

I'm John Lacken, this show was broadcast on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016 and I would like to begin as always with a prayer to Our Lady asking her for guidance and protection for all married couples.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.  
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,  
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.  
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,  
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,  
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen

### **Our Young People are Delaying Marriage**

This week I want to begin to look again at the fact the marriage seems to have become unpopular with our young people. The Central Statistics Office tells us that for the year 2014 the average age for women to get married was 33 and the average age for men was 35, that's relating to Ireland. We also noted that for 2014 it was the lowest year on record for Catholic marriages. So there's a decline in young people getting married and people are leaving marriage to an older age.

I have quoted some American statistics in the past, which I think would be fairly true of most western nations, and that was that in 1960, almost three out of four Americans aged 24 were married, 72% of them. Now that number is less than one in ten, just over 9% of 24 year olds are married! So a decline from 72% to just over 9% of 24 year olds who are married.

### **Catholic Men looking for Catholic Women**

I began looking at this problem after a young man contacted me telling me that he and some of his Catholic male friends were finding it difficult to find young women who were, as they used to say in Ireland, 'marriage minded'. In the past I have met young women who told me of a similar problem in that they said they could not find Catholic men to marry.

### **What Has Gone Wrong?**

So what has gone wrong in our society where something so naturally beautiful and so simple, has now become complicated and hard to achieve and, I should also say, hard to maintain as we see from the increasing divorce rates. Ultimately what we are seeing is the eternal conflict of views. Christ and His Catholic Church on the one hand seeking to lead all souls to heaven. The world, the flesh and the devil on the other hand seeking to lead all souls down to the fiery depths of hell.

The problem is multi faceted and it has deepened with time but let us begin to delve into it to see if we can trace some of its more recent origins. Along the way we will dip in and out of different papal documents. In doing this, we will see that our popes have constantly highlighted not only the problems within society but that they have also offered solutions, which, unfortunately, have not always been followed by our societies which have more and more pushed God to the margins and exalted the thinking of men.

### **Read the Popes**

And again, I like to make recommendations, I like to exhort people and in this day and age of the internet, the papal encyclicals are available online and its a great education just to read encyclicals of the past to see what popes have said especially if you go way back. I would highly recommend

anything by Pope St Pius X, pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII, Pope St John Paul II. You have *Humane Vitae* of Pope Paul VI and all along the way there are different documents, different popes addressing different problems and they give us a great insight into how the Church operates and into how well the Church perceives the problems. The Church never operates, contrary to some popular misconceptions, the Church doesn't force people to believe or try to force people to believe and the Church is not a coercive institution.

### **Ignore the Disinformation**

Sometimes people will say “Oh what about the crusades, what about this...” In those situations, if you look at the history correctly and get past the bias, what you will see is that in those situations the Church was acting and urging people to come to the defence of nations or to the defence of the Holy Shrine. It was acting in self defence, which has always been allowed. But I just recommend and I exhort you to go and have a look at some of the encyclicals and read through them, or even just read a couple of paragraphs and as I say they give you a great insight.

### **Pope Pius XII – Young People Have Changed**

One earlier aspect of the development of this problem in marriage, I think, was indicated by Pope Pius XII, he gave an address to the teaching sisters on September 15<sup>th</sup> the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows in 1951.

Now remember, he is writing just six years after the end of the second world war, and the second world war saw some 50 to 85 million people killed, and the pope speaks of a crisis in the schools and educational institutions.

“If it be your painful experience that the teaching Sister and the modern girl no longer understand each other well, this is not a thing peculiar to you. Other teachers, often parents themselves, are not in a very much better position. It is not using empty words to say that young people have changed, have become quite different perhaps. The chief reason for this difference in the young people of today may be that which forms the subject of the frequent lament: young people are irreverent toward many things that formerly from childhood were naturally regarded with the greatest respect. But young people of today are not solely to be blamed for their present attitude. In childhood, they have lived through horrible things and they have seen many ideals formerly held in high esteem break down miserably before their eyes. In this way they have become distrustful and aloof.”

### **Distrustful and Aloof**

So here the Pope notices that, after the war, young people seem to have changed. They have become distrustful and aloof, they have lost respect for those things that previously were regarded with great respect. He says that they are not solely to be blamed for this, because having lived through the war, that second world war with almost 85 million people killed, they have seen the high ideals that were formerly promoted, break down miserably and this resulted in the high number of deaths during the war and the large scale destruction in cities and towns right across Europe caused by the war.

Without getting into the rights and wrongs of the second world war, it seems to have damaged young people's trust in authority, particularly the authority of the state and how men behaved. Their view of the Church was may also have been affected because the Church was seemingly powerless to stop the war.

### **Our Lady of Fatima tells us the Cause of War**

However, in the case of the Church, this was not on account of some lack of authority within the Church. No, Our Lady of Fatima told Sr Lucia about the cause of the second world war when she told her, referring to the first world war.

“The war is going to end: but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the Pontificate of Pius XI.”

So our Lady tells us that, if people do not cease offending God another war will break out. So when people offend God, war is inevitable because people lose their love for one another. If we cannot love God we cannot love each other and we lose our love for each other then others become our enemy and we end up in competition and then this can lead to war.

Pope Pius XII continues,

### **Lack of Understanding between Generations**

“It must be remembered also that this complaint about lack of understanding is not something new. It is one made in every generation and it is mutual between maturity and youth, parents and children, teachers and pupils. Half a century ago and even a little before that, there was a good deal of sentimentality. People were fond of believing that they were "misunderstood" and said so. Today, the complaint, not devoid of a certain amount of pride, is more concerned with the intellect. The result of this misunderstanding is, on the one hand, a reaction which may sometimes exceed the limit of justice, a tendency to repudiate anything that is, or appears to be, new, an exaggerated suspicion of rebellion against any tradition. On the other hand, it is a lack of faith that shrinks from all authority and, spurning every competent judgement, seeks solutions and counsels with a sort of infatuation more ingenuous than reasoned.”

The pope is well aware of the problems that all generations face, of the problems between one generation and the next, between parents and their children. But he notices the problem of intellectual pride which leads the older generation on the one hand to tend to be distrustful of the younger generation with their new ideas, and that the older generation had a tendency towards a lack of justice in repudiating anything they think is a rebellion with the traditions of the past, or new fangled.

The younger generation have lost faith and they no longer respect the old authority and the basis for the sound judgements of the older generation. They have become infatuated with what is new and do not use the gift of reason in looking for solutions to their problems and the problems of the world.

And again remember the pope has noticed a change in the young people after the war. It's very hard to estimate the effects of the war on the young generation and seeing that terrible destruction right across Europe the way men and millions of people killed and you know in one sense, for what? So, the pope is noticing a shift, a change in the young generation.

### **Force does not Win Hearts**

And then he tells the sisters that they will not win the hearts of the young people by trying to force them to see what is right. He urges them to try to understand the young people and to help them to understand themselves. But then he notes that they mustn't give way on, “those immutable truths and values which admit of no change in the heart and mind of man.”

### **Understanding is the Key**

He tells them that understanding young people does not mean giving approval to their new ideas, whims and false enthusiasms but in finding out what is solid in the young people and accepting it, and then also finding out the origin of their deviations and errors whilst realising that these are often an unhappy attempt to solve their problems. The young people are experiencing difficulties, they've just come out of a war, They're trying to solve problems, they're trying to find a way that is not going to lead to another world war but sometimes they have deviations and errors and they've got to look to see what's the cause of that.

### **Precision and Clarity of Speech**

And the pope then says a very interesting thing which we would do well to note today.

“Making yourself understood does not mean employing words that are not sanctioned by good usage and constructions that are ungrammatical leading, as they do, to inaccuracy and vagueness of thought. It rather means expressing clearly one's own thoughts in different yet always correct ways, striving to fathom the thoughts of others, always keeping in mind their difficulties, their ignorance, and their inexperience.”

So I've noticed that our world is becoming more and more casual, more and more irreverent. We looked at this is looking at the whole thing of immodesty in dress and I said that immodesty is not just limited to dress and here we have, the pope is hinting here at, what I could call immodesty in language. There is this temptation now to try to engage the young people by speaking their language, by being 'hip', by being 'cool', and the pope is warning against this and saying that when we try to engage people like that there's a danger it leads to inaccuracy and vagueness of thought.

In my own children's education I have noticed a huge difference in how English is taught through the Seton home schooling programme that we use and how it was taught when my children were in school. The schools have become permeated by this casual attitude which is spreading everywhere and there was very little emphasis placed on proper punctuation and grammar, whereas the Seton programme insists on a meticulously high standard in both grammar and punctuation.

### **Sloppiness in Writing and Speech leads to Inaccuracy and Vagueness**

The reason for this is now clear to me as it was to Pope Pius XII back in 1951, when he noted that the constructions that are ungrammatical lead to inaccuracy and vagueness of thought. So the young people, no longer understand what is being said to them because it is said in a way that seeks primarily to appeal to the young people and to engage with their emotions rather than trying to convey a truth to their understanding and intellect. The young people are patronised by this approach and it has become widespread throughout our civilisation.

I mentioned before the great modern sin of our time which is to cause offence to another and this is regardless of whether or not what allegedly causes the offence is true or not.

### **Cardinal André Vingt-Trois - Silence**

The French Cardinal, André Vingt-Trois, of Paris, mentioned this problem on 27<sup>th</sup> July. He gave a homily at a requiem Mass in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, for the French Priest Père Jacques Hamel, who was murdered in France last week by two muslim youths who claimed to be operating for ISIS.

In an online article that I found it says.

### **Fear Imposes Silence**

“The Cardinal also said that in the current social environment, fear becomes the driving force behind our choices, leaving people powerless to do good and resist evil. Political correctness imposes silence out of fear of offending, of stepping out of line with the way “proper” people think and speak.

This silence extends to parents, afraid to transmit values to their children, and extends to the “silence of the elite in the face of deviant behaviour, and the legalization of deviance.”

Just for the Irish situation you can look at that silence of the elite in the face of same-sex marriage and the legislation of same-sex marriage. The article continues.

“This pressure not to offend others leads to cowardice and abdication of duty, the Cardinal suggested, it imposes an unhealthy conformism.

“Above all do not annoy others, so as not to trigger conflicts, aggression, or even violence, by inconsiderate proposals or simply the expression of an opinion out of line with the image given us of a unified modern thought,”

Cardinal Vingt-Trois concluded his homily by urging the faithful to be courageous and to find their strength in the Lord.

“Though they fight against you, they shall not prevail, for I am with you, to save and rescue you, says the Lord. I will rescue you from the hand of the wicked, and ransom you from the power of the violent,”

“My rampart is God, the God of love,”

That's where the Cardinal was quoting the Prophet Jeremiah.

### **The Silence of Catholics on the Truths of Our Faith**

The Cardinal touches once again on this modern day problem of the silence of Catholics with regard to the Truths of the Catholic faith. If we look at Ireland, we saw this very clearly in Ireland last year whereby no Catholic, that I heard, who addressed the public media during the referendum campaign to destroy marriage as we know it, no Catholic was heard to voice the teaching of the Catholic church with regard to the sinfulness and disorderedness of active homosexual relationships. Many of the Catholics who spoke in public approved of corrupt and immoral legislation which gives recognition to same-sex sexual relationships and confers rights on them contrary to the natural law and contrary to right reason. Error and disorderedness has no rights!

In this climate, which is not new, whereby Catholics refuse to speak the Truths of Jesus Christ in the public square for fear of offending others, how do we expect our young people to have respect for the teachings of the Catholic Church? How do we expect them to know what marriage and life are about, if those who are Catholic and who are adults are afraid to tell them the truth and to speak the truth in public for fear of causing offence?

### **Our Young People are Being Led Astray**

We should not be surprised then to learn that the majority of our young people, who voted in the referendum, and who were obviously badly educated as regards the Catholic faith in their Catholic schools, that they voted for a position on marriage which is contrary to the Catholic Church's teachings.

I spoke this week to a young man in his early twenties who told me that once, his religion teacher in their religion class in a Catholic secondary school, in a rural town in Ireland, spent at least four weeks teaching them about contraception. She said that it was hard to believe in this day and age that the Church still said that contraception was wrong, thereby she implied to the young people in her class that the Church was wrong in what she teaches and that the Church should change. Now these are young people in a class situation so nobody's going to contradict the teacher. So the teacher is not contradicted and the Church's teachings are not defended, so the young people are being misled.

On another occasion, shortly after last years referendum I met with the mother of a nine year old girl. Her daughter was delighted with the result of the referendum. The mother told me that this nine year old girl had been taught in her local Catholic primary school, this is a primary school, that it was a good thing to change the definition of marriage and for the yes side to win in the referendum.

So when the yes side did win, this little nine year old girl is delighted thinking that this is a great victory, probably a victory for equality. Little does she understand that she has been misled, but at nine years old. In other words, the thinking of nine year old children is being corrupted in Catholic schools in Ireland.

### **The Truth Will set You Free**

Christ tells us that it is the Truth that sets us free, so, when Catholics refuse to speak the Truths of the Catholic faith in a clear and unambiguous manner, then they become part of the problem which enslaves our young people in half lived lives or in lives whereby they succumb to impurity and to other vices. When Catholic adults refuse to speak the Truth to young people, they lead those young people astray, and its not compassion. If you fear to offend the young people, it is not compassionate to allow them to end up in deviant behaviour because we're afraid to speak, because we don't want to offend.

We cannot blame our young people for what they believe and for how they behave in society when Catholic adults in their schools, and in public debates on marriage in our society, do not uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church. If Catholics do not uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church and still claim to be Catholic the young people will see this as hypocrisy. And young people have massive radars, they can detect hypocrisy at a great distance, and they do not like it. They can end up angry but also what happens is they end up confused. We cannot expect our young people to have a correct understanding of marriage when the Catholic Church's teachings on marriage are being contradicted by adult Catholics, in their schools and in the public square on the radio and television. The problem is not confined to the laity but, when it comes to children and young people, it is we the parents who are charged with forming them in the faith, and we will answer to God for how we have carried out this onerous duty that we have as parents. It's great to be a parent of children, as I've said before but the responsibility of the task is massive.

## **Parents are Responsible for Education their Children in the Faith**

If our young people are not upholding the Catholic faith then the parents must be doing something wrong. Yes other people can be at fault too but, we as parents, we're the ones who have to act when we see the young people going astray. First within our own family and then we have to try to exhort other families. It's why I founded the Legion of the Holy Family, to encourage Catholic families to live Catholic lives and to try to influence other people and to show them the value of living a Catholic life.

We have moved on a few generations since the second world war, but the young people whom Pope Pius XII noticed had changed after the second world war, they themselves became parents and began to influence the society in which they lived in greater and greater ways. After the war and probably on account of the war, the influence of materialism began to take a deep hold on the people. People wanted to be happy, they wanted to forget the war.

Pope Pius XII spoke of this on his visit to the Shrine of Lourdes in France to commemorate the centenary of Our Lady's visit there, that was in 1957. On this occasion he said

## **Our Lady Visits and Innocent Child in Lourdes**

“In a society which is barely conscious of the ills which assail it, which conceals its miseries and injustices beneath a prosperous, glittering, and trouble-free exterior, the Immaculate Virgin, whom sin has never touched, manifests herself to an innocent child. With a mother's compassion she looks upon this world redeemed by her Son's blood, where sin accomplishes so much ruin daily, and three times makes her urgent appeal: "Penance, penance, penance!" She even appeals for outward expressions: "Go kiss the earth in penance for sinners." And to this gesture must be added a prayer: "Pray to God for sinners."

As in the days of John the Baptist, as at the start of Jesus' ministry, this command, strong and rigorous, shows men the way which leads back to God: "Repent!" Who would dare to say that this appeal for the conversion of hearts is untimely today?"

So there the pope is speaking in 1957 and he speaks Christ's early words in His ministry, John the Baptist, 'repent'. Our Lady said the war would come if men did not stop offending God, so the call to repentance, to holiness. The pope then exhorts the faithful to return to a regular reception of the sacraments and to have regard for Christian morals in everyday life and he also asks the bishops and the priests to encourage the faithful in their efforts for the Christian renewal of society in response to Our Lady's appeal.

And then he speaks directly about the influence of materialism.

## **The Dangers of Materialism**

“This materialism is not confined to that condemned philosophy which dictates the policies and economy of a large segment of mankind. It rages also in a love of money which creates ever greater havoc as modern enterprises expand, and which, unfortunately, determines many of the decisions which weigh heavy on the life of the people. It finds expression in the cult of the body, in excessive desire for comforts, and in flight from all the austerities of life. It encourages scorn for human life, even for life which is destroyed before seeing the light of day.”

“This materialism is present in the unrestrained search for pleasure, which flaunts itself shamelessly and tries, through reading matter and entertainments, to seduce souls which are still pure. It shows

itself in lack of interest in one's brother, in selfishness which crushes him, in justice which deprives him of his rights -- in a word, in that concept of life which regulates everything exclusively in terms of material prosperity and earthly satisfactions.”

The pope then quotes Luke 12:19-20

"And I will say to my soul. the rich man said, Soul, thou hast many good things laid up for many years; take thy ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, Thou fool, this night do they demand thy soul of thee."

That was Luke 12:19-20 quoted by the pope in Lourdes in 1957.

### **Materialism is Rampant Today**

In our modern culture, materialism is still rampant and false compassion, and we have forgotten to teach our young people about the four last things; death; judgement; heaven and hell. One of results of this is that our young people no longer prioritise their lives according to the things of God, but according to the things of this world and they are not being helped by the Catholic adults who seek to engage their emotions rather than their intellects by promoting a watered down Catholicism which falsely proclaims that you can be both Catholic and worldly at the same time. It is as if we are trying to teach our young people that you can be 'cool' and be Catholic rather than exhorting them as Our Lady urged, at both Fatima and Lourdes, to follow the penitential path of self-sacrifice and holiness. Love of God and love of neighbour rather than love of self.

That's about all for this week. I hope that I've given you some food for thought and please God we will come back to this again next week to tease out more of these problems and to look at how we can bring our young people back to the full realisation of the beauty and goodness of Catholic marriage, and also to realise the importance of Catholic marriage for society. When our young people are delaying marriage what happens is the birth rate naturally starts to fall because they are getting married at a later age so these families will most likely have less children. As the birth rate starts to fall the society begins to disappear. Some demographers now looking at European society, they're actually predicting that in a couple of generations, that certain races will be in danger of extinction.

The other thing also then is that you have an influx, in order to keep the society and the economy going, you need to bring in people from outside, and the people from outside if they're coming in with another culture particularly a culture which is not Catholic, what you actually start seeing is the demise of Catholic society and the demise of the influence of the Church in the world, which is not good for society. And again as we go through these talks of a catechetical nature, we can look at what popes have said and what popes have taught about Catholic society and the importance of Catholic society for peace in the world.

So, we're on an adventure to look at some of these things and I'm always amazed as I read Catholic documents, especially the papal documents. Its very exciting, our Catholic faith is so rich and its so deep and this is also what saddens me that our young people are being deprived of these riches. They're being given, emotional treats, if you like, instead of being fed the Truth. Its also like you know Oh, be happy, don't be worried about all of those things you know God loves you. Of course God loves us but God also expects something of us and as we saw last week we're told the way to life is hard the gate is narrow.

So promoting an easy life and sending our young people down the wide road, is actually leading them towards perdition, whereas we need to be exhorting. I was speaking to a priest recently and he said we need to start using this word 'exhort' more, to exhort people, to encourage them, to help them to strive for holiness. So lets get on this adventure and over the next couple of weeks we'll just keep on looking, we'll delve more and more into Catholic teaching, about marriage, but ultimately because society is founded on marriage all things point back to that. As I said in the talks that I give, if we get marriage right, if we get the family right we will get society right.

All other efforts which do not address the problems that are facing families will be doomed to failure. We won't actually solve the problems in society unless and until we solve the problems within marriage and we start getting our young people back to early marriages, to discovering the beauty of marriage and the beauty of helping out in society.

That's all for today

I'm John Lacken

May God bless you

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