

Keeping the Faith Alive

A slimbook on responding to the challenges posed by the Catholic Church hierarchy on Reproductive Health



Ma. Georgianna Villar & Ma. Corazon dela Paz

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The womb of life

There is a power that resides in each person that is so compelling it strikes fear in the hearts of kings and popes. A power that is visceral yet spiritual. A power that is personal and universal. That power is the power to reproduce life.

For generations, this power has been harnessed and protected to ensure the continuation of life as we know it. More people meant more labor and more armies to create and defend resources that became increasingly important as social structures became more complex.

History has shown how this ability to produce life has been celebrated through rituals associated with the cycles of nature. Birth, death and rebirth were viewed by many Asian civilizations as a never-ending cycle that kept the world on keel.

On the other side of the globe, the power of reproduction was mystified with the advent of organized religio-political structures which recognized the value of controlling it to fortify its political and spiritual power over its subjects. Concepts of virginity and lineage were important concerns for the perpetuation of power, resources and control of royal families over their kingdoms.

Eventually, the same values were taught and instilled upon their subjects normalizing a phenomenon which was otherwise a function of their time and needs. Gender and reproductive roles were developed based on anatomy and its perceived power to engender life. Males for the perpetuation of their lineage, paid labor and protection of families and states; females for giving birth, sex and unpaid domestic work.

While the term reproductive health and rights is quite new, the concept is not. The issues of fertility, infertility, child and maternal mortality have been concerns albeit with a different set and degree of public attention and debate. With each wave of globalization and technology, layers were added to an already complex interpretation of the right to one's body and reproductive health and rights.

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