

PRO-LIFE MANIFESTO
AN APPEAL TO BISHOPS

Voice of the Family, 2021

Summary

Pope Francis has launched a two-year synod of bishops, listening to the “cry” of the people. This worldwide consultation is taking place at a time when there is a programme of state-sanctioned murder in virtually every country of the world.

Empirical evidence indicates that the illicit separation of the procreative and unitive ends of marriage, as predicted in *Humanae Vitae*, has been a catalyst for the abandonment of the moral law throughout society. Public authorities have imposed laws which are contrary to the natural law relating to human life and the family.

In particular, compulsory relationships and sex education programmes in schools promoting the LGBT agenda, gender ideology, and providing access to contraception and abortion are a form of coercion on families and indoctrinate the next generation in the culture of death.

The separation of the procreative and unitive ends of marriage has advanced the worldwide culture of death through contraceptive drugs and devices which also cause early abortions, through in vitro fertilisation – a procedure which instrumentalises and destroys countless human lives, through same-sex “marriage” which undermines the protection of children Christian marriage provides, through compulsory sex education programmes which supplant the role of parents and destroy the innocence of children, and through the crime of abortion.

The pro-life movement cannot defeat such evils on its own. These evils are rooted in a centuries-old revolution against God and His Church, which reached a dramatic climax in the 1960s since when there has been a catastrophic collapse in Christian civilisation. This cultural revolution has also entered the Church. Lack of formation of the Catholic faithful is having disastrous consequences for souls and the world. Consequently, people professing the Catholic faith support anti-Christian laws and policies.

Bishops have a unique apostolic moral power to preach the Gospel of life bestowed on them by Christ before His Ascension. When they speak the Gospel truth in love, their words reverberate with authority, both in the hearts of the faithful and in the hearts of people who do not know Christ – just as Christ’s words did.

Voice of the Family appeals to bishops worldwide to hear the cries of children who are being murdered with the approval not only of governments worldwide but of ordinary citizens, including members of the Church.

Voice of the Family appeals to bishops to use their God-given power received as successors of the apostles and to explain to souls in their charge the irrefutable teaching of the Church on the sanctity of human life and the inviolability of the family and how that teaching finds overwhelming support in medico-scientific and other academic research.

May the bishops of today echo the words of Cardinal von Galen on 22 March 1946: “The dear God placed me in a position in which I had a duty to call black ‘black’ and white ‘white’, as it says in the rite of consecrating a bishop.”

The cry of God's people

1. We are writing to you about the worldwide consultation on synodality, launched by Pope Francis in October 2021: *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*.
2. In part two of the official Synod handbook we read: "...By listening, the Church follows the example of God himself, who listens to the cry of his people".
3. This worldwide consultation is taking place at a time when there is a programme of state-sanctioned murder in virtually every country of the globe – targeting the most vulnerable groups in the population – through abortion, through IVF procedures, and through euthanasia.
4. We are mindful of the first occasion on which God listened to the cry of his people. After Cain killed his brother Abel, God said to Abel: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth."¹
5. Pope John Paul II said of abortion "that we are dealing with murder" and of euthanasia, the Pope said "depending on the circumstances, this practice involves the malice proper to suicide or murder"² and that "suicide is always as morally objectionable as murder".³
6. Pope Francis also speaks of abortion as "murder" referring to one particular country where six million abortions had been performed, and saying that if the Church accepts this "it is as if it accepts daily murder".⁴
7. More human beings are estimated to have been killed by abortion in the past thirty years alone, around two billion,⁵ than the estimated total number of those killed in all of the wars in recorded human history.⁶
8. Worldwide, each year, approximately one baby is aborted for every three babies who are born alive.⁷

Abandonment of natural law on human sexuality and sexual ethics

9. We consider that one of the greatest catalysts of the spread of abortion has been the abandonment of the natural law relating to human sexuality and sexual ethics.
10. In her book, *Adam and Eve after the Pill – Paradoxes of the Sexual Revolution*,⁸ Mary Eberstadt, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, describes the central teaching of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (25 July 1968) on the regulation of birth, as "perhaps the most unfashionable, unwanted, and ubiquitously deplored moral teaching on earth". She then goes on to show that the teaching enshrined in *Humanae Vitae* is in fact the "most thoroughly vindicated" moral teaching on earth "by the accumulation of secular, empirical, post-revolutionary fact". To illustrate her point Mary Eberstadt cites Nobel-Prize winning economist George Akerlof. In a 1996 article in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Akerlof explains "why the sexual revolution, contrary to common prediction ... [has] led to an increase in illegitimacy and abortion". Mary Eberstadt in *Adam and Eve after the Pill* also says: "The years since *Humanae Vitae* have ... vindicated the encyclical's fear that government would use the new contraceptive technology coercively".
11. In this connection, we refer to relationships and sex education programmes proceeding in countries worldwide which give schoolchildren access to contraception and abortion and eliminate the role of parents as the primary educators and protectors of their children. We refer particularly to "gender theory" ideology which "denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family"⁹ and which is leading to legislation being passed in various parts of the world¹⁰ introducing new systems for children obtaining legal gender recognition. These programmes are intended to be a form of coercion on our families and to sow the culture of death in the next generation.

12. After two billion abortions over the past 30 years alone and rising, the greatest slaughter in recorded human history, we note the extent to which the separation of the procreative and unitive ends of marriage has been a catalyst for the culture of death, advancing in virtually every nation on earth:
 - i. through contraceptive drugs and devices which, other than barrier methods, according to the manufacturers, can cause early abortions in their modes of action;
 - ii. through in-vitro fertilisation, which involves the instrumentalisation of the human embryo and, each year, the destruction or loss of 10 human embryos for every one baby born alive;¹¹
 - iii. through same-sex “marriage” which undermines Christian marriage, an institution designed to nurture and protect children, and which makes it virtually impossible for the pro-life movement to oppose in-vitro fertilisation without being seen as the enemy of those with homosexual inclinations who demand the so-called right to a child through IVF procedures;
 - iv. through relationships and sex education programmes promoting the LGBT agenda and providing access to contraception and abortion, which are relentlessly promoted by powerful Western nations, UN agencies and by tax-funded non-governmental organisations seeking to reach and destroy the innocence of every child throughout the world.¹²

The pro-life movement: Our aim and our limitations

13. The aim of the pro-life movement and the reason for our existence is to oppose and to defeat the idea, which dominates virtually the entire world, that there is such a thing as a life not worthy to be lived; and to create a society in which God’s law “Thou shalt not kill” is not only written into national and international law, it is also upheld and energetically defended by our fellow citizens.
14. Taking into account that every human life is a compound of the life of the body and the life of the soul, our work should be part of a much wider and deeper historic crusade for the restoration of Christian civilisation founded on the primacy of spiritual values. What we are seeking to achieve is immeasurably beyond the capacity of our relatively small organisations in various countries which go under the pro-life banner to achieve on our own.
15. Of necessity, in addition to abortion, we are opposing and seeking to defeat a wide range of related evils which directly or indirectly represent attacks on the sanctity and inviolability of human life and the inalienable rights of the family, the first protector of human life – including, as we have mentioned above, contraception, in vitro fertilisation, euthanasia, same-sex “marriage”, relationships and sex education, gender theory and attacks on parents as the primary educators of their children, to name but a few.
16. These are evils rooted in a revolution, a rebellion against God and His Church, the seeds of which were planted many centuries ago. It is a revolution which reached a new dramatic climax in the 1960s since when there has been a catastrophic collapse in Christian civilisation and in the recognition of truths universally upheld just a couple of decades before. Unfortunately, this cultural revolution, during this period, has also penetrated within the Church.
17. We and our fellow activists in the pro-life movement have done our best for more than half a century, seeking to save lives through our witness, from time to time through our successes in courts and in state legislatures, through our loving care for mothers-to-be, and through seeking to persevere, steadfastly, in the face of constant setbacks and the rising toll of killings.

However, relatively speaking, pro-life groups are tiny compared to the wealth and political strength of the culture of death which is supported by virtually every government on earth.

Pro-life groups need to be reinforced by the prophetic and unequivocal voices of bishops

18. Many of the moral principles by which people have lived throughout Christian history are being systematically outlawed by the legislatures of powerful nations and unjust laws are being all but imposed on less powerful nations and States worldwide: think of the moral law that parents are the primary educators of their children; or of moral laws governing sexual behaviour; or of the increasingly successful efforts, in relation to the sanctity of human life, to outlaw medical professionals' conscientious objection to abortion¹³ and euthanasia.¹⁴
19. Those same moral laws are being rejected in ordinary families worldwide, and the code of morality by which the overwhelming majority of people have lived throughout the history of Christendom is being transgressed, including within our own Catholic communities and families. We think, for example, of the widespread acceptance amongst our Catholic families of cohabitation, of the acceptance or refusal to criticise homosexual relationships,¹⁵ of the acceptance of birth control,¹⁶ including abortifacient birth control, and of the acceptance of legalised abortion in certain circumstances.¹⁷
20. Lack of formation of the Catholic faithful is having disastrous consequences for souls and for the world as we saw, for example, in the San Marino abortion referendum in September 2021 in which 77.28 per cent¹⁸ of the voters said Yes to abortion up to birth¹⁹ and in a country in which 97 per cent of the population profess the Catholic faith.²⁰
21. Our pro-life organizations need urgently to be reinforced by the prophetic and unequivocal voices of bishops throughout the world faithfully preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ – for two reasons: because without Christ we cannot do anything; and because the full Gospel message about the truth and meaning of human sexuality and the sanctity of human life, teaching which is also part of the natural law written on all human hearts, is nowhere more fully spelled out than in the teaching of the Church.
22. Bishops have a unique apostolic moral power, to preach the Gospel of Life. According to St Matthew, Christ's last words to the apostles on earth before ascending into heaven were: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations ... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."²¹ These words were addressed to the apostles and they are meant, above all, for the successors of the apostles. Bishops have a charism bestowed on them by Jesus Christ just before His Ascension. That's why Pope John Paul II emphasised in *Evangelium Vitae*: "Bishops ... are the first ones called to be untiring preachers of the Gospel of life"²² – because when they speak the Gospel truth in love, their words reverberate with authority, both in the hearts of the faithful and in the hearts of people who do not know Christ – just as Christ's words did. As St Mark says of the Jews in Capharnaum: "And they were astonished at his doctrine. For he was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes".²³

The courageous example of Cardinal von Galen

23. 80 years ago Cardinal von Galen won the approval of the world with his denunciations of the euthanasia programme in Nazi Germany like those in the sermon he preached as a bishop in St Lambert's Church on 3 August 1941 in which he said: "Woe to humanity, woe to our German people, if the holy commandment of God, 'Thou shalt not kill', which the Lord gave on Sinai amid thunder and lightning, which God the Creator wrote into the conscience of man from the beginning, is not only broken, but if this breach is tolerated and taken up as a regular practice without punishment."

24. In his book *The Lion of Munster*,²⁴ Daniel Utrecht of the Toronto Oratory writes: “Not only was his sermon secretly copied and spread throughout Germany and to soldiers on the front, the courage of Bishop Clemens August von Galen, of which the people of his diocese were well aware, soon became known throughout the country and, indeed throughout the world. Eventually, the sermons came into the hands of the British, who printed them in leaflets in the tens of thousands and dropped them from airplanes all over Germany and read them in radio broadcasts transmitted to Germany. When the Americans came into the war, they too looked on von Galen as a hero ...”
25. It is clear that a different kind of supreme courage is needed by bishops today in upholding the 5th commandment. Bishops today are not likely to be treated as heroes for doing so. They are more likely to be denounced by the British and American authorities and mass media as the enemy of so-called fundamental rights and human freedom by speaking out against abortion and euthanasia killings and the suppression of the rights of parents as the primary educators of their children in the matter of sex education. We are experiencing a different kind of tyranny from the Nazi and Communist dictatorships which aroused such fear and loathing throughout the world. This is a world order of which the State has conferred the mastery to ordinary citizens so that it’s fragmented and diffused around the world – firstly with the contraceptive pill and now with the abortion pill; and recently in an abortion referendum in San Marino. (See above.)

We appeal to our sacred pastors

26. We are in the midst of the worst period in world history of legalised murder, firmly in place in virtually every country in the world. We appeal to you, our sacred pastors, to hear the cries of around 2 billion children killed over the past thirty years alone with the approval of national legislatures and political leaders worldwide.
27. With reverence, we appeal to you to hear the cries of the innocent by, for example, refusing blatantly unrepentant pro-abortion politicians and others openly living in mortal sin to receive the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion in breach of God’s laws – just as, we are certain, permission to receive Holy Communion would be rightly refused to politicians who favoured the killing of any other group of people created in the image and likeness of God.
28. We appeal to you to use your God-given power which you received as a successor of the apostles to explain to souls in your charge the irrefutable teaching of the Church on the sanctity of human life and the inviolability of the family and how that teaching finds overwhelming support in medico-scientific and other academic research, for example:
- i. how the separation of the procreative and unitive ends of marriage has been a catalyst for the culture of death, advancing in every nation on earth;
 - ii. the scientific evidence that human life begins at conception;
 - iii. the facts about human development before birth and the injustice of abortion;
 - iv. Church doctrine that no circumstance, no purpose, no law whatsoever can ever make licit an act which is intrinsically illicit, since it is contrary to the Law of God which is written in every human heart, knowable by reason itself, and proclaimed by the Church – such as abortion, euthanasia, IVF or contraception;²⁵
 - v. in this connection, Catholic teaching opposing induction of pre-viable unborn children for any reason;²⁶
 - vi. the loving forgiveness of God for anyone who regrets having an abortion or having been involved in some way with an abortion, or the help which is available from the church and lay organisations for those who are tempted for any reason to have an abortion;

- vii. the false arguments employed by many scientists and politicians to justify destructive research on human embryos;
- viii. why in vitro fertilisation (IVF) is never ethically justified²⁷ and the injustice to, perhaps, 5 million human embryos created who are frozen, discarded, or used in destructive human embryonic research in order to enable half a million children conceived through IVF to be born alive;²⁸
- ix. the obligation of health professionals to oppose abortion, euthanasia and other such evils by conscientious objection;²⁹
- x. the obligation of parents to uphold their right and duties as the primary protectors of their children particularly in resisting school-based relationships and sex education;³⁰
- xi. loving warnings to families about the pressures brought to bear by national health services around the world through ante-natal screening programmes which seek to detect and destroy unborn children with a disability;
- xii. the obligation, together with suggestions as to how to fulfil this obligation, to express opposition to the use of embryos and aborted babies in the creation of fetal cell lines used to produce vaccines, medications and other products albeit it is licit for the faithful to use such products³¹ which they played no part in creating on the basis of the moral teaching of St Thomas Aquinas and St Alphonsus Liguori;
- xiii. the special care and protection to be given to disabled babies threatened by abortion, not least babies who may be expected to have very short lives either in the womb or after birth;
- xiv. the obligation to campaign for and vote for ethical legislation.³²

29. Finally, we commend to you the words of Cardinal von Galen on the occasion of his return to Munster after being created a cardinal in Rome, which happened to be very shortly before his death on 22 March 1946: “The dear God placed me in a position in which I had a duty to call black ‘black’ and white ‘white’, as it says in the rite of consecrating a bishop. He gave me a position that made me the leader and responsible guide of hundreds and thousands, who, like me, found it hard, who suffered it only with virtue and with the greatest pain, when God’s truth and justice, the value of the human being and the rights of the human being, were set aside, rejected, and thrown on the ground ... I knew that many suffered more, much more than I personally had to suffer, from the attacks on truth and justice that we experienced. They could not speak. They could only suffer. It may be that in God’s sight, in which suffering has more value than actions and words; it may be that despite their suffering, even many of those who are standing here have truly merited much more in the holy eyes of God, because they have suffered more than I have. But it was my right and my duty to speak, and I spoke for you ...”³³

Endnotes

¹ Genesis 4:9-10.

² *Evangelium Vitae*, 65.

³ *Evangelium Vitae*, 66.

⁴ Vatican News, “Pope Francis speaking to journalists on the return flight from Slovakia”, 16 October 2021; <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-09/pope-abortion-is-murder-the-church-must-be-compassionate.html>

⁵ Guttmacher Institute, “Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion Worldwide”, July 2020; <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-worldwide>

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- ⁶ Chris Hedges, “What every person should know about war”, New York Times, 6 July 2003; <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/06/books/chapters/what-every-person-should-know-about-war.html>
- ⁷ The World Counts; <https://www.theworldcounts.com/populations/world/births>; Guttmacher Institute, “Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion Worldwide”, July 2020; <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-worldwide>
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- ⁹ Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, 19 March 2016, no 56.
- ¹⁰ New Zealand Parliament, Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill 2021; <https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-digests/document/53PLLaw26531/conversion-practices-prohibition-legislation-bill-2021>; “New Zealand moves closer to passing 'self-identification' law”, Reuters, 11 August 2021; <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-moves-closer-passing-self-identification-law-2021-08-11/>; Scottish Government, Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill: consultation analysis, 2 September 2021; <https://www.gov.scot/publications/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill-analysis-responses-public-consultation-exercise/>
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- ¹² UNESCO, *International technical guidance on sexuality education*, 2018; <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ITGSE.pdf>; Stefano Gennarini, “UN Agency Defies General Assembly, Promotes ‘Comprehensive Sexuality Education’”, Center for Family and Human Rights, 19 January 2018, https://c-fam.org/friday_fax/un-agency-defies-general-assembly-promotes-comprehensive-sexuality-education-part-1/
- ¹³ L.A. Keogh et al., “Conscientious objection to abortion, the law and its implementation in Victoria, Australia: perspectives of abortion service providers”, BMC Medical Ethics, 31 January 2019; <https://bmcmethics.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12910-019-0346-1>; House of Lords, Conscientious Objection (Medical Activities) Bill, 2018; <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2018-0010/LLN-2018-0010.pdf>
- ¹⁴ Department for Constitutional Affairs, Mental Capacity Act 2005, 23 April 2007; https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921428/Mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice.pdf
- ¹⁵ Jeff Diamant, “How Catholics around the world see same-sex marriage, homosexuality”, Pew Research Center, 2 November 2020; <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/11/02/how-catholics-around-the-world-see-same-sex-marriage-homosexuality/>
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- ¹⁷ Dalia Fahmy, “8 key findings about Catholics and abortion”, Pew Research Center, 20 October, 2020; <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/10/20/8-key-findings-about-catholics-and-abortion/>; Andrew McCorkell and Colin Francome, “Most UK Catholics support abortion and use of contraception”, Independent, 23 October 2011; <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/most-uk-catholics-support-abortion-and-use-contraception-2083291.html>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/09/catholics-church-contraception-abortion-survey>
- ¹⁸ Angela Giuffrida, “San Marino referendum ends with 77% voting to end abortion ban”, The Guardian, 26 September 2021; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/26/san-marino-votes-in-referendum-on-lifting-abortion-ban>
- ¹⁹ BBC, “San Marino votes to legalise abortion in referendum”, 26 September 2021; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-58701788>
- ²⁰ World Atlas, “Religious Beliefs In San Marino”; <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-san-marino.html>; The World, “San Marino votes to legalize abortion, ending a 150-year-old ban”, 28 September 2021; <https://www.pri.org/stories/2021-09-28/san-marino-votes-legalize-abortion-ending-150-year-old-ban>
- ²¹ Mt 28:20.
- ²² *Evangelium Vitae*, 82.
- ²³ Mark 1:22.

²⁴ See Daniel Utrecht, *The Lion of Munster*, TAN Books, 2016.

²⁵ *Veritatis Splendor*, 79-83.

²⁶ See Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, Loreto Publications, 1955, section 1889 onwards
<https://archive.org/details/DenzingerTheSourcesOfCatholicDogma/page/n503/mode/2up>

²⁷ *Donum Vitae*, 5.

²⁸ See note 11.

²⁹ *Evangelium Vitae*, 73.

³⁰ *Sapientiae Christianae*, 42; *Divini Illius Magistri* 65-67,74; Pope Pius XII, An address to French fathers, 18 February 1951.

³¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Note on the morality of using some anti-Covid-19 vaccines*, 17 December 2020;

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³² Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration on Procured Abortion*, 18 November 1974, No. 22: *AAS* 66 (1974), 744.

³³ Daniel Utrecht, *The Lion of Munster*, see endnote 24.