



‘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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John Lacken

‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’

Thank You!

I would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to all of you who have supported me with your prayers and your generous donations as I launched *‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’* - The Legion of the Holy Family.

For those of you who are familiar with my writings, you will be aware that I believe that traditional Catholic Church teaching on marriage and family life is the only long term solution to the problems which beset our society and western civilisation.

Since 2008, I have wanted to begin an organisation which would maintain a singular focus on all matters relating to the Catholic understanding of marriage and family life; to promote this understanding to young people in particular so as to encourage them in getting married; and to present talks on the Catholic understanding of marriage and family life with a view to helping Catholic families in their great undertaking of raising Saints for the Kingdom of God.

On the 26th September 2008, I wrote to Archbishop Michael Neary of the Tuam Archdiocese, telling him of my desire to found *“Legio Sanctae Familiae”*, and he responded as follows.

“I would wish, if I might, to congratulate you on your faith and initiative in bringing this plan of yours to a stage of practical beginning. Assuming, as I know I may, that you will be working in full communion with the Church, both local and universal, I wish you every blessing and success.

There is a great need for support, especially spiritual support, for families in Ireland. This work you have undertaken will require very great patience and understanding of situations which, to say the least, are often less than perfect.

The Blessing of *‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’*

I will pray that you find ever more means to communicate with and serve these fragile families with the sometimes heroic levels of tact and diplomacy often required and always so difficult to balance with Gospel forthrightness. It is a remarkable calling, which I hope will prosper and yield a rich harvest.”

Archbishop Neary was right when he said that it would require a great deal of patience. Back in 2008, my wife and I were still in the middle of rearing a family of eight children, aged from 19 down to 6 years of age. We began home schooling some of our children in 2005 and by 2008, six of them were being home schooled. I was also working a full time secular job in order to pay the bills. Life was at a very busy stage and there was very little time to put into the building up of a family organisation.

The attacks against traditional Catholic families kept growing, and I realised that I needed to keep my focus on protecting my wife and children from these dangers. I also needed to increase my own limited understanding of Catholic Church teaching on marriage and family life, before I could share this with others.

I worked briefly for Aid to the Church in Need on a project in Knock, and I also worked for Human Life International for one year and helped to relocate their main office to Knock. This gave me valuable insights into how a Catholic organisation is run.

In 2013, I began writing for Catholic Voice and continued to write a fortnightly article for almost nine years. I worked for almost five years helping to set up and establish The Lumen Fidei Institute, from 2017 until June of this year.

I had been giving talks around Ireland since 2016, but in 2020, the country was locked down and it was impossible to give talks, or even to get to Holy Mass, but the need for a clear exposition of traditional Catholic Church teaching on marriage and family life was growing more and more urgent. This urgency was highlighted in 2015, by the passing of a referendum and subsequent legislation which gave sinful same-sex relationships in Ireland the same legal standing as Catholic sacramental marriages.

Then in 2018, another referendum allowed the Irish Government to legislate for abortion, with, ‘The Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018’, coming into effect on the 1st of January, 2019. In 2019 there were 6,666 abortions recorded in Ireland under the new legislation. In 2020 a further 6,577 were recorded. The latest abortion report for 2021 records 4,577 abortions in Ireland, to give a total of 17,820 innocent human beings who were murdered by the Irish government. However, the Irish government issued a note with the 2021 figures in which they stated that the cyber attack on the HSE databases may have contributed to the lower number of cases recorded, as the claims for the second consultation required for early abortions came to 6,700 in 2021,

which was higher than the number of abortions reported and was in line with previous year's figures. This would push the figure of those murdered by the Irish government to 19,943 over the first three years of the abortion legislation.

It is grotesque to publish the figures of those murdered by abortion in such a casual manner, but this is part of the diabolical plan to normalise abortion in the minds of the public, especially in the minds of the younger generations. The Irish Government, in publishing these abortion figures, is also declaring its compliance with the demands of the global organisers and funders of population control, who see abortion as part of their eugenic solution to what they perceive as a global population problem. They believe that too many of the wrong sorts of people are being born and they seek to change this.

Unfortunately, the minds of our young people have been largely captured by the population controllers who have managed to infiltrate their agenda into the public school systems, including the Catholic schools. The evidence for this was made startlingly clear in Ireland in the 2018 referendum on abortion, where an Irish Times exit poll reported that 87% of the 18 - 24 years old cohort who voted, endorsed the killing of innocent human beings in their mothers' wombs. These young people saw this as a progressive and caring move, and many of them still do not understand that their votes have directly led to the deaths of almost 20,000 innocent human beings over a three year period. Many of them do not care because they no longer practice the Catholic faith.

The urgency to promote and defend traditional Catholic Church teaching on marriage and family life also comes from what is happening within the Catholic Church. There is a growing, heretical movement within the Catholic Church, which has gained a lot of administrative power, and which seeks to overthrow infallible Catholic Church teachings relating to marriage and family life. This movement, which has high powered and influential cardinals, bishops and priests as members, regularly undermines Catholic Church teaching on contraception, on the indissolubility of marriage, and on the disordered nature of homosexual acts and relationships. Many of these attacks are presented in the subtle way of the father of lies, claiming to promote good whilst actually promoting evil, in practice. Bishops in Belgium, even went so far as to publish a blessing for homosexual couples on September 20th of this year.

Saint Paul's words to Saint Timothy come to mind.

"I charge thee, before God and Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, by his coming, and his kingdom: Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine.

For there shall be a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables.

Opposing Lies - Promoting Truth - Restoring the Faith

But be thou vigilant, labour in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. Be sober. For I am even now ready to be sacrificed: and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:1-7)

We are living in a time where men have turned away their hearing from the truth. Where, for example, standing up for the truth that, boys cannot become girls and girls cannot become boys, can land you in jail, indefinitely. Where men who dress as women in an exaggerated fashion and who often perform in erotic adult shows, are invited to read stories to children and to address the students in Catholic secondary schools. Where a diocesan youth organisation in Ireland, with a Catholic priest as chairman, promotes free condoms to 17 year old children.

It would be easy to become despondent or to walk away from the fight, because the odds are stacked against us, but, like Saint Timothy, we must continue to bear witness to the beautiful truths of our Catholic faith and we must continue to “fight the good fight”.

As many of you know, we were recently given notice to leave our house in County Mayo. Thank you so much for your prayers for this situation. Your prayers were answered in a spectacular way, and we recently moved to County Clare. I had been praying that we would be able to move close enough to Sacred Heart Church, in Limerick city. This former Jesuit church, is now owned by the Institute of Christ the King, Sovereign Priest.

My son, Abbé Raphael Lacken, has just entered his third year of priestly formation at the Institutes’s seminary in Gricigliano, in Florence. Please keep him and the other seminarians in your prayers. For the first time in more than two and a half years, I have been able to attend daily Holy Mass and, for the first time in my life, it is daily Holy Mass in Latin.



Abbé Raphael Lacken

The reason I mention this here, is because of the history of Sacred Heart Church in Limerick. This church was opened by the Jesuits in January of 1869 and they remained there for one hundred and thirty seven years, until 2006. The Church was then sold to a private owner for commercial use. There were rumours that it was going to be turned into a shopping centre or a spa and leisure centre.

A group of devotees of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who used to attend and promote the Sacred Heart Devotions every Friday night in Sacred Heart Church in Limerick, and who were shocked at its closure, kept up the Friday night Sacred Heart devotions in another chapel for the more than six years of its closure. Some of them prayed for the reopening of Sacred Heart Church.

The plans to commercially develop Sacred Heart Church in Limerick fell through, and the Church was put back up for sale in 2011. The Institute of Christ the King, Sovereign Priest, who had been travelling from Italy to celebrate a weekly Latin Mass in St Patrick's Church in Limerick, purchased Sacred Heart Church in 2012.



Sacred Heart Church - September 2012

Our family had often made the more than two hour journey to St Patrick's Church in Limerick from Knock to attend the Latin Mass on Sundays, and I was invited to see the newly purchased Sacred Heart Church. I managed to pay a visit in September 2012. There were no seats inside the church, the paint was peeling from the walls in several places, the tabernacle was gone, and apart from the high altar, the church was just a shell. A local photographer, Michael O'Brien, posted a haunting video on You-tube titled "Former Jesuit Church & Residence, Limerick". You can still watch the video if you Google the title. The video shows how dilapidated the church and residence had become.

This church could be seen as a symbol of the state of the Catholic faith in Ireland. Yet, instead of focusing on how bad things were, the Institute of Christ the King saw the potential. They saw the house of God which He used to frequent every day at Holy Mass and where he resided in the tabernacle for one hundred and thirty seven years, in a state of disrepair. They decided to restore God's house and to invite Jesus to return through the sacraments of His Catholic Church.



The flaking paint is removed

Ten years have passed and the restoration continues. At some point in the history of this church, it was decided to paint over all of the intricate stencilled artwork in the church. Today, this beautiful hand painted artwork is being restored and updated with the crests of the Institute of Christ the King and their patron saints.



Restored artwork on Church Ceiling

During the last week of September this year, the scaffolding was moved from the centre of the church to the sanctuary, revealing the amazing detail of the restoration of the artwork to date. It is incredible to witness the restoration of this Catholic Church and it gives me great hope, because it shows just what is possible when we seek first the Kingdom of God and strive to give glory to Him. Please pray for the Institute of Christ the King's mission in Ireland, for their priests, their sister adorers of the Royal Heart of Jesus, and their seminarians.

‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’ News

The restoration of Sacred Heart Church in Limerick reminds us that our society is also in need of restoration, to bring souls back to Jesus Christ and to His Catholic Church. We can tend to take the saying that, “the fundamental unit of society is the family”, for granted. We see that the traditional Catholic understanding of family is under attack on a global scale, and yet very little is being done to protect the traditional Catholic family, with many of those who claim to have a concern for the family being the very ones who are destroying families. The attacks are coming both from within and without the Catholic Church, the most worrying of these being those from within. The fundamental unit of the Catholic Church is also the traditional Catholic family so, it is no wonder that Sister Lucia of Fatima wrote the following to Cardinal Carlo Caffarra.

“The final battle between the Lord and the kingdom of Satan will be about marriage and the family. Do not be afraid, because anyone who works for the sanctity of marriage and the family will always be fought and opposed in every way, because this is the decisive issue. However, Our Lady has already crushed his head.” (Sister Lucia of Fatima to Cardinal Carlo Caffara – circa 1984)

When I decided to set up *‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’* on my own this year, there were a few times when I questioned my own sanity, because I was starting out with nothing. Thank God that I have a spiritual father to discuss these things with. He encouraged me to “step out in faith”, praying that, “the Holy Spirit may achieve His work in and through you.” He finished by saying - “Trust until you bust!”

Ultimately, it is God who desires the promotion of the traditional Catholic family for the increase of His Heavenly Kingdom, by raising Saints in the Catholic Church. God does not need me for this work, and yet, I am convinced that this is what He wants me to do. The house that we now live in and which we came by through an extraordinary set of circumstances, was formally consecrated to the Holy Family last year and dedicated to the work of God by its owners. It now houses *‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’* - The Legion of the Holy Family - which is dedicated to the Holy Family and seeks to promote traditional Catholic Church teaching on marriage and family life under the guidance of the Holy Family, in order to revitalise both the Catholic Church and our society and culture.

I contacted some people to see if anybody was interested in financially supporting this venture and to get it off the ground, and thank God, enough people responded for me to take the next step.

When I launched *‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’* this year, I set out five elements for what I called the first phase.

1. A Handbook for Catholic Family Life
2. One Meeting in Every County in Ireland
3. Our Lady of Banada Prayer Association
4. Online and Video Apostolate
5. Traditional Catholic Family Networks

Our Lady of Banada Prayer Association

Being an apostolate, the priority must be prayer, and so I set to work designing a leaflet and a prayer card for Our Lady of Banada Prayer Association. I also had some A4 images of the statue of Our Lady of Banada printed, which are suitable for framing. The story of the conversion of Freddie Jones, through his mother's prayers to Our Lady of Banada, is an inspiring story. I meet so many people, parents in particular, who lament the fact that their children or other family members have left the faith. I too am touched by this cross and I realise the power of, and the need for, prayers for our family members. We are asking Our Lady of Banada to go after the 'lost sheep' in our families and to bring them back to the Catholic Church.

So I began sending out a few of the leaflets and to date, with very little publicity, thank God, there are almost 400 names on the monthly Holy Mass intentions list for the conversion of family members.



A Handbook for Catholic Family Life

I am currently writing up the handbook for Catholic Family Life and, thank God, it is almost finished. There were delays because we had to move house, with all the disruption that entails. There are four parts to the book. The first part goes through traditional Catholic Church teaching on marriage and family life, from scriptures and from the magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church.

The second part takes a brief look at the fruits of marriage. The third part looks at the global attacks on traditional families and where they are coming from, and the final part looks at how Catholics, especially parents, can work to defend their families and to re-build our society and our Catholic culture. The solutions proffered are not short-term quick fixes for a broken world, they are a long term project which will take generations to fulfil. The sooner we start this work the better.

Once the book is written, I will have to send it for review and then I will have to find a publisher. I am hoping that one of the American Catholic publishers will take on the project. Please pray for this intention so that the Catholic Church's traditional teachings on marriage and family life will become well known and widely practised once again.

One Meeting in Every County in Ireland

To date, people from five different counties in Ireland have contacted me with a view to having me give a talk in their county. I am happy to visit anywhere in Ireland, North or South, to give a talk on marriage and family life, focusing on the challenges and the necessary solutions. Whilst I really need to finish the book, I will leave it all in God's hands and if someone is ready and can gather a minimum of 10 people I am happy to come and give a talk.

The final two elements of what I called the first phase, the online and video apostolate and the traditional Catholic family networks, are somewhat dependent on the completion of the book. These too should develop over time.

How Can I Help Or Become Involved?

The greatest need that I have at present, is your prayers for me, for my family, and for this work of "*Legio Sanctae Familiae*". Sister Lucia wrote that, "anyone who works for the sanctity of marriage and the family will always be fought and opposed in every way, because this is the decisive issue."

Traditional marriage and family life is under attack globally, with very powerful forces in the spiritual, Catholic, and secular order, mounting what they believe to be the final offensive against the Catholic Church. We do not need to fear, because we know that in the end, Our Lady's Immaculate Heart will triumph, but we must make sure that we have on the armour of God and that we are striving to live holy lives with frequent recourse to the sacraments of confession and Holy Communion and a deep prayer life.

I was very blessed to have had the generous support of a few donors in setting up '*Legio Sanctae Familiae*'. I now need to establish regular contributions from those who wish to support this work. I am now financially dependent on '*Legio Sanctae Familiae*' and I have no other source of income other than from those who wish to support the work. Again, I trust in the providence of God to see to it that regular supporters will come forward. The whole world benefits when traditional Catholic families are free to live their lives raising saints for God's Kingdom and we have a promise from Christ that when we seek "first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."

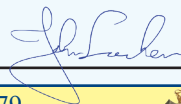
There is a form included with this newsletter, which you can use if you are in a position to make a financial contribution to '*Legio Sanctae Familiae*'. All donations are gratefully received, regardless of how small, and bigger donations are also welcome.

You can also help by ordering some of the leaflets of Our Lady of Banada Prayer Association. You could order 10 to see how you get on and more if you think you will be able to distribute them.

If you are in a position to help to organise a talk in your area with people who would be interested in learning about traditional Catholic Church teachings on marriage and family life and how to combat the assaults on children and families, then please get in touch and we can work out a suitable date and venue.

Finally, if you would like to promote "*Legio Sanctae Familiae*" and help to grow this apostolate, then please contact me for more of these newsletters which you can give to your friends. You can also send me the names of anyone you know who might be interested and I will post out a newsletter to them.

Thank you and May God bless you for your support.



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