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The two purposes of marriage

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The second session of the Synod on the Family is close at hand. Three interlinked questions require further discussion at this session: they are the conjugal union, marriage and the family. We have in effect reached a period in the history of humanity in which, beyond doubt for the first time, we are witnessing a radical questioning of marriage and the family. The target in the line of sight is marriage and the family, with their twofold purpose: the *unitive* purpose and the *procreative* purpose of the union of a man and woman. Their destruction will lead to the disintegration of human society as a whole. It is the entire human family which is now being attacked, undermined and distorted by hostile ideological currents.

To manufacture children?

The most evident of these complex currents is the *hedonist* current which, in the conjugal union, *separates* the unitive from the procreative purpose.

On the one hand, this current *unilaterally exalts* certain *unitive* actions and behaviour in the couple, to the exclusion of procreative behaviour. The *unitive* dimension places the emphasis on pleasure and hedonist and utilitarian individualism. Observe what has happened with contraception. There is no more an openness to the other, there is no more a recognition of the identity of the other, of the difference which distinguishes me from the other. Each wishes to do what he/she desires

to do. This is the identitarian closure of the self on itself: contraception bolts in the relationship with the other.

On the other hand, the dissociation, the separation of the two purposes of marriage throws the door wide open to *unilateral* exaltation of the procreative purpose, to the exclusion of the unitive effects. The creation of life is then held to be a matter of technology, in which the amorous embrace of a man and woman has no part.

These unitive behaviours and procreative technologies could come under the control of public authorities. We run the risk of finding ourselves in the near future in a society in which there has ceased to be a place for responsible love. If necessary, parents will be completely stripped of authority, rights and duties vis-à-vis their children. Why should children not be entrusted to education, on which the public authorities claim a monopoly?

The voluntarist dissociation of the two purposes of the conjugal union is the focal point addressed in the encyclical *Humanae vitae* (1968), the synodal exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (1981) and numerous magisterial documents, including the directive *Donum vitae* (1987) and the study *The Family and human procreation* (2006). If the two purposes of the conjugal union, and the marriage which seals that union, are separated, the outcome of this radical and engineered dissociation could be we know not what.

As soon as the *unitive* purpose alone is vaunted, one rapidly falls into all kinds of sexual practices: homosexuality, lesbianism, fornication, etc. There is no longer a place for fidelity, because what matters is pleasure alone, the interest of each individual. Man ceases to be a person, a being capable of opening himself freely to another person; he is an individual in search of his own enjoyment.

If, conversely, the *procreative* purpose alone is exalted, there will be other consequences, for example medically-assisted procreation, surrogate pregnancies, technalisation of the transmission of life to the point *where we will arrive at genetic modification of the human being*. Man will no longer be constructed in a loving home. There will no longer be maternity, or paternity: in consequence, there will no longer be consanguinity. With the proclaimed arrival of the artificial uterus, soon it will no longer be necessary for a woman to carry a baby in her womb.

All these processes are evidently the outcome of lengthy and complex experimentation. Abortions are rendered «necessary» in order to resolve the «failures». An example of a failure? The intolerable arrival of a being one does not want, precisely in the name of the unilateral exaltation of the unitive purpose. But abortions are also «necessary» because they are highly «useful» to the procreative purpose, which it is desired to exalt. Hence, embryos produced *in vitro* and subsequently implanted will be closely monitored during their gestation. If abnormalities are discovered, they will be aborted. It must be remembered here that the incidence of abnormalities is higher in *in vitro* fertilisations than in natural fertilisations. However, a superfluity of embryos is indeed "inescapable" for experimentation with embryo stem cells.

Under the pressure of hedonist ideologies, children are created *pro rata* to the pleasure of the partners, the necessities of society, as defined by «experts», economists, demographers, politicians and technocrats with a strong ideological bias. Selection is enshrined in this technalisation; it is in the logic of the liberal ideology to select: the product must be flawless, otherwise it is discarded. One is aware of racial selection; here, what counts is political, economic selection, the quality of the manufactured product. The man and woman become

alienated from one another: they transfer to machines and incubators the manufacture of children. Ultimately it will be possible for the child, the manufactured product, to be bought, sold, chosen from a catalogue.

Just as there must be «safe» abortion, there will also have to be «safe» procreation. It will be necessary to «liberate» the woman from her capacity to procreate because natural procreation is too risky. At present, many women do not have children because procreation is regarded as unsafe.

Hence, the way is clear to the prolongation of a sensual life, liberated from conjugal and parental constraints. The transmission of life will no longer take place in a human perspective; it will obey ideological planning constraints. Finally, at the other end of life, we will soon have mass euthanasia.

The challenge of transhumanism

These are some of the challenges observable in current debates on *transhumanism*: the new technologies – we are assured – offer man the means to dispose of the body and manufacture superhumans. If you please! In brief, we are witnessing the rapid rise of a new eugenics, more precisely the construction of new «human» beings, genetically modified and hybridised with machines. This hybridisation between the living body and dead matter is irreversible. We are witnessing the irreversible destruction of the integrity of the human body. Decidedly, the culture of death extends everywhere ...

Today, even in certain so-called Catholic hospitals, procedures such as abortion, medically-assisted procreation and embryo research, not forgetting euthanasia, etc, are practised. How many voices, in the laity, clergy and episcopate, are being raised to urge reconsideration of these practices? In the face of this mutism, it is above all necessary to

assert the indissociable nature of the purposes of the conjugal union and marriage. In effect, it is the separation of these two purposes which throws the door wide open to the multiple abuses we are today experiencing. The perverse effects of separation of the two purposes of marriage go far beyond the intimate sphere in which the separation begins. Those who attack *Humanae vitae*, *Familiaris consortio*, *Donum vitae* and other magisterial documents must have sensed that, in the teaching of the Church, it is not sufficient to assert why the Church refuses contraception and abortion, nor why the Church challenges the ideology of gender; this ideology is merely one of the avatars of the dissociation we are facing. It must therefore be demonstrated that, once separation of the two purposes of the conjugal union is allowed, all the possibilities offered by technologies and incubators allowed in law will be available without safeguards.

With regard to those who, in the Church, are battling for this scission to be allowed, they must be aware that they run the risk of triggering a schism for which they will have to account before God and before man.

The Terror, yesterday and today

The discussion instigated here does not merely concern the Christians of today and their adversaries. The individualist currents underpinning the abuses we invoke above were first developed in Great Britain, always the intellectual leader in these matters, then in the United States, the strategists of world eugenics and a country in which physicians kill, without arousing discussion. In equal measure, these currents were propagated from Germany. Let us at least remember that it was in that country that ideologies celebrating racism and eugenics, and also euthanasia, were promulgated and put into practice.

However, these same currents developed in particular in France in the Age of Enlightenment. It was in France that a powerful current exalting the individual, the «subject», his reason, his liberty, his right to pleasure, his passions, was formed, developed and exported. France became the world torch-bearer for Republican secularity. In its different articulations, revealed religion was rejected. Man progresses, we were assured, by relying purely on his reason and on his experience; space must be given to civil religion or atheism. Passions must be ordered to maximise the gamut of sensual delights. The right to erotic pleasure, at times brought to a paroxysm including the right to destroy, is claimed and reinforced by the rejection of God. From his dungeon, the divine Marquis did not lack an audience and guaranteed his own posterity.

However, once God is killed or if one behaves as if God does not exist, it is difficult to find a foundation for the law. This was one of the major difficulties of Illuminism, in the French style. Since the XVIIIth century, a significant and influential section of the French intelligentsia has striven, in the name of liberty, to find a place for the Terror in public life. With stupefying obstinacy, the politically correct history books hand down the revolutionary vulgate from generation to generation.

However, a review of this vulgate is necessary, even if it proves disturbing. The media and public opinion have recently, and with good reason, risen up in the face of beheadings and other acts of barbarism perpetrated by adherents of integrist Islam. It is however dishonest to conceal, as in political harangues and textbooks, that it was the masters of the guillotine who were among the first to practice mass beheadings and export their expertise. This cruel practice is again observable today. Proud of their Voltairian ancestry, the forces of secularity brandish, as a lugubrious trophy, the figure of 200,000 abortions a year in France. Revolutionary terrorism has rooted itself firmly in the name of liberty. For

good measure, France is seizing every opportunity to proclaim itself the «Birthplace of Human Rights», a glaring historical error, yet useful in the cause of arrogant messianism and preaching.

The question of evil, today

In the current situation, the question of evil is posed as never before. Of course, there are remarkable attempts to analyse evil, as presented in the major totalitarian ideologies of the XXth century. A disturbance of reason has frequently been invoked. Yet today, in the name of a perversion of liberty, now disoriented, we are confronted with an attempt without precedent in the history of humanity: an attempt to destroy humanity itself, to destroy the capacity which man naturally has: the capacity to love. Refusal to acknowledge the plan of God for man! The end result of this destruction will be destruction of the body of man through the irreversible destruction of his genetic integrity. *This is the greatest tragedy in the history of humanity.*

Not long ago, Hillary Clinton asked the UN to proclaim a universal right to abortion. Beware the perversion which threatens the law: How can one reduce a human being to an object of which one can dispose to the point of destruction? A human being is welcomed, is respected: it is not the subject of a law; the jurists say it is not disposable. I have the right to buy bread, a car or a house. But I do not have the right, I who am a human being, to kill someone, to eliminate another human being. Now, from the moment of dissociation of these purposes, *anything at all* becomes not only legalisable, but also legal; the law itself is thereby distorted. At the same time, medicine is also perverted given that, instead of seeking to cure, improve health, relieve suffering, it consents to be placed in the service of death, before and after birth. In Belgium, during the debate on the euthanasia of children (in 2014), legislation was

drawn up: the law was passed without a problem; there were but few protests, although it was the future of humanity which was at stake in all these debates.

To protect natural morality

All these new questions cannot be resolved by casuistry such as this: «In this case one can abort, in that case one cannot abort: in this case one can euthanase, in the other case, one cannot euthanase». One limits oneself to settling individual matters of conscience without reference to the fundamental principles of morality. This casuistry is to some extent the precursor of situational morality. What is necessary is to go right to the core of the problem and discover, in the division of the purposes of marriage, the roots of the action of Satan, today, in the history of humanity and in the hearts of men.

Moreover, one further observation must be made regarding the casuistry to which we refer above. The Church finds itself in an astonishing situation. Senior prelates, primarily from opulent nations, are attempting to modify Christian morality concerning the divorced and remarried and other problematic situations, some of which had been cited here. These Guardians of the Faith should however not lose sight of the fact that the fundamental problem posed by the division of the two purposes of marriage is a problem of *natural* morality. It is at the *natural* level that man and woman are called upon to come together to bear witness to their love and procreate. It is this natural reality that the Lord has raised to the dignity of a sacrament. Faced with the powers which are currently undermining the family, *the Church should discover in itself the vocation to be the sole authority in a position to save human sexuality and the natural institution of marriage and the family.* It is not simply a matter of saving Christian morality; it is necessary to save and

protect *natural* morality. It should not therefore be the case that, through their specious casuistical methods, Catholics of all ranks and all ages are contributing to the destruction of *natural* morality. The major abuses have arisen when certain Catholic intellectuals have begun to say and write: «A green light for abortion, for homosexual unions, for euthanasia, etc». Now, from the moment Catholics jump on this fatal bandwagon, they contribute to the destruction of the *natural* institution of marriage. It is the entire human community which is being split by this new «betrayal by clerics».

A key question is worth posing here: is the Magisterium of the Church competent to *modify* natural morality? The reduction of natural morality to a purely casuistical morality has the backing of certain theologians and pastors for reduction of the law founded on the nature of man. In a recent action which attracted wide media coverage, it was declared on several occasions that the law should have nothing to do with morality. Henceforth, there is no law other than purely positive law, proceeding from the sole will of the legislator. If this is the case, there is no longer a law innate to man, quite simply because he is man. There are only rights defined by political, national, international and world authorities. *One shudders when one thinks that the generalisation of such a law would be a prelude to the inauguration of a «global», that is world, society, forged by the will of the strongest.*

In brief, instead of protecting the family unit from fragmentation, division, the law itself places in the service of destruction of the person and the family. Is it not, on the contrary, the role of the law to protect the conjugal and family unit and the fruits deriving therefrom, namely children?

The reception of Pontifical teaching

Blessed Paul VI experienced misunderstanding and rejection on publication of the encyclical *Humanae vitae*, an encyclical which caused him much anguish, before and after its publication. He said: «You will thank me for publishing this document».

Saint Jean-Paul II took up this prophetic momentum with his commitment to the poorest and most vulnerable. Whence his repeated appeals to put an end to the trivialisation of abortion and its legalisation. In the further actions of Jean-Paul II, other crucial questions are examined. Among other things, this Pope tackled birth control policies, in particular in Third World countries. He also referred to the increased life expectancy from birth, the primary cause of the ageing of the population, in turn invoked for the purposes of legalising euthanasia. We are therefore experiencing an entire set of entangled problems to which the public, although frequently uninformed or poorly informed, as demonstrated by discussions in Western countries on prospective adjustments to the retirement age, is paying increasing attention.

Saint Jean-Paul II expressed, in his face, conduct, actions, speech, encyclicals and entire manner, that he was a mediator between God and man. Wherever he travelled in the world, he was perceived as an envoy of God, even by non-Christians. He was a living icon of God among men. He gave men the confidence necessary to commit themselves to the service of life and the family. Saint Jean-Paul II is the Pope who will have saved the family, who will have saved innumerable human lives by the power of his words. From this standpoint, Saint Jean-Paul II is one of the leading charismatic figures of the contemporary Church. He certainly had extraordinary contacts with men, women, children from all backgrounds. But what is remembered above all was his determination to protect life

and save the family. He mobilised individuals and couples, inspiring in them the boldness to embark on the adventure of being a parent, to welcome life, to become professionals of love.

The Church must return to Paul VI's *Humanae vitae* and the teachings of Jean-Paul II and Benedict XVI on these questions. Pope Francis walks in the footsteps of his predecessors when he stresses the coincidence of the Gospel of love and the Gospel of joy. It will be necessary to *strengthen the magisterial weight* of all this teaching, demonstrate its coherence and *protect* this treasure from predators.

Conversion of the heart

Not by claiming to modify or «improve» man using hazardous technologies will man be able to elevate the indicators of justice, well-being and happiness. The technologies currently deployed are heading nowhere; they are surrendering the helm to a dream. The dream of a utopia is taking control of the world, but will lead nowhere. The dream requires the ideology to convince man of the «legitimacy» of transgression. Today, utopian scientists and politicians are seeking to entice people with the prospect of yet one more ideal society. They claim that, to this end, it is necessary to modify or reconstruct man. Without this modification of man, construction of the ideal society will be prevented. According to this logic, Christians are contemptible if they refuse to subscribe to this plan.

Man today must free himself from these ideological snares, which constrain him in new forms of slavery. What is needed is to restore to man the respect which is his due. It is necessary to call man to a conversion of the heart to enable him to open himself to the true values and commit to the service of those values. This restoration of man involves a preliminary step: it is necessary to unmask the Promethean

deceptions and manifest the weight of sin they are injecting into our societies. A forward-looking vision of society and the biosphere is also required, since both, man and the biosphere, can only be saved together.

This reappropriation of man by himself today makes it possible to take measures in accordance with the society one wishes to construct. This is what *perspective* (in French: prospective) has taught us. Christian or not, morality can no longer be satisfied with *prediction* (in French: prévision), which perceives in the future a simple extrapolation of the present. Indeed, in the case of prediction, the *predicted* future is determined; it evades moral responsibility. However, perspective does not regard the future to be constructed as the substance of a dream; it is what determines the present and makes decision-making a morally responsible act.

To bring hope to the world

Man will only liberate himself from these new forms of slavery, from the multifaceted peripheries, by regaining control of himself, reaffirming his capacity to discern and decide. Prediction of the future as a simple extrapolation of the present, like its prolongation, will certainly not suffice to bring meaning to action. A predictionist notion of the future leaves no room for free and responsible decision-making, because the future has been determined. The morality of responsibility invites us to act in the world today with a view to the better world we desire to prepare for the young of today. All morality involving human sexuality and the family should therefore be based on long-term reflection. The future we are preparing for future generations depends on the quality of the decisions we are taking, or we are not taking, today. *The poor and children are our masters.* We must concern ourselves with them. We are responsible for

them. They must be able to grasp the hand we extend to draw them from death to life. Perspective leaves ample space for free decision-making, and hence openness to hierarchical values. It mobilises will, it invites commitment; it stirs the heart in the face of all the miseries on which man can act if he so wishes.

Certainly, the issues tackled by the Synod on the Family are all deserving of discussion. But the Church risks losing its way if it gives space to disordered predictions instead of offering human society the message of hope the Lord has entrusted to us, which it has a mandate to bring to the Nations.

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