

**I met Fr Paul Marx 40 years ago when I first started working as a volunteer at national level for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. He came into our office, at that time in west London, carrying his back pack, the international pro-life missionary par excellence, the first international pro-life missionary, the pro-life prophet who was one of the first, if not the very first leading pro-life figure, who understood fully that the acceptance and legalisation of contraception provides the basis for the acceptance and legalisation of abortion. As Pope John Paul II put it in “Evangelium Vitae”, Number 13: “The close connection which exists, in mentality, between the practice of contraception and that of abortion is becoming increasingly obvious. It is being demonstrated in an alarming way by the development of chemical products, intrauterine devices and vaccines which, distributed with the same ease as contraceptives, really act**

**as abortifacients in the very stages of the development of the life of the new human being.”**

**40 years after meeting Fr Paul Marx, the pro-life prophet against the evil of contraception, it's an extraordinary privilege for me to receive the Father Paul Marx Pro-Life Award from Human Life International, the group he founded, the world's premier international pro-life group which is totally dedicated to his pro-life vision.**

**I want to dedicate these few words of acceptance of the honour you have kindly bestowed on me to Josephine, my dear wife. Josephine has given me unconditional, unreserved support in my work for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children since we married 31 years ago. Thank you for everything Josephine.**

**In 2007, Fr Paul Marx was the worthy recipient of Human Life International's Cardinal von Galen award, given to**

**leading churchmen who have been a voice of conscience in their societies.**

**Blessed Clemens August Cardinal Graf von Galen, delivered a sermon on Sunday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1941 (my wife's birthday, some years later I hasten to add!), in Münster Cathedral, in which he risked his life by openly condemning the Nazi euthanasia programme. In his historic sermon, condemning the brutal inhumanity of the Nazi regime, Cardinal Von Galen made abundantly clear the legal basis on which he was basing his opposition to what was happening at that time.**

**He said:**

**“ ... I am reliably informed that lists are ... being drawn up in the asylums of the province of Westphalia as well of those patients who are to be taken away as so-called 'unproductive national**

**comrades' and shortly to be killed. The first transport left the Marienthal institution near Münster during this past week.**

**“German men and women, section 211 of the Reich Penal Code is still valid. It states: 'He who deliberately kills another person will be punished by death for murder if the killing is premeditated.' ...”**

**A little further on Blessed Clemens says:**

**“The Penal Code lays down in section 139: 'He who receives credible information concerning the intention to commit a crime against life and neglects to alert the authorities or the person who is threatened in time...will be punished.'”**

**The courageous Cardinal Von Galen continued:**

**“When I learned of the intention to transport patients from Marienthal in order to kill them, I brought a formal charge at the State Court in Münster and with the Police President in Münster by means of a registered letter which read as follows: "According to information which I have received, in the course of this week a large number of patients from the Marienthal Provincial Asylum near Münster are to be transported to the Eichberg asylum as so-called 'unproductive national comrades' and will then soon be deliberately killed, as is generally believed has occurred with such transports from other asylums. Since such an action is not only contrary to the moral laws of God and Nature but also is punishable with death as murder under section 211 of the Penal Code, I hereby bring a charge in accordance with my duty under section 139 of the Penal Code, and request you**

**to provide immediate protection for the national comrades threatened in this way by taking action against those agencies who are intending their removal and murder, and that you inform me of the steps that have been taken."**

**My dear pro-life colleagues and friends, I travelled from Rome where the Family Synod is taking place to be with you for a couple of days for the pro-life Congress in Fatima and to receive this prestigious award. Inspired and edified by Cardinal Von Galen's heroic example, I speak to you today about my most profound concerns regarding the Family Synod currently taken place from Rome under the presidency of Pope Francis – and, like the good cardinal, I wish to explain the legal basis for my doing so.**

**I say these things to you this evening to fulfil my responsibility outlined in Canon 212 of the Code of Canon Law:**

*According to the knowledge, competence, and prestige which they possess, they [the Christian faithful] have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful, without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons.<sup>1</sup> (Code of Canon Law, Canon 212 §3)*

**In fulfilling my responsibility under this Canon, I do so as chief executive of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children for which I have worked at national and**

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Canon Law, Canon 212 §3.

**international level for over 40 years. I do so also as co-founder of Voice of the Family, an international coalition of 26 pro-life and pro-family groups, including Human Life International, present in five continents worldwide.**

**Voice of the Family, funded by SPUC, has sought to contact every Synod Father and every president of every Catholic bishops' conference in the world, explaining in detail our concerns and we have received a number of warm letters of thanks for our efforts. We have also raised our concerns with Cardinal Baldisseri, the general secretary of the Bishops' Synod, and many other curial officials. What exactly are these concerns?**

**Firstly, our concerns relate to the *Instrumentum Laboris* which is intended to act as the basis for discussions at the Synod of Bishops being held in Rome this month.**

**What we as Christian faithful have told our sacred pastors, in accordance with Canon 212, is that the *Instrumentum Laboris* threatens the entire structure of Catholic teaching on marriage, the family and human sexuality.**

**It does this by:**

- **Undermining the doctrine of *Humanae Vitae* by proposing a false understanding of the relationship between conscience and the moral law (paragraph 137)**
  
- **Discussing artificial methods of reproduction without giving any judgement on the morality of such methods or making any reference to previous Catholic teaching, or to the enormous loss of human life that results from their use (paragraph 34)**

- **Proposing the admission of the “divorced and remarried” to Holy Communion without amendment of life (paragraphs 120-125)**
  
- **Reducing the indissolubility of marriage to the level of an “ideal” (paragraph 42)**
  
- **Suggesting that cohabitation and “living together” have “positive aspects” and can, to some extent, be considered legitimate forms of union (paragraphs 57, 61, 63, 99, 102)**
  
- **Preparing the ground for the acceptance of same-sex unions by acknowledging the need to define “the specific character of such unions in society” (paragraph 8)**

- **Denying the full rights of parents regarding the provision of sex education to their children (paragraph 86)**

**I say with love and respect for my sacred pastors, the bishops of the Church, that, in these and other ways, the document poses a very real danger to our families, especially its most vulnerable members, and not least to my own family, and to the integrity of Catholic doctrine.**

**As I said in an address I was invited to give to the Catholic Bishops of Ghana in Accra last August: “Catholics have a duty to oppose the direction being taken at the Synod” as presented in the *Instrumentum Laboris*, the working document of the Synod.**

**Last Friday in Rome I met Robert Cardinal Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments.**

**His Eminence has raised fears about the manipulation of the Ordinary Synod, which opened yesterday. In the recently published book Christ's New Homeland Africa: Contribution to the Synod on the Family by African Pastors, His Eminence wrote: "We also see communications strategies being implemented; it would even seem that new methodologies for the synod assembly are being examined in order to give a voice to some lines of thought while endeavoring to make others inaudible, if not to silence them completely. Everything leads us to believe that the next synod assembly will be for many people a synod with high stakes. The future of the family is indeed at stake for mankind today."**

**Cardinal Sarah's warning is timely and justified, as Voice of the Family makes clear in our first report from Rome on the eve of the Synod. I have copies of that report for anyone interested in being fully informed on what's happening in our Church.**

**The *Instrumentum laboris* clearly undermines the teaching of the encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae*. Paragraph 137 nullifies the central teaching of *Humanae Vitae* which declared morally inadmissible “any action which either before, at the moment of, or after sexual intercourse, [which] is specifically intended to prevent procreation—whether as an end or as a means.”<sup>2</sup>**

**Paragraph 137 of the *instrumentum laboris*, without in any way restating this fundamental teaching of *Humanae Vitae*, suggests that a balance must be reached between the**

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, No. 14

**“role of conscience” and the “objective moral norm”**

**under “the regular guidance of a competent and spiritual guide”. The implication of the whole passage is that contraceptive acts may sometimes be permitted. Let me conclude this section of my talk by quoting again the timeless teaching of Pope Paul VI in *Humanae Vitae*:**

**“Though it is true that sometimes it is lawful to tolerate a lesser moral evil in order to avoid a greater evil or in order to promote a greater good, it is never lawful, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil that good may come of it ... even though the intention is to protect or promote the welfare of an individual, of a family or of society in general.”**

**Given that experienced pro-life campaigners, such as Human Life International from the very beginning of its mission, as well as leading academics, have long concluded**

**that the acceptance of contraception is a basic building block of today's culture of death, a view held too by St Pope John Paul II (see [Evangelium Vitae](#), 13), apparent permission for contraception by Synod Fathers can only lead to an intensification of the current abortion holocaust which, it is estimated, has already cost the lives of more children in the womb than there have been lives destroyed in all the wars throughout recorded history<sup>3</sup>. That's why the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children is in Rome as co-founder of Voice of the Family for this Family Synod. As Cardinal Sarah says: The stakes could not be higher for unborn children than they are at this Family Synod.**

**We need to issue a clear warning to our sacred pastors, with love and reverence, both the Synod Fathers and our own diocesan bishops. We need to warn them that**

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<sup>3</sup> According to an article published in the New York Times, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2003, between 150 million and 1 billion people have been killed in wars throughout all of human history. (Chris Hedges, journalist, author of What Every Person should know about war)

**acceptance by bishops of contraception in the kind of language used in the Instrumentum Laboris risks intensifying the current abortion holocaust and that they will bear the main responsibility for such an intensification of the abortion holocaust. Why do I say that? If a shepherd abandons his flock and the sheep are destroyed by the wolves, who will be held principally responsible for the destruction: the shepherd or the wolves? Like the wolves, International Planned Parenthood Federation and other contraception and abortion promoting agencies, merely act according to their nature, with their consciences darkened by not knowing God. However, like the Shepherd, Catholic bishops who teach error know their responsibility before God, to hand on the truth, but they are failing to carry it out.**

**We need to issue another clear warning to our sacred pastors, with love and reverence, both the Synod Fathers**

**and our own diocesan bishops. We need to warn them that Paragraph 86 of the *Instrumentum laboris* contains a direct attack on the rights of parents. The paragraph states that “*the family, while maintaining its privileged spot in education, cannot be the only place for teaching sexuality.*” This statement is directly contrary to Catholic teaching which affirms the right and duty of parents to be the first and foremost providers of education to their children in sexual matters. Parents are entirely capable of performing this task by themselves and it is entirely their choice if they wish to involve others. Paragraph 86 of the *Instrumentum laboris* leaves our children and grandchildren at the mercy of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, IPPF. IPPF's truly shocking ideas on sex education programmes, now so strongly influenced by the homosexual lobby and ideology and backed up by the provision of contraception and abortion,**

**are being adopted in schools all over the world, including in Catholic schools.**

**Voice of the Family, dear Pro-Life colleagues and friends, has issued a manifesto:**

**"As Catholic laity working in the pro-life, pro-family movement", reads the manifesto, "we are well aware, from our daily experiences, of the profound challenges facing the family in the modern world. We know also that there is nothing more essential to our success in responding to these challenges than the courageous witness of the bishops of the Catholic Church. The consequences for the family are devastating whenever this witness is absent."**

**Noting "with alarm the increasing tendency of prominent figures within the hierarchy of the Church to promote positions contrary to the Catholic faith and the natural**

**moral law", Voice of the Family appeals to Pope Francis and the Church's teaching authorities "to take all necessary steps to protect the integrity of Catholic doctrine and, by so doing, to protect our families from the ravages of the culture of death."**

**The manifesto calls upon the Synod "firmly and unambiguously" to uphold the Church's teaching on the indissolubility of marriage, the evil of adultery, the wrongness of homosexual unions and the sinfulness of contraception. In particular, Voice of the Family urges to Synod Fathers to teach that:**

- "those who live in adultery cannot receive the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion without repentance and amendment of life"**

- **"contraceptive methods [are] gravely contrary to the moral law and ha[ve] devastating consequences for the family, for society and for the Church"**
- **"no form of union between persons of the same-sex can be approved in any way"**
- **parents [have the right] to be the primary educators of their children".**

**Let's pray for each other, dear pro-life friends and colleagues, that following the example of Father Paul Marx and Blessed Clemens August Cardinal Graf von Galen, we continue to be courageous apostles of, and faithful to, the unchanging and unchangeable Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the family, the Gospel of life.**