

ARTICLE 100

Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

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The Centenary

My 100th Article for Catholic Voice

Today marks another milestone in my journey with the Catholic Voice newspaper. This is my one hundredth article in Catholic Voice. A centenary of articles during the centenary of Fatima! What began as a simple question to Anthony Murphy, “would you be interested in some articles on marriage and family?”, with the reply, “send me in something and we’ll see”, has turned into a journey of faith exploration. In these turbulent times for the Catholic Church, I recently received an e-mail which ended, “thank you for your wonderful articles in the Catholic Voice, which has kept me sane in these very confusing times.” It is these kinds of responses that make the journey and the effort worthwhile.

I am aware that not everyone agrees with some of the things that I write, and I am always glad to get feedback both critical and complimentary as this usually leads on to deeper discussion and thought on both sides, on matters pertaining to the Catholic faith.

‘The Lumen Fidei Institute’

Almost two years ago, Anthony asked me to help him with a new organisation he had established called ‘The Lumen Fidei Institute’. At the time I was presenting a weekly half hour show on Radio Maria, I was also trying to establish another Catholic organisation myself, and between that, family duties, and writing for the Catholic Voice, I was just not able to give it the time that was needed.

We then embarked on a series of talks around the country in fifteen different locations and it was from these talks that we became aware of a great hunger amongst faithful Catholics for some lay group to stand up and clearly proclaim the Truths of our Catholic faith in an unambiguous way. People were fed up with what they perceived as a patronising attitude that has developed within the Catholic church in Ireland. Legitimate concerns that were brought to priests and bishops were dismissed or ignored. Often, these legitimate concerns were being raised by parents or grandparents regarding their children and what they were being taught and exposed to in Catholic schools and at Catholic events.

Keep the Peace – Regardless of the Cost

The primary concern of some of those in charge seemed to be a desire to keep the peace at all costs without dealing with the concerns raised. They sought to placate and to avoid having to confront wrongdoing directly. The attitude that seemed to prevail at the time of the abuse scandal, where everything was done to, ‘keep the show on the road’, and where parent’s concerns about certain priest’s behaviour, were either disbelieved, dismissed or suppressed, and where abusers were moved around from parish to parish, still seems to prevail in certain quarters.

Don’t Inconvenience me with the Truth

I have encountered this myself. When a priest was scheduled to speak at the Knock Novena some time ago, who had previously advocated that people should be open to watching ‘gay’ movies and reading ‘gay’ novels, I contacted my parish priest to make a complaint. During a meeting I had with my parish priest, he told me that I had to understand that these speakers were scheduled some years in advance. As if this has any bearing on the matter. What the priest was really saying was, that it would be inconvenient to him to have to cancel a dissident priest because they had been booked in advance and because they had a worldwide reputation. It would be inconvenient to have to try to get another orthodox speaker to replace him.

The real reason may be that my own parish priest at the time agreed with the other priest's position on human sexuality. I don't know if this is the case or not. So, I explained to my parish priest that the dissenting priest's presentation was being offered and was being put in front of my children. However, it was clear to me that his primary concern was not for my children or for other people's children but, was to make sure that nobody rocked the boat or caused tension or 'bad' publicity about the matter.

The Silence of our Bishops

We see this in Ireland in many other areas that affect our children. Sex education in 'Catholic' schools, contrary to Church teaching, remains unopposed by our bishops. Buddhist mindfulness programmes in our Catholic schools remain unopposed by our bishops, despite many people complaining.

Inadequate sacramental preparation and woeful 'children's' liturgies are commonplace throughout Ireland. I received a letter outlining what happened in one Catholic Church in Ireland where the children were taken from school for confession. They were given a general absolution by the priest without individual confession. I cannot give out more details because it would identify where this happened, and it might lead to repercussions for the family who wrote to me. This is the climate we now live in here in Ireland where faithful Catholics are castigated, rebuked and sometimes ridiculed for simply standing up for their Catholic faith. I am sad to say that a culture of bullying and intimidation has entered our Church against those who insist on speaking and teaching what the Catholic Church has always taught.

You are the Bully for Insisting on what is Right

Of course, those of us who insist that only what is Catholic is good enough for our children and who are not afraid to complain when things are not right, will be accused of being the bullies, but we must not let this deter us from our duties to our children. Christ tells us to rejoice when people speak calumny about us because of Him.

"Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12)

Isolation Tactics – You are the Only One

One of the tactics used in the attempt to silence or discourage those of us who are willing to stand up for our Catholic faith, is that of trying to isolate us. You will be told that you are the first one ever to complain, or that most people don't have a problem with the issue you are raising. In other words, the problem is really with you and you are all alone.

I once complained about a catholic bookshop in a religious order's Friary selling a popular book on human sexuality, which was in common use in Irish Catholic schools, but which did not uphold Church teaching on contraception. The Friar in question, forwarded my letter to the author of the book, who wrote back to me saying that only three people had ever complained in the ten years since the book was written. The book was a bestseller for Veritas. I responded to the author pointing out that the book did not uphold Catholic teaching on contraception.

You Cannot Teach Children the Truth if their parents don't live by it?

I received a reply from the author saying that you cannot tell the children in Catholic schools that contraception is wrong, because their parents may be using contraception. I wrote back saying that by that logic, you cannot teach children that stealing is wrong, because one of their parents may be a thief. I received a very short letter assuring me of the author's prayers. This author's books are still on sale in Veritas bookshops, which are owned by the Irish Bishop's conference.

I wrote back to the Friar in question, asking him why he had forwarded my letter to him to the author of the book. I explained to him that the way for him to verify whether or not a book is Catholic, is to have Catholic teaching on one side and the book's teachings on the other side and to make a comparison. If there are any differences in what is taught, then the book is not Catholic. He wrote

back to me to say that he would not be stocking the book after the last three copies he had were sold. The correct response would have been to throw the last three copies in the bin.

The Launching of The Lumen Fidei Institute

And so, in July of this year we publicly launched 'The Lumen Fidei Institute'. Lumen Fidei – The Light of Faith. The stated purpose of the organisation is to promote the Catholic faith, to Defend the Catholic faith, to teach the Catholic faith, and to help people to live by the Catholic faith. We seek to be a safe haven where Catholics can come and learn the Truth about what the Catholic Church teaches. Our primary focus, as a lay organisation, is in the area of marriage and family life, because it is primarily the laity who must live and defend Catholic teaching on marriage and family life. There are some who may not like the military tone of some of my articles, but ordinary lay Catholics need to realise that we are at war. In a war, not everyone is called to be a soldier on the front lines, but everyone is called to support the soldiers who are in the trenches lest they be overrun by the enemy.

Catholic Parent's primary Duty is Family

For lay married Catholic parents, their primary duties are centred on their families and on ensuring that they create an authentic and clearly recognisable Catholic home in which to nurture their children. They must protect their children from the immediate dangers that threaten the Catholicity of their home. Television and internet represent two huge dangers for today's children and adults. Another danger today comes from 'Catholic' schools which are not living up to their calling and which do not fully embrace all of the Catholic Church's teachings, particularly in the area of human sexuality.

We Are Not Alone

The response to The Lumen Fidei Institute has been tremendous and I would once again like to thank all our supporters and benefactors. The response clearly shows that although we may be thinly dispersed around Ireland, we are definitely not alone. It is heartening to receive letters, e-mails, phone calls, and support from all around the country. I am particularly moved by the older, battle-hardened, generation of Irish Catholics who have come forward to encourage us in what we are doing. They remember when Ireland was clearly identifiable as a Catholic nation, they know that something has gone dreadfully wrong, and they still want to fight for their faith despite their elderly years. Thank you so much, it means so much to have your support and your prayers.

Fauré's Requiem in Limerick

Next Friday 24th November, there will be a Requiem Mass in Sacred Heart Church in Limerick for the Holy Souls at 7.00pm featuring the music of Gabriel Fauré (Fauré's Requiem Mass). This is a great opportunity to pray and to offer sacrifice for those who have gone before us and who may not yet have attained the beatific vision in Heaven. The requiem is followed by Absolution. This is not to be confused with sacramental absolution or general absolution, but is what is known as 'The Absolution of the Dead'.

'The Absolution of the Dead' does not forgive sins or confer sacramental absolution. It is a series of prayers for the Holy Souls asking God to bestow His mercy on them. There is a beautiful, sung responsory, which begins.

"R. Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal in that awful day. When the heavens and the earth shall be moved: when thou shalt come to judge the world by fire."

"V. Dread and trembling have laid hold of me, and I fear exceedingly because of the judgement and of the wrath to come."

If you have not been to a traditional Latin Requiem Mass, then I strongly encourage you to make the effort to get to Limerick on Friday 24th November at 7.00pm. Your deceased relations, who may still be in purgatory, will greatly appreciate it as will the whole Church suffering.

Annual Marriage and Family Conference

Then on Saturday 25th November, we have the annual Catholic Voice conference in the Savoy Hotel in Limerick which begins at 9.00am through to 6.00pm. This is a great opportunity for faithful Catholics to realise that they are not alone and to come and hear certain aspects of the Catholic faith presented in all their glory. The theme for this year's conference, in the centenary year of the apparitions at Fatima, comes from a letter of Sr Lucia to Cardinal Cafarra.

“Final battle between God and satan will be over marriage and family”

There will be a Lumen Fidei Institute table at the conference, and I look forward to meeting as many readers of Catholic Voice as possible so that we can discuss ideas about how best to defend our Catholic families in these exciting times in which we live.

May God bless you.

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