

Summary of the Moral Seminar

THE session concerned itself with two problems in human fertility—seminal tests and artificial insemination. As an introduction to the first of these questions a list was compiled of all the methods of semen collection found mentioned in current literature, both medical and theological. The medical value of each of these was then examined. It was pointed out here that despite the adverse criticism of some doctors, there are others who find that satisfactory specimens are obtainable through the use of the method of testicular puncture. In fact, it became clear in the ensuing discussion that doctors often are expressing merely their own personal likes and dislikes in the verdicts they render on the value of the various methods.

Each one of the procedures was next subjected to an evaluation from the moral point of view. Considerable attention was given to the one in which a perforated condom is employed. Though strong objections were raised against its liceity, particularly from the side of the agent's intention, the sentiment of the body in the end was to label the opinion in favor of its liceity as probable, *saltem extrinsece*.

The following outline was agreed upon as summing up the moral side of the matter. Objectionable methods—masturbation, interrupted intercourse, condomistic intercourse, use of a vaginal sheath or of a contraceptive pessary. Licit to a greater or lesser degree—puncture of testicle, rectal massage, post-coital aspiration of vagina, use of a tasette, perforated condom, cloth condom, use of semen accidentally deposited outside of the vagina, as well as of that adhering to penis after intercourse, use of the emission produced during an involuntary pollution, also of the semen found in the male urethra after normal coitus, and lastly the use of a cervical spoon. It was agreed that the last named method is the best, in fact that it solves the test problem for those men who are married.

In discussing the morality of artificial insemination we began again with a listing of the various methods. Coming to the question of how to evaluate each of these morally, the idea was proposed that

hereafter we can abandon the use of the terms artificial insemination in the wide sense and insemination *improprie dicta*. Instead we can refer to all forms of lawful procedure in this context as assisted insemination. This means the use of methods intended simply either to facilitate the natural act or to enable the natural act, effected in a normal manner, to attain its end. This allows us to assert without further qualification that artificial insemination is condemned.

The main point in the recent papal pronouncement on the subject was stressed—that artificial insemination is wrong even when the active element is obtained in a lawful manner. It was agreed that the same pontifical statement makes untenable the view that artificial insemination is lawful when the semen is obtained by puncturing the testicle.

The following summarizes our attitude on the various procedures that might be employed. On the condemned list—masturbation, puncture of testicle, rectal massage, interrupted intercourse, condomistic intercourse, vaginal sheath, nocturnal pollution. Agreed upon as lawful—aspiration of vagina, using instrument to push semen along the vagina, cervical spoon, hyaluronidase, injections to stiffen penis or to prevent *ejaculatio praecox*, use of an instrument to enlarge vagina or to hold uterus in its proper place. Disputed—perforated condom, cloth condom, and injection of semen deposited as *os vaginae*. We could not arrive at any clear understanding of the practical purpose behind a doctor's possible recommendation of a contraceptive pessary, a method found on our preliminary list. Another, *rapport fractionné*, elicited a great deal of comment. Two members were in favor of its liceity, five were opposed, and the remainder were undecided.

The last point for discussion concerned the precise sin involved in condemned forms of artificial insemination. It was found that this phase of the question has not as yet received the attention it deserves. Is such behavior a violation of purity, of commutative justice, of legal justice, etc.? No definite answers were reached on this point.

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