

Los Pequeños Pepper

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We are an Archdiocesan-wide Catholic lay organization committed to a charitable defense of the Catholic Faith by means of education, communication, and prayer. We are devoted to the Roman Catholic Magisterium, the Holy Father, and to the bishops and clergy in union with him. Our members believe what the Church believes and we promote what the Church teaches. To this end, we believe that no individual, whether cleric or lay person, has the right to alter the substance of the gospel message or moral truths which have been inerrantly and infallibly held by the Catholic Church since Her founding.

Interview with Bishop Athanasius Schneider

Rorate Caeli discusses the “Profession of the Immutable Truths” and communion for “divorced and remarried” with Bishop Schneider, auxiliary of Astana, Kazakhstan

RORATE CAELI (RC): Your Excellency has personally been out in front in terms of restoration of the traditional liturgy for many years. Now Your Excellency, Archbishop Peta and Archbishop Lenga have come out publicly, and forcibly, in defense of marriage in the aftermath of *Amoris Laetitia*. Why did the three of you decide now was the time to respond?

BISHOP ATHANASIUS SCHNEIDER (BAS): After the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*, several bishops and Bishops’ Conferences started to issue “pastoral” norms regarding the so-called “divorced and remarried”. One has to say that, for a Catholic, there is no divorce because a valid sacramental bond of a ratified and consumed marriage is absolutely indissoluble and even the bond of a natural marriage is per se indissoluble as well. Furthermore, for a Catholic, there is only one valid marriage: being that his legitimate spouse is still alive. Therefore, one cannot speak of a “re-marriage” in this case.

The expression “divorced and remarried” is consequently deceptive and misleading. Since this expression is commonly known, we use it only in quotation marks and with the previous remark “so-called”. The mentioned pastoral norms regarding the so-called “divorced and remarried” — norms masked with a rhetoric bordering on sophism — foresee ultimately the admittance of the “divorced and remarried” to Holy Communion without the requirement of the indispensable and Divinely established condition that they may not violate their sacred marriage bond through their habitual sexual relationship with a person who is not their legitimate spouse. A certain peak has been reached in this process of implicit recognition of divorce in the life of the Church when Pope Francis ordered the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, his letter of approval of similar norms which he issued to the bishops of the Pastoral Region of Buenos Aires, to be published.

This act was followed by a declaration that this papal approval would belong to the authentic Magisterium of the Church. In view of such pastoral norms which contradict Divine Revelation with its absolute disapproval of divorce and contradict also the teaching and sacramental practice of the infallible Ordinary and Universal Magisterium of the Church, we were forced by our conscience, as successors of the Apostles, to raise our voice and to reiterate the immutable doctrine and practice of the Church regarding the indissolubility of the sacramental marriage.

RC: Has the Kazakh conference officially released an interpretation of *Amoris Laetitia*? Do they plan to do so, or does this letter mean that the conference believes *Amoris Laetitia* cannot be understood in an orthodox way or is in any way compatible with the Catechism and with Scripture and Tradition?

BAS: The text of the “Profession of truths” is not a document of the Bishop’s Conference of Kazakhstan, but a document only of those bishops who signed it. Our Bishop’s Conference considered it not necessary to issue pastoral norms as an interpretation of AL. Even though in our society the plague of divorce is widespread, a consequence of 70 years of Communist materialism, and we have also in our parishes cases of so-called “divorced and remarried”, yet the same “divorced and remarried” would not dare to ask to be admitted to Holy Communion, since the awareness and conscience of sin is, thanks be to God, very deep routed in the souls, and even in the civil society.

In our country people commit sin as elsewhere, but our people still acknowledge that sin is sin, and therefore for such sinners there is hope for conversion and Divine mercy. It would be for our people — and even for the so-called “divorced and remarried” among them — a kind of blasphemy to demand access to Holy Communion while continuing to cohabit with a person who is not their legitimate spouse. Therefore, our Bishops’ Conference did



Bishop Athanasius Schneider, auxiliary of Astana, Kazakhstan

not see the necessity to issue relevant norms.

RC: We've had the famous *dubia* sent to the Pope and a filial correction – mostly by laymen – sent as well. Neither have garnered a response. However, many feel Francis has already responded in a sense, when he officially endorsed the Buenos Aires bishops' apparently heretical instruction to the divorced, remarried and still cohabitating. Should we still expect anything more from Francis on this matter?

BAS: The Buenos Aires bishops' instructions do not express directly a heresy. Yet they allow, in individual cases, "divorced and remarried" people to receive Holy Communion in spite of the fact that they do not want to stop sexual relationships with their non-conjugal partner. In this case the mentioned pastoral instructions deny in practice, and hence indirectly, the Divinely revealed truth of the indissolubility of marriage. The sad circumstance is that the Pope approved such instructions. By this way the Pope gave, in my opinion, directly an answer to the first point and indirectly to the four other points of the *dubia*. We can only expect through our appeals, prayers and sacrifices, that Pope Francis may answer in a most unequivocal manner to the five points of the *dubia* according to the relevant teaching of the Ordinary and Universal infallible Magisterium.

RC: The threat to the Faithful has been clear, not only since *Amoris Laetitia* was promulgated, but just from the discussions alone at the synods. The confusion it has all caused cannot be questioned. However, much like the usefulness of *Humanae Vitae* was lessened due to how long it took for it to be published, is all this now too late to stop the damage, especially when the Pope has now officially given permission for some divorced and remarried to receive Holy Communion?

BAS: We have to bear in mind that the Church is not in our hands, and not even in the hands of the Pope, but in the almighty hands of Christ, and therefore we cannot say that all this is now too late to stop the damage. We can also apply the following affirmation of Saint Paul to our situation inside the Church: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20). God had permitted this current extraordinary doctrinal and moral confusion in the Church for the aim that, after this crisis, the truth will shine brighter and the Church will become spiritually more beautiful, especially in the married couples, in the families and in the popes.

RC: We have heard now, for over a year, that a formal correction coming from the cardinals is imminent, yet nothing has happened. What do you believe is the hold up?



BAS: In the face of the current temporal and partial eclipse of the function of the Papal Magisterium concerning concretely the defense and practical enforcement of the indissolubility the marriage, the members of the episcopal and of the cardinalitial colleges have to assist the Pope in this Magisterial duty through public professions of the immutable truths which the Ordinary and Universal Magisterium — that means what all the Popes and the entire episcopate during all times – have taught concerning the doctrine and the sacramental practice of the marriage.

RC: If a formal correction is made by a number of cardinals, and Francis continues to officially approve of bishops' conferences giving Holy Communion to some divorced and remarried, then what?

BAS: There exists the following principle of the traditional Catholic doctrine since the first centuries: "*Prima sedes a nemine iudicatur*", i.e., the first episcopal chair in the Church (the chair of the Pope) cannot be judged by anybody. When bishops remind the Pope respectfully of the immutable truth and discipline of the Church, they don't judge hereby the first chair of the Church, instead they behave themselves as colleagues and brothers of the Pope. The attitude of the bishops towards the Pope has to be collegial, fraternal, not servile and always supernaturally respectful, as it stressed the Second Vatican Council (especially in the documents *Lumen gentium* and *Christus Dominus*). One has to continue to profess the immutable faith and pray still more for the Pope and, then, only God can intervene and He will do this unquestionably.

RC: For the typical Catholic, who goes to Mass but maybe doesn't follow the politics of the Church like *Rorate* readers do, the casual Catholics who hear the Supreme Pontiff saying numerous confusing things over the past few years, things that appear contrary (hopefully) to what they've been taught their entire lives, what does Your Excellency say to them? And how do serious Catholics push back when, at every turn, they're asked by modernists if they think they're "more Catholic than the Pope"?

BAS: First, these faithful have to continue to read and study the immutable Catechism, and especially the great doctrinal documents of the Church. Such documents are theme here, e.g., the Decrees of the Councils of Trent about the sacraments; the encyclicals *Pascendi* from Pius X.; *Casti connubii* from Pius XI; *Humani generis* from Pius XII; *Humanae vitae* from Paul VI; the *Credo of the People of God* from Paul VI; the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* from John Paul II; and his Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*. These documents do not reflect a personal and short-lived meaning of a Pope or of a pastoral synod. Instead, these documents reflect and reproduce the infallible Ordinary and Universal Magisterium of the Church.

Second, they have to bear in mind that the Pope is not the creator of the truth, of the faith and of the sacramental discipline of the Church. The Pope and the entire Magisterium “is not above the Word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on” (Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, 10). The First Vatican Council taught that the charism of the ministry of the successors of Peter “does not mean that they might make known some new doctrine, but that, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, they might religiously guard and faithfully expound the revelation or deposit of faith transmitted by the apostles” (*Pastor aeternus*, chap. 4).

Third, the Pope cannot be the focal point of the daily life of the faith of a Catholic faithful. The focal point must instead be Christ. Otherwise, we become victims of an insane pope-centrism or of a kind of popaltry, an attitude which is alien to the tradition of the Apostles, of the Church Fathers and of the greater tradition of the Church. The so called “ultramontanism” of the 19th and 20th centuries reached its peak in our days and created an insane pope-centrism and popaltry. To mention just an example: There had been in Rome in the end of the 19th century a famous Monsignor who led different pilgrim groups to the Papal audiences. Before he let them enter to see and hear the Pope, he said to them: “Listen carefully to the infallible words which will come out of the mouth of the Vicar of Christ”. Surely such an attitude is a pure caricature of the Petrine ministry and contrary to the doctrine of the Church. Nevertheless, even in our days, not so few Catholics, priests and bishops show substantially the same caricatural attitude towards the sacred ministry of the successor of Peter.

The true attitude towards the Pope according to the Catholic tradition has to be always with sane moderation, with intelligence, with logic, with common sense, with the spirit of faith and of course, also, with heartfelt devotion. Yet there has to be a balanced synthesis of all these characteristics. We hope that after the current crisis the Church will reach a more balanced and sane attitude towards the person of the Pope and toward his sacred and indispensable ministry in the Church.✠



By the same token, the new and stringent Ultramontanism on the Catholic Left - in which even the mildest questions about how things are working in this pontificate are denounced as treasonous disloyalty - is an affront to the open conversation for which the pope [FRANCIS] has called.

— George Weigel —

The term *ultramontanism* has meant varied things over the centuries but is here used to decry an excessive (inflated beyond the boundaries of Church teaching) emphasis on papal authority.

The theological importance of *Humanae Vitae* and its prophecy for our time

Address delivered in October 2017 at the Voice of the Family's conference, "Humanae Vitae: Setting the Context" which marked the approach of the 50th anniversary year of the encyclical letter Humanae Vitae.

By Fr Serafino M. Lanzetta

1. *Humanae vitae* has faced acute problems. *Humanae vitae* (HV), Pope Paul VI's Encyclical on the solemn duty of the transmission of human life, spoke loud and clear at a troubled historical and cultural moment. June 25, 1968, the day on which Paul VI signed the Encyclical, marked the beginning of a major controversy in the Church. One objection put to the Magisterium was that pronouncements could not be made on moral questions beyond the scope of Divine Revelation, for example the natural moral law, in particular artificial birth control, that is, contraception. However, HV 4 states from the outset that it is beyond dispute – as moreover taught by Paul VI's prede-

cessors – “that Jesus Christ, when He communicated His divine power to Peter and the other Apostles and sent them to teach all nations His commandments, constituted them as the authentic guardians and interpreters of the whole moral law, not only, that is, of the law of the Gospel but also of the natural law. For the natural law, too, declares the will of God, and its faithful observance is necessary for men’s eternal salvation”.

Some theologians were also of the opinion that, if the principle of totality^[1] (a part in relation to a larger whole) was extended to the moral sphere of matrimony, it could be claimed that the procreative purpose belongs to the entirety of conjugal life and is therefore unaffected by individual acts intended to prevent conception. Individual matrimonial acts would hence be sterilizing in material terms, but fertile in formal terms, invoking right intention and separating fertility from an order defined as merely bodily and material, linking it instead to a rational, and hence superior, order. Reliance was in fact placed on a morality of effects and consequences combined with convenience, an approach whose grave repercussions continue to this day.

The doctrinal vision presented by HV rests on two principles, abused to favor artificial birth control, but explained by Paul VI in the light of the Revelation as a whole. These two principles are: a) human love and b) responsible parenthood.



A sterile relationship

a) It appeared in fact that human love, said by many to have been restricted by *Casti Connubi* because it focused on marriage whose sole purpose was the transmission of life, was an alternative approach to a static notion of “nature”, favoring instead the dynamic of the “person” and “communion”. HV 8 teaches that “husband and wife, through that mutual gift of themselves, which is specific and exclusive to them alone, develop that union of two persons in which they perfect one another, cooperating with God in the generation and rearing of new lives

b) Responsible parenthood, however, was not to be defined merely as the predominance of right judgment in the couple’s openness to fertility, but also as a decision either to have additional children or “for serious reasons and with due respect to natural law, not to have additional children for either a certain or an indefinite period of time” (HV 10). Further clarifying the limits of responsible parenthood, HV 10 sheds new light on true human love which guides a couple, stating that parents: “are not free to act as they choose in the service of transmitting life, as if it were wholly up to them to decide what is the right course to follow. On the contrary, they are bound to ensure that what they do corresponds to the will of God the Creator. The very nature of marriage and its use makes His will clear, while the constant teaching of the Church spells it out”.

True human love unites parents and hence makes them capable of transmitting the gift of life; the gift of life is in turn an expression of human love. This will be important in avoiding a division between union and procreation (a binomial which remains indigestible). In fact, Paul VI was to observe in HV 11 – a significant magisterial step forward, in particular from the Second Vatican Council and *Gaudium et spes* (here authentically interpreted) and holding fast to Pius XI’s *Casti Connubi* – that “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”^[2].

Here, always with the primary aim of procreation, the truths of love and union are welded together. HV 12 further states, on the indivisibility of these two aspects, that: “This particular doctrine, often expounded by the magisterium of the Church, is based on 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. [...] And if each of these essential qualities, the unitive and the procreative, is preserved, the use of marriage fully retains its sense of true mutual love and its ordination to the supreme responsibility of parenthood to which man is called”.

This indivisibility leads us to reflect on the fact that the binomial – first expressed by Paul VI and linking *Gaudium et spes* to *Casti Connubi* as a result of a reappraisal of the important contribution of human and sacramental love to marriage – brings together *union* and *procreation* in the same moral principle, in fact showing it to be a *procreative union*. Marriage makes a couple one in love with the aim of begetting new life. Hence, the matrimonial union is intended for procreation and procreation perfects the union in a circular relationship of truth and love: the truth of the union finds its completion in love which begets new life and the fertility of love is in turn built on the indissoluble unity of the couple; if this were not the case, the love would be false, a deceit. As there is no procreation without union, so there is no union without procreation. So too love and fertility go hand in hand and are a reflection of love and unity.

As correctly noted by Stephan Goertz and Caroline Wittin in a recent book of collected essays entitled *Amoris laetitia: Un punto di svolta per la teologia morale? (Amoris laetitia: A turning point for moral theology?)*, invoking HV 12, “contraception is no longer only *contrary to nature*, but also *contrary to love*”^[3].

2. To what extent does HV interpret and authentically complete *Gaudium et spes* while holding fast to *Casti Connubi*? To begin this brief excursus, we must refer to the doctrine of the blessings of marriage, formulated by Augustine, taken up by St. Thomas Aquinas^[4] and proclaimed in *Casti Connubi*. “All these – says St. Augustine – are the blessings which make marriage good: procreation, faith and the sacrament”.^[5] According to Pius XI, these three blessings constitute a splendid compendium of the entire doctrine on Christian marriage. However, *Casti Connubi* affirms that, of the three, procreation has prime place. Marriage is intended by the Creator and elevated by the Redeemer for the procreation of life and enrichment of the Holy Church through the begetting of new citizens, that is the procreation of “fellow citizens of the Saints and members of God’s household” (Eph 2:19).

The discourse on the blessings of marriage is joined and intertwined with the discourse on the purposes of marriage (and its properties): the primary purpose which is procreation and the secondary purpose which is mutual aid associated with the blessing of fidelity (*bona fidei*) and the allaying of concupiscence associated with the blessing of indissolubility (*bona sacramenti*). These precepts were originally formulated in the theology of Saint Isidore of Seville. The 1917 Code of Canon Law attaches importance to expression of the three purposes of marriage, primary and secondary (cf. Canon 1013, § 1), continuing a long-standing scholastic and controversialist tradition. The relevant theological works endorsed this approach adopted in Canon Law and formulated the discourse on the blessings of marriage on which *Casti Connubi* rests.

However, tension was frequently noted, having developed after *Casti Connubi*, between a vision of marriage as “an institution given by nature” and a vision of marriage as a “communion of persons” founded on conjugal love. This tension was said to have been triggered by the neoscholastic thinking which underlies Pius XI’s Encyclical on marriage, where the Encyclical states:

“This mutual molding of husband and wife, this determined effort to perfect each other, can in a very real sense, as the Roman Catechism teaches [ch. VIII, q. 13], be said to be the chief reason and purpose of matrimony, provided matrimony be looked at not in the restricted sense as instituted for the proper conception and education of the child, but more widely as the blending of life as a whole and the mutual interchange and sharing thereof”.^[6]

At Vatican II, there was a confrontation between two different motivations in the writing of *Gaudium et spes*, one defined as *institutionalist* and the other as *personalist*. The former, bolstered by the hierarchy of the purposes of marriage, continuously invoked Holy Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium, while the latter, rooted in the centrality of conjugal love, exhorted a broader interpretation of traditional and scriptural works on the three purposes of marriage, seeking the inclusion of love and sexuality in the original plan of the Creator, giving rise to the exigencies of marriage.

It is indeed opportune to note that, in *Casti Connubi*, Pius XI refers to the Catechism of the Council of Trent which, even at that date, placed an emphasis on love in marriage.^[7] For Pius XI, the love in married life which permeates all functions of conjugal life “holds pride of place in Christian marriage”.^[8] Indeed *Casti Connubi* perceives no opposition between nature and the communion of persons, that is between the natural/sacramental aspect of matrimony and the communion/personalist dimension. This division, arising from an absolutist interpretation of love, was deepened by the application of an unbalanced hermeneutic to *Gaudium et spes* (and the rejection of HV). However, it is equally true that the interpretation of the Constitution of the Church in the modern world in fact leans towards the personalism of love rather than the hierarchy of the purposes of marriage, placing greater emphasis on the former and neglecting the doctrine of the hierarchy of the purposes of marriage formulated at an earlier date.

In *Gaudium et spes* 47-52 one sees the clear imprint of the personalist position of the majority. An entire paragraph is dedicated to human love (47) and as, last but not least, noted by Goertz and Witting, “the category of ‘natural’ as an ethical criterion has been consciously dropped”.^[9] *Gaudium et spes* 48 affirms that: “By their very nature, the institution of matrimony itself and conjugal love are ordained for the procreation and education of children, and find in them their ultimate crown”. This is reiterated in paragraph 50. While it is hence emphasized that the intrinsic purpose (not the primary purpose, but the purpose deriving from matrimony as an “intimate partnership of life and conjugal love”, GS 48 reiterated in the 1985 Code of Canon Law, Canon 1055, § 1), is procreation, there is no longer mention of the fact that *each single conjugal act is, by its very nature, oriented towards procreation*, as stated in HV, in express reiteration of *Casti Connubi*. Only in a footnote to paragraph 51 of *Gaudium et spes* is the reader referred to the doctrine of *Casti Connubi* on the rules on birth control. It is added, again in note form, that problems requiring further and more careful consideration had been referred to an ad hoc Commission for study of the population, the family and the birth rate. Hence the Con-



The doctrine of the blessings of marriage, formulated by Augustine, taken up by St. Thomas Aquinas and proclaimed in *Casti Connubi* is authentically supported by *Humanae Vitae*

ciliar Magisterium offered no concrete solutions on the matter of birth regulation. As we well know, the study carried out by the Commission was to be preparatory to Pope Paul VI's Encyclical on human life.

What emerges from this brief excursus is significant: while HV fills the void left by *Gaudium et spes*, condemning contraception and establishing a proper understanding of the value of human love, associated with responsible parenthood and always open to the gift of life, it also harmoniously unites the two inseparable aspects of marriage, the unitive and the procreative (described in paragraph 291 of the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* as “reasons of the matrimonial union”, together with the *remedium concupiscentiae*). Therefore, the link between *Gaudium et spes* and *Casti Connubi* is restored, the virtualities of the latter are developed and the truth of conjugal love is planted in the soil of procreation in cooperation in the design of God, which is the purpose of each individual act of conjugal love. This therefore is once again a *procreative union*. For this reason, it is also expedient, in a discourse on Christian marriage, not to neglect the hierarchical purposes of matrimony, purposes to be continuously embedded in the vital and supreme discourse of procreation, likened to the Creator and the fertile love of Christ for his Bride. The unity of love of husband and wife finds its completion in procreation, even where this is naturally absent because love – from a consistently spiritual and supernatural standpoint – is, or is simply not, fertile.

3. *Amoris laetitia* as a means of overtaking HV? The Magisterial teaching of HV, which provides a clear definition of the immorality of all contraceptive practice, includes the following passage (paragraph 14):

“Similarly 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”.



The warning given to us by Paul VI is the risk of focusing – as we said at the outset – on a morality based on the “principle of totality” in order to reject the morality of each individual act, hence of the moral act as such. A morality of the person, understood to be in opposition to nature, in relation to the moral act in itself, in fact postulates the soundness of teleological ethical theories such as consequentialism and proportionalism, condemned by *Veritatis splendour*, but reappearing in force and gaining popularity.

HV could be overtaken in a context of teleological morality – referring to the ethical and moral content of *Amoris laetitia* (AL), as articulated by leading interpreters of that document – through the application of a consequentialist or proportionalist morality to the ends chosen, and hence to the intentions of anyone who elects to make a choice rather than refer to the moral object. In a world in which human actions are increasingly a blend of good and evil, the only means of adequately assessing the morality of an act is not based on the act itself, the end chosen, hence ascribed to the person choosing it, but instead on the aims desired based on a calculation of effects produced or a just proportion between the good to be thereby achieved and the evil to be thereby caused. As explained by John Paul II in *Veritatis splendour* 75:

“concrete kinds of behavior could be described as ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, without it being thereby possible to judge as morally ‘good’ or ‘bad’ the will of the person choosing them. In this way, an act which, by contradicting a universal negative norm, directly violates goods considered as ‘pre-moral’ could be qualified as morally acceptable if the intention of the subject is focused, in accordance with a ‘responsible’ assessment of the goods involved in the concrete action, on the moral value judged to be decisive in the situation.

The evaluation of the consequences of the action, based on the proportion between the act and its effects and between the effects themselves, would regard only the pre-moral order. The moral specificity of acts, that is their goodness or evil, would be determined exclusively by the faithfulness of the person to the highest values of charity and prudence, without this faithfulness necessarily being incompatible with choices contrary to certain particular moral precepts”.

Let us consider a concrete example. From a standpoint of “situational ethics”, in a situation of adultery (a pre-moral good), if the cohabitants are obliged to remain together for the good of the children and hence live as husband and wife to safeguard a more important good (the motive being charity and hence a moral good), the moral action would be good because there would be a satisfactory proportionate relationship between the good attained and the wrongful act tolerated. For this reason, the intention of the agent could not be judged to be good or bad and it would therefore no longer be possible to judge the behavior in itself, but merely in relation to the circumstances of the case. However, in a situation involving contraception, in which the moral good of the act in itself is eliminated due to the circumstances of that act (for example the need to safeguard the good of the family as a whole or other children), the moral action would be judged on the basis of a calculation of the effects produced or the proportionate relationship between the good effects and the bad effects, but in any event the morality of the act would no longer pertain to the person or persons choosing this behavior, but derive from a calculation based on the end attained. If the end is good because the chosen good inherent in it is, for example, the good of the family, contraception would be morally acceptable and the intention of the agent would be considered neutral and hence not open to judgment. Therefore the objectivity of the moral act *per se*, and hence of the divine precepts, including those which impose prohibitions *semper et pro semper*, is disregarded as futile or immaterial.

A morality such as this, which favors the intention and consequences of the act only, to the exclusion of the act itself, falls into the acceptance of “intrinsic evil”; these are acts whose object cannot be ordered to God because they radically contradict the good of the person created in His image, violating what is stated clearly in the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans (3:8): “It is not licit to do evil that good may come of it”.^[10]

A closer examination of AL reveals two paragraphs which lend themselves to interpretation in this direction. The first is AL 80, where it is affirmed that: “no genital act of husband and wife can refuse this [generative] meaning [here reference to HV 11-12 is made], even when for various reasons it may not always in fact beget a new life”.

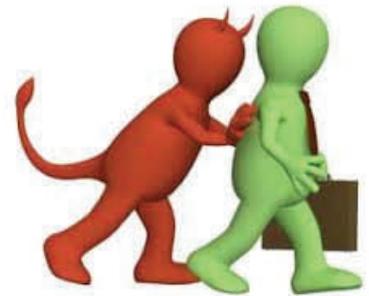
As noted by Goertz and Witting, “this is surely an ambiguous assertion because, from a ‘not licit’, one proceeds to a ‘not being able’. Is fertility of love to be understood here as transcending actual procreation?”^[11] These reasons are not identified, or even defined as “grave”, but merely as reasons, ultimately ascribable to the supreme reason of love which, in a more general interpretation, precedes, or is implicit in, procreation.

There is however a further text which paves the way for the convenient positioning of an invoked “shift in moral paradigm”, namely AL 82 which, quoting the *Relatio Synodi* states that: “We need to rediscover the message of the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of Blessed Pope Paul VI, which highlights the need to respect the dignity of the person in morally assessing methods of regulating birth...”.

In fact, nowhere in HV is any reference to the dignity of the person in an assessment of birth control methods to be found; instead it is said that the Church, in defending conjugal morality in its entirety and consistently condemning contraception as directly contrary to the unitive and procreative aspect of marriage, is thereby defending the dignity of husband and wife (cf. HV 18). However, quoting *Gaudium et spes* 50 in AL 222, Pope Francis underlines the *dignity* of the spouses, inviting them to form a right judgment before God regarding children to be brought into the world. He adds that the use of natural methods of birth control is to be encouraged.

According to an influential moral theologian, Eberhard Schockenhoff^[12] (theological adviser to a number of German prelates), who perceives in AL a “Paradigmenwechsel”, a “paradigm shift” (which has attracted many followers in Italy also), if we follow the exhortation of Pope Francis on love in the family, we would be “downplaying the sexuality” affirmed in recent centuries. The title chosen for AL invites us instead to gaze from on high at the playfulness, passion and ecstasy of love. In the opinion of Schockenhoff, AL 82 is particularly expressive of this shift in moral perspective. In his opinion, the text should be read in the light of the skeptical observations made by Pope Francis on the overestimation of a deductive moral theory which, from general principles, aims to arrive at a solution for all possible situations. From this Schockenhoff forms the impression that behind this text is “a tendency to relativize the teaching hitherto upheld of the absolute moral censure of artificial birth control”.

In other words, according to this German theologian, AL has paved the way for an overhaul of the moral doctrine on contraception, favoring a personalistic morality rather than the existing neo-scholastic or essentialist morality. Is this the guiding idea behind the new Commission, established to monitor the historical progress of HV and so identify possible links between this document and *Gaudium et spes* against *Casti Connubi*? Are we again to be confronted with the invocation of an absolute Conciliar Magisterium, contrary to the Church’s unwavering tradition and moreover developed homogeneously and definitively in its earliest beginnings by the Pontifical Magisterium of



Nothing is absolutely right or wrong...?

the last 50 years?

Furthermore, according to Schockenhoff, this would be a propitious moment to set aside a morality based upon the neo-scholastic moral act deriving from the ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas. From a morality of acts (and their object), we would proceed, as in AL, to a morality of the person. Hence the root of the problem of remarried divorced persons would be solved in a nutshell: if it ceases to be necessary to judge consciences, it then becomes necessary to ask whether the life shared by remarried divorced persons is loved in its moral value. If what matters

is the communion and personalism aspect, then, in the view of the German theologian, even a civil union should be seen as a bond and an entirely personal community of life. Therefore, to refer to ‘rupture’ of the abandoned partner will be simply absurd. This is the extreme conclusion to which arrival at the “paradigm shift” invoked would lead, resulting in substantial repercussions on life and procreation within marriage. This would mean that the love formerly proclaimed is trampled upon.



**Nicolas Poussin (1642):
Sacramental Marriage**

4. Conclusion Much effort is being exerted to generate an irreversible turnaround in moral theology, as encouraged by AL. It is hence suggested that AL should be read in the light of *Gaudium et spes* in order to disregard the (neo-scholastic and jusnaturalistic) norms set in stone in HV, which refer organically to *Casti Connubi* and the moral doctrine on marriage of the Tradition as a whole. It is proposed to disregard an ethic on the law or the norm to make reference to an ethic of the person or of love or of responsibility.

The moment of this disregard is important and programmatic. It is fed by characteristic prolixity, which in turn becomes a pedagogical method. In the opinion of another German theologian, H.K. Pottmeyer, prolixity (or verbos-

ity) is instrumental to a transition which it is desired to cause: “Through persuasive language, it is intended to obtain support for a new beginning, while at the same time demonstrating continuity”.^[13]

We should therefore focus increasingly on an analysis of the language employed and its proper usage in theology. What is at risk as a result of this reckless shift in paradigm is not just the morality of marriage, but morality itself, which would be reduced to good intentions. However, our stance is such that the only words we utter are “Yes for Yes” or “No for No”. Whatever goes beyond this comes from evil. (cf. Mt 5:37).✠

Notes

[1] This principle was formulated with reference to the matter of organ transplants, as developed by Pius XII. According to this principle, respect should always be given to oneself and others, as members of the human community regarded as *an organic unity of persons, distinct from one another*.

[2] This is the central statement, after making reference to the natural law, whose rule is inserted in the doctrine revealed by God: «[...] *quilibet matrimonii usus ad vitam humanam procreandam per se destinatus permaneat*». HV here holds fast to *Casti Connubi*: «[...] *quemlibet matrimonii usum, in quo exercendo, actus, de industria hominum, naturali sua vitae procreandae vi destituatur, Dei et naturae legem infringere, et eos qui tale quid commiserint gravis noxae labe commaculati*, AAS XXII (1930) 560.

[3] S. Goertz – C. Witting (edited by), *Amoris laetitia: un punto di svolta per la teologia morale?* San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo 2017 (in German: *Amoris laetitia – Wendepunkt für die Moraltheologie*, Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau 2016), p. 27.

[4] Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, Supplement, q. 49.

[5] St. Augustine, *De bono coniug.*, chap. 24, no. 32.

[6] In AAS XXII (1930) 548-549.

[7] The Catechism of the Council of Trent (par. 290) gives the following definition of matrimony: “The conjugal union of man and woman, contracted between two qualified persons, which obliges them to live together throughout life”.

[8] In AAS XXII (1930) 547-548: «[...] *ex coniugali scilicet amore, qui omnia coniugalis vitae officia pervadit et quemdam tenet in christiano coniugio principatum nobilitatis*».

[9] S. Goertz – C. Witting (edited by), *Amoris laetitia: un punto di svolta per la teologia morale?*, cit. p. 25.

[10] *Veritatis splendor* 79 teaches: “One must therefore reject the thesis, characteristic of teleological and proportionalist theories, which holds that it is impossible to qualify as morally evil according to its species – its ‘object’ – the deliberate choice of certain kinds of behaviour or specific acts, *apart* from a consideration of the intention for which the choice is made or the totality of the foreseeable consequences of that act for all persons concerned”. Paragraph 81 adds: “In teaching the existence of intrinsically evil acts, the Church accepts the teaching of Sacred Scripture. The Apostle Paul emphatically states: ‘Do not be deceived: neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the Kingdom of God’ (1 Cor 6:9-10)”. Lastly, *Veritatis splendor* 80 quotes HV 14, in so doing ratifying its magisterial authority on matter of intrinsic evil acts with direct reference to contraception. Therefore, the Encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, in reiterating the teaching of HV (in the light of the magisterial tradition as a whole) and invoking it as an authority on this matter, allows us to hold HV to be *definitive magisterial teaching* on contraception.

[11] S. Goertz – C. Witting (edited by), *Amoris laetitia: un punto di svolta per la teologia morale?*, cit. p. 57.

[12] See his essay *Traditionsbruch oder notwendige Weiterbildung. Zwei Lesarten des Nachsynodalen Schreibens “Amoris laetitia”*, published in «*Stimme der Zeit*» 3 (2017) 147-158. Also a digital version is available: www.stimmen-derzeit.de/zeitschrift/archiv/beitrag_details?k_beitrag=4797115&k_produkt=None. We will make reference to this essay in its digital version.

[13] H.J. Pottmeyer, «Von einer neuen Phase der Rezeption des Vaticanum II. Zwanzig Jahre Hermeneutik des Konzils», in H.J. Pottmeyer – G. Alberigo – J.P. Jossua (edited by), *Die Rezeption des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, Düsseldorf 1986, p. 48, cit. in S. Goertz – C. Witting (edited by), *Amoris laetitia: un punto di svolta per la teologia morale?*, p. 56.

Palliative Care: The Real Story

By Elizabeth Wickham, PhD

Because of the new appointments to the Pontifical Academy for Life, its workshops and conferences in 2017, plus the one planned for winter 2018, my comments here are directed to the low-profile wing of the euthanasia movement known as the Third Path, which relies on the new field of palliative medicine. Today's palliative care is falsely advertised as the moral alternative to physician-assisted suicide. Having studied this low-profile wing for over 15 years, I believe the activities at the Pontifical Academy for Life (PAL) are very troubling.

I recommend that you read the important book by David Clark entitled *Transforming the Culture of Dying: The Work of the Project on Death in America (PDIA)*. From cover to cover he tells how [George] Soros funding gave a major impetus to the growth of palliative medicine. Palliative medicine became a certified specialty in record time orchestrated by a PDIA board of nine talented doctors, ethicists, and others. Its purpose was to systematically and fully transform care at end of life. They had “a small window of time,” said Susan Block in an interview with David Clark! (see ft. 40 on p. 15)

Soros put PDIA board member Dr. Kathy Foley in charge of allocating \$45 million over nine years to several cohorts of elite physicians and a few nurses located throughout the country. Now that very same leader of the Soros scholars is a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life! It is my guess that she heads the new project PAL-LIFE to make palliative care the official and mandatory standard of end of life (EOL) care globally! They are working at breakneck speed. After these new June 2017 Pontifical Academy for Life appointments, we too have a “small window of time” to protect those who wish to die a holy death in God’s time.



The book is full of interviews with Foley and other board members. There can be no misunderstanding about the goals of palliative medicine after reading this book. And, by the way, David Clark is on the program at the upcoming Feb/Mar 2018 Pontifical Academy for Life workshop at the Vatican. I suggest reading his book, taking notes, and beginning to ask questions. They are being pretty reckless in their cover-up now. I guess they see that their goals are within reach with the experienced Dr. Foley in charge of combining the resources of the Pontifical Academy for Life with Soros’ financial commitment over the years to legalize the low-profile wing of the euthanasia movement.

Foley has been working toward this transformation since before 1994! From PDIA she went on to work with the World Health Organization (WHO). She argues that palliative care is a basic human right, and that means that palliative medicines will be readily available anywhere in the world. Read the WHO list of these essential medicines.

And read what Foley said to the British House of Lords in January 2005 about its proposed physician-assisted suicide bill (PAS). She testified that more time is needed to condition people's thinking about PAS and that the right time for legalization of physician-assisted suicide may be 10, 20, or even 30 years away. (House of Lords - Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill - Minutes of Evidence: publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200405/ldselect/ldasdy/86/5012008.htm)

The argument that these people are improving healthcare to extend people’s lives by offering good, traditional healthcare that encourages the finest medical techniques IS JUST NOT TRUE. Rather, palliative care discourages use of specialists and encourages more primary care doctors working with community healthcare workers and community-based organizations.

Palliative care is an interdisciplinary team approach where the doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, physical therapists, nutritionists, etc. are trained in using family dynamics to guide the patient into selecting life-limiting goals. The team is trained, not in traditional medical care, but in persuasion techniques. If the patient chooses to receive the best of technical care as long as possible, the palliative care team fails. But they will return to the patient over and over seeking to convince him or his family that traditional medical treatment is outweighed by burdens. This is where the cultural virus of proportionalism comes in. (Read Bishop Gracida’s talk given in Raleigh a couple of years ago: abyssum.org/2017/02/15/the-cultural-virus-of-proportionalism.)

Part of their medical treatment is biopsychosocial-spiritual. It begins with a spiritual assessment of the patient.

The person who helped develop the tools to take a spiritual history and assess how to incorporate a measure of spirituality into the patient's electronic health records is another Soros PDIA grant recipient and member of the new Pontifical Academy for Life, Dr. Daniel Sulmasy. He moderated Foley's presentation at the Oct. 2017 Pontifical Academy for Life meetings and is a former Franciscan brother now married to Lois Snyder Sulmasy. She too is knee deep in this euthanasia movement.

Finally, their policy/grassroots mega organization is called C-TAC or Coalition to Transform Advance Care. C-TAC is determined to break down all barriers to ensuring that every patient has expressed his goals of care in the form of an advanced directive. Read about Respecting Choices in LaCrosse, WI, that trains facilitators to help patients fill out the Physicians Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form. Respecting Choices is now part of C-TAC.

Woe if it be a healthcare power of attorney that asks for medical treatment to preserve and protect life as God would choose! Spend some time reading about how the Coalition to Transform Advance Care is organized and what legislation it is promoting. The coalition wants all barriers to palliative care to fall!

You should be prepared for pressure to see the language in your Health Care Power of Attorney early on. The Third Path seeks to target those with multiple chronic conditions. It does not want palliative care limited to those who are truly near death. I know of someone who was asked to see the language in his HCPOA several times after ordinary knee replacement surgery. ❧

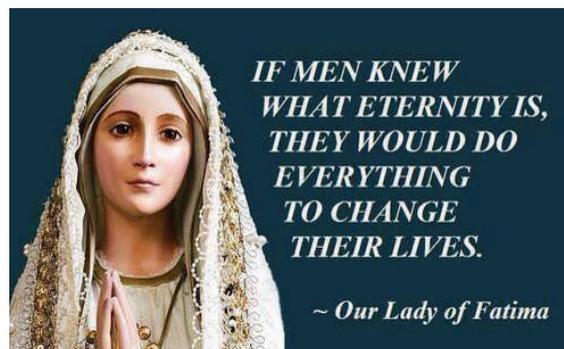
Dr. Elizabeth Wickham is president and founder of [LifeTree](#), located in North Carolina.

Rosary to the Interior: For the Purification of the Church

On February 2, 2018, which is the day celebrating the double *Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, there will occur throughout the United States the gathering of faithful in their parish churches to pray the Rosary for the intention of the Purification of the Church, and the Triumph of the Light of Christ over all sin and error.

While being inspired by the Rosary on the Borders in Poland, this Rosary event – titled *Rosary To The Interior: For the Purification of the Church* – does indeed have a different and very specific intention. Recognizing that the Catholic Church alone in this world was blessed and commissioned with the Light of Christ necessary for triumph over the Darkness of sin and error, and that this Light has now been severely obscured by the sin and errors of its own members, this Rosary asks us to turn our eyes inward in order to effect that interior purification which alone can once again make Christ's Light manifest in its fullness to the world.

A website has now been established, which offers a more complete explanation of both the nature and structure of this event; it is also a comment forum for thoughts and information from those interested in participating in this effort. It is found at: www.rosarytotheinterior.com



Why We Shouldn't Change the *Our Father*

By Anthony Esolen

Pope Francis has caused another round of cheering and dismay by calling for a “better translation” of the words of the Lord’s Prayer. Specifically, he says that the line familiar to us English speakers as “lead us not into temptation” should be rendered as “let us not fall into temptation,” because a loving Father does not subject His children to evil. We may cite here, in apparent support of that statement, the words of St. James: “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one; but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire” (Jas. 1:13–14). It was not God who tempted Job, but Satan. It was not God who tempted David with the sight of Bathsheba bathing in her garden, but David himself, whose desire gave birth to the sins of adultery and murder. All Christians, I suppose, will agree.

And yet, and yet: The words of Jesus are clear. The original Greek is not ambiguous. There is no variant hiding in the shelves. We cannot go from an active verb, subjunctive mood, aorist tense, second person singular, with a clear direct object, to a wholly different verb—“do not allow”—completed by an infinitive that is nowhere in the text—“to fall”—without shifting from translation to theological exegesis. The task of the translator, though he should be informed by the theological, cultural, and linguistic context of the time, is to render what the words mean, literally, even (perhaps especially) when those words sound foreign to our ears.

Here someone will shout, “But sometimes the meanings are not literal.” I agree. Sometimes the primary meaning is figurative; but that is still a linguistic judgment, and not theological exegesis. Even so, we are far more likely to paint for our readers a broad range of figurative meaning by keeping close to the literal field wherein that meaning takes root and flourishes, than by dispensing with the literal, and losing it and much of the figurative to boot. Hence translations that suppress the word

“seed” (as in “Abraham’s seed”), or “fruit” (as in “be fruitful, and multiply,” or Jesus’ parable of the vineyard owner who sent his servants to gather the “fruit” of his land), replacing these words with “offspring” and “produce,” are not only pallid English. They make it impossible for us to hear the figurative resonances of these words as Jesus and his fellow Jews heard them, across all of Scripture. They distance us—who are already farther off than is healthy—from what Chesterton has called “the warmth and wonder of created things,” of fruit, and seed, and the marital act that sows the seed.

Someone else will say that language changes over time, and that is why we need revisions. Perhaps; but the ancient Greek has not changed, and English in this regard has not changed. “Lead us not into temptation” means “do not lead us into temptation,” and that is that. We might revise and render “temptation” as “testing” or “trial”: “Do not lead us to the test,” but that would still fall under the pope’s disapproval.

No, I believe that the Greek means what it means, and what it means is accurately rendered as “lead us not into temptation,” exactly the same in Matthew as it is in Luke.

Then someone objects, and says that the Greek is just a translation of the Lord’s Aramaic, so that we, by guesswork, can efface the Greek and replace it with a supposititious original. There are three problems here. First, the Greek is the text we have, and it is canonical. Second, there is no reason to suppose that Greek-speaking Jews did not pray the prayer exactly as the Greek-speaking Saint Luke records it, which in this line is identical to Matthew’s. Third, if we consider a Semitic substrate it becomes more likely, not less, that the Greek *me eisenenkeis hemas eis peirasmon* is an exact rendering of what would be a verse of psalmic poetry, as I believe all of the Lord’s Prayer is. We would have A + B + C, where A is the negative, B is a causative verb (in Hebrew, “lead” = “to cause to go,” as in Psalm 23) with affixes for second-person singular subject and third-person plural object, and C is “into-temptation.” Such a verse or half-verse would be familiar to every one of Jesus’ listeners, and they would have expected it to be completed by a second half. And so it is, in another A + B + C: “but + free-us + from-evil,” each element in correspondence with its partner in the previous half. No, I’m afraid that all attempts to justify an



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alteration on linguistic grounds fail. But what about the theology?

Let us be careful here. Jesus himself, in Gethsemane, instructed his apostles to pray “lest they be put to the test,” echoing his own words in the Lord’s Prayer. It is not a prayer that they should not fall into temptation, much less that they should not yield to temptation. It is parallel instead with Jesus’ prayer in the garden, that he might be spared the cup that he was about to drink. Jesus knows our weakness, and knows that trials will come. He knows that, as James says, “blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him” (1:12). But we are weak. We are not yet heroes. We are hardly soldiers at all. So we confess our weakness.

We pray, then, that God will spare us that test—even as we know that tests will come. Jesus himself says it. Satan has demanded Peter, to sift him like wheat, says Jesus, “but I have prayed for you, that your faith might not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:31). We are not heroes, we are poor and unprofitable servants, yet we are called to say, with St. Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 3:7). And a Father might very well allow His grown sons and daughters to stand the test, that they might show their strength—His strength in them!—and triumph over the Slanderer.

The words of Jesus, as words, are clear. Their implications are profound. They are hard for us to fathom. They strike us as strange. That is as it should be. Let them stand. ☞

Anthony Esolen is professor of English Renaissance and classical literature at the Thomas More College of Liberal Arts.

February Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting
February 23, 2018
Call (505) 293-8006 for information.

Pro-life Prayer:
Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.
Holy Innocents Chapel:
(505) 266-4100
Times: Monday-Friday 8 AM – 3 PM

Helpers of God’s Precious Infants
Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: 8 AM – 11:30 AM
Wednesdays: 12 Noon – 3:00 PM
For more information, call Phil Leahy:
(505) 440-3040



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Check out *Project Defending Life’s* radio show, **Lifetalk**, which airs on 1050 AM KTBL every Saturday at 2:00 pm till 3:00 pm.

"Parishioners are incarnate beings whose senses are dulled by pedestrian liturgy, banal art, amateurish music and graceless architecture. ... When we worship, should we not exult in the glory of God? Should we not offer God our best? 'My soul doth mediocritize the Lord' is not an inspiring motto."

- Dana Gioia, California's poet laureate

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