

I, the undersigned priest, subscribe to the following statement circulated by the co-ordinating committee of the Western Conference for Priests in September, 1968. The result of this consultation among priests of Western Canada is to be presented to the Canadian Catholic Conference sitting in General Assembly, in Winnipeg, September 23 - 27th, 1968.

STATEMENT:

On Pastoral implications of *Humanae Vitae*,

1) Sharing with our Bishops a common pastoral concern for the faithful in Canada, we urge the Bishops to prepare, as soon as possible, a pastoral statement on the encyclical "*Humanae Vitae*". This statement is needed to give genuine practical assistance to pastors and confessors in the ministry of preaching, private counseling, and sacramental penance. Through this ministry the faithful in turn will be helped to come to a workable solution, specifically, of the moral question regarding family regulation methods.

2) We accept and welcome the positive moral and pastoral values stressed by the encyclical. However, the question of family regulation methods raises a special (if not primary) problem. We know that many of the faithful and many priests, in Western Canada as elsewhere, are torn in anguish between two demands of their Catholic conscience: a due faithfulness to the magisterium of the Holy Father, and the fundamental duty to follow the dictate of one's own conscience prudently formed. We urge, therefore, that a forthcoming statement of the Canadian Bishops address this particular problem. In so doing, it should include an unequivocal explanation of the conditions for prudent dissent, both internal and practical, on the part of the Catholic faithful. We say this because we are convinced that more than one ecclesial value is at stake here, e.g. God-given authority in the Church, true freedom of conscience, honesty in the confessional, a climate of mutual trust in the Church, unity in the Church, sacredness of marriage and family life, etc. All these values must be preserved and fostered in a true Catholic balance.

3) Finally, we urge that this statement of the Bishops stress the necessity of Catholic peoples to develop the capacity to make mature, personal moral decisions assisted always by the teaching ministry of bishops and priests.

(Signed)

