

*Janet E. Smith*  
[smithengagements@gmail.com](mailto:smithengagements@gmail.com)

### **Talks, Titles, and Promotional Blurbs**

Please note: All presentations require a screen, a Power Point projector, a remote, and a good microphone.

(1) Premier Talk: *Contraception: Why Not*

\* Recommended first and foremost is the signature talk: *Contraception: Why Not?* Please allow approximately 75 minutes for this presentation; a 30-minute Q&A following the presentation is suggested. You may choose the traditional title, one of the alternate titles below, or we can create titles and blurbs that better suit your event.

Alternate Titles:

- a. *The Sexual Mess We Are In and How We Got Here*
- b. *Why is Sex so Complicated?*
- c. *The Case against Contraception*
- d. *How Contraception Ruins Relationships*
- e. *Contraception: A Couple's Friend or Foe?*
- f. *The Church's Teaching on Contraception: A Woman's Friend or Foe?*
- g. *Natural Law Arguments Against Contraception*
- h. *Humanae Vitae: Sense or Nonsense?*
- i. *Humanae Vitae and Conscience*
- j. *Why Natural Sex is Best*

Possible Promotional Blurbs:

- Our culture believes that contraception is one of the greatest inventions of the late twentieth century. Promoters of contraception argued that it would decrease unwed pregnancy and abortion and improve marriages. Professor Smith will illustrate that such has not happened and will explain why the Church argues that contraception diminishes the total self-giving that is of the essence of marriage. She will explain why natural family planning is not the same as contraception and why couples using NFP report great benefits to their marriage and rarely divorce.
- Our culture believes that contraception is one of the greatest inventions of the late twentieth century. Promoters of contraception argued that it would decrease unwed pregnancy and abortion and improve marriages. The evidence is overwhelming that since contraception has become widely used, unwed pregnancy, abortion, and divorce have greatly increased. Professor Smith will argue that contraception has fundamentally altered our understanding of the meaning and purpose of sexuality and has led us to view babies as an unwelcome consequence of sexual intercourse rather than as a gift.
- Everyone knows sex is complicated. It involves very different human beings, made up of unruly souls and bodies, with different expectations. Our culture has lost all the wisdom it ever had about sex. This talk maintains that until we embrace God's plan for sexuality we will continue to make ourselves miserable by bad sexual choices and not achieve the meaning, intimacy, and joy that sex is meant to provide.

(2) *Why Green Sex is Best*

\* This presentation includes much of the material from *Contraception: Why Not*, but emphasizes environmental issues.

Connects concern for reckless disposal of chemicals in the environment with the use of chemical contraceptives. The talk explains that chemical contraceptives are harmful for the environment and also that they have a large carbon footprint. The damage that contraception does to a woman's delicate ecological system is also explained.

### New Talks

(3) *Humanae Vitae: A Half Century Later: Progress or Regress?*

This talk explains the tumultuous atmosphere in which *Humanae Vitae* was issued -- not only was there much political upheaval, the sexual revolution was then underway. It is hard to imagine a more counter-cultural teaching then or now. We are still recovering from the dissent in the Church that followed *Humanae Vitae*. While there are signs that the teaching is being more widely taught and accepted, powerful attacks are also being newly waged against *Humanae Vitae*. (This is a very popular choice at conferences right now as 2018 marked the 50-year anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*.)

(4) *The Connection Between Dissent from Humanae Vitae and the Sex Abuse Crisis*

Pope Benedict has drawn a connection between the current sex abuse crisis in the Church and dissent from the sexual teachings in the 60s and 70s. Professor Smith has been following the issue closely and will provide an overview of the status of the issue. (This can be a disturbing talk; it is critical of the bishops.)

(5) *How to Maintain Your Faith During These Challenging Times*

Christians are being persecuted throughout the world, our own culture and government are becoming more and more intolerant of Christianity, there is division within the Church on doctrinal matters, and many Catholics are leaving the Church because of the sex abuse crisis. Professor Smith discusses the reasons for maintaining one's faith and various measures for doing so.

(6) *The Transgender Phenomenon*

Until recently most people had not heard of "transgenderism." This talk explains the various current views of the issue and explores some ways families and schools can address the issue.

(7) *Saint John Paul II's Various Approaches to Humanae Vitae*

John Paul II's *Love and Responsibility* provides a philosophical defense of the Church's teaching on contraception based on a personalistic understanding of natural law; his *Theology of the Body* provides a theological defense of the Church's teaching on contraception based on a personalistic Christian anthropology. Audiences who are somewhat advanced in their understanding of the theology of the body can appreciate this talk.

## ***Theology of the Body Talks***

(8) *Theology of the Body Condensed*

Saint John Paul II answered the plea of Vatican II for moral theologians to lay out the Scriptural basis for the Church's moral teachings. His profound reading of Genesis discloses to men and women the nuptial meaning of their bodies, but even more explains the greatest depths of the human person. The *Theology of the Body* illuminates both the vocation to marriage and the vocation to celibacy.

(9) *Theology of the Body and the Eucharist*

Explains marriage as the dominant image in Scripture for the relationship of God to his people and Christ to His Church. There is a remarkable connection between the total self-giving required by marriage and the total self-giving that the Eucharist is.

(10) *Theology of the Old Body*

This is a talk that addresses the challenges of taking care of a parent with dementia. It is a series of anecdotes based on Professor Smith's experiences taking care of her elderly mother who suffered from dementia. Allow at least 75 minutes for this talk.

(11) *Theology of the Body and Ephesians 5*

(12) *Theology of the Body and the Single Life*

## **Other Talks**

**(that can easily be paired with *Contraception: Why Not*)**

(13) *Hormones R' Us*

More and more modern studies are showing that chemical contraceptives have not only serious physical side effects, they also impact how men and women respond to each other, what they find attractive in each other, how they choose a partner. Contraceptives also have serious social justice dimensions; the effect of unwed parenthood on the spouses and children is daunting.

(14) *What Does the Church Teach about Homosexuality?*

Explains in a compassionate way that homosexuality is one of many offenses against chastity to which human beings are inclined. The prevalence, possible causes, bad consequences, and possible treatments for homosexuality are addressed.

(15) *The Right to Privacy:*

This talk covers the main points of Professor Smith's book *The Right to Privacy*. In *The Gospel of Life*, Pope John Paul II identified a "distorted view of freedom" as one of the roots of the "Culture of Death." In this talk Professor Smith demonstrates how that distorted view of freedom dominates various Supreme Court decisions on life issues under the guise of the "right to privacy." Learn of some surprising connections between contraception, abortion, assisted suicide, and same sex unions.

(16) *Just Follow Your Conscience?*

Many couples have been told in reference to contraception that they should just follow their consciences. It is true that we should ALWAYS follow our consciences; but what is the conscience? How does one form it correctly? Is the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* infallible?

(17) *Humanae Vitae and Conscience*

The Catholic Church teaches that we must always follow our consciences. But what is the conscience? What influence should *Humanae Vitae* have on our consciences?

(18) *A Culture of Life vs. A Culture of Death*

In *Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)* John Paul II maintains that we are now living in a Culture of Death, a culture that believes that death (abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia, creation of excess embryos, etc.) is a legitimate solution to problems. He seeks to discover the root causes for the fact that our culture has made “rights” out of what were once crimes. He contrasts some of the values of the modern world with those of Christianity and explains why only commitment to Christian values can restore us to a Culture of Life.

(19) *When is it Moral to Use NFP?*

Both couples using NFP and contraception desire to have sex without having babies. How can contraception be immoral and NFP moral? Can NFP be used with a contraceptive mentality? When is it moral to use NFP? Many people think that contraception and natural family planning are not different morally since in both cases couples are having sex with the intention not to get pregnant. In *Familiaris Consortio*, the Holy Father speaks of the difference between the two as being “wider and deeper” than is “usually thought” and as “involving two irreconcilable concepts of the human person and of human sexuality.”

(20) *Designer Genes: Problems with Reproductive Technologies*

What is wrong with artificial insemination? With in vitro fertilization, doesn't the Church's condemnation of modern reproductive technologies conflict with its requirement that one purpose of marriage is to have children?

(21) *The Family as a Path to Holiness*

This presentation is largely a series of anecdotes about family life; it is humorous and especially suitable as an after-dinner talk or for those who may be hostile to talks about contraception (but who will likely get the tape afterwards). There is much talk in our culture about “family values” without us much knowing what these values are and why they are important. Virtually every culture has realized that the family is essential to the well-being of individuals and of the whole of society. Why? When people become parents they must grow-up; they must become more generous, selfless, mature, disciplined, etc. That is, one major purpose of children is to make adults of their parents. The virtues needed to sustain a happy and somewhat sane household are those that our culture needs. This talk will help parents realize the importance of their vocation and provide some insight into how to do it well.

(22) *Why Premarital Sex is Wrong*

Working on the understanding that it is a deep desire of the human heart to love and be loved in an unconditional and committed way, Professor Smith explains why premarital sex is terrible preparation for marriage. Gives advice on how to remain chaste and how to prepare for a lasting marriage. This talk is particularly good for high school and college students.

(23) *Fraternal Correction*

Explains the importance of learning how to correct others whose behavior is not in accord with Christian truths.

(24) *End of Life Issues*

This talk treats the Church's teaching on euthanasia. It explains when medical treatment may be discontinued and when it is obligatory.

(25) *What is "Brain Death"? Why is it a problematic concept?*

(26) *Why is Personhood so Highly Valued*

This talk explains the understanding of personhood behind the Church's teaching on abortion and euthanasia.

(27) *The Beauty of Virtue*

(28) *Religious Liberty*

Religious liberty is under great attack in our culture. This talk explains different views of what religious liberty is, why our founding fathers valued it so highly, and why it is essential that our culture respect it.

(29) *Preaching and Teaching Difficult Truths*

A talk for priests that explains the importance of preaching about difficult moral issues and provides some guidelines for how to do so.

