; that means that the state—through its economic and social policies—grants him the possibility to nourish his family in honor; and through its social and state constitution, [it offers him the possibility] to be a true supporter of public responsibility. Only then will the woman as the heart of the family in inner freedom help to carry the responsibility of the man and be able to be the trusted mother of his children."⁴³ Some Christian Democrats also championed the Catholic Church for its "glorious struggle" against Nazism; this *Kirchenkampf* discourse soon embraced the notion that "the community of Christians" had offered the most serious resistance to Hitler. Jakob Kaiser, a Catholic resistance leader during World War II, noted that Hitler tried to eliminate all vestiges of Christianity because he rightly identified Christianity as "the strongest counterweight against all aberrations and exaggerations of political extremes."⁴⁴ These types of claims received the support of the occupying authorities and contributed to the growing credence of the *Kirchenkampf* concept within the West German population. But more important, the concept championed by the CDU-CSU allowed ordinary Germans to identify themselves as opponents of National Socialism, since most belonged to a Christian church.

In addition to the German populace's desire for a return to normalcy and the Catholic Church's claim of being untainted by Nazism, the increased willingness of Germans to endorse, at least publicly, the Catholic view of marriage and family reflected the changed confessional demographics of the newly created Federal Republic. The eastern regions of Germany historically had been strongholds of Protestantism. With their exclusion from the new West German state, Catholics ceased to be a minority group. They now

represented roughly half the population, giving political Catholicism a new privileged place in politics.⁴⁵ Although the CDU-CSU did not have a specifically Catholic identity as had its predecessor, the Center Party, Catholics dominated the ranks of the CDU-CSU coalition; from 1949 until 1969, the CDU-CSU controlled or belonged to the ruling coalition.

However, neither public policy nor discourse reflected the reality of the contemporary West German family—Catholic or non-Catholic. In 1963, only 60 percent of the West German population lived in the idealized complete family.⁴⁶ Moreover, the gendered division of labor championed by the Christian parties never materialized in practice. As Christine von Oertzen detailed in *The Pleasures of a Surplus Income*, the number of West German women in paid employment grew significantly between 1950 and 1965, and the employment of married women outside the home skyrocketed in the late 1950s. By 1962, the percentage of female wage earners in West Germany was greater than that of any other labor force in Western Europe.⁴⁷ Many of these women sought employment because they found working pleasurable. It provided relief from the drudgery of housework and gave them an independent income. In the autumn of 1960, *Constanze* devoted an entire issue to women's part-time employment; the articles included quotes from women who described how working outside the home had made them feel young again.⁴⁸ Thus, long before the 1970s feminist movement, West German women were seeking new roles in society beyond that of wife and mother; in fact, they were neither staying home nor having the large families envisioned by the CDU government.

For policymakers who discerned a direct correlation between defeating Communism and increasing German family size, the declining birthrate was perhaps the most disturbing development. Although West Germany experienced a baby boom in the 1950s, it had ended by 1964. A 1950 survey of West German couples showed that 50 percent believed the ideal number of children was two; 21 percent said three; and only 11 percent thought four children were ideal. Despite family and child allowances, West Germans were having fewer children. On average, even Catholic families were becoming smaller.⁴⁹ At least some Catholic and non-Catholic West Germans were practicing some form of birth control, whether natural, mechanical, or abortive, in order to keep families small or to pursue extramarital/premarital sexual relationships.

Yet neither information about contraception nor the means of contraception were readily available in the 1950s or early 1960s. In some West German

states, the production, sale, and distribution of contraceptives were prohibited.⁵⁰ However, as Elizabeth Heineman explained in *Before Porn Was Legal*, the mail order erotica industry allowed many Germans in regions with strict regulations to circumvent the law and their neighbors' watchful eyes. The two largest erotica firms in the 1950s and early 1960s, Gisela and Beate Uhse, employed a domesticated language of sexual consumption that stressed how unwanted pregnancies and sexual dissatisfaction could lead to marital ruin. This strategy allowed the two firms to gain the confidence of millions of West Germans. By 1957, an estimated 8 million Germans out of a population of 54 million subscribed to erotica mailing lists, and the most sought-after products were contraceptives, accounting for 30 percent of all sales for the mail order firm Beate Uhse in the early 1960s.⁵¹

Although it is impossible to determine how many of these mail order consumers were Catholic, the trend toward growing dissatisfaction with the Church's conception of marital morality was clear. Readers of *Frau und Mutter* were unhappy when magazine staff members appeared unsympathetic to the hardships suffered by large families. One reader described a woman who had a nervous breakdown when she discovered she was pregnant again. This reader questioned whether having large families compromised one's ability to be a good Christian and parent. The letter engendered a harsh reaction from Aenne Volk, one of the journal's contributors. Volk accused such parents of being unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices to raise children.⁵² The magazine frequently blamed materialism and consumerism for the trend toward smaller families. In a 1953 article, Idamarie Soltmann lambasted a refrigerator advertisement that advised, "Temporarily the stork must wait until you have your home practically and beautifully equipped."⁵³ In a series of articles by a Catholic doctor, Georg Volk, the magazine also refuted the argument that giving birth to a large number of children endangered women's health. Not only did Volk reject the argument, he drew a close correlation between feminine fulfillment and pregnancy.⁵⁴

Despite the magazine's support for the Church's official position on contraception, readers remained unconvinced. Yet to its credit, the editorial staff continued to provide a forum where Catholic women and men could express discontent with official Church teachings. In a 1959 letter to the editor, one female reader captured the financial, emotional, and moral dilemma that the choice between an unwanted pregnancy and using contraception posed for many Catholic women: "We have four children, ranging in age from three to twelve, and have reached the conclusion that our income level

makes having another child undesirable. We have tried to limit sexual relations to the infertile days. But my husband often finds abstinence during the fertile period impossible. I resist relations during these times, but my frigidity injures him and creates serious resentments. When I give in to my husband, my reluctant compliance offends him or it aggrieves my conscience; consequently I avoid Communion and in so doing make my life spiritually poorer."⁵⁵ For such women, the rhythm method provided little or no relief from unwanted pregnancies, marital strife, or moral qualms.

Couples also complained that it removed all spontaneity from sexual intercourse. The rhythm method (also called the calendar method) required women to painstakingly track their menstrual cycle—the theory being that since ovulation occurred twelve to sixteen days before the anticipated first day of the menstrual cycle, a woman could determine her fertile and infertile days. By avoiding sexual intercourse during fertile days, she could prevent unwanted pregnancies. Success necessitated strict adherence to the dictates of a calendar that many married couples experienced as less than satisfying.⁵⁶

Even more problematic, the method was unreliable, since many women commonly experience irregularities in their cycle. With the rhythm method, any irregularity could result in an unwanted pregnancy. One woman lamented in a 1975 letter to the German moral theologian Bernhard Häring that she had conceived three children on the rhythm method. Out of desperation, she turned to the pill because she and her husband could not afford another child. However, using this illicit form of birth control caused her great moral distress.⁵⁷

To fully appreciate this moral suffering requires an understanding of the idealized conception of womanhood that many Catholic women internalized through constant exposure to its many manifestations at German Catholic congresses, at mothers' schools (*Mütherschule*), in marriage preparation classes operated by Catholic youth groups, in Catholic schools, in marriage manuals, and from families and friends. Catholic leaders counseled women and girls to emulate the Virgin Mary. In *Die ewige Frau*—a text widely used in German Catholic confessional schools in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s—Gertrud von Le Fort extolled Marian virtues and assigned eschatological meaning to women's role as mother:

In motherhood, the existential contact between God and humanity is constantly renewed; it is the only place in the entire creation where God, Regent

and Sustainer, remains always active in his creative Fatherhood, whereby the man as friend of God must cooperate in his intention. Likewise, in her mystical marriage with Christ, the Holy Virgin is sanctified in the birth of new creation. By emulating Mary, the woman recognizes that she receives only for this purpose mystic Grace and thus can pass it on to others.⁵⁸

Le Fort cautioned that women who did not emulate Mary existed outside the realm of spiritual redemption; such women forfeited their feminine identity and succumbed to masculinization. Le Fort described this development as “apocalyptic.”⁵⁹

Catholic femininity also implied a willingness to embrace suffering. In his 1961 book, *Die Frau vor der Zukunft*, E. R. Maexie extolled maternal sacrifice and condemned egoistic motherhood. Maexie characterized women who were unwilling to die in childbirth or who even used modern medication to relieve the pain of childbirth as guilty of disobeying God’s commandment: “That the woman until now had to use her life for the life of her child, that she had to be prepared to die, if she were to give life, was her induction into the mystery of motherhood. . . . The possibility of painless birth that the scientific magus gives the modern woman is an emancipation from divine Law (Gen. 2/16) and brings no blessing, because it advances the egoism of the woman, instead of being a radical relief. The fruit of ‘egoistic motherhood’ is the unloved child who together with the Mother for the most part ends up in need of psychotherapy.”⁶⁰ Both Le Fort and Maexie assumed that a woman who did not embrace motherhood acted against nature and the will of God.

The burdens of womanhood extended beyond childbirth. Women were also responsible for safeguarding the purity of sexual relations. In 1954 Hans March explained in *Stimmen der Zeit* how the obligation to keep the male libido in check derived from woman’s essence: “The natural design of woman . . . holds in check not only her own animalism and libidinal urges, but also domesticates and makes ethical the animalism of the man; it channels his natural needs toward a different mode of loving development.”⁶¹ For March, the woman who could not control her husband’s sexuality suffered from a defect in her natural disposition.

The Catholic Church offered no realistic role model for girls and women. According to the Church’s dualistic view of womanhood, one either emulated the Virgin Mother or followed the temptress Eve, whom Church fathers had reviled for centuries.⁶² But Mary as a role model posed a dilemma. She

established motherhood as women's destiny, but she escaped the sexual intercourse required for mortal women to fulfill that destiny. In *Alone of All Her Sex*, Marina Warner concluded that the unattainable character of the twin ideals (virginity and motherhood) embodied in Mary produced one of two reactions in Catholic girls. They either rebelled or experienced an intensification of "the need for religion's consolation, for the screen of rushes against the perpetual frost of being carnal and female."⁶³ Although rebellion and renewed religious fervor did characterize women's reaction to the reproductive model of marriage, Warner's dualistic account oversimplifies the phenomenon. As seen in this chapter and other chapters, religious fervor did not always signify affirmation of traditional values. Rebellion could also take the form of intense religiosity, as when women demanded admission to the priesthood.

However, female rebellion first found expression in modest demands. At the 1962 West German Catholic Congress, a group of women and mothers dared to ask for the abolition of the term "abuse of marriage" (*ehelicher Missbrauch*) to describe the actions of "those Christians who in principle do not fail in the service of life but have already proved with 4, 5, or more children that they are prepared to make great sacrifices." The petitioners explained that women with so many children were often too weak to fulfill their duty and consequently should not face condemnation in the confession box. The official account of the congress labeled this modest request "most shocking."⁶⁴

The Pill: Early West German Debates

Against this backdrop of social, political, and religious condemnation of birth control, on the one hand, and the outright practice of contraception, on the other, the Berlin-based pharmaceutical company Schering debated introducing the pill on the West German market. Concerns about bad press and public protest in West Germany prompted Schering to delay the German release. Instead, on February 1, 1961, Schering introduced Anovlar in Australia, where the company anticipated less moral resistance.⁶⁵

Schering wanted to secure the German medical community's support before releasing the pill. However, the company knew that getting that support would be no easy task. A 1961 survey of 1,370 doctors in northern Germany showed that only 13 percent had a strong interest in birth control products; 55 percent expressed little or no interest. This dearth of interest reflected the topic's taboo nature and the fact that few West German doc-

tors received information about contraception during their medical training. On June 1, 1961, after securing the support of several prominent doctors, Schering introduced Anovlar in West Germany. But even with support, the company proceeded cautiously. It limited its initial distribution of brochures to a small group of prescreened doctors. The brochure underscored Anovlar's use in treating menstrual disorders and included only a brief reference to the drug's undesirable contraceptive properties. The brochure advised that Anovlar be prescribed only to married women with three or more children.⁶⁶

However, events soon forced Schering to change its marketing strategy. On June 20, 1961, *Stern* published an article by Dr. Anne-Marie Durand-Wever calling attention to Anovlar's contraceptive properties. Durand-Wever had been active in the Weimar sex reform movement and was one of the founders of Pro Familia (1952). In the article, she offered a qualified endorsement of the new drug for contraceptive purposes and pleaded for an open discussion of the complex issues surrounding contraception. Her cautious support reflected her concerns about the drug's potentially negative moral and medical consequences. She feared that the pill would encourage promiscuous sexual behavior on the part of youth, who would no longer worry about the consequences of their actions. She also felt that the trial period had been too short and feared that there might be unknown long-term side effects. Therefore, she advised prescribing Anovlar only for short-term use by women who had just conceived, and could thereby prevent a second pregnancy too soon after the first, and for long-term use by women "who already have at least three living children and are approaching the change of life."⁶⁷

The publication of Durand-Wever's article meant that a large segment of the general population now potentially knew of Anovlar's contraceptive properties. Schering realized that information about Anovlar would have to be sent to all German doctors and pharmacists. Like the old brochure, the new one emphasized the drug's use in treating menstrual disorders. However, it also included a cautiously worded statement about the drug's contraceptive properties that also underscored the company's disapproval of the *Stern* story: "ANOVLAR can also be prescribed if the prevention of conception under a doctor's control is temporarily desired. In recent days, this property has gained unwanted publicity, which has induced us to offer scientific information to all German doctors."⁶⁸

The pill became the prism through which West Germans debated so-

cially acceptable sexual mores. The cautious approach of Durand-Wever and of Schering typified early West German public discourse on the pill. Doctors, politicians, university professors, and church officials dominated a discussion that focused on both the moral and medical ramifications of the pill. The general consensus among supporters was that contraceptive use belonged exclusively within the confines of marriage. They saw the pill as a solution for spouses who already had more children than they could support financially. They also recommended it for women who were too sick or too weak to give birth. Some experts saw the pill as a means of reducing the number of illegal abortions in Germany. No one spoke in favor of the pill as a means of sexual liberation. Instead, supporters and critics shared concerns about the risk of increased promiscuity among young people and the development of a “contraceptive mentality.”⁶⁹

At first, no Catholic theologians supported even this qualified endorsement of the pill for contraceptive purposes. Until the end of 1961, Catholic theologians concurred that oral contraception constituted a deliberate act of direct sterilization and consequently was illicit.⁷⁰ As Pius XII made clear in a 1958 speech to the Seventh International Congress of Hematology, the individual’s intentions determined the morality of ingesting anovulatory medications: “If the woman takes the pill with no intention of preventing contraception, but solely for a medical purpose, as a necessary remedy for a disease of the uterus, she brings about an indirect sterilization, which is permissible according to the general principle concerning actions that have a double effect.⁷¹ But a direct sterilization, and consequently an illicit one, is brought about whenever ovulation is impeded with the goal of protecting the uterus and the body from a pregnancy that it cannot support.”⁷² If the aim was contraceptive, the Church condemned the use of the pill.

December 1961 witnessed the first significant modification of this position. In response to reports of multiple rapes of nuns stationed in the Congo, the Italian Catholic theological journal *Studi Cattolici* posed the following theoretical question: Could an unmarried woman (particularly a nun) who had reason to fear being raped take the pill as a means of protection? The journal published the affirmative responses of three prominent theologians—Pietro Palazzini, Franz Hürth, and Ferdinando Lambruschini. Although Palazzini relied on the doctrine of double effect, the other two theologians introduced new theological principles that potentially allowed the pill to be used in other scenarios.

Hürth distinguished between absolute and relative sterilization. He

defined absolute sterilization as any act that produced sterilization in the subject. Hürth contended that sterilization became a sin only if the individual's motivation was lust. In other words, a woman who made herself sterile without any intention of associating her sterility with a sexual act committed no sin. Thus, a nun who used the pill because she feared being raped acted in good faith. This rationale could be applied to a married woman whose husband compelled her to submit to his sexual advances when her duty as a responsible parent called for abstinence. Hürth acknowledged that a close parallel existed between the two cases, although he still maintained a distinction.⁷³

Lambruschini's response had even broader implications. He acknowledged that a deliberate act of sterilization had taken place in the scenario just described. He affirmed the Church's position that sterilization for reasons of health was illicit. The reason for this condemnation, he argued, was that a married couple had at their disposal a more radical method of avoiding procreation—namely, abstinence. In the case of the nun, no such radical alternative existed. Sterilization was her only option. Moreover, he asserted that grave reasons existed for her actions—namely, to act otherwise jeopardized her physical and spiritual well-being. Therefore, Lambruschini concluded that the Church could not deny her access to anovulatory interventions because “when a physical and physiological process is in opposition to a pre-existent moral and spiritual right, precedence must be given to the latter.”⁷⁴

Lambruschini's prioritization of the subject's moral and spiritual well-being in conjunction with the Church's more positive teachings on marriage raised new questions about contraception: Could married couples use artificial contraception if serious reasons existed for counseling against abstinence? Could they use artificial contraception if their spiritual well-being depended on a more reasonable approach to procreation? If spiritual well-being took precedence over physiology, did the couple's right to express their love via sexual intimacy without fear of an unwanted pregnancy justify an intervention in the wife's ovulation cycle? By the end of 1962, these questions met with an affirmative response by some theologians and Church officials, including German theologians, such as Bernhard Häring and Franz Böckle, who had previously rejected the use of the pill for contraceptive purposes.⁷⁵

Joseph Reuss, auxiliary bishop of Mainz, was the first German bishop to support married couples using artificial forms of contraception. Like

Herbert Doms, Reuss argued that marital sexual intercourse could not be reduced to its biophysiological aspects; as an expression of marital love, it represented an act of communion. However, the two men reached different conclusions about the use of artificial forms of contraception by married couples. In 1935, Doms argued that artificial contraception destroyed “the natural inner harmony of marriage” and thus reduced marital intercourse to an egoistic act.⁷⁶ In contrast, Reuss endorsed natural and artificial contraceptive methods. He asserted that stipulating acceptable methods went beyond the competence of the theologian, who could “merely stipulate that the intervention took place in such a way as to safeguard the personal dignity of the married couple for the sake of increasing their mutual love.”⁷⁷ The German moral theologian Alfons Auer agreed in substance with Reuss’s argument; however, he did not think that all contraceptive forms (i.e., natural, hormonal, chemical, mechanical, and surgical) were equally acceptable. Other Catholic theologians, such as Dietrich von Hildebrand, remained steadfast in condemning artificial contraception.⁷⁸ Thus, on the eve of the third session of Vatican II (September 14–November 21, 1964), the Catholic theological community was deeply divided.

On October 28, 1964, Cardinal Agagianian announced to the commission responsible for revising the schema that became *Gaudium et Spes* that “some points” had been reserved for the pope’s special commission on birth control. The following day, Archbishop John Dearden of Detroit, chair of the subcommission responsible for revising the chapter on marriage and family, made it clear to its members that the progesterone pill in particular and birth control in general were no longer topics open for discussion; those wishing to make their views known should submit them in writing to the papal commission. Dearden assured the subcommission members that the papal special commission would give serious consideration to their recommendations.⁷⁹

The full commission opened debate on Article 21, “The Sanctity of Marriage and the Family,” on October 29, 1964. Despite the removal of the topic of birth control from the agenda, the commission did not ignore the issue completely. Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, Cardinal Döpfner of Germany, and Cardinal Léger of Canada wanted the Church to move away from the language of primary and secondary purposes of marriage. They believed the Church had placed too much emphasis on the biblical call to “be fruitful and multiply” and paid insufficient attention to the words “and the two become one flesh.” By rejecting the language of primary and secondary purposes,

Cardinals Suenens, Döpfner, and Léger paved the way for their second proposal—married couples should be given primary responsibility for determining family size.⁸⁰ They believed that this proposal was in keeping with the council's higher valuation of the laity as the people of God: "These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God; they are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ; and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world."⁸¹

However, this shift in emphasis was not well received by all council fathers. Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani, pro-prefect of the Magisterium (CDF) and president of the Theological Commission, objected to the proposal because it implied that for centuries the Church had erred: "Does this mean that the inerrancy of the Church will be called into question? Or was not the Holy Spirit with his Church in past centuries to illumine minds on this point of doctrine?"⁸² Ottaviani was not alone in his concerns about the proposed draft's implications. Cardinals Giovanni Colombo and Carlo Colombo also objected, citing the draft's failure to link sexual intercourse with procreation and the lack of direction for priests in the confession box.⁸³ As close associates of Paul VI since the 1930s, these three men were in a unique position to influence Paul's views on birth control.⁸⁴ Thus, it should have come as no surprise to members of the commission when on November 25, 1965, during the fourth session of the council, Father Sebastian Tromp read a letter from Amleto Cardinal Cicognani, the Vatican secretary of the state, stating that the pope required four *modi* (amendments) to the chapter on marriage and family, including an explicit reference to Pius XI's *Casti Connubii*: "Secondly, it is absolutely necessary that the methods and instruments used to make conception ineffectual—that is to say the contraceptive methods which are dealt with in the encyclical *Casti Connubii*—be openly rejected; for in this matter admitting doubts, keeping silent or insinuating that such opinions may perhaps be admitted can bring about the gravest dangers in public opinion."⁸⁵

Paul VI's call for revisions provoked heated protests at a meeting of the full commission. The text on marriage and family had already received the necessary two-thirds approval by the entire council. According to council rules, no amendments could be introduced that substantially altered a text once it had been affirmed by a two-thirds majority. However, Cardinals Brown, Parente, and Ottaviani and other Roman Curia members cham-

pioned the amendments, proclaiming, “The pope has spoken. *Causa finita!* Contradiction is inadmissible.”⁸⁶

Commission members who favored greater democracy in the Church feared that the request for amendments signaled an increasingly autocratic approach to the papacy and the council by Paul VI. They believed the amendments were designed to preempt any decision made by the papal commission on birth control. Alarmed lay auditors at the council wrote the pope warning him of the danger of alienating Catholics throughout the world if he simply reiterated *Casti Connubii*'s ban on all forms of artificial birth control. The next day the pope replied by letter, stating that the commission members did not have to insert the amendments verbatim into the chapter on marriage and family; they were free to express the essence of the amendments in their own language.⁸⁷ Thus, the goal of some bishops and their *periti* (theological advisers) became that of neutralizing the amendments' effect. Paul's reference to the “contraceptive arts” was changed to “illicit practices against human generation.” On the “ends of marriage,” the commission remained deliberately vague, avoiding any direct references to primary and secondary purposes. It did cite *Casti Connubii*, but in a footnote. The same footnote mentioned the ongoing investigation of the papal commission.⁸⁸

For the council fathers, the birth control debate had ramifications beyond marital doctrine; the principle of collegiality was also at stake. Whereas Vatican I underscored papal primacy,⁸⁹ Vatican II highlighted episcopal collegiality. Collegiality is the doctrine which asserts that the worldwide episcopate together with the pope, albeit never separate from the pope, possesses supreme authority and thus bears joint responsibility for the universal Church. Although the term “collegiality” never appeared in any Vatican II document, both *Lumen Gentium* and *Christus Dominus* described Church governance as “collegial” and characterized the hierarchy as unified in a “collegium.”⁹⁰ However, neither document provided a concrete plan for implementing collegiality. In the years after the council, heated debates erupted on what collegiality entailed. In a nutshell, the debate centered on which council's teaching took precedence—Vatican I's teaching on papal primacy or Vatican II's emphasis on collegiality. With *Humanae Vitae*'s release on July 25, 1968, many European bishops believed that Paul VI had violated the principle of collegiality, for two reasons. First, Paul VI ignored the recommendations of the Pontifical Study Commission on Family, Population, and Birth Problems, which he had charged with investigating the moral

and doctrinal aspects of contraception. Second, Paul VI had not consulted the bishops. Cardinal Suenens of Belgium explained that “although no one could say that he had no right to produce *Humanae Vitae* on his own, it would have been more credible if it had been collegially prepared.”⁹¹

The study commission had been created by Pope John XXIII and expanded by Pope Paul VI.⁹² Its members included bishops, theologians, social scientists, and laypersons. The theological discussions of the commission focused on three questions: Was artificial birth control intrinsically evil? Did *Casti Connubii* constitute an infallible teaching? And could the Church revise its position without harming its credibility in the eyes of the faithful?⁹³ For some members, *Casti Connubii* constituted an infallible teaching that clearly condemned artificial contraception: “This is the doctrine of Holy Scripture; this is the constant tradition of the Universal Church; this the solemn definition of the sacred Council of Trent, which declares and establishes from the words of Holy Writ itself that God is the Author of the perpetual stability of the marriage bond, its unity and its firmness.”⁹⁴ However, Auxiliary Bishop Reuss of Mainz, Cardinal Döpfner’s leading expert on the question, argued that a pope who wished to speak *ex cathedra* explicitly declared his intention to do so. He reminded commission members, “The church has not always taught the same things about what is licit in marriage.”⁹⁵ Furthermore, Reuss argued, the Church’s authority would not suffer, because believers understood the difference between infallible teachings and other doctrinal pronouncements subject to reform.⁹⁶

The commission also considered Catholic married couples’ experiences with the rhythm method. Patricia and Patrick Crowley, an American Catholic couple serving on the commission, had sponsored a survey of three thousand Catholic couples from eighteen nations; their survey showed that most couples did not experience the “tonic effects” attributed to the rhythm method by celibate clergy.⁹⁷ On June 28, 1966, the commission sent its final report to the pope.⁹⁸ The report offered a qualified endorsement of married couples’ use of artificial birth control if financial, social, or psychological conditions existed that made having a child unwise. The report argued that this position did not constitute a break from earlier Church teachings on regulating birth. It maintained that this qualified acceptance of artificial contraception was the natural outgrowth of Pius XII’s acceptance of the rhythm method.⁹⁹ The Vatican intended for the report to remain secret; however, it was leaked to the international press. The *National Catholic Reporter* (United States), the *Tablet* (Great Britain), and *Le Monde* (France)

all published the full report.¹⁰⁰ News of the commission's recommendations guaranteed widespread public outcry when Paul VI reaffirmed the Church's ban in *Humanae Vitae*. Most Catholics assumed that the pope would not ignore the advice of his commission.

Turning Point: *Humanae Vitae* and the Sexual Revolution

The publication of *Humanae Vitae* on July 25, 1968, unleashed a firestorm of protests throughout the world. Laypersons, theologians, bishops, and even cardinals numbered among the protesters. Nor were these protests limited to Catholics. In West Germany, non-Catholics voiced their views in letters to the editor of secular magazines and even in letters to the federal government.¹⁰¹ Although *Humanae Vitae* had some supporters in West Germany, the overwhelming majority of Germans rejected the encyclical's conclusions, and German Catholics demanded that the pope rescind the encyclical.

Since Anovlar's release in 1961, West Germany's social and political climate had changed dramatically. While experts continued to debate the moral and medical ramifications of the pill, the general public was slowly overcoming its initial reservations about oral contraception. In 1964, only 300,000 packets of the pill were sold monthly, leading the Düsseldorf financial newspaper, *Handelsblatt*, to note wryly that the pill was much discussed but not much used.¹⁰² However, by 1968, the Deutsche Presse-Agentur reported on an international study that ranked West Germany third in pill use, with an estimated 12 percent of all women between the ages of fifteen and forty-five taking the pill.¹⁰³ By 1972, almost one-third of all German women took oral contraceptives, making it the most popular form of birth control in West Germany.¹⁰⁴

The initial lack of enthusiasm for the pill was the product of several interrelated and overlapping events. First, shortly after Anovlar's release in West Germany, reports began to trickle in from the United States and England that some women had developed thrombosis after taking the pill. Some cases of death had even been reported. This news coincided with the thalidomide scandal in Germany. Following a short clinical trial period, the German pharmaceutical company Grünenthal put Contergan (thalidomide) on the market. The company championed the drug as a safe and effective treatment for anxiety, insomnia, and morning sickness in pregnant women. In December 1961, Grünenthal pulled the drug from the market after its use by pregnant women was linked to catastrophic birth defects. By 1962, newspapers and magazines had carried countless stories underscor-

TABLE 3.1. WEST GERMAN WOMEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF
15 AND 44 USING THE PILL, 1964–1972.

Year	West German Women Using the Pill (%)
1964	1.7
1965	2.4
1966	3.7
1967	6.5
1968	11.9
1969	16.3
1970	18.7
1971	25.6
1972	29.6

Source: Ralf Dose, *Die Durchsetzung der chemisch-hormonellen Kontrazeption in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, 1989), 17.

ing the gross negligence of Grünenthal. The federal government launched a criminal investigation of the company.¹⁰⁵

Given the ongoing thalidomide scandal, it is not surprising that Germans were reluctant to embrace the new oral contraceptive; news magazines contained countless reports of the dangerous side effects experienced by women in other countries who had used oral contraceptives, and German medical experts offered conflicting views on the pill's safety. This uncertainty prompted some Germans to turn to the federal government for a definitive answer. But no such answer was immediately forthcoming. The Federal Ministry of Health responded to one woman's inquiry by shifting the burden back to the pharmaceutical company: "Legislators addressed this question at length before passing the pharmaceutical law on May 16, 1961; they decided not to relieve pharmaceutical companies from responsibility for the drugs they produced, that before bringing a drug to market the company must carry out all tests and trials in an objective manner based on the current state of scientific knowledge."¹⁰⁶ Given Grünenthal's culpability in the thalidomide debacle, Germans more than likely did not find this response reassuring.

Some women also had difficulty finding doctors willing to prescribe oral contraceptives, particularly in predominantly Catholic regions. In November 1967, *Stern* reported that a Munich law student had published a list of doctors who would prescribe the pill without asking "dumb or humiliating questions."¹⁰⁷ The list itself represented nothing new; many student com-

mittees had published such lists. However, until now, no mainstream publication had supported such endeavors.

Stern's endorsement was indicative of Germans' changing attitudes toward sexuality. The younger generation, in particular, increasingly rejected the bourgeois conformity of their parents. Between 1967 and 1973, the number of unmarried women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine who believed that it was morally acceptable to live with a man outside of wedlock increased from 24 percent to 92 percent.¹⁰⁸ Instead of seeing Christianity as an antidote to fascism, many West German youths underscored similarities between fascism and Christianity; they drew parallels between the sexual conservatism promoted by the churches and sexual repression under Nazism.¹⁰⁹ By 1968, German university campuses had been transformed into sites of protest against the political, social, economic, and sexual norms of the 1950s. For students, lifestyle revolt and political protest became intricately linked. "Make love, not war" became the defining idea behind the movement.¹¹⁰

Against the backdrop of this new political and cultural climate, Germans reacted negatively to the encyclical. In addition to having believed that the pope would not reject the advice of his own commission, many German Catholics could not fathom why using the pill contradicted Church teachings. They endorsed the argument made by John Rock, an American Catholic doctor and one of the pill's creators. Rock claimed that by preventing ovulation rather than intervening directly in the sex act (as was the case with condoms and IUDs), the pill constituted a hormonal rhythm method. Moreover, as early as 1965, the chair of DBK, Julius Cardinal Döpfner, instructed priests in the Diocese of Munich not to exclude from Communion all married couples who practiced contraception: "Responsible partners who see themselves obliged to contraceptive marital intercourse, not lightly and habitually, but rather as a regrettable emergency solution, may take it that by doing so they do not exclude themselves from communion at the Eucharist table." Although Döpfner did not go so far as to approve artificial contraception, by allowing such couples to receive Communion, he did contravene the instructions of *Casti Connubii*.¹¹¹ Thus, many West German Catholic married couples felt that they had the implicit if not explicit support of the Church to use artificial contraception.

So when *Humanae Vitae* contravened this implicit support, West German Catholics and non-Catholics expressed shock and anger. In the press, on the radio, and on television, the encyclical encountered widespread re-

sistance and ridicule. *Der Spiegel* printed multiple letters to the editor from Catholics and non-Catholics concerning the encyclical. Although a few writers praised the encyclical, the vast majority did not. One male reader satirically proposed the following solution to the Catholic moral dilemma: "As a way to relieve the conscience, a Catholic man should marry a Protestant girl. So long as the woman does not accept the Catholic faith, she could without further ado use the pill for family planning."¹¹² This cynicism was not limited to non-Catholics. Walter Dirks, a prominent Catholic journalist and husband of the kfd president, Marianne Dirks, wrote in the *Frankfurter Hefte*, "The pope speaks of love as the blind speak of color."¹¹³

While lay Catholics responded swiftly, German bishops and theologians initially kept silent. Most found themselves in an awkward position; they had overwhelmingly supported revising the Church's teachings on birth control. Now it appeared that they had led their flock astray. In *Strukturkrise einer Kirche* (1969), Thomas and Gertrude Sartory described German Church leaders' early reactions: "From some apologetic radio broadcasts, one heard in the first days after the appearance of the encyclical that whether one looked high or low, no moral theologian could be found to comment. It was as if they vanished from the face of the earth."¹¹⁴ But the official Church in West Germany could not remain silent indefinitely.

Priests, congregants, and the ZdK demanded to know how *Humanae Vitae* should be interpreted in Germany. Could Germans dissent without jeopardizing their souls? What were priests to say to their congregants? According to a *Deutsche Tagespost* report of August 17, 1968, one hundred Münster priests were refusing to do an about-face; they argued that in keeping with the "Majority Report," they had not misled their parishioners. The prominent Catholic author Luise Rinser published an open letter to Döpfner in which she pleaded for him to take action against the encyclical because it violated the spirit of Vatican II.¹¹⁵ Most significantly, the president of ZdK, Karl Furst zu Löwenstein, wrote Döpfner to make it clear that it was "not about the corruption of our times" if young married couples "earnestly question how many children their family can rear responsibly before God." Löwenstein noted that Vatican II had affirmed responsible parenthood, as did *Humanae Vitae*. Yet the encyclical forbade married couples to use reliable methods of contraception. Löwenstein concluded by mentioning the upcoming Catholic Congress, at which he believed a discussion of birth control must take place, not in order to tell the pope what he must do, but to "give him a picture of our situation—as families, as modern mar-

ried persons, as astute, responsible Church members, as German Catholics, with perhaps problems different from those in other continents, so that the Mother Church realizes that we are adult children of God who can be given more trust.”¹¹⁶ German Catholics were no longer willing to accept unconditionally papal pronouncements and expected German hierarchs to support their decisions.

On August 30, 1968, the German bishops gave their qualified support for the continued use of artificial contraception. But like Vatican II documents, the so-called Königstein Declaration was a document of compromise, since not all German bishops supported reform. Bishops Hermann Schäuferle of Freiburg and Rudolf Graber of Regensburg sent personal messages of gratitude to the pope for the encyclical. Lorenz Cardinal Jaeger of Paderborn accused believers of having “misguided consciences” and argued that public outrage against the encyclical demonstrated “how weak the belief of many Catholics was in the truths that merited obedience.”¹¹⁷ The Königstein Declaration’s language of compromise led a more conservative Church leadership in the 1980s to try to limit or even rescind the declaration’s tacit approval of artificial contraception. However, in 1968, its cautious acknowledgment of married couples’ right to make informed decisions of conscience about contraception significantly reduced tensions in the German Catholic Church and safeguarded the credibility of the German bishops. Catholic couples chose to hear only the affirmation of their right to decide; the document’s admonishment that such couples must face the judgment of God alone received little attention, and its assertion that even nonfallible teachings of the Church deserved obedience went unheeded.¹¹⁸ Lay endorsement of contraception would carry the day at the upcoming Catholic Congress in Essen.

The issue of birth control dominated press coverage of the Essen congress. On September 3, 1968, the Catholic extraparliamentary opposition group, Kritischer Katholizismus, demanded Paul VI’s resignation, as well as that of two German cardinals who openly supported the encyclical. This announcement garnered banner headlines in the secular and religious press. The press also highlighted the close link that Kritischer Katholizismus drew between the Church’s condemnation of birth control and its complicity in National Socialist crimes, its postwar failure to de-Nazify ecclesiastical bureaucracies, and its support of remilitarization.¹¹⁹ The Tübingen paper, *Schwäbisches Tagblatt*, gave credence to the group’s accusations that the Church acted like a police state when it confirmed that plainclothes of-

ficers had been instructed to prevent group members from attending official forums; congress organizers denied the charge.¹²⁰ Other newspapers, such as *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, countered that it was the Catholic extraparliamentary opposition whose tactics mirrored those of the Nazis.¹²¹ Everyone agreed that the Catholic unified front no longer existed.

But Kritischer Katholizismus's shock tactics were not the real story of the Catholic Congress in Essen. As Reinhold Noll, the editor of *Fränkische Nachrichten*, astutely noted, such tactics distracted from the real revolution; ordinary middle-class German Catholics were demanding fundamental changes in the Church's structure and organization.¹²² At the official forum on marriage, numerous speakers enumerated the encyclical's flaws to loud applause. One speaker explained that the encyclical's condemnation of artificial contraception was based on natural law, not on evidence from the Bible. Given that modern science had demonstrated natural law's shortcomings, the encyclical's authority was dubious. Another speaker simply asserted that he had no need for "cheap" absolution given by priests in the confession box. In the end, the participants voted overwhelmingly in favor of demanding the encyclical's revision (three thousand in favor, ninety against, and fifty-eight abstentions).¹²³

Although theological debate on *Humanae Vitae* continued long after the Essen congress, the general Catholic population ceased to follow such debates closely. Catholics had reached their decision, and the Königstein Declaration affirmed that decision. By the time of the Würzburg Synod (1972–1975), the controversy over marital morality in West Germany had shifted from birth control to celibacy and interfaith marriage.¹²⁴ Using birth control became a nonissue for German Catholics. Consequently, when John Paul II gave a series of addresses on marital morality beginning in 1978, Germans paid little attention to his condemnation of artificial contraception or his effort to redefine *Humanae Vitae* as an infallible teaching. The Königstein Declaration provided them a framework in which they could express loyal dissent.

In addition to undermining German Catholic confidence in Vatican leadership of the universal Church, the *Humanae Vitae* crisis had two other significant ramifications in Germany. First, many prominent Catholics believed that affirming the birth control ban undermined the Church's stance on abortion. In a 1972 *Der Spiegel* interview, the Bonn moral theologian Franz Böckle noted, "So long as we have no credible answer for family planning, it is difficult to provide a convincing rule for abortion."¹²⁵ Similarly,

TABLE 3.2: SURVEY OF WEST GERMAN CATHOLICS
ON *HUMANAE VITAE*.

West German Catholics on <i>Humanae Vitae</i>	All Surveyed(%)	Churchgoers(%)
I believe the pope has acted according to divine inspiration and we must comply.	6	14
I have doubts about whether the pope in this case was well advised, but I will comply with his instruction.	17	25
I believe the pope has erred; consequently I will act according to my conscience.	68	57
In my opinion, the pope is so far removed from reality on this that I am seriously considering separating from the Church.	8	3
No opinion	1	1

Source: Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, *Katholische Ehepaare über Humanae Vitae*, BA, ZSg. 132/1542.

a German priest opined in a letter to the president of the ZdK that many Catholics now would be “unable to resist the temptation to limit the number of children through abortion.”¹²⁶

Humanae Vitae also compromised the German Catholic Church’s credibility as a partner in formulating government policy on sex education, family planning, and abortion. On October 2, 1968, two German Catholic organizations—Katholisches Zentral Institut für Ehe- und Familienfragen (Catholic Central Institute on Marriage and Family) and Katholische Ehe- und Familienberatung (Catholic Marriage and Family Counseling Service)—found themselves in an awkward position when their continued involvement on the Committee on Sex Education and Family Planning organized by the Federal Ministry for Family and Youth was called into question by other members. Dr. G. Struck, a representative of the Katholisches Zentral Institut für Ehe- und Familienfragen, explained that neither organization agreed with the encyclical. In keeping with a statement released by the national organization of Catholic doctors, Katholische ärztliche Arbeit Deutschlands, they believed that the distinction the encyclical drew between natural and artificial means of contraception was itself artificial.¹²⁷ Copies of this statement were provided to all committee members. Struck also emphasized that his organization had the German bishops’ support.¹²⁸

Unfortunately, the minutes of the meeting provide no indication of

the committee members' responses. But German attitudes on sexuality were changing, and Catholic organizations that objected to government-sponsored sex education and family planning programs increasingly encountered stiff resistance from women's groups and even from some government officials. For example, in a 1980 internal memo, a government official sharply criticized the Catholic social welfare organization, Caritas, for its stance on abortion: "'Help' according to Caritas means only assistance in preserving the life of the unborn child. The interests of the woman, acknowledged by the Constitutional Court, are ignored."¹²⁹ This attitude was not confined to secular actors; by the early 1980s some Catholic women were also questioning whether the Church had their best interests at heart.

Catholic Women, Birth Control, and the Church

Although prominent German Catholic women, such as Luise Rinser and Marianne Dirks, participated in the early birth control debate, they did so either as individuals or as members of male-dominated groups. Despite the topic's obvious relevance to women's lives, most mainstream Catholic women's groups did not take up the cause of birth control in the 1960s or early 1970s. The editors of *Frau und Mutter* made no reference to *Humanae Vitae* in the months immediately following its release. Moreover, at the meeting of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations in November 1968, opinions on the encyclical were so varied that the organization concluded that no statement in the name of its member organizations could be issued.¹³⁰ Catholic women were deeply divided on the question of artificial contraception.

In West Germany, the influence of religious and secular feminism on mainstream Catholic women's organizations developed at a much slower pace than was the case in the United States. In fact, prior to 1971, women did not hold a majority of the leadership positions in the kfd, the largest West German Catholic women's organization.¹³¹ Although a shift in emphasis could be detected by the mid-1970s in *Frau und Mutter*, the kfd did not adopt a new mission statement calling for the recognition of women's fundamental right to equal treatment in church and society until 1979.¹³²

The 1979 kfd mission statement did not have the universal support of its members. The national kfd leadership knew that deep divisions existed among German Catholic women: many rejected feminism and clung to traditional notions of Catholic femininity; others questioned or rejected the Church's traditional teachings on gender and sexuality. At the 1980 Catholic

Congress in Berlin, the kfd general secretary, Anneliese Lissner, described her role as one of guiding the organization toward a more progressive future, while “making sure that the steps are not too large for the traditionalists or too small for the feminists.”¹³³

The national kfd leadership did not have to wait long to discover just how difficult negotiating a middle way would be. On November 18, 1980, Barbara Engl, the designated BDKJ youth spokesperson, confronted Pope John Paul II during his Munich visit:

In your sermons, you have said many things that move us. Yet many youth in the Federal Republic find the Church difficult to understand. They have the impression that the Church anxiously tries to maintain existing relationships and emphasizes confessional differences, instead of seeking common ground. It reacts to issues of youth, friendship, sexuality, and partnership with prohibitions, and too often offers no response to young people’s search for understanding and dialogue. Many cannot understand why the Church holds so axiomatically to celibacy, given the clerical shortage. Currently there are insufficient youth pastoral care workers and many want to know if it might not be possible for more women to hold offices in the Church.¹³⁴

Engl’s statement sparked widespread controversy in the German Catholic Church, particularly in the kfd. When the national kfd leadership publicly expressed its support for Engl’s statement, most members reacted negatively. One kfd member wrote: “In fact, the Pope has addressed topics like premarital relations and birth control . . . and given clear answers! It is just that Barbara Engl and other youths prefer different answers. Christ’s representative on earth and the successor of Peter, however, has proclaimed the truth of Christ. He cannot say ‘yes’ to an immoral way of life. That would be against God’s divine order (= natural law).”¹³⁵ Entire local chapters also voiced their objections: “The St. Maria Magdalena Rheinbreitbach kfd chapter was outraged when it heard of your radio broadcast from the 14th of this month, declaring your support—hopefully incorrect—for Barbara Engl’s remarks during the papal mass in Munich; we expect an immediate retraction. Our sense of faith and of ethics was effectively destroyed when the kfd abandoned its previous positions on questions of partnership and sexuality as well as on clerical celibacy; we cannot work within a Catholic women’s association that thinks this way.”¹³⁶

Increasingly, the national kfd leadership found itself torn between two realities. On the one hand, young women were leaving the Church in alarm-

ing numbers because of its teachings on sexuality and femininity. A 1985 survey conducted by Renate Köcher of the Allensbach Institute for Public Opinion Research revealed that only 22 percent of Catholic women under the age of thirty identified themselves as faithful members of the Church, down from 50 percent in 1968. Only 38 percent believed that the Church could assist them in resolving moral questions.¹³⁷ On the other hand, those who remained active in the Church, particularly within Catholic women's organizations such as the kfd, were largely conservative in their orientation. Consequently, efforts by the kfd central office to stanch young women's exodus from the Church by incorporating into their mission statement a more liberal approach to questions of sexuality often alienated their most active members.

Yet despite the persistence of traditional beliefs within Catholic women's organizations, new ideas about sexuality and women's place in the Church were gaining favor among some German Catholic women. Press coverage of the 1982 Catholic Congress in Düsseldorf noted the growing dissonance between the hierarchy's perception of women's place in church and society and that of Catholic women. *Die Zeit* reported:

The gentlemen of the hierarchy probably see that the role of women has changed. Nevertheless, their daily official bulletins depict an image of woman as housewife and mother that is consistent with their fanciful opinions about marriage and family. For them *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* is no worn-out formulation. . . .

Many women, however, have begun to feel the wounds inflicted upon them by the Church. They applaud appreciatively the Dutch professor Catharina Halkes. . . . [M]any women dream of a Church in which the divorced are accepted; in which more female altar servers are allowed . . . a Church in which women can speak out without fear when they are beaten and maltreated; one in which the responsibility for sexual morality and family planning, and the associated feelings of guilt and conflicts of conscience, will no longer be the burden of women alone.¹³⁸

The old ideology of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* no longer rang true for many West German Catholic women. For these women, the Church's attitude toward artificial contraception was indicative of a larger problem—the Church's refusal to recognize women's equality.

In 1985–1986, the topic of artificial contraception suddenly reappeared in German headlines. Several articles noted that Cardinal Höffner was un-

derscoring the “almost dogmatic” character of *Humanae Vitae* and that he had described the pill as a form of “private abortion at the earliest possible point in time.”¹³⁹ In an interview with *Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt*, Höffner declared that the Königstein Declaration supported only natural family planning methods. Citing the conclusions of the Fifth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of the Bishops (1980) on “The Duties of the Christian Family in Today’s World” and the teachings of John Paul II, Cardinal Höffner associated the acceptance of artificial birth control with increased acceptance of other “manipulations” such as artificial fertilization, sterilization, and abortion.¹⁴⁰

Like John Paul II, Höffner was moving beyond Paul VI’s characterization of the use of artificial contraception as a violation of moral chastity, labeling it instead a violation of faith. For two decades, West German Catholics had believed that the German episcopate supported married couples’ right to use artificial contraception within marriage if good reasons existed for not having more children. Thus, Höffner’s statement shocked many German Catholics who had taken for granted that the Königstein Declaration shielded them from John Paul II’s growing insistence on *Humanae Vitae*’s infallibility.

The president of the Katholischer Deutscher Frauenbund (KDFB), Rachel Pechel, wrote Höffner, “We feel compelled to make you aware that a high percentage of Catholic women are uninterested in your definition of the Königstein Declaration and are apathetic toward it.” Pechel asserted that German Catholic women were “no longer willing to acquiesce to any restriction on their freedom to make decisions of conscience or to turn away from the Second Vatican Council.”¹⁴¹ Similarly, the kfd president wrote, “Precisely because we want to prevent the growing dissonance on issues of marriage and family between German Catholics, particularly women, and official Church representatives, we believe a general consultation is urgently needed on these questions.”¹⁴²

In response to the letters, the DBK agreed to a meeting with representatives of the two largest German Catholic women’s organizations. In July 1987, the first of a series of meetings took place in which Höffner’s remarks on birth control served as the entry point into a broader discussion about women’s place in the Church. The KDFB and kfd representatives stressed: “Patriarchal society has reached its end. There has to be a conversation in the Church about new forms of collaboration between men and women in the family, in society, and in the Church.”¹⁴³ Despite the DBK’s 1981 decla-

ration, *Zu Fragen der Stellung der Frau in Kirche und Gesellschaft*, German Catholic women believed that little had changed in practice. Catholic women had begun the difficult process of redefining their relationship with the Church.

. . .

The birth control debate in postwar West Germany began as a debate among experts about the new oral form of contraception. Politicians, doctors, university professors, and clergy members discussed the pill and by extension what constituted acceptable public sexual mores. As the new form of contraception gained in popularity, experts lost control of the debate. Despite the official rhetoric of sexual conservatism in 1950s Germany, West German attitudes toward family size and more generally toward sexuality were changing. The introduction of the pill accelerated this process, because the pill constituted a reliable and minimally invasive form of contraception, and it gave women control over their fertility. But West German acceptance of the pill was not accompanied by a parallel acceptance by the universal Catholic Church. When Paul VI reaffirmed the traditional ban on artificial contraception in 1968, many West Germans—non-Catholic and Catholic—reacted angrily. Mainstream Catholics rebelled. The Königstein Declaration, in which the DBK recognized the right of married couples to make informed decisions of conscience about birth control, mollified them to some extent. However, the declaration could not change the fact that, increasingly, official Catholic doctrine on gender and sexuality did not reflect the values of most Germans, including Catholics. This development had multiple consequences. First, it compromised the ability of Catholic officials in West Germany to influence government policy on questions of sexual mores; by the early 1970s, the Church found itself marginalized in policy discussions on sex education and abortion. Second, within the Catholic Church, it raised questions about the Church's unconditional rejection of abortion. Third, the Vatican position on artificial contraception left many German Catholics disillusioned. This disillusionment, in turn, took multiple forms. For some West German Catholics, it represented the last straw; they separated from the Church or simply distanced themselves from it. For others disillusionment led to increased engagement in the Church. As members of either alternative or traditional organizations, they advocated for change in official Church teachings on artificial contraception and more generally for a revision of the Church's negative assessment of sexuality. They associated this

negative assessment of sexuality with the persistence of a male-dominated celibate clergy and the lack of democracy in the Church.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the connection drawn between celibacy and a negative assessment of sexuality and contraception developed a new dimension, as mainstream Catholic women slowly internalized ideas promoted by religious and secular feminists. Increasingly, they perceived the Church's rejection of artificial contraception as symptomatic of the Church's low valuation of women. Slowly, mainstream Catholic women's organizations joined alternative women's groups in demanding that the Church acknowledge their worth as human beings, not just as wives and mothers. However, not all West German Catholic women welcomed this change; many remained loyal to the Vatican's position. Consequently, mainstream Catholic women's organizations, such as the kfd, found that they were torn between two realities. Young women were abandoning the Church because of its position on gender and sexuality. However, kfd efforts to prevent their departure by endorsing artificial contraception and championing more roles for women in Church governance alienated the organization's conservative base. Many conservative women left the kfd and joined small fundamentalist/evangelical groups. Fragmentation within mainstream organizations made it clear that the Church could no longer count on the unconditional support of women, but it also meant that women often worked at cross-purposes with one another in their efforts to renegotiate their traditional relationship with the Church. The interrelated debates on celibacy and artificial contraception produced a series of crises that continue to redefine modern piety. On the one hand, these crises accelerated the exodus from and the inner migration within the Church. On the other hand, they catalyzed an intense engagement with and defense of the Vatican's positions on sexuality by those Catholics who remained active in the Church.