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TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Duc in Altum—
Put Out into the Deep*
REVEREND PETER M.J.
STRAVINSKAS 1

*The Truth about Mary:
Part XVI*
REVEREND NICHOLAS L.
GREGORIS, S.T.D. 5

*A voice crying in the
wilderness: On the
50th anniversary of
“Humanae Vitae”*
REVEREND SEAN CONNOLLY 12

*Humanae Vitae
and Its Legacy*
THE MOST REVEREND
CHARLES J. CHAPUT, O.F.M. CAP. 21

*Reformation Historian’s
Advice in the Wake of
“Humanae Vitae”*
REVEREND HUBERT JEDIN 39

*Bishops of Kazakhstan
Reaffirm
Humanae Vitae*
ARCHBISHOP TOMASH PETA,
BISHOP ADELIO DELL’ORO,
BISHOP ATHANASIUS SCHNEIDER,
ET AL. 47

Questions & Answers 51

*Short Reviews
by the Editor* 60



Duc in Altum— Put Out into the Deep

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI's encyclical which taught that each and every act of sexual intercourse must be open to new life. This was a watershed event in the life of the Church. Truth be told, my entire ecclesiastical life has been lived in the shadow of *Humanae Vitae* as I entered the seminary but three weeks after that document's appearance and have fought the effects of its non-enforcement my whole priestly life and ministry. The vast majority of articles in this issue of TCR are thus dedicated to *Humanae Vitae*. The rest of this editorial is actually a piece I wrote on the encyclical's twentieth anniversary; I republish it here because I believe it is as true today as it was then.

To hear some people talk, one would get the impression that prohibition against artificial contraception came out of the blue. However, even a brief review of history reveals a strong and consistent ban on all such activities from the earliest days of the Church in a direct line, right into the twentieth century, with statements to the same effect by Pope Paul VI's three immediate predecessors, as well as Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes*. As a matter of fact, at least as early as 1966, Pope Paul VI himself gave clear signals that the traditional teaching would be reaffirmed.

Pope John Paul II has reiterated that case for the teaching of *Humane Vitae* with patience and regularity. Two statements, however, are particularly noteworthy because of their forcefulness. In 1983, the Holy Father declared:

Contraception is to be judged so profoundly unlawful as never to be, for any reason, justified. To think or to say the contrary is equal to maintaining that in human life, situations may arise in which it is lawful not to recognize God as God. (L'Osservatore Romano, October 10, 1983, p. 7)

In 1987, Pope John Paul II asserted that ***“the Church's teaching on contraception does not belong to the category of matter open to free discussion among theologians, Teach-***

ing the contrary amounts to leading the moral consciences of spouses into error” (*L’Osservatore Romano*, July 6, 1987, p. 12). If the polls are correct in observing that more than 80% of Catholic women of child-bearing age in the United States ignore this teaching, why not change it, or at least why bother to appear to “beat a dead horse”? Because the truth of the Gospel and the truth about the human person are at stake.

Very often even people of goodwill find the logic of *Humanae Vitae* difficult to understand. While they know the pronouncements of the Magisterium in this regard, they may feel the teaching has no grounding in Scripture.

I have always wondered why no one seems to ground the core of *Humanae Vitae*’s teaching in the written Word of God. For me, one passage (which provides a basic theme for the whole of the Bible) is most instructive about the plan of God and the response He expects from those who would wish to be numbered among His Chosen People. I refer specifically to Genesis 17:10-13:

This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you that you must keep: every male among you shall be circumcised. Circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the mark of the covenant between you and me. Throughout the ages every male among you when he is eight days old, shall be circumcised, including household slaves and those acquired with money from any foreigner who is part of your blood. Yes, both the house born slaves and those acquired with money must be circumcised. Thus my covenant shall be in your flesh as an everlasting pact.

As Almighty God began to form a people uniquely His own, He established a covenant (that is, a pact, a contract) with Abraham as the father of that chosen nation. The Lord promised that Abraham’s descendants would be as numerous as “***the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore***” (Gn 22:17). And that, from a man who was “***as good as dead***” (Heb 11:12).

All this showed that the Lord was God both in love and in power; He was truly Yahweh (I Am Who Am), Who thus revealed Himself to Moses as the very source of life (cf. Ex 3:14).

And so it was that when God was asked by Abraham to demonstrate His *love*, God spoke in terms of *life*; ever since, love and life have been inextricably linked to each other, for they are two sides of the same coin.

In ancient times, covenants were the normal means of doing business, and such agreements always had external signs. The Lord God said the sign for Abraham and every son of the covenant thereafter was to be that of circumcision. How strange! Why not a sign that would be visible to all at every moment? Why a sign seen only by the man and his wife? For a reason so simple that is most profound: the act of sexual intercourse would thenceforth speak not only the language of love but equally the language of life, which is to say, that sexual intimacy would speak God's language.

Therefore, every time a Hebrew man engaged in intercourse, he would be reminded that this particular act had been invested with a new meaning by God Himself, a point literally branded into one's flesh and as enduring as God's will, God's love, God's gift of life.

Whoever came up with the saying, "Two's company, three's a crowd," knew nothing of the God of the covenant; His love is totally unrestricted and completely open. God says, "*the more the merrier!*" He says that in His own Godhead in that Community of Persons Who love Each Other eternally and expansively in the Trinity; hence, not just one Person, nor two, but three. Thus does the Blessed Trinity serve as a model for human love and relationship, in which love between persons *necessarily* overflows into new life.

The connection between love and life reaches its apex in Jesus Christ, Who loves humanity so much that He gives His life that "***we might have life and have it to the full***" (Jn 10:10). Like His heavenly Father, Jesus offers a covenantal sign of His love in the life-blood of the Eucharist, that new and everlasting covenant.

Although Christians need not practice circumcision under the new covenant, they are still called to reflect those same values by which love and life are proclaimed in who we are and in what we do, an example provided in a preeminent manner by Christ's sacrifice of Himself on our behalf.



Holy Trinity by Szymon Czechowicz, c. 1756 – 1758

Unlike any faith system before or since, the covenant way of the Lord sacralizes human sexuality by making of it a mirror image of God's own gifts of Himself as Love and Life. Therefore, we deal here with the truth of God's identity and man's dignity at one and the same time. No wonder, then, that St. Paul could rhapsodize on the beauty of marital love as a great mystery, indeed the sign of Christ's love for His Church. Contraceptive intercourse, on the other hand, lies about both the God of the covenant and the children of the covenant.

Twenty years after *Humanae Vitae* the Church clings to this essential teaching with a tenacity that annoys and astounds most people, but she does so because of some fundamental convictions that underlie the whole vocation of being a part of the Chosen People. In a 1966 essay in *Triumph* magazine, Brent Bozell put it powerfully:

The world deems the Church mad to have hitched its whole moral authority to this wretched piece of intransigence. Millions of Catholics and near Catholics and apostate Catholics over the years have felt the same way: if only the Church would give ground on this one, the rest would be easy to take. But this wretched piece of intransigence is the key to the mighty mystery of sex, which unlocks the door to the even more awesome mystery of life, which in turn reveals the reality of the supernatural. If the Church does not own this key, it does not own any keys at all.

Married couples, theologians, clergy – indeed anyone interested in the God-man relationship – would do well to reflect on “*the mighty mystery of sex,*” and on “*the even more awesome mystery of life.*”

Thus did I write in 1988. If you reflect on this and the other related pieces in our current issue, and encourage others to do likewise, you will *duc in altum*.

Father Peter M. J. Stravinskias
Editor and Publisher

Our cover features *The Fall of Man* (detail) by Hendrick Goltzius, c. 1616

The Truth about Mary:

Part XVI

BY THE REVEREND NICHOLAS L. GREGORIS, S.T.D.



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Editor's Note: The following is excerpted from the third homily preached by Father Gregoris for the Triduum of Our Lady of Mount Carmel for the Carmelite Nuns of Traverse City, July 14-16, 2018.

On a breathtaking promontory overlooking the Mediterranean is the city of Haifa, which is not far from the city of Carmel in whose lovely shadow lies the dreaded Plain of Megiddo, where so many fierce battles have taken place over the years. Consequently, the Plain of Megiddo became known as Armageddon, the place of the final cosmic conflict between Good and Evil, between God and Satan on Judgment Day.

I'll never forget the day that I visited Carmel in the Spring of 2006. It rained cats and dogs as I scrambled to take a few photos of the church's wet façade. I then rushed to enter the church to visit the caves in which the Prophet Elijah is believed to have dwelt and to celebrate Latin Mass in one of the chapels. There I prayed at the origins of the great Carmelite Order, indeed at the origins of the Judeo-Christian tradition, for Saint Elijah prepared the way for Saint John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Christ. I recalled the importance of Elijah in the Old Testament. Elijah hears God not in the clapping of loud thunder but in a still small voice, and this is the origin of his prophetic vocation. It is this mystical contempla-



Satan before the Lord
by Corrado Giaquinto, c. 1750

tion of the still small voice of Almighty God which is at the heart of all Carmelite spirituality, from Saint Teresa of Ávila and Saint John of the Cross, to Saint Thérèse of Lisieux and Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), and, dare I say of the late great Holy Father, Saint John Paul II who, for a time, contemplated a Carmelite vocation and who wrote his doctoral dissertation in sacred theology at the Angelicum in Rome on the mystical poetry of Saint John of the Cross.

This venerable Carmel is a living testament to the spirit of Elijah in the Diocese of Gaylord. Here, in beautiful Traverse City, our beloved Nuns continue to discover anew each day the presence of the one, true and living God in the still small voice of their conscience amidst their daily routine of work and prayer, with special attention paid to the lovely chanting of the Monastic Office and the devout celebration of the Lord's Eucharistic Sacrifice in the official tongue of the Church, Latin.

Elijah was hungry and thirsty in a most desperate life-threatening situation, and yet God provided for him by means of a raven. Materially speaking, the Nuns do not have much at all. But they have confidence in God's Providence as they rely on the generosity of each one of you for their sustenance, for the provisions that keep them going day in and day out from year to year. Likewise, the Nuns trust God to raise up vocations for their Carmel in an age dominated by the noise of technology, in a time when young people seem to shun silence and sacrifice in order to have everything in the palm of their hand. Through the peaks and valleys of vocation surpluses and shortages, the Nuns trust that God will provide as long as they remain faithful to His still, small voice calling them to ever-increasing fidelity to their divinely inspired charisms and apostolates. Elijah was a prophet mighty in deeds, in miracles that are too many to recall here. Suffice it to say that Elijah was God's chosen mediator for defeating the pagan priests of Baal. So, too, the Carmelite Nuns are instruments in the hand of His Majesty for sending a message to those who espouse the many pagan and secular values that threaten the Judeo-Christian fabric of our society as we saw happen in the Charlie Gard and Alfie Evans cases in England and this past May when 66 % of the Irish people voted to legalize abortion in their once staunchly and proudly Catholic isle of saints and scholars.

Our Nuns believe that our worship of the one, true God ought not to be sacrificed on the altar of political correctness and expediency, and so they adhere to the Catholic Faith in an unadulterated fashion and not merely as is convenient for them to do so, but as it

challenges them to go against the grain, to swim against the currents of the Dictatorship of Relativism, the Culture of Death and the Throwaway Culture of the Ephemeral, which surround us on every side. From within these sacred walls, the cloistered Nuns – through their sanctification of themselves and of all of you who attend Mass and other services here – have become a formidable, invisible force for sanctifying the world. This is perhaps the greatest miracle of any good Carmel. It's the miracle of incessant prayer that resounds to God's infinite glory and effects the sanctification and salvation of the world that is so often too busy to pray for its own sake.

Our Jewish friends still leave a place for the Prophet Elijah at the Seder meal on the feast of Passover because they believe that he will return as a sign of the Messiah's coming. This is why in the time of Our Lord the prophetic preaching of Saint John the Baptist in the spirit of Elijah was considered a powerful sign of the Messiah's arrival. But who will be the voice crying out in the wilderness to prepare the way for the Lord's Second Coming, for His *parousia* at the end of time? That voice must begin here this evening with each one of us.

Later still, on the mountain of Our Lord's Transfiguration, traditionally identified with Mount Tabor, Elijah appeared alongside Moses to discuss with Jesus the topic of His looming *exodus* or departure from this world and His return to the Father through His paschal dying and rising. The Nuns are here with us as reminders that this life of suffering and pain, often unseen and unheard by others, when united to the Paschal Mystery of the Lord's Cross and Resurrection, can prepare us to meet the Lord joyfully at the hour of our own *exodus* or death, and when Jesus will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. The Nuns' life of simplicity and austerity, like that of the prophets Elijah and John the Baptist, beckon us to detach ourselves from material realities, from our many precious possessions, so that we can be more fully prepared to meet our Heavenly Bridegroom, Christ Jesus, when He comes at last to take His Spotless Bride, the Church, definitively to Himself.

Perhaps we shall not receive the grace that Elijah did of leaving this world in a fiery chariot in a whirlwind, but nonetheless as disciples of Elijah – like the Prophet Elisha – we can ask for a double portion of his prophetic spirit and pray that his prophetic mantle may continue to fall not only on us and this our Carmel, but on all future generations of believers and Carmelites who, in coming here, make their own miniature pilgrimage to the original Mount Carmel.



Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saints (Simon Stock, Angelus of Jerusalem, Mary Magdalene de'Pazzi, Teresa of Avila) by Pietro Novelli, c. 1641

The first Carmelites were hermits living on Mount Carmel in the Holy Land during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Those first Carmelites built a chapel in the midst of their hermitages and dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Stella Maris Monastery in the Holy Land is the headquarters of the Order.

According to the mentality of the time, the Carmelites referred to Mary by the Latin title of *Domina* (Lady). Hence, the title, Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Since the fifteenth century, the popular devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel has been centered on the Brown Scapular. A scapular is a sacramental and therefore derives its efficacy from the sacraments. According to a tradition, Our Lady first gave the Brown Scapular to an

English Carmelite, Saint Simon Stock, promising that those who wear the scapular (presumably with genuine faith) would die and go directly to Heaven if they were wearing it at the hour of death.

The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is associated with the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Carmelite hermits living in Cambridge, England, in 1374. The original date for the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was July 17. However, due to a conflict with the pre-existing feast of Saint Alexis, the date was changed to July 16 for the universal Church. Today's feast is also known as the "Scapular Feast."

Carmelites regard the Blessed Virgin Mary as the perfect model of the interior life. We recall that on two occasions in Saint Luke's Gospel, the Evangelist tells us that Mary *sympallousin*; that means that "she put together" the pieces of her life to make sense out of them. Most translations say that Mary "pondered," that is, for example, she reflected on the meaning of the mysterious events unfolding in her life like the adolescent Jesus' "loss" for three days, whereupon His anxious parents found Him about His Heavenly Father's business teaching the Doctors of the Law in the Temple of

Jerusalem. We can easily imagine that Mary “pondered” time and again the sacred and salvific events of her life, most especially as she gazed upon the lifeless body of her beloved Son, so movingly depicted in Michelangelo’s *Pietà*.

Carmelites look to the Blessed Virgin Mary not only as the perfect model of the interior life and contemplation but also of virtue, for she was the human being closest to Our Lord Jesus Christ. Mary is seen as the one who points the way to Christ, saying to all – as she once said to the wine stewards at the wedding feast of Cana: “Do whatever He tells you.” These words recall the ratification of the Old Covenant at Mount Sinai when the Israelites told Moses: “Whatever the Lord commands we will do.” Furthermore, one of the most ancient and venerable genres of Marian icons is known in Greek as *hodegitria*, meaning “she who shows the way.” The Virgin Mary is depicted as holding the Christ-Child, pointing toward Him while her gaze is lovingly fixed on us, beckoning us, as it were, to focus not on her but on her Divine Son. In other words, *Ad Jesum per Mariam* (“To Jesus through Mary”).

Carmelites also look to Mary as their spiritual mother and sister. Father Gabriel of Saint Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, author of the spiritual classic *Divine Intimacy* and a respected authority on Carmelite spirituality, explains the sublime nature of Carmelite Marian devotion. He writes that devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel means:

a special call to the interior life, which is preeminently a Marian life. Our Lady wants us to resemble her not only in our outward vesture, but, far more, in heart and spirit. If we gaze into Mary’s soul, we shall see that grace in her has flowered into a spiritual life of incalculable wealth, where no human creature has ever left its trace, where love and zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of mankind reign supreme. [...] Those who want to live their devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel to the full must follow Mary into the depths of her interior life. Carmel is the symbol of the contemplative life, the life wholly dedicated to the quest for God, wholly oriented towards intimacy with God; and the one who has best realized this highest of ideals is Our Lady herself, “Queen and Splendor of Carmel.”

A statement of the North American provincial superiors of the Carmelites reminds us: “Devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel is bound to the history and spiritual values of the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary and is expressed through the

scapular. Thus, whoever receives the scapular becomes a member of the Order and pledges him or herself to live according to its spirituality with the characteristics of his or her state in life.”

Perhaps some of you are in the good habit, no pun intended, of wearing the Brown Scapular with genuine piety and devotion. Doing so signifies several important realities that we should recall here and never forget: (1) it is a sign that one belongs to Our Lady; (2) it is a pledge of her maternal solicitude, intercession and protection now and at the hour of our death; (3) it signifies that the Order and the person who wears the Scapular are especially dear to the her; (4) it is a sign of special consecration and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, in whose Immaculate Heart we place our confident trust; (5) it is an outward reminder of the need to imitate Mary’s virtues, above all, her humility, charity, chastity and interior spirit of prayer and contemplation.

Various statues represent Our Lady of Mount Carmel holding the Brown Scapular around the world. Some of the most famous statues are found in Biscay, Spain; Paucartambo, Peru; and Boston. Other places include Chile and Beniaján, Spain. In certain statues, Our Lady is accompanied by angels, while in others she is surrounded by the souls in Purgatory, implying her maternal role of mediation on their behalf.

When we consider the “Sabbatine Privilege,” we turn to a decree of Pope Paul V issued by the Holy Office of the Roman Inquisition (now the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) on January 20, 1613. It reads, in part:

It is permitted for the Carmelite Fathers to preach that the Christian people may piously believe in the help which the souls of brothers and members, who have departed this life in charity, have worn in life the scapular, have ever observed chastity, have recited the Little Office (Hours) of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or, if they cannot read, have observed the fast days of the Church, and have abstained on Wednesdays and Saturdays (except when Christmas falls on such days), may derive after death, especially on Saturdays, the day consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, through the unceasing intercession of Mary, her pious petitions, her merits, and her special protection.

In 1901, Pope Leo XIII authorized a Decree of the Congregation of Indulgences which granted to all confessors the faculty to dispense from the obligation to read the Little Office and abstinence from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays by substituting “other pious works.”

To conclude our reflections, permit me to offer a few quotes from the Little Flower and a prayer.

Thérèse of Lisieux, echoing the *Magnificat*, reflects on her desire to imitate Mary's lowliness – *tapeinosis* in the Greek text of Saint Luke's Gospel. Thérèse writes: "I prefer simply to recognize, like a true daughter of His Blessed Mother, that Almighty God has done great things for me, and the greatest of all is to make me conscious of my own littleness."

A summary of her Marian devotion can be found in her *Last Words* where she reflects:

It is well known that the Blessed Virgin is the Queen of Heaven and of earth, but she is more a Mother than a Queen; and it is wrong to believe, as I have heard said, that on account of her prerogatives the Blessed Virgin throws the glory of the saints into the shade, as the rising sun makes the stars disappear. My God, how strange that would be: A mother who makes the glory of her children disappear! In my opinion, quite the contrary is true. I believe that she will greatly increase the splendor of the elect. It is good to speak of her prerogatives, but one must not limit oneself to that. One must make her loved. If, while hearing a sermon on the Blessed Virgin, one is forced from beginning to end to burst into exclamations of admiration for her, one becomes weary and is hardly drawn to imitate her or love her. It is ever possible that certain souls would come to feel a kind of remoteness from so superior a creature. To ask something of the Blessed Virgin is not the same thing as to ask something of the good God.

She knows well what to do with my little desires, and it is for her to decide whether to ask for them or not. After all, it is up to her not to force the good God to hear me, but to leave all to His Will.

Let us pray:

O Beautiful Flower of Carmel, most fruitful Vine, splendor of Heaven, holy and singular, who brought forth the Son of God, still ever remaining a pure virgin, assist me in this necessity. O Star of the Sea, help and perfect me. Show me that you are my Mother; Patroness of all who wear the scapular, pray for us! Hope of all who die wearing the scapular, pray for us! O Sweet Heart of Mary, be our salvation. Amen.

*A voice crying in the wilderness: On the 50th anniversary of “*Humanae Vitae*”*

BY THE REVEREND SEAN CONNOLLY



The Reverend Seán Connolly is from Ossining, New York. He attended the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in the Classics. Immediately following college, he entered Saint Joseph’s Seminary, Dunwoodie, to begin his priestly formation for the Archdiocese of New York and was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on 23 May 2015. He has published articles in The Catholic World Report, The National Catholic Register and The Wanderer and leads annual pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

[Editor’s Note: This article was originally published on May 23, 2018, in The Catholic World Report, which has graciously granted permission for reprinting.]

Later this year, Blessed Paul VI will be raised to the honors of the altars as a saint. The canonization will take place in October during a meeting of the Synod of Bishops. It is fitting that his canonization is taking place this year, which marks the fiftieth anniversary of what Pope Paul is perhaps best known for – his controversial encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.

This significant document reaffirms the Church’s condemnation of artificial “birth control” – a misnamed concept, because as G.K. Chesterton cleverly puts it, “what is quaintly called Birth Control...is in fact, of course, a scheme for preventing birth in order to escape control” (*The Well and the Shallows*, in vol. 3 of *The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton* [Ignatius Press]). Not only is this encyclical clarifying; it has proven to be prophetic. The world did not listen to Pope Paul in 1968 and the stark warnings he gave about what the widespread acceptance of contraception would mean for society have all come to pass. And now, a half-century later, the world no longer remembers what he even said in the first place. We would do well to honor the memory of this soon-to-be-sainted pontiff by using this anniversary to recall and boldly proclaim his oft-neglected message on the nature, purpose, and dignity of married love.

The historical context

When Giovanni Battista Montini was elected to succeed the popular Pope John XXIII on June 21, 1963, he had the task of steering the Second Vatican Council to completion. With this mission before him came the burden of implementing its reforms while maintaining unity between conservative and liberal wings of the Church whose different views of what the Council meant were coming increasingly to the fore. Taking the name Paul VI, he set out to accomplish what would prove to be a near-impossible task.



Paul VI, at his ordination to the priesthood, May 19, 1920

Western societies were shattered by the two world wars that engulfed them in the first half of the twentieth century. A crisis of confidence and identity ensued. Old ways of thinking began to be challenged. The turbulent 60s and 70s were a period of social and moral revolution. Religion, marriage, and the family were certainly not institutions exempt from this spirit of questioning and change. That the reforms of Vatican II were carried out in this context is unfortunate.

The spirit of the age was difficult to distinguish from the legitimate procedure of reform the Church was implementing. The optimistic hope for a great renewal within the Church mixed with the prevailing *zeitgeist*, often superseding prudence, and the changes that followed were quick and drastic. The years immediately following the Council saw a new drive to foster once-forbidden relations with other religious groups, far-reaching changes to the Church's ancient liturgy, and the altering of the supreme and universal authority of the Pope to work more collegially with conferences of local bishops. Thousands left the priesthood and religious life due to a lack of confidence in the institutional structure of the Church, or to preempt what was thought to be the inevitable end to mandatory clerical celibacy. Everything seemed to be on the table for change. So, surely, the Church's total ban on artificial contraception – which was increasingly thought to be antiquated – would be changed too, right?

In light of scientific progress, evolving values, and growing opposition to this teaching, Pope Paul's predecessor, the now-Saint

John XXIII, established an advisory commission to study the matter in 1963. Shortly after he became Pope that same year, Paul VI expanded the commission from a mere six laypeople to a total of 72 persons, including theologians, doctors, cardinals, and bishops. Five of the participants were women. The report this commission submitted in 1966 recommended a revision of the Church's moral teaching that the use of contraception no longer be considered an intrinsic evil but subject to the consciences of the faithful for use in certain circumstances. An intervention was made by a small minority of the commission's members opposing this position which was then, in turn, responded to by the majority. This back-and-forth was leaked to the media, which led to the wide expectation that the Pope would accept the majority opinion of his own commission. Priests in parishes and professors at Catholic universities were already teaching that contraceptive use in particular cases is permissible.

But to the surprise of many and against tremendous opposition, Pope Paul, in his finest moment, definitively clarified as an exceptionless norm of morality that the use of artificial contraception is intrinsically evil. He did so fifty years ago in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, promulgated on July 25, 1968.

The teaching and reception of *Humanae Vitae*

Pope Paul VI brought clarity to the debate, stating what has always been the Church's understanding of married love. Citing Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, he stated: "Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the procreation and education of children. Children are really the supreme gift of marriage and contribute in the highest degree to their parents' welfare" (*Humanae Vitae* 9). He also reasserted the "...inseparable connection, established by God, which man on his own initiative may not break, between the unitive significance and the procreative significance which are both inherent to the marriage act" (*HV* 12). And as a result, that "each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life" (*HV* 11). Thus, sexual intercourse that is deliberately contraceptive through use of unlawful birth control methods is labeled "intrinsically wrong" (*HV* 14).

The encyclical did, however, acknowledge there could be well-grounded reasons for spacing births, and as a result married people "may then take advantage of the natural cycles immanent in the reproductive system and engage in marital intercourse only during those times that are infertile, thus controlling birth in a way which does not in the least offend the moral principles



Christ Blessing Little Children by Charles Lock Eastlake, c. 1839

which We have just explained” (*HV* 16). This practice has come to be known as “Natural Family Planning” (NFP). To be clear, NFP is not a form of contraception, which deliberately renders sexual intercourse incapable of resulting in conception. Pope Paul clarifies: “Neither the Church nor her doctrine is inconsistent when she considers it lawful for married people to take advantage of the infertile period but condemns as always unlawful the use of means which directly prevent conception, even when the reasons given for the later practice may appear to be upright and serious. In reality, these two cases are completely different. In the former the married couple rightly use a faculty provided them by nature. In the later they obstruct the natural development of the generative process” (*HV* 16).

The choice to avoid or postpone birth can be licit under just and reasonable conditions that are medical, economic, and social. This is the *via media* in the debate over birth control. As Monsignor William Smith observes: “Some style themselves ‘providentialists’ in their claim that God will provide for whatever number of children you have.... The providentialists say, do nothing to interfere with procreation (including NFP). The seculars say, have 1.78 children. The Catholic position is neither of these but calls for generosity, while recognizing there can be serious reasons for spacing children or limiting family size. The point is to get the couples to ask themselves are they really answering God’s call to generosity

in the service of life” (William Smith, *Modern Moral Problems: Trustworthy Answers to Your Tough Questions* [Ignatius Press]).

Rather than bringing the debate over birth control to a close, the promulgation of *Humanae Vitae* provoked antagonistic protest and dissent. Pope Paul suffered much for proclaiming the truth on the nature and purpose of married love. The encyclical was received with almost universal scorn and condemnation from the world, including many within the Church. Numerous bishops and priests spoke out against the encyclical. Perhaps the most infamous instance of this was when Father Charles Curran of The Catholic University of America organized a media campaign to protest its principal teachings and arranged to have more than 600 theologians sign a “Statement of Dissent,” which he penned. So fierce was the backlash, Pope Paul did not issue another encyclical in the remaining ten years of his pontificate. Today, the teachings of *Humanae Vitae* are, arguably, the most disobeyed doctrines of the Catholic Church.

But fifty years later, his words have proven to be prophetic. Dale Ahlquist observes:

The Holy Father had upheld the truth, upheld the teaching of the Church. He had gone against the tide and was paying an awful price. The rest of the world wanted sex without consequences. But sex without consequences... has consequences. And the Pope knew it, and since then he has been proved right a million times over. All of his predictions about birth control leading to divorce, leading to abortion, leading to perversion, were absolutely correct, but no one listened at the time.

G.K. Chesterton said, “A dead thing goes with the stream. Only a living thing can go against it.” Pope Paul VI was almost the only living thing in the world in 1968....The world did not listen to Pope Paul VI. And now it does not remember what he said. (Dale Ahlquist, *All Roads: Roamin’ Catholic Apologetics* [ACS Books])

Not only did Pope Paul say that contraception was bad; he said it would have bad consequences. And he was right.

The prophecies of *Humanae Vitae*

In *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI asserts that the widespread use of contraception would “lead to conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality.” No one can deny that fifty years later there has been a sweeping decline in morality throughout

the world. The vast increases in divorce and children born out of wedlock, the tragedy of abortion being procured on a horrifying scale, and the perversion that pervades contemporary popular culture all testify to this fact.

The encyclical also foretold how the use of contraception would be detrimental to conjugal love. Pope Paul argued that contraception would ultimately lead to a loss of respect for the woman, where “her physical and psychological equilibrium” would no longer be cared for as she would be considered “a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment and no longer as [her husband’s] respected and beloved companion.” All persons have an innate dignity as beings created in the image and likeness of God. The Church’s teaching that the use of artificial contraception is an intrinsic evil that can never be accepted is designed, in part, to protect this understanding of the dignity of the human person. That dignity is violated when spouses use each other’s bodies as mere objects for their own gratification by obstructing the natural end of their sexual union. By this act, they display a lack of commitment and authentic love for one another and frustrate the ultimate purposes of their marital union, which are their mutual good and bringing children into the world.

Pope Paul also warned that the widespread acceptance and even celebration of contraception would place a “dangerous weapon...in the hands of those public authorities who take no heed of moral exigencies.” This has certainly come to pass as the prevailing wisdom identifies overpopulation as the primary cause of poverty. As a result, it is the policy of many governments to control population growth through “family-planning programs.” What this means, of course, is the widespread distribution of contraceptives, opportunities for sterilization procedures, and abortion (even forced abortions, in the case of China). Countries implementing birth control practices are given preferential access to resources from first-world governments and charitable agencies, forcing the Catholic poor into the indignity of exchanging their consciences for money. Contrary to the prevailing wisdom, the plain truth is that there is an actual problem of under-population in the West. Most Western nations have a birthrate that is under 2.1, which is not enough to sustain a given society.

The final warning of this prophetic document was that contraception would lead man to think he has unlimited dominion over his own body. God’s will has been replaced with the selfish desire of the individual. Many go so far as to alter their own physical make-up by undergoing sterilization procedures. The emergence of the practice of *in vitro* fertilization and the transgender movement

are not at all unrelated to this. In each of those cases, God's dominion over the natural order is obstructed to suit one's own desire.

**The voice crying in the wilderness:
The message of *Humanae Vitae***

Today, the most transient and material things of this world – clothes, cars, expensive vacations – are more desired than the joy of children. Our secular world has forgotten God and the greatest blessing He gives to any family – new life. Malcolm Muggeridge poignantly details what our society has lost sight of:

There is no beauty, there is no joy, there is no compensation that anything could offer in the way of leisure, of so-called freedom from domestic duties, which could possibly compensate for one-thousandth part of the joy that an old man feels when he sees this beautiful thing: life beginning again as his ends, in those children that have come into the world through his love and through a marriage which has lasted through 50 and more years. I assure you that what I say to you is true, and that when you are that age there is nothing that this world can offer in the way of success, in the way of adventure, in the way of honors, in the way of variety, in the way of so-called freedom, which could come within a hundredth part of measuring up to that wonderful sense of having been used as an instrument, not in the achievement of some stupid kind of personal erotic excitement, but in the realization of this wonderful thing—human procreation. (Malcom Muggeridge, Malcom Muggeridge on *Humanae Vitae* [The National Committee of Catholic Laymen])

Pope Paul VI stood firm in the midst of the moral permissiveness which came under the guise of “freedom” in the 1960s and boldly proclaimed the truth of married love. But his message was a like a voice crying out in the wilderness. It is the cause of great controversy, and is despised and rejected. But what ultimately, is the message of *Humanae Vitae*? Put very briefly: that the long and uncomplicated tradition of a man and a woman falling in love, getting married, and having children is a good thing. That the family is the most important unit of society. And that the natural order of all this should be respected. That this should be the subject of controversy shows how society has lost its way. May the message of the soon-to-be Saint Paul VI, in *Humanae Vitae*, help us to find it again.

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Humanae Vitae *and Its Legacy*

BY THE MOST REVEREND CHARLES J. CHAPUT, O.F.M. CAP.,

Delivered at the conference sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., on April 4, 2018.

Thirty years ago, in remarks to brother-bishops, Joseph Ratzinger noted that life in the modern Church comes with a recurring litany of complaints.

The complaints are familiar. They never vary. They target the Catholic teachings on contraception, sexual morality, and the nature of conscience and freedom. And each individual complaint rests upon a commonly shared desire for a “much more far-reaching change of ‘paradigms’ [about] the basic ideas of being, and human obligation.”¹

As a result and over time, said Ratzinger, some key elements of the Catholic Faith “have witnessed a kind of reduction ... a reduction [in confidence and zeal] which has gradually been preparing the way for another ‘paradigm’.” It’s a new and quite different paradigm that would “confer the aura of morality upon changed norms of behavior” more accurately labeled “as a surrender of moral integrity ...”²

Not much has changed in thirty years, or in the fifty years since *Humanae Vitae*. But neither has the truth changed about the dignity of human life, the nature of the human person, the beauty of marriage, and the purpose of human sexuality. So we’re here tonight to celebrate the Catholic proclamation that truth, goodness, and beauty go together, and they’re experienced with the greatest joy and freedom in obedience to the Word of God and the enduring wisdom of the Church.

This is the paradigm for the believing Christian. And it’s the only paradigm that matters.

Men and women fall in love with each other because they see a reflection of God’s beauty and goodness in each other – body,

1 Ratzinger, Joseph, “Difficulties Confronting the Faith in Europe Today,” *Communio: International Catholic Review*, 38 (Winter 2011): 728-737

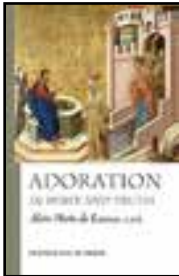
2 Ibid.

mind, and soul. God is a communion of persons united in a love so fruitful that it overflows into the created world. That world gives glory to God and reflects His attributes, especially that crown of creation, human beings. We're uniquely created in the image and likeness of God. God has therefore made our love fruitful, like His own, and called us to take part in the creation of new life.

Many otherwise good and decent people today are blind to this good news. So remembering a few simple facts is important.

In 1960, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first birth control pill for release to the general public. Supporters argued that the pill would strengthen marriages by allowing couples to space their children rationally. Children would be enriched by more attention and love from their parents. Financial strains would ease. Families would flourish. Demand for the new pill was heavy and immediate.

Paul VI set up a commission to advise him on whether the historic Christian rejection of contraceptives would apply to the new



ADORATION IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

Rev Alain-Marie de Lassus CSJ

No one will deny that adoration is at the heart of the Catholic faith. Yet one seldom gives thought to the full meaning of the word. In this book, the author explores the Scriptural passages that speak of adoration, the theological aspects of the obligations that follow for every believer, and also the practical aspects of how adoration is to be expressed. There are echoes here of topics addressed in the writings of Cardinal Robert Sarah, who begins by looking first at where mankind stands before God as His redeemed creatures.

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technology. After study and discussion, the commission advised that it would not. In other words, most members found the pill to be morally legitimate. A few commission voices disagreed. They included Karol Wojtyla, the Cardinal-Archbishop of Krakow. But they were in the minority.

What happened next is very well known. In Paul VI's 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, he taught that the pill *was*, in fact, a form of prohibited birth control. As a result, many Catholic clergy, scholars and laypersons simply refused to accept the decision. And that resistance continues in our own day.

Humanae Vitae revealed deep wounds in the Church about our understanding of the human person, the nature of sexuality, and marriage as God created it. We still seek the cure for those wounds. But thanks to the witness of St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict, Pope Francis, and many other faithful shepherds, the Church has continued to preach the truth of Jesus Christ about who we are and what God desires for us. People willing to open their eyes and their hearts to the truth will see the hope that Catholic teaching represents and the power that comes when that truth makes us free.

This evening, I want to focus on three things. First, I want to look at the emergence of Christianity in Rome and how the Gospel changed pagan society's view of the human person. Second, I want to examine the signs of our own times. We're living in a new kind of pagan society. We need to understand our culture's topography, so that the Church can fruitfully respond to it. And third, I want to consider *Humanae Vitae's* teaching and prophecies, the ways in which Paul VI called us to lives of self-giving and self-denial, and his predictions if our society refused to take up that call.

Many people today dismiss the Catholic view of sexuality as an oddity, or worse. It's an unhealthy thorn in the side of enlightened culture. We're scolded, even by critics within the Church, that we focus too much on the "pelvic issues." The battles over sex compete with and obscure more urgent parts of the Gospel, like care for the poor – or so the argument goes.

As a bishop for thirty years, I can tell you that in every diocese I've served, the Church has put far more money, time, and personnel into the care and education of the underprivileged than into programs related to sex. And it's not that critics don't know this. Many don't *want* to know it, because facts interfere with their storyline of a sexually repressed, body-denying institution locked in the past.

I'll get to the ironies in that reasoning in a moment. My point is, the Church believes what she believes about human sexuality because of what she believes about the meaning and dignity of the human person *as a whole*. We care for the poor and work against injustices like human trafficking for the same reasons we believe that sexual love is reserved for marriages between men and women who are open to children.

For proof, we can look to some contrasts from the world in which Christianity arose. I'll draw on the work of Kyle Harper, a professor of Classics and provost at the University of Oklahoma. In ancient Greece and Rome, society divided into men and women of status who had honor, and those who had none. Aristocratic women were told to preserve their chastity for marriage. Aristocratic men were expected to have sex as they pleased, ideally in moderation and discreetly.

Slaves and prostitutes existed to meet the needs of their masters and clients. Professor Harper writes that the austere classical philosophers and more promiscuous Romans both “presumed that sex was just sex, one instinctual need among others, to be channeled in certain fundamental ways.”³ Prostitutes and slaves were safety valves. They were a way to release pent-up energies for free-born men. This isn't so alien to the way many think about sex and pornography in our own society. The fifth-century bishop Salvian summed up Roman sexual policy as forbidding adulteries, but building brothels.⁴

This regime rested on exploiting the weak, a fact that Romans couldn't see because Rome lacked any sense of the innate dignity in all human beings. Harper notes that: “None of the classical political regimes, nor any of the classical philosophical schools, regarded human beings as universally free and incomparably worthy creatures. Classical civilization, in short, lacked the concept of human dignity.”⁵

This changed drastically with the rise of Christianity. Christians welcomed all new life as something holy and a blessing. They argued that *all* human beings – Jews and Greeks, slaves

3 Kyle Harper, “The First Sexual Revolution,” *First Things* 279 (January 2018): 42.

4 Kyle Harper, *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 47. See also Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*, 7.22.

5 Kyle Harper, “Christianity and the Roots of Human Dignity in Late Antiquity,” in *Christianity and Freedom: Volume I: Historical Perspectives*, edited by Timothy Samuel Shah and Allen D. Hertzke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 127.

and free, men and women – were made in the image and likeness of God. The new faith held that men and women are not simply souls trapped in bodies. We're a *unity* of body and soul – ensouled bodies and embodied souls.

In other words, your body isn't just a bag of flesh – or in today's much more cynical terms, “animated meat” or “wetware.” It's more than just raw material for your own uses or those of others. Your body is part of who you are and the expression of your being.

Christians preached that the world is *not* subject to the course of the planets. It *doesn't* depend on the whims of fate. Rather, God has given all women and men free will, the power to act in accord with God's commands or against them. Christianity embedded that notion of free will in human culture for the first time.⁶ Christian sexual morality was a key part of this understanding of free will.⁷ The body was “a consecrated space” in which we could choose or reject God.⁸

Christians therefore demanded care for the vulnerable *bodies* of society. The first recorded opposition to slavery as an institution in history comes from Gregory of Nyssa.⁹ Christianity likewise created the category of “the poor” as a group of people whose material poverty contradicts their dignity as human beings. And Christians preached that the bodies of slaves and prostitutes did not exist for the sexual gratification of masters and paying clients.

In other words, early Christians saw their faith, including its understanding of sexuality, as a message of freedom and new life in Jesus Christ, not repression. “Sexual morality was part of the proclamation of a half-hidden story of God's restoration of the created cosmos,” Harper concludes.¹⁰ It was and remains “integral to the Christian vision of redemption” because it is the logical outgrowth of that vision, not a tumor we can safely excise.¹¹

One part of that early Christian understanding of sex was contraception. As with abortion, the early Church rejected contraception. The fact that Christians did not use contraception or expose unwanted children to the elements to die set them apart from their fellow Romans.

6 Harper, 2013, 4.

7 Ibid., 13.

8 Ibid., 92.

9 Harper, 2016, 132.

10 Harper, 2018, 43.

11 Ibid., 45.

Christian opposition to contraception was universal throughout the Middle Ages and Reformation era. It remained so until 1930. In that year, the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops wrote that while the preferred method of limiting births should be abstinence, “nevertheless in those cases where there is such a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles.”

The Lambeth bishops went on to note their “strong condemnation of the use of any methods of conception control from motives of selfishness, luxury, or mere convenience” or as a means of population control.¹² They condemned “the sinful practice of abortion”¹³ and sex outside marriage. They also urged restrictions on the purchase of contraceptives.¹⁴

The Anglican bishops at Lambeth thought they could remove one seemingly small part of Christian teaching to accommodate modern culture, while keeping the rest of it intact. History shows they were wrong. Their minor tweak gradually turned into a full reversal on the issue of contraception. Other Christian leaders followed suit.

Today this leaves the Catholic Church almost alone as a body of Christian believers whose leaders still maintain the historic Christian teaching on contraception. The Church can thus look stubborn and out of touch for not adjusting her beliefs to the prevailing culture. But she’s simply remaining true to the faith she received from the apostles and can’t barter away.

Since Lambeth, developed society has moved sharply away from Christian faith and morals, without shedding them completely. To borrow a thought from Chesterton, we’re surrounded by fragments of Christian ideas removed from their original frame-

12 <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1930/resolution-15-the-life-and-witness-of-the-christian-community-marriage>; <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1930/resolution-16-the-life-and-witness-of-the-christian-community-marriage>

13 <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1930/resolution-16-the-life-and-witness-of-the-christian-community-marriage>

14 <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/document-library/lambeth-conference/1930/resolution-18-the-life-and-witness-of-the-christian-community-marriage>

work and used in strange new ways. Human dignity and rights are still popular concepts – just don't ask what their foundation is, or whether human rights have any solid content beyond sentiment or personal preference.

Our culture isn't reverting to the paganism of the past. It's creating a new religion to replace Christianity. It's vital that we understand that today's new sexual mores are part of this larger change. As Professor Harper notes, "In our secular age, just as in the early years of Christianity, differences in sexual morality are really about the clash between different pictures of the universe and the place of the individual within it."¹⁵

Much of the moral conflict, broken family life, social unraveling, and gender confusion that seems so common today stems – directly or more subtly – from our disordered attitudes toward creation, and our appetite to master, reshape and even deform nature to our wills. We want the freedom to decide what reality is. And we insist on the power to make it so.

Humans have a very long and imaginative record when it comes to sins of the flesh. But our most recent dysfunctions about sex began with treating human fertility as a disease. They live on in the tragedy of children whose sex is altered by a cocktail of hormones and scalpels. For Christians, this modern hatred of the body – because hatred is exactly what it is – and the desire to master and transcend the body's limitations, attack the heart of our humanity.

Earlier, I mentioned the irony of critics who dismiss Christian sexual morality as repressive. The irony is this. Beneath all of today's enlightened talk about liberating human sexual behavior is a contempt for the weakness and inefficiency of the flesh. The body is a defective machine. It gets fat. It gets old. It gets sick. Then it dies. It can't do what my will demands of it. The body is a prison that needs to be smashed and rebuilt to new designs. The result is familiar. It's history's latest episode of Gnosticism with a new script, new cast and better sets. But the story is always the same – a hatred of the limits imposed by mortal flesh and blood.

Therein lies a key contrast. As the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – speaking for Pope Francis – stressed just last month in *Placuit Deo*:

Gnosticism ... associates itself with a negative view of the created order, which is understood as a limitation on

¹⁵ Harper, 2018, 46.

the absolute freedom of the human spirit. Consequently, salvation is understood as freedom from the body and from the concrete relationships in which a person lives ... [but] true salvation, contrary to being a liberation from the body, also includes its sanctification (cf. Rom 12:1). The human body was shaped by God, who inscribed within it a language that invites the human person to recognize the gifts of the Creator and to live in communion with one's brothers and sisters.¹⁶

Respect for the human body and the purpose of its sexual expression is *fundamental* to the Christian worldview. Unlike the Gnostics – ancient and modern – we believe that God created us male and female for a good and holy reason. Ordering ourselves to that purpose leads us to joy. And God became incarnate in the Person of Jesus to redeem us, body and soul.

Pope Francis warns that our desire for mastery and autonomy has created a human crisis similar to the crisis of our natural environment. “In our day,” he says, “marriage and the family are in crisis. We now live in a culture of the temporary, in which more and more people are simply giving up on marriage as a public commitment. This revolution in manners and morals has often flown the flag of freedom, but in fact it has brought spiritual and material devastation to countless human beings, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.”¹⁷

Francis also notes how this seemingly “progressive” culture functions religiously. He warns against the “ideological colonization” of Third World countries and the “polite persecution” that Christians in the First World face when they dissent from the new sexual orthodoxies.¹⁸

As Francis has made clear, we need to resist these new orthodoxies if we want to be faithful to Jesus Christ. And that brings us back to *Humanae Vitae*, the first sharp challenge by the Church to what was then called “the new morality.” *Humanae Vitae* is remembered for the great “no” that Paul VI uttered, and rightly so. But we often forget that his “no” came only after an even more powerful “yes” to the beauty of marital love.

16 *Placuit Deo*, 14

17 Pope Francis, “Not Just Good, but Beautiful,” in *Not Just Good, but Beautiful: The Complementary Relationship between Man and Woman* (Walden, NY: Plough Publishing House, 2015), 3–4.

18 <https://cruznnow.com/vatican/2017/11/21/pope-francis-ideological-colonization-blasphemy-god/>; <http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2016/pope-beware-of-polite-persecution-disguised-as-culture-progress.cfm>.

Pope Paul begins *Humanae Vitae* by noting four key elements of married love. Married love is *human*. It's an act of the free will by which a man and woman are joined, body and soul, in a communion of life. It's also *total*, a gift of one's whole life and self. It's also *faithful*, a gift made exclusively to one person until death. And marriage is finally *fruitful*, overflowing to new life like the love of the God in whose image we are made.

Paul VI argues that marriage is not just a social convention we've inherited, but the design of God Himself. Christian couples are called to welcome the sacrifices that God's design requires so they can enter into the joy it offers.¹⁹ This means that while husbands and wives may take advantage of periods of natural infertility to regulate the birth of their children, they can't actively intervene to stamp out the fertility that's natural to sexual love.

Paul saw that the Church's teaching often hadn't been followed in the years prior to *Humanae Vitae*. So he offered four predictions of the future if that trend continued. Each of his warnings has come true, in ways more tragic than he could imagine.

First, Paul said that the widespread use of contraception would lead to "conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality." Obviously, the pill isn't the only factor in creating our current sexual confusions. But clearly it's had a massive effect. Look around today. Our young people are drowning in pornography. STIs and family breakdown are not only on the rise; they're seen as the collateral cost of having true freedom.

Second, Paul warned that men would lose respect for women, viewing them as instruments of selfish enjoyment and no longer as revered and beloved companions. Turn on the radio or TV and see how this has played out. And look at the growing list of men who fall from the peak of their careers because of decades of sexual predation.

Popular culture glorifies sexual coercion and physical abuse in a way unthinkable just a few decades ago. Read the studies of today's sexual relationships and accounts of the hook-up culture in our cities and on our campuses.²⁰ As I wrote in a pastoral letter

19 Clement of Alexandria was even more blunt than Paul VI: "Sex not intended to produce children is a rape of nature" (Harper, 2013, 111; Clement, *Paidogogos* 2.10.95).

20 For three examples of a growing trend in scholarship, see Mark Regnerus, *Cheap Sex: The Transformation of Men, Marriage, and Monogamy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, *Pre-*

on *Humanae Vitae* twenty years ago, “according to [Pope Paul], contraception might be marketed as liberating for women, but the real ‘beneficiaries’ of birth control pills and devices would be men.... Many feminists have attacked the Catholic Church for her alleged disregard of women, but the Church in *Humanae Vitae* identified and rejected sexual exploitation of women years before that message entered the cultural mainstream.”²¹ In other words, Paul VI was right.

Third, Paul warned that widespread use of contraception would license public authorities to advocate and implement birth control as a form of population policy. This is precisely what’s happened. As my brother bishops in the developing world can confirm, Western countries often tie their aid money to contraceptives, abortion, and sterilization – as Pope Francis said, a kind of “ideological colonization” and a way to keep the “wrong” people from having more babies.

Fourth and lastly, Paul VI worried that contraception would mislead human beings into thinking they had unlimited dominion over their own bodies, relentlessly turning the human person into the object of his or her own intrusive power. Our current obsession with transgender issues simply proves his point. As a result, a deep confusion drives much of our thinking about human life today.

A friend of mine, a wife and mother with an impish sense of humor, refers to the pill as America’s chemical corset. It’s a curious thought. My own sister – I suspect like a lot of modern women – would look back on corsets as an annoying museum piece: uncomfortable, antiquated and, quite literally, restrictive. They were a way to control and reshape women’s bodies to fit the expectations of society, especially men.

But contraception works in much the same way. First, it presupposes that a woman’s body should work like a man’s in order for a woman to flourish and be free. Second, because a woman’s body does *not* work like a man’s, it says that her fertility and biological rhythms are problems and weaknesses; in effect, a disease that needs to be managed, like cancer or a chemical imbalance. Thus we get a paradox. Millions of women make sure they avoid meat

marital Sex in America: How Young Americans Meet, Mate, and Think about Marrying (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Donna Freitas, *The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture Is Leaving a Generation Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled, and Confused About Intimacy* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

²¹ Much of this section is drawn from that pastoral letter. The letter can be found in full at: <https://www.ewtn.com/library/BISHOPS/CHAPUTHV.HTM>.

with hormones and take care to use plastics sparingly. Many of those same women *also* fill themselves with hormones and put plastic coils inside their bodies to thwart their natural fertility.

And yet it's the Church – not the pharmaceutical industry with its profits and manufactured infertility, or the doctors who deal with the pill's collateral health damage, or the abortion industry that cashes in lavishly on the failures of contraception, but *the Church* – that gets criticized as abnormal and intrusive. Nothing speaks more nakedly to the doublethink we now accept as the rhythm of our daily lives.

I'll close with just a couple of final thoughts.

The boomer generation – my own cohort that came of age at the time of *Humanae Vitae* – inherited a moral framework that gave us a sense of order and meaning even as we rejected it. Liberated sex was seen as life-giving, organic and a source for more generous, less confining love. *Humanae Vitae* was seen as just one more effort to bottle up the energy and freedom of young people. As late as the 1980s, much of our popular entertainment still showed casual sex as affectionate, healthy and fun, with few if any consequences.

Today's film and TV dramas are very different. They're far more wounded and vastly more cynical. Lena Dunham's cable series "Girls," and the short story "Cat Person" published by New Yorker magazine and the media uproar it created, are just two of the most obvious examples.²² The #MeToo movement, emotional wreckage, sexual disease and date rape are the realities we've inherited from the sexual revolution. Paul VI would not be surprised.

Half a century after *Humanae Vitae*, the Church in the United States is at a very difficult but also very promising moment. *Difficult*, because the language of Catholic moral wisdom is alien to many young people, who often leave the Church without ever really encountering her. *Promising*, because the most awake of those same young people want something better and more enduring than the emptiness and noise they now have.

Our mission now, as always, is not to surrender to the world as it is, but to feed and ennoble the deepest yearnings of the world – and thereby to lead it to Jesus Christ, and his true freedom and joy.

So as we come together in the fellowship of this conference, may God guide us fruitfully in pursuing that task.

²² <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/12/11/cat-person>



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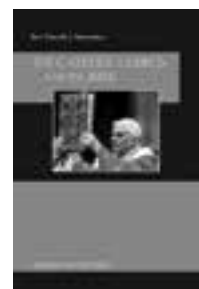


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Reformation Historian's Advice in the Wake of "Humanae Vitae"

BY REVEREND HUBERT JEDIN

Editor's Note: Father Hubert Jedin is best known as the author of the definitive History of the Council of Trent (4 volumes) and a ten-volume History of the Church, which was translated into English the year after his death in 1981. The words of Father Jedin's remarkable "Letter to the German Bishops," written in September of 1968 (to the head of the German episcopal conference), seem to be more prophetic than ever as each year passes. That Father Jedin's 26-year-old warnings have gone largely unheeded is reflective of the crisis of authority which lies at the heart of present-day problems in the Church.

I take the liberty to offer you enclosed a few thoughts and opinions on the present situation in the Catholic Church, with the request to present them to the members of the German Bishops' Conference.

My thoughts have grown out of long years of scholarly concern with the history of the Church and were dictated by grave concern over her present development. I am aware that many invited and uninvited advisers are said to gain the ear of the bishops. Mindful of the admonition of the Second Vatican Council about the co-responsibility of the priests and laity, I feel obliged in conscience to offer my knowledge and understanding, so that evaluative categories will not be lacking to the venerable episcopate; for what life-experience is to individuals, the history of the Church is for the ecclesial community.

At present, the Catholic Church is passing through a difficult crisis. Germany, too, at least the region of the Federal Republic, is gripped by it. This crisis became broadly visible during the "Catholic Day" at Essen during which the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* was regarded not as a starting-point but as an object of anxiety and as the flashpoint.

To us historians especially concerned with the history of the Reformation, this crisis suggests parallels to those events which led in the sixteenth century to the schism of the Church in the West. It compels us to draw inferences from the historical experience for the evaluation of the present moment in the Church.

I. Through the research of recent decades, it is evident that Martin Luther did not intend to split the Church when in the year 1517 he presented his theses on indulgences to the appropriate bishops and later published them. He renounced the authority of the Church in stages; in Leipzig (1519), he even rejected the binding force of decisions by valid ecumenical councils. And given the resulting resonance in the public sphere he himself did not expect, he was finally tempted to refuse obedience to the condemnation – far too long delayed in any case – of his 41 theses in the bull *Exsurge Domine* (1520).

In some German dioceses, this papal decision was publicized inadequately, and in others not at all. The bishops considered the “Luther conflict” as a quarrel among theologians and overlooked the fact that the foundations of the Catholic concept of the Church were being not only shaken but destroyed. Apart from a few theologians, the faithful saw in Luther the re-discoverer of the true faith and the restorer of the Church, the liberator from the yoke which the Church had allegedly imposed upon them until then.

The most passionate and most powerful champions of the Lutheran movement were the “intellectuals” of that time, the humanists, in whose eyes the current theology, scholasticism, was a hindrance to progress. Also included were numerous priests and clerics who, fascinated by the slogan “evangelical freedom,” cast off the vows they had taken upon themselves. Finally, there were some from the classes threatened by social decline, such as the imperial knighthood and the well-to-do farmers, throughout a great part of Germany.

The almost complete success of the Lutheran movement in the years 1517-1525 was made possible by the control of that age’s only means of mass communication, the press, whose significance for the Church was insufficiently understood. People used to snatch the writings of Luther and the countless pamphlets stamped with his ideas right out of the hands of book-sellers. They spoke the language of the people and were read, even devoured.

The few who issued warnings were, to be sure, more clear-sighted as theologians, but weaker as propagandists. They remained unread and were regarded as the “reactionaries.” Those responsible for the Church’s magisterium, the pope and the bishops, were silent; the repeatedly requested and longed-for council never materialized. Uncertainty in regard to the faith persisted.

Without wishing in the least to explain away the mistakes and oversights committed by the Roman Curia at that time and

subsequently, the passivity of the German episcopate must be admitted. They were not sufficiently trained theologically, and with a few exceptions, the prince took precedence over the bishop in leading the people. This state of affairs facilitated the nearly unchecked progress of the Lutheran movement, and in fact this is what made it possible in the first place. The German bishops thus missed their chance.

Once the majority of the imperial cities and the princes had made Luther's cause their own (after 1526), it was too late. Bypassing the bishop, Lutheran rural churches were erected and the urban clergy numerically increased. As the Lutheran movement became organized and consolidated, it conducted itself as a creed and bound itself together by a politico-military league. The schism in the Church was a fact.

We know today that the inner process of schism, the formation of a "Confession" (denomination), lasted not years, but decades. Melancthon and Calvin claimed to be "Catholic" until the end of their lives, while the adherents of the old faith were calumniated as "Papists."

The faithful long clung to the Mass and their saints, and the church regulations introduced by Lutheran magistrates took over many Catholic customs – even processions and pilgrimages. The bulk of the simple faithful never understood that the "Reformation" was not a reform of the Church but the construction of a new Church set up on a different basis. In retrospect, one must therefore maintain: the schism of the Church succeeded by nothing so much as by the illusion that it did not exist. It was widespread in Rome and in the German episcopate, among many theologians, amongst the majority of clergymen and among the people.

The parallels between then and now are obvious. But one essential difference exists: The schism in the Church in the sixteenth century, since the end of the 1520s, was increasingly an affair of "governments," and therefore of states. Today the state is indifferent toward ecclesiastical events, except in Communist regimes which put the Church under heavy pressure. In those cases, the signs of crisis discussed below are either not present or found just minimally. They can only be found in the Free World of the West where they profit from rebellion against the so-called "establishment."

II. The Church's present crisis in Germany is in its innermost essence, as in the sixteenth century, a matter of uncertainty and disorientation in the faith. Protestant biblical criticism has

broken into Catholic theology on a broad front. The problem is not so much those who hold chairs of exegesis with their rather nuanced statements as with their students and auditors who are often insufficiently prepared theologically and philosophically and who accept uncritically the views of radical Protestant theologians, e.g., Rudolph Bultmann. They extend and coarsen the concepts to the point of polarization, simplify them in their institutes and propagate them in conferences and courses as well as in preaching.

Under the cloak of hermeneutics, the binding nature of dogmatic definitions by ecumenical councils is called into question (e.g., transubstantiation). The bond of theology to the Magisterium is loosened, if not altogether denied, and the Magisterium itself depreciated and even ridiculed. Today's hostility and contempt for authority, which is so widespread among the younger generation and is supported by many parents and educators, abets this dissolution of the Catholic concept of the Church, and consequently the idea of religious obedience.

The question "Is there anything still Catholic?" is not just something asked only by older and so-called "traditional" Catholics, but comes from the very core of sincere and genuine believers. This too was brought about not just by the constant change of liturgical forms and the ever more encompassing capriciousness in liturgy, but is the result of real uncertainty and the need for knowledge.

Today's modern communications media are incomparably more powerful than those of the sixteenth century. Almost without exception, they have become dominated by intellectuals who frequently, especially if they are Catholic, want the "new" for its own sake, as the supposedly "progressive" thing to do. They promote it and propagate it, regardless of the truth content. In their speech and style of expression, they cater to the inclination of the younger generation for slogans ("democratizing the Church"), and they judge this agitation to be harmless to their religious formation, or they explain it away, and in general they comment upon Church events in a distorted way.

Communications media: They make (or better, they manipulate) "public opinion" against which only a few among the many millions of television watchers are capable of validly forming their own opinion. The constant saturation of the faithful by a communications media controlled by the ecclesiastical "Left" has the effect of altering their relation to the Church and has indeed already changed it. This disorientation makes progress month

by month. The longer it lasts, the greater will be the danger of schism in the Church, as in the sixteenth century. Or, what could be even worse, a complete estrangement from the Church, just as individual raindrops disappear in the dry sand.

I do not believe that the founding and support of conservative, traditionalist groups and movements (“Una Voce”, “Nunc et Semper” and the like) is the right way to prevent the schism or revolt threatening the Church. To leave the fight against the abuses of the ecclesiastical “Left” to an ecclesiastical “Right” would be a fundamental abdication by the authorities. In contrast to the Protestant church-communities, the Catholic Church possesses authority since her structure is based on divine law. The bishops must speak out clearly and act decisively, rising above public opinion. If they act, and act quickly, it will become evident that they still have the great mass of Catholic faithful behind them.

Had the German bishops in the first years of the sixteenth century’s schism from the faith joined together for common action before the Reformation became political, the schism in the Church, even if it were not totally prevented, could quite possibly have been reduced to a mere splintering.

The episcopate of today is no longer burdened and obstructed by defective theological education or by its social place and the resulting entanglements in politics. The constitution *Lumen Gentium* has conferred on them thorough-going rights and opportunities, but also a higher responsibility for the integrity of the faith than ever before. They cannot wait for the intervention of higher authorities, but must act themselves.

Where the public communications media construct walls of silence or permit one to observe daily events only through distorted lenses, a word of clarification and corresponding action is doubly indispensable. To every Catholic and non-Catholic it must be made clear that the bishops consider the unabridged truth and care for the good of the faithful their first and highest duty.

III. Some concrete examples may illustrate how one might imagine this “action.”

1. The canonical mission of professors of higher education and teachers of religion, who plainly teach errors of faith, should be withdrawn. Conflicts arising from this with state officials and with the pressure groups of the “Left” must be accepted.

Priests and chaplains who come into open opposition to Church discipline in their teaching or through their conduct (e.g., in regard

to the Holy Eucharist) are to be suspended, even if there results from this a temporary shortage in pastoral care.

One should not be afraid of making “martyrs” of them. It is necessary to set an example – but in so doing it will be important to take care that the transition to a secular occupation be facilitated by providing suitable help for those afflicted.

2. No candidate for priestly office should be ordained unless he explicitly and unconditionally acknowledges the duties of the priesthood and undertakes canonical obedience. Above all, the authors of declarations against celibacy, against papal and episcopal teaching on doctrine, the instigators of revolts and those who try to coerce unacceptable changes in monasteries and seminaries are to be excluded from ordination....

3. The education of “lay-theologians” must be supervised with much greater vigilance, and the canonical mission must be bestowed more carefully. A portion of this group is inspiring the ecclesiastical “Left” and – knowingly or unknowingly – is promoting uncertainty and confusion about the faith.

4. It must be impressed on the entire clergy that liturgy is not a free-style composition by the parish assembly, but a divine service regulated by the Church. The chaotic changes in the liturgy have already gone so far that even the words of consecration are being changed by individual clerics without authorization. The Latin Mass, the bond of unity of the universal Church, should not be allowed to perish now that the world is becoming so much smaller. In every church with several Sunday services, one Latin Mass should regularly remain. It will, as experience shows, be well attended.

5. In teaching style, slogans like “democratizing the Church” or “critical Catholicism” and the like must be rejected because of the errors intermingled within them. The teaching of the Church from the basis of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* must be inculcated. The traditional principles of “subsidiarity” and “solidarity” fully suffice to guarantee the participation of the laity in the accomplishment of its apostolic mission. One should not be afraid to retain the concepts “authority” and “obedience” in the vocabulary of the Church.

IV. In the parallels pointed out above and the sample proposals derived from them, I have taken into consideration that in present-day Church developments, there are at work strong religious forces not unlike those in the sixteenth-century movement enkindled by Luther. The saying of St. Augustine applies

to both of them: “*Nulla porro falsa doctrina est, quae non aliqua vera intertmesceat*” (“There is no false doctrine without some truth intermingled.” *Quaest. ev.* 11.40). I am convinced that the true and the good which has emerged from the new awakening of the Church at the Council and through the Council up to today can only be fruitful if it is separated from error.

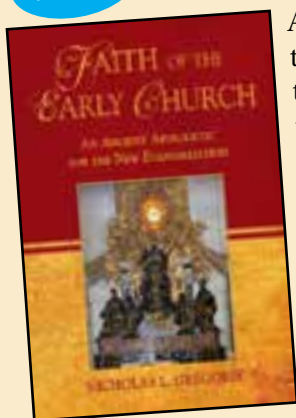
The longer the painful operation is put off, the greater will be the danger that valuable sources of strength are going to be lost because they will be amalgamated with error. Then there will occur among us not only a separation from the Church, but a defection from Christianity itself. The more clearly the bishops speak and the more decisively they act, the greater the chance to maintain the movement of awakening within the Church and thereby to uphold the Church.

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Jose Luis Mumbiela Sierra is bishop of the Diocese of Most Holy Trinity in Almaty and president of the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of Kazakhstan. Tomash Peta is metropolitan archbishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Mary in Astana. Adelio Dell'Oro is bishop of Karaganda. Athanasius Schneider is auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Mary in Astana. Very Reverend Father Dariusz Buras is apostolic administrator of Atyrau. Very Reverend Mitred Archpriest Vasyk Hovera is delegate of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches for the Greek-Catholic faithful in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

Editor's note: The following document is a pastoral letter issued May 13 by the bishops of Kazakhstan on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the encyclical Humanae Vitae.

Praised be Our Lord Jesus Christ! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! The current year is marked by the memorable event of the 50th anniversary of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, in which Blessed Paul VI confirmed the teaching of the constant Magisterium of the Church regarding the transmission of human life. The Bishops and Ordinaries of Kazakhstan want to take this favorable occasion in order to honor the memory and the enduring importance of this encyclical.

During the last meeting of all our priests and religious Sisters in Almaty, there were thorough discussions on the theme of the preparation of young people for the sacrament of marriage. There was made the proposal to transmit to young people the main truths of the Magisterium of the Church with regard to Christian marriage and the sanctity of human life from the moment of its conception.

We proclaim with the voice of the Magisterium of the Church as we can learn it in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* and in the documents of other Roman Pontiffs the following demanding truths of Christ's "sweet yoke and light burden" (Matt. 11:30):

The Church in urging men to the observance of the precepts of the natural law, which it interprets by its constant doctrine, teaches that each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life (*Humanae Vitae*, 11).

Excluded is any action which either before, at the moment of, or after sexual intercourse, is specifically intended to prevent procreation—whether as an end or as a means. Neither is it valid to argue, as a justification for sexual intercourse which is deliberately contraceptive, that a lesser evil is to be preferred to a greater one, or that such intercourse would merge with procreative acts of past and future to form a single entity, and so be qualified by exactly the same moral goodness as these. Though it is true that sometimes it is lawful to tolerate a lesser moral evil in order to avoid a greater evil or in order to promote a greater good, it is never lawful, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil that good may come of it (cf. Rom. 8)—in other words, to intend directly something which of its very nature contradicts the moral order, and which must therefore be judged unworthy of man, even though the intention is to protect or promote the welfare of an individual, of a family or of society in general. Consequently, it is a serious error to think that a whole married life of otherwise normal relations can justify sexual intercourse which is deliberately contraceptive and so intrinsically wrong (*Humanae Vitae*, n. 14).

When the spouses through contraception deprive the exercise of their conjugal sexuality of its potential procreative capacity, they attribute to themselves a power which belongs to God alone: the power to decide in the last instance the coming to existence of a human person. They attribute to themselves the qualification of being not the cooperators of the creative power of God, but the ultimate holders of the source of the human life. From this perspective, contraception is to be objectively judged to such an extent illicit, that it could never, for any reason, be justified. To think or to speak the contrary, equals to hold that in human life there could be given situations in which it would be licit not to recognize God as God (John Paul II, *Address to Participants of a Study Seminar on Responsible Procreation*, September 17, 1983).

Many think that the Christian teaching, although true, is nonetheless unfeasible, at least in some circumstances. As the Tradition of the Church has constantly taught, God does not command the impossible but every commandment also entails a gift of grace which helps human freedom to fulfill it. Yet constant prayer, frequent recourse to the sac-

raments and the exercise of conjugal chastity are needed. Today more than yesterday, man is again beginning to feel the need for truth and right reason in his daily experience. Always be ready to say, without ambiguity, the truth about the good and evil regarding man and the family (John Paul II, *Address to Participants in a Study Meeting on Responsible Procreation*, June 5, 1987).

Humanae Vitae reasserts the continuity of the Church's doctrine and tradition. [...] This teaching not only expresses the unchanged truth of *Humanae Vitae*, but also reveals the farsightedness with which the problem is treated. [...] What was true yesterday, is true also today. The truth expressed in *Humanae Vitae* does not change; on the contrary, precisely in the light of the new scientific discoveries, its teaching becomes more timely and elicits reflection on the intrinsic value it possesses (Benedict XVI, *Address to Participants in the International Congress on the 40th Anniversary of the Encyclical Humanae Vitae*, May 10, 2008).

This document, i.e. *Humanae Vitae*, was inspired by the immutable teaching of the Bible and the Gospel, which confirms the norms of the natural law and the irrepressible dictates of conscience regarding respect for life and its transmission by fathers and mothers who practice a responsible parenthood. The document has acquired new and urgent relevance in view of the wounds now being inflicted by civil laws on the holiness of the indissoluble marriage bond and the sacredness of human life even in the maternal womb. In face of saddening defections in the Church and society, We, like Peter, feel compelled to go to Him as the only source of salvation and cry out to Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (Paul VI, *Homily* on June 29, 1978).

The entire human history gave sufficient evidence for the fact that a true progress of society depends to a large extent on large families. This fact applies all the more to the life of the Church. Pope Francis reminds us of this truth: "It is a consolation and hope to see so many large families that welcome children as a true gift from God. They know that every child is a blessing" (Pope Francis, *General Audience*, January 21, 2015).

May the following words of Saint John Paul II, the pope of the family, be a light, a strength, a consolation and a joyful courage to

all Christian couples and to the young men and young women, who prepare themselves for the life of a Christian marriage and family.

We have the distinctive confirmation that the path of holiness lived together as a couple is possible, beautiful, extraordinarily fruitful, and fundamental for the good of the family, the Church and society. This prompts us to pray the Lord that there be many more married couples who can reveal in the holiness of their lives, the “great mystery” of spousal love, which originates in creation and is fulfilled in the union of Christ with his Church (cf. Eph. 5:22-33). Like every path of holiness, yours too, dear married couples, is not easy. We know how many families in these cases are tempted to discouragement. I am particularly referring to those who are going through the sad event of separation; I am thinking of those who must face illness and those who are suffering the premature death of their spouse or of a child. In these situations, one can bear a great witness to fidelity in love, which is purified by having to pass through the crucible of suffering. Dear married couples, do not be overcome by hardship: the grace of the Sacrament supports you and helps you *constantly to raise your arms to heaven*, like Moses. At the same time, I ask all families to *hold up the arms of the Church*, so that she may never fail in her mission of interceding, consoling, guiding and encouraging (*Homily in the Holy Mass of the Beatification of the couple Luigi Beltrame Quattrocchi and Maria Corsini*, October 21, 2001).

May the Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of the Church, also be the Mother of “the Church of the home.” Thanks to her motherly aid, may each Christian family really become a “little Church” in which the mystery of the Church of Christ is mirrored and given new life. May she, the Handmaid of the Lord, be an example of humble and generous acceptance of the will of God. May she, the Sorrowful Mother at the foot of the Cross, comfort the sufferings and dry the tears of those in distress because of the difficulties of their families. May Christ the Lord, the Universal King, the King of Families, be present in every Christian home as He was at Cana, bestowing light, joy, serenity and strength (*Familiaris Consortio*, 86).

Astana, May 13, 2018, Memory of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Fatima

Q & A

Dear Readers,

This is really your column, for you direct it by the questions you send me. I want to encourage you to do so for many reasons, not the least of which being that without your questions, there is no column!


Here are a few simple notes to keep in mind:

1. Your letter may deal with any topic connected to the Church and her theology; you may “piggy-back” on previous questions to seek further clarification or take issue with a response I have given.
2. It is necessary that you keep your inquiry or comment to a single page.
3. To qualify for inclusion in the column, a letter must be signed, however, you may ask that your name and/or address not be published—and that will be honored.
4. Due to the volume of mail, it is impossible to respond personally to our inquirers. Obviously, not all letters can or will be used. Look for a reply in a future issue and realize that a response may take several months to make its way into print.

Questions may be emailed to: fstravinkas@hotmail.com or sent by regular mail to:

The Catholic Response • 601 Buhler Court • Pine Beach, NJ 08741
Thanks for your continued interest and support.

Father Peter Stravinkas, Editor & Publisher



The Rubrics of the Mass

Rev. Peter M. J. Stravinkas

This is a “guided tour” of the Sunday Mass, with rubrics and explanations for all who participate in the Sacred Liturgy. It addresses the most frequently asked questions about options, deviations, etc.

Perfect
for
RCIA Classes

No. Books	Price	S&H	Total
100	50.00	6.00	56.00
50	35.00	5.00	40.00
10	10.00	4.00	14.00
5	6.00	3.00	9.00
1	1.50	1.50	3.00

Living in the Present

Q. My wife drives me crazy. What else is new, you say. Seriously, all her focus is either on regretting the past or fear for the future. As a result, she never lives in the present. Can you suggest something to help her out of this morass?

A. Your wife is not alone in this approach to life. Quite recently, one of the friars at EWTN, Father Patrick Russell (a very talented young priest), preached on this problem. Here are his reflections, worth pondering:

St. James tells us in the First Reading today: “You have no idea what your life will be like tomorrow” (4:14). These words are a good reminder to live in the present moment. When speaking about the present moment, Mother Angelica would say: “We have to ask God: What are You calling me to do now, in this Present Moment? Not yesterday or tomorrow, but right now. God’s will is manifested to us in the duties and experiences of the Present Moment. We have only to accept them and try to be like Jesus in them” (*Mother Angelica’s Little Book of Life Lessons and Everyday Spirituality*, 27).

Too often we tend to dwell on the past with feelings of guilt and resentment or on the future with anxiety about what difficulties may come our way. It certainly is good to have contrition for our past sins and to plan accordingly for the future, but we tend to dwell too much on them, which can lead to missing the graces and opportunities that the Lord gives us right now to live out our call to holiness. God might be asking us to do something specific today, but because of our excessive concern for the past or the future, we can miss what we are asked to do today.

Archbishop Fulton Sheen suggested that we leave our past to divine mercy and entrust our future to God’s loving providence. He said as well that “all unhappiness (when there is no immediate cause for sorrow) comes from excessive concentration on the past or from extreme preoccupation with the future” (*From the Angel’s Blackboard: The Best of Fulton Sheen*, 4). He then suggested two remedies that Our Lord Himself gave us – confession and living in the present moment. The Sacrament of Confession, which Our Lord instituted on Easter Sunday evening after He had risen from the dead, blots out our sins and gives us hope and strength for the future. Our Lord also wants us to live in the present moment. He said this when he taught: “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day’s own trouble be sufficient for the day” (Mt. 6:34). In other words, we don’t need to worry about tomorrow because we have enough

of a full plate today. Worry and excessive concern over the past or the future does us no good. They are not productive and can actually drain us. They don't fix or resolve our problems and they actually take away our peace.

In his novel entitled *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis tells of a devil, Screwtape, who teaches his nephew, Wormwood, how to tempt and lead souls away from God. One of the techniques he teaches is to tempt the humans to live either in the past or in the future. The main objective is to pull them away from thinking about eternity with God and living in the present moment (Letter XV). However, God desires that we live in the present, right now, and to think and meditate on eternity, rather than to worry excessively about the troubles tomorrow might bring. Even in the "Our Father," Our Lord teaches us to pray "give us *this* day our daily bread." God will provide for us today and give us the graces that we need. Let's try not to miss the opportunities He is giving us today.

Grave abuse

Q. I have a non-Catholic cousin who receives Holy Communion during our family Masses. The priest is unaware of this. I have given him the holy chalice though I always feel guilty in doing so. Am I committing a sin?

A. If you are aware of this fact, surely the rest of the family is, too. Where are they? Why have they said nothing, either? This is a grave abuse and should be stopped immediately. If your cousin is invincibly ignorant of the Church's position on this, be very gentle and kind in bringing this to his attention, explaining carefully why the Church holds what she does. The priest should be informed as well, and let's hope that he sees the problem for what it is.

Basic civility

Q. My neighbor is a barber; he is also a Lutheran. This past spring, the barber was invited to the ordination of one of his customers. He knew he would not be able to attend because of his work, but asked me what would be an appropriate gift. I suggested money, so that he could buy personal things since all his other needs would be taken care of. He sent the new priest a check; the check was cashed, but the new priest never thanked my neighbor in any way. What can I tell my neighbor about this?

A. There is no excuse for bad manners in anyone, let alone a newly ordained priest. In my experience, I find Catholic people most tolerant of the foibles of their clergy, but two areas seem to rouse the greatest resentment: unanswered phone calls and failure

to send thank-you notes. Pope John Paul II, in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, his apostolic exhortation on the formation of priests, talks about the importance of candidates for the priesthood having what he calls certain fundamental “human” qualities, long before we endeavor to develop any supernatural dimensions – on the presumption that, in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, “grace builds on nature.” Basic civility is one of those characteristics, in my judgment. The most you can do is apologize to your Lutheran friend for the behavior of the new priest; if you know the priest, you should likewise bring it to his attention in a kindly but firm fashion.

Pushing it a bit?

Q. I would like to have your explanation about the following situation going on in our family. My third son, Charles, has been married for ten years, outside the sanction of the Church, but has the desire to return to Mass and Holy Communion. In the process of talking to our parish priest, the pastor gave Charlie collection envelopes to start supporting the church. That I know is one of the precepts of the Church. The problem is this: I have a niece whose situation is the same as Charlie’s (married outside the Church), goes to Mass every Sunday, would like to contribute, but wants her envelopes listed in her married name (civil), but our parish priest agreed only to give her envelopes in her single name. Her grandmother, who is my sister, has been in disagreement about this situation, who thinks our priest is too strict with the young ones, causing them to leave the Faith. Is there really any solution to this matter? My sister thinks the female should be treated just the same as the male. This situation may seem like something trivial, but our Catholic theology must have an answer.

A. While I don’t think the ministers of the Church ought ever to appear to countenance an irregular marital union, my hunch is that the priest in question may be pushing the issue a bit too far, with the potential for counterproductive results. Suppose the same couple had children in the parish school. Would he expect the teachers to refer to the mother of these children by her maiden name? Perhaps I am a somewhat sensitive on this issue because, as some readers know from my previous revelations, my parents were not married in the Church and the Sisters and priests never treated them with anything but total respect and dignity – which eventually led to their “fixing” their situation.

The fact that there is an obvious desire to do as much as possible to live a Catholic life, just short of the whole nine yards, is reason to rejoice – not to punish.

By the way, I don't know why you think there is/was a sexual double-standard here; nothing in your narrative suggests that.

Double dipping

Q. Two years ago, our son and his wife (who is not Catholic) had their daughter baptized, first at his wife's church in the morning and then again at the Catholic church in the afternoon. Was this wrong? This just doesn't seem right to me. I think our granddaughter was baptized by her mother's stepfather, who is a minister. I wonder if the priest knew of the first ceremony. Everything tells me this was wrong. If so, would you explain why?

A. Your Catholic intuition is very strong and very good. To repeat a sacrament that confers an indelible character – for example, Baptism – is wrong and sacrilegious; the second ceremony is, in reality, but a simulation of a sacrament. If the priest knew about the earlier rite, he should not have performed the second; in all likelihood, he was kept in the dark.

Intercommunion

Q. I have a son who left the Catholic Church and joined the Anglican Church because, for one thing, he could get a job there. (He's also on this third wife.) He later came home for a visit and mentioned he'd like to go down to my parish church for Mass. I said something about the fact that he couldn't receive Communion, whereupon he gave me a long story about how in the Middle East it is considered quite acceptable to have intercommunion between Catholics and Anglicans (if they couldn't get to their own church). It was news to me, but I didn't want to be more Catholic than the Church, so I said nothing. The pastor went along with it (he had been in Jordan, an Arab country), but I never felt right about it. Then I came across, in a good Catholic magazine, the statement: "The Catholic Church does not allow intercommunion with Anglicans, while the Anglican Communion encourages the practice." It also quoted Pope John Paul II in *Ut Unum Sint* ("That All May Be One"): "For the sake of furthering ecumenism, these norms must be respected." So it looks as if we'd been had. The pastor may have made an honest mistake since he had been in Jordan. But my son has been in Jerusalem for the past thirty years, and he knows there's a Catholic church on every block and an Anglican church on every other one (and all the rest of the denominations, too). Can you give me some appropriate sources that will settle the matter once and for all?

A. The most obvious point to the entire discussion is your comment that just because something is possible in Jordan does not necessarily make it either possible or right in Vermont! It

sounds as though your son wants his cake and to eat it, too. This is immature. If he made a deliberate decision to leave the Catholic Church, he shouldn't try to cash in on his Catholic inheritance when convenient and to leave it aside when inconvenient.

Every missalette carries the Catholic discipline on this matter in plain English, stating not only the universal law of the Church, but also the specific application to the United States, enacted by our bishops' conference. That should settle it "once and for all," but I suspect it won't!

Funeral attendance

Q. My question is about a relative that I'm very close to. He was baptized and raised in the Catholic Church, but later was divorced. He remarried in the Lutheran Church and is now a member. Should this relative pass away and his funeral be held in the Lutheran Church, as a Catholic can I attend his funeral?

A. Certainly, your attendance at this funeral would not encourage his ongoing membership in the Lutheran Church! Therefore, seriously, I would not hesitate to go and pray for the repose of his soul.

Pure spirits

Q. I was having a discussion with a Baptist about angels. He believes all angels are men. When I hear about angels, I always think more of women, though it could be either a man or a woman. Can you answer this question for me?

A. Angelic beings are pure spirits – that is, beings possessed of intellect and free will, but no bodies. On that very count, then, they are asexual. When they are deputed by Almighty God to represent Him to men, they take on human form and, inasmuch as the three angels whose names we know are masculine, it seems that perceptions of them are along those lines. For a fuller and authoritative discussion of angels, see the Catechism of the Catholic Church (nn. 327-336).

Getting your money's worth

Q. I am aware of the so-called evolving teaching of the Church as regards capital punishment. I believe in the necessity of having an ultimate penalty. I am, however, greatly outnumbered on this issue in my department. Does the Catholic Church still uphold the right of the State to execute felons? If not, I need to submit my intellect to the teaching of the Church. Further, if the Church no longer upholds this right of the State, would not that constitute a change in the teaching of the Church? I tell my students that the Church's teaching on abortion is unchanged and

will remain so for as long as the Church proclaims the truth. I am confused on this one.

Am I correct when I state to my students that for the individual Catholic, “salvation is not assured”? When Protestants preach about one’s assurance of salvation, aren’t they really committing the sin of presumption?

I was reading a biblical commentary by a rabbi. One of the interesting comments was: “The Bible is not a book for children.” Would you agree? I run into difficulties trying to explain the crucifixion to my four-year-old daughter, along with floods and plagues, etc.

I was reading some back issues of *The Catholic Response* and was glad to see your response concerning the Eucharist’s being the “risen” Body of Our Lord. However, how does that fit with the teaching that the Last Supper was the first Eucharist, there having been no Resurrection yet? My intellect is curious here; I mean no disrespect.

Last, I remember being taught not to chew the Eucharist. I think it looks tacky, almost disrespectful. I want my eldest daughter to be correct, as her time for First Communion is fast approaching.

A. The first thing I would say is that your multiple questions indicate a sure desire to get your money’s worth out of your subscription!

So, first, the Church still holds that the state has the right to exact the death penalty. However, Pope John Paul II hemmed that in by numerous qualifiers, such that capital punishment would be deemed almost always immoral. For a detailed discussion of this, refer to *Evangelium Vitae* (“The Gospel of Life”) and to the revisions thus necessitated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (found in the supplement).

Salvation is assured for no one, and anyone who claims to have such assurance flies in the face of St. Paul’s warning about our need to work out our salvation “with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12), and – even more to the point: “Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor 10:12).

The Bible is the kind of work into which one grows. Certain passages are more immediately comprehensible than others. That doesn’t mean it’s not for children at all, just that one should be judicious in introducing little ones to the Sacred Text. Concepts of evil, divine retribution and the like are not easily explained, but sooner or later they need to be faced since they are integral to the full message of the Gospel.



The Last Supper by Sebastiano Ricci, c. 1713 – 1714

The Last Supper, we can say, was Act One of a two-act drama, with the Lord's crucifixion on Calvary as Act Two. You have undoubtedly noticed that Christ's words of Eucharistic institution have future verbs: "will" be given up; "will" be poured out. Furthermore, St. John's approach to the Paschal Mystery would have us understand that on Calvary, Jesus' death, resurrection, and communication of the Holy Spirit happened simultaneously, which is entirely in keeping with the notion that God lives outside time and in an eternal present. Therefore, a linear method of interpretation does not do justice to the Johannine presentation of events "will" be given up; "will" be poured out.

Finally, there is nothing inherently wrong with chewing the Lord's Body, but it should be done gracefully and respectfully.

Health concerns?

Q In your negativity about Communion under both kinds, you have often alleged that there are "health concerns" that should be considered. Our diocesan worship office says that is a lot of nonsense. Can you back up your statement with some medical facts?

A First of all, I am not at all negative about Communion under both kinds by intinction. Nor am I doctrinally concerned about Communion from the chalice.

I am pastorally concerned for several reasons, which I have aired frequently. The health risk, however, is not my personal "take" on the situation; it comes from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

Back in 1985, when the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy was pushing hard for both species at all times, concerns were raised about the risks involved. Some people had even expressed fear of the spread of AIDS from this method of Communion distribution/reception; that, of course, was unwarranted, given the fact that the disease cannot be transmitted by casual contact.

At any rate, after going through the various levels of risk, Dr. Donald Hopkins of the CDC concluded thus: "In summary, we cannot quantitate [sic] a risk for disease transmission by use of a common Communion cup, nor can we provide an absolute endorsement that the practice is safe." Hardly a rousing statement of "all clear," I'm sure you would agree.

Religious attire

Q. I have heard it stated that clerics must wear clerical garb when in public. Where can I find such statements? Also, where are nuns told to wear their habits?

A. In 1994, the Congregation for the Clergy came out with its Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests. In n. 66, we find the following: "The attire [of a priest], when it is not the cassock, must be different from the manner in which the laity dress...A cleric's failure to use this proper ecclesiastical attire could manifest a weak sense of his identity as one consecrated to God." This merely reinforces what was already contained in the Code of Canon Law (c. 284). In 1999, that same dicastery published *The Priest and the Third Christian Millennium*, with equally strong statements such as: "It is easy to understand the significance and pastoral role of the discipline concerning clerical garb, to which the priest should always conform since it is a public proclamation of his limitless dedication to the brethren and to the faithful in his service to Jesus Christ. The more society is marked by secularization, the greater the need for signs" (IV.3, emphasis added).

As for Religious (male and female alike), the Code of Canon Law deals with the matter thus: "Religious are to wear the habit of the institute made according to the norm of proper law as a sign of their consecration and as a testimony of poverty" (c. 669). Numerous other documents from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life and the Holy Father (including the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata* [on the consecrated life and its mission in the Church and in the world], n. 25) have called for the same, apparently to no avail in all too many instances.

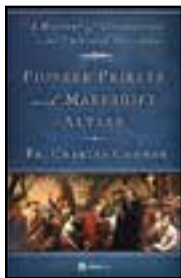
Short Reviews by the Editor



Robert L. Anello, *Minor Setback or Major Disaster? The Rise and Demise of Minor Seminaries in the United States, 1958-1983*. St. Louis: En Route Books and Media, 2018. 591 pp; \$35.

Father Anello has produced what may be considered the definitive work on high school seminaries in the United States. I wrote an extensive pre-publication review of this work and indicated that I thought it was a most needed

point of departure for any serious conversations about youthful priestly vocations. I stand by that assessment and recommend it to bishops, formation directors and any others concerned about the dearth of young men responding to the call of Christ.



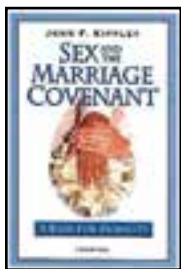
Charles Connor, *Pioneer Priests and Makeshift Altars: A History of Catholicism in the Thirteen Colonies*. Irondale, Alabama: EWTN Publishing, 2017. 259 pp; \$19.95.

Devotees of EWTN will recognize the name of the present author and know in advance that they will be treated to an informative and enjoyable tour through the topic at hand. Father Connor is a long-time friend and a worthy descendant of the

dean of American church historians, Monsignor John Tracy Ellis.

The “Catholic” aspect of the American founding is generally lost in the fog – deliberate or ignorant – of most mainstream tellings of the tale. This work fills in that regrettable gap.

*In keeping with our overarching theme for this issue, namely, a biblical and Catholic view of human sexuality in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Blessed Paul VI’s **Humanae Vitae**, we offer the following works for reading or re-reading:*



John F. Kippley, *Sex and the Marriage Covenant*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005 (second edition). 411 pp; \$17.95.

The author is best known for his work with the Couple to Couple League. This volume is a *sine qua non* for a proper context in which to interpret Paul VI’s encyclical. It belongs in the library of every priest and anyone involved with marriage preparation and ongoing service to married couples.



Paul M. Quay, S.J., *The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality* (revised and expanded edition). San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017. 233 pp; \$17.95.

This is an ideal companion to the work of John Kippley. Father Quay deals with the scriptural foundations for a wholesome theology of the human person, human sexuality and the complementarity of the sexes, most clearly lived out in fidelity to the perennial principles of Catholic morality.



Obiannuju Ekeocha, *Target Africa: Ideological Neocolonialism in the Twenty-first Century*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 219 pp; \$16.95.

The author is a Nigerian woman (a biomedical scientist by trade), who has undertaken a mission to defend the integrity of human life and sexuality on the African continent. All who have heard her speak – at conferences or before the United Nations – have been impressed by her command of the issues and the passion of her convictions.

The pressure for African nations (and others around the world) to exchange deep-seated values for financial assistance is reprehensible and has been consistently condemned by the Church, including by Pope Francis on numerous occasions. Miss Ekeocha must be pleased with the recent defunding of International Planned Parenthood by the Trump Administration, which has already resulted in the closure of numerous PP “clinics” around Africa.

An excellent “read” and a true eye-opener to the malevolence of these neocolonial powers.

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