

ARTICLE 42

Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

Marriage a gift from God

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Marriage! Errant Catholics don't Help

Public Statements of Catholics that promote erroneous thinking

Before looking at the statements from the previous article on the marriage referendum, I want to look at a more recent public statement, this time issued on an Irish diocesan Facebook page. Once again the diocese and the bishop are unimportant as I want to deal with the subject matter. The bishop in question was speaking about political parties collecting funds after Mass outside of church gates. Now, whilst I agree that political parties collecting outside church gates is a questionable practice, giving out to the political parties for this practice is a soft and somewhat popular target, and is also I believe, somewhat misguided. The real problem here, is not that political parties with policies at variance with Church teaching collect money outside of churches, rather, the real problem is that Catholic Mass goers give money to these political parties and vote for their candidates at election time despite their immoral policies. It is the Catholic supporters of these political parties who should be admonished and taken to task for their betrayal of the faith.

When is it permissible to Legislate Contrary to Christ's Teaching?

The Facebook page comment said “There is no obligation on any political party to support the Church, and certainly not to legislate in accordance with Church teaching.” Here, once again we have a problematic public statement, issued on behalf of a prominent Catholic, that is not truly in accord with Church teaching on the duty of politicians and legislators. To see that this is so, one merely has to ask the question, “when is it permissible for a political party to legislate contrary to Church teaching?”

Now of course we are not talking of legislation which would compel citizens to attend Mass on Sundays, for such a law would in itself be contrary to Church teaching, and we are not talking of laws which regulate water and other charges. But, in all areas pertaining to the common good, there is indeed an obligation on political parties to legislate in accordance with Church teaching.

The Teaching of the Pope

Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical letter 'Libertas' of 1888, puts it this way:

“There are others, somewhat more moderate though not more consistent, who affirm that the morality of individuals is to be guided by the divine law, but not the morality of the State, for that in public affairs the commands of God may be passed over, and may be entirely disregarded in the framing of laws. Hence follows the fatal theory of the need of separation between Church and State. But the absurdity of such a position is manifest. Nature herself proclaims the necessity of the State providing means and opportunities whereby the community may be enabled to live properly, that is to say, according to the laws of God. For, since God is the source of all goodness and justice, it is absolutely ridiculous that the State should pay no attention to these laws or render them abortive by contrary enactments. Besides, those who are in authority owe it to the commonwealth not only to provide for its external well-being and the conveniences of life, but still more to consult the welfare of men's souls in the wisdom of their legislation. But, for the increase of such benefits, nothing more suitable can be conceived than the laws which have God for their author; and, therefore, they who

in their government of the State take no account of these laws abuse political power by causing it to deviate from its proper end and from what nature itself prescribes.” (Libertas 18)

Many Church Leaders no Longer Claim their rightful Authority

The above diocesan statement is symptomatic of the phenomenon whereby many Church leaders no longer lay claim to the rightful authority which belongs to the Church to guide souls in all matters pertaining to their lives. They thereby tend to diminish the rights of God and of His Church in the eyes of men. Similarly, the public statements quoted in the last article in support of civil unions, tend to lead people astray as to what exactly the Church teaches regarding marriage and the law.

Catholics cannot give their support to legislation which claims to confer benefits and rights on objectively disordered and sinful same-sex relationships without themselves undermining Church teaching. In fact there is a clear and emphatic duty laid on all Catholics to actively oppose such legislation and to work for its repeal.

The Teaching of Arcanum

Much of what Pope Leo XIII said in his encyclical letter 'Arcanum' in dealing with those who live together applies equally to same-sex relationships although we know that marriage is not an option in the case of two persons of the same sex.

“Lastly, since We well know that none should be excluded from Our charity, We commend, venerable brothers, to your fidelity and piety those unhappy persons who, carried away by the heat of passion, and being utterly indifferent to their salvation, live wickedly together without the bond of lawful marriage. Let your utmost care be exercised in bringing such persons back to their duty; and, both by your own efforts and by those of good men who will consent to help you, strive by every means that they may see how wrongly they have acted; that they may do penance; and that they may be induced to enter into a lawful marriage according to the Catholic rite.” (Arcanum 44)

The False Dichotomy

The second statement from the last article finished by saying “Neither do I object to gay adoption, when the only alternative is to spend life in a loveless orphanage.” Here we have a classic case of a false dichotomy which offers only two alternatives. But let us suppose that we had a child in this situation where these were the only two options available. Can we really be sure, from the point of view of the child's eternal salvation, that the child would actually be better off being brought up in a household where the child is daily exposed to a sinfully disordered relationship which is presented as being normal, as opposed to the child being cared for in the poverty of a 'loveless' orphanage? To claim that two men who live in a sexual relationship with each other are expressing love, is contrary to what God teaches us. Men who love each other would never engage in such disordered and unhealthy sexual activity with one another. So what has actually been presented in the case above is a choice between two loveless situations, one of which is also objectively disordered. Personally, I believe that, from the point of view of eternal salvation, the child would fare better in the orphanage!

Purely Secular Arguments presented by Catholics on Moral Issues, undermine the Faith

When high profile Catholics, present arguments such as those mentioned, in public discourse, without mentioning God, or Jesus Christ, or the words 'sacrament' and 'grace', they give credibility to the lie that we cannot argue the case for marriage from a purely Catholic perspective. Such arguments undermine our Catholic faith, they further alienate ordinary Catholics both in the public square and because they are a source of doubt to their faith and ultimately, these secular arguments help those in power in the marginalisation of Catholics.

“Look” they say, “so and so is a good Catholic and he does not allow his Catholic faith to interfere with his political outlook or to directly influence his public arguments and this is as it should be. Why are you being so divisive and why are you trying to force your own religion on us?”

The Faith is not Preached

And so, not only has moral ground been lost in an important referendum, but also a wonderful opportunity to stand tall and to bear witness to the Beauty and the Truth that comprise our Catholic faith and heritage has been squandered.

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Author: John Lacken
Founder: Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family
E-Mail: john@truedevotions.ie
Website: www.truedevotions.ie