



In reference to the book "Theological Ethics of Life ", many people on Twitter seem to believe that Humanae Vitae is an infallible and irreformable pronouncement against contraception.

First of all, we need to say - as Pope Francis noted on July 30 - that the Pontifical Academy for Life has published the Proceedings of a meeting among theologians. In the book there is a free and open debate on many topics, including contraception and sexual matrimonial morality. The style of such a debate - as Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia has underlined in the Introduction to the book - is similar to that of the "quaestiones disputatae", a style and a working method already present in the Middle Ages to deepen and broaden the discussion among theologians. Actually, this is the task of a Pontifical Academy.

As regards the specific question of contraception, when the moral theologian of the Pontifical Lateran University Msgr. Ferdinando Lambruschini presented Humanae Vitae in a press conference in the Vatican on 29 July 1968, responding to a specific journalist's question, he stated – under the mandate of Paul VI – that the encyclical Humanae Vitae is not to be considered part of the infallible pronouncements. Lambruschini stressed that Humanae Vitae did not express a definitive truth of faith granted by “infallibilitas in docendo”.

We also know that following the publication of the encyclical, the Archbishop of Krakow Karol Wojtyla asked Paul VI to define Humanae Vitae's teaching as infallible. Pope Paul VI did not do it and neither did Pope John Paul II during 26 years of his pontificate.

A historical and theological reconstruction of this issue was published in 2018:

<https://www.lastampa.it/vatican-insider/it/2018/08/14/news/humanae-vitae-cinquant-anni-dopo-appunti-sulla-storia-1.34038517>

It should be recalled that the Pontifical Academy for Life has promoted a conference among moral theologians. During that conference all the issues related to the ethics of life have been discussed, including contraception and sexual matrimonial morality. The end result is a 517-page book ("Theological Ethics of Life", published by Libreria Editrice Vaticana). This is the task of a Pontifical Academy. The rest is up to the Magisterium.

Vatican City, August 08, 2022