

# Contraception and Teen Depression

Pertinent to "Why the Church Isn't Crazy on Contraception" by Janet E. Smith (Commentary & Opinion, May 22-28):

I am a mom and a pediatrician, and it breaks my heart to see the emotional desolation faced by our teens. The number of young people struggling with depression is staggering. Nearly all of the girls I see with this problem are on hormone-based contraceptives. Sexual promiscuity and hormone-based contraceptives both cause depression. Rather than acknowledge this and deal with the problem honestly, the medical community prescribes Prozac and encourages "safer sex." Just whom it's safer for isn't quite evident.

Women are supposedly "liberated," with "greater opportunities." Yet I encounter more and more young women with no concept of their own dignity, self-worth or talents. They prostitute themselves for a few thrills in junior high. (Oral sex is rampant among seventh- and eighth-graders throughout the country; they perceive it as harmless.)

In high school, girls define themselves according to the guy they're sleeping with — even to the point of accepting physical abuse. One teen, a talented seamstress, saw my colleague for severe reflux. She vomited every time she ate. She came in when her vomit became blood-streaked. A month later she returned for a follow-up appointment with me. Her reflux was cured, but she never took the medications. Instead she had moved out of her boyfriend's home. He had been beating her. Another girl asked me for Valium to calm her nerves because she was fighting with a girlfriend over a guy who wouldn't make up his mind. He was sleeping with both of them.

Many of the young men I meet are involved with drugs, alcohol and sex. As one teen put it, "I don't think it's a problem to feel good a couple times a week." Others don't see a problem with "hooking up" since "it's about mutual pleasure. We're using each other." They don't believe in or see a need for love. One teen concocted a cocktail of over-the-counter medications because he was "looking for a religious experience."

That last statement is profound. As parents, we ensure that our children are materially, socially and intellectually saturated. We maximize their worldly potential as we

neglect their souls. We starve them spiritually, then wonder why our teens hunger for love, completely unaware of whom they are seeking or how to find him.

We are created for love and called to holiness. It is only in a true gift of self that we find God, love and fulfillment. Instead of witnessing this truth, we urge our children to

find fulfillment in lust — lust for money and power, youth and beauty, things and thrills.

Our children are our future. Christ is our hope. We must reclaim our children for Christ if there is to be any hope for our future.

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(KRT illustration)