

ASIAN
HORIZONS
Vol. 12, No. 2, June 2018
Pages: 315-330

SEX EDUCATION: AN ETHICAL VIEWPOINT

Ann Mary Madavanakkadu, CMC♦
DVK, Bengaluru

Abstract

The purpose of sex education is to help students arrive at the moral judgment that sex outside a committed love relationship is wrong because it violates the value of caring – caring for oneself, one's partner, the child that might result, and society as a whole. In this article, an attempt is made to help teenagers become aware of the advantages of avoiding premarital sexual activity, and to demonstrate to them that their sexuality has the power to create a new human life. Besides, this article explains how diseases like AIDS are transmitted, the risks involved in the use of condoms, and the advantages of monogamy and premarital abstinence, especially for the prevention of AIDS. Thus, this article invites them to have responsible sexual behaviour.

Keywords: AIDS, Committed Love Relationship, Monogamy, Moral Judgment, Premarital Abstinence, Premarital Sex, Responsible Sexual Behaviour, Sex Education, Teenager

1. Introduction

In all of value education, no topic stirs as much debate as sex education. For, "it is from sex that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological and spiritual levels, make that person a man or a woman, and thereby largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into society. Hence sexual matters, as is obvious to everyone, today

♦ **Ann Mary Madavanakkadu** is a religious sister in the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC). She completed her LTh in Pastoral Management at JDV, Pune and LTh in Moral Theology at Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bengaluru, where she continues as a doctoral student in Moral Theology. She has published a few articles. Email: sranmarycmc@gmail.com

constitute a theme frequently and openly dealt with in books, reviews, magazines and other means of social communication.”¹ However, *Amoris Laetitia* says, “It is not easy to approach the issue of sex education in an age when sexuality tends to be trivialized and impoverished. It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving.”² As we know, sex education includes the sensitive subjects such as morality of premarital sex, contraceptives, abortion, homosexuality, AIDS, etc. But in the midst of all these issues, there is a consensus that sexual behaviour is determined by values, not mere knowledge. Consequently sex education must educate young people about the moral dimensions of sexual conduct. Another consensus among experts in adolescent development and those who have witnessed the destructive effects of sex at an early age is that sex is not for kids, and abstaining from sexual relationships is in the best interests of teenagers themselves and society at large.³ The challenge now is to help young people in every way possible to make the moral decision not to get sexually involved. Therefore, it is important that beyond the mere physiological and anatomical facts, sex education can and should include such topics as ethical behaviour, total self-giving, moral decision-making, and social expectations.⁴ With these parameters, the Church is undoubtedly one of society’s primary shapers of sexual attitudes, and it is this approach toward sex education that this article adopts.

2. Meaning of Sex Education

Sex education doesn’t mean imparting a complete knowledge of anatomy and physiology of the human body. Rather true sex education consists in letting the children grasp, in the concrete experience of everyday life, the role and meaning of sexuality and love in the life of a couple and the society in which they live.⁵ In *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope John Paul II says that since sexuality is an

¹Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Persona Humana* (Declaration On Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics), 1975, 1. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19751229_persona-humana_en.html (Accessed on 04.10.2017)

²Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (2015), No. 280. *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*. https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amorislaetitia_en.pdf (Accessed on 14.05.2018).

³Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character: How our Schools can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, New York: Bantam Books, 1992, 348-349.

⁴Timothy Arthur Lines, “Sex Education and the Church,” *Review and Expositor* 91 (1994) 343-361, 343.

⁵Anthony Grugni, *Sex Education*, Mumbai: Better Yourself Books, 2011, 14.

enrichment of the whole person – body, emotions, and soul – and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love, sex education is the basic right and duty of parents, and it must always be carried out under their attentive guidance.⁶ Adding to it Pope Francis says, “sex education should provide information while keeping in mind that children and young people have not yet attained full maturity. The information has to come at a proper time and in a way suited to their age.”⁷ Also, during the process of sex education the children should be informed, motivated, and helped to develop healthy sexual practices and lifestyles. For, sex education is the process of acquiring information and forming attitudes and beliefs about sex, sexual identity, relationship, and intimacy.⁸ Sex education should supply information to the teenagers about the physiology of sex, pregnancy, birth control, venereal disease, and the like with the hope that with all of this and with practice in decision-making exercises, teens would make a responsible decision.

3. Goals of Sex Education

The Second Vatican Council spoke of the need for a positive and prudent sex education. Sex education should be imparted to children and adolescents as they grow older, with due weight being given to the advances in the psychological, pedagogical and didactic sciences.⁹ *Familiaris Consortio* advises that “in view of the close links between the sexual dimension of the person and his or her ethical values, education must bring the children to a knowledge of and respect for the moral norms as the necessary and highly valuable guarantee for responsible personal growth in human sexuality.”¹⁰ Therefore, adequate sex education of children holds many life-long benefits.¹¹ First of all quality sex education helps a child to develop a positive attitude towards his or her sexual nature, which in turn, contributes to the child’s total self-esteem and leads to more rewarding sexual

⁶John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 37. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html (Accessed on 20.05.2018)

⁷Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 281.

⁸R. Chitra, “Merits of Sex Education in Schools,” *Health Action* (September 2010) 34-37.

⁹Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis)*, 1, in *The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, ed. Mumbai: St Pauls, 2010.

¹⁰John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 37.

¹¹Kirkendall Lester, *Sex Education (SIECUS Study Guide No. 1)*, New York: Sex Information and Education Council of the United States, 1965.

relationships.¹² The research shows that many sexual problems such as sexual diseases and unwanted pregnancies can be prevented through factual knowledge and positive attitudes.¹³

Sex education also helps to develop the skills needed for effective communication of sexual ideas and feelings. When sex education has been an ongoing process from an early age, the communication of sexual information seems no different from any other form of communication. Effective sex education also includes training in decision-making skills. Knowledge and attitudes are not enough, underlying values need to be explored, and ways of clarifying personal values are to be explained.¹⁴ It is important to note that sexuality characterises man and woman not only on the physical level, but also on the psychological and spiritual, making its mark on each of their expressions.¹⁵ We need to link the physical, psychological and spiritual aspects when we speak of sex education of youth or children. They should understand the relationships between people, and that they should value themselves and respect others as well. In other words, sexuality is an integral part of the whole being, and this is the essence of sex education.

4. Content of Sex Education

Vatican Council II in the *Declaration on Christian Education* presents the perspective in which sex education must be set, affirming the right of young people to receive an education adequate to their personal requirements. The Council states: "With the help of advances in psychology and in the art and science of teaching, children and young people should be assisted in the harmonious development of their physical, moral, and intellectual endowments."¹⁶ The document, *Educational Guidance in Human Love* begins by presenting an overall vision of the mystery of human sexuality.¹⁷ It says, "Sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, one of its modes of being, of manifestation, of communicating with others, of feeling, of expressing and of living human love. Therefore it is an

¹²Spanier Graham, "Sources of Sex Information and Premarital Sexual Behaviour," *Journal of Sex Research* 2 (1977) 73-88.

¹³Graham, "Sources of Sex Information and Premarital Sexual Behaviour," 76.

¹⁴Lawrence Pinto, "Sex Education of Youth," *Kristu Jyoti* 9, 1 (1993) 86-87.

¹⁵Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love*, 1983,5.http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19831101_sexual-education_en.html (Accessed on 06.06.2018)

¹⁶Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Christian Education*, 1

¹⁷Shaji George Kochuthara, *The Concept of Sexual Pleasure in the Catholic Moral Tradition*, Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2017, 332.

integral part of the development of the personality and of its educative process.”¹⁸ Hence, any type of sex education should adopt the following four essential steps, namely, self-evaluation of one’s own attitude and beliefs; unlearning of the fragments of myths and misinterpretations; relearning; and practice.

According to Ted Robert, a sex addiction therapist, there are astonishing differences between men and women. We have different brains, bodies, hormone surges, backgrounds, and perspectives. We can draw only one conclusion from all these incredible dissimilarities: the frustrations and conflicts that seem to be so much a part of married life at times are all normal responses to God’s divine design.¹⁹ The differences between the two sexes have such deep roots in the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of our lives that the only way we can explain them is his creative power.

5. Role of Parents in Sex Education

The unique role of the family in transmitting values is very important.²⁰ Giving children a sound, factual, and attitudinal basis for their sexual decisions is among the most important aspects of parenting.²¹ No matter where and who the child gets information from, the parents are his or her best resource, simply because he or she gets life-long lessons on what is right and wrong from his or her parents. Studies have shown that if parents are involved in their children’s sexuality education, the chances of risky and irresponsible sexual behaviour decrease.²²

It is in an atmosphere of love the true origin of life is revealed. If father and mother are always trying to make their love grow and reach full maturity, if children see their parents continuously reaching out to one another and to the children as well, discussions concerning birth and fertilization will take place in a simple and warm way and seem like a logical consequence of love. When that kind of relationship exists between parents and children, sex education will have a proper foundation. In fact, the secret of sex

¹⁸Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love*, 1983, 4.

¹⁹Ted Roberts & Diane Roberts, *Sexy Christians: The Purpose, Power, and Passion of Biblical Intimacy*, Michigan: Baker Books, 2010, 51.

²⁰E. Lopez Azpitarte, “Sex Education in a Capitalist Society,” *Theology Digest* 31, 1 (1984) 17-21, 21.

²¹Pinto, “Sex Education of Youth,” 87.

²² Parent-booklet. <https://www.moe.gov.sg/docs/default-source/document/education/programmes/social-emotional-learning/sexuality-education/files/parent-booklet.pdf> (Accessed on 25.05.2016).

education consists in the fundamental principle that nothing must be done out of selfishness, and true satisfaction is found only in the gift of self. *Familiaris Consortio* also speaks in the same line that the family is the first and fundamental school of social living. Family as a community of love finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow. The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the self-giving that must be practiced in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family.²³ The communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulty are the most concrete and effective training for the active, responsible, and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society.

If the children receive this kind of education, there is some guarantee that they will respect the other, marry not in order to have someone to lean on or to take advantage of, but in order to have someone to sustain and to love sincerely. Hence, sexuality can be understood as energy, a dynamic force, a drive toward self-fulfilment that everyone feels. Since sexuality reaches maturity when it becomes a gift of oneself to another, then a celibate who loves everyone he or she meets, obviously, does not remain incomplete and unfulfilled but instead enriches all humanity.²⁴

Teens are more emotionally healthy if they have a strong sense of closeness, feel cared for, and feel satisfied with the warmth of their relationship with their parents. Parents need to connect, not merely be present. Teenagers' sense of connectedness to parents and family, parental presence in the home, shared activities, and positive parental expectations for their teenagers contribute to better emotional health. Lack of connectedness to parents and family, and/or the presence of cigarette, alcohol, and drugs in the home are all associated with facets of poor emotional health and behaviour.²⁵ When parents talk openly with their children about sex, children's sexual attitudes and values are more likely to reflect the values of their parents.²⁶ It is important to note that if kids pick up the wrong attitudes toward sex early, it makes it much harder for the school to teach positive attitudes and sexual restraint later. So parents are the children's most important sex

²³John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 37.

²⁴Mariele Quartana, *The Origins of Life: Sex Education in the Family*, New York: New City Press, 1983, 12-13.

²⁵Beulah Wood, *Families in the Plan of God: A Theology for South Asia*, Bangalore: SAIACS Press, 2011, 153.

²⁶Vincent Bozzi, "Home Sex Education," *Psychology Today* (1987) 14.

educators, the chief influence on their sexual attitudes and conscience. Hence, it is necessary to encourage parents to communicate with their children about sex openly, often, and early. Parents need to know that young people who have positive attitudes toward themselves are less likely to get sexually involved. That means helping children, at home as well as at school, to build a positive self-image.

Teenagers will have self-respect if they know that their parents treat them as responsible people. They can only have self-esteem if their parents build it in them, and that means acknowledging their achievements small or great and teaching them to be responsible. Telling a child to be responsible does not work. Letting him or her be responsible may work. It is good to allow the teenagers to find something they are competent in and to do that for the benefit of the family even if they make mistakes in their decisions, and to teach them lessons from their mistakes.²⁷

Adolescents need to become independent. That is their task. Many will have to demand it if parents do not give it. Parents need to see their teen as a fellow human, nearly adult, and accept this. Parents naturally want to control their children but they must resist the urge. They cannot control anyway, because their teens are not with them all the time. But they can offer choices to their teens. For example, on the issue of returning home late at night, they can say, "You have a choice. You can go, if you come home by 10 pm, or if I pick you up at 9.45 pm. Which do you prefer?" This gives teenagers chance to make their own decisions, but within boundaries acceptable to their parents.

6. Current Patterns of Sexual Activity of Youth

The Population Council surveyed more than 50,000 young people in India on such topics as time use, sexuality and childbearing, and civic engagement. It helped shed light on the realities of India's youth and presented recommendations for the implementation of appropriate youth-targeted programs and policies. The study was the first to reveal the extent of premarital sex among India's youth at the sub-national level and countered the common misconception that premarital sex in the country is rare. 15% of unmarried young men and 4% of unmarried young women reported engaging in sexual relations, mostly with a romantic partner. Most of these relations are unprotected, putting young people at risk of infection and unintended pregnancy.²⁸

²⁷Wood, *Families in the Plan of God: A Theology for South Asia*, 155.

²⁸Population Council, *Youth in India: Situation and Needs Study* - from 2014-2010. <http://www.popcouncil.org/research/youth-in-india-situation-and-needs-study> (Accessed on 28.05.2018).

There is a clear and present need to help young people understand the moral issues involved in sex and to develop sexual self-control. For, the facts and numbers may not give the whole story of the youthful sexual activity, but when we talk to teachers and others who are close to children and adolescents, we hear sad stories testifying to the changes that have taken place in the sexual attitudes and behaviour of the young. A ninth-grade teacher in Alberta, Canada, told of a 14-year-old boy in her class who watched pornographic movies at home with his father. "He is going to see it later anyway," was the father's comment. After a month of watching such movies, this boy sexually abused his cousin, a 3 year-old girl.²⁹ A nurse who does substitute teaching in health education classes told of high school students who, before the start of one class, talked and joked openly about their sexual activities, who was doing what with whom, what went on the night before, and so on. She was speechless. When she asked them if they did not ever worry about AIDS, they just laughed. Not all children and teenagers fit the disturbing patterns described in these stories. However, virtually almost all young people have been affected, in some way, by the eroticized environment that is the legacy of the sexual revolution.

We are in a culture where a generation of children is growing up, in which large numbers of adults, pre-occupied by sex themselves, no longer try to protect children from premature exposure to sex or even from exposure to pornographic and perverted forms of sexuality. Moreover, to a certain extent, television, internet, movies, and magazines, etc. send the message that sex is the central and indispensable source of human happiness and that sex between uncommitted persons is standard human behaviour.³⁰ In another word we can say that it is a kind of psychological sexual abuse of children. From very early ages, children are immersed in a culture that engulfs them with sexual information and images they are not developmentally ready to evaluate, over stimulates them sexually, divorces sex from moral values, and consequently reduces their chances of growing up sexually in a healthy, moral way.

7. Teen Pregnancy

It is commonly said that teen sexual activity and teen pregnancy are due to the sexual abuse of children, lack of family structure, negative influence of the mass media, poor role-modelling by adults, and social class-related values that encourage teen sexual activity.³¹

²⁹Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 350-351.

³⁰Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 351.

³¹Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 352.

These factors suggest that if schools are to succeed in teaching sexual responsibility, they will need a broad-scale approach plus all the help they can get from families, religious institutions, and other community groups that work with young people. A prominent sex educator, in her view explains why schools could not present a moral perspective on sex. In her opinion, the matter of sexual behaviour is so intimate and personal as one's own name and address. No textbook or classroom teacher can teach it.³² Some may say that, since sexual behaviour is an intimate or personal decision, there can be no objective, rational ethics to guide it. That logic can break down through a closer examination. For all actions, however personal, are subject to moral judgement.

8. Marriage and Sexuality

Both the Old Testament and New Testament have positive and pessimistic attitudes towards human sexuality.³³ But it seems that, instead of relying more on divinely inspired scriptures, some of the early Christian writers, in their attempt to give a philosophical foundation to Christian ethics, depended to a certain extent on dualistic philosophical tradition that equated the body with evil and the spirit with good. Accordingly, at least indirectly the prevailing Gnostic attitudes towards human sexuality influenced the Christian leaders of that era to view the spiritual soul as opposed to the material body, requiring submission to the spiritual soul. Similarly, Stoicism, the pagan philosophy that encouraged discipline over the passions, which included sexual passions, became very accessible for the Fathers in responding to certain issues.³⁴ Consequently, they treated human sexuality as something evil, marriage as something to be tolerated, and finally, sexual pleasure as something justifiable only if procreation were intended by married spouses. According to St Augustine, procreation in marriage is the only reason for justifying sexual intercourse.³⁵ Here the importance of the interpersonal relationship and individuals are ignored.

When we look into the magisterial teachings, *Casti Connubii*, in 1930 also maintained the idea that procreation was the primary

³²Susan Cronenwett, "Response to Symposium on Sex and Children and Adolescents," in *Character Policy: An Emerging Issue*, E.A. Wynne, ed., Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1982, 101.

³³Gen 1 and 2; Song of Songs 7:7-13; Eph 5:25-32; etc.

³⁴Vimal Tirimanna, *Vatican II and Official Catholic Moral Teachings*, Bengaluru: Dharmaram Publications, 2015, 11-12.

³⁵Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed., *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopaedia*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, 238.

purpose of sex. But a new meaning in the purpose of marriage took place in Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* in 1965. It says, "Marriage to be sure is not instituted solely for procreation; rather, its very nature as an unbreakable compact between persons, and the welfare of the children, both demand that the mutual love of the spouses be embodied in a rightly ordered manner, that it grows and ripens."³⁶ In the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968 Pope Paul VI exhorts,

The fundamental nature of the marriage act, while uniting husband and wife in the closest intimacy, also renders them capable of generating new life – and this as a result of laws written into the actual nature of man and of woman. And if each of these essential qualities, the unitive and the procreative, is preserved, the use of marriage fully retains its sense of true mutual love and its ordination to the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man/woman is called.³⁷

Pope John Paul II puts it very clearly saying that marital love has its origin in God, who created man and woman through love and for love. Hence "love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being."³⁸ These documents highlight love and procreation equally as the purpose of marriage instead of procreation alone. The present position of the Catholic Church is that both purposes – love and procreation – must be present in each and every act. It teaches that every act must be part of a permanently committed heterosexual love relationship and every single act must be open to procreation.³⁹ So any sexual act, which does not fulfil these purposes are morally wrong. Hence children should be taught all these in a proper way.

9. The Contraception Issue

There is a traditional fear that when human sexuality is not lived within a whole project of fecundity, it is betrayed in its very nature and that sex only for mutual pleasure and utility serves to nourish only mutual narcissism.⁴⁰ It is also opined that those who use contraceptives for the sake of mere sexual pleasure do not speak the true, realistic language of maturity and responsibility. They are

³⁶Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 50 in *The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, ed. Mumbai: St Pauls, 2010.

³⁷Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html (Accessed on 14.05.2018)

³⁸John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 11.

³⁹James Punnalackal, "The Changing Nature of Relationship in Marriage and Sexuality: The Need for an Integral Understanding of Catholic Conjugal Morality," *New Horizons in Christian Ethics: Reflections from India*, Scaria Kanniyakonil, ed., Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 2014, 400-401.

⁴⁰Shaji George Kochuthara, *The Concept of Sexual Pleasure in the Catholic Moral Tradition*, Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2007, 407.

saying to each other: “these sexual games have nothing to do with the real persons we are, with our social involvements, with our future. They are merely a diversion. They are a way to forget real life.”⁴¹ Theologians affirm that conjugal sexual intimacy “for pleasure alone” at the rejection of other values is not accepted.⁴² Though, the Christian tradition, especially the Augustinian tradition has seen sexuality as dangerous and uncontrollable, today sexuality is seen as purely human and not as a force or as an animal instinct, under the dominion of biological forces alone. However, it is made clear that, sexuality, if not integrated, can become destructive.⁴³

Artificial contraception has been seen and accepted as an effective way of achieving certain goals and at the same time avoiding certain problems. However, the effectiveness of some of these means has been exaggerated, while some negative side effects have been played down or ignored. For instance, it is clear that, however effective the pill is in avoiding pregnancy, its widespread use is also an open invitation to the venereal disease epidemic which people have experienced in recent years.⁴⁴ Some of these means do not prevent pregnancy, but rather bring one to an early halt through an unnoticed abortion. In the case of using condom, a condom of high quality is said to be 95 per cent effective when used properly. Seminal fluid can easily escape, however, when carelessly used, making the condom’s true effectiveness about 80 per cent.⁴⁵ Whatever protection the condom offers in this regard, the pill obviously does not provide.⁴⁶ At the same time, for example, the New York State Board of Regents AIDS education proved the use of condoms as extremely high-risk behaviour. The view that condoms should or can be used as a way to reduce the transmission of AIDS should not be supported.⁴⁷ For, in a study conducted by the University of Miami Medical School, seventeen per cent of wives of AIDS-infected husbands contracted

⁴¹A. Guindon, *The Sexual Language*, Ottawa: The University of Ottawa Press, 1976, 174. As quoted in Shaji George Kuchuthara, *The Concept of Sexual Pleasure in the Catholic Moral Tradition*, 407.

⁴²Shaji George Kochuthara, “Conjugal Sexual Pleasure: Contemporary Theological Perspectives,” *Ephrem’s Theological Journal* 13. 1 (2009) 44-71, 68.

⁴³ Kochuthara, “Conjugal Sexual Pleasure: Contemporary Theological Perspectives,” 69.

⁴⁴Donald G. McCarthy & Edward J. Bayer, ed., *Handbook on Critical Sexual Issues*, Garden City, New York: Image Books, a Division of Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1984, 113.

⁴⁵McCarthy & Bayer, ed., *Handbook on Critical Sexual Issues*, 114.

⁴⁶McCarthy & Bayer, ed., *Handbook on Critical Sexual Issues*, 113.

⁴⁷*Health: AIDS Instructional Guide, Grades K-12*, Albany, New York: The State Education Department, 1987, 162.

AIDS themselves within eighteen months, despite their husbands' use of condoms.⁴⁸ And a government report warns that condoms have higher-than-average failure rates among homosexuals. Promoting reliance on condoms is bad AIDS education because, in the words of Theresa Crenshaw, the Presidential AIDS Commission member, "Putting a mere balloon between a healthy body and a deadly disease is not safe."⁴⁹ In a 1992 analysis of 11 studies by the University of Texas Medical Branch, the average condom failure rate for preventing AIDS was 31 per cent.⁵⁰ As a result, there remain many questions about the effects artificial contraception has had and is likely to have on the physical health and the personal attitude of the people. Those who oppose artificial contraception and those who favour it would be wise to seek more and more insight into what artificial contraception is in fact bringing about in the lives of men and women today. With regard to the moral education and public policy, abstinence is the only 100 per cent effective way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Besides, we cannot conclude that contraceptives make sex emotionally safe. Moreover, condoms provide no protection whatsoever against all the emotional hurts that can come from premature, uncommitted sex.

10. Emotional Risk of Uncommitted Sex

Dick Purnell, a counsellor, psychologist, and lecturer heard of the guilt, emptiness, and regret people experience after uncommitted sex. In his opinion, adolescent girls need to know the sharp regret that so many young girls feel after getting sexually involved. He gives the example of a student who shares her feelings, "I get upset when I see my friends losing their virginity to some guy they've just met. Later, after the guy's dumped them, they come to me and say, I wish I hadn't done it."⁵¹ Dick Purnell points out the reason behind this kind of feelings: When they share their body with someone they are giving part of themselves. When they leave the life of others, something of his/her goes with them. They will never get it back. Kevin Leman, a clinical psychologist describes the sexual flashbacks that trouble a number of married women he has counselled. When they make love with their husbands, they suffer sometimes 10 to 15 years into the marriage involuntary mental images of premarital sex

⁴⁸ *AIDS and the Education of Our Children: A Guide for Parents and Teachers*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1987.

⁴⁹ Theresa Crenshaw, "Condom Advertising," Testimony before House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, 1987.

⁵⁰ *CBS Evening News Report*, May 1993, cited in Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 363.

⁵¹ W.J. Bennet, "Sex and the Education of Our Children," 124.

with other partners. Men are also vulnerable to these disruptive flashbacks.⁵²

It is only within the committed relationship in marriage that sex is most likely to be loving, the dangers of disease and hurt are minimized, and a family is available for raising a child if pregnancy should result from the sexual union. One speaker said to a class of high school juniors when a student asked the question about his view on premarital sex:

When you are married, sexual union is part of the total commitment you've made to each other. Your sexual intimacy expresses your complete commitment, your complete giving of self. When you aren't married, sexual intercourse is different. Not being committed to each other changes the meaning of the sexual act. Then it's not part of the complete giving of yourself; you're holding back. Even if you're engaged, you can always get disengaged. You're keeping your options open. Totally giving love means this: you join your bodies when you join your lives. Really join them. From this viewpoint, sex before marriage is wrong because it separates sexual love from the committed love relationship that it's meant to express.⁵³

But today many people who favour voluntary premarital sexual intercourse think that it is "all right" or acceptable in certain circumstances, for example, if the individuals "love" each other. The main force driving the young people to premarital sex is the view that sex is only natural. In that case, people don't see the need to hold out until they are married. A recent popular song has the enchanting words, "It can't be wrong when it feels so right." One of the reasons for having sex most overlooked is that of pressure. The problem is that some teens find themselves not performing up to everyone else's standards and this reflects on them – they feel like they're not capable of doing a certain thing. As this vicious cycle progresses, the one thing a teen can do is to have sex, whether it be to release tension or to have a sense of doing something right or succeeding at something. Again the most common reason for sex before marriage is the overwhelming need to be close to another human being, to make emotional contact, to gain a sense of self-worth, to keep from being lonely and to feel cared for.⁵⁴ However, to approach sex as a mere instinct like hunger and thirst destroys the possibility of the great and deep experience of the bodily union as the fulfilment of an ultimate spousal love and a full self-donation.⁵⁵

⁵²See Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 366.

⁵³Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 361.

⁵⁴Paul Flaman, *Premarital Sex and Love: In the Light of Human Experience and Following Jesus*, Edmonton, Canada: St. Joseph's College, 1999, 2.

⁵⁵Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Man and Woman*, Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966, 23; Ronald Lawler, Joseph Boyle and William May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics*, Huntington, Illinois: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1985, 184.

With regard to whether or not premarital sexual relations are 'natural' or not, we should consider not only human physical capacities such as to have genital sexual relations, but also the human capacity to be aware of and respond to morally relevant personal goods or values. Morally relevant goods that pertain to human sexuality include the dignity of persons, justice, friendship, self-giving love, truth, fidelity, marriage, the sacredness of human life, human health, procreation, responsible parenthood, and God. As human beings all are called to live as responsible moral agents, to respect and promote such goods, according to the requirements of a properly ordered love.⁵⁶

11. Pro-Abstinence Approach

A pro-abstinence approach to sex education makes good ethical sense from the standpoint of both moral education and public policy. For, abstinence is the only hundred percentage effective way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. Abstinence is also the best protection against the emotional hurts – feelings of loss, guilt, betrayal, and being used – that very often follow sex outside a committed relationship. Abstinence is consistent with a long-term goal of character development and self-control.⁵⁷ Pope Francis says, “sex education should also include respect and appreciation for differences, as a way of helping the young to overcome their self-absorption and to be open and accepting of others.”⁵⁸ Teen sexual activity is often part of a larger pattern of self-indulgence that can carry over into adulthood. Hence, the adolescents need to acquire the habit of self-control in order to say no to premarital sexual opportunities so as to draw self-control when faced with extramarital temptations. Thereby, marital infidelity occurs very often.

The pro-abstinence approach recognizes that sex is powerful and attempts to teach that truth to young people. Sex can create a kind of illusion of intimacy with a person whom he/she doesn't really know. Sexual attraction can inspire and uplift and be part of a beautiful love; but uncontrolled it can lead to broken hearts, exploitation, promiscuity, rape, prostitution, pornography, and the sexual abuse of children. Helping teens avoid premature sex also supports families in their values and hopes for their children. It is true that many parents fail to teach their children sexual morality, and many others do harm by exposing their children to unwholesome sexual influence. Finally,

⁵⁶Flaman, *Premarital Sex and Love*, 10-11.

⁵⁷Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 354-355.

⁵⁸Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 285.

a definite commitment to the value of abstinence for teenagers gives sex education the clear ethical viewpoint needed to engage, and positively influence, students' sexual moral values.⁵⁹ Adolescents tell that it is their internally held values that keep them away from sexual involvement. Even peer pressure is not as powerful as these internalized beliefs and values.

12. Teen Aid in Sex Education

A programme was conducted focusing explicitly on sexuality using a popular pro-abstinence curriculum known as Teen Aid.⁶⁰ Through discussions and videos they came up with certain messages to the young people. They propose that the only real, safe sex is having sex only with one's marriage partner who is having sex only with him/her; abstinence offers freedom from guilt, doubt, and worry; sexually transmitted disease; pregnancy; the trauma of abortion; loss of reputation; and pressure to marry early. Abstinence offers freedom to become more creative in sharing feelings; to develop skills and abilities; to develop healthy self-appreciation; to achieve financial stability before having a family; and to develop greater trust in marriage.⁶¹ Also after having been sexually active, it is possible to regain the advantages of abstinence by deciding to change.

Kathleen Sullivan, the project director on sex education,⁶² rejects the theory that "hormones are destiny" when it comes to sex. She says, "Nobody has ever died from not having sex, it's the one appetite that's not necessary to fulfil."⁶³ Hence, sex education needs to encourage students to choose chastity as a positive life-style, one that gives them the freedom to grow up without the pressure of sex. The teenagers may resist the idea of saving sex for marriage or even forgoing sexual activity in their present relationships. However, there will be positive and encouraging attitudes toward sexual behaviour,

⁵⁹William J. Bennett, "Sex and the Education of our Children," *America* (1987) 120-124, 122.

⁶⁰The component of the San Marcos program that focused explicitly on sexuality used a popular pro-abstinence curriculum known as Teen-Aid. Teen-Aid offers six week course on Sexuality, Commitment, and Family to young people. Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 357.

⁶¹"Will 'Safe Sex' Education Effectively Combat AIDS?," a position paper prepared by the staff of the U. S. Department of Education, Washington, DC, 1987.

⁶²Project Respect, with federal grant support, has developed a pro-abstinence curriculum which was being used in six midwestern states. Kathleen Sullivan was the director of that project. This project was conducted in one of the midwestern states, Kansas. Lickona, *Educating for Character*, 356.

⁶³Sarah Glazer, "Sex Education: How Well Does it Work?," *Editorial Research Reports* (1989) 338-350.

including the ability to control sexual desire. Once they are given the sex education many of them will agree with the statement “sexual feelings are always controllable.” If they are not informed properly they will never understand how sex can cause problems and how this can affect their whole life.

Conclusion

The most important goal of sex education is to help young people learn to act as they should with control over their desire, respect for self, respect for others, and a view to the future in their sexual lives as in all other areas of their lives. Parents and teachers of the young must endeavour to lead their children and their pupils, by way of a complete education, to the psychological, emotional and moral maturity befitting their age. Therefore, they will prudently give them information suited to their age; and they will persistently form their wills in accordance with Christian morals, not only by advice but above all by the example of their own lives, relying on God’s help, which they will obtain in prayer. The Pontifical Council for the Family exhorts that the parents should be capable of giving their children, when necessary, a positive and serene explanation of the solid points of Christian morality such as the indissolubility of marriage and the relationship between love and procreation, as well as the immorality of premarital relations, abortion, contraception and masturbation. It is also good to recall that “the two dimensions of conjugal union, the unitive and the procreative, cannot be artificially separated without damaging the deepest truth of the conjugal act itself.”⁶⁴ Thereby they will protect the young from the many dangers of which they are quite unaware.⁶⁵ This in turn will help them to resist the temptations of premature sex just as they say no to drugs and other self-damaging activities, and will protect them against teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. In such a manner the children will be able to develop the kind of values and character that will someday serve them well as marriage partners, parents of their own children, and citizens of society.

⁶⁴The Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, Guidelines for Education within the Family*, 102, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_08121995_human-sexuality_en.html (Accessed on 11.01.2019).

⁶⁵Sacred Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith, *Persona Humana*, 8.