

ARTICLE 98

Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

First Published in the 'Catholic Voice', Ireland, October 2017

John Lacken – john@truedevoations.ie



The Truth is Not Relative

The Light of Faith

There are two things that came to mind recently regarding the title of our new organisation 'The Lumen Fidei Insitute'. Both are concerned with the whole image of the Light of Faith. If you pass by a house during the daytime, and a light happens to be left on in the front room, you will not notice it. Pass by the same house at night, and the same light will be noticeable from far away. The light has not gotten any brighter, but it shines even more clearly because of the surrounding darkness. I think the same is true of our Catholic faith, as the darkness of apostasy grows, so too the Truth of the Catholic faith seems to shine more brightly.

But I also noticed another side to this image. If there is an enemy who wishes to attack you for some reason, then the light shining in the darkness will also draw him to you. Faithful Catholics, who speak out in opposition to the prevailing modernist trends of thought that are currently circulating within the echelons of the Catholic hierarchy, become clear targets for those who wish to silence the Truth that they speak, or who do not accept these Truths. The example of the Catholic Professor, Josef Seifert, a prominent Austrian philosopher, who was recently fired from his job for his critical question on paragraph no 303 of 'Amoris Laetitia', comes to mind.

Fired for Upholding Catholic Teaching

Did the professor contradict any Catholic Church teaching? On the contrary, he was strenuously upholding the constant and unchanging teaching of the Catholic Church regarding sin. The professor showed that paragraph 303 of Amoris Laetitia lends itself to an interpretation which would undermine the very foundation upon which Catholic moral teaching rests. He did not say that Pope Francis is contradicting Church teaching he just asked the question and then said.

"I will leave it entirely to the Pope or to any reader to answer the question whether or not there is at least one affirmation in Amoris Laetitia that has the logical consequence of destroying the entire Catholic moral teaching."

If there is no problem – then, Answer the Questions

Now, if there is no such affirmation which would contradict Catholic Church teaching in Amoris Laetitia, then surely the simple solution to this problem is to show clearly that the affirmation does not exist. In the Spiritual Exercises, St Ignatius begins with a presupposition.

"To assure better cooperation between the one who is giving the Exercises and the exercitant, and more beneficial results for both, it is necessary to suppose that every good Christian is more ready to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to condemn it as false. If an orthodox construction cannot be put on a proposition, the one who made it should be asked how he understands it."

Four Cardinals, two of whom have since died, have asked for just such an understanding regarding Amoris Laetitia and more recently, 62 professors of Theology and Philosophy have asked something similar. To date their questions have remained unanswered.

The Questions should be Answered for the good of ordinary Catholics

As a lay man, who does not hold the qualifications necessary for my own opinions on this matter to be given any weight, I can only conclude that these questions should be answered in the interests of the Catholic faithful. My conclusions come from the following facts. The Polish bishops have contradicted the German bishops on how *Amoris Laetitia* should be interpreted and implemented. The bishop of Philadelphia has contradicted the bishop of Chicago on how *Amoris Laetitia* should be interpreted and implemented. The bishops of Malta have contradicted paragraph 84 of Pope St John Paul II's apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* in their interpretation of *Amoris Laetitia*. They have also contradicted the code of canon law no 915 which states that.

“Those upon whom the penalty of excommunication or interdict has been imposed or declared, and others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin, are not to be admitted to holy communion.”
(Canon 915 Code of Canon Law)

The Maltese Bishops

The well-known Canon Lawyer, Dr Edward Peters, had this to say regarding the Maltese Bishops.

“The Maltese bishops have fallen completely for the canonically and ecclesiological false view that an individual's assessment of his or her own readiness to receive holy Communion (see c. 916) controls a minister's decision to administer the sacrament (see c. 915). In Malta now, anyone who approaches for the sacraments should be recognized as being “at peace with God”. Objective evidence to the contrary is simply no longer relevant. Canon 916 is thus eviscerated, Canon 915 is effectively repudiated.”

Cardinal Schonborn contradicts Trent

Recently, Cardinal Schonborn contradicted Church teaching from the Council of Trent and the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the sacrament of confession, to justify his interpretation of *Amoris Laetitia* which would allow a woman who confesses an abortion to go to Holy Communion without having to confess her adultery.

There is a problem with *Amoris Laetitia*

From this we can clearly see that there is a problem with *Amoris Laetitia*. It is causing confusion and division amongst Catholics, precisely because contradictory interpretations are being allowed to flourish within the Catholic world. But the confusion and division do not stop with *Amoris Laetitia*. *Amoris Laetitia* is an apostolic exhortation promulgated by Pope Francis and, because we have come through decades of faulty catechesis, many Catholics have an incorrect understanding of Papal infallibility. These Catholics erroneously believe that it is impossible for there to be anything wrong with *Amoris Laetitia* because it comes from the Pope. They believe in a progressive papal magisterium which is not bound by previous magisterial teachings. The current pope and only the current pope, makes and interprets the laws, according to this erroneous opinion.

We see this error being subtly promulgated in the Irish Bishop's new parish programme ‘*Amoris*’, which is due to be rolled out into every parish in the country from this December onwards. On page twenty-four of the parish programme, the page with the image of the embracing lesbians one of whom has a rainbow flag on her hand, they state;

“Pope Francis' ideal for married love is that it would always be open to a fruitfulness that gives birth to children and draws the couple beyond themselves...”

Marriage was instigated by God, not by the Pope

The problem with this statement is that it claims for the Papacy an ideal for married love. Marriage was instituted by God, it is His creation and it is governed by His rules. The Pope is charged with upholding God's laws and with preserving the deposit of the faith and with teaching Catholics and all who will listen what God expects of them. The Pope has no authority to change marriage or to imagine new ideals for marriage. Being “open to a fruitfulness that gives birth to children” is not the

Pope's ideal, it is God's desire and command for how marriage should be lived. The Irish bishops cause confusion when they allow such imprecise language to be used in documents that have been prepared for every parish in the country.

Situational Ethics & Moral Relativism

But there is worse. The Irish bishop's parish programme, on page eleven states; "The programme takes, as its starting point, people's experience of love and their hopes and fears with regard to marriage and family" This is the starting point for moral relativism. No Catholic programme takes 'people's experience' as a starting point for the simple reason that God existed before ever there were people. This programme builds on a false foundation and it will do tremendous damage to people's understanding of marriage and family life in this country if it is allowed to go ahead.

On page twenty-four of this programme, above the picture of the embracing lesbians, it states;

"While the Church upholds the ideal of marriage as a permanent commitment between a man and a woman, other unions exist which provide mutual support to the couple. Pope Francis encourages us never to exclude but to accompany these couples also, with love, care and support"

Marriage is not an ideal.

Marriage is not an ideal. Marriage is a reality given to us by God and strengthened by the grace of the sacrament. Marriage is the only place where it is permissible for sexual activity to take place, and other unions, which are sexual in nature, are mortally sinful and cannot provide any real support to the couple involved because these unions lead the couple away from God. What we are witnessing in this programme is the philosophy of situational ethics whereby there are no absolute moral norms and whereby all behaviour, even homosexual behaviour and relationships, is claimed to contain a certain degree of goodness depending on the circumstances.

The great purveyor of situation ethics, Joseph Fletcher, described it thus in his book on the subject.

"Situation ethics holds flatly that there is only one principle, love, without any prefabricated recipes for what it means in practice, and that all other so-called principles or maxims are relative to particular, concrete situations!" (Situation Ethics, Joseph Fletcher p36)

The Interweaving of Truth and Error

In describing chapter 8 of *Amoris Laetitia*, professor Pierantoni, one of the main drafters of the filial correction said .

"Chapter 8 skilfully interweaves the authentic Catholic doctrine about extenuating circumstances with the heterodox concepts of situational ethics, according to which there are "no intrinsically evil actions" and, in some situations, "what is normally evil may be the right choice, so it can objectively be a good act. The doctrine of extenuating circumstances is being used here as "a mask to conceal situational ethics."

Confusion Leads People Astray

The same could be said of the Irish bishop's 'Amoris' programme. It interweaves authentic Catholic doctrine with situational ethics and I believe that, when they release the videos that accompany the programme, we will be shown emotional scenes and interviews of couples living in sinful unions which will seek to draw our support for these couples without denouncing the sinful unions.

The saddest thing of all, is that the confusion that is being generated by *Amoris Laetitia* and programmes like the one produced and promoted by the Irish bishops, will ultimately lead confused young people to experiment with sinful unions in the false belief that, if the Church now accompanies people in their sinful unions, then there cannot ultimately be anything all that wrong with these unions.

No Reason to Resist Temptation

Others too, who have failed to live up to their marital commitments, may be tempted to give in to starting an adulterous affair, because the Church now accompanies adulterers and permits them to receive Holy Communion, just like anyone else. We are witnessing what Sr Lucia of Fatima called the final battle between the Lord and Satan, the attack on marriage and family life, and the main thrust of the attack against the family is coming from within the ranks of the Catholic Church. Dark times indeed.

The Proclamation of the Catholic Faith is Seen to Undermine Pope Francis?

Because erroneous opinions have been allowed to spread unchecked within the Catholic Church, it comes as no surprise to receive a letter that tells me that I am undermining the authority of Pope Francis in what I write. Everything I write is in conformity with Catholic Church teaching and is checked by a very patient religious priest, who is a professor and a doctor of moral theology. It would be a contradiction in terms, if upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church could in some way undermine the authority of the papacy of Pope Francis. The only way that Catholic Church teaching could undermine Pope Francis' authority, would be if Pope Francis himself were not upholding that teaching in its entirety. This is clearly not what the author of the letter to me meant, but it should give Catholics pause for thought on this most serious matter.

Good Intentions Cannot make and evil act good.

In these confused times, it is not surprising that, when I wrote to my bishop to complain about the teaching of Mindfulness within Catholic institutions within his diocese, his priest secretary wrote back to me saying.

“Of course, as you will appreciate, Mr. Lacken, a person's intentions in engaging in any Mindfulness practice is extremely relevant and important.”

The priest went on to say that the context of the non-Catholic teaching, which denies the existence of our triune God, is nothing to worry about so long as the person has the intention of improving their sense of well-being. This is the moral relativism that is produced by situational ethics and it is unfortunately very prevalent here in Ireland. I imagine that it must be taught to our seminarians in the seminary in Maynooth.

Make Sure you carry extra Oil for your Lamp

So, what are we to do. Like the wise virgins we must arise and trim our lamps and make sure that we have plenty of oil in case the bridegroom is delayed for much longer. We must study ever more deeply the unchanging teachings of the Catholic Church, especially concerning marriage and family life. We must not allow anyone, no matter who they be, to lead us astray with another doctrine on marriage which is inconsistent with what the Catholic Church has always taught. We must regularly examine our consciences and make sure that we are availing of frequent confession so that we remain steadfastly in a state of grace.

Finally, we must entrust ourselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary and invoke her under the title Our Lady of Victories, so that the Light of the Faith of our beloved Catholic Church will pierce more deeply into the hearts and souls of men and guide those who have fallen into error back to safety of her altars where Christ's sacrifice awaits us.

These articles are free to download, to print and to distribute provided that authorship is acknowledged and contact details for the author are provided as follows.

Author: John Lacken
Founder: Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Holy Family Legion
E-Mail: john@truedevotions.ie
Website: www.truedevotions.ie
Secretary: The Lumen Fidei Institute
E-Mail: secretary@lumenfidei.ie
Website: www.lumenfidei.ie