2.1 Incipient human life

2.1.1 The essence and the purpose of marriage according to the teaching of the Catholic Church

Marriage is a union for life and a communion between a man and a woman. Instituted by the Creator, and based on mutual love, its purpose is the propagation of mankind by the procreation of children who will find, within that communion, a safe place to grow up to be well-balanced people who are to share in God's glory after their life on earth. It is a natural union that was elevated to a sacrament by Christ. In marriage the spouses mutually give themselves to one another in love without restriction, after the example of the sacrifice of Christ to the Father that is prolonged in the Eucharist.

2.1.2 How man should use his capacity to procreate

Man should use his capacity of procreation – his highest biological capacity – in accordance with its purpose: the continuation of the human family; he should do so within the communion of married love, where husband and wife give themselves totally to one another and put themselves at the service of God's work of creation.

2.1.3 The attitude to the use of our sexual capacity

The sexual capacity should be used with great respect for its intrinsic goal which should not be frustrated. It is a supreme expression of mutual love.

2.1.4 Direction of the marital act to fertility

Not every marital act is fruitful and man is free to use this knowledge without, however, actively impeding its intrinsic goal. It is also wrong to use sexual capacity merely to one's or each other's pleasure and to untie its use from its intrinsic purpose, i.e. procreation. This would go against the commandment of respect for human dignity because it makes the body of the partner, or one's own body, a mere instrument of satisfaction of sexual feelings. This would also be contrary to the demand of the complete giving of oneself mentioned above.

2.1.5 A new human comes into being

Through the sexual union of husband and wife the material conditions ("dispositio in materia") that is necessary for the formation of the material substrate of a human being, i.e. the human embryo, to be brought about. However, man only gets his life as an actual human being from the non-material principle of life, the soul, created directly by God for every human being. Every human being is formed by an act of creation of God out of divine love for that human being.

2.1.6 Attitude towards the human embryo

The human embryo should be awarded the same rights and acknowledged to have the same essential properties as any human at any stage of life. Thus the embryo is entitled to unconditional protection and care. The human embryo is a human being from the moment of conception. Whereas the Church never issued a statement as to the moment of ensoulment, the finality of the embryo is indistinguishable from that of any man from conception: to develop into independence and finally come to unite with the Creator. The human embryo cannot develop into anything other than an independent human being, unless it perishes and dies from a disturbance in its biological development.

2.1.7 The attitude of parents to the embryo that is a result from their communion of love

The parents should accept the developing human being with gratitude as a gift of God that is entrusted to their care and completely depends on them. They should do everything within their power to make sure that the baby is born and is raised in circumstances that are as favorable as possible; they should provide it with a good education within the frame of the stable, familial situation to which they are called in their marriage.

2.1.8 Contraception

Contraception is any act or method that intentionally renders the marital act unfruitful, regardless of the means. It comprises the use of a condom, interrupted coition, oral contraception and, in the broader sense, all pharmacological and mechanical means that render impossible or undo the nidation of an already formed embryo in the mucosal lining of the uterus. Among the latter are the 'morning after pill', intrauterine device (IUD), so-called overdue treatment and curettage.

2.1.9 Rejection of contraception by the Church

It is the judgment of the Church that the separation of the marital act from its intrinsic purpose, is against the nature of man and thus against God's intention. Moreover, the marital act is an ultimate expression of love of the spouses, where they give themselves to each other completely, including fertility and every other capacity. To exclude fertility by measures of temporary or permanent sterilization of one or both of the spouses (condom, contraceptive pill, intrauterine device, and sterilization) inflicts damage to this gift of self in an essential way.

2.1.10 Other moral objections to contraceptive methods

All objections as to their intrinsic morality are connected with the abortive action of the methods. The so-called overdue treatment, the 'morning after pill', the intrauterine device all provide an inhibition to the nidation of the embryo that was formed by conception into the mucosal lining of the uterus. Even the usual oral contraceptives potentially have this effect, when inhibition of ovulation is unsuccessful (at low estrogen dosage). Apart from this the combination pills make the cervical mucus less penetrable to sperm cells.

2.1.11 Condemnation of artificial methods of procreation by the Church

Those methods, where conception is achieved outside the context of the union of man and wife in the marital act, are condemned by the Church because they degrade procreation to a business-like procedure (in the laboratory), where marital love plays no direct part.

This is why artificial insemination, all forms of in vitro fertilization, egg cell donation, cryopreservation of egg cells and surrogate motherhood are rejected.

2.1.12 The Church's view on procreative methods outside marriage of a man and a woman

These are rejected by the Church because marriage between a man and a woman is the natural framework meant by God, where new human beings are to be born and can grow up.

Apart from this, the Church emphasises that every new human being presenting itself should be received with the same unconditional respect for its life and is entitled to the loving care of its parents.

2.1.13 Rejection of procured abortion by the Church

According to many, procured abortion is a serious offence and in the teaching of the Church it is a great evil that, de facto, excludes those involved from the community of the Church. For every human being has a fundamental right to life, to the possibility of development into independence, and to the love of its parents from the moment of conception.

2.1.14 Specific reasons for rejecting procured abortion

1. An incipient, defenseless human being is denied the fundamental right to life by intentionally killing it.
2. The child is thereby degraded to a mere object that can be freely disposed of and its human dignity is therefore denied.
3. This act implies a denial of the marital love of the parents that should be the background of the coming into being of the child and it is a denial of their responsibility as parents.
4. It contributes to a loss of the correct notion within society of the status of the child in the mother's womb and of the priority that love for one's neighbour (i.e. a defenseless child) should have over any advantage, pleasure or desire directed at oneself.

In short: procured abortion can be said to be:

1. murder;
2. the denial of the true human nature of the child;
3. the denial of marital love;
4. a deleterious example that undermines society.

2.1.16 False arguments by supporters of procured abortion and the proof of contrary

False argument 1.

At the beginning of pregnancy the embryo cannot be put on the same level as a human being and is not entitled to the rights that law and custom normally confer on people.

Answer: According to its nature the zygote that originates at conception cannot develop into anything but a human body that by the will of God is ensouled with a human principle of life, i.e. a human person. For from conception onwards all genetic information that is necessary to the development into the definitive form of appearance, is contained in the zygote. This finality gives the embryo the same dignity as every person come to full development.

False argument 2. The woman has total authority over her own body.

Answer: As it was said before, no one has total authority over their body. Moreover the embryo in the woman's womb is not her body, since it is distinct and separated from it as to its genetic content, as to the development and construction of its tissues and its circulation. When taking also into account the arguments proposed in answer 1 the women cannot freely dispose of the embryo. Her only freedom lies in the choice whether or not to

engage into sexual intercourse that led to this conception.

False argument 3. The child in the womb may be seen or experienced as an aggressor against whom the women is allowed to defend herself;

Answer: The argument of the embryo as an aggressor is a way of deliberately confusing phrasing. It would suppose an agent who, following his nature or not, would aim at harming the mother's integrity. This might occur unconsciously as in the case of a microbial or animal organism, or consciously as in the case of a hostile person.

While it is recognized that pathological conditions and illnesses exist that present themselves in connection with the presence of an embryo, including its placenta in the womb or elsewhere (in the case of an extra uterine pregnancy), one cannot maintain that the embryo, be it as a developing human person or as an organism is the formal cause of such a disease. The problem is rather a disturbance in the mother's body in its ability to deal with the situation of pregnancy, which is physiological in itself.

False argument 4. A child is not wanted or suffers from some defect such that it will be better off not to be born.

Answer: In this argument human life itself and the right to life are made subordinate to a personal opinion on the quality of life of the developing child held by the mother and/or others. This is clearly a false way of reasoning in two ways: Firstly, it is not for man to decide on the life of a fellow human being and, secondly, one should not confuse life itself with quality of life.

2.1.17 Selective abortion

By this term is meant the killing of one or more embryos because of a reason that is based on choice, e.g. when the embryo is seen as supernumerary, its sex is not the desired one, certain genetic properties are unwanted or other deviations from what is desired. This means that, in addition to the rejection of the incipient human being as such, a discriminatory motive is added to the action, thereby excluding this specific human being from existence because of an unwanted accidental quality.

2.1.18 Procured abortion to save a mother's life

One may not intentionally kill a child in its mother's womb to save the mother's life. The choice between two human live does not belong to man. Also one may not kill the child because one expects that it will die anyway. In all such cases all that is possible to save both lives has to be done.

There may me situations where the life of the mother is in acute danger, and where the intervention that is needed to save her life may bring about the death of the child (e.g. hemorrhage into the abdominal cavity in an extra uterine pregnancy). In such cases, the intervention can be judged according to the principle of double effect.

2.1.19 Experiments on human embryos

Therapeutic experiments, directed at the immediate wellbeing of the embryo can be permitted when due prudence is observed. The use of human embryos – regardless of the way in which they were obtained – for pure scientific research is in conflict with their human dignity, because by the experiments they are being instrumentalized completely. In their vulnerable situation they have a right to the utmost protection. That the

embryo will die eventually has no place in the argument.