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# Population Growth and the Catholic Church

Issues in Population Control in the Philippines

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## Abstract

This research aims to investigate the role and contribution of the Catholic Church by reflecting on the place and function of religion in the public sphere concerning overpopulation in the Philippines while promoting Responsible Parenthood. This research would like to give a critical account of how the Catholic Church deals with Responsible Parenthood for the welfare of the Filipino people. Moreover, this study aims to promote the knowledge about Responsible Parenthood and deepen the understanding of the problems of population growth in the Philippines and how the Catholic Church intervenes in developing family planning methods.

First, this research also tries to clarify the various senses of the term children are “*blessings from God*” from Filipino perspective. Secondly, this paper explores the several problems of the population resulting from Filipinos “*bahala na*” attitude or leaving everything in God’s hand and the future. Thirdly, it also brings attention to Christian maturity that applies especially to Filipino males who primarily decide how many children they will have. And though religiosity and accepting one's fate is somehow a positive response in every bad situation. The author contends that it is best if Filipinos can avoid “*bahala na*” attitude and instead face the moral obligation to act responsible rather than having too many children they can provide.

Furthermore, it is better to view children as a parent’s responsibility and commitment towards raising them. Because the role of parents on their children's development process also depends on how many children they had. Thus, considering the regressiveness of the impact of additional children, there will be more repercussions from a more impoverished and enormous household. Additionally, this paper also suggests that the Catholic Church should promote smaller families and encourage parent’s who provide quality lives to their children rather than parents who abandoned their responsibility.

In this hermeneutical research, I collected data from the literature, journals, CBCP’s encyclical letter and the Vatican, government statistical records, blogs, websites of advocacy groups and newspaper clippings and video archive concerning teenage/unplanned pregnancy, family issues, responsible parenthood, and reproductive health debates. While understanding the present situations of the socio-economic contexts, traditions and life circumstances that

lead Filipino families in overpopulation and poverty, thus, cultural and religiosity are embedded in responsible parenthood practices in the Philippines reflecting the strong influence of conservative religious belief.

## Abbreviations

AFP	Artificial Family Planning Methods
C4RH	Catholics for Reproductive Health
CBCP	Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines
CFC	Couples for Christ
FP	Family Planning
NFA	National Food Authority
NFP	Natural Family Planning Methods
NSO	National Statistics Office
PGH	Philippine General Hospital
POPCOM	Commission on Population
RH	Reproductive Health
RPRH	Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNICEF	The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## *1.1 Themes*

This thesis describes the different population issues in the Philippines and factors affecting responsible parenthood. Furthermore, central to the case study is the role of the Church concerning the overpopulation in the Philippines and how the doctrine of the Catholic Church's "Responsible Parenthood" stand against the artificial family planning methods that the Philippine government promote in the hope to engage family planning development through its programs.

## *1.2 Family, Religiosity, and the Filipinos*

The Philippines is an archipelago with 7,107 islands and a nation of high linguistic diversity as it has more than 176 dialects. It is also a land of diverse cultural background with influences from Spain, Japan and the United States due to their previous colonization of the country. The culture comprises a blend of traditional Filipino and Spanish Catholic traditions. The Philippines are the only major Christian nation in South East Asia, and more than 80% of the population is Roman Catholic.

The rich culture and strong religious faith of the Filipino people were shadows with different population concerns. As a result, the government promoted reproductive health policies and encouraged its people to developed effective family planning towards responsible parenthood. On the other hand, the Catholic Church in the Philippines, as elsewhere around the world, alleges that reproductive health policies through artificial contraceptives are abortifacient and that only natural methods should promote. A people-centered approach to development and concern for the environment are called for to improve the quality of life of the Filipino people. Moreover, the Church insisted that the government should focus on producing employment opportunities especially to the poor and should realize their flaws and negligence in the management of wealth and resources of the nation.

According to the Bureau of Treasury, the country's outstanding debt stood at P6.88 trillion Philippine Peso as of April 2018. Also, the Commission on Population of the Philippines (POPCOM) projected that the population will continue to increase throughout 2018 and is

estimated to reach around 107,190,081 by Dec. 31, 2018. Therefore, health, housing, water, and food crisis are expected to increase as well as environmental degradation due to tremendous population growth. The Government has intervened, although in varying degrees, in the marketplace to affect virtually all branches of the supply chain, importation, and the demand spectrum. But self-sufficiency has remained elusive. The population is far from being more food secure now than a decade ago. According to Asian Review, the average Filipino family consumes over 100 kg of rice a year, and the staple food accounts for one-fifth of the spending of the poor households. Recently, President Rodrigo Duterte urged the government to import rice from neighboring countries as rice has become more expensive in the Philippines. More than two million people or 5% of the labor force are rice farmers. Hence, this has caused a reduction in the income of the poor, which includes the landless farmers and urban poor workers.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church preached in the pulpit and encouraged the Filipino people to strengthen their faith and not to lose hope despite all the challenges they are facing. Contraception that is proposing on the government's family planning method is corruption and can harm the nation. It will lead to a crime against women and corrupts the soul. The Church also appealed that Filipino should be prayerful to God for miracles to overcome all challenges and urged the lawmakers not to compromise their faith and stop corruption.

### ***1.3 Purpose of Research***

This thesis utilizes *a hermeneutical method* in the form of studying and understanding the meaning of subjects or texts by focusing on the historical experience and its developmental and increasing effects on the person and society. Moreover, Hermeneutics is the theory and practice of interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Hence, Friedrich Schleiermacher has been acknowledged as the founder of modern hermeneutics, moving beyond the illumination of the biblical text to human understanding.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Wilhelm Dilthey broadened the field of interest of hermeneutics beyond the individual to include organizations and social systems.<sup>3</sup> Filipinos have a social network rooted in poverty in which children are also viewed as a means of social security for parents when they reach their old age. It is a family system and is highly indebted

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<sup>1</sup> Paterson, M., & Higgs, J. (2005).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

to their parents with a strong need to give back, "utang na loob" (Talisayon, 1990; Andres, 1996).<sup>4</sup> Therefore, rejecting to support the family will feel in shame and guilt or "hiya." Thus, the culture of patriarchy and its effects on gender roles in the family is dangerous. The researcher will examine the part of the Catholic Church in exercising its moral authority in the implementation of Responsible Parenthood. Furthermore, the researcher will investigate how a counter-ideological and political movement of the government and non-government Reproductive Health and Family Planning supporters, from right's advocacy groups and women's health to a few members of the Catholic Church, has emerged.

For this study, the researcher will perform a comprehensive analysis of Philippine population policy and differentiate the practices of Responsible Parenthood of the State and the Catholic Church. The analyzed data will consist of the following:

- Historical literature that traces the Catholic Church's involvement in Family Planning methods and debates.;
- Discourse concerning population issues and economic stabilization by using of balancing population growth;
- Blogs, websites of advocacy groups and newspaper clippings and video archive concerning teenage/unplanned pregnancy, family issues, responsible parenthood, and reproductive health debates;
- Documents from the Philippine Population Management Program and the 4th annual RPRH Report of the government explaining population management strategies as of 2017;
- Encyclical letter from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Vatican Council.

Also, the researcher will explore the role of the Catholic religious teachings in the formation of moral values of Filipino families while being involved in dialogues with the secular world.

Hence, the researcher formulated this question to get more clarity on the statement mentioned above: "***What does the Catholic Church do to ensure that Filipino families especially the poor choose and live in accordance to the Church's version of 'Responsible Parenthood' practices?***"

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<sup>4</sup> Tuason, M. (2002).

Furthermore, the purpose of this research is also to analyze "blessings" in the context of pregnancy and having children (Peters, 2018). In the book of Genesis God tells Abraham, "I will bless you, and make your name great so that you will be a blessing."<sup>5</sup> Therefore, God's blessing is that Abraham and his children are "to be a blessing to others." In this concept, the focus of blessing is "to be a blessing to others" rather than the blessing of having children as a socio-cultural attitude of getting the future secured. It is the Filipino mentality that the more children a family had the more help will receive. Thus, Filipino families think that the more children you had, the more chances of one or more might succeed in the future. According to Tuason, this speaks to the Filipino value of "pagmamay-ari," that children are considered wealth (Talisayon, 1990). Therefore, from this perspective, children are considered a means to escape poverty.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, if Filipinos begin to think more on to be a blessing to others other than acquiring wealth or "pagmamay-ari" through having children, the nation can overcome issues on overpopulation and will effectively practice Responsible Parenthood.

#### **1.4 Literature Overview**

As a master's student in Theology at MF, the researcher opted to choose from the literature that mirrors the Christian based studies. In this regards, the researcher decided to choose from five main books the topics that will be discussed in this study and added two supporting books, which are both essential to the theory. The concept of the role of the Catholic Church concerning the solutions for overpopulation and for promoting competent 'Responsible Parenthood' is select as the central theme of the thesis.

*Sex Violence and Justice, Contraception and the Catholic Church* by Aline H. Kalbian, 2014, the review will focus on the historical and contextual background of the Catholic Church and the reasons why they are opposed to contraceptives and artificial family planning methods. Additionally, the researcher will explore the foundation of moral teaching of the Catholic Church, the publication of "Humanae Vitae" or "Of Human Life" by Pope Paul VI which also sets as a guideline of the Church's moral teachings about sanctity of life and procreation as the basis of their instructions with regards to family planning until today.

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 12:2.

<sup>6</sup> Tuason, M. (2002).

*Trust Women: A Progressive Christian Argument for Reproductive Justice* by Rebecca Todd Peters, 2018. The study will relay the Reproductive Justice and empowering women through reproductive health choices, the sacred nature of motherhood and parenting.

*Six Billion Plus : World Population in the Twenty-first Century* by Bruce K. Newbold, 2007. The researcher will list down the consequences and issues on population growth such as, the growing crisis on food, resources, and environment, different factors involved for the active population policy, which includes human development and women empowerment through International bodies like United Nations. Also, the researcher will differentiate the effectiveness of using family planning methods in developed and developing countries like the Philippines.

*Pro-Life, Pro-Choice: Shared Values in the Abortion Debate* by Alvarez Bertha Manninen, 2014. Manninen will anchor on a pro-choice moral framework, respecting fetal life and pregnant women.

*Pro-Choice and Christian: Reconciling Faith, Politics, and Justice* by Kira Schlesinger, 2017. This study will focus on the two ways of being Christian and Pro-Choice.

The first three books about population, 'Responsible Parenthood'; and the Catholic Church are the primary literature of this study which was also use as the primary source of the theory. As a summary, Aline Kalbian focuses on the Catholic Church doctrines, and Bruce Newbold focuses on Population Issues while Rebecca Peters anchors on Reproductive Justice. The focal point of the last two books from Alvarez Bertha and Kira Schlesinger was from the ideas of Pro-Choice and Christian belief.

## ***1.5 The Research Questions and Sub-Questions***

In order to gain more clarity and a better understanding of the possible solutions to the problems of the population in the Philippines, this thesis will investigate on how Filipino families practice and attain responsible parenthood in the Catholic context and how religiosity, sociocultural, poverty, corruption, and politics affect Filipinos in their practice on responsible parenthood. It also entails that population growth equates to more housing need resulting in debt and declining agricultural land that is essential for food production.

### **What are the roles of the Catholic Church concerning the solutions for overpopulation in the Philippines and for promoting competent Responsible Parenthood?**

The research will have these following sub-questions:

1. How does the Catholic Church impact the population in the Philippines?
2. What are the population issues in the Philippines?
3. How does Responsible Parenthood contribute to the welfare of the Filipino people?

These research question and sub-questions are expected to be answered based on the data obtained from the literature, journals, encyclical letter from the Vatican, pastoral letters, government statistics, news agencies, and other legitimate sources that the researcher can find in this hermeneutical research thesis.

In this thesis, the researcher will begin with the understanding of 'Responsible Parenthood' from the Catholic perspective. Thus, the population can be managed only by utilizing natural family planning and by providing employment opportunities to the poor by the government. On the other hand, the Filipino government continues to promote family planning through artificial methods, which are opposed by the Church due to its moral issues. While the Church and the State had the same goal to improve the lives of Filipino people, their means of achieving these goals are different that caused impact to their people who are 80% Catholics and in poverty.

## ***1.6 Scope and Limitations***

In the scope of a one-year master thesis, this study will focus on the role of the Catholic Church in the issues of population growth in the Philippines and the importance of 'Responsible Parenthood'. This study will not cover any personal interviews from someone in the Philippines, but the researcher will share her observations and personal experiences from the years she lived in the country and also gathered experiences from her parents. Additionally, due to the method used for this study, the researcher would rely on literature, journals, CBCP's encyclical letter, and other vital documents. Furthermore, the researcher will make use of quantitative research from the Philippine Population Statistics to have an overview in regards to population issues, maternal, infant health indices, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infection statistics. Also, the researcher will only concentrate on the documents about reproductive health and family planning from the pastoral letters from Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) covering from 1992 to 2012 and evolved arguments by the Bishops and Vatican II documents (i.e., *Humanae Vitae*). On top of that, the researcher gathered videos from archives of International News Agencies that were reviewed and analyzed as part of the evidence in this study. And above all, this research focuses on understanding the role of the Catholic Church concerning the solutions for overpopulation in the Philippines and for promoting active Responsible Parenthood.

## ***1.7 Methodological Framework***

This thesis describes and analyzes the impact of Catholicism and the role of the Catholic Church concerning solutions for overpopulation and promoting competent 'Responsible Parenthood' in the Philippines. Moreover, this study identifies and examines the causes of poverty, environmental degradation, unhappy family and street children. Utilizing hermeneutics research strategy, the researcher will make use of literature, government statistics, journals, video archives and other reliable sources that describe the lives of Filipinos amid poverty, religiosity and political debate regarding population management. Hence, the "Hermeneutics method" was select as appropriate research or "interpretive approach" since the research goal was to interpret how Filipino people understand and practice 'Responsible Parenthood' in the context of Catholicism. Significantly, the researcher will anchor the role of the Catholic Church concerning solutions for overpopulation and for promoting effective 'Responsible Parenthood' as the setting of this case study. The principal collected data method

which consists of reading materials from literature, books, journals, pastoral letters and video archives from international news agencies that the researcher gathered established according to the research sub-questions. The method of hermeneutic analysis further contributes to the transparency, trustworthiness, and plausibility of the research findings, interpretations, and products of the research.<sup>7</sup> Answers to the main research questions were examined by gathering and analyzing the theory and the findings from the research through careful interpretation of data through the hermeneutical method.

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<sup>7</sup> Paterson, M., & Higgs, J. (2005).



## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Population Issues

According to the Philippine Population Management Program Directional plan for 2017-2022, population issues remain as a critical factor in the development of the Philippines. Thus, as Filipinos reached the 107 million mark in terms of population, demographic factors are crucial in the attainment of national development goals. In line with these goals are poverty reduction, universal health care, employment generation, social and human development, and other critical sectoral objectives. And one of the main issues linking overpopulation is poverty. For example, an ordinary family with more than three children and only the father is the provider will have difficulties in covering all their expenses. Hence, the probability of meeting the needs for food, electricity, water, and education is small.

One of the most critical events in a person's life is to create and start a family. However, when a family begins to grow from 2 persons or more, it also demands more time and money to support the needs of the family. Also, if only one is working and there are more mouth to feed, and the minimum wage of a Filipino worker is only 512 pesos a day; thus, it is not enough to feed even for two persons. In fact, with all the inflation rate, contractual job system and also the housing rental caused a burden like a cross that Filipinos cannot carry anymore. As a result, the poor Filipino will look for temporary solutions which would give more load and create more problems in the future.

For instance, they will either borrow some money in the "sari-sari store" or a small store in the neighborhood or go to the so-called "Bumbay" or Indian money lender to cover their expenses for the family which in return provides higher interest rate on their debts. Additionally, poverty incidence is higher among more impoverished families: 57.3% of Filipino families with seven children are in poverty on the other hand only 23.8% of families who have two children live below the poverty threshold.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, is also list that a large population is one of the significant causes of poverty in the Philippines, together with weak macroeconomic management, employment issues, an underperforming agricultural sector, and

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<sup>8</sup> Aniceto Orbeta, Jr, (2000).

an unfinished land reform agenda, governance issues including corruption.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, based on the analysis of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) data from 1985 to 2009, the larger the number of children, the higher the likelihood of a family falling into poverty.<sup>10</sup> Debt is one of the results of population growth in the Philippines. In the slums where there are more children in the streets, poverty is evidently can seen; thus, more problems arise because of this.

On the other hand, there are still positive results of population growth like Filipino "People Power." In the Philippine history, the Church managed to take out the power of the former presidents Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Ejercito Estrada due to their corrupt practices, and with the help of the influential Catholic Church leaders, they encouraged the people to rally in the streets and battle for freedom over these corrupt officials. Besides, population growth could also be beneficial for the economy through workforce and by exporting Overseas Filipino workers abroad who remit dollars in the country. Workers' remittances from abroad accounted for 3.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product for the period 1996–7 or an average of \$1.7 billion annually.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, Filipinos provide human resources to rich countries, which are low in population, and that labor force supports their nation. The 1970s to the present state, Philippines has been the primary source of overseas contract workers to different parts of the world like the Middle East and North America. Despite this advantage, it caused a brain drain to the economy of the Philippines that the best of its workforce choose to migrate and work abroad due to a big salary and a better working environment.

Another key to remember is the adverse effects that this will bring to the families because Filipino migrant workers need to leave their spouse and children to continue to work and provide financial support for their loved ones. Elderly parents are press into taking over parental surrogate roles especially if the migrant worker is a woman.<sup>12</sup> People leave and work abroad not because they want to but because they don't have enough choice and this would mean better opportunity and financial support to their families. In most cases, a single mother

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<sup>9</sup> The Asian Development Bank (2004).

<sup>10</sup> Pernia & Orbeta (2010).

<sup>11</sup> National Statistical Coordination Board (1998).

<sup>12</sup> Phillips, D. (2000).

needs to leave her children on the care of her parents not only because they are weak but because of the increasing number of people who depend on her and what they have is not sufficient to support all their needs. Also, most of the elderly parents would be dependent on their daughter even their daughter has her child to support. Therefore, with the continuous population growth and less opportunity in the country, the trend of migrant Filipino workers will continue in the hope that their family and children will have a better future.

## *2.2 The Commission on Population*

The Philippines stands out among its Asian neighbor as being the only predominantly Christian nation in the region. In which as a result of three hundred years of Spanish colonization, at least 80 percent of the population are Roman Catholics.<sup>13</sup> Thus, since 1971 the Philippines had a formal population policy under Republic Act 6535 aimed at fertility reduction (Commission on Population 1994). Such resistance to a decrease in the growth rate through fertility reduction has partly traced to the strong lobby by the Roman Catholic Church against the use of artificial methods of contraception.<sup>14</sup>

The world had an overall 7.7 Billion population, while 107 million people are locating in the Philippines ranking number 13 in population growth as of 2018.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, with 4,695 babies born everyday or 206 every hour, POPCOM executive Director Juan Antonio Perez III said that an increase among Filipina women in their reproductive age with around 27.1 million which aged 15-49, about 30.5% of the population and with the increasing trends of early pregnancies among the age 0-14 years old, that would be around 33.11 million women in reproductive age as of 2018. There is also a higher number of pregnancy in less educated and inferior sectors.

The population remains predominantly young. Therefore, such youthful composition also is reflected in the dependency ratio, with a higher proportion of dependents being young below 14 years,<sup>16</sup> resulting in much higher dependency rates. Filipinos trapped in poverty and unable to escape in poor condition they experienced. Another year of increase in population may result in a lack of job opportunities locally, hence, leading to the rise in the unemployment rate and economic failures.

Also, due to high population growth, the government budget allocated for health and public services may not be enough to meet the demands of the growing nation. The projections since 2010 that the growth of population will increase was eventually decreasing as of 2018. Due to the increasing number of women and their family choosing family planning or spacing their

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<sup>13</sup> Phillips, D. (2000).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Commission on Population (2017).

<sup>16</sup> Phillips, D. (2000).

children, which is about 70% according to POPCOM. Though the population growth decreases, the number of female in reproductive age are still high. Hence, the government needs to consistently monitor the family program to stabilize and continue economic growth.

The government program for women targeted until 2020 is crucial for stable population growth as it aims to educate the younger generation about family planning and responsible parenthood. POPCOM believes that if the population continues to decrease, it will generate the proper ratio from the economic resources and support for the older generation instead of parents supporting their pregnant children. Thus, family planning seminars in communities and free access to artificial birth control like pills, condoms, IUD and other sources are just some of the activities that the program implemented to support its goal. POPCOM looks forward that it will eventually result in a much more healthy population, more job opportunities and a brighter future for the Filipinos.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church is still equating contraceptives with abortion. Although the Catholic Church is aware that with the increase in population, poverty will continue and problems having so many children will arise, using contraceptives is "unnatural" and against God's will for the human to propagate. In Catholicism, the word "birth control" unacceptable due to its moral stand that sex is for procreation and not to control what is Gods will. Thus, the Catholic Church find ways to help by promoting natural family planning for married couples. They work hard in educating Filipinos that everything foreign and unnatural will have side effects, especially to a woman's body using IUD and other contraceptives.

And while more Catholics and politicians take the side of the church, the preaching about the side effects of contraceptives is scarier than having 6 to 8 children to feed. The Church was willing to cuddle these consequences while encouraging women and their families to pray for guidance while they are looking for food and shelter for their children. Sometimes "beautiful words" or "*mabulaklak na salita*" that God loves the poor and the needy will at least compensate the unplanned babies of couples resulting in a more severe consequence. The children suffer most in the end, and the Catholic Church supports this suffering child through Church organizations who may end up adopting them, as their family cannot support their needs; Hence, this is just a temporary solution to the root of the problem.



## 3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

### 3.1 *The Church and the Population Issues*

The Philippines is known to be the only Christian nation in Asia. Thus, the faith of Filipino people is firmly in connection with the Church. Catholics should solve population issues based on moral grounds and by which it affects government lawmaking process and its implementation. Gorospe (1966, p.475) asserts that in the duty to build a nation, we are definitely against any importation of materials that will compromise the morality of the Filipinos especially the young.

Given this, Gorospe (1966) states a question if Filipinos should import and accept a policy about "irresponsible family planning" program from other Asian neighbors (the majority are not Christian) which will sabotage the morality of the Filipinos and which take no account the Christian conscience of its people. Moreover, birth control pills used as a cover-up for the "consequences of immorality." For instance, indecent affair or sex out of marriage and prostitution. Thus, according to Gorospe (1966, p.476) the use of human control, resulting in the realization of the human creative spirit, and this spiritual element in human response is fundamental in the improvement of any country.

#### 3.1.1 *The Catholic's Role on Contraceptive Debate*

Pope John XXVIII, in his encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra: On Recent Development of the Social Question in the Light of the Christian Teaching*, Pope John XXVIII states that; "contraception is immoral because he believes that it went against God's inviolate law; a law that protects the sanctity of human life and affirms God's role as the creator of life."<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, Kalbian says that the Pope called for more emphasis on the appreciation of "natural law" and "the plan of God" in our lives over human reason. Additionally, the pope convinced in the creativity and "ingenuity" of its people that are capable of ensuring that there will be sufficient natural resources for all. Alternatively, Kalbian (2014, p.145) added that in "*Sollicitudo rei socialis*<sup>18</sup>," marking the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum*, Pope John Paul II addresses the issue of the population as it is related to development. Thus, Pope John Paul

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<sup>17</sup> Kalbian, 2014:144.

<sup>18</sup> The Concern of the Church for the Social Order.

II uses the term "demographic problem" apart from the problem of overpopulation is also the growing problem of the decline of population in other regions, which is also a significant concern.

Moreover, Pope John Paul II uses the opportunity to frame birth control campaigns as "violations of respect for individual freedom" and calls this a new form of oppression. Specifically, policies were giving financial aid to developing countries on the condition that they will provide reproductive services. (Kalbian p.144, 2014)

In his encyclical letter Pope John Paul II explains the issue of population control in two ways:

- (1) Expanding it beyond overpopulation to also address the problem of "demographic decline."
- (2) Grounding opposition to birth control in a notion of "reproductive freedom," a term usually associated with birth control movement.<sup>19</sup>

Some developed countries that can control population but with concerns on globalization and global warming offer incentives to developing countries that will participate in population control management. These incentives, however, assumed by the Catholic Church is a new form of oppression, by which the developing countries like the Philippines have no other options but to agree with International bodies in exchange of financial help.

### **3.1.2 Environment Degradation**

According to Kalbian, there are two competing narratives which are both long histories-framed modern Catholic thinking about population and contraception. Kalbian explains that one of the stories is about the decreasing population especially in Europe because of the availability of contraception. On the other hand, "John Noonan rejects that contraception is the cause of declining in population because urbanization, later marriage age, a genetically linked decline in fertility, and the rise of rationalism. Additionally, he asserts that the spread of contraception has not motivated by political and social ideals but rather a widespread individual decision." (Kalbian p.143, 2014)

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<sup>19</sup> Kalbian, 2014:144.

The other narrative illustrates that while the population is increasing, the growth results in poverty in other nations. Also, it leads to environmental degradation. The continuous growth in the population may result in scarcity of the available resources of the planet. Ehrlich's view became the foundation of the idea in his 1968, "The Population Bomb" states that; unless deliberate measures were taken to slow down population growth, especially among the poor, the human race would run out of space and resources.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Kalbian (2014, p.135) indicates that this led to fear and worry about population growth and often a consequent unwillingness to recognize the complex factors that shape population growth. In favor of population control, believe that population growth will result in greater danger to present and future generations. Thus, a community of people who live in deplorable conditions still sees their children as their only hope for survival. Notably, Kalbian (2014, p.135) "according to Betsy Hartmann describes it as follows: more people equal fewer resources and more hunger, poverty, environmental degradation, and political instability." And view that the poor are responsible for their misery because of their inability to cooperate to control their population.

The government wants to make sure that there are programs that will protect the environment and in return will support the population. The Catholic Church shows consistency in its stand about the adverse effects of using artificial methods of population control. Furthermore, the Catholic Church believes that contraceptives can kill babies and can harm the health of women and even the environment. It is the historical root of Church's doctrine that contraception remains to be the center of the Catholic Church's teaching for married couples and encourage them to be open for life.

### **3.1.3 Poverty and Unemployment**

Few weeks before the end of my high school days, one of my classmates who was then the top student in our batch given a chance to speak in front of the class. While reading her speech, she was weeping as she can't continue her studies in college due to financial problems. She needed to work after graduation to help her parents support her six siblings. She made us realize how lucky we were and be thankful that most of us can go to college to pursue the career we want.

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<sup>20</sup> Kalbian, 2014:134.

Finishing studies and having a good education is very important in the Filipino family. It brings pride to every family and boosts the morale and self-confidence of the graduate while facing another chapter in their life. It also brings hope to every low-income family as this may help them get out of poverty. Every college graduate in the Philippines dreamt of getting the right job based on what they've learned in school. On the contrary, not every graduate student guarantees of getting a job. It is due to high rates of fresh graduates every year than the number of job openings which results in small chances are getting slimmer.

According to Newbold (2007, p.175) “that rapid population growth and high fertility seemingly have the greatest negative impact in the poorest countries where national institutions are weak (...) poorly developed markets or ineffectual government programs and leadership failed to protect, invest and build the basic infrastructures that are needed.” Companies used to take advantage of the large selection of applicants through employing those that is not over 25 yrs old, taller, fairer skin, college level, with pleasing personality and good looking. For business outsourcing companies like call centers, they are hiring fresh graduates to train them as call center agents catering the needs of people from outside the Philippines (e.g USA, Canada, Europe). With so many applicants but few companies, there is a very small chance to be hired even though the applicant is highly educated.

Therefore, with a young population profile, the attendant costs associated with health and education for children are high, reducing household savings and increasing government expenditures.<sup>21</sup> In countries with rapid population growth, labor markets are frequently unable to provide sufficient employment opportunities for the young, which leads to underemployment or unemployment.<sup>22</sup>

Being employed abroad is another option, but it is usually expensive which may lead to debt for families due to agency placement fees. Also, it requires a healthy heart and dedication because you have to be away from your family. In a country with rapid population growth, someone needs to be extra creative. Based on experience, I lost a job because the company I was working with closed its operations. It was a challenge looking for another opportunity

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<sup>21</sup> Newbold, 2007:173.

<sup>22</sup> Newbold, 2007:174.

due to qualifications and age limit. I was overqualified and my age of 26 years old was considered overaged by most of the companies I applied.

Hence, I managed a small home-based business, but the income I am getting was only enough for my personal needs. My family struggled to maintain all the expenses because of the inflation rate and our parents' medical needs. Because of limited opportunity and the high number of job seekers in the county, most need to take additional education to develop their skills as this might be the key to earn more money and work abroad. In this regard, we, Filipinos are known worldwide as workers in ships, restaurants, hospitals, hotels, call centers, and even household helpers overseas. It is a Filipino trait that is full of hope, hard work, and patient and ready to serve others.

High fertility inhibits household savings, forcing household expenditure on essential goods and services for a large number of people, while savings for education were postponed or neglected.<sup>23</sup> Due to poverty, one of my relatives is unable to finish her studies, and because of depression, it ended a too early pregnancy. The calling of her family for support is neglect as opportunities for employment in the country is limited given her current situation.

Thus, rapid population growth and high young dependency ratios lead to increase poverty and underemployment, weakening investment in human and physical assets such as education, institutions, family planning, household savings, decreasing ingenuity, and degrading resources. Therefore, worse, rapid population growth and weak economic growth appear to be self-reinforcing, making it more difficult for countries to motivate themselves out of this downward spiral given lack of well-developed institutions in many of the poorest countries.<sup>24</sup>

### ***3.2 The Church's Historical and Contextual Background***

According to Vitaliano Gorospe: "Responsible Parenthood is part of the total Christian approach to sexuality, marriage, and family is clear from the Church's latest pronouncement in the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church in the Modern World."<sup>25</sup> Additionally, Gorospe (1966, p.476) states that in relation on population management allowed by the Catholic Church, there is a question still being asked: "May a couple use the pill to

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<sup>23</sup> Newbold, 2007:174.

<sup>24</sup> Newbold, 2007:185.

<sup>25</sup> Gorospe, V. (1966).

limit the size of their family or to exercise Responsible Parenthood?” Moreover, Gorospe (1966, p.477) emphasizes that the same Constitution on the Church in the Modern World states that the steadfast should not choose any methods that will regulate “procreation” and is also opposite from the teaching of the Catholic Church and its divine law.

### 3.2.1 The Catholic Doctrine of Contraception

In 1966, the history of the Catholic doctrine of contraception published and titled, “John Noonan’s comprehensive account Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists.” Hence, it was then updated and re-issued in 1986. Kalbian (2014, p.11) indicates that this had been the shaping force of many scholarships on Catholicism and contraception. Furthermore, the doctrine of contraception has served as “a wall built around the norms of procreation, education, life, personality, and love.” Therefore, these five values embody the Catholic teachings about sexuality. However, Noonan notes that a wall can be either a bulwark or a prison-that is, can either serve to defend the values or it can inhibit them.<sup>26</sup>

Kalbian (2014, p.11-12) presented that Noonan saw Catholic prohibition as a prison. Nevertheless, "either as a bulwark or a prison, the wall had a pragmatic purpose." In other words, what mattered were the values around which the wall built. Thus, Noonan’s careful historical analysis reveals the historical roots of the threefold classification of contraception’s "evil as sexual sin, an act of violence, and as a grave injustice."<sup>27</sup> Kalbian (2014, p.30) summarized three possible frameworks based on John Noonan's structures of early Christian thinkers:

- Firstly, that contraception is evil because it violates nature by interfering with the natural order and processes of conception as ordained by God;
- Secondly, that contraception is immoral because it breaks the primary goods of marriage-especially, procreation; and
- Thirdly, that contraception is evil because it constitutes murder.

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<sup>26</sup> Kalbian, 2014:11.

<sup>27</sup> Kalbian, 2014:29.

It is a violation of God's will because man chooses his own will by using contraceptive methods. This frameworks regarding contraception have shaped the Church's teaching until this generation especially in the Philippines. The Church stands that divine law should be followed even in the modern age. Hence, any unnatural methods that disallow the continued natural will of God to proceed its intention are considered evil and sinful.

In *Catholics and Contraception* (2009), comprehensively presented that the Catholic Church's continued prohibition gave it a unique "cultural visibility." The Catholic Church uses its advantage in the context of sexual reproduction especially when they are a large religious majority. Hence, it indicates that the authoritative church specifies that it is the "physical act" of taking artificial contraception to prevent procreation which is exceptionally evil.

Additionally, in the language of Catholic moral theology, a couple using contraceptive methods during sexual intercourse is "objectively wrong" no matter what the intentions and situations are. Furthermore, this stand of the church suggests that even a married couple who is using condoms because one is HIV infected is still "morally wrong." Therefore, instead of recognizing how condoms might help in avoiding HIV/STI virus, the Church is much concerned that condoms might lead to a more irresponsible sexual behavior.

### **3.2.2 Natural Law and Procreation**

Love is the primary reason for God the Father why were justified through our faith in Jesus Christ. Testified by the gift of self by Jesus Christ. The love of God that opens the possibility for Jesus to offer his own life for humankind without restrictions. Moreover, God is Love and so powerful that this love molded in trinitarian love of the God our Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as a promise to guide us. Thus, human beings and children of God and by the suffering and death of Christ, we become one with Christ.

We have created in the image of God or "*Imago Dei*" in the same manner that we also had a relationship to our God as His children and also the capabilities to become parents like God who was our father. Additionally, as an image of God, the Church gave more importance to live the life that is according to the will of the Lord and not just by our means. Finally, as an obedient wife to his husband and his husband to care for his wife and as responsible parents to care for their children.

Kalbian (2014, p.18) notes that Thomas Aquinas set forth a valuable question in the "Summa Theologiae." That pertains to the relationship between the Decalogue and the natural law the "killing" and "family relations." That belongs in the category of the "law of nature" because they are things that "the natural reason of every human of its own accord and at once judges to be done or not to done."<sup>28</sup> Kalbian (2014, p.18-19) maintains that the Decalogue with natural law is valuable information of morality discussions in Catholicism because it emphasizes the Catholic belief that "God's law" is reasonable, objective, and knowable to all humans. Moreover, Thomas Aquinas and other medieval theologians hold that:

...Sexual intercourse was ordained by God to have only one legitimate end: "procreation." While, intercourse while pregnant, with the sterile, and with those were lacking procreative potential was classifying as "non-procreative," but that does not render it unnatural.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, Kalbian (2014, p.33) asserts that according to Thomas Aquinas, introducing semen into the genital part of women or "insemination is the act of nature." Then explained, non-proliferation or "non-procreative acts" still transmit the deposit of semen in the vagina is "unnatural," when insemination or introducing semen on the vagina cannot come into existence. Then again, this action raises a question about the meaning and significance of "procreation as an end." Hence, it appears more clearly to say that during a sexual act, insemination is the "goal," the depositing of male sperm in the woman's vagina and should not be taking away the male sperm from the woman's body while on the sexual act.

Therefore, Kalbian (2014, p.33) points out that according to Thomas Aquinas one way to describe the "natural law argument about procreative purpose" is to convey it as "the natural purposes of bodily organs." Finally, Thomas Aquinas solidifies the natural law argument in the context of marriage and sexuality, and it has continued to have high authority for the Catholic hierarchy.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Kalbian, 2014:18.

<sup>29</sup> Kalbian, 2014:33.

<sup>30</sup> Kalbian, 2014:33.

### 3.2.3 *Humanae Vitae* and Conjugal Love

According to Kalbian (2014, p.45) “*Humanae Vitae*” was issued less than three years after the close of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), which was characterized by openness to the modern world and a less authoritarian and hierarchical vision of the Church. Thus, abstaining from sex during fertile periods was considered acceptable; however, preventing conception in the act of sexual activity was not. The intention is of little significance in this evaluation, and in the language of Catholic moral theology, it is the act objectively construed that ultimately determines its moral status.<sup>31</sup>

Kalbian (2014, p.49) indicates, “procreation was the primary end of sex in marriage” (...) other ends, or purposes recognized to varying degrees, but always seen as secondary. In the Vatican II document of Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World “*Gaudium et Spes*,” promulgated by Pope Paul VI, two passages are of great importance to review:

"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, too be embodied in a rightly ordered manner, which it grow and ripen.<sup>32</sup>

Other than procreation, other essential purposes of marriage are openness to another goal of marital sex gives hopes to other Catholics for the Church to be more open to other methods. Kalbian (2014, p.49) contends, "that with procreation no longer the sole or primary purpose; couples might use contraceptive means that enabled them to engage in sex solely as an expression of their mutual love."

Significantly, Kalbian (2014, p.49) then points out *Humanae Vitae* outlines this renewed, integral vision of marriage and conjugal love through four characteristics "marks and demands of conjugal love." Though it is easy to identify *Humanae Vitae* as an "*anti-contraception document*," one must also remember its attempt to portray marital love as multi-dimensional. Finally, Kalbian (2014, p.50) asserts that despite this new rhetoric of

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<sup>31</sup> Kalbian, 2014:47.

<sup>32</sup> "Is NFP sinful?," Catholic News Agency.

conjugal love, *Humanae Vitae* rejected the use of artificial contraceptives, and that ban remains in place as of this day.

Nonetheless, Kalbian (2014, p.144) notes that Pope John Paul II view is part of what he refers to in an earlier encyclical letter as an "anti-life mentality." Thus, for Pope John Paul II, "this term describes what occurs when humans, who are overcome by fear and anxiety about the future of the human race, fail to have faith and confidence in God. Provided that, worries about overpopulation are, in his view, an example of this unbridled anxiety." Subsequently, "Pope Benedict XVI identifies the contradiction he sees in societies that claim to value human dignity and human rights yet also support what he views as an "anti-life actions" that for Benedict, "the primary evil of contraception is that it devalues life"<sup>33</sup>

Additionally, Pope Benedict restates developed countries use the "anti-birth mentality" which originated from John Paul II's, that to influenced the underdeveloped countries pretending of "cultural progress." Moreover, Pope Benedict offers an explicit account of a connection between a pro-life or acceptance-for-life mentality and economic development.<sup>34</sup> Kalbian (2014, p.147) illustrates this encyclical letter of Pope Benedict to transform an anti-contraception stance into a pro-human rights stance that expresses solidarity with the poor.

Also, Pope Benedict XVI "says that a rejection of artificial contraception is a more effective way to bring about social change. However, the Church replaces a focus on sex and harm-the two primary categories it uses to evaluate contraception-with a focus on social justice". Therefore, Benedict's explanation of the link between contraception and social justice is more theological and optimistic. Finally, it notes the positive benefits of natural family planning.<sup>35</sup>

### ***3.3 Political Environment Leading to Population Management***

The role of population in the development of policies or population management had been a discussion since the 1940s. These created different scholars to suggest strategies in promoting population control. One of which is Frank Furedi, who stated that there are three distinct stages about the role of population in the development of policies. Firstly, Kalbian (2014, p.140) says that Furedi claims that the process of development understood as "increased

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<sup>33</sup> Kalbian, 2014:145.

<sup>34</sup> Kalbian, 2014:145-146.

<sup>35</sup> Kalbian, 2014:147.

economic opportunities" and an "embrace of Western values," was viewed as "the only way" to resolve the perceived problem of rapid population growth, especially in societies in the Southern Hemisphere.

Nevertheless, when the economic growth continues, more people became busier in their jobs and with more things to do, population growth decrease also. Moreover, Frank Furedi strongly believes that:

...Population growth was a "symptom of poverty," which meant that it could resolve if economic development settled the severe poverty of many nations.<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, "Furedi identifies the relationship between development and population which began in 1955. Thus, Furedi establishes a point that development and population were reverse as a new theory gained ascendancy, one that claimed that population growth impeded development." Given this; population growth had to control before a country could hope to achieve healthy levels of economic development.<sup>37</sup>

However, "it reveals that population and development had decreased significantly since 1975. As a result, "the concept of development is replaced" by the idea of "women empowerment," especially on the increased access to reproductive services. Furthermore, these radical changes in the way Western policy analysts have understood the relationship between population and poverty correlate with how contemporary societies have responded to fears about overpopulation.<sup>38</sup>

Furedi state the importance of controlling the population to have a successful economic development especially for already impoverished countries. Emerging countries need to adopt western values to be able to achieve the same level of development. Additionally, empowering women by giving them freedom of choice through reproductive health while continuing the focus on economic growth. This concept by Furedi if applied in the Philippines might help eradicate the present poverty situation that families continue to experience.

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<sup>36</sup> Kalbian, 2014:140.

<sup>37</sup> Kalbian, p.140.

<sup>38</sup> Kalbian, p.140-141.

### 3.3.1 Birth Control & Economic Reforms on Fighting Poverty

Family planning and economic reforms are both suggested to help eliminate the poverty situation, but due to different views, some may disagree because of religious, social and political beliefs. One is Francis Galton, a distinguished pioneer in the eugenics movement, believes that humans must take control of breeding as a way to ensure a better and more prosperous world.<sup>39</sup>

Notably, “eugenicists”<sup>40</sup>Embraced this idea and argued that humanity would improve by encouraging and rewarding the breeding of those considered superior and discouraging the reproduction of those deemed inferior. The notion that birth control was not our business had replaced by the idea that family planning was an essential component of efforts to fight poverty both in the United States and abroad. With this in mind, the linkage between family planning and poverty ensured that the issue became the government's business.<sup>41</sup> Another vital personality and who wanted to end poverty and ensure the well being of women was, Margaret Sanger.<sup>42</sup> Sanger is considered to be the founder of the birth control movement in America and is responsible for coining the term “birth control,” and Sanger saw birth control as a "potential savior for the poor, especially women."

On the other hand, another person who's opposed to Sanger's proposal was John Ryan<sup>43</sup>. Hence, Ryan asserts that contraception was ultimately a violation of God's law that would also lead to negative consequences for society. Additionally, Ryan also claimed that poverty could overcome through “economic reforms” and could thus alleviate without requiring families to limit their size.<sup>44</sup> Although they had different opinions and ways to combat poverty, both of them were agreeing to achieve the same goal, which is “human justice” for all. Kalbian (2014, p.155) comments that a sense of justice motivated both Sanger and Ryan;

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<sup>39</sup> Kalbian, 2014 p.136.

<sup>40</sup> Eugenics, the selection of desired heritable characteristics to improve future generations, typically about humans.

<sup>41</sup> Kalbian, 2014:136-137.

<sup>42</sup> Margaret Sanger, original name Margaret Louisa Higgins, (born September 14, 1879, Corning, New York, U.S.—died September 6, 1966, Tucson, Arizona), founder of the birth control movement in the United States and an international leader in the field. Sanger credited with originating the term birth control.

<sup>43</sup> John Augustine Ryan (May 25,1869–September 16, 1945) was a Roman Catholic priest and a writer, educator, and social reformer.

<sup>44</sup> Kalbian, 2014:155.

both wanted humans to flourish, and both believed that communities had a responsibility to support that flourishing.

Moreover, Ryan's "insistence on social justice and his rejection of eugenics put him on the right side of history. Meanwhile Sanger, in spite of her embrace of eugenics, fought to make sure that the issue of family planning was for women's emancipation and well-being which was a point supported by contemporary feminist views. Although Sanger and Ryan shared a desire to help improve the living conditions of the poor, they diverged on how birth control could be used to achieve that goal."<sup>45</sup>

As a summary, Ryan emphasizes that poverty can solve through "economic reforms" and not through population control while for Sanger, family planning and birth control are the key and would be the first and most probable steps in achieving the economic development and greater future. Each needs thorough research and proper understanding of the causes of poverty and population growth to come up with appropriate solutions. For instance, to understand poverty, we need to check all the factors why it is happening. Likewise, to understand population growth, we need to look for other reasons why the populations are continuously growing in a specific area, especially when there is poor economic stability. Furthermore, some factors such as improved health services, cultural and religious beliefs may consider for this growth.

Consequently, the economic success of other countries is another issue because the reason might be rooted in their value system that is more open to change and not religiously motivated. Thus, accepting responsibility through the personal commitment of planning a small family may contribute to that success. Hence, links on the relationship between poverty, population, and economic development will always be evident regardless if others will say otherwise. Meanwhile, having the discipline and responsibility not just for ourselves but also with the resources available around us would be a prime factor for reaching this goal. Therefore, people need to be open for possibilities for changing their beliefs and develop a culture of openness for the betterment of society.

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<sup>45</sup> Kalbian, 2014:155.

### 3.3.2 The Positive Sides of Contraception

For Ryan, who opposed birth control to combat poverty, is more concern about economic development that will benefit all human beings if adequately managed. Thus, Ryan's views about economic reforms take longer time to see the results. Meanwhile, Margareth Sanger points out that women are the primary concern and primarily affected parties of birth control. Additionally, she contends that birth control would also improve sexual relations between men and women.

Moreover, instead of viewing poor women as victims, Sanger came to see them and their high birthrates as a problem that was also harmful to society.<sup>46</sup> Margareth Sanger used *four types of justifications* to support her views about the positive impact of birth control, particularly “*Contraception*”:

- (1) It enhances women’s sexual experiences.
- (2) It improves women’s health and well-being.
- (3) It helps to stabilize population growth, and
- (4) Contraception can advance eugenics goals.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, Sanger also went to great lengths to target the Catholic Church as the primary obstacle to efforts to change attitudes about fertility and reproduction.<sup>48</sup>

Given this, Sanger who understands the woman's needs had done a job that started to make women part of the solutions to the problems of poverty. Additionally, Sanger lifted the pride of women through diverting the victim's state of women into a view that women can contribute to solving population problems like poverty through spacing the number of their children. Also, Sanger even voiced her arguments to the powerful Church who indeed make it more complicated for women to practice birth control methods. As a realization, the Church is also the reason why there is poverty because of their restrictions on women's choices regarding their reproductive health.

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<sup>46</sup> Kalbian, 2014:149.

<sup>47</sup> Eugenics is a movement; the goal is at improving the genetic composition of the human race.

<sup>48</sup> Kalbian, 2014:150.

Another key to remember that Sanger says about birth control method is that the eugenics will also benefit from this. However, they might exclude those people with poor social background and low intelligence due to the risk of a burden to society. Thus, it also challenges human values that birth control method is not for the benefit of everyone's right to live but only for the rich ones. Therefore, this might be one of the many reasons why the Catholic Church and John Ryan rejected to approved the birth control methods.

### ***3.4 Towards Empowering Women and Children***

After many years of debates and confusion involving different scholars in population management, the population control debate reaches to the point that the International bodies are now engaged. Hence, I believe that a woman who is the primary concern and the main beneficiary of the program soon found another effective way to address the concern. International bodies are of great help for women to practice their right to choose. However, imposing restrictions to this matter had put weight on women's shoulder on what is best for them. Again, fertility behavior is generally interpreted to be personal and a private family affair but taken into public discussions.

The United Nations recognized the right of couples to determine the spacing and number of their children. Notably, abortion and contraceptive use are the critical factors of fertility in most developed countries. Additionally, increased access to birth control methods and the commitment to limit family size helped fertility reduction, and when these steps have been integrated into developing countries, decrease in fertility has been faster than that developed countries experienced during their fertility transition. Meanwhile, Newbold (2007, p.21) states that in Asia, Latin America and Africa, the use of contraceptives is lower than 10 percent. Instead, the regulation of fertility mostly lies with "traditional methods," and low incidence of contraceptive use attributing to "religious beliefs or societal values."

In comparison, "women in developed countries tend to start using birth control in their late teens or early twenties to delay childbearing and, following the birth of a child, to achieve the desired spacing. In the developing world, contraception use frequently starts after the desired family size achieved."<sup>49</sup> Thus, Newbold (2007, p.23) contends that the decision to control

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<sup>49</sup> Newbold, 2007:21.

fertility is based on the financial and social cost of raising a child as more children are produced and surviving into their reproductive years. Newbold (2007, p.23) quoted:

“Children in the developed world are not expected to contribute to the economic well being of the household or to support parents in their old age.”

Given this, Newbold (2007, p.23) states that they represent enormous direct costs associated with education, clothing, and food, along with the indirect or opportunity costs of having children at a time when the same dollar value could be spent on other consumer goods and demands for leisure time. Nonetheless, Newbold (2007, p.41) takes the view that there is a relationship between family-planning programs and the practice of some form of family planning, be it contraception use or some other method to limit and space pregnancies.

Furthermore, unmet needs are not just due to religious beliefs but also due to social issues. If families are poor and live in remote areas, the accessibility of obtaining family planning methods will be difficult and makes women feel left behind. Also, some women especially the poor and uneducated might need to get first the approval of their spouse or their church before availing the birth control methods. Some municipal government can pose a ban on the use of contraceptives due to religious influence. Making it illegal to purchase any contraceptives forced some women to seek help from quack doctors and to commit unlawful abortion. Hence, this made women more vulnerable to abuse.

Meanwhile, for developed countries with more birth control programs, the birth rates are lower compared to other developing countries where they struggle to have a family planning program. In other words, restrictions on contraceptive devices make women more suppress with their rights as they can't choose to undergo a family planning program. With all things considered, due to many obstacles, these poor, uneducated women in developing countries will continue to strive in a world where men and even their Church who had power over this programs will never reach and help them. "United Nations" which is a respectable international body and human right advocate representing the whole systems regardless of the religious background of countries, empowered women's Reproductive Policies. Therefore, it should be respected and followed regardless of their beliefs. Importantly, enabling their choices mean women are real protected and not by a set of beliefs imposed by hierarchy institutions.

### 3.4.1 Effective Public and Social Policy

Rebecca Todd Peters emphasizes the importance of providing health care policies for women. It will bring about balanced community growth and common good for the whole society. Significantly, imagine the benefits that will be created by just providing more options prioritizing women's reproductive health. A woman's body compared to a tree where everyone is getting its source to living fully. Everyone started and developed from our mother's womb.

It is where we grew and nourished before we finally came to see the world. Hence, it is crucial to keep a woman's body well fed and adequately cared of so every child growing inside its womb will be born healthy and free from any sickness. As the time comes, this child will be the hope for a great future and contribute to the community. Hence, a healthy society will generate wealth and produce another young generation. This link is indeed a cycle which rooted in the life inside a woman's womb.

Furthermore, Peters (2018, p.195) believes that "the mothers of these children are the real experts on the support. Hence, public-policy changes are needed to create safe and healthy families in the absence of social policy and political will to ensure that children adequately care from birth to age eighteen. Hence, "poverty" is a real moral factor that influences women's decisions about pregnancy.

Thus, according to Rebecca Todd Peters, the future development of public policy should focus on creating equal opportunity for all women to have real choices about having or not having a child." "For many poor women, young women, and women of color, this public policy should offer access to adequate resources to bear and raise children in safe and healthy communities." (Peters p.195, 2018)

Nonetheless, Peters (2018, p.195) emphasizes that among the resources these communities would offer are decent paid jobs; affordable healthcare, childcare, and housing; and quality public schools where children could grow and learn in safe and supportive communities. Therefore, a comprehensive and much-appreciated approach to women's health and well-being indeed attends to questions of unplanned birth, but also in the context of widely addressing women's health care needs. According to Peter (2018):

When we focus on to provide comprehensive reproductive health care to all women, we create a justice-oriented approach to our common good as a society.<sup>50</sup>

Peters “focusing on the need for effective sex education as well as access to all forms of contraception.” Thus, including both ‘girls and boys’ to have sex education for them to be aware of their bodily functions as well as the consequences of their actions if ever they are engaged in sexual intercourse. Moreover, Rebecca’s takes the view that it’s was not only women's obligation, but the boys are also the reason why there are unwanted pregnancies. (Peters 2018, p.195) Importantly, Peters (2018, p.196) states that this education must include medically and scientifically accurate information about sexual activity, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, and abortion.

Meanwhile, "abstinence should be included as an important option; sex education program should not rely exclusively on teaching abstinence." (Peters p. 196, 2018) Peters did not take out the abstinence method and even stated that it is still an important option for sex education. However, she also points out that the "abstinence-only program" is not practical due to a more increase in sexually transmitted diseases. Given this, instead of practicing abstinence from sex, the youth became more sexually active, and this became an issue. On the other hand, although it is an essential part of the program, abstinence-program itself should not be quoted as the only means to avoid sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancies or abortion.

Peters (2018) suggest that despite the challenges of informing the young adults and teens to wait for sex until marriage, they still could not wait. Therefore, we need to continue teaching them to respect their bodies and their sexuality and how to make the right decision about when and with whom to share their intimate moments. As well as, ensuring access to contraception without coercing women and instituting state control of women’s fertility.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, "public policy that supports the reproductive health and well-being of all women would include both free, universal access to all forms of preventive care. Provided that, fully funded and accessible, comprehensive reproductive health care for women at all stages of

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<sup>50</sup> Peters, 2018:195.

<sup>51</sup> Peters, 2018:196.

their reproductive lives is essential for the creation and maintenance of healthy and secure families.”<sup>52</sup>

As a summary, Peters put great importance on the mother's health in response to protecting life while a baby develops inside the womb. She also suggested for the cooperation of an open-minded community and government that support women to have resources to support their childbearing years. Additionally, financial stability created much more freedom and safety for each mother. The same applies to women choosing to have or not to have children. Moreover, emphasizing the formation of values for children and having severe and personalized approach addressing the moral values of their child. Furthermore, it demands a more safety, happy, and relaxed environment for women and children to live. This approach may not be straightforward, but the results will be rewarding not just for the mothers and their children but also the society that will benefit from having a healthy and loving generation.

### **3.4.2 The Sacred Nature of Parenting**

Christianity and Peters assert that motherhood is a covenant to the unborn child. It begins at the womb of a mother, a bond that requires extra love and care. Thus, this covenant requires a severe lifetime commitment in molding a child to know God and be a good Christian.

According to Theologian Kendra Hotz, motherhood is a calling-not for everybody. Hence, Peters and Kendra agreed that motherhood should not take lightly. Because it requires great responsibility, this responsibility is a vow before God and requires not just faith but proper planning emotionally and financially towards the future of a child. That is to say; it is more concerning to think the sacredness of being a parent, having a family and raising a child.

Peters (2018, p.171) asserts that most Christians recognize that sexual activity between committed partners is a way they share their love and deepen the ties of their relationship. Importantly, Peters acknowledges that raising children requires passion, commitment, time and resources. Moreover, bringing-up children should also be taken very seriously and involve someone a "desire" to be a parent. Therefore, becoming a parent is certainly not something that should either be forced on someone or viewed as "punishment for having sex."

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<sup>52</sup> Peters, 2018:197.

However, according to Peters, so many Christians continue to hold on to the belief that pregnancy is the price women must pay for sexual activity.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, “Theologian, Kendra Hotz emphasize that parenthood as a calling that not everyone is called to fulfill. As well as, engaged us to think beyond the personal happiness and satisfaction that raising children may bring and to think more deeply about whether the choice to have children are also a true expression of what God is doing through our lives in the world. Hotz emphasizes that; the choice of parenthood is wider than what pleases me. It is also about God’s reconciliation of all things.” (Peters p.174, 2018)

In other words, Peters (2018, p174) contends that "Christians regard parenting as a sacred trust in which parents enter a covenant relationship to care for, nurture, and bring up a child to love and know God."

Furthermore, it is a responsibility that requires full knowledge of the commitment and the sacrifices required. Then again, if a person is to honor God and the covenant, then any covenant commitment to parenting must be entered into willingly.<sup>54</sup> As Peters (2018, p. 175) claims that;

"We frame parenthood as a covenant relationship that parents establish with their children. Thus, recognizing the powerful social force that human relationships have in shaping personhood."

That is according to Peters (2018, p.175), the woman must consent to the relationship after recognizing her pregnancy. Hence, Peters (2018, p.175) says that a woman's acceptance of the pregnancy and her willingness to enter into a relationship with the pre-nate signals the beginning of her moral obligation to carry that particular pregnancy to term. Therefore, "to honor women’s moral wisdom to discern God’s calling, we must view a woman’s moral obligation to a "pre-nate as a covenant commitment or responsibility" that requires her consent for a severe decision morally and materially to herself and the baby.

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<sup>53</sup> Peters, 2018:171.

<sup>54</sup> Peters, 2018:174.

Significantly, Christians believe that we were created to live together in communities of love and support.”<sup>55</sup> Peters (2018, p.176) takes the view of characteristics of human dependence and interdependence that from this theological perspective, "life is not simply about being born, but also about being named, claimed and welcomed into the community and nurtured into being." Given this, women are also realistically assessing their capacity to do what is necessary to nurture and care for a pregnant body and the developing pre-nate.<sup>56</sup>

While every child has the right to be born, will it be more rightful to be born with dignity? As Peters puts more stress not just on becoming a mother but also the dignity of a child to be taken in a loving family that is emotionally, spiritually and financially ready to support the needs while the baby is growing. Therefore, with love from the family itself, a child would not just be so thankful for having loving parents who can support him but also be grateful to God for giving him a decent and happy life.

It's a way of involving the whole community in providing positive views for a pregnant woman to continue. If a woman feels safer and financially stable, supplied with a real and loving Christian community that takes good care of their brothers and sisters in Christ, this woman will never have a second thought of giving birth to another child because she knows that she is not alone in her responsibility. And fully supported by the community of real Christian believers who value life not only the child she will carry but also her health as a mother.

### **3.4.3 From Judgments to Reproductive Justice**

Whenever I see my father does the household chores, I feel sorry to say that my mother is a lot better in doing such. The same goes with my grandmother to whom I've seen a lot of hard work for cooking and preparing a basket full of food for my grandfather who works in the field. In the Philippines, women have a unique gender role in the family. However, this role is usually limited to an area where women do the duties inside their household, taking care of the husband, children, and even the extended families.

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<sup>55</sup> Peters, 2018:175-176.

<sup>56</sup> Peters, 2018:176.

A woman who realized that there are other potential skills she is capable of doing outside the family and not just being a housewife is sometimes accused of being disobedient by her own family. Thus, making the woman feel unwanted and guilty. Also, the priorities inside the home limit the capacity of some women to work outside even though she has a good intention to do so. This issue became more serious when a woman already has a baby as she is expected to care for the child but not forget about her dreams of being successful like men are.

A woman and her partner are considered to be responsible parents if they consider planning first and checking on their capabilities in raising a child rather than just giving a child a chance to live but providing an uncertain future for him. These moral obligations to plan carefully, according to Peters (2018, p.182) also engaged both women and her husband in a “meaningful moral discernment.” Peters (2018, p.182) states that the ability to discern good from evil and to act for the good is what we call the moral agency. Likewise, when women evaluate these possibilities, they consider many factors, including their financial ability to care for a child, and their ability to honor their health and well being, including their career and vocational plans.<sup>57</sup>

A man can put his career over other things, and that is culturally acceptable since men should be the one supporting the family. On the other hand, when a woman thinks that her career is important to her, people tend to see that woman to be selfish and irresponsible towards her children and family. Thus, this is one of the cultural expectations for a woman and her gender role, especially in a Christian background.

Therefore, according to Peters (2018, p.184), she believes that it is time to “*stop shaming women*” for being sexually active and start demanding that sex education materials include attention to how people can expect a healthy and safe relationship as a prerequisite for a sexual relationship. Additionally, Peters (2018, p.184) states that it is time to “*stop damning women*” for having repeat abortions and start ensuring that there is access to effective contraception, affordable housing, and healthcare, drug treatment programs, public transportation in their communities so that women can raise the children they have and the children they hope to have.

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<sup>57</sup> Peters, 2018:182.

Moreover, Peters (2018) believes that when we shift "*from judgment to justice*," we become the kind of community that helps women solve problems and live healthily and save lives rather than blaming and shaming them for decisions they make in good faith about their future and their families. Hence, this reimagined vision of childbearing is the foundation of an ethic of reproductive justice.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, Peters (2018, p.192) clarifies that this "justification approach" reaches us to focus on individual women's lives, situations, and morality. Peters (2018, p.192) summed up the teaching of the Bible about sin:

"A progressive Christian approach to thinking about sin in the Bible focuses less on the sins of individuals and more on the sinful and disordering nature of power structures that oppress people."

With this in mind, Peters takes the view that we must address as a society the social and cultural factors that might have an impact on women's decision-making. (Peters, 2018) In other words, it is a "moral issue" if women were deeply affected by their decisions about "unplanned pregnancies" whenever they see that the community lacks safety and stability. Nevertheless, Peters (2018, p.193) states that structuring our society to care for 'the least of these' is a moral issue.

Then again, this failure in our society hurts the ability of some women to turn unplanned pregnancies into wanted ones.<sup>59</sup> Importantly, Peters notes that "it should seek to create a social world where all women can make positive decisions about the size and shape of their families without being constrained by poverty, racial injustice, poor education, inadequate housing, low wages, or any other factors that prevent women from having real choices." (Peters, 2018)

While it is easy to see the faults of others especially the women's choice, Peters reminds us to refocus on improving the structure of our society especially those who always judge a woman because of her choices. Sometimes, the moral issue is the society itself and the lack of support to pregnant women. Nevertheless, a woman needs real help and not condemnation. This help should come from the authentic Christian community who help each other just like Christ's teaching in the Bible.

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<sup>58</sup> Peters, 2018:184.

<sup>59</sup> Peters, 2018:193.

In times of crisis and worries of giving birth, a woman needs assurance that she will be cared enough and should not force to doing something that she doesn't like. Furthermore, a woman should empower by the society in which she lives. She needs to feel the robust support system especially on raising a child. She needs guidance to all her decisions and should not be left behind. Therefore, a community that helps each other will make a woman feel more secured of becoming a mother and will embrace its beauty while seeing her child grow.

### *3.5 The International Sphere on Reproductive Justice*

Human development is one of the integral parts of the 1994 Cairo UNFPA Conference. Thus, from national interest, the conference redefined humanity's well being to women's rights. Moreover, redefining the purpose and target of the meeting gives hope to the reproductive rights of women. Also, the conference opened the possibilities for women to speak up and heard. The conference made a woman to feel and be part of the improvement of their health and family. Therefore, it is privileged that women are now the priority. After so many debates and barriers set by influential parties like the Catholic Church. Significantly, the 1994 UNFPA Cairo Conference redefined views of population growth (...) promoted investment in human development, particularly the status of women.<sup>60</sup> On the contrary, "abortion was not promoted" as a method of family planning.

Women's reproductive rights traveled a long journey. The reproductive health freedom that each woman is enjoying today is because of the women's activists who fought and voiced-out their concerns at the UN conference in Cairo. It opens a broader understanding of the situation of each woman globally and soon gave them options for reproductive health. Thus, the UN Conference in Cairo not just recognized the reproductive rights of women but the freedom to practice their choices for family planning that will benefit the economy. If a woman saw not only the helper of men but one of the main reasons for the economic development, women will gain respect and become the pride of each family.

Therefore, the "UN Conference in Cairo" became a model that shows that women should be respected on their reproductive choices so that they can also take care properly of their children, who will then take good care of the economy. Kalbian (2014, p.159) states that they succeeded in cementing the idea that information about and access to contraception is an essential element of women's overall health. Importantly, the conference promoted the view that "women's health was critical to development." Thus, contraceptives and access to abortion were not to control population but rather ways "to empower women."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Newbold, 2007:39.

<sup>61</sup> Kalbian, 2014:159.

### 3.5.1 The UN Conference and the Vatican

Kalbian (2014, p159) emphasizes that the ultimate objective of the Cairo Conference was to empower women to make better reproductive choices, which would also be suitable for economic development. But Pope John Paul II clearly stated the Catholic Church's opposition to artificial contraception. Additionally, Pope Paul II was worried about coercive measures such as "forced sterilization." In particular, was the inclusion of abortion as a tool for population control. (Kalbian 2014, p.157)

According to Pope John Paul II, they rejected the view of humanity that based on individual autonomy, a belief that the conservative Catholic commentator George Weigel claims as to the core philosophical concept at the heart of Cairo conference's vision.<sup>62</sup> The Vatican Church strongly opposed that the way, which the plans emphasized that reproductive freedom is a convenient way to achieve this justice.<sup>63</sup> Another key to remember, the UN didn't guarantee that population control would result in economic success or eradicate poverty.

Instead, the Vatican asserts that improvement of economic stability will eradicate poverty and the development of the lives of people will be a factor in slowing down population growth. Consequently, Kalbian (2014, p.159) states that the UN firmly "rejects any coercive population policies," arguing instead that the minimal responsibility of government is to ensure access to information and services. Therefore, the state should legalize and secure access to information. Nevertheless, the plans clearly emphasize that family planning is ultimately a matter of individual choice because access to these services is primarily a matter of health.<sup>64</sup>

Other than poverty and economic growth, there is another essential matter to discuss, and that is the freedom of choices of women and their reproductive rights. While everyone was busy creating and improving economic growth. Suddenly, it diverted into more critical matter than finances, and that is on empowering women through family planning. Meanwhile, the Catholic Church worries that policymakers and politicians might abuse the policies regarding reproductive health. For instance, it is forcing population policies, like abortions and other

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<sup>62</sup> Kalbian, 2014:158.

<sup>63</sup> Kalbian, 2014:159.

<sup>64</sup> Kalbian, 2014:160.

contraceptives against its will. The Vatican and the UN hold substantially different views about what is at stake in the activity of artificial reproduction.<sup>65</sup>

Freedom of choice and reproductive rights of women are an essential matter to discuss other than poverty and economic growth. While creating and improving policies for economic growth, suddenly, it diverted into a more critical issue than finances, and that is empowering women through family planning. On the other hand, the Catholic Church worries that policymakers and politicians might abuse the policies regarding reproductive health. For instance, it is forcing population policies like abortion and other contraceptives against the people's will. Meanwhile, the UN guarantees that there will be no coercive measures.

The government bodies should educate and provide information about families' reproductive choices. The Catholic Church knows that they can't block this policy anymore and the only thing they can do is to make sure that the reproductive policies should not force into peoples' lives. According to the UN, abortion is not part of the family planning program. Thus, this favored the Catholic Church. UN and the Vatican Church may not agree on some policies about reproductive health; the UN stands regarding reproductive rights give women justice and individual freedom to choose which I believe is also a Christian way to do.

### **3.5.2 The Future of Population Policies: Quality of Life**

United Nations states that as the economy grows and people become more engaged in the working environment, population growth impacted. People divert their duties to improve their financial stability rather than making babies, thus, the couple plan the size of their family not just because of economic reason but also for them to devote time to each member of the family. Also, because of financial stability, the couple will have some time to enjoy the fruit of their labor.

When a society is economically productive, it increases the business growth of the nation. However, this can only gain through the cooperation of the influencing Church and the policymakers of the government. Each of them has a role in making it happen but blocked by Christian values and cultural beliefs. Hence, family planning methods maybe never attained due to conflicting viewpoints and ideologies.

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<sup>65</sup> Kalbian, 2014:161.

Newbold (2007, p.26) states that family planning was, at first seen as a long-term objective. Thus, expecting that while the quality of life improves, "reductions in fertility" will follow. Particularly, family-planning programs have succeeded in "altering fertility behavior" when adequately instituted, increasing the use of contraceptive methods and contributing to declines in fertility.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Newbold (2007, p.29) believes that successful programs have explicitly recognized that a reduction in productivity is as dependent on individual and societal motivations as it is on technology and the government.

... We realized that for family planning programs to succeed, they must work to change the context of the social and cultural environment to encourage smaller families.<sup>67</sup>

To give an illustration "population policy will need to extend beyond family planning to encompass a variety of segments within the society. As well as, the provision of health care, the removal of socioeconomic barriers to contraceptive use, the involvement of religious leaders, the involvement of males (as husbands and fathers), and synergy between development initiatives, such as literacy and the communications infrastructure". (Newbold p.30, 2007)

As a summary, the smaller the family, the better the quality-life can achieve. Furthermore, society and individual should be motivated when choosing a family planning method. It means that every person in the community is cooperative and involved to achieve economic stability. Each should have the motivation to plan well before having a family to have a better quality of life.

Family planning is a critical step for a better and quality life. Planning the size of the family based on financial stability can create a better future for the child. Also, the couple can provide quality time and support each child's emotional needs. Also, it can strengthen the relationship of the couple as each can devote particular time for each other. It is also a must that a wife and her husband agree on what family planning approach should take; otherwise, it will be a problem. Planning can prevent any issues in the future. It can also lay out a plan for a great future.

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<sup>66</sup> Newbold, 2007:28-29.

<sup>67</sup> Newbold, 2007:30.

### ***3.6 Reframing Pro-Life and Finding Common Ground***

It is natural for a human to have a second thought about their lives and think of a bright future. Each has an inner voice helping to choose what is the best to do. According to Schlesinger (2017, p.94) both in the secular and religious realms, we value other qualities as part of a fulfilled life – “life concerns are more than just existence.” In the book of Galatians 5:1 and Luke 4:18-19 stated that these are the conditions of life:

"Freedom in Christ; good news to the poor, release to the prisoned, recovery of sight to the blind, letting the oppressed free, and the proclamation of the jubilee year."

Similarly, Jesus proclaimed this while he was doing His ministry for the poor, oppressed, the sick, and women in desperate situations. Jesus lives with poor people while he performed healing and gave them hope under the oppressive society. Thus, Jesus went through the same struggles as the people he met and together with His disciples. But the good news of hope, love, and freedom gives grace to humanity's sinful nature.

According to Schlesinger (2017, p.94), these are not just spiritual realities but also physical realities: relief from economic poverty, freedom from captivity, and health for the sick. Moreover, Jesus set an example through his ministry of "healing, feeding, of challenging the dominant oppressive powers of his day," and even giving his precious life.

Additionally, Jesus was more concern with oppressed people who are more oppressed by the people in position. Hence, Jesus is the voice of oppressed people who are not helped but condemned. Furthermore, this is an abundant life for which Jesus was born, lived, died and resurrected.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, Schlesinger (2017, p.95) states that a consistent pro-life ethic should be concerned with eliminating obstacles to human flourishing in all its forms, as laid in Scriptures.

Another key to remember, any circumstances that directly take away from human flourishing and fulfillment, from that abundant life that Jesus promised are all anti-life. Pro-life means are making society safe for women and taking steps so that we leave a healthy planet for the

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<sup>68</sup> Schlesinger, 2017:94-95.

generations after us.<sup>69</sup> Thus, it includes everyone's responsibility; the mother should also take importance beside her baby and the environment that is crucial for the future. It requires involvement to think about not just the present but the prospect of everyone. It makes us feel more a loving community of Christian believers that Jesus first thought us to love one another without reservations.

Notably, "being pro-choice is defending a woman's choice." Therefore, if a child conceived from rape and the mother wants to keep it, then that choice should be respected and supported by a woman's community. Then again, "abstinence-only education" has proven to be "ineffective" at keeping young people from having sex. Given this, a pro-life ethic should support the whole human person, including their sexuality, contains access to accurate and balanced sex education, including information about contraception and condoms.<sup>70</sup>

The Bible is enough to educate us on how to forgive and love one another. It is the beauty of Christianity as there is more room given for forgiveness to avoid revenge and anger. Forcing a woman to do something that is against her will is a form of oppression. We have to consider her intention and the reason why she wanted to choose artificial contraception. Jesus, as the Son of God, in his time didn't bother to answer the questions of Pharisees and Sadducee's even though their concerns are only a trap against Jesus.

Why can't we be more open to asking these women on what we can do about their situation? Thus, Jesus teaches us how to care for the least of his people and not to throw stones for the sinners or condemn them. By showing love and care, Jesus made them change their lives for the better without forcing them, because "Jesus takes time to listen." For example, when Jesus talks with a Samaritan woman. Because of the pain and frustrations in the world, we sometimes forget why Pharisees and Sadducee's used to target Jesus.

We don't want to be those pretending to be religious and following the law of God in words but not in hearts and actions. As Christians, I believe that the only way to overcome the problems of women choosing to abort their babies or to families who wish to control it using unnatural method is only by reassuring them of true love and care. The husband, the closest

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<sup>69</sup> Schlesinger, 2017:97.

<sup>70</sup> Schlesinger, 2017:103-104.

family and friends and the whole community of the church should act as a support system to a woman and a child for them to have a fulfilling life.

Manninen (2014, p.134) summed up that the role of raising children are a communal duty: “The common goal should be to help build a society that is conducive to assisting women with unintended pregnancies to keep and raise their infants if this is what they choose to do.” Importantly, allow them to heal by coming home to the love of God and provide support and assistance to help the woman raise her child. Therefore, when Christians show love and care to the people in despair, we are fulfilling what Jesus taught us in the first place.

### **3.6.1 Pro-Choice means Respecting Choices**

Women's freedom of choice divided between the view of pro-life and anti-life. Thus, if I say I am pro-choice, some conservatives would label me as anti-life or pro-abortion even though I believe in protecting someone else's life. It varies from different perspectives as this is a sensitive matter regarding women's decisions on their reproductive health. Today, women are more open to possibilities about family planning and even abortion. For a poor mother who is unsure of what life to give her child may show her love in a way that some may not agree. The fear of giving the child a desperate life may lead a mother to perform the act of ending the baby's life inside her womb through abortion. Hence, Manninen (2014) keeps on reminding women to value fetuses and not treat it as only a clump of blood

The terms “pro-choice and pro-abortion” were described in the same manner. Nevertheless, according to Manninen (2014), they are almost different. Thus, the terms pro-choice means just what it says: it is about giving women a choice between continuing a pregnancy than either raising the child or giving it up for adoption or having an abortion. Hence, the term pro-abortion denotes someone who encourages and celebrates abortion and who desires to see women choose it over other options.<sup>71</sup> Manninen (2014, p.90) claims that:

“Evidence that being pro-choice means respecting choice, rather than encouraging or celebrating abortion, can be found in abortion providers treatment of the issue.”

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<sup>71</sup> Manninen, 2014:90.

That is to say, many women choose abortion out of respect and care for the fetus itself. Consequently, they believe that they are “making the most responsible, caring, and appropriate decisions about the interconnected lives of themselves and the lives within them.”<sup>72</sup> Therefore, the point is "not to require women to grieve or to make them feel guilty or morally remiss if they do not, but to allow women who do grieve the opportunity to do openly and honestly without fear of criticism or belittlement." (Manninen p.98, 2014)

Rather, pro-choice advocates who are confident in their position can safely acknowledge that abortion involves the death of a nascent human being and a potential person. That fetuses are unlike any other part of a woman’s body, that many women seeking an abortion acknowledge the fetus’s value, and that some do feel grief and loss (though not necessarily regret) after the abortion.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, there is violence in abortion, especially in second-trimester procedures. However, "if the pro-choice community does not speak honestly about the violence of abortion, it is just as guilty as the anti-choice community of dishonesty and distortion of reality." (Manninen p.103, 2014) Therefore, it is time that pro-choice advocates reclaim the moral high ground that allows them to demonstrate respect both for women's reproductive choices and for life may be a sacrifice as a result of those choices.<sup>74</sup>

### **3.6.2 Theology on Reproductive Justice: To be a Blessing to Others**

The Filipino’s believes that children are blessings from God. It is a symbolical blessing of God and for Filipino’s an answered prayer that means they are also dear to God. However, according to Peters, this is not always the case. Instead, we should be a blessing to others instead of thinking that babies are blessings. What's more is after the baby was born in a bigger-poor family, the family struggles for another baby. The "baby-blessing" is now turning to another word "responsibility." A big responsibility which does not fully understand that it is included together when the baby was born.

Sometimes, while Filipino parents scold their children, I could hear the word “ikaw ata ang malas sa buhay ko" means "maybe you're the reason for my bad luck" which is wrong because bad luck is the opposite of blessing. The blessing they thought before was now a curse not because God punished them but because they were not aware of the real responsibility. As a

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<sup>72</sup> Manninen, 2014:95-96.

<sup>73</sup> Manninen, 2014:101-102.

<sup>74</sup> Manninen, 2014:104.

result, this arguing family makes their life more complicated and more unsatisfactory. Even though it happens every day, the Catholic Church will still preach that Jesus loves the poor and the children. The church was diverting the main reason from parent's irresponsible decisions to praying for miracles instead of doing something to improve their situation.

According to Peters (2018, p.202), "we need to let go of our belief that each pregnancy is a gift from God if we are to develop a theology of reproductive justice that centers to women's sexuality and their moral agency as the most relevant theological issues." Thus, a theology of reproductive justice also undercuts the tendency to consider children as commodities, even if the gift supposedly comes from God. Children bless us with their presence in our lives, but our capitalist-influenced understanding of blessing has distorted our theological understanding of the Bible.<sup>75</sup>

In the Bible, when God calls Abraham away from his father's home and sends him to a new land, God tells Abraham, "I will bless you, and make your name great so that you will be a blessing."<sup>76</sup> In this biblical story, the sign of God's blessing is that Abraham is to "be a blessing" to others. With this in mind, we think about blessing in the context of pregnancy and children; we need to think of it as "a verb, not a noun." Additionally, blessings are "not possessions." Having said that, "the mere existence of our children are not a blessing, either. Furthermore, to be a blessing is to act in ways that bring joy, care, comfort, and honor to one another." (Peters p.205, 2018) Moreover, our children are blessings because they bring this joy and love into our lives, which is part of human flourishing. Thus, the fertilization of an egg with sperm is a biological fact, not a blessing.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, Peters (2018, p.204) also emphasizes the vital factor in reproductive justice:

...Women recognize as the agents of their own lives with the capacity to engage in moral reasoning supported by their communities, including their communities of faith.

Therefore, in the light of the theological importance of supporting women's ability to discern and live in their vocational and relational calling, women's capacity to control their fertility is a moral good. Peters asserts her argument that abortion can be a moral right does not

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<sup>75</sup> Peters, 2018:202.

<sup>76</sup> Gen 12:2.

<sup>77</sup> Peters, 2018:202-203.

necessarily mean that abortion is always a moral good.<sup>78</sup> The emotional response to abortion itself ranges from happiness to sorrow. On the contrary, in the case where abortion is not a moral good, the abortion may have been coerced, or a woman may believe that what she is doing is morally wrong in the light of her values and religious beliefs. Therefore, an ethic of reproductive justice seeks to ensure that no woman is pressured or coerced into making any decisions, including abortion against her will.<sup>79</sup>

Granted that, for some women, this is their source of healing and life-giving experience. It also allows some women to be responsible parents to the children they already have if they had more options to choose. Additionally, it will enable women to live life by finishing their education and becoming responsible adults. As well as, for other women who are not open for parenthood or not being pregnant helps maintain the thin thread of sanity that allows them to survive amid mental illness, poverty, divorce, domestic violence, or a host of other challenges. Therefore, it takes moral courage to ignore the bullies and hate-mongers that seek to shame you for your decision. Thus, to reject the Christians who want to make you feel guilty for making a potentially life-defining decision that you know is right with God.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Peters, 2018:205.

<sup>79</sup> Peters, 2018:205-206.

<sup>80</sup> Peters, 2018:206.



## 4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 *Population Issues*

#### 4.1.1 *Poverty and Corruption*

As of December 2018 and according to the Commission on Population (POPCOM) using data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the Philippine population is now 107,190,081.<sup>81</sup> With the speed of population growth in the Philippines, the effects of this tremendous growth are visible effectiveness of government policies in maintaining peace and order. In maintaining peace and order, the Filipino people should participate and need to be aware of the ways to eradicate or at least avoid more negative effects in their lives due to an increasing number of dependents. However, the Catholic would blame corruption in government other than population growth, which is for them, is the main reason for poverty. Thus, the pointing fingers worsen the situation of starving Filipino's because it delays the real solution to the problem.

According to the Catholic Church, instead of blaming the population explosion, the main focus should be on the irresponsible governance of the state that resulted in corruption and mismanagement of wealth. Additionally, crimes of politicians are to be taken more in concern since this is the leading cause of poverty and not promoting programs to encourage people about contraception in which the Church feared will create an immoral society. The Catholic Church must have been very firm on doing its duty as the guardian of morality in the Philippines. Moreover, they maintained the natural method of family planning for Filipino families to manage their birth rate. Likewise, some Filipino family also chooses to stay with the stand of the church against artificial methods of family planning.

I believe that poverty and corruption correlated and relatively the result of the other. Both are just negative consequences of undisciplined population, and therefore poverty and corruption work hand in hand. Therefore, without corrupt government, there will be no poor people, and without poverty, no one will have the temptation to steal for survival. And when the population is uncontrolled and without proper programs to handle the increasing population growth. Nonetheless, more challenges on management need to met and the unpreparedness

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<sup>81</sup> <http://www.popcom.gov.ph/>.

and lack of sense of seeing the actual problem will result in a more chaotic society which is already victims of inefficiency and lack of right information. In the Philippines, these challenges are more complicated due to the unwillingness of the church to coordinate with government programs on birth control.

They added that the church also influenced the Filipino people when some choose to be silent because of public stigma. I believe that majority of Filipino people are not adequately informed about the dangers of too many children in their health and the demands of social, emotional and financial needs of their family and most importantly their children. Not properly coordinating creates this endless blaming on which is the real primary cause of all these interconnected problems. And admitting that there is a need for population management in the Philippines. In this case, it's challenging it's morality, tradition, culture, religiosity and human rights. Moreover, it deepens more to other more severe and damaging effects of too many people to feed while the sources or provider is getting lesser.

Furthermore, local farmers were unable to sustain their produce due to an earthquake and tropical cyclone that happens 6-8 times a year from September 2018 to February 2019.<sup>82</sup> With an unstable climate and with more than 107 million people and still growing, the effects stretch on food supply for the more significant demands of the nation. Thus, this time the most affected ones were the poor Filipino families who believe there's nothing wrong with their decisions of having many children because it is the fault of the government who can't provide securities for them.

However, the food crisis was not a problem during my grandfather's farming years. As I remember, there's enough food for every table, and they even had something to share with neighbors. It is hard work to be a farmer, but it helps to feed large families with extra for the next following months. Unfortunately, in this day, I was a witness of how rice became so expensive due to its high demand but fewer farmers. As a result, the food crisis had resulted in inflation, and this creates more problems that make it more difficult for an already problematic Filipino family to cope.

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<sup>82</sup> retrieved 9 April 2019 from <http://bagong.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/climate/tropical-cyclone-information>.

#### 4.1.2 Inflation and Food Management Crisis

With two million children born every year, the UN warns that by 2025 the Philippines will not have enough resources to feed its population.<sup>83</sup> It is alarming that in a few years from now if the Philippines don't take any steps before the very worst situation on the food crisis will happen. The Filipino people will starve and as more consequences are the future of these children will grow malnourished, wretched and much more miserable than their parents. According to IBON Foundation, a non-stock non-profit development organization in the Philippines. About 6.4 % inflation hits poorest Filipinos the most. Research group IBON estimates that the most deprived 60 million Filipinos have suffered income losses of anywhere from Php993 (18.85 USD) to as much as Php 2,715 (51.55 USD) due to worsening inflation since the start of 2018.

About 40% of Filipino's consumes on food.<sup>84</sup> Hence, rice is one of the significant sources of energy of Filipino's. Additionally, it is a staple food that we eat on almost every meal. With this in mind, the province of Tarlac is considered one of the top rice producers in Central Luzon. Tarlac is an Agricultural based economy, located in the heart of Central Luzon. The 112,997.57 hectares of land are mainly on agricultural production. Rice and Corn are the top 2 commodities planted in the province with 2 to 3 cropping a year.<sup>85</sup> Even there are farmers and farmlands; the rice crisis still hit the Philippines. For instance, in the southern part, Zamboanga City declared calamity state due to rice shortages. Some NGO's suggest substituting corn from rice to cope the hunger. On the other hand, President Rodrigo Duterte had instructed to import rice to minimize the problem.

The Philippine local rice or known as NFA-Rice was the cheapest in the market. NF-rice is price at 27php (0.51 USD) per kilo and the rice which ordinary Filipino can afford. Notably, inflation had a domino effect on purchasing power between cheaper local rice and quality, but more expensive imported rice produce. Moreover, the rice crisis also leads to less production of other agriculture crops due to inflation. Significantly, with less power to buy, the ordinary

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<sup>83</sup> The Population Debate <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/>.

<sup>84</sup> <http://ibon.org>.

<sup>85</sup> <http://tarlac.com.ph/executive-agenda/executive-summary/>.

Filipino is limit to purchase food with nutritional value. Presumably, this is because of both a preference for a diet short in protein and some other elements because of low incomes.<sup>86</sup>

Therefore, low-income families would go for the cheaper version of food that could share with a larger family. For instance, instant noodle soup and a can of sardines. Than buying expensive meat or other fresh produce that is more expensive and so little to share for a big family. Hunt confirms that the problem is in "large families."(Hunt C., 1992) In extreme cases in the most remote areas in the Philippine, a family would even have the possibility to eat rice only "once a year" due to extreme poverty and lack of education.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, it is quite alarming especially children when they are not well fed with enough nutrition they need. It will result in an inability to perform well in school due to inadequate vitamins kids required. And with the growing issues in malnutrition, it becomes more burdens to the poor Filipino's to find solutions to an almost impossible situation. That whether rice self-sufficiency can continue with a population ten times that are present, is another question.<sup>88</sup> Aside from lack of nutrition, more significant families health also challenges from not eating the proper diet. Moreover, for a large family whose income was never enough to buy food will forcibly stretch their senses to be less motivated but insecure of their future.

Furthermore, medication and doctor fees are not cheap in the Philippines and added that pharmaceutical products are one of the expensive in Asia. In Asia, the Philippines are among the countries with the highest prices of medicines. Which means the cost of medication is far beyond the reach of many.<sup>89</sup> Hence, with this dangerous healthcare condition in the country. Experts noted that the high cost of medicines is one of the leading factors as to why most Filipinos left themselves in a much more miserable state of waiting for a painful death. And hoping that someday the government will improve and gave them another chance of proper, decent and even free medication. For a Catholic Filipino, we carry this load as a symbol of a heavy cross. And for a family already struggling to get nutrition and now to be checked because of their health issues.

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<sup>86</sup> Hunt, C. (1992).

<sup>87</sup> David, K. (2012) GMA Documentaries "Minsan Sa Isang Taon".

<sup>88</sup> Hunt, C. (1992).

<sup>89</sup> commented by Tomas Marcelo Agana III, president, and CEO of Pharex HealthCorp.

Being penniless and in large families is not an excuse for someone to be exempt from being sick. Thus, hospitalization and proper medication is also another factor due to the incapacity of the government to finance the health system that will somewhat benefit the poor Filipino families. The World Health Organization (WHO) classifies the Philippines as one of the top countries where less than 30 percent of its population have regular access to essential drugs. These means that almost 70 percent of Filipinos deprived of the medicines they need for faster health recovery,<sup>90</sup> with the food shortages problems and inflation. Therefore, the demand of the population that is proliferating also requires more hospitals and medical facilities to attend their needs.

Twenty years ago I experienced to take my sick mother in a government hospital because she needs surgery. A long queue is being there from 6 am to 13-16 in the afternoon. With us is those other many poor people in the Philippines need an affordable medical checkup. And yet, we're not that poor, but still, we can't afford. We need more hospitals than shopping malls, but poverty is also stopping people from going to doctors because some food is more important than medicine. Thus, if we didn't take chances to be check-up in the government hospital, my parent's property will need to be sold, and we might be in massive debt afterward. And whenever we were at the Philippine General Hospital<sup>91</sup> for a check-up, I feel sad for older patients that even they are so old, and on wheelchair still need to go through the queue.

And after two years my mother was finally admitted to the hospital for an operation. And while waiting for her turn to the operation room, we need to stay in the ward area sharing with other 12 or more patients. And during sleeping hours, the other helper of patients (1 for each) and I was only allowed to sleep beside the bed with flat carton box at the bottom and a piece of blanket, no extra bed for me. As we stay in the hospital ward, I developed a friendship with other patients and their carers. We share stories about why they are there and from those moments, I learned so much from that experience. I became more thankful because I know that after this we can go back to our regular routines. And grateful that my parents didn't have more children or else it will be impossible for us to get through. It's a long journey, and after several years I promise to myself to work hard and hopefully we don't go back to that

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<sup>90</sup> <http://www.pchrd.dost.gov.ph/index.php/news/library-health-news/5601-almost-70-filipinos-are-deprived-of-needed-medicines>.

<sup>91</sup> PGH is the most prominent modern government hospital in the Philippines, servicing more than 600,000 patients annually.

government hospital again. But if ever that my parents need medical assistance, I'll make sure this time I will bring them to private clinics to avoid too much stress.

Because of poverty and inflation, most families fall short in their budget and some members choose to migrate from urban to rural areas to work. And as people migrate to other places, the need for more shelter is also in demand. As a result, some land area dedicated to rice plantation succeeded by subdivisions, housing projects, factories and, another establishment. Therefore, the increase in population pressure continued as the population diverted into other areas as more people would also choose to reside in those places permanently. The demand for housing is increasing but can a poor Filipino with so many children can afford to buy it?

For this reason, some families forced themselves to live in a desperate situation; they live illegally to avoid fees and government taxes. In return, if they have a child, these children are also molded into a society where it is unsafe and dangerous for them. And even in squatter's area, people need to survive every day. Though illegal settlers still had the free will to choose between violence and peaceful living, but sadly due to bad surroundings, it's not easy to choose the best for the family.

### **4.1.3 Agricultural Land and Housing Crisis**

About 20 years ago, I used to live in my lovely community called Lawang Bato<sup>92</sup>. Hence, with fewer populations and houses it was a clean and peaceful area. Thus, bamboo trees and tamarind trees are there at our backyard and also on my neighbors. Added the beauty of large rice plantation and mango trees whenever I walk by foot from the school to my home.

Additionally, I find myself in peace mesmerizing the simplicity of where I used to grow as a child. Moreover, I also find myself living in a safe environment with so many greens and courteous people around me. Therefore, I can say that it was the most reliable time when fewer people are living there. And every time there is a community church program like fiestas. More often, people are well coordinate for continued cleanliness of the whole barangay. Additionally, I can see and feel in those faces that all are happy to clean their backyard and celebrate with the feast of our Catholic tradition.

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<sup>92</sup> Lawang Bato, is a barangay in Valenzuela, Metro Manila.

Also, rice farming is a source of living. However, I could say that there is less money to buy clothes and other vanity things, but food is never a shortage. The reason was that almost every household had a small vegetable garden in their backyard. Thus, people do more work in the garden. Flowering plants are also prevalent, also as an agent to divide the property. For example, is "Santan" plants; it serves as a nicely arranged bush or an instant wall by different household. Although meat products from pigs and cow are not abundant, it is occasionally available during fiestas. Food is quite a lot and more than enough to feed more people. Therefore during those days, I believe that the others and we have plenty to eat healthy and fresh produce. Hence, sharing cooked food is also common to see during that time. Even, when the season of harvest comes, I can smell the breeze of rice crops in the air.

My late grandfather both from the side of my mother and father are farmers. Moreover, as a child, I saw how much hard work they put on cultivating rice for the Filipino table. My grandfathers did not just plant rice but also other vegetable crops. They even had cows, chickens, and goat. And while the streams are clean, catching fresh fish is easy too. Some neighbors had chickens, pigs, and goose. Therefore, It was a moment of simplicity but abundant food experience as I can say.

However, after several years, those farms were left unattended because the farmers are getting older and some even died, and the real owners of the farms sold it to a Chinese businessman. In the end, the landowners also give a share to their farmers like my grandfathers. My parents got a percentage of the land enough for us to build our home in it plus an extra lot for our apartment business and convenience store. There were few rice fields left, but very few young men would like to be a farmer and inherit the farming skills. Majority of sons of farmers sell their inherited land to have easy money.

During those times huge families are exceptional. Its because each family owned lots and big houses. Therefore, space is plenty and old men always cultivate the other land they had for supporting their families. Also, even my grandfather had many children and grandchildren; everyone was feed enough and even had the share of the property. There is plenty for everyone because of the massive land for farming and other activities. Furthermore, there is also a yearly fiesta celebration, celebrating the feast of harvest and abundance. Thus, we are always overflowing with food and extra more.

Nevertheless, just after 20 years, the community where I live from in the Philippines became the migration area from people from far provinces. It is due to an increase in employment opportunities because of factories and other industrial company. Also, it became a city, urban centers for workers and businessperson. The demands of apartment buildings are also on the rise. Meanwhile, more people are looking for a place to rent, and the monthly earnings are very attractive to the land and apartment owners of the area. Then again, those who had money had invested in building apartments.

Moreover, they had an attractive earning from it. Increase in prosperity also means more taxes that are funding the local municipality. Thus, our district that once a farming area suddenly was filled up with factories and different people from remote provinces. Hence, we became a minority just after several years of sudden change. There is a considerable impact on the improvement of public facilities. Building more schools while our Catholic Church was renovated to accommodate more churchgoers and clinics, and other health facilities were improved as well to serve the growing population of my hometown.

On the other hand, the improvement of roads had also increased illegal sidewalk vendors. Thus, making it more crowded added by the people competing with the sidewalk for safety from cars and tricycles that is also on the increase. While factories had helped to earn money, it also polluted the air and the river. The apartment business is booming, but it becomes noisier and even excessively much for the added karaoke businesses that had sprouted in every corner of the streets. There is an increase in the public market, but the high demand for food had created shortages for the fresh harvest, which means buying more processed foods or fast foods and street food.

Before it was a clean area, but mixed people also created diverse ideas. Some are not so clean enough to tidy their garbage. Additionally, the pile of waste was increasing, and the remaining open areas converted into dump sites. Moreover, as people increases, people begin to be hard to discipline. It becomes contagious, and the previous clean area becomes dirty as well. People were migrating into an already small space and not even enough for garbage disposal. Also, without proper segregation of garbage, it became more severe threat especially to the health of the community.

The area where I live will never look the same because trees are chosen to cut to give way to bigger houses and road widening. Thus, nature itself is no more but could only see on pots lying on the side of the streets. The old farmers who are supposed to take care of the farmland and its fruits cannot take care of anymore because nothing is left but bricks and walls. Even more, concrete walls and walkways are constructing. The price of industrialization had paid the price for sacrificing Mother Nature and the land that is the source of food and life. At this moment as the area keeps on shrinking and do so fresh air. Moreover, people keep on doing the usual stuff. Undisciplined dumpsters and neighbor conflicts because of a nonsense fight over a piece of leaves falling from their area or an irritating sound from their karaoke machines.

And the fewer spaces, people become more protective of that lesser area. And even with a smaller area, people still wanted to have children to the belief that it will complete a family. And worst is having much more children that some parents can't support. With traditional views that a boy child is vital to continue a families name even a family already had 4 or more girls. And for some couple who is unable to have a child seeks to adopt to complete their family life or for some reason to make them happy as a family.

Large families don't move in bigger apartments but stay together even in the same small area. It's "BAHALA NA" attitude, which means they leave everything to God's hands and the future. I believe, these unplanned family formations had some consequences and because of this "bahala na" attitude, Filipino's just kept on doing those things even without proper planning believing that God is the provider of everything and God loves the poor and needy. But Filipino's are a nation who loves to be with many people. The more children, the happier as my late uncle said when he had five children and didn't have any stable job. My uncle believes that his children are his wealth and still he will always speak to the end that God will help them. But usually the reason a family stick together to live in a small apartment will also save them money, so they choose to live together to share the cost of rent, and the money they save can use in other things like food, water, electricity, and personal hygiene.

Eventually, this small living area had created a tiny place for children to play. There is of course playground in the City Hall area but some families are a bit away from home and, it takes time and energy for a parent to take their children over there. It also creates less privacy

for the parents and their children. It creates chaos in organizing their personal belongings because of a small area. Some families crammed to a little place on their preference due to a personal choice of staying with another extended family and for financial reasons.

Additionally, this will help them not to feel alone and branded as sad people. For old people, living with younger ones was a plus factor for them. Thus, it makes them feel safe and secure. In the most deprived areas, I witnessed how people in desperation will choose to live in a cemetery and dumpsites with their children and other members of the family because they don't have money to rent an apartment. Also, they will continue to produce more children in this severe condition. In the long run, the results of choosing to raise a family in this situation had a domino effect on their children who in the end will also inherit their parent's way of life.

Also, surviving in this situation had made it more difficult for a child to mold in a responsible individual. Thus, these families particularly the children were allured and exposed to another world where they can temporarily escape hunger and poverty. To that end, even at a young age, as young as ten are engaged in a relationship, explicit sex, crimes, prostitution, and even drugs as a result of temporary escape. At this moment, there is no turning back to innocence and instead of a willing mind to rebel to their parents whom they could not depend from the beginning.

Moreover, at a very young age, most children choose to run away from their families and tried to find a way by themselves. Eventually, they were broke inside and outside, the same story I can hear on every slum. Nor, some might survive and be successful someday, but it will be not easy. Most of these children will end up begging in the street and end up in prostitution for women and other crimes. Furthermore, this kids when they, in turn, became adults, will also try to build their own family but without proper foundation and planning for their future, that will eventually will end in an additional problem for the community, the church, and the government. Finally, the story ends with another street children from a broken family due to lack of space and improvement.

#### 4.1.4 Street Children

It was 7 in the morning while I am sitting inside a local jeepney<sup>93</sup>, together with other people on their uniforms going to work. A small and dirty kid about 6-8 yrs old suddenly climb up the jeepney with a small cloth on his hand and patiently looking down cleaning every shoe of people sitting inside the jeep. I was shocked to see that for the first time, seeing it and I knew he wanted in return. I then look for some coins in my pocket to give it to the boy but others didn't bother, and some are even irritated. Added that the little boy is smelly too. Thus, after that incidence, I couldn't get over that kid, and I was mad to think about the whereabouts of his parents. Why they allow this thing to happen to their child.

But then again as I continued to work in the city, seeing street children begging and sometimes stealing to survive became an everyday site. Some of these street children were called rugby-boys<sup>94</sup>Who depends on smelling solvent. Likewise, this is only a small fraction of what I believe is happening to the street children in the Philippines. It is just unacceptable to see children on the street exposed to violence and even crime. According to Child hope, a non-government organization reveals that about 70 percent of these street children are boys;

.... Street children usually come from large families, (...) with six to ten children per family, are generally malnourished and anemic,(...)suffer psychologically from family pressures, abuses and neglect at home, prone to street fights and bullying, harassment from policemen, suspicion, and arrest for petty crimes, violence, and torture from misguided authorities, usually come from broken families, more boys than girls.<sup>95</sup>

While female girls are prone to sexual abuse and more housework. My parents never did that to me, and I didn't know that not all parents are like them. I thought that once you become parents, you automatically become more responsible. But not in reality for most of the time because it will depend on the upbringing of the child especially the boys. At my young age, I believe that children are a gift from God and should not exploit like what I see from the streets. However, this belief depends on how parents take care of and mold their children. For example, my parents took good care of me and thought me to fear God, pray, respect people,

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<sup>93</sup> A copy of US military jeep and serve as a public transport in the Philippines.

<sup>94</sup> Rugby Boys are a term for gangs of street children found in the Philippines, particularly in the slums.

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.senate.gov.ph/pdf>.

not steal, and my father thought me the importance of dignity and trust. In the same way, my parents as they told me that they are also molded "more strictly" by my grandparents to be fearful to God, and to live with dignity and respect. Therefore, I am lucky to be born in a family with a long history of God-fearing, ethical, respectful life and responsible family.

For some reasons, some couples are not fit to become parents of any child because some are naive. In other words, the root of the problem of street children was from what family they came. Notably, parents also had a role and influence on why they became street children. Thus, if their parents cannot properly take care and discipline themselves, their child will never learn any right sides from them. As a result, the child tends to get attention in the street to find answers to their questions. Moreover, these children choose to see friends or gangs over their family to find love and acceptance. That might engage them into drug trafficking, stealing or even prostitution to be able to be part of that group.

...In the Philippines, there is a large number of street children roaming the streets. UNICEF, through its Child Protection Section, is working with government, NGOs and communities to uphold the rights of these children and give them a new lease on life.<sup>96</sup>

There will always be permanent damage to these children. But when given first aid of love by NGO's. They can change and improved for the betterment of their future. Thus, understanding, communication and proper information on children will give them proper guidance on how to be a better person. For instance, Charley joined a group of out-of-school youth on their free ALS class in Binondo Plaza, Manila. Charley formed a unique bond with Jason, a street child. Jason recalls his difficult life as a street child—he doesn't even know where his birth parents are.<sup>97</sup> What a puzzled statement of a child not knowing his parents. Or probably Jason doesn't even care about his parents. If not for NGO's this child must have been in much deeper trouble. These NGO's are developing because the problem exists and it needs a person-to-person contact with the street children. Filipino's had a saying that "the youth is the hope of the nation." But the youth whose about to build a future had already failed from the beginning of the process.

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<sup>96</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/reallives>.

<sup>97</sup> retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/reallives>.

The parents should be the first person to teach them these saying. Fulfilling it by providing their children with enough food, clothing and most importantly the love of a family. Unfortunately, the responsibility to build the child's gifts was passed by parents on government and Non-government Organization to deal with street children. Thus, parents of street children are preoccupied with earning a living; in times engaged in irregular low-paying jobs as construction workers, beggars, vendors, and scavengers.<sup>98</sup> Of course, there is hope, and that's the reason some people are willing to take the courage to lead this responsibility that these parents cannot handle themselves. Either way, the parents itself might be the product of previously broken families. Especially when coming from a more extensive family background when everyone needs attention and care but parents were unable to divide their attention because they had many children.

Therefore, love and attention inside the home are fundamental for those children to grow. Eventually, it will be easy for them to understand the meaning of love when it's felt first in their own family. "Children end up on the streets for different reasons," Jesus Far, Child Protection Officer at UNICEF Philippines comments;

...It's because they're being abused at home, either physically or sexually, their parents are unable to provide for them, and they need to work to survive and because of peer pressure. Boys, in particular, are attracted to the street gang, in sniffing solvents, drinking alcohol and taking illegal drugs. They are attracted to crime, violence, and sexual abuse. Often, they end up injured, jailed or killed.<sup>99</sup>

With all the problems created due to mismanagement of family and population growth, the Church had an essential role in guarding what left to a Filipino. Filipino's are a nation of faith, who believe that there is God and although it's mostly poor, the church was mostly filled up during Sunday services. Thus, we are a community of faith, and we look towards so much in what the priest is going to say in his preaching. Moreover, the hope of the Filipino people guides in a way where they look at what the Catholic Church will speak for them to save from these situations. The teaching of the church about using the "natural family planning" methods in regards to couples that wanted to space the number of children is one option.

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<sup>98</sup> retrieved from 24 September 2018 <https://www.senate.gov.ph/pdf>.

<sup>99</sup> retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/reallives>.

The question of how effective is this to couple's and women's health? Will this help the poor Filipino family to cope with the demands of its growing needs? Or just another false hope to never-ending battle to poverty and corruption. Support is never enough for smaller families, especially at this time. There is a higher chance of decent survival and quality of life for everyone. For others who cannot turn back, their children can still have the possibility to change for the better if adequately educated before starting to have a family. I set a primary focus for the benefits of the children with regards to family planning. In the Philippines, the government had programs on promoting better and free learning available to every child. That is why there are public schools so that education is available for everyone. However, the information about sexual education and spacing the number of children is not standard.

In the end, even education is of primary concern but due to higher birth rates, shortages of classrooms, teachers, and textbooks just worsening the situations if more children are born every year in the school to study. Thus, the shortage problem is not easy to solve because the root of the problem is within individual responsibility especially the declining moral values of men. Ideally, the Church's role is of great importance, especially for street children. Those who abandoned children and letting the church take over the task is another way of a Filipino parent to put his/her trust in the Church. Filipino Catholic families knew that the Church will always accept these children and even gave them another chance to start over again, but the question is for how long? And as Catholics, this precious life is also from God and valuable means to give importance. Thus, I believe being a parent also means sacrificing some for their children, but it doesn't mean you need to sacrifice every time. Moreover, better to have proper planning before the baby arrives. Firstly, a baby is our source of happiness, and the extra will-power comes next after the child grew and became a young adult.

As a community who fear God and with faith in the Catholic Church, and as a Filipino I believe that children are responsibilities before God of their parents. These responsibilities didn't end when the child was born or when it becomes rebellious; it only begins when it started to become rebellious also. Moreover, it never ends until the child becomes successful or until the parents died. Supported by the Church, in spiritual ways, is also ready to educate the Filipino's on how to practice his faith in the Lord and be responsible too. In the next chapter, I will discuss some traditional ways of the Catholic Church in the promoting responsible parenthood. And the challenges it undertakes.

## 4.2 *Population Management and The Catholic Church*

### 4.2.1 *Reflections for Married Couples*

In the Philippines where the Catholic Church plays a prophetic role in almost all aspects of life—which includes the social order—the communications media is doubly essential.<sup>100</sup> Thus, in its pastoral instruction signed by its president, Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Socrates Villegas sought that-while we respect and recognize the duty and right of the State to pass laws, we deem it our commitment as pastors to teach you about the Christian understanding of health which the present RH law seems to misunderstand.<sup>101</sup> As Catholic Bishops of the Philippines celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, the Catholic Church of the Philippines offers three reflections based on their consultations with married couples and parents.

In summary, it gives meaning and importance first to the child, then responsible parenthood and finally, keeping the sanctity and of marriage and begetting children. I believe that by such statements, the Filipino family in distress will adjust and make these statements in reality and not just compensation for what is the truth behind. Specifically, the account is all about each and everyone in the family working together as a whole especially men. Thus, keep family values and not abandoning the responsibility of parenthood. Therefore, to be able to achieve these goals depends on the will power of the married couples especially when the time comes on raising their children.

Firstly, is the reflection about putting greater importance to every child- *"Every Child is a gift from God."* As CBCP statement describes that it is natural for married Filipino's to fully embrace each child and see this as the *"fruit of their love for each other."* Also, is the encouraging word for families that even there is a fear and negative feedbacks from having big families, CBPCP states that "we still rejoice at the coming of a child." The Catholic Church is very optimist in proving even by the word of God. As "The Psalmist sings: Children too are a gift from the LORD, the fruit of the womb, a reward."<sup>102</sup> For instance, when a Filipino mother told that she should only have two children and not five, the mother would

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<sup>100</sup> retrieved 26 September 2018 from <http://www.cbcnews.com/cbcnews/>.

<sup>101</sup> CBCP exhorts faithful to be 'responsible stewards of health' retrieved 26 September 2018 from <http://www.cbcnews.com/cbcnews/>.

<sup>102</sup> Psalm 127:3.

automatically ask: "Who among my children should not have been born? What will you do with my excess children."<sup>103</sup>

Secondly, for the Filipino, "*the parents are anointed by God to educate their children.*" CBCP statement asserts the importance of being the parents to children as to "*Responsible Parenthood.*" Additionally recognizing that "it is natural for parents to be responsible for their children. Moreover, family planning is not only about the method." As CBCP asserts that: "*every family plans for their future: when they are ready to have children or when to add more, how they will nourish, where they will be sent to school, how to teach them to pray, where they could go for vacations, how will they manage their finances, etc.*"<sup>104</sup> Therefore, if family planning is decreased to the avoidance of pregnancy, should we be puzzled when some children feel that they are fruits of "unwanted pregnancies"? Won't they feel that their parents love them simply because they have no choice?<sup>105</sup> It is the effect of what we call the "contraceptive mentality." Pope Francis states that, "when speaking of children who come into the world, no sacrifice made by adults will consider too costly or too great, if it means the child never has to feel that he or she is a mistake, or worthless or abandoned to the four winds and the arrogance of man." The gift of a new child, entrusted by the Lord to a father and a mother, begins with acceptance, continues with lifelong protection and has as its final goal the joy of eternal life.<sup>106</sup>

Thirdly, for the Filipino, it is natural for couples to dream of being together for a lifetime and of desiring to have children. "Pope Paul VI describes married love as fully human, total, faithful and exclusive of all other until death, and fruitful. "For Blessed Francis; Love always gives life. Conjugal love 'does not end with the couple."<sup>107</sup> The couple in giving themselves to one another" offers not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living representation of their love, a permanent sign of their conjugal unity and a living and inseparable union of their being a father and a mother. Moreover, for couples that find it challenging to have a child, Pope Francis advises;

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<sup>103</sup> retrieved 24 September 2018 from Christian Family Movement of the Philippines | CBCP ...  
<https://cfmphilippines.org/2018-pastoral-exhortation.html/>.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

...I encourage those who cannot have children to expand their marital love to embrace those who lack a proper family situation.<sup>108</sup> Adopting a child is an act of love, offering the gift of a family to someone who has none.<sup>109</sup>

With these statements of the pastoral council signed by the Archbishop of Davao Most Rev. Romulo G. Valles, President of CBCP as of 25 July 2018. Summarizing that the church states that family planning is not only about methods "it's about planning."<sup>110</sup> I believe that this following reflection is for married couples and soon to be married as well. As we read the whole letter, I find it very clear that having a family and being a parent is a great responsibility. That's why the church is crucial to remind that family planning is not only about methods (artificial or natural). But it can't avoid that this statement is quite not fully grasp due to the heading of the letter that "every child is a gift from God." With "gift" added as from "God," making more exciting for a reader to put more value and remember rather than the "responsible parenthood" and naturality of a Filipino to become parents and to stay in the marriage.

Yes, children are a gift from God and parents are accountable to be responsible to take care of these precious gifts. Moreover, the freedom and right to have children is there, but the right to have a decent life when one is born is understated. Thus, it is also essential to consider for parents and soon to become parents to make sure to provide a quality of life for their children. Being a parent and being responsible is two different words to remember. I don't agree that every parent understands the idea of being responsible even after they enter marriage. If there are no street children or maybe only very few, I would agree that its natural for Filipino parents to be responsible. Thus in reality, aside from broken families, street children came from the growing numbers of unhappy couples fighting in front of the children that make it more difficult for the teaching of the church to progress.

Therefore, a happy marriage is not for every household, and the struggles mostly begin when a mother gives birth to a child because a woman usually takes all the responsibility. While

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<sup>108</sup> "retrieved 24 September 2018 from Christian Family Movement of the Philippines | CBCP ... <https://cfmphilippines.org/2018-pastoral-exhortation.html/itae-.pdf>.

<sup>109</sup> "Every child is a blessing" CBCPnews.net retrieved 24 September 2018 from <http://cbcnews.net/cbcnews/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/CBCP-Pastoral-Exhortation-on-the-50th-anniversary-of-Humanae-Vitae-.pdf>

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

men leave the house and so the child lives in the street because there is no love left at home. More unexpected problems arise due to financial shortages and other emotional stress inside the house. Eventually, in the middle of this unhappiness, the children were sacrificed. Some mothers would choose to leave their children on orphanage hoping that the Church can take care of the children. I don't know how hurtful to let your child in the adoption center, but women doing this are also victims of abuse and maybe had mental issues.

Another is the importance of having a child as a sign of the love of couples as stated by Pope Francis. And for a married couple who never had a child were encouraged to share their passion through adopting a child. How much pressure is it for a couple in the Philippines to be asked all over again about "why still not have a child?" Does it mean that the childless couple whose genuinely loving each other will never be complete or happy? Loving your wife or husband is also a sign of love especially when one is not able to conceive. Unfortunately, the church didn't say that it will still be okay not to have children or even if they say that, I again can see the power of the statement of having children as something exceptional.

Thus, almost every couple I know in the Philippines, once they are married had experienced some degree of family and community pressure to have a child right away. Sometimes I feel like it was the community or their family that is deciding this fundamental matter. And because of community pressure, the couple might be so fragile and easily manipulated. Added by the Church encouragement to be fruitful as a couple, encouraging some family that hasn't any child to adopt and share its blessings to another child who doesn't have a family. I don't have any figures on how many abandoned children were available for adoption. But I believe that there are many available children for adoption, added the time and paper works when going through adopting them. I knew friends who undergo in adopting a child, and they are so happy about their decisions. But what about other children left from the adoption centers? Where can they get all the love they need?

In this matter, the church is raising the awareness that there is nothing wrong to have children no matter the situation and instead to be brave and take responsibility. However, some parents choose to abandon their children because they can't survive anymore. And how to cope with a significant number of children are not stated in the letter. I find the statement a bit soft on being responsible; it should say the most crucial part of becoming a responsible parent. Nor it

doesn't give a more in-depth and meaning for a reader to reflect more on how to be "responsible" first before having a baby. Probably, the Filipino culture had the idea that raising a child is also raising someone that can take care of him or her in the future when they are old.

Older people in the Philippines depends so much on their children when they are retired and cannot work anymore. It is passed from generation to generation while bringing them in residential care is not an option or else people will look down to whoever did it. Moreover, taking care of old parents are very important, may be considered more important than bringing a child into a bright future. It is a problem because if Filipino's put more responsibility on taking care of the old while setting aside the duty to their children will result in more problems in the future.

Everyone is affected; the children, the parents, and the grandparents are all involved in the formation of these problems. Therefore, if population management is not implemented and the people keep on making babies for "gift of God reasons" when the meaning is more than that. Because a truly faithful Catholic believer should think that this is life and life is precious and life is a gift from God that should be taken care of and not you be taken care off. Parents should prioritize their children. And if the child prioritized to raised rightly, it means that we did what God exactly wants us to do. When the child is brought-up with proper guidance will do the same for its future family and likewise to us when we get old. Thus, marrying and giving birth doesn't end over there; it only begins to another level of a "very serious and committed responsibility." Moreover, if we know what a blessing is it should be more valuable to fear on God who is the giver of life.

#### **4.2.2 CBCP's Pastoral Concern: Corruption is the Scourge of the Nation**

The Philippines are running through a democratic constitution. Allowing freedom of speech and freedom to voice out the sufferings of its people. Some militant groups would take their banners and posters in the streets near the Presidents Palace in hoping that the government will hear their concerns. These militant groups were the mirrors of how improper management of the wealth of the nations that was not precisely allocated to several needy families. Demanding economic reforms, end of job contractualization, increase in salary and other workers dilemma that make life more difficult to live. According to CBCPNews; "The

Philippines in 2016 ranked low, 101 out of 176 countries, on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. Scandinavian countries ranked in the top five." And considering that the Philippines is 80% Catholic, the Church is likely to blame the government for its incapacity for taking care of the poor people. Instead, the corrupt society became a common life for the Filipino people. As CBCPNEws asserts that:

...Politicians are considered the most corrupt of all. They allegedly set up false foundations and charities to hide the public funds given to them for community projects and developments and then channeled the billions into their private accounts.<sup>111</sup>

With all the political powers and corrupt system that the politicians had in their hands the Catholic Church is unable to control the growing poverty level because of continued lying and irresponsible governance of its political people that considered to be Catholics as well. In a country with the majority were Christians and still didn't properly manage the wealth of the state and take good care of its people should be ashamed. Yes, we believe in God, and we go to Church but how come that the people cannot fully understand that it is a big sin to steal. It should be the other way; a way like Christ did for the poor, but this is not the case for most of the politicians. In this case, the Church would like the government to realize their faults by scolding them through courageous sermons whether it's through preaching or on the media.

The Philippine government was to blame for its corrupt practices that result in more problems of Filipino's. Aside from the growing poverty problems, are the children and their parents coping to survive a decent livelihood. With desperation, some of these children were open to sexually abused and pornography due to the need for money for survival. Thus, the Philippines became another destination for sex tourist by wealthy countries. And because of corruption even in the judicial system, the sex offenders can easily escape even there is clear evidence on them. As CBCPNews asserts that: "Massive bribery was suspected of having been involved."

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<sup>111</sup> CBCPNews, "Corruption is the Scourge of the Nation." retrieved 5 December 2018 from <http://cbcpnews.net/cbcpnews/corruption-is-the-scourge-of-the-nation/>.

The Church claims that justice is not serving due to once again the corrupt practices of the Philippine officials in the government. Justice should help when there is evidence to the crime but the judicial system disregard this evidences and bend it wrong for the benefit of the offenders. That is why more children were exploited and sometimes even by their parents. They are just typical family who needed money to survive, and without the help of the government, they tend to go through illegal ways to survive. According to CBCPNews;

...Now the suspect is hiding in the USA and attacking online the child defenders who exposed her crimes against the children.<sup>112</sup>

Doing what is right becomes a threat to the lives of people who choose legal ways. I agree that most Filipino people who were fighting against corruption and illegal activities are not welcome. Hence, they experience life-threatening if they don't keep silent. So to avoid some of this discomfort people tend to be quiet and live like there is nothing wrong. It is quite tough to be still when you know you're a Christian, and you see your neighbor doing illegal stuff. But illegal doers in a country with a high population in an area don't bother and feel like they are the one having the most power due to their influential status. They added that illegal drugs and domestic violence become a norm especially in a big family living on slums and the streets. Thus, Filipino families when trying to ask for help in the government didn't get what they ask for, but instead, they are exploited and asking for in return of any service by a government official. Hence, doing illegal stuff to survive is infecting people. The disease is infectious and painful to avoid due to its presence everywhere.

Though the morally right Filipinos that should be protected and praised are condemned for their right choices to live legally. Condemned just because they disagree with injustices that are continued to happen. A corrupt official almost has no soul and will always find something to benefit from others even risking the safety of its people. As CBCPNEws asserts that: In any

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<sup>112</sup> CBCPNews, "Corruption is the scourge of the nation." retrieved from <http://cbcnews.net/cbcnews/corruption-is-the-scourge-of-the-nation/>.

situation where the official has the power to give or withhold anything to which the member of the public has a right to receive.<sup>113</sup>

But according to CBCPNews although the corrupt officials have this power over people, it doesn't mean that the community should be quiet. Instead, people are encouraged to be a voice and "exposed such corruption" as the first step to further destruction of lives. Pope Francis even calls us to participate and to say;

"No to corrupt practices and to take a stand for integrity, honesty, human dignity, justice, good governance, and human rights."<sup>114</sup>

Furthermore, exposing corruption is like hitting yourself in a big wall full of deadly spikes. Thus, it cost a life for people ready to take a stand against the powerful corrupt officials. According to CBCPNews, even the President of the Philippines said: "he will order the police to shoot human rights advocates." It is to avoid interrupting the President on his task of controlling the illegal severe drug problems in the Philippines. However, it also noted that corruption in developing countries like the Philippines is on a different level. The concerned parties were undeniably more and very difficult to manage. Children and women were primary victims of this, which is worse due to the issuance of a permit to operate on sexual bars and nightclubs where teenage girls were the main attraction of these clubs.

Abuse of power and greediness of money were routinely in the middle of this crisis and the children and women on "*large debt, which they can't pay off*" became more hopeless of their situations. Corruption is so severe that even the police that should be protecting the women and children, only protect the bar owners on their benefits. Saying "No to corruption can cost you your life. Over a hundred journalists and human right workers have annihilated for exposing injustice and corruption in the Philippines. The people of conscience and integrity

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<sup>113</sup> "CBCPNews, "Corruption is the Scourge of the Nation." retrieved 5 December 2018 from <http://cbcpnews.net/cbcpnews/corruption-is-the-scourge-of-the-nation/>.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

need to take the risk and stand up and say "No More Corruption" and act to expose and oppose all such evil practices."<sup>115</sup>

### 4.2.3 Contraception Equals Abortion

Birth control is "the voluntary limiting of human reproduction, using such means as sexual abstinence, contraception, induced abortion, and surgical sterilization. It includes the spacing as well as the number of children in a family."<sup>116</sup> Contraception in human physiology birth control through the deliberate prevention of conception or impregnation.<sup>117</sup>

While the Reproductive Health law requires government health centers to distribute birth control pills, free condoms, and sex education to teach in schools. And according to IRR of RA10354 with R.A.8344 section 3.01: Contraceptive refers to any safe, legal, effective, and scientifically proven modern family planning method, device, or health product. Whether natural or artificial, that prevents pregnancy but does not primarily destroy a fertilized ovum or avoid a fertilized egg from being implanted in the mother's womb in doses of its approved indication as determined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Supporters say the move is needed to stem population growth, reduce maternal death rates, to help avoid unwanted pregnancies among poor women, and slow down the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>118</sup>

Catholicism in the Philippines is more than just a religion it's a culture, a way of life and identity for more than 80% of the population in a world's third largest Catholic nation the Church's word on daily life is much revered.<sup>119</sup> Contraception according to CBCP is sin and immoral. Moreover, contraception in the Catholic Church seen as equivalent to abortion, so the Church does not fully support it. Furthermore, contraception is not the solution to the problems, but instead, the government should provide jobs for the growing population. Thus,

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<sup>115</sup> CBCPNews, "Corruption is the Scourge of the Nation." retrieved 5 December 2018 from <http://cbcpnews.net/cbcpnews/corruption-is-the-scourge-of-the-nation>.

<sup>116</sup> retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://www.britannica.com/science/birth-control>.

<sup>117</sup> retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/contraception>.

<sup>118</sup> Retrieved from Who will win the battle over birth control? 24 September 2018 from <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidestory/2013/01/20131249300832452.html>.

<sup>119</sup> "population debate" retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXYo5kmc6Mo&t=544s>.

empowering the Filipino people through better livelihood and economy and not by contraception.

The "sin" and "immoral" word is a potent word for the Filipino Catholic community. Moreover, the Filipino's believe not just in karma but also God's judgment. Or rather I can remember when I was attending a church preaching about "if you sin you will go to hell and burn in the fire for the rest of your life." In other words, promoting fear for a churchgoer and if taking a pill will make me go to hell then I should not do it for the reason that I am a follower of the doctrine of the church and believing that this is morally wrong and against the will of God. In other case, contraceptives labeled as evil and all sort of negative words that can equate with this method.

When Pope Francis visited the Philippines last January 2015. The pope itself witnessed poverty and victims brought by Typhoon Haiyan. And in one of the meetings of the Pope a former street child, 12 yr. old named "Glyzelle Palomar" was in front of the stage and asked a question that Pope itself didn't manage to answer clearly. Glyzelle as she was allowed to have a speech in front of the Pope and other millions of Filipino Catholic followers. Translating what Glyzelle says while I playback the replay of the video;

"There are many abandoned children. Most of them suffered badly like drugs and prostitution. Why Does God allow this thing to happen? Even it is not the children's fault. And why only very few people are helping us children in desperate need?"  
(Glyzelle Palomar)

Glyzelle started crying as I heard the changing background noise from the millions of people listening. I am not quite sure if they sound like laughing or a bit sad about the noises. After the speech, Pope Francis approached Glyzelle to embrace and comfort her and the other children beside her. The statement of Glyzelle was base on real-life situations, and this is very serious, and even the Pope couldn't provide a clear answer. There is no clear answer because the problems just became global too and uncontrollable that even the most respected person

cannot do anything about this matter. Additionally, Pope Francis humbly states that; "She is the only one who has put a question for which there is no answer."<sup>120</sup>

The girl was right that children like her were born and suddenly exposed to horrible situations is unfair for an innocent child who only likes to be cared for by their parents. Maybe Glyzelle had no choice if she wanted to be born or not or which parents she can have, but I believe at least her parents had an opportunity to plan first before letting her come into this world.

...There are estimated to be more than 1.5 million street children in the Philippines, about 70,000 of them in the Manila metropolitan area, according to the He Cares Foundation, another group that cares for them.<sup>121</sup>

But as soon as birth control is open up by the government to the public. The continued pointing fingers are never-ending, nobody is willing to accept their faults as well as nobody is willing to take its responsibility. Thus, the church is blaming the government for the poverty while the government is blaming the church for ineffectiveness to distribute the family planning methods thoroughly and this poor girl is asking God and a little less blaming maybe why God allows this to happen. Glyzelle was asking Pope Francis, in a greater hope that the most top leaders of the Church can give not just answers but solutions to the problem of abandoned children. However, the Pope itself cannot provide a concrete answer to these street children who are neglected first by their parents and then the community.

First and foremost the children should be happy to be born and not to be exposed to abuse. The purpose of life will continue to be blurred unless the Filipino people will take this problem seriously. And yes, I think most of the Filipino's don't take it seriously the true meaning of responsible parenthood. And for a Filipino family who already has 3-11 or more children. And if these parents can't afford to feed her children and they die from starving and malnutrition, then what is the difference to die as an infant than die older because you had nothing to eat. I feel sorry for children that are allowed to live temporarily but still will die from hunger and violence. If only everyone can help each other but how? If most of the

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<sup>120</sup> "Ex-street kid weeps as she asks Pope why God lets children suffer in the Philippines" retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/19/asia/philippines-pope-street-children/>.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

people even adults need care? What can the church offer aside from compassion and preaching?

In the next part, I will discuss the methods promoting by the Catholic Church to help the Filipino families limit the numbers of their children. In this response, I will focus on the ineffectiveness of the natural methods of family planning even though the church advocates its effectiveness. On the other hand, more Filipino's are hoping to be supported by the Church to practice artificial methods without a guilty conscience.

#### 4.2.4 The Natural Family Planning

The church promotes Responsible Parenthood through “*natural family planning*.” Unfortunately, it seems that this method is not effective. As Dr. Junice Melgar Executive Director, Likhaan a non-government organization states that:

...That natural family methods are not working; women ask for artificial methods, which are the most effective methods. And there are many women here have 7, 8, 9, 11 sometimes 13 children so do you want a family planning method that can help them stop.... Although Catholic, you had to differentiate between the teaching and what people believe in. Because they are Catholics and yet they embrace family planning and something that's also like a God-given gift that they have to make sure that all their children are taking good care. They can go to school and have enough food.<sup>122</sup>

Teenage pregnancies or unplanned pregnancies usually are seen in the most unfortunate part of the country. And because they are below 18 years old, they are also not allowed to get married in the church. Most are pregnant first before entering a marriage due to a lack of information about condoms and contraceptives. Primarily women are forced to quit from studying and start early parenting. As I know, before getting married in the Philippines the couple needs to undergo seminars of family planning. However, due to the legal age of marriage and early pregnancy, most young girls suffer without able to be educated appropriately by these seminars.

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<sup>122</sup> "Population Debate" Retrieved 24 September 2018 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXYo5kmc6Mo&t=330s>.

Hence, natural family planning methods might be constructive for soon to be and already married couples, but for teenagers and unwed mothers, are left on their own. Indeed, teenagers are quite adventurous in discovering their bodies, and then they fall into pregnancies issues, unplanned and immature. In the end, the parents of these teenagers also suffer the consequences. I believe the parents should be the first one to educate their children about their sexuality. However, it is not comfortable for Filipino parents to open and discuss sexual issues to their children because of shame or "hiya."

Natural family planning will work if Filipino were willing to undergo self-control and discipline. Unfortunately, most Filipino men are not willing to cooperate, and cooperation is the key to making the method of the Church successful. As a result, this may force some women to "black abortion."

Last December 2017, I was in the Philippines and while walking through the streets of Quiapo Catholic Church in Manila. I can see street vendors selling a bottle of "PAMPAREGLA" or allowing a woman to have an abortion. It is illegal and alarming that it could buy on the side of one of the most prominent Catholic Church in the Philippines. Thus, this is only one of the main consequences of the ineffectiveness of natural family planning. People go to faster solutions and even illegal options. I believe that natural family planning will work but if the husband is not willing to control then the results will be useless. And the burden will primarily fall on the women again and her child. However, if the husband and wife are willing to cooperate, then it will work for them.

Additionally, the natural methods instructed to couples willing to undergo self-control. Thus, excellent management skills on computing the date of ovulation and also abstinence from sex for unmarried couples. Though in reality, it is more difficult to follow if the couple is underage or very young which not taking that having a child is a great responsibility because they also depend on their parents. Moreover, higher birth rates come from the youngest population, and it expands the numbers as they age. Meanwhile, pre-marital sex is also rampant and one of the causes of sexual diseases like STD's and AIDS. Hence, this is the generation who was very intense in getting into a relationship as early as the elementary level.

Significantly, it worsens with lack of sex education and family orientation from the school and their parents. On the other hand, "*abstinence from sex*" according to the natural method of family planning is one of the keys to birth control. Thus, the Catholic Church also advocates the importance of "*virginity*" before marrying. They have added that "*loyalty to partner*" is also taken importance to achieve the goal of family planning. However, these three words "abstinence, virginity, and loyalty" are only becoming imaginary against the reality in the Philippines.

Nevertheless, the majority of couple marrying is not a virgin anymore. And abstinence, disrupted because more women are already pregnant or committed sex before their marriage vows. The sin starts once the person becomes sexually active and doesn't bother about all these moral teachings. Added that immaturity due to being young and unplanned pregnancies make it worse for these children because they can't even afford to support themselves. Parents should have done something before their children became sexual active because the Church already say the values these children need to hear, but moral values are not enough if parents didn't opened-up topics about sex and pregnancy.

As I said before, the challenge for a natural family planning to work is the cooperation between the husband and wife. Thus, the woman should convince his husband that they couldn't have sex on days that she was fertile. Secondly, the husband needs to agree with his wife and wait until her proper time so that they can avoid her being pregnant. In this case, not every man is willing to be part of the "self-control, abstinence-program." And with the majority of what I watch from the different compilation of videos researched by international networks like BBC; CNN, AL Jazeera, and others. The Filipina woman is the one taking all the responsibility and burdens of a child. For example, the Filipina mother would say that she didn't want this to happen to have children this much that they can afford. But because she was afraid that her husband would cheat or complain, so she gives him the chance to impregnate her again.

Though the natural methods of the Catholic Church had good intentions for couples, who are willing to undergo these methods. The church cannot deny the power of men over women asking and demanding their desires even their wives is not willing to do it. Nevertheless, it is

the woman primarily willing to undergo family planning due to the reasons that she knows that she is the first to hit the responsibility of the added children in the family. Then, their other children will suffer because the mother cannot divide all her time to her many children plus her demanding husband. And if the husband is the only one working and earning the same amount even when more children are adding to the family. Then it would be impossible to provide for the whole family with more children if the husband cannot find a better and higher source of income.

Although more negative consequences are happening with more children in low-income families, it has never been a more significant issue to families with higher income. Then again, the CBCPNews on "Every Child is a blessing" asserts that; "based on experience, any family planning method that is natural is effective and good than "artificial" or "chemical" – even if it is term as "modern." Why? Because of no apparatus or chemical causes, adverse side effects are carried into a woman's body."

...The couple also learns how to listen and to be sensitive to each other. The marital relationship deepens in such a way that they get to know, respect and love each other more.<sup>123</sup>

Moreover, the natural family method is used not only to postpone the possibility of having a child but also to decides when the couples are ready for it. Thus, "the sexual act and pregnancy can also be scheduled in such a way that the married couple can increase the possibility of having a male or a female child. Among the “natural” methods are the following: Billings ovulation, Lactational amenorrhea, Basal body temperature, -thermal, Porsuelo, Standard days – if contraceptives do not use on fertile days. Why? Because by using condoms as a sort of “backup” contraceptive, the couple would fall once more into the “contraceptive mentality” that has poisoned the relationship between countless couples and destroyed many families. Couples choose the method that works for them. The contraceptive mentality ultimately leads to abortion. How? When contraceptives fail.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2370.

<sup>124</sup> CBCPNews, “Christian Family Movement of the Philippines.” retrieved 26 September 2018 from <https://cfmphilippines.org/2018-pastoral-exhortation.html>

CBCP statement is for the betterment of married couples who is willing but what about those that are not willing to undergo those supportive measures especially the men? And what about those underage young parents (below 17 years old) which also the root cause of the population problem. Young adults are very aggressive added to the advancement of technologies. If the church will restrict these kids to be educated in the school about their sexuality before they reach the reproductive stage the problem will not decline. Excluding the singles, unwed and the teenagers are also putting a blindfold on the eyes on the real issues of population. As a Filipino myself I cannot ignore that as young as 13 years old they get pregnant or much worst they have sex even before they reach puberty.

It is alarming because what if I had a child growing in a society that is not so open with sexual education on schools or condoms and artificial contraception. What will happen to the future of my child if she didn't know that there is a way not to be pregnant in case she's sexually engaged at a very young age? I believe in virginity on my old days, but these days this word is very foreign now. Thus, people get in touch quickly through social media for dating and other even sex. I will not pretend that the Philippines are still the Maria Clara of the old days because it changes so much. Being responsible begins in it, and because the Philippines is quite late now, this should start on the present young adults until they pass on their future children.

The situation of low-income families became powerless to choose the other methods. The struggle of them thinking of losing their soul if they want the other way of family planning. However, it was never stated the benefits of contraceptives even there is also evidence from scientific studies. Therefore, if the church is not cooperative to educate the Filipino's about their sexuality, and give the freedom of conscience to choose what is best for them. Then it is the governments chance to do what the church cannot provide and also through human rights advocates when the church disagrees with the programs of the government.

Politically the Catholic Church in the Philippines had a real power to influence its millions of followers that can affect the vote for every official. Still, government officials and NGO's and also some Catholic in favor of artificial birth control again take its part to do what they think

is right for the Filipino people. In the next section, I will discuss the Catholic's sides in favor of the Reproductive Health Bill and the use of artificial methods of family planning. Their challenges and their stand towards their social role to the society and the effects of their position against the officials of the Catholic Church opposed to artificial birth control methods.

#### **4.2.5 Catholics in Favor of Reproductive Health Bill**

The Catholic in the Philippines had the power to excommunicate its moral authority and political power. Seven years ago, late Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago considered President Aquino as her hero for certifying the RH bill as urgent, but for the CBCP, the real heroes were the 104 lawmakers who voted against the legislative measure.<sup>125</sup> Hence, the statement of CBCP, as the official body representing the Catholic Church had created an impact on the Filipino Catholic voters. Moreover, CBCP states that those against this RH Law are the pure protector of life. For an ordinary Filipino family, with much more concern on how to survive every day will leave behind again, no proper answer to their problems and also created division among Filipino's.

Benigno Aquino Jr. was the president during that time, and late Miriam Santiago was the Senator. Both of them were Catholics, but they support the Reproductive Health Bill. Their Catholic membership thus is endangered, or more or less if they run for another election, the Catholic Church will not help them but will support the other 104 lawmakers, unsure if they not favor in RH Bill or just being forced to do something that will benefit them for maintaining a position in the government. The Catholic Church had a political power to take away even the former president of the Philippines twice in history.

For example, the late President Ferdinand Marcos and President Ejercito Estrada. Both of them were taken off their position because the Catholic Church had more power to influence its people and of course they were out of their place because the Church convinced that they commit plunder and injustice to the people. However, on the heat of reproductive debate, I believe not all politicians are to be blamed, some are not corrupt but still condemned by the

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<sup>125</sup> retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2012/12/16/886554/fight-vs-rh-bill-catholic-churchs-biggest-challenge#4Luz04gtFhek5i2.99>.

church because they promote Reproductive Health Bill that will guarantee more options for families who wanted to space their children.

One of the most prominent was the late Senator Miriam Santiago who was one of the pioneers promoting this bill. According to an article *Leave No Woman Behind: Why we fought for Reproductive Health Bill* written by Miriam Defensor Santiago and co-sponsor of RH Bill published by CNN dated December 31, 2012;

"The Philippines remain one of the poorest countries in the world because, among other else, for a long time, it ignored to acknowledge what could easily see when one glances out the window: the country desperately needs a reproductive health law."<sup>126</sup>

Moreover, Miriam Defensor Santiago strongly argues that: "Not having a reproductive health law is cruelty to the poor...It can help the poor escape the cruel cycle of poverty by giving them options on how to manage their sexual lives, plan their families and control their procreative activities." While the Church maintains that "it will destroy marriage and morality in the Philippines." It added strong support from Filipino's itself when October 2012, by surveying young Filipino (15-19 yrs old), 83% agree with RH Bill and family planning. As Miriam concludes: "Reproductive Health is a human right. The people are entitled to demand it from their government, and the government is obligated to its constituents."<sup>127</sup>

Catholic for Reproductive Health (C4RH) classified them as Catholic. However, the CBCP had stated whoever supports the RH bill like the C4RH is considered "bad Catholics." Moreover, CBCP state that the C4RH is not a good example since they are supporting the artificial family planning methods of the government. Thus, promoting abortion by using contraception. However, according to C4RH "...they are from the Catholics for Reproductive Health (C4RH) believe that it is consistent with the Catholic value of compassion and principle of social justice."<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> "Poverty – In America - CNN.com Blogs" retrieved from <http://inamerica.blogs.cnn.com/category/poverty/>.

<sup>127</sup> retrieved 06 December 2018 from CNN <https://edition.cnn.com/2012/12/29/opinion/philippines-reproductive-health-bill-santiago/>.

<sup>128</sup> retrieved 5 December 2018 from "Bishop's War on RH - Catholics for Reproductive Health" retrieved 1 May 2019 from <http://c4rh.weebly.com/bishops-war-on-rh.html>.

C4RH is stating the importance of the role of legislators on reproductive health law to improve the lives of women and children and not because of the demand of Bishops to stop the law in return of promotions by Bishops to have these so-called "*Catholic votes*" that will bring them again in the position in the government. But instead, C4RH insisted on the primary importance for the right of the suffering women and children from illegal abortion, death, unplanned pregnancies, sexual diseases and careful planning of family through the spacing of children. It is worth fighting for and not for something that the church itself and the Bishops cannot offer enough help for the already burdened Filipino families. As C4RH asserts that:

...There should be no war in promoting reproductive health. Our war should be against injustice, poverty, indifference—and others that contribute to human misery.<sup>129</sup>

The cooperation between political and religious powers might not solidly materialize. They will never be one due to morality, political, health, religious and other issues. But for other Catholics like the late Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago, who had a loud voice in the Senate, C4RH and other Catholics who are in favor of more choices through the RH bill. There is one common goal, to protect the Filipino family from sinking into poverty towards a brighter future. Thus, it is the power to save the lives of women and children and the whole nation from oppression and poverty.

In the next chapter, I will discuss how the Filipino family engaged and practiced responsible parenthood in their community. Additionally, the role of these families in neighborhoods and how the communities influence each Catholic families while undergoing family planning methods.

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<sup>129</sup> retrieved 5 December 2018 from "Bishop's War on RH - Catholics for Reproductive Health" retrieved 1 May 2019 from <http://c4rh.weebly.com/bishops-war-on-rh.html>.

## **4.3 The Filipino Family**

### **4.3.1 Filipinos as Community of People**

In the Philippines, it is common to see a 50 sq meter or less home with a big family living together. Thus, grandparents, their children, and their grandchildren don't bother to cramp and live together in their so-called home sweet home. Additionally, the laughter of these children and the noise of their toys are like music to the adults as they say. Although sometimes it is very uncomfortable, with a lack of spaces some say they wish to get away to have peaceful breaks from the noisy background of a big family.

On the other hand, Filipino's like to live with more people to feel safe and not alone. That's is the culture I live in, and that is the average household I can usually see by our neighbors and relatives. Though we're only 4, and now my parents live together in our four floors house with apartments. Therefore, it's bigger than other neighbors but commented they had a sad life because my parents are only two persons inside. But, I believe my parents are a privilege because we were able to provide food and medicine for them.

My parents even had more freedom to travel and live the life they want. The only disadvantage is when they are affected by what people will say. Those other people had more families living in the same roof while my parents had more spaces to relax, except for that they still wish a child would make the big house noisy as it will make them happier. Thus, I also believe it depends on the person view, and I cannot blame my parents for having such a belief of "the more, the merrier." Added that the Filipino's are a community of people, we love to connect and interact with our family, friends, and neighbors. The whole town is like a bigger version of the Filipino family. Believing this is also a way to feel secure and friends, neighbors, and family is a significant factor in surviving a developing nation. Additionally, Filipino families invest in praying the rosary, family reunion, community fiesta, birthdays, weddings and even funeral events.

Moreover, knowing everyone in the community as much as possible is a must. Filipino's makes most friends as much as he can to feel comfortable, accepted and safe in the area. But this "community of people" like the Philippines also had a certain downside. Issues like

housing, health, education, and job employment. Others, suggesting some systems originating from the West might help ease the burden of population growth. Although it is happy to see a lot of families in one roof, I can't deny the challenges these families are going through. But we Filipino's think differently, "as long as we're together, it will be ok." But having more dependents and fewer resources, it became impossible for larger families to have a decent living. Some need to sacrifice because of poverty. As a Catholic priest asserts in an interview by Al Jazeera;

“It is a Catholic issue it is a Filipino issue, and I even dare say it is an Asian issue, so we view it as the Western imposition of the culture to our own culture which is family oriented. We love children, we love life primarily.”<sup>130</sup>

Yes indeed just like other nations Filipino's love to have children and I also smiles just by only seeing a child. Additionally, there is a belief that having children is a source of true happiness and a sign that God blesses a couple. But to love children might be an overused word for couples since I can re-make the statement into "Filipino's love to raise children in a Godly way and productive life" and not just Filipino's love to make babies. Unfortunately, this was not the case for unwanted pregnancies or the majority of the mothers giving birth at a very young age. They are not prepared emotionally, physically and financially. In this scenario, the religious Filipino faith saying, "bahala na si God" or "God will provide." Thus, Filipino's had a greater faith even when blinded by the realization of the real challenges ahead. In worst cases, the father leaves after the child was born and without support from the father, a very young single mom without a job and own means will lead to a more severe situation together with her child.

Hence, more dependents are born each time than the providers of the family. In the end, the young mother will either depend on her parents or other relatives and friends for support. But this support is only temporary and might be not enough until the young mother can support herself and her child. Some young mothers would say they would do anything for their child to feed them so that they will not be like them if they grow. Therefore, this responsibility is as easy to say, but for a country with limited resources and fewer employment opportunities,

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<sup>130</sup> The Philippine Population Debate 101 East.

it might only be a poverty trap. I believe the problem arises when there is no proper planning and leave everything to God's hand.

BBC and CNN are two big international news agencies that get to interviewed Filipinos regarding the birth control methods. Similarly, the issues regarding population control in the Philippines had been a source of interest to the big news agency to have a dialogue with the church people, the health workers, the children, the parents and especially the mother. Likewise, the majority of the people interviewed were living in the slums of Manila particularly in "Happy Land, Tondo." For instance, I had been myself in one of the slums in Manila, but that was 20 years ago. And I would say that it was a hard life people were experiencing over there. Additionally, violence, crime, drugs, and street children are familiar in the streets. I couldn't imagine how were the people in Happy Land, Tondo today.

Based on the report of BBC, childbirth is as young as 14 years old, and the mother itself is a child too. Hence, as I can see on the news and in my community, teenage pregnancy is rampant in the Philippines and this is itself is ruining their future. Furthermore, unplanned birth blamed from lack of education from family planning methods and even access to condoms and birth control pills. Parents of teenage mothers were unknowingly didn't realize that their child is already sexually active and will be pregnant because parents are not openly discussing sexual education to their kids due to believing that it will maintain their innocence. Unfortunately, these young teenage mothers will try to discover sex by themselves through their partners.

They have added that teenagers are influenced by social media on having a boyfriend and in return having sex with their partner. In a documentary by CNN, I can see the confusion and joy after a poor mother gave birth. As CNN narrates this event;

... In a maternity hospital in downtown Manila, another baby is born majority into low-income families. At the time where there should be so much joy and happiness

Janet is fearful of the future. She and her husband don't have a job, and now Janet had another mouth to feed.<sup>131</sup>

Indeed the baby is a joy especially when it is just born. It's almost like an angel looking up to its parents and its future. But due to poverty and lack of job opportunities just after a few months the realization finally appear, and then the joy might turn into fear. In the next chapter, I will discuss the importance of population in the formation of the nation. The exporting of overseas Filipino workers remitting dollars in the Philippines and the assurance there will be enough people will take care of the old people.

#### **4.3.2 Filipino Migrant Workers**

My sister left to work as an Aupair 8 years ago. Considering us as a middle-class family, my sister did it because she only likes to work in another country for a change. I believe she knows that if she grabs this opportunity, it will be for the betterment of our whole family too. Although we live decently, we knew it would not last long since medicines are getting higher each year and unemployment is on the rise. She chose to leave her work, and her husband with mix emotions. She is fearless to be the first person to go outside our traditional family. But through praying and hard work God help her achieved her goals, now her husband was living with her here in Norway, and I am also. Thus, my parents were allowed to visits us but preferred to stay at home due to our established apartment business.

I could say that I also made a significant decision leaving my parents, in the view that I might be a help to them when they quite old. But before leaving them, I suffer negative comments from neighbors and relatives because leaving older parents behind without other siblings is not acceptable. Likewise, I don't feel 100% supported by my decisions, and others even make me feel guilty about what I am planning to do. Though I am leaving to study abroad and I will help myself. Still, other people think I should stay and take care of my parents. Then after several years had passed, my parents were able now for regular doctor check-ups, and they can buy their medicines through the help of our apartment business. Of course, they suffer a little bit when we are away, but now it helps my parents, and we are only two siblings. What

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<sup>131</sup> "Reports on Efforts to Control the Philippine Birth Rate" retrieved 20 September 2018 from CNN <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhZJiOOZueE>.

more if several siblings will work altogether. Whereas, the most significant income for the Philippines is remittances. When people leave, they have to send money home to support their families.<sup>132</sup>

The children and grandchildren are the big “hope” of older generations who will take care of them. In a Filipino family, the mother must look for the kids while the father was working. But today because of financial reasons, both parents need to work. In such cases, mothers cannot thoroughly guide their children accordingly because she needs to take a full-time job. Parent's had a more significant role because of their ability to influence their children with proper guidance while they are growing. But due to their absence, the grandparents take charge of their grandchildren. Likewise, grandparents are another influencing factor for the children. Moreover, the product of how these children were brought-up will be visible, as they become adults and parents as well. And as a result, children will be molded as just like what their guardian had brought them up.

In my case, my mother didn't have to work and leave us to our grandparents. Hence, my father had a decent work to provide us what we need even my mother is not working. I grow up in a family where I see my mom doing the daily task at home, washing, cooking, tidying and other stuff. While my father goes to work very early and my mother would do the job of budgeting his salary. I had a small task like small cleaning, ironing and looking for my little sister when she is on her "duyan" or baby bed. I see this role on them as we are also encouraged to concentrate on our studies and was asked every time what else we need. We eat together on the dinner table, and we enjoy being with each other without another extended family. Plus, we also enjoy living in a bigger house that has more privacy.

My sister and I shared a room while my parents had their place. We had toys and had more spaces to enjoy them inside the house. The only time we are many in the house is during birthday celebrations and some special occasions. We also have time to visit big Catholic Churches every year traveling with relatives and friends. We go to church together, we ate together, and we go to enjoy parks and malls. And when we started to get into the college that's when I realized it would be difficult for us to budget my father's salary. As a result, my

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<sup>132</sup> Shauf, T., & Ferrer, C. (2012).

parents take a loan to get my sister and me to college. And that is also the time when my mother decided she also needs to help my father earn some money. Both of them were working selling pre-cooked food in our small Canteen.

I felt a sense of responsibility even I am young, and decided to take a 2-years technical course that will help them as soon as possible. These are the family I live in considering small, but we still struggle with daily expenses. It gets worse when my mother gets sick and need an operation. After all the struggles, we tried to focus so we could avoid this problem again. When I was a young adult, I always listen to my father and mother, whenever they say something about the right time to get married and be pregnant. My mother even takes me in Catholic Seminars called "Kursilyo" to improve my relationship with God. I can say that not everyone getting inside the seminar will learn from the heart. From my experience, I keep as much as I learned in my head and my heart and tried to apply in my daily lives and it works.

My father also teaches me about dignity, trust, and loyalty to the employer. He's a goldsmith, and I would remember that he reminds me not to steal something that is not ours. And I believe that if families were open to educating their children beginning at home to have a sense of responsibility and dignity. There would be no more corruption and poverty in the Philippines. My family was not born rich we work hard and help each other to improve our lives. And when my sister started to send money in the Philippines, my parents will make sure that it well kept in the bank.

Another important reason why having children in the Philippines is essential is that the Philippines don't have a national insurance system that will support the elders. Moreover, Filipino people think that having children will guarantee them to have someone to help them when they get old. I can't deny that my parents also feel the same way about having us. Sometimes they would say that by investing in their children's education, in return they would also enjoy it on their retirement years. Because children are their hope and knowing they couldn't depend on the government. Thus, support and love of the family, investing, education, praying and planning will help the whole family sustain not just in the beginning but also for the future of everyone.

In the next chapter, I will focus on how social media influenced Filipino in their relationship. The consequences as more young mothers are involved while more children are also born out of wedlock.

### **4.3.3 Filipinos and Social Media**

Watching television is still one of the favorites past time of Filipino's. Tele-serye, Telenovela or love stories and even love songs. Hence, Filipino's are romantic, and we love to fantasize the ideal relationship of different actors and actresses on television. Beginning from wedding finale, love triangle, rags to riches and mistress plots there is much to watch. And the demand for people wanting to observe this kind of romantic drama made the big local networks to be one of the active influencers of Filipino families. The requirements are so high that we even import romantic telenovela series and dub into the local language to become more appealing to Filipino's.

In Oslo, while I stay in my own space with other Filipina's in an apartment. I could hear the excitement of someone being so in love while they watch Filipino tv-series in the living room area. Just like my mother that whenever she's in front of the TV, I can almost feel that she is overreacting like it's a real thing. Thus, the majority of the reactions were being excited for the main character getting involved romantically with another person. Likewise, fighting for there loved one and in the end, being together after all the struggles and pain makes it more appealing. Love conquers all in the so-called Filipino "tele-serye." For a romantic Filipino side, especially the women, they tend to be more attached to the characters of the tv-series and sometimes I would see my mother even to react like she's the real actress of the series.

For others, this is also a temporary way to escape the real world. And by these actors and actresses, the Filipino viewers can easily relate to the series itself because some are happening in real life mostly the struggles. Because in real life, it is more complicated and more often the broken relationship is not easy to reconcile due to the involvement of family and friends. For some Filipinos branded as bitter, they would say "there is no forever" or means there is no such thing as lasting relationships. Not just tv-series but also Catholic Mass was lively broadcasted every Sunday in the morning. Television is a powerful tool for romantic and even religious Filipino's that is also molding the minds of the people. Enjoying watching television

by the whole family will also benefit them to be together. But there are also some negative consequences. In a letter by Pope John Paul II on "Television and Family." Pope John Paul II asserts that;

..It can isolate family members in their private worlds, cutting them off from authentic interpersonal relations; it can also divide the family by alienating parents from the children and children from parents.<sup>133</sup>

As a reminder that although it enriched peoples mind, it also impacts the children by what they see over the television. Therefore, proper guidance by adults to their children is needed to avoid misinterpretation. Especially children while watching a tv-series or tv-program and help them understand the difference between reality and fiction. Apart from television is the big world of social media that is sometimes the primary source of meeting new friends and eventually a partner like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Getting popular and socialized is easy as one click from the phone. Meeting different people in the diverse social background make it easier especially for the young generations to roam around and also to have sexual partners. In this part, parents should be extra smart in monitoring their children because social media platforms are changing so fast.

”Wowowin”<sup>134</sup> was a noontime show on Philippines television showcasing Filipinos joining the game program in exchange for money. But before they are about to begin, a few short interviews are asked to each contestant. Their guests were very young Filipina mothers (13-17 years) who already had babies. I begin to observe as they tell their stories and as I play back the replay on "GMA Network youtube channel.”<sup>135</sup> The baby was considered a gift and importance to them, but after all, it was the question of how to support the baby. Thus, some parents or guardian of the young female participants is also present. Also, being asked about several questions by the host of the show "Willie Revillame."

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<sup>133</sup> retrieved 8 December 2018 from [http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs\\_jp02tv.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_jp02tv.htm).

<sup>134</sup> A famous noontime variety show in Filipino Television.

<sup>135</sup> GMA Network or TV Channel 7 in the Philippines.

The first guest is a 15-year-old mother who already had two kids (1 yr. Old and three months baby). She had them on two different men. First is almost the same as her age and the other was a 62-year-old man. The 62-year-old man was the father of the 3-month-old baby, but the old man died after the baby was born due to liver cancer. The young mother would say that the reason she loves the older guy is that he supported her during the abandonment of her first boyfriend. The host of the show Willie Revillame say sorry for the young mother and while she was crying Willie told her that her story should be acknowledged and set as an example and lesson from other young girls. This noontime show had helped many Filipino's at least forget about their sufferings and some money to start a new life.

And for those who are still studying and enjoying their youth and watching this tv-program of Willie Revillame. Must realize for themselves not to make the same mistakes as these young mothers did. And for parents of young adults and maybe watching this program together with their children should at least explain further how important it is to prioritize their studies for the betterment of their future. On the other hand, due to busy schedules, parents tend to use TV as a babysitter to their children allowing them to watch everything without proper guidance.

In their absence, the parents might encourage their children to turn off the television and social media and make them realized that there is more valuable to do other than that. Physical activity or personal socialization on friends and neighbors that will develop the sense of community of the child. Or watch Christian Channels promoting moral values and word of God.

...To encourage families themselves, media personnel and public authorities to realize to the full their noble calling to strengthen and promote society's first and most vital community, the family.<sup>136</sup>

Although television networks are for business reasons, the Catholic Church reminds that every "*social media should serve the purpose of the common good.*" Moreover, television and

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<sup>136</sup> Catholic Library: Television and the Family (1994) retrieved 8 December 2018 from [http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs\\_jp02tv.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_jp02tv.htm).

other communication instruments make lives convenient. This convenience should also be an instrument to develop good qualities of the children while they grow. And while communication media is developing are the challenges of parents to screen and check what is watching by their kids.

#### 4.3.4 Filipinos Faith

Filipino Churches is quite full every Sunday. One service is not enough per Sunday due to a large number of people attending the church. And we do several Catholic traditions whenever we ask for prayers. My mother would light some candle in the church, pray the rosary every night and even go to devotional Mama Mary or Saints pilgrimage so that her request granted. Besides that my mother goes home and with faith, she waits until God answered her prayers. I love my mom; she provided me with the love I need when I grow up. Thus also faith by itself is it does not have works, is dead.<sup>137</sup>

Probably while my mother was praying, her prayers help us to achieve whatever we ask for prayers. But if I only pray like my mother and alone sit inside the house and wait for the miracle happens from above. I don't know if possible for me to have a decent job or be in this position writing a thesis. I believe prayer is a perfect way to communicate and discern what God wants in our life, but after prayer, as a true Christian, we need to face the difficulty of how to survive. From faith, trusting God through works should also follow and can trust Him. Facing our fears and leave things to God while we do what we know is right even if it's sturdy and impossible we need to trust God that everything will eventually be better.

For married couples whom faith is manifest in their devotion to saints and other traditions. Childless Filipino couples who wish to conceive tend to take further efforts. One example is attending the feast of Saints in Obando, Bulacan<sup>138</sup>In the Philippines, it was "fertility dance that serves as a form of prayer" or for couples that pray to have a child. Their dance is also a sign of thanksgiving for other couples that dance before and become successful in their prayers to have a child. It is a feast of three saints named as San Pascual Baylon, Santa Clara and Our Lady of Salambao.

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<sup>137</sup> James 2:7.

<sup>138</sup> The Obando fiesta celebrated from May 17-19 where couples who are childless can take this celebration to pray for divine intervention and dance to please the Virgin of Salambao.

...Santa Clara is associated with fertility elsewhere in the Philippines as well and "is symbolically connected to eggs," but her connection is difficult to discern, given that Clara was a celibate nun.<sup>139</sup>

We valued much of the idea of having a child to the extent that these dances created in the hope that God will give them the blessing of a complete family. In this event, Filipino's didn't just pray they also dance with so much faith in their heart that if God sees their effort, their prayers of having a child will grant. And when the child is born and went to school, parents also did prayers for their child to be successful in their studies. Every event in the school participated by their children and rewarded with honors was attributed to their persistent prayer to God. Filipino's depend much on praying and the blessings that come from God.

But blessings shouldn't always be in the form of financial success but especially on having a child resulting in a happy and stronger family. It also about getting a regular job and a house to live no matter it is small but as long as the family is together. I could meet several families who lack material things but still smiles, embracing the poverty they are experiencing — saying that as long as they are not sick and even poor, they will always be thankful. The positivity in every Filipino family who lacks space, food, clothing and material stuff still manage to go to the Church every Sunday and gave offerings through serving and offering. I can hear the sound of coins roaming around the church basket whenever there is Sunday mass. Though there are many poor people in the Philippines, the church is rich with architecture due to the help of all the low-income families who offers what they can for the formation of the church buildings. Still, Filipino's believe so much in the love of God for the poor and always think that no matter their situation God sees and hear.

But being too religious is sometimes escaping the reality of our situation. Other factors need to consider, and there is a lot to do to improve our lives. Prayers and faith should be practiced outside too. Questions about, am I financial ready or am I emotionally and physically fit to have a child? It begins on our self to reflect what God's purpose in our lives and not just

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<sup>139</sup> retrieved 8 December 2018 from <https://www.catholicsandcultures.org/feasts-holy-days/obando-feast-three-saints-philippines>.

because we want it. And I believe God's intends every human being to prosper and not suffer. Importantly, not just praying and waiting for miracles to happen but to work hard for it. Praying, miracles and waiting for someone to help us is never enough, we need to move on for better. Though job vacancies are not much, putting personal businesses might also help. As Bo Sanchez emphasize;

"Don't wait for your prosperity from any politician or any form of government. If you want prosperity, you've got to go and create it yourself. Only you and God working in you can create the wealth you want."<sup>140</sup>

Bo Sanchez was a Catholic preacher whose books are a focus on Filipino values towards promoting positive views on prosperity. Although being prosperous is already positive, Filipino culture had a different understanding of becoming wealthy and happy at the same time. Bo Sanchez had established a sense of attraction to Filipino viewers and readers because of addressing some of the concerns of Filipino views towards life in a function that they will positively see that reality. But those entertaining moments seems like not fully grasp by the main viewers, and still, we struggle to a more critical part of reaching the goal which to overcome poverty.

Bo Sanchez was very positive on promoting the goodness of God while still on earth. Also, Bo Sanchez is combining the possibility of being obedient to God while also becoming successful and productive. However, some Filipinos would think that God loves the poor and hate rich people. This understanding makes it more difficult for some Filipino to reach its goal towards a successful life. Some think that money is the source of evil and most of the rich people are sad and not content in their life. Thus, is something I also see in movies and tv-series. And good Catholics can be defined to be abiding by the traditions of the church or someone who are inclined to do what is morally right. Seriously, the excellent Catholic might be a result of the determination to face the real problem of population and try to be more willing to change for the better.

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<sup>140</sup> Bo Sanchez, 2007 p.34.

My father is an excellent example of practicing self-control that identifies the Church's version of responsible parenthood. Besides, we are also raised very nicely as a good Catholic. However, my father's serious way of self-control was not programmed by the state either the Church, but this is in his own will. My father is not even so religious; it is just my simple father who work and love us. Although my parents came from a large family and our neighbors were increasing. It never affected my parents and they did not do any family planning program. But according to my mother, it was my father who decided to limit us to only two siblings. According to my father, the reason he needs to control making more babies is that he can only provide for the maximum of only two children.

My father knows his in charge of feeding and providing for us that I hope every Filipino man will live like what my father did. My father is an old fashioned daddy but very loyal to my mother. My father was also five years older than my mother, matured, had stable work and knew his responsibility. Additionally, my parents also did an outstanding job taking care of themselves by a healthy lifestyle that provided us also with a quality of life. They teach us to be a good Christian while they fulfill their task as parents by giving us advice, working hard and providing us what we need.

My parents were Catholics, but they didn't relay their future solely on government and the Church. For example, "Bahala na attitude" which means "As God wills it." Unfortunately, through the years we've twisted the meaning and made it fatalistic.<sup>141</sup> Because of this "bahala na attitude," some Catholics choose to make more babies even if they can't even afford food for themselves. Other say it's way better to put the babies for adoption other than abortion or contraception, which is unfair for the child.

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<sup>141</sup> Bo Sanchez 2010, p.70.

## **4.4 The Future of Responsible Parenthood**

### **4.4.1 The Goal of the Philippine Population Management (PPMP)**

Presently, the primary goal is to promote “Matatag, Maginhawa, at Planadong Pamilyang Pilipino”, or "Stable, Convenient, and Planned Filipino Family" and beside this goals are the objectives of the PPMP they hope to achieve by 2020; First, to meet the needs of couples and individual for access in modern family planning methods. Additionally, to increase more awareness on using contraceptives by 65% and to eliminate unintended pregnancies especially for the poor women. Second, is to reduce and prevent teenage pregnancies into half for adolescent aged 10-19. Finally, to enable national, sectoral and local government agencies to integrate population variables effectively and dynamics in developing people entered interventions.<sup>142</sup>

With more choices for Filipino families plus the support of the government to make the methods legal and available. It makes it more accessible for Filipino's to practice and choose to be Responsible parents when the local government is hands-on in implementing these programs. Hopefully for people who unable to practice the natural methods of family planning will have another option to plan their family responsibly. Thus, it is for the sake of their children and future children Filipino's had more freedom to practice what in their heart they believe will help them fulfill their responsibility as a parent.

The slogan stated as the primary goal added security for Filipino families who wanted a good life for their children and themselves. Therefore, there should be no more excuse about having unwanted pregnancies because the system is making sure that the family planning program will be readily available through health workers on their designated municipalities. And even the social worker went directly to their doorsteps to bring the different methods of family planning.

Additionally, although PPMP is a government sector, the Church's natural family planning program is also included through the family planning seminars. The Church natural methods of family planning are still there. Though it will depend on the Filipino couple which means they think it will work on them that is also base don their conscience. While this program is

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<sup>142</sup> The PPMP Directional Plan for 2017-2022.

implemented, PPMP is looking forward that by 2022, their desired fertility level will reach by 2.1. Therefore, PPMP asserts that declining fertility is an ideal demographic scenario for a balanced population and economic development.<sup>143</sup>

#### **4.4.2 Inclusion of Natural FP Method to RPRH Law**

RFPF or Responsible Parenthood and Family Planning are one of the main components of population management strategies. PPMP (2018, p.36) states that aside from the full implementation of RPRH Law, it strengthens the Pre-Marriage Counselling (PMC) Program, in helping them prepare themselves for responsible parenthood through family planning seminars. Although it is the government managing the program, it includes the Natural Family Planning Method of the Catholic Church, together with modern family planning in promoting responsible parenthood. The law will not force families to choose the artificial method but will only increase their choices based on their conscience. Besides, the Catholic Church should stay and continued to inform the Catholic Filipino's Christian moral values even in the middle of the advancement of modern family planning methods.

The government program acknowledges that Filipino men also is a significant factor to make the program successful. Importantly, it includes men to be educated as part of the family planning program of the government. Men need to be involved and not just women because men are the primary protectors and providers of the family. Without men, women will always have difficulty raising the family if she does it alone. Hoping that street children will decrease as more men are also educated to be real responsible fathers of this child in which 70% is also boys.

Moreover, improving the health facilities to make sure that the need to support Filipino's in need of proper information about FP and their services met as soon as possible. Hence, also involving private sectors to participate for effective delivery of the functions of FP methods. Therefore, RFPF is just one of the main reason why Filipino's are now prepared to choose the spacing of their children and taking care of their health as well.

While empowering women and children, it will also allow the nation to overcome the poverty created by irresponsible decisions due to lack of support and sexual education. Finally, the

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<sup>143</sup> The PPMP Directional Plan for 2017-2022.

purpose of responsible parenthood program should enable everyone to be involved and not divided for personal and political motivations. The goal of PPMP is for the whole Filipino nation, and the effects might not be seen this early, but the future generations will enjoy its benefits.



## 5 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Counter-Arguments

In most dialogues and debate regarding RH Bill, the most common topic to discuss was the "contraceptive debates." Thus, it leads to not fully understanding the other methods that family planning methods can offer. "According to Dean Tony La Vina of the Ateneo School: Among others, it is clear that abortifacient methods are forbidden, freedom of conscience is recognized, and there is neither a mandate to decrease our population nor a preference for smaller families."(Cabral, 2013)

In light of this, it is essential to remember the efforts of RH Bill. Is to make sure that the government will act to provide, universal access to medically-safe, non-abortifacient, valid, legal, quality, and affordable reproductive health care services. Methods, device supplies which do not impede the implantation of a fertilized ovum and appropriate information and training thereon according to the priority needs of women, children and other underprivileged sectors.<sup>144</sup>

However, more low-income families will benefit from the program of the government. It doesn't mean that only because they are families in poor conditions are mainly targeted by population control. Instead, the right to access to family planning should be available for all no matter the status of the family. The Commission on Population (POPCOM) had a greater ambition to implement its program targeting all and not just the poor. With its five-year Philippine Population Management Program (PPMP) Directional Plan for 2017-2022 on the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) which aims to realize *AmBisyon Natin 2040 (Matatag, Maginhawa, at Panatag na Buhay para sa Lahat)*. To contribute to the realization of this concept, the PPMP aims to build and nurture "Matatag, Maginhawa, at Planadong Pamilyang Pilipino."<sup>145</sup> Confident that these programs will leave no one behind.

The law recognized that not every Filipino's primarily conservative Catholics are not in favor of RH law. Thus, it did state that RH law will respect the Religious Freedom of citizens and Christian Hospitals to practice their religious convictions and not coerce to follow the RH law

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<sup>144</sup> Cabral E. (2013).

<sup>145</sup> Perez III, JA. (2018).

without their consent. Moreover, the implementation of the RH law is not to force someone but to give the right to choose. The phrase: "reproductive rights" includes the idea of being able to make reproductive decisions free from discrimination, coercion or violence.<sup>146</sup>

Family planning methods are seen as long term objective and already proven safe in other countries. Additionally, family planning is not a tool to show off the power that the state can use to force people for population control. Sadly, it shows power between the Church and the government, that instead to show an example of obedient and proper order were using their energy for contraception battle that they think one should win. And, even RPRH win the case in favor of the state, the losers are still the majority of the Filipino's divided due to the drama regarding the family planning implementation.

### **5.1.1 Arguments for Contraception and Abortion**

Contraceptives are an issue for more impoverished families due to lack of proper information. The Catholic Church continues its statement until today that contraception had side effects and should avoid for health reasons. Although the ideas of contraceptive side effects are interesting, the church does not take account of the growing problems of health implications of too close pregnancy that results in illnesses and death for mothers and their premature babies.

The World Health Organization's definition of contraceptives differentiate it from abortion (WHO, 2015) but even it was proven scientifically by experts that contraceptives are safe. The Catholic Church was still in the side were they consider contraceptives as abortifacient and thus should be ban no matter if science proved it reliable, what matters is the doctrine of the Church. Additionally, the provisions do not allow explicitly for exceptions even when the health or life of the mother is at stake. As a consequence, thousands of desperate women who see no other option opt for illegal, unsafe abortion as their way of dealing with an unwanted pregnancy, often suffering its consequences.<sup>147</sup>

Kalbian (2014), on the other hand, asserts that during the UNFPA Conference, women's health seen as critical to development and contraceptives is also a tool to empower women

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<sup>146</sup> Cabral E. (2013).

<sup>147</sup> Melgar J, Carrera-Pacete J. (2016).

and children. Moreover, emphasizing that family planning is a matter of individual choice and health (Kalbian, 2014). Newbold (2007) further demonstrate this point on personal and societal motivations. Noonan, express this notion when he saw the Catholic prohibition on contraception as a prison (Kalbian, 2014). Therefore, health matters do not depend on what the Church will say, but it is a personal decision and should support by society.

While the Philippine government promotes artificial family planning, the Catholic organizations make way to petitioned even the supreme court to stop distribution of approved contraceptives. Hence it delays the program to distribute the contraceptive pills. Some public officials influenced by the Church also involved in holding a campaign against the "culture of death," "Population genocide" and the "greed of population control agencies" like IMF and World Bank (Acosta, 2015). Also, some Catholics will even state that the national budget for artificial methods should have more value if it used for "morality formation for the young," building schools and job opportunities for adults.

Kalbian (2014) emphasizes the importance of Noonan's notion about the Church doctrine of contraception that can be either a bulwark or a prison-that is, it can defend the values, or it can inhibit them. I believe these moral values are still of great importance and are beyond the control of the church and therefore had the right to reinforce by the Church. The main reason there are issues in population is that the Church lacks the control of the moral values system of the people. The Church uses its power and influence to stop the distribution of contraceptives but should focus more on the moral values that are declining because the Filipino's been forgetting how our great fathers and mothers were able to practice the positive Family Filipino values also during times of poverty and big family size.

The Church focuses much on the government's delaying its program. In reality, it's the Filipino families that are affected and not the government. Although the Church acts against contraceptives, I still agree that the message of the Catholic Church should continually hear during masses. But I also believe in letting each Filipino individually assess what they heard and act responsibly on their reproductive choices.

### 5.1.2 Arguments for Population Control

The Reproductive Health Law had been termed by the conservatives as a mask to create immorality to Filipino people, and thus it only diverts the real responsibility of the state in creating a job for the poor. The experience from across Asia showed that population policy with government-funded Family Planning program had been a crucial complement to sound economic policy and poverty reduction.<sup>148</sup> Additionally, the larger the family size, the nearer it is to become associated with poverty. Moreover, poverty incidence is lower in smaller families while those with bigger family size also had an increased rate of poor conditions.

Furthermore, international organizations underdeveloped countries supply financial aid in the exchange of family planning programs that promote artificial methods for Pope Paul II is a new form of oppression. Also, abuse in the sense that an emerging country is being asked to accept something they need together with campaigns that are against their religious beliefs. The result of this is categorizing developing countries with limited resources, and economic instability should limit the number of their children because of their poverty situation. In contrast to this is not guaranteed that population control can overcome poverty but is still a tool empowering women giving them more options to space the number of their children while improving they're well being.

Pope John Paul II argues that population issue in countries in Europe had a problem due to decrease in their population growth that needed to filled-up with developing countries like the Philippines to be able for their economy to run continuously. Although it is true, it can't deny that European nations were economically stable than the Philippines and women had more options to choose when regards to reproductive health. However, it would be wrong to claim that population growth in already emerging countries should encourage because of positive effects on other nations. Moreover, Kalbian (2014) describes Furedi's claim that population growth impeded development and a symptom of poverty.

Peters (2018) further demonstrates poverty as a real moral factor that influences women's decisions about pregnancy whether in developed or developing countries. Additionally, although developed countries are more prosperous than developing countries, their importation of migrant workers from developing countries like the Philippines was also

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<sup>148</sup> 30 UP Economists (2012) Population, poverty, politics and RH Bill.

causing brain drain. Moreover, population control through the methods of family planning also improves the quality of life (Newbold, 2007). Because of this, population growth should control to balanced the growth of the economy and maintain the health of every family.

### 5.1.3 Arguments for Procreation and Conjugal Love

Kalbian (2014), emphasizes the importance of the publication of " *Humanae Vitae*" by Pope Paul VI, which also sets as a guideline of the Church's moral teachings about sanctity of life and procreation as deemed the primary end of sex in marriage that is the basis of Catholic Church teachings with regards to family planning until this day. The Church guidelines are observed strictly, yet the other purpose of marriage sees as secondary. For instance, in the Vatican II document of Pastora Constitution on the Church in the Modern World "*Gaudium et Spes*", promulgated by Pope Paul VI (1965), two passages about marriage are of great importance to review which it is "not instituted solely for procreation but to nurture children and both demand that the mutual love of the spouses."

While the Catholic Church emphasizes the importance of procreation as an end of a marriage, the other view held that there is more than just procreating but the commitment of love between two people that are thinking the well being of their spouses and children. Additionally, if love is evident as the primary reason why this marriage is act as an agreement with God, why not use the intention of the couple for reasons that they choose to use other means to control the number of their children? However, Kalbian (2014) describes that intention is of little significance in this evaluation and the language of Catholic moral theology. Therefore it is the act objectively construed that ultimately determines its moral status, However, if intentions are re-evaluated because married coupled use birth control but have sex to show love for each other is morally right than having too many children they can't even love and support.

Therefore responsible parenthood is not just about procreation, which is given more emphasizes by the Catholic Church. Where love should be the foundation of a relationship. This commitment to love of married couples while establishing the future of their children is the true meaning and end of a marriage. Significantly, Miller (2011) on progressive Catholics argues the view on sexuality as positive, for which they find support in the Bible's "Book of

Solomon," which graphically describes lovemaking and sexual pleasure.<sup>149</sup> Whereas, emphasizing discernment and conscience.

Therefore, this love is shown more powerfully as a great example to us through Christ. That love is not just about following the law but making love happens in reality at the product of the couple's happy children. Moreover, the power of true love gives importance to both, the mother and the unborn because Schlesinger (2017) argues "life concerns more than existence." Peters (2018) further explains this point in theological perspectives that "life that is not simply about being born but also named, claimed and welcomed into the community and cared into being." For these reasons, I agree that conjugal love should take more value and importance than just procreating babies. Indeed if love is the main reason for sex, the other purpose of marriage will quickly and automatically follow.

#### **5.1.4 Arguments from a Position of Power and Influence**

The approval of RPRH Law<sup>150</sup> didn't change the stance of the Catholic Church regarding family planning methods. Thus, "abstaining from sex" during fertile periods was considered an acceptable means of natural family planning. It demonstrates the hierarchical position of the Catholic church still reflects on how it is restrictive on government policies and the strong influence of religious beliefs through the insistence of natural family planning. Moreover, the Catholic Church played a crucial role in influencing government programs concerning family planning methods. Today, I believe that the implementation of national law gives women more freedom of information that can be availed locally for families convenience.

And now, local community leaders like Mayor Atienza, cannot uphold the implementation of artificial methods just because of his religious views. Therefore, the national law gave lawful rights to all families to choose what they like to practice legally — giving more options to people who are in favor of being responsible for selecting other methods of family planning. However, there is still a limit for minors to access the artificial methods due to the need for parental consent or guardians unless they already had children. It is due to social factors and religious belief that condoms and artificial contraceptives will make minors more susceptible to immoral sex.

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<sup>149</sup> Miller, L. (2011).

<sup>150</sup> Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law.

Although World Health Organization mandates the methods of modern family planning as human rights with regards to Contraception Information and Services, the Catholic Church is still not agreeing with its terms as protector of human rights policies. Moreover, the Catholic Church is using its power to influence the people about the effects of contraceptives as abortifacient and not safe for them to take. However, after passing RPRH Law, it ensures the public that every contraceptive pill was certified by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as non-abortifacient. Moreover, even proven scientifically safe and non-abortifacient, the Catholic Church still argue that it is abortifacient and can also cause cancer. Additionally, the Church continues to contend that birth-control pills are not a medicine to treat the population like a disease. Therefore, I believe this creates wrong information for people who are looking for better methods of family planning.

UN arguing the "responsibility of government instead to legalized and make it easier to access of information" about family planning methods even the Catholic Church disagree with its program. (Kalbian, 2014). The Catholic even argues that they should protect the minors in a way to make sure that the program of the government should not reach them, hoping they will remain pure and away from immorality. Unfortunately, minors are the producers of unwanted pregnancies, illegal abortions and street children. Moreover, the Catholic Church continued to argued that sexual education violates the primary roles of parents over their children. This argument is not however accepted by the Supreme court, due to premature reasons as there was no curriculum yet to opposed.<sup>151</sup>

The Catholic church should take account that parents are not comfortable discussing sex education with their children due to shame. Additionally, parents were not prepared on sex education because irresponsible parents are also the problem of the government. Therefore problem still exists and continued. But now that there is a national law that guarantees more options for families especially women to have options in either natural or artificial family planning. While the Catholic church cannot reverse not to have RPRH Law in the Philippines, it can continue to advocate through religious groups that there are positive benefits when choosing natural family planning.

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<sup>151</sup> The decision on *Imbong J. et al. Vs. Ochoa P. et al.* GR. Nos. 204819, 204934, 204957, 204988, 205003, 205043, 205138, 205478, 205491, 205720, 206355, 207111, 207172, 207563. Supreme Court of the Philippines (en banc); 2014. <http://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/pdf/web/viewer.html?file=/jurisprudence/2014/april2014/204819.pdf>.

### 5.1.5 Arguments for Protecting Women, Children and Family Life

At the vital population management strategies of POPCOM, it argues that husbands or male partners should include in the Responsible Parenthood and Family Planning program to educate and involve to make the program successful. Moreover, involving men means acceptance of the head of the family or responsibility as the father who protects the well-being of their wife and children and not just the role of women serving men through sexual intimacy and having children. Peters (2018) "express this notion that boys also identified as to be the reason while there are unplanned or unwanted babies." Newbold (2007) further demonstrate this point in the "importance of the involvement of males, husbands, and fathers" in family planning methods.

While mothers in the Philippines are often forced to be silent and obedient to their husband because of cultural and public acceptance that Filipina women are expected to be "martyr" to keep her family intact. Peters (2018) on the other hand argues that motherhood requires "someone a desire to be a parent and not to be forced on someone as a punishment for having sex." Manninen (2014) further support this point by emphasizing that the role of raising children is not just for mothers alone but a communal duty. Therefore, it is the results of "human dependence and interdependence" between husband and wives and the support of their community and the church.

The Catholic church argues much of protecting the unborn. However, children being born into unhappy families is increasing while the church can only give temporary solutions through adoptions and temporary shelters. In reality, street children are not fully supported and thus became a chain of problems in society. Peters (2018) strongly argues that "parenting as a sacred trust, entering a covenant relationship to care for, nurture and bring up a child to love and know God." Therefore, giving birth is only the beginning of the moral obligations of parents to bring up a child as good Christians. If only all know this covenant commitment by heart, and I believe knowing it by heart, will result in no more unwanted babies and street children. That is to say if more families have more options to plan and space their children especially in this time where women were to be blamed. It will also protect women and children from more violence and being unwanted.

### 5.1.6 Filipinos in Defense of Family Planning to be Responsible Parents

According to the National Demographic survey: contraceptive use among married women in the Philippines has nearly tripled over the last 30 years, from 17 percent in 1973 to 49 percent in 2003.<sup>152</sup> About 33.4% of women were using modern methods of family planning while 15.5% on the traditional methods.<sup>153</sup> By the year 2011, another survey shows that in a high 73% of Filipino's who is in favor to educated about family planning methods.<sup>154</sup> It shows that a lot of Filipino's would like to be informed and be of service by the government through its family planning program. Most important to this survey is that 82% suggest that family planning is a decision made by the couples and therefore it should not be decided by others. Even in news and other survey agencies, regardless of their Catholic background, they were in the side of modern methods of family planning. There are also Catholics who choose to practice contraceptives, IUD and sterilization are still want to say they are Catholics and will continue to go to Church.

It is apparent that although it is a nation of Catholics, the people who only declare war against artificial family planning are Bishops and Cardinals together with their followers and maybe some fake politicians are pressured because of votes and recommendations from the Catholic Church. I agree with the good intention of the church to guard the morality of Filipino's but to the extent that the children are sacrifice through the irresponsible decisions of parents. Therefore, I believe that Filipino families need to claim their right to information about family planning and not to find for their solutions that it makes more sinful for some especially for those who chose abortions over unplanned pregnancies.

The implementation of Reproductive health policies and family planning (natural or artificial) of the Church and the government. Will be beneficial to the improvement of government economic policies to serve more people in need and to families to help them space the number of their children. And be more responsible parents to their children and had the proper time also to take care of themselves. They are also emphasizing the importance of the involvement

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<sup>152</sup> "Planning size of their Families have a Direct Bearing on ..." retrieved 2 May 2019 from <https://www.coursehero.com/file/p4p9sh2/planning-size-of-their-families-have-a-direct-bearing-on-the-quality-of-their/>.

<sup>153</sup> <https://psa.gov.ph/content/half-filipino-women-now-practicing-family-planning>.

<sup>154</sup> Labor Force Survey, Philippines (2007).

of "religious leaders" to promote smaller families through their natural family planning program.

Furthermore, Newbold (2007) states that "for the family planning program to succeed everyone must work to change the context of social and cultural environment to encourage smaller families." Moreover, Filipino families should be more proud and happy if they had a thriving family planning through having children that they can provide. It should also give credits to people who take efforts to practice responsible parenthood by having smaller family especially when they did it the natural way.

## 5.2 *Bulding an Effective Responsible Parenthood Program*

In one of the headlines of CBCP News dated July 12, 2014, Manila: Msgr. Joselito Asis, secretary general of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said the Church's definition of *Responsible Parenthood* is distinct from those promoted by RH bill supporters. At the heat of the controversy between Responsible Parenthood of the Church and the State, former President Benigno Aquino III, in his state of the nation address discussed shortages in classrooms and textbooks for students. Hence, it is a state of urgency, and this overwhelming problem should solve with clear solutions. Then former President Benigno Aquino III says: "*I think responsible parenthood is the answer.*" On the other hand, CBCP official said that if Aquino is referring to the responsible parenthood according to the Church's teachings, "then it's good, but unfortunately it is not."<sup>155</sup>

### 5.2.1 **Inclusion of Male and Husbands on Sexual Education**

Education towards Christian maturity and responsible parenthood applies, especially to the Filipino male and husband.<sup>156</sup> Gorospe (1966) suggests that the solution to population problem should be taken seriously by the Church by realistically creating positive Catholic program as a practical Christian alternative to an objectionable family program. Additionally, the Philippines need a positive Catholic Program that suits the situation in the country. Moreover, Gorospe (1966) added that in order these programs to be effective will depends on motivating those people concerned and continued refining of proper Christian attitudes. Therefore, cultivating those attitudes begins with the smallest structure of the nation, which is the family-especially the father which is the head and not just only the responsibility of mothers to their children.

Moral education should start beginning on the father and seeing his wife, not just an object of pleasure but to show concern for the safety of her wife struggling every time she was pregnant. In other words, a father who is not just thinking about his masochism but to be "unselfish" towards her wife and her well-being is a great step reaching a Catholic way of family planning. Peters (2018) asserts to "stop blaming just women" but instead make it happen that husband get involved in responsible planning.

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<sup>155</sup> CBCPNews (2012) Aquino Urged to Clarify Responsible Parenthood.

<sup>156</sup> Gorospe, V. (1966).

I agree that Filipino men in the old days is allowed to have more children because they work hard in the fields, knows their responsibility as a provider, strictly acts as the head of the family, had bigger houses and vast land to be cultivated. Additionally, there is a share of responsibility between the Filipino wife and their husband. The mother takes care of the children while the father works in the field to provide food in the table. The mother helps her husband to cook for the workers of the farm while also maintaining their loving home. However, in the present context of Filipino family most men did not even want to cultivate the land they inherit from their father, but instead, they sell it without realizing the importance of the value of the property.

Thus, it shows the immaturity of men because they only wanted the money for themselves and not for the future of their children. Now they had no land, significant debts, and no savings. Their families need the money, and there are no more sources to get it and this results in arguments and eventually broken families. And these problems created by immature men will pass on to their hapless children. Therefore, the Church needs to help these men reclaim their role as the real provider and protector of the family. Likewise, women and children should feel safe and secure with having a responsible father in the house, instead of a drunk, womanizer and violent father.

I disagree about having large families even it is happier to have many siblings because, in reality, it doesn't fit the present situation. However, it depends on if the family is good enough to provide enough love and space for their children. Moreover, homes and areas of land are getting smaller, and women are not just fixing the household chores but also taking the responsibility of the man which is to provide the family. Therefore, a woman's role expands because men are incapable. As a result, children take for granted because no one can thoroughly guide them. I believe it's essential to make more valuable time for each child because parents are the first provider of genuine love and care.

Concerning family planning methods, if the woman was not comfortable to take contraceptive pills, using IUD or endangers her life. Then men or husbands also need to take control of their family size by some methods like natural or even artificial. Filipino men should act with a clear vision that it will be more unpleasurable to feed more babies he can't provide than performing self-control or family planning methods. The Filipino men were culturally raised leaving the domestic responsibility on Filipina women and even obligating its marital duties

in terms of men's sexual needs without consideration of their wife's feelings. I believe that if the Filipino men started to be more caring will also give him rewards that the woman if she was adequately cared for by her husband, will also have the motivation to care for him and her children without being pressured for other concerns like sexual intimacy.

Husbands must learn to show how to love their wife and children and be thoughtful of the "other" as a person and not merely an object of self-gratification.<sup>157</sup> Therefore, this training of unselfishness should begin at home, in school and the community and throughout life.<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, the moral values that the Catholic church is trying to maintain will be eventually more natural to accomplish when men fully accept his moral obligation as the head of the family to his wife and children.

### **5.2.2 The Duty of Parents to their Children**

The Catholic church defends against the government's promotions on artificial family planning to limit the number of their children was due to the stand that this is a family matter and needed to be faced by married couples by themselves and not to be intervened by the state's policy. As Pope Francis states that to achieve Responsible Parenthood. Dialogue is needed. The parents need to have proper communication with their children regarding their sexuality. Including the sensitive issue of sex education which is according to the Catholic Church is the duty of parents to their children. For this reason, if their children failed this to apply on their future decisions, means the matter was to blame their parents.

Therefore, this duty of parents should be reminded or even included in their seminars before starting a family. Parents voice need to hear to clarify to their teenage sons and daughters the dangers of an unplanned pregnancy. However, due to cultural and social barriers, sex was viewed as dirty and be locked inside the closet. And in reality, Filipino parents are not comfortable to talk this matter to their teenage sons and daughters. In the end, it's the teenagers who will try to look for answers for themselves outside their parent's guidance, which is very wrong that leads to more problems. I believe that this problem can avoid if parents will be more open and patiently explain the consequences of an unplanned pregnancy. Therefore avoidance of early and unexpected pregnancy will increase.

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<sup>157</sup> Gorospe, V. (1966).

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, p. 478.

Hence, this duty is not limited to the mother but also the father to make it work effectively. It means to act together and not just listen to church teaching but also applying and doing the parents duty before any problems persist. In this sensitive issue, parents should accept this task even if it is challenging for them because the Catholic church is acknowledging their role as an educator in terms of sexuality.

...As for sex education, thus us a fundamental and non-negotiable right and duty of parents to their children (Paul II, Catechism of the Catholic Church or CCC 2221).<sup>159</sup>

This duty begins at home while sitting together especially while watching sensitive issues on the television. Explaining everything will be very challenging especially at the beginning of the stage of maturity of kids, but this is how parents should deal with their children while the priest and nuns will be more uncomfortable to conduct sex education for teenagers. The parents with supports of the Church has experience on how to deal with these situations because they are adults and the first molders of these children. Also, there are professionals that the Church can assign to help parents to have more self-confidence to guide their children.

Though I believe this duty is taken lightly not because parents are less educated but because of many excuses and shame. Filipino's Catholics need to change this mentality that sex education should keep in secret, but instead, the church should help them apply the teaching of the church that while sex is holy and sacred. There is also nothing to be ashamed of when discussing sex especially if this will save the children's future.

### **5.2.3 Responsibility by Heart and by Actions**

The challenge of promoting responsible parenthood of the church is the lack of convincing power. Catholic teachings continue to use the word morality, God, hell, violation of the commandment and even health risk to scare people not to use the artificial methods of family planning but still not practical to some. Though, few preferred natural approaches, the church is still limited to what it can offer to its people. Because the only means were abstinence or

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<sup>159</sup> Melgar J, Carrera-Pacete J. Understanding Catholic fundamentalism in the Philippines: how conservative religious teachings on women, family, and contraception are wielded to impede the reproductive health law and other reproductive health policies. 2016. [http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/26.-Philippines\\_with-extra-pages-added.pdf](http://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/26.-Philippines_with-extra-pages-added.pdf).

natural methods. It is also ineffective because I don't see any promotions from Catholic TV stations encouraging smaller families or saying any side effects when having too many children. The real issues were left while the Church continues to promote that Children are "Blessings" and Filipino families no matter how desperate they still see their children as "their wealth." Children as their hope are one of the reasons why they need to make as much as ten children are very immature.

Moreover, in the end, families will tend to blame the government for the consequences they had done. Unfortunately, there is a pattern that everyone is copying which is blaming someone else rather than improving from their own mistakes which is I don't agree. Filipino's are Christians a long time ago, and culturally even old people tend to ask for guidance through church leaders on their family concerns that shows the inability to mature. Families should also learn from other peoples mistakes and should discern how to be good parents because the Philippines is a Christian nation. Furthermore, the preaching from the priest should be more vocal and concrete even to the point that it reaches Filipino sensitivity to moved by the message and therefore changed because they heard the "truth" of the real gospel about being a responsible parent.

To back-up, a positive and practical approach is the statement of Pope Francis on several of his interviews and its very enlightening. Pope Francis is still evident though that birth control is not encouraged and against the teaching of the church but "Responsible Parenthood" is very loud and clear for him. According to an editorial by Catholic News Agency (CNA) dated 2015: Pope Francis backed Blessed Paul VI's teaching against birth control and urged openness to life, but reminded couples that "responsible parenthood" does not need them "to be like rabbits" to be good Catholics.<sup>160</sup>

...On the contrary, he said, "responsible parenthood" requires that couples regulate the births of their children, as church teaching allows.<sup>161</sup>

This statement was very timely because this was when the Philippine government and the Catholic Church was in a debate about Family Planning laws that promotes artificial methods. And until now we had serious concerns about high birth rates especially on poor and

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<sup>160</sup> Holdre, A. (2015).

<sup>161</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/20/catholics-dont-have-to-breed-like-rabbits-says-pope-francis>.

uneducated population which worsen the poverty situation of the nation. Though, Pope Francis still open to life said: "a man cannot give the sacrament to the woman, and the woman give it to him if they are not in agreement on this point to be open to life."<sup>162</sup> Pope Francis even gives an example of the opposite word for Responsible which is "Irresponsibility." For example, a woman she met who had eight children and all in cesarean section. And right after that, the woman still didn't leave her eight children and instead used the word "I trust God."

Using God after all the irresponsible ordeal use as an excuse word is not either a good idea. Instead, Pope Francis reminds again to be Responsible Parent and that each person applies the church-approved ways to regulate birth. The pope insists "That is an irresponsibility!" and the woman might claim that she should trust in God. "But God gives you ways to be responsible," he said. There are many "licit" ways of regulating births that are allowed by the church. An apparent source to the natural family planning method of monitoring a woman's cycle to avoid intercourse when she is ovulating, without the use of drugs, devices, and surgical procedures.<sup>163</sup>

To have a practical Catholic approach, the Church leader should also be hard preaching the parents like the pope did and not just the government. Although, Filipino's tends to be extra sensitive especially when they are already in a poverty situation. The approach might hurt for a while, but the results will be more effective because it deals with their case to wake-up and has some shame and change for the better. Just like what Pope Francis says about "don't breed like rabbits" or on my understanding "don't breed like animals without self-control" or act humanly with respect on your bodies and to your children. Looking back, I don't agree that the Church is doing much of the scolding on the politicians and even the President of the Philippines while tolerating the families who never learned from their previous mistakes.

The Philippines is a majority a Catholic nation who go to church for Sunday mass. The problem is, it is also the majority of them don't practice what they heard from the priest because they knew that the church will always be there to help blame the government for its corruption. It's a continuous cycle; people go to Church, filled up and pray and then go home

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<sup>162</sup> Holdre, A. (2015).

<sup>163</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/20/catholics-dont-have-to-breed-like-rabbits-says-pope-francis>.

and still didn't bother to apply what they heard from the pulpit. The Pope is very accurate and honest when he speaks truly about "Responsible Parenthood" that gives an idea for Filipino parents to reflect seriously and apply on their present situation.

## **5.3 Key Factors of Responsible Parenthood**

### **5.3.1 Motivation and Dedication**

The Catholic preaching should not only be kept inside the church but should be practiced especially inside the home of its people. The commitment that the Catholic Church has in guarding the morality of the Filipino people is on their stand against contraceptives and any unnatural methods of family planning. Despite the changes in the society, influences of science, politics and even international bodies, the Catholic Church remains firm and clear that Filipino people should live by the law of God. While the country continues to receive different views from the church and the government about Responsible Parenthood, Filipinos need to assess the current situation and make a decision whether to choose the government or the church's approach in family planning.

As a Filipino Christian nation, the Church leads an excellent example in delivering their duties before God. Hence, parents should also do the same. Although we cannot deny the fact that the government has its say on which approach is the best for the country, Filipinos can discern and decide through their inner conscience and right reasoning what is best for him and his family. Meanwhile, the Philippines is not a country of slaves but people with free will. Hence, Christians enjoy the benefits of religious freedom not to use against each other but practice to improve their lives for the better.

Another key to remember to be a responsible parent is transforming the way we think and exercise self-control towards our actions. It will enable a person to establish itself into a world of challenges and commitment. "Life does not just happen to us; we make and shape life." (Valentin, 2015) Usually, it is easier to blame someone else rather than taking full responsibility and improving personal life. Therefore, practicing what the Church preaches about life, love, God, and health is in the hands of the people.

Some psychologist would suggest that the first seven years of a child is the most crucial and demanding stage, as this needs attention and proper guidance. Hence, it is the point when a child will learn to speak, listen, smell and even read. If a child exposed to unloving family, it would be difficult to reverse the effects. But a loving parent is the primary ingredient for a child to be groomed as a right individual and a citizen. When a child is loved and cared for by his guardian or parents, this child can pass that love he experienced before. Significantly, love

is something you give and receive and the focal point is to be a blessing and not just to accept that blessing.

Filipinos know how to love their children, but this love is expected to be paid back by their children. Some parents will tell their children to take care of them and provide their needs because it's their 'utang na loob' or debt to pay. This example is not the love that should be exposed to children as love is selfless and doesn't expect something in return. It is only a bonus when the child returns that love to his parents once he gets older. The main point is parents should grasp how valuable their love can influence their children and affect them in the future. Therefore, responsible parenthood is realizing the current situation and dedicating itself for improvement of the family.

### **5.3.2 Instructions for Christian Households**

The whole family should work like one body helping each other to be effective. The bible elaborates the different roles of Christian in the household. Firstly, "Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands. Secondly, "Husbands, love your wives and do not be rude with them." Finally, "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord." "Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged."<sup>164</sup>

In the Christian context, God illustrated how a family should work together to live according to His will. The wives' submission to the husband shows that the man may be physically stronger than the woman, but it doesn't mean that this physical power should use against the wife. Furthermore, the Bible added that the father plays a big role in developing his children's moral values. With the evolving needs and changes in society, this context still needs to be adopted by each man and women. The father as the foundation of the family should love his wife with all his heart and protect the most vulnerable member of the family.

On the other hand, the count of broken families in the country becomes larger. The woman shoulders the responsibilities of both father and mother, which are indeed challenging to bear. The man needs to understand that he plays, as the backbone of the family and without taking the responsibility will limit the power of a family to overcome every struggle and challenges. Additionally, a responsible father will never leave his family no matter what trials they are

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<sup>164</sup> Col 3:18-21 NIV.

facing. The respect and love that the wife and husband have for each other will be imprinted on the children's minds and will lay a foundation of a happy and loving family.

Therefore, a family is comparable to the human body. Each part has its role to play for a human to function. Like our body, a family will have difficulties to move forward if it has a missing piece. A family needs support from each other without violation right or use of power, and show respect through the binding love for each other. Hatred and blaming mindset should be discouraged while encouraging love and practice of Christian values to be passed from one generation to another.

### **5.3.3 Children are not the Solution to Poverty**

Being a blessing teaches us to love others through the power of giving and not just receiving. The Philippines is a lovely country with a society that is willing to help their neighbors in need. Helping especially in times of crisis is in the hearts of the Filipino people. On the other hand, helping should not only happen in times of crisis but better in a situation where people plan for a better future. Planning to have a baby because someone is afraid to be alone or to make sure that someone will take care of him or her when they are old is a selfish reason. People need to remove this selfish mentality. Thus, parenthood is being ready to support, love, and care for the child and not the other way around. Hence, it is unconditional and pure love that Christian values teach us.

Jesus Ministry is to serve and not to be served; hence, Jesus Christ came in helping the people. This Christian value is imprinted through the Disciples of Christ that are why most choose to be celibate and share the love of God through the gospel and discipleship. Filipinos, on the other hand, practice some of their Catholic beliefs through the tradition of fiestas and saints. Over and beyond, it is vital to continue and practice the real understanding of Christ mission, which is to love. Additionally, as Peters (2018) suggests that we should have a different view about "child as a blessing" but instead "be a blessing." It makes more sense that once we start thinking about others, we are following what Christ had taught us.

Thus, Jesus was showing us the continuation of God's moral law found in the Old Testament and summing it up as a LAW OF LOVE, not replacing it.<sup>165</sup> The ten commandments illuminated in these two laws: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,*" which is the first and the greatest commandment. , And the second is, "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*" All the Law and the Prophets cling on to these two commandments.<sup>166</sup> Therefore, people should not consider a child as a commodity or a mean to attain selfish dreams and ambitions. Meanwhile, some use their children as an instrument to accomplish their goals.

Again, we have to understand that children are accountability before God and not solely for the selfish desires of parents. Children should not be viewed as an asset and owned by their parents. God is the real giver of life. God is the valid owner and parents are the stewards to develop their children to be a responsible person in the future. Peters (2018) agrees in the power of children to give happiness. An excellent opportunity for parents to enjoy their loving children while they grow up whereas those who never had a child would not experience such joy and happiness. Thus, motherhood, once it is performed adequately as a covenant because of the love of God, gives such power to anyone who takes the responsibility seriously. These power or love will also transfer to the child as a concrete foundation while it grows.

#### **5.3.4 Careful Analyzation before any Decision Making**

Pro-life is not exclusive for people who labeled themselves as good Catholics just because they didn't agree with birth control. Pro-life is also for Pro-choice and should not be labeled as anti-life because they also value life in another way. Changing the mindset from believing that being Pro-Choice is only for people who do approve artificial methods. Pro-Choice also means that even the one who is in favor of contraceptives is also valuing "life" and it doesn't mean that it is unchristian and anti-life. As Manninen (2014) emphasizes in her book *Pro-choice and Christian, "being pro-choice means respecting the choice."* Labeling Pro-choice as anti-life or bad Catholics because they choose to plan their family artificially creates division in the Christian family.

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<sup>165</sup> retrieved 2 March 2019 from <http://www.thebible-tencommandments.com/the-two-greatest-commandments.html>.

<sup>166</sup> Matt 22:37-40.

Pro-Choice are more aware of their choices and their impact on their health and their children if they continue to have babies uncontrollably without proper spacing. Thus, pro-choice is about protecting life by protecting babies' development inside a healthy womb of a mother who knows how to value herself to be able to love their children entirely. Catholics who think the consequences before having sex should be called "responsible Catholics" and not bad Catholics. Hence, being Pro-Choice is not harmful and should not be linked as killers of life but instead people with choice and consider their family while planning for their future.

Furthermore, it should note that not every word that social media say about the romantic relationship is correct even if it's from a Christian background. It needs individual re-assessment of financial, mental, emotional and physical preparedness for having a child. Use conscience and inner instinct to know what is right and wrong. Learn to be content and happy for what we have and stop comparing ourselves to others with larger families. Remember that the bigger the family, the bigger the responsibility. It is equally necessary to have full control of the situation, and if carelessness or "*bahala na*" is practiced all the time, it will be impossible to think clearly and do the right thing. Therefore, careful planning should accurately be governed and practice primarily in the decisions of having a child.

The Philippines with influences of Catholicism may have different means of practicing responsible parenthood. Filipino Catholics may practice the various traditions of Catholicism, but very few are willing to live the real values of being a Catholic parent that practice love until the end. Thus, being responsible only at the start of having a family is not enough because the responsibility should last until death. Easily giving-up on the obligation and not facing the immediate consequences would only result in a more severe problem in the future. Thus, being a Catholic nation, Filipinos should practice their faith and Christian values through parenthood and form a family with a foundation of responsible decisions. Having a mature determination helps manage the present situation of every individual. Taking one step at a time and not committing another mistake and not rely on an immediate fix. Therefore, the moral values that the church taught, unless a family is willing to practice self-control and discipline, the realization of Catholic's Responsible Parenthood will only remain in the shadow of the country.



## 6 CONCLUSION

### *6.1 Catholicism in the Philippines*

The Philippine Catholic hierarchy explicitly recognized Vatican authority as absolute and divine. It is collaborative which sought legal enforcement of Catholic doctrines especially in regards to parenthood and reproductive rights. In other words, it dismissed the philosophical rationalism and individualism to go with modernity. Today, the influence of religious conservatives and this anti-contraception doctrine of the Catholic Church equate all modern family planning methods with abortion that is the primary importance to the conservative Catholic position.

Also, the Catholic Church in the Philippines added that the only acceptable sexual relations could take place within marital procreation. On the other hand, the Church's family planning allowed the methods of procreation and abstinence in practice. The power of the church also influenced the government by prohibiting the modern methods of family planning for unmarried and adolescents. Restricting the decision power of a woman also influence a family, as the husband's consent is needed if the woman wants to be sterilized. Thus, making it more complicated when a policymaker chooses to follow the church's tenets in favor of the votes and support from the Catholic Church and its loyal people.

While the Catholic Church is guarding much of the roles of women and family values, the men are less becoming aware of their functions. Filipino men are one of the main reasons why a family was built and also broken. The Catholic Church doesn't have to always focus on women because most of Filipina mothers are loyal to the church teachings and relationship with their husbands. It is men's percentage in male sterilization is very low, only 0.1% based on the desired demographic scenario of PPMP, and participation in family planning whether its natural or modern methods.

The doctrines of the church about responsible parenthood also limit the choices of women while their husband is not helping them solve issues in having unplanned pregnancies. Filipinos kept the idea that there's nothing wrong with a larger family. Even inherit this idea with grandfathers who even had 12 or more children though they never starved. But we should also note that late grandfathers are known to be hard working men as they work in the

fields from dusk till dawn to have food to feed their 12 children while wives are doing the domestic works like cleaning, taking care of the children and cooking food for the family.

Filipino family values were passed on from generation to generation, but as we become more modern, Filipinos tend to be selective on what values they will prefer. From industrious men to "*Juan Tamad*" or Lazy John, the Filipino men depend more now on their submissive Filipina wives. Therefore, the future of Responsible Parenthood practices of the Catholic Church lies on the targeted subject of their preaching. It is not always women but also men or the husband to be the focus of the teaching to remind them of the old days as the great provider and the head of the family. Over and above, it is vital to involve men in all the decision making and share responsibilities with women in all aspects of family activities and planning. We should not forget that men are considered the head of the Filipino family; hence, should act and play the role as it is.

The Filipino men who are culturally spoiled by the society through which they are power framed only to work and increase the population. Men should not limit themselves to provide their families not just financial but more on emotional, and domestic help for women and their children. Some of these men refrain from practicing the real fatherhood and live with a mindset of "*lalake ako, walang mawawala sa akin.*" or "I'm a man, and I have nothing to lose."

Women usually carry all the burden of taking full responsibility in supporting their children once the father leaves them. Therefore, Responsible Parenthood to be effective is to practice both by man and woman. Thus, preaching's of the Catholic Church should not only be heard but also practiced accordingly through the lives of every Filipino men and woman and every individual who consider themselves as real Catholics. Hence, they deliver not just their commitments with the man but over and above their obligations before God. Both free expression of religion and choice of family planning method to be responsible parents, base on the grounds of conscience, our Constitutional rights in the Philippines.<sup>167</sup>

The Catholic Church should continue its duties to guard the moral values of the Filipino people especially the men. Filipino's should also learn to grow up and be mature to weigh

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<sup>167</sup> Section 5, Article 3 and Section 3, Article 15, Philippines Constitution, 1987.

their decisions responsibly. And the problems that the Filipino's experiencing is due to lack of self-control and colonial mentality. We should look back on our Filipino positive values, and the evidence can remember on our late grandparents who are also Catholics. In Filipino culture, becoming a serious person is not so attractive but annoying. Of course, there's nothing wrong with being funny and happy but not when hearing the teaching of the Catholic Church. Sadly, most Filipino's don't take it seriously because if they are serious, it will reflect in their lives.

Unlike before that my late grandparents always show respect to what the Church will say because they know they also make a vow before God; "for better or for worst til death do us part." The old Filipino family values that I witnessed before is not just religiously motivated but self-motivated decisions because my grandparents knew and practiced their obligations. They knew it from the start, the sacredness of their commitment as practicing responsible Filipino parents.



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Col 3:18-21

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