



‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’ The Legion of the Holy Family

Under the Patronage of
The Sacred Heart of Jesus
The Immaculate Heart of Mary
The Most Chaste Heart of St Joseph



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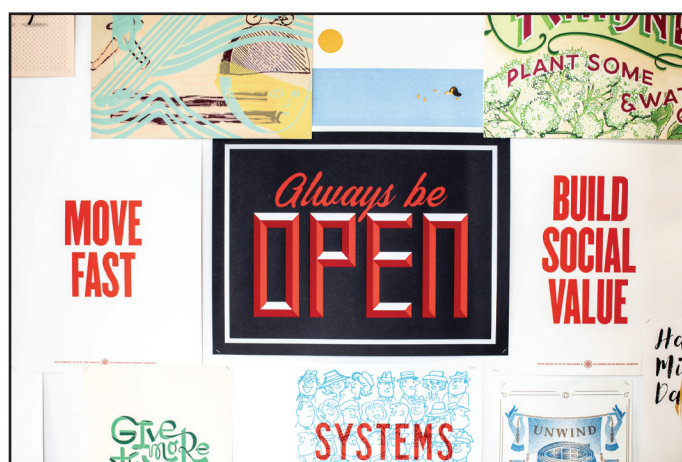
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We have seen how Pope Pius XI stresses the importance of correct education. In this next part of ‘*Divini Illius Magistri*’ he outlines some of the dangers that false thinking is wont to introduce into systems of education. There were many who did not accept what Pope Pius XI had to say and most of the errors he spoke of have been introduced into main stream education. We are currently witnessing the disastrous effects of these false methods of education upon children and young people, many of whom have lost their way in the world. Some will say that ‘*Divini Illius Magistri*’ is outdated, but Catholic truths regarding education are not relative to any particular time. Catholic Church teaching is as timeless as God Himself.

“Hence every form of pedagogic naturalism which in any way excludes or weakens supernatural Christian formation in the teaching of youth, is false. Every method of education founded, wholly or in part, on the denial or forgetfulness of original sin and of grace, and relying on the sole powers of human nature, is unsound. Such, generally speaking, are those modern systems bearing various names which appeal to a pretended self-government and unrestrained freedom on the part of the child, and which diminish or even suppress the teacher’s authority and action, attributing to the child an exclusive primacy of initiative, and an activity independent of any higher law, natural or divine, in the work of his education. (**Divini Illius Magistri 60**)

“If any of these terms are used, less properly, to denote the necessity of a gradually more active cooperation on the part of the pupil in his own education; if the intention is to banish from education despotism and violence, which, by the way, just punishment is not, this would be correct, but in no way new. It would mean only what has been taught and reduced to practice by the Church in traditional Christian education, in imitation of the method employed by God Himself towards His creatures, of whom He demands active cooperation according to the nature



of each; for His Wisdom “reaches from end to end mightily and orders all things sweetly.” (Wisdom 8:1) (**Divini Illius Magistri 61**)

Pope Pius XI is pointing out that the Catholic Church is well aware that children develop. The Church, better than anyone, understands that consciences must be formed over time and that it takes time for children to grow in virtue. Part of the purpose of Catholic education is to teach children how to become responsible adults who will follow God’s moral code as given to the Catholic Church.

“But alas! it is clear from the obvious meaning of the words and from experience, that what is intended by not a few, is the withdrawal of education from every sort of dependence on the divine law. So today we see, strange sight indeed, educators and philosophers who spend their lives in searching for a universal moral code of education, as if there existed no Decalogue, no gospel law, no law even of nature stamped by God on the heart of man, promulgated by right reason, and codified in positive revelation by God Himself in the ten commandments. These innovators are wont to refer contemptuously to Christian education as “heteronomous,” “passive,” “obsolete,” because founded upon the authority of God and His holy law.” (**Divini Illius Magistri 62**)

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Since Pope Pius XI wrote the above in 1929, there has been a systematic expunging of the Catholic moral code from education systems around the world. The 'Catholic' school systems have also been affected with false theories of education. In the English speaking world, Thomas Groome, a laicised Catholic priest, has done huge damage with his theory of 'Shared Christian Praxis', which has been almost universally adopted in the Catholic schools of the English speaking world. In a 1992 review of Thomas Groome's book, "Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision", Fr Donald Keefe, S.J. wrote:

"Since its first publication a dozen years ago, this book has been widely used in Catholic catechetical formation, and has won for its author a prominent position among professional religious educators. This is an outcome more than unfortunate, for Groome's work betrays not so much the near-total ignorance of the Catholic Church which its cursory reading might suggest, but rather, a thoroughgoing strategy for the deconstruction of the *res Catholica* — a strategy whose success is now apparent in the freshmen classes of contemporary Catholic colleges and universities whose members display quite uniformly a complete unfamiliarity with, and frequently a disinterest in and disaffection from, the Catholic tradition in which they were for the most part reared. (As quoted by Msgr. Michael J. Wrenn in his introduction to Eamon Keane's book 'A Generation Betrayed - 2002)

In 2022 the Irish bishops' conference hosted a webinar in the 'Together Along The Way' series with Thomas Groome as the keynote speaker. The sorry state of Catholic education in Ireland comes as no surprise to Catholic parents who are aware of the direction taken by the Irish bishops.

"Such men are miserably deluded in their claim to emancipate, as they say, the child, while in reality they are making him the slave of his own blind pride and of his disorderly affections, which, as a logical consequence of this false system, come to be justified as legitimate demands of a so-called autonomous nature." **(Divini Illius Magistri 63)**

The LGBT ideology, which is causing huge damage to children, leads children to think that they can decide their own gender. Part of the reason that these children and young people believe what they believe is that they have been deprived of a truly Catholic education both at home and in the Catholic schools they attend.

"But what is worse is the claim, not only vain but false, irreverent and dangerous, to submit to research, experiment and conclusions of a purely natural and profane order, those matters of education which belong to the supernatural order; as for example questions of priestly or religious vocation, and in general the secret workings of grace which indeed elevate the natural powers, but are infinitely superior



TOGETHER ALONG
THE WAY

Conversations on
Catholic Faith Formation
in Contemporary Ireland



Ireland's Bishops hosted an online conference with Thomas Groome in May, 2022

to them, and may nowise be subjected to physical laws, for "the Spirit breathes where He will." (John 3:8) **(Divini Illius Magistri 64)**

The supernatural outlook is very much absent from our Catholic schools and from our once Catholic societies.

"Another very grave danger is that naturalism which nowadays invades the field of education in that most delicate matter of purity of morals. Far too common is the error of those who with dangerous assurance and under an ugly term propagate a so-called sex-education, falsely imagining they can forearm youths against the dangers of sensuality by means purely natural, such as a foolhardy initiation and precautionary instruction for all indiscriminately, even in public; and, worse still, by exposing them at an early age to the occasions, in order to accustom them, so it is argued, and as it were to harden them against such dangers. **(Divini Illius Magistri 65)**

I have spoken before about the Irish bishops' conference promoting the 'Flourish' programme in Catholic primary schools. This programme asks teachers to show a sexually explicit cartoon video to children as young as eleven or twelve, in a classroom setting. The video was produced for Ireland's largest abortion provider, the Health Services Executive.

"Such persons grievously err in refusing to recognize the inborn weakness of human nature, and the law of which the Apostle speaks, fighting against the law of the mind; (Romans 7:23) and also in ignoring the experience of facts, from which it is clear that, particularly in young people, evil practices are the effect not so much of ignorance of intellect as of weakness of a will exposed to dangerous occasions, and unsupported by the means of grace. **(Divini Illius Magistri 66)**

Modern societies tend to tolerate and to promote the exposing of children to matters of a sexual nature from a very young age. These children are at an age where their wills are not strong enough to be able

to resist temptations. These children are not aware of the dangers. This is why it is the solemn duty of parents to be eternally vigilant in regards to what their children are being exposed to in schools and other social settings.

“In this extremely delicate matter, if, all things considered, some private instruction is found necessary and opportune, from those who hold from God the commission to teach and who have the grace of state, every precaution must be taken. Such precautions are well known in traditional Christian education, and are adequately described by Antoniano cited above, when he says:

“Such is our misery and inclination to sin, that often in the very things considered to be remedies against sin, we find occasions for and inducements to sin itself. Hence it is of the highest importance that a good father, while discussing with his son a matter so delicate, should be well on his guard and not descend to details, nor refer to the various ways in which this infernal hydra destroys with its poison so large a portion of the world; otherwise it may happen that instead of extinguishing this fire, he unwittingly stirs or kindles it in the simple and tender heart of the child. Speaking generally, during the period of childhood it suffices to employ those remedies which produce the double effect of opening the door to the virtue of purity and closing the door upon vice.”
(Cardinal Silvio Antonio, Dell ‘educazione cristiana dei figliuoli, book II, page 88) **(Divini Illius Magistri 67)**

This is probably the area that is causing most damage to children in our day. So many adults ignore the reality of ‘Original Sin’ which leads to man having a darkened intellect and a proneness to sin. The children who are exposed to materials of a sexual nature from an early age, grow to adulthood with weakened wills and a lack of understanding of human sexuality. The current culture, where modern technology provides easy access to pornography and other evils, further enslaves men to the corruption of their sexual nature. This in turn is what has led to the promotion of abortion, so that any children conceived as a result of immoral sexual activity can be put to death. The worst outcome is the loss of those souls who fall into a state of habitual mortal sin. There are few who know how to guide those who have thus fallen, because so many have compromised with the world against Catholic Church teaching.

“False also and harmful to Christian education is the so-called method of “coeducation.” This too, by many of its supporters, is founded upon naturalism and the denial of original sin; but by all, upon a deplorable confusion of ideas that mistakes a leveling promiscuity and equality, for the legitimate association of the sexes. The Creator has ordained and disposed perfect union of the sexes only in matrimony, and, with varying degrees of contact, in the family and in society.



Besides there is not in nature itself, which fashions the two quite different in organism, in temperament, in abilities, anything to suggest that there can be or ought to be promiscuity, and much less equality, in the training of the two sexes. These, in keeping with the wonderful designs of the Creator, are destined to complement each other in the family and in society, precisely because of their differences, which therefore ought to be maintained and encouraged during their years of formation, with the necessary distinction and corresponding separation, according to age and circumstances. These principles, with due regard to time and place, must, in accordance with Christian prudence, be applied to all schools, particularly in the most delicate and decisive period of formation, that, namely, of adolescence; and in gymnastic exercises and deportment, special care must be had of Christian modesty in young women and girls, which is so gravely impaired by any kind of exhibition in public. **(Divini Illius Magistri 68)**

I would imagine that those of us who agree with Pope Pius XI on this point are few in number. Most people do not see any harm in co-education, where boys and girls are educated together. Again, this comes from a denial of the effects of Original Sin. In the push for a false equality which denies the obvious differences between men and women, it is forgotten that men and women, aside from having different complimentary strengths, also have different weaknesses. God has also ordained different roles for men and women within the family. The husband is the head of his wife. The wife must submit to the authority of the husband. Children must submit to the authority of their parents.

It is God who ordained that both the Catholic Church and civil society be founded on a hierarchical structure. Neither the Catholic Church nor civil society can function in an ordered way without this hierarchy of authority. Of course authority can be abused, however the abuse of authority does not mean that the structures of authority should be abolished. The authority of both the Catholic Church and of civil society has its foundation in the moral law which in turn is based on the ten commandments. The abandonment of this moral authority will lead to chaos and the collapse of civil society. This collapse is fast approaching and it will affect the Catholic Church as well.