

## **Death or Life: The Choice is Ours**

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By Bishop Victor Galeone

Some ten years ago a remarkable interview took place on a TV talk show. I no longer recall the name of the host who conducted that interview, but to this day I can still recall what was said.

The one being interviewed was Marianne Faithful, the first female rock star of the 1960s. She had been Mick Jagger's girlfriend – one of the beautiful people, living at the center of the new counter-culture, and intimate with many of the world's most famous rock stars.

Early in the interview, the talk-show host said something like this to Marianne:

“Marianne, there's something I've been wondering about for a long time. Back in the '60s everything seemed to have changed at once. In a short period of time we saw the sexual revolution, the hippie culture, social turmoil, free love, illicit drug use, unrest on college campuses, rampant divorce, and more. And it all happened at once. I mean, there wasn't even a domino effect. I thought that, since you were in the middle of it all, you could give me a couple of reasons why all of this happened at the same time.”

Without any pause in the conversation, Marianne Faithful replied:

“There aren't a couple of reasons. I can tell you in just two words why it all happened. THE PILL. When they gave us that Pill, there weren't any more rules. And I'm not just talking about sex. There weren't any more rules...about anything!”

In the year 410, the city of Rome fell to the barbarian hordes. The citizens, who were pagan, blamed the Christians. The sack of Rome, they alleged, was a punishment from Jupiter, who was displeased with the followers of the new sect for refusing to worship the pagan deities.

A few years later, St. Augustine began to write *The City of God*, his mammoth work refuting the slanderous attacks of the pagans. Augustine showed that it was Christianity that had temporarily forestalled the inevitable downfall of the corrupt Roman Empire. According to him, the whole world is divided into two communities: the City of God and the City of Man. Citizenship in one or the other is determined not by the fact of one's birth or place or residence, but rather by the object of one's love: the love of God to the contempt of self, or the love of self to the contempt of God.

These two cities are still with us. Pope John Paul II referred to them as the Culture of Life and the Culture of Death. At this time I would like us to examine the irreconcilable differences between these two cultures by having us study four of their citizens – two from each culture. Two of the citizens have the name *Margaret*, and the other two, the name *Paul*.

Let us begin with the first Margaret – **Margaret Sanger**, a citizen of the City of Man. She founded the first Birth Control clinic in the United States in 1916. Then in 1921, she established the American Birth Control League, which later was renamed “Planned Parenthood.”

I’d like to itemize just a few of Sanger's ideas on various topics:

### **On Marriage**

- “The marriage bed is the most degenerating influence in the social order.”
- Adultery ? “A woman’s physical satisfaction is more important than any marriage vow.”

### **On Motherhood**

- “...women must come to recognize that there is some function of womanhood other than being a child-bearing machine.”
- “No woman or man shall have the right to become a parent without a permit.”
- Couples who choose sterilization should be rewarded.
- “The most merciful thing that a large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.”

### **On Birth Control**

- The purpose in promoting birth control is “to create a race of thoroughbreds.”
- “More children from the fit, less from the unfit – that is the chief aim of birth control.”
- “Give those groups with bad genes...their choice of either segregation or sterilization.”

### **On the Catholic Church**

- By condemning contraception, the Catholic Church is “enforcing subjugation by turning woman into a mere incubator.”
- The Catholic “race” has degenerated terribly through the celibacy of its priests and nuns, who are the more intelligent and “splendid types,” – thus leaving the members of the Catholic “race” in very inferior racial health.

### **On blacks, immigrants, and indigents**

- They are merely “human weeds, reckless breeders, spawning human beings who never should have been born.”
- “Keep the doors of immigration closed to certain aliens whose condition is known to be detrimental to the stamina of the race...” (In the context, Sanger was referring to Jews and Southern Italians.)
- “We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population...”

In summary, it can be stated that Sanger’s entire life revolved around the only two things that mattered to her: the birth control movement and her sex life. As she grew older, she threw lavish parties, entertaining a great number of men much younger than she was. One of her two sons called them “sycophants,” while the other one labeled them “gigolos.”

Her health began to fail when she was in her late 70s. About that time she would start her day off with daiquiris for breakfast, a half bottle of wine accompanied with Demerol for lunch, and then spend the rest of the day in a deep sleep.

Margaret Sanger passed the last seven years of her life in a rest home, unaware of her surroundings, and babbling incoherent nonsense. It was there that she died in 1966, shortly before her 87th birthday. Funeral services were held in the Episcopal Church of Tucson, where she was eulogized as “a fighting saint, who experienced martyrdom.”

Let us now consider the second of our two Margaret's, **Margaret of Costello**, a citizen of the City of God.

Margaret was born in Italy of noble parents in the year 1287. Her parents were eagerly anticipating the birth of their first child – until they learned the tragic reality. Their daughter was born dreadfully deformed. She was a dwarf, hunchbacked, totally blind, and with a horribly disfigured face. Since one leg was much shorter than the other, she would walk only as a cripple.

Her father, Parisio, was so distraught at the sight of his daughter that he informed his relatives and friends that the child had died shortly after birth. He then turned the baby over to the care of a servant, who had her baptized. When her parents refused even to name her – so total was their rejection – the servant gave her the name Margaret. Strict orders were given that visitors to the castle were not to lay eyes on her.

From an early age, Margaret loved to pray. Once, while she was making a visit in the family chapel, a visitor came upon her by chance; and almost discovered the horrid truth that this hobbling deformity was the daughter of the lord of the castle. “Heaven forbid that anyone should ever learn our secret!” Parisio told his wife Emilia. “Since she likes to pray, we’ll accommodate her.”

Parisio had a stone mason build a cell adjacent to a nearby chapel in the forest. The cell had a small window, opening into the chapel, so that Margaret could assist at Mass. There was another small opening in the opposite wall, through which food could be passed without anyone having to see her.

Margaret was only six years old when she was imprisoned in this cell. She grew to maturity without parental love and with no friends to play with. Her only companions were the birds of the air and the creatures of the forest – and Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

The priest attending the forest chapel frequently spoke to Margaret, and soon discovered that she had a brilliant mind that was hungry for the things of God. So under the chaplain's instruction, she grew rapidly in the knowledge of the faith.

When Margaret was 20 years old, her parents learned of miraculous cures that were taking place at the tomb of a Franciscan friar in the distant town of Castello. Hoping for a cure, they made the long journey to Costello with Margaret. On arriving at the tomb, they thrust her into the midst of the motley throng of sick and crippled. By day's end, there was no sign of a cure. “It's hopeless,” Parisio blurted. “Look at all those sick and deformed people. She belongs with them, not with us.” Amelia agreed. So she and Parisio quietly returned to their castle, abandoning Margaret at the tomb. That night, she was temporarily adopted by two beggars, Roberto and Elena.

Never uttering a word of bitterness towards her parents, Margaret continued her solitary life. Over the years, many poor families took her into their homes for a few days at a time.

Eventually, she became a lay Dominican and spent the rest of her life in prayer and works of mercy. No sick person was too far away for her to limp to, in order to offer them encouragement and prayer. When she learned of the inhumane treatment of the area's prisoners, she made them the object of her special care. Every day she would bring them food and medicine; and as a result many of them surrendered their hearts to the Lord.

After years of prayer, sacrifices and acts of charity, Margaret passed away peacefully in the year 1320. She was only 33 years old. The whole town thronged to her funeral and demanded that their saint be buried in a tomb inside the church. The pastor at first refused; but when a crippled girl was miraculously cured during the funeral, the people had their way. She was declared a Blessed in heaven three centuries after her death.

After all these centuries, her body is still incorrupt. To this very day it may be viewed in the chapel of the School for the Blind in the town of Costello.

Had Margaret been conceived in 2006 instead of in 1287, would an amniocentesis test perhaps have sealed her fate in the womb? Consider all the lives that would never had been touched by her seemingly worthless life.

We now turn our attention to the two Paul's – both of whom made world headlines in 1968. The first Paul is a citizen of the City of Man. His name is Paul Ehrlich, an entomologist, specializing in butterflies. In 1968 he was catapulted onto the world stage with his bestselling book, *The Population Bomb*. In that book, he made some dire predictions about the future of humanity – followed in succeeding years with equally dire predictions.

I would like to cite some of those predictions, and then compare them with the actuality:

- 1968 – “The battle to feed humanity is over. In the 1970s the world will undergo famines...hundreds of millions of people (including Americans) are going to starve to death...”

**Fact** – Food production worldwide is well ahead of population growth, and obesity now kills 300,000 Americans a year.

- 1969 – “Smog disasters” in 1973 might kill 200,000 people in New York and Los Angeles.

**Fact** – The air in New York and L.A. is cleaner now than it has been in decades.

- 1969 – “If I were a gambler, I would take even money that England will not exist in the year 2000.”

**Fact** – Six years beyond that deadline, England continues to thrive.

- 1976 – “Before 1985, mankind will enter a genuine age of scarcity...in which the accessible supplies of many key minerals will be facing depletion.”

**Fact** – There are no key minerals facing depletion. Almost all of them, along with raw materials in general, are far cheaper now, relative to the Consumer Price Index.

What's going on here? Does Ehrlich have a hidden agenda? Indeed he does! Paul Ehrlich cannot stand people, a fact that is quite evident in his 1968 bestseller. There he wrote that his thinking had been dramatically affected by the sheer mass of humanity that he had encountered on a trip to India:

“The streets seemed alive with people. People eating, people washing, people sleeping. People visiting, arguing and screaming. People thrusting their hands through the taxi windows, begging. People defecating and urinating. People clinging to busses. People herding animals. People, people, people.”

He gives the game away when he compares us human beings to cancer:

“A **cancer** is an uncontrolled multiplication of cells; the **population explosion** is an uncontrolled multiplication of people. Treating only the symptoms of cancer may make the victim more comfortable at first, but eventually he dies... A similar fate awaits a world with a population explosion if only the symptoms are treated. We must shift our efforts...to the cutting out of the cancer... the disease (of overpopulation) is so far advanced that only with radical surgery does the patient have a chance of survival.”

In the late 60s Ehrlich made national news when he proudly announced that he had had a vasectomy.

We now come to the last person for our scrutiny, whose name is also Paul – a citizen of the City of God – Pope Paul VI.

In July of 1968, Pope Paul issued his long-awaited decision dealing with contraception – his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. In that document, he merely restated what the Church had been teaching for almost 2,000 years. Namely:

“There is an inseparable link between the two meanings of the marriage act: it must be **unitive**, that is, *love-giving*; and it must be **procreative**, that is, *life-giving*. It was God himself who established this link, and man is not permitted to break it on his own initiative.”

Translating that into everyday language, Pope Paul reaffirmed:

- It was God who put “making love” and “making babies” together in one and the same act.
- God intended this two-fold purpose of the marital act to be absolutely inseparable.
- Therefore, man is not free to separate what God has joined together.

When this encyclical made its appearance in 1968, a hailstorm of angry protest erupted worldwide. Catholics and non-Catholics alike berated “the celibate old man in his Vatican ivory

tower” for failing to read the signs of the times, and thus hindering the Church’s full entry into the modern era. Full page ads appeared in liberal journals with bold-faced headlines, blaring over a picture of emaciated children in India: “Pope Denounces Birth Control while Millions Starve.”

In Deuteronomy 18:21 we read that an authentic prophet can be distinguished from a false one, if what is foretold materializes or not. Judged by that benchmark, Paul Ehrlich is a first-class false prophet. Now then, let’s apply the Scriptural standard for prophecy to Paul VI.

In *Humanae Vitae* Pope Paul predicted four dire consequences, if the use of contraception were to escalate. Here are his predictions – made almost 40 years ago – with the results:

- Marital infidelity will dramatically increase.  
Since 1968 the divorce rate has more than quadrupled.
- There will occur a general lowering of morality, especially among the young.  
The number of sexually transmitted diseases has expanded from six to more than 50. Some STDs are fatal – without a known cure.
- Husbands will come to view their wives, and women in general, as mere sex-objects.  
Pornography -- especially the Internet variety – has become a plague, grossing more than all the receipts from professional sports and legitimate entertainment combined.
- Governments will have a weapon to coerce massive birth control programs on their people.  
Sterilization is forced on unsuspecting women in third world countries, with China’s one-child-per-couple policy in the vanguard.

Yes, Paul VI has proven to be a prophet – rejected in his day, but validated in ours. Decades before Marianne Faithful summarized in just two words the reason why the morality of the 60s imploded all at once, Paul VI had accurately predicted the tragic reality of our modern culture.

I began by explaining St. Augustine’s view of history as a conflict between two groups of citizens. Both groups are in mortal combat over two kinds of love: in the one case, the love of God to the contempt of oneself; in the other case, the love of oneself to the contempt of God.

We have examined representatives from both groups: from the City of Man: Margaret Sanger and Paul Ehrlich; and from the City of God: Margaret of Costello and Paul VI.

In the one City there reigns darkness, hatred and death; in the other, there reigns light, love and life. Death or Life? The choice is ours!

Citizens of the City of God, here present this evening, let us never cease to work, to strive, to sacrifice until we have made the last citizen of the City of Man – a fellow citizen of ours!