

# JOCELYNE'S RESOURCE-OF-THE-MONTH: June 2017

My Commentary on: *"The Role of Women in the Church and Society"* by Dr. Alice von Hildebrand

YouTube Video → [https://youtu.be/vM6WJV\\_P2Mw](https://youtu.be/vM6WJV_P2Mw)

## True Feminism, Part 2: Attacks on the Sacred Gift of Womanhood

In my last commentary, I spoke of my difficulty in coming to terms with my womanhood and in coming to terms with God's Truth. While I struggled with this for many, many years, through the grace of God, I have come to realize that my womanhood is a Divine gift. I am happy to be a woman. This realization did not come easily or quickly, as society's view of manhood and womanhood is severely skewed, but extremely influential. Today's radical feminism is largely to blame for this. This "false feminism" has destroyed the true meaning of womanhood, placing her value and worth in the measure with which she is able to be like men and to compete with men.

As a general observation, the Western woman does not know her worth. We do not know the special power, value and God-given gift of our womanhood. Society has conditioned us to believe that our worth is reliant on what we can offer or what we can do. For women, and I have experienced this on a very personal level, this means that we also base our worth on what we can offer the opposite sex. We are taught that to be loved we need to be physically appealing and sexually available. We are told that sexual promiscuity liberates us, and that sex can and should be independent of pregnancy and childrearing. Women are told to view their sacred ability to give and nurture life as a "burden," and that she should be free of this "burden," as men are. In other words, women should be more like men. I cannot be the only woman who is insulted by this, but according to radical feminism, this is what liberates women. Today's radical feminists, therefore, vehemently defend a woman's "right" to abort, to terminate her unborn child's life.

While some aspects of the feminist movement have been good for women (ie. the right to vote, the right to equal education, the right to equal wages, etc.), the radical feminism of today is misguided and extremely detrimental. Easy access to contraception, and the legalization of abortion are just two of the fruits of this movement, which has changed societal views regarding sex. Sex is no longer a sacred, marital act meant to unify the married couple and give life (as defined by the Church). Sex, ultimately, has lost its beauty and has simply and sadly become a means of attaining a moment of pleasure, a meaningless but entertaining pastime.

Due in large part to society's acceptance of contraception, abortion and recreational, meaningless sex outside of marriage, we have actually seen an increase in the degradation of women and in the evils enacted on women in our western society (eg. pornography, divorce, sexual assaults, prostitution, etc.). Look up the stats from a reliable source. They do not lie. Women have become more and more objects of desire; their bodies only toys, playthings, objects to be exploited and used.

Women are now free to be exploited without the "inconvenience," "burden" and responsibility of pregnancy and children. Contraception and abortion have not been advancements for women! They have, in fact, contributed to a greater disrespect of women and of her body's sacred life-giving ability. Society no longer values life, and so society no longer values women! By devaluing life and the sacred ability of the womb, we devalue women!

After I was raped, I worried about the possibility of having contracted a sexually transmitted infection. I also worried that a pregnancy would result. While I hoped I was not pregnant, I decided not to take the "morning after pill" and that I would not abort if I was pregnant. I always clearly recognized that abortion is the termination of an innocent, human life. Let me just insert here, that if you have chosen abortion, I am clearly not in a position to judge. I have made so many grave mistakes in my life. God tells us "Judge not, that you may not be judged (Matthew 7:1)." Only God knows your heart and the circumstances that lead you to that decision. Please also remember that God's mercy and love are for all, no matter what! Please see our Pro-Life page for resources and information for those struggling after an abortion. You are not alone and there are many organizations that can help you find healing and peace.

Although I had solid convictions against abortion, I bought into the notion that contraception frees women. I had a really hard time with the Church's teaching that it is wrong to contracept. I saw it as good for women. I decided, therefore, to get tested

for STI's at a local clinic and to begin taking birth control. If anything like that ever happened again, at least I would not have to worry about pregnancy, I thought. Taking the pill was a responsible thing to do, I thought. When I was questioned at the clinic as to why I wanted all these tests, I refused to share with them what had happened. I had resolved that I would tell no one. Tears streamed down my face and my body shook during the exam, while a kind and compassionate nurse held my hand.

What I did not understand, nor take the time to research or to consider at the time, is the reasoning behind the Church's teaching on sexuality and on contraception (please see the Catechism to learn more, or read Pope Paul VI's encyclical, "Humanae Vitae"). I was also under the impression that all contraceptives prevent ovulation, so that conception is not possible. I was not aware that many methods of contraception, including the pill, are also abortifacient, meaning that they will cause the death of a fertilized embryo by making the womb inhospitable to life. Had I fully known the facts, I may have made a different choice.

It is important to note that the Church recognizes that there are valid reasons that a married couple may want to responsibly space births or inhibit pregnancy. Natural family planning (NFP) is fully endorsed by the Church and is a totally natural, safe and highly effective (more effective than artificial or hormonal contraceptives and with no negative side effects) way to do this. See the Marriage and Family page on our website for more information on this.

God is a loving and perfect Father. He wants what is best for us. He established a Church to teach us His moral truth, for our greatest benefit. I know now that contraception is not good for women. I can now see clearly that, not only is it a health risk (I do not have time in this commentary to address all of the physical and psychological risks that are often not disclosed to women), but that it worsens the very thing I thought I was fighting against: the objectification of women! It promotes casual, meaningless sex and therefore erodes the dignity of the human person.

I didn't see any of this before. I was blinded by my anger, by my infected and painful wound. I was heavily influenced by societal norms and by today's feminism. I believed that women were in competition with men, and I naïvely accepted my own objectification. I wore clothes that sought male attention and allowed men to gawk at me lustfully, as this made me feel valued. I wanted to be sexy, to be desired, but ultimately I just needed to be loved. I bought into society's lie that part of my worth and value is based on how sexually appealing I am deemed to be. And while women can use their sexuality to exercise power over men, this is no longer a power I wish to exploit. I recognize now the sacredness of my body and of its ability to cooperate with God in developing and nurturing human life. I am also so much more than just my body. I am made in the image and likeness of God, with an immortal soul and special gifts given to me by my Loving Creator.

A true feminism needs to be adopted in our society, a feminism that sincerely values woman and her God-given gift of the womb and other uniquely feminine gifts. Instead of working to provide access to contraception and abortion, we should spend our time, energy and resources on promoting and obtaining true support for women and their children. In our western society, this could include greater parental benefits, better adoption resources, support and educational resources for single parents, the promotion of chastity and of healthy marriages and families, or other like initiatives.

I know that this view is unpopular, but Jesus was not out to win a popularity contest; He set out to save souls with His truth and was crucified because of it! The Church, as proclaimer of Christ's truth, has some very unpopular teachings. However, if we trust Our Lord and obey His commands, we will be blessed. Our God is a loving and perfect Parent, not an unfair dictator. He wants what is best for us, even though we may not always understand His law. Our Heavenly Father will help you understand, however, if you ask Him and earnestly seek the truth. The truth is what liberates!

I encourage you to read Pope Paul VI's "Humanae Vitae" on the regulation of birth and the Catechism of the Catholic Church for more information on Church teaching regarding contraception and abortion. Links to these can be found on the Marriage and Family page of our website. I would also invite you to listen to the talk by Dr. Alice von Hildebrand that I have chosen to highlight this month. A philosopher and theologian, Dr. Alice, was also married to one of the great opponents of Hitler and of his Nazi regime, the late Dr. Dietrich von Hildebrand. She provides a fascinating look at the history of the feminist movement and of its fruits, as she has lived this history and has studied its contributors in great depth. Her insight is invaluable.

If you have questions or comments, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us and let us know your thoughts. Also, don't forget to come back next month to check out Part 3 of my commentary on true feminism.

Your sister in Christ,

Jocelyne