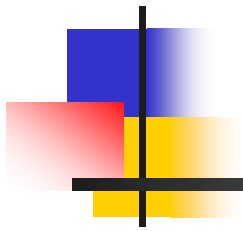


Suffer the Little Children:

The Contraceptive Revolution,
Child Well-being, and Poverty

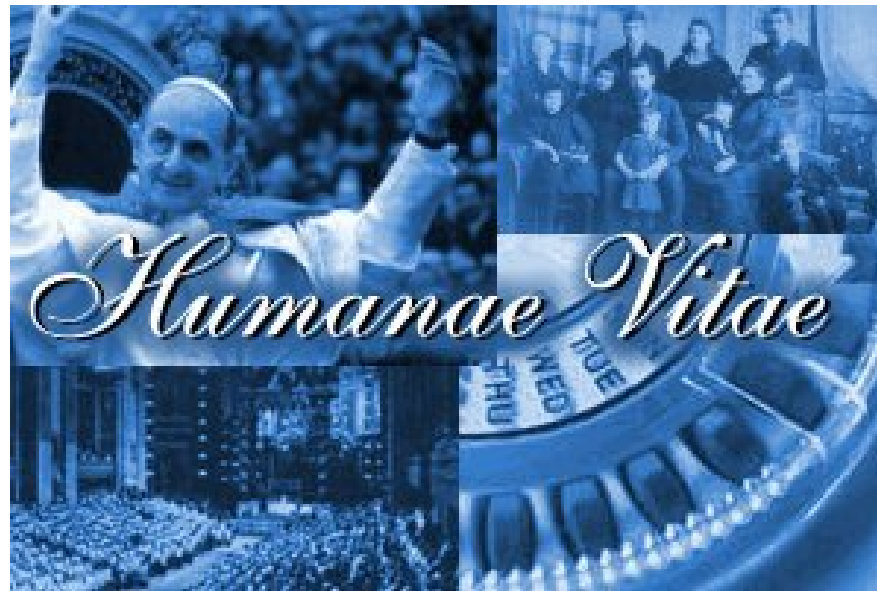


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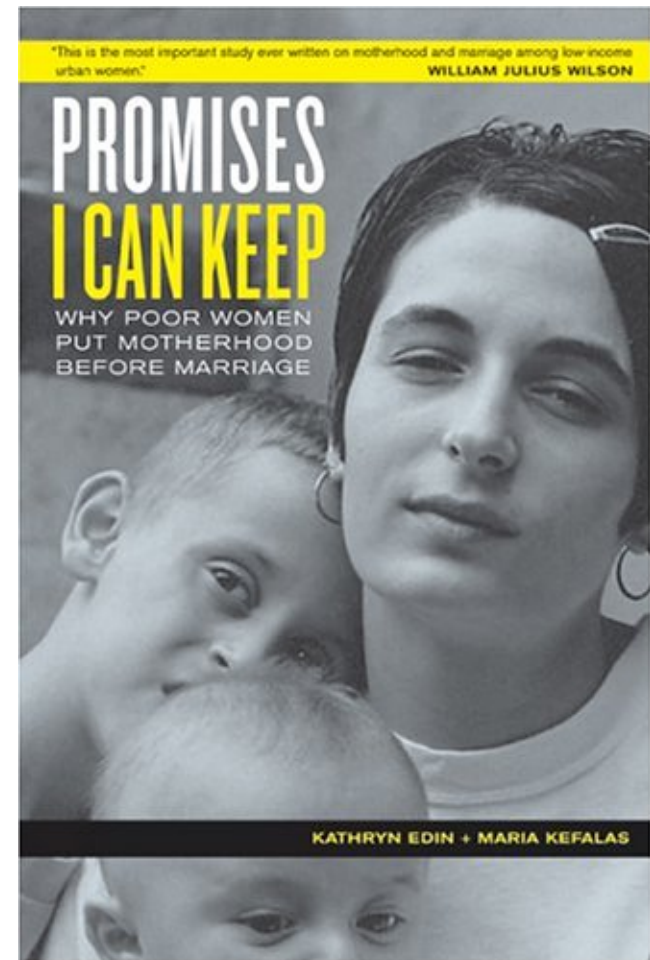
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Humanae Vitae's Reception

- In 1968, Pope Paul VI released *Humanae Vitae* to widespread shock and outright rejection



Accommodationist Error





The Retreat from Marriage

- Marriage has weakened in the U.S. since the 1960s
 - 1960 to 2000:
 - Illegitimacy rate rose from 5 to 33%
 - Divorce rate rose from 20 to 45%
 - Children now more likely to live outside intact married family
 - 1960: 80% of children spent entire childhood with both parents
 - Now: Only 50% of children will spend entire childhood with both parents



Sources of Family Change

- Princeton sociologist Sara McLanahan:
 - Declining real wages of men
 - Poor and minority men hit particularly hard, less “marriageable”
 - Means-tested public policies
 - Penalize marriage among the poor (EITC, Medicaid)
 - Feminism/Changing Status of Women
 - Women less dependent on marriage and more likely to seek equal relationships
 - Contraception-Abortion-Sexual Revolution
 - How and why did the sexual revolution weaken marriage, particularly among minorities and the poor?



Social Science on Divorce

- Robert Michael at Chicago
 - Why did divorce rate more than double between 1960 and 1980?
 - 50% of divorce surge can be attributed to consequences of the “contraceptive revolution”
 - Married women could focus more on higher education and careers
 - Less dependent on husband & more likely to seek equal marriages
 - Both spouses more likely to see marriage as oriented to their emotional-financial needs
 - Less focused on the classical function of marriage: to provide an environment where a child has the material, emotional, and social support of the two parents who conceived her
 - More likely to set high expectations for marital happiness



Social Science on Nonmarital Childbearing

- George Akerlof at Berkeley
 - Why did nonmarital childbearing surge after the introduction of the Pill and abortion?
 - 3% in 1965 for whites; 18% in 1990
 - 24% in 1965 for blacks; 64% in 1990



The Contraceptive Shock

- Contraception and abortion constituted a “technology shock” to relationship market that
 - Immiserated traditional/pro-natalist women
 - Gave men freedom to walk away from a pregnant girlfriend
 - Reduced the social imperative to marry in the wake of a pregnancy
 - “the norm of premarital sexual abstinence all but vanished in the wake of the technology shock”



Marriage on the Wane

- Rise in nonmarital childbearing →
- Rise in feminization of poverty
 - “Just at the time, about 1970, that the permanent cure to poverty seemed to be on the horizon and just at the time that women had obtained the tools to control the number and the timing of their children, single motherhood and the feminization of poverty began their long and steady rise.”



Uncivilized Men

- Decline in marriage for young men
 - 1968: 66% of men ages 25 to 34 married
 - 1993: 49% of men ages 25 to 34 married
- Result: young men, especially poor men, were not domesticated by marriage
 - Increases in substance abuse, robbery, assault, and tomcatting



Retreat from Marriage

Hit Poor & Minorities Hardest

- Nonmarital childbearing in 2002:
 - 68% of black children born out of wedlock
 - 44% of Latino children born out of wedlock
 - 29% of white children born out of wedlock
- Percentage of mothers currently unmarried (either due to divorce or a nonmarital birth)
 - 5% of college-educated mothers unmarried
 - 25% of mothers without a high school degree unmarried



Why did the Retreat Hit Minorities & the Poor Harder?

- Poor and working-class Americans depended more on norms against nonmarital childbearing and divorce to get and stay married
 - Because they did not have access to the economic and social resources that make marriage easier
- African American relationships were weaker
 - Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson: African Americans “still paying the ethnocidal price of slavery and the neo-dulotic Jim Crow system,” which made them vulnerable to outworkings of sexual revolution



Why Should We Care?

- *Why Marriage Matters* shows that retreat from marriage has serious consequences for children's
 - Physical and emotional health
 - Educational attainment
 - And for the commonweal (more public expenditures on welfare, prison, police, health care)
- I will focus on
 - Poverty
 - Crime
 - Sex



More Children in Poverty

- After divorce, between one-fifth & one-third of mothers fall into poverty
- Disadvantaged single mothers who don't marry have household incomes that are 40% lower than disadvantaged single mothers who do marry
- Most of the increase in child poverty since the 1970s can be attributed to the retreat from marriage—i.e., nonmarital childbearing and divorce



More Boys Headed to Prison

- Boys raised in single- and step-families are more than twice as likely to end up in prison as young adults
- 70% of juveniles in state reform schools, 72% of adolescent murderers, & 60% of rapists grew up in fatherless homes
- Unmarried young men more likely to end up in prison
- Family structure is one of the strongest predictors of urban violence



More Girls Getting Pregnant

- Father presence and girls' virginity
 - 35% of girls whose fathers left before they turned 6 got pregnant as teens
 - 10% of girls whose fathers left during their school-age years got pregnant as teens
 - Only 5% of girls whose fathers stayed throughout their childhood got pregnant as teens



Summarizing Consequences

- Children reared in single- or step-parent families are 2 to 3 times more likely to experience serious negative outcomes
 - Individual consequences
 - About 10% of children in biological married-parent homes experience such outcomes
 - About 25% of children in biological single-parent homes experience such outcomes
 - Collective consequences for children if we had 1960 marital stability
 - 1.2 million fewer suspensions
 - 1 million fewer acts of teen delinquency or violence
 - 597,000 fewer teen smokers
 - 70,000 fewer attempts at suicide by teens



Signs of Hope

- Since 1990s, marriage trends have largely stabilized:
 - Divorce is down
 - Marital happiness is up
 - Teenage sex is down
- Scholarly and policy consensus emerging across the ideological spectrum
 - That Marriage Matters
 - We need to strengthen marriage

Social Scientists on Marriage



- “Although it was once possible to believe that the nation’s high rates of divorce, cohabitation, and nonmarital childbearing represented little more than lifestyle alternatives brought about by the freedom to pursue individual fulfillment, many analysts now believe that these individual choices can be damaging to the children who have no say in them and to the society that enables them.”
- - Ron Haskins, Sara McLanahan, and Elizabeth Donahue, *Princeton-Brookings Policy Brief* (2005)



Evangelicals on Contraception

- New openness to Catholic teaching on contraception on the part of evangelicals
 - Al Mohler: “Thirty years of sad experience demonstrate that *Humanae Vitae* [correctly] sounded the alarm, warning of a contraceptive mentality that would set loose immeasurable evil as modern birth control methods allowed seemingly risk-free sex outside the integrity of the marital bond.”



Catholic Moral Teaching & Social Justice

- The revival of Catholic moral teaching regarding human sexuality will depend in no small part on showing the integral connection between the Church's moral teaching and her "preferential option" for the poor
- The most vulnerable members of our society depend most on the Church to revive her proclamation of the truth about sex, marriage, and children



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