



AN ANALYSIS OF

Life to the Full

the Relationship and Sex Education programme
of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales

by

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INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Education Service (CES), an agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has developed a Government-approved Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) programme, *Life to the Full*, which flouts Catholic teaching on faith and morals, undermines parents as the primary educators of their children, and exposes children to occasions of sin. The programme is backed by bishops throughout England and Wales and, according to the provider, Ten Ten Resources, was used in over 80% of Catholic schools from 2023 to 2024.¹

Its content, shocking as it is, might reasonably be seen as the natural development of a reversal of policy by the authorities of the Catholic Church in recent decades, resulting for the first time in the promotion of classroom sex education. This reversal of policy chiefly concerns the authority of parents in relation to that of the state in the education of children, particularly on matters relating to marriage and the family. It is our contention that, by refusing to exercise their own teaching authority,² the authorities of the Church have undermined the authority of parents and permitted the authority of the state to be grossly exaggerated, resulting in an effective capitulation to anti-Catholic legislation and playing right into the hands of the sexual revolution. We also hold that these catastrophic results vindicate the previous policy demanding that "every precaution must be taken" on the part of anyone teaching a child about human sexuality *in loco parentis*.³

Catholic faith, parents' authority and children's innocence betrayed through political pressure in Catholic schools

Bishop Marcus Stock, the chairman of the CES, and vice-president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, explains in his introduction to the bishops' *Life to the Full* programme that it was developed by the CES in conjunction with both the British Government and Ten Ten Resources, a media company specialising in e-learning programmes for Catholic schools.⁴

Bishop Stock claims that *Life to the Full* is "deeply rooted in, and faithful to, the Catholic Church's vision of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God and the truth and meaning of human sexuality". Such a statement does not take account of the reality that Catholic teaching is repeatedly abandoned, subverted and contradicted in the programme, including but not limited to every instance in which it conflicts with Government "learning objectives" as set out in the Department of Education's statutory guidance.⁵ Among the requirements are:

- [Pupils should know] that there are choices in relation to pregnancy (with medically and legally accurate, impartial information on all options, including keeping the baby, adoption, abortion and where to get further help)."

- “[Pupils should know] how to get further advice, including how and where to access **confidential sexual and reproductive health advice and treatment**”⁶ (emphasis added), defined by the British government as including access to contraception and abortion for under-sixteen-year-olds.⁷
- “In all schools, teaching should reflect the law (including the Equality Act 2010) as it applies to relationships, so that young people clearly understand what the law allows and does not allow, and the wider legal implications of decisions they may make.”

These “learning objectives” have been pursued for well over a decade by leading politicians from the three main political parties in the UK,⁸ in order that children, by the time they leave school, will regard contraception, abortion, same-sex “marriage” or transgenderism as positive life choices, which do not admit of moral objection either on the part of the Church or on that of parents who delegate to the school their right to educate their children. In conformity to these “learning objectives”, the bishops’ *Life to the Full* programme presents lifestyles and behaviours which objectively violate Catholic morality as being more or less equal in value to the spiritual goods of faith, family and sacramental marriage.

Broadly speaking, *Life to the Full* undermines Catholic teaching and children’s innocence in three ways:

1. It contradicts, misrepresents or entirely omits Catholic teaching on basic morality, especially sexual morality.
2. It undermines the rights of parents as primary educators and refers children to institutions with explicit ideological agendas.
3. It breaks down the natural reserve and sense of shame of children, which are their best natural defence from sexual predation and occasions of sin.

We will explore each of these points in detail.

I. *Life to the Full* contradicts, misrepresents or entirely omits Catholic teaching on basic morality, especially sexual morality

a) COHABITATION

From Upper Key Stage 2 (9–11 years old), the Church's teaching on marriage and secular thinking about cohabitation are repeatedly presented as largely equivalent options, about which everyone may have their own opinion.⁹ In one video (Year 9, Session 5, "Marriage"), a Catholic priest wrongly says of cohabitation, "the Catholic Church is never, never in the business of saying 'you must, you should, you ought.'" Taken at face value, this glaringly false witness to the fundamental nature of Catholic teaching may logically be applied to all moral questions covered in the programme.

b) SAME-SEX "MARRIAGE" AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

Another video (Upper Key Stage 2, "Imagine a World"), aimed at children aged nine to eleven, focuses on discrimination in the context of the Equality Act 2010. The presenters in the video speak approvingly of laws enforcing civil partnerships, same-sex unions, and transgenderism as follows:

*"These are types of legal union between a man and a woman, a man and a man, or a woman and a woman ... Other protected characteristics include about whether someone is a boy or a girl, meaning male or female, when someone feels different about themselves from the way their body is and who they are attracted to ... These are the protected characteristics. Because that is what they are: protected by the law as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. You might think that would it be great if we all treated one another fairly without needing to tell us to. **But these protected characteristics are really good.**"*

The concluding remark, one of clear approbation, strongly undermines Catholic doctrine regarding the intrinsic evil of homosexual acts and Catholic duty to avoid formal cooperation with sin:

*"In those situations where homosexual unions have been legally recognized or have been given the legal status and rights belonging to marriage, **clear and emphatic opposition is a duty. One must refrain from any kind of formal cooperation in the enactment or application of such gravely unjust laws and, as far as possible, from material cooperation on the level of their application.** In this area, everyone can exercise the right to conscientious objection."* (Emphasis added)¹⁰

c) SAME-SEX COUPLES AND ADOPTION

The same can be said about a video (Year 8, Session 7, "Wider World") aimed at 12–13-year-old children. In a passionate presentation on the value and dignity of every single person, including testimonies from

homosexuals who have been victims of discrimination, the presenters stress that civil partnerships and same-sex marriage are legal in the UK, emphasising that same-sex couples can also be registered as legal parents of children: facts presented verbally and reinforced with on-screen text.

On this subject, no mention is made either of the Church's condemnation of the adoption of children by homosexual couples or of the biological and anthropological elements of marriage and family, which are entirely lacking in homosexual unions:

"... experience has shown, the absence of sexual complementarity in these unions creates obstacles in the normal development of children who would be placed in the care of such persons. They would be deprived of the experience of either fatherhood or motherhood. Allowing children to be adopted by persons living in such unions would actually mean doing violence to these children, in the sense that their condition of dependency would be used to place them in an environment that is not conducive to their full human development. This is gravely immoral and in open contradiction to the principle, recognized also in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, that the best interests of the child, as the weaker and more vulnerable party, are to be the paramount consideration in every case.

"...Such unions are not able to contribute in a proper way to the procreation and survival of the human race. The possibility of using recently discovered methods of artificial reproduction, beyond involving a grave lack of respect for human dignity, does nothing to alter this inadequacy."¹¹

In place of Catholic teaching, there is a passage in the same video which is designed to arouse children's indignation towards countries where the "rights" of "LGBT" people are not enforced. The presenter then asks, "Yeah, but hold up a minute. *Life to the Full* is a Catholic program, right? Doesn't the Catholic Church hate gays? Doesn't the Church think that it's a sin to be gay? Isn't the Catholic Church against same-sex people loving each other? We can answer these questions very simply. No. No. No."

What exactly is meant by "a sin to be gay" or "same-sex people loving each other" is left entirely to the interpretation of the children and their teacher. Whilst the presenters seem to anticipate that the 12–13-year-old viewers neither understand nor have much sympathy for Catholic teaching, there is no attempt made to clarify and defend it. Any conflict between the Catholic faith and liberal secular thinking is tacitly denied, whilst any breach of the Equality Act 2010 or the Human Rights Act 1998 is denounced with passionate indignation and emotive rhetoric giving the impression that the only grave sin that the Church associates with homosexuality is prejudice against homosexual people. The presenters continue:

*"Deliberately mocking someone, belittling them, telling them they don't belong, or that they are weird because of how they are or how they choose to express themselves. Now that **is a sin.**"*

“Telling someone that they are a sinner just for simply experiencing same sex attraction is a lie.”

“Passing judgment on someone as if you were God is wrong. ... And bullying, including homophobic bullying, is a sin. It's wrong and it's shameful.”

In contrast to these truisms, which present no stumbling block to secular thinking, there is no exposition of the destructiveness of homosexual acts to the familial, social, natural and supernatural reality to which man is ordered,¹² which has caused such acts to be counted among four “sins crying to heaven for vengeance”. Catholic teaching concerning the “grave depravity”¹³ of homosexual unions or the “objectively disordered” nature even of homosexual inclination¹⁴ is passed over in silence.

d) TRANSGENDERISM

In another video (Year 8, Session 2, “Appreciating Differences”), 12–13 year-olds are introduced to questions of equality between the sexes in a way that follows the secular liberal narrative exactly. Students are then introduced to the subject of gender dysphoria with a dialectic comparing the claims of gender ideologues with the scientific reality of biological sex. Although objective facts of one's biological sex are not given any precedence above one's subjective sense of one's “gender identity”, the argument is naturally on the side of biological reality. However, the line of argument is abandoned with the words, “There is no blueprint for you”, leaving children with the idea that they can choose their own gender identity if they wish.

While the video includes tactful considerations that “people experiencing gender dysphoria need a lot of love and support”, no mention is made of their right to be told the truth, of the spiritual, psychological and physiological destructiveness wrought by gender ideology¹⁵ or of the Church's teaching that so-called gender transition is morally illicit.¹⁶ As this is one of the major threats to young people today,¹⁷ one would expect a programme commissioned by Catholic bishops to deal with it in some detail.

e) ABORTION

Whilst Catholic teaching unequivocally condemns abortion,¹⁸ the *Life to the Full* programme presents abortion in equivocal moral terms, as a choice which pupils must make for themselves.

In one video (Year 10, Session 5, “Pregnancy and Abortion”), abortion is presented to 14–15-year-olds as a “big decision for Holly” — the main character in the dramatisation. The session continues by urging pupils to “develop your own values and attitudes related to the topic”, rather than satisfying their natural intellectual curiosity so that they can conform their understanding and will to the truth of Catholic teaching. At one point, the presenter says, “Many consider the mother to be the most vulnerable ... The baby inside the womb has no legal rights until he or she is born, and so many consider the unborn child to be vulnerable as well.” Thus even the basic humanity and right to life of the unborn child is presented as a matter of perspective, abandoning children to the permissive spirit of the culture of death.

f) HUMANITY OF THE UNBORN BROUGHT INTO QUESTION

On various occasions in *Life to the Full*, the scientific fact that a new human individual comes into being at the moment of conception is presented as a Christian belief and just one possible position among many.

- In the same video (Year 10, Session 5, “Pregnancy and Abortion”), in response to the question, “When does life begin?” the presenter answers, “This is not simply a legal question, **it’s a question of belief**. As we said before, we’re going to give you the Christian perspective on these matters alongside other perspectives, so you’re better informed to make your own decisions. **The Christian perspective is that life begins at conception.**”
- In another video (Year 8, Session 4, “Before I was Born”), the presenter says, “**The Catholic Church and many other Christians are clear that every human life begins at conception.**”
- And in another (Year 9, Session 7, “Knowing my rights and responsibilities”), one presenter asks, “But what happens if God’s law is different to the law of the land?” and the other gives examples including same-sex “marriage” and abortion, saying, “Catholics believe that life begins from conception. But in England, Scotland and Wales, the right to life applies not from conception but from 24 weeks, and there is no legal time limit in case of disability or a serious threat to the mother’s life or health.” She then concludes, “**These are challenging questions.**”

By presenting the biological reality of the life of an unborn child as a matter of Christian belief rather than an irrefutable scientific fact, acknowledged even by leaders of the pro-abortion lobby,¹⁹ the programme again subjectivises the fundamental moral issue of the right to life of the unborn child, giving children the opportunity to abandon the line of reasoning and reject objective reality as one point of view among many.

g) CONTRACEPTION

Another video (Year 9, Session 4, “Fertility and Contraception”) presents 13–14-year-olds with different methods of contraception as morally neutral ways of avoiding a baby. Natural family planning is also, wrongly, presented as a form of contraception. A doctor explains to one of the presenters various types of contraception and their effectiveness in reducing the possibility of pregnancy. The emphasis in the video is on the merits and demerits of different types of contraception in terms of their efficacy and ease of use, with no reference to nor explanation of the Church’s moral teaching that “‘every action which, whether in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible’ is intrinsically evil”.²⁰

h) PROMISCUITY AND SOLITARY SINS

A video covering “casual sex” and masturbation (Year 9, Session 2, “Love People Use Things”), mercifully, says nothing positive about these sins, but neither does it give 13–14-year-old viewers any indication that masturbation is “an intrinsically and gravely disordered action”,²¹ in other words, a mortal sin. In fact, there

is little reference to sin — besides discrimination (cf. 1c above) — no reference to mortal sin, and although the Sacrament of Confession does make a brief appearance elsewhere in programme, the narrative in this and other videos continuously undermines the fact that nothing can cause an intrinsically evil act to become moral.

A dramatisation featured in a video (Upper Key Stage 2, Module 1, Unit 3, “Seeing Stuff Online”) for 9–11 years olds, features one otherwise admirable character; a father tactfully confronting his son who has watched pornography online, saying, “The reason you went back and looked at those images again is not because you’re bad or naughty but because your brain was tricked ... one side of your brain anyway ... What, you didn’t know you know you your brain had two sides? ...”

While trying, perhaps, to raise a serious point about the addictiveness of online pornography, the moral aspect of these actions is directly denied and then explained away with a brief exposition of pop science. This misdirection, no doubt unintentionally, raises another serious point: that at the present time it is parents who need to be formed in Catholic teaching on human sexuality in order to pass it on to their own children with confidence and discretion.

II. *Life to the Full* undermines the rights of parents as primary educators and refers children to institutions with explicit ideological agendas

The *Life to the Full* programme repeatedly promotes Childline, a registered charity which provides confidential advice on, among other things, accessing abortion and contraception to children in primary school right through to the senior years of secondary school.

Childline is run by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and is strongly committed to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) agenda,²² and to providing children with access to abortion and contraception without parents' knowledge or consent.

On all these issues, children going on to the Childline website are assured, "Confidentiality means not telling anyone the things you've told us. And it means you can trust we'll keep things private."²³

Within a few clicks on the Childline website, any underage girl who may be considering abortion is informed, "You don't have to talk to your parents but your doctor will encourage you to", and on the same page, the website purports to tell children what abortion involves, without in any way pointing out the reality of the unborn child's development, that abortion kills the developing child in the womb or that an abortion can have serious adverse effects on a mother's physical and mental health. The Childline website states instead:

"Deciding to have an abortion can be really scary. But no one should ever force you to decide whether or not to have one. There are different ways to have an abortion, depending on how many weeks pregnant you are.

Up to 9 weeks

"In early pregnancy, some doctors may give you 2 special tablets to take which will cause you to miscarry the pregnancy — which means you won't be pregnant anymore. Abortions can make you bleed from your vagina for up to 2 weeks, which can feel like you're having a heavy period.

Up to 15 weeks

"Abortions later than this will involve surgery in a hospital or clinic under anaesthetic. If you wish to abort a pregnancy after 15 weeks then the procedures are different and your doctor or nurse will explain exactly what needs to happen. You may feel some discomfort after having an abortion."²⁴

On the same webpage, young people are directed to Brook Advisory Centres and the Family Planning Association, an affiliate of International Planned Parenthood Federation, the world's largest abortion-promoting agency. Both of these organisations have pioneered the provision of abortion and contraception to underage children without parents' consent or safeguarding from adults having sex with minors.²⁵

Having been signposted to Childline throughout the bishops' *Life to the Full* programme, children who visit the website are encouraged to question their gender identity. A section headlined "Questioning your sexuality" says:

"It's natural to be confused about your sexuality or to need time to work out who you are. It's okay not to be sure. Some people know who they're attracted to from a really young age. For other people it's not so simple and can take a while to work out. If you're not sure about your sexuality, you might:

- *not be sure what it means if you 'like' someone*
- *be scared about how other people will react*
- *worry about what it means for your community or religion*
- *want to come out and tell people*
- *try to find a sexuality that 'fits' how you feel."*

"It might take some time to work out what your sexuality is. Remember there's no such thing as normal." (Emphasis added)²⁶

On another Childline webpage, under the headline, "What is gender identity", the following account is given:

"When we're born people have to record whether we're a boy or a girl. This is usually based on looking at our sexual organs, but for some people their gender identity can be different.

"Lots of things make up your gender identity, including:

- *your body and biological sex, for example your sexual organs*
- *how you feel about your gender and how you identify yourself*
- *your gender expression, for example how you dress or act."*

"Gender identity isn't just male or female. Some people can identify as non-binary, and how people identify can change over time. It's okay to take your time when thinking about your gender identity, especially if you're feeling pressured to identify as a specific gender. For many young people feeling unsure about their gender is part of growing up and can pass in time, for some these feelings continue for longer. If you're unsure about your gender identity, you're struggling to cope or you want to talk about what it means to you, we're here to help." (Emphasis added)²⁷

Another Childline page tells children, "It's important to remember that nobody can define your sexuality except you" and young people are offered a choice of *thirty* different "genders" to which they might belong.²⁸

Repeated signposting to Childline is a particularly dangerous aspect of the *Life to the Full* programme, which can only serve to facilitate further children's acceptance of, and access to, contraception and abortion, and gender ideologues' access to, and influence over, children.

III. *Life to the Full* breaks down the natural reserve and sense of shame of children, which is their best natural defence against occasions of sin.

The *Life to the Full* programme recklessly exposes children to occasions of sin. Leaving aside the question of the subjective maturity or particular susceptibility of each child, known best to the child's parents, there are many elements of the programme which present objective occasions of sin, dangerous to all children without distinction.

- From the primary school years right through to the senior years of secondary school, vulgar content is used to break down a child's natural resistance to classroom discussion of intimate personal matters relating to human sexuality. Intimate details of human sexual development from childhood to adulthood are graphically presented from Lower Key Stage Two, ages 7–9, in mixed classes, contrary to all sane teaching practice, and the specific admonitions of the Church.²⁹
- From Upper Key Stage 2 (up to 11 years old), and at every stage until school leaving age, an atmosphere of sexual freedom is created in films and promoted in classroom discussions, doubtless with the intention of stripping away children's natural reserve which is so prized in the teaching of mother Church as their best natural defence of their innocence.
- In the secondary school years, sexually provocative images and film sequences are used which may present occasions of sin, including lewd discussion involving pupils and teachers.

For example, a series of dramatisations in the *Life to the Full* Programme takes the form of a soap opera called *Paradise Street*, about children aged 10–11. One episode (Upper Key Stage 2, Module 1, Unit 2, Session 1, "Girl's Bodies") focuses on a shy girl, in a mixed primary school class, dismayed by a presentation of the changes a girl goes through during puberty, with diagrams of the female body at different stages of development. Some boys in the class repeatedly manifest their excitement and are told off for being immature. After the class, the girl says to her friend, "It was so awkward having boys in that lesson. I just think we're too young to learn all that." The other girl mockingly replies, "Speak for yourself," and the narrative continues to move crassly in that direction.

When the shy girl gets home she takes her sister's bra from her drawer and practises putting it on over her blouse. Her big sister discovers her bra missing and they get talking, with the big sister, eventually

saying, "You and me should have a bra party". They dance about with bras over their clothes until their mother interrupts them. After their mother's initial dismay, she joins in, all of them waving their bras in the air, communicating a message of sexual freedom. It is all very demeaning, no less for the child than for the adult actresses.

The unfortunate sequel to this dramatisation (Upper Key Stage 2, Module 1, Unit 2, Session 1, "Boy's Bodies") starts with a presentation to the same mixed class on the changes boys go through during puberty (again with diagrams). The shy girl from the previous video now has an air of confident acceptance. The girls cringe when the teacher talks about boy's genitals getting larger. One boy asks his smirking classmate, "What are you so happy about?" and he replies meaningfully, "I can't wait to become a man."

"The next day", the boy gets out of bed to discover evidence of ejaculation on his pyjamas. In the bathroom, he apparently discovers that he has begun to grow armpit hair; then is reprimanded by an aggressive man (later identified as "my mum's boyfriend") for using his deodorant. He comes into school and boasts to his friends (two girls and a boy) about growing armpit hair. On subsequent mornings he discovers more evidence of ejaculation and starts to mimic the negative (stereotypically male) behaviour of the man who apparently lives with him and his mother. His mood and behaviour makes him more and more isolated from his friends until, after a third ejaculation, he confides in his teacher in private, saying that he needs to see a doctor but is afraid that his mum's boyfriend will find out he's wetting the bed and call him "girly". He explains, "The sheets aren't really wet ... it's not wee, it's gooey." The teacher reassures him and warns him that "Calling people names like 'girly' is wrong ... Being a man is not about doing manly things." The teacher then explains erections and nocturnal emissions to the whole class.

While both these dramatisations address the kinds of anxieties children might face during puberty, the indiscriminate and superficial approach presupposed is more than likely to result in an incorrect presentation of Catholic teaching, adverse to children's privacy and peace of mind and a danger to their chastity and ultimately their salvation. In follow-ups to both of these dramatisations, titled "Delving Deeper", the presenters employ patronising antics to further break down resistance to mixed discussions of intimate details of puberty. The male presenter giggles about changes in girls. The female presenter describes changes in boys, whilst the male presenter mimes them: covering his genitals with his hands, looking down when she describes the growth the genitals and of hair, speaking in a deep voice and winking, etc. She prompts him to describe an erection and an ejaculation. All sense of propriety and respect between the sexes is thrown out.

In another video (Year 7, Session 4, "Where do we come from?"), a teacher asks her pupils, presumably aged 11–12, in a mixed class "Where do babies come from?" One child says, shyly and giggling, "The penis goes into the vagina". The Ten Ten presenters then break into song, singing "Let's talk about sex, baby". There's a montage of pop songs about sex with the titles "Your sex is on fire", "I smell sexy", etc. Later, the

teacher asks the children if they know of any pop songs which talk about sex well. A number of children are reluctant to participate and one girl shyly admits that songs she listens to are “inappropriate”, eloquently highlighting the extreme distastefulness of the discussion to which they have been subjected. Again, the whole purpose of the video appears to be to break down children’s natural reserve about sexual matters, arising from their innocence. There is no serious exposition of Catholic teaching on the ends of marriage. However, there is a comment from one of the presenters, “The Catholic Church says that sex is for marriage between a man and a woman. You may have strong opinions about that,” Yet again, this presents Catholic teaching as open to question and ends the lesson on a decidedly ambiguous note.

Another video (Year 8, Session 2, “Feelings”) deals at length with sexual attraction, using crude and immoral examples such as “seeing a naked body you’re attracted to”. Children aged 12–13 are prompted to discuss their own ideas of sexual intimacy: “When is the right time? Who is the right person? What is the right intention?” The presenters comment that different people have different perspectives and give numerous inappropriate examples, concluding:

“So many perspectives. And one perspective is the Catholic Church’s teaching ... In our hearts, God has planted a deep desire to love and to be loved ... This desire to love and be loved can manifest itself in many different ways. Through our family relationships, through our friendships, through our passions, through our care for others, but the most powerful way that our longing to love and to be loved can be manifested is through sexual union. This is why sexual desire is so powerful. It draws us towards love — true love with another person ...”

This is accompanied by an animation of two nondescript figures — apparently modelled on men’s toilet signs, joined by a heart shape — with the caption “Sexual desire draws us towards true love”, which naturally lends itself towards a debased interpretation. Elsewhere, text and other design elements are animated to be visually suggestive of erection and ejaculation, sexual arousal, intercourse, etc. (Year 7, Session 4, “Where do we come from?”; Year 8, Session 2, “Feelings”).

In another video, (Year 9, Session 6, “One Hundred Per Cent”), an extensive skit is acted out in a real Catholic Church, revolving around a sacrilegious marriage ceremony in which the presenters make inverted vows to “manipulate” and “blackmail” one another, etc. with a priest officiating. Again, it might have been designed to convey a serious point, but was nonetheless acted out in a church — apparently in front of the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle. This impression is reinforced as the skit continues with the presenters, now out of their wedding costumes, still in front of the sanctuary, laughing and joking. In a comic aside, the man playing the priest returns, having changed out of his liturgical vestments but still wearing his Roman collar. “Actually, I’m a real Catholic priest”, he says, genuflecting to the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle and exiting.

While children's innocence and parents' authority are the main target of the programme, it is hard to overstate the offence to God, in this video, of such a blithe mockery of the Real Presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. The blasphemous irreverence is more than likely to cause contempt and doubt in the minds of students.

In the following video (Year 9, Session 7, "Knowing my rights and responsibilities"), the take-home message for 13–14-year-olds is, "Trying to have sex with anyone without their free or full consent is always wrong." It includes an audio recording of a young woman giving her heart-wrenching testimony of being raped at the age of about 16, accompanied by melancholic piano music. After this, the presenters describe various kinds of sexually aggressive behaviour and prompt the students to seek help for themselves or others they know who might have been victims of these. This is followed by a 10-second break (apparently for this purpose). Immediately afterwards, a skit begins in which the male presenter is complaining "This session is so depressing ..." when an animated caveman appears, introducing himself as "the Joke Monster", and asking "Do you want to hear a dirty joke?" to which the male presenter replies, "As always." This is completely gratuitous, and again, the purpose seems to be to break down natural reserve about sexual matters.

Aside from the standards one would expect from a programme commissioned by Catholic bishops, the content of this video demonstrates a failure to consider the most basic standards of respect, prudence and good taste.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most fundamental problem with the bishops' *Life to the Full* programme is its renouncement of the authority and responsibility of the Church in pronouncing on matters of faith and morals, especially where this would inevitably bring Catholic bishops into conflict with the secular authorities.

In sharp contrast, it is most instructive to note the extreme caution demanded by the perennial teaching of the Church, as faithfully expressed by Pope Pius XI, on the part of anyone teaching a child about human sexuality *in loco parentis*:

“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.”³⁰

Pope Pius XI envisaged that Catholic parents should “agitate” for authentic Catholic teaching in schools to ensure that “the various branches of secular learning will not enter into conflict with religious instruction to the manifest detriment of education”.³¹ With prophetic realism, he warned that, whilst young people cannot be removed from the society in which they must live and save their souls, “they should be forewarned and forearmed as Christians against the seductions and the errors of the world”.³² Such forewarning and forearming are singularly absent from the bishops of England and Wales' *Life to the Full* programme.

Catholics in Britain, who for nearly a century have generously contributed to the building and upkeep of Catholic schools,³³ have seen Pope Pius XI's vision of the Catholic school shockingly betrayed by their pastors. Fortunately, the Catholic laity are fully capable of understanding Christ's words concerning scandal given to children: “But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for

him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt 18:6). Catholic parents also understand that these words provide a terrible warning to Catholic bishops and others in the Church, under whose authority children are corrupted spiritually, morally and physically through political pressure.

On 20 July 1941, at the height of Hitler's power, Archbishop Clemens August von Galen delivered a sermon in the Church of Our Lady (Liebfrauenkirche) in Münster, denouncing the injustices "crying out to heaven" on the part of the Reich. In words which will reverberate down the centuries, the archbishop urged parents not to neglect their "most sacred duty" to resist the "false teachings and morals" to which the German youth were being subjected. His guidance to parents was firmly rooted in the doctrines contained in Pope Pius XI's teaching in *Divini Illius Magistri*.

"We are the anvil, not the hammer! Unfortunately you cannot shield your children, the noble but still untempered crude metal, from the hammer-blows of hostility to the faith and hostility to the Church. But the anvil also plays a part in forging. Let your family home, your parental love and devotion, your exemplary Christian life be the strong, tough, firm and unbreakable anvil which absorbs the force of the hostile blows, which continually strengthens and fortifies the still weak powers of the young in the sacred resolve not to let themselves be diverted from the direction that leads to God."³⁴

It must be remembered that, while we are duty-bound as Catholics and as parents to fight for the rights of God and the Church, it is to bishops that Christ has confided this authority. Mindful of what God can do with twelve good bishops freely exercising this authority, we conclude this initial analysis by echoing Pope Pius XI's plea to bishops, for whom we must pray and make sacrifices:

"For the love of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, therefore, we implore pastors of souls, by every means in their power, by instructions and catechisms, by word of mouth and written articles widely distributed, to warn Christian parents of their grave obligations. And this should be done not in a merely theoretical and general way, but with practical and specific application to the various responsibilities of parents touching the religious, moral and civil training of their children, and with indication of the methods best adapted to make their training effective, supposing always the influence of their own exemplary lives."³⁵

ENDNOTES

1. <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/primary/> and <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/secondary/>
2. Cf. Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929), 16.
3. Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929), 67; Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae* (1890), 42; Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (1891) 13–14; Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929), 35, 57, 82–85, 89–91; Pope Pius XI, *Mit Brennender Sorge* (1937), 31; Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1932), 79.
4. <https://rsetraining.catholiceducation.org.uk>
5. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers (Department for Education, 2019) pp 20–22, 27–29.
6. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/confidentiality-at-sexual-health-services/>
7. Cf. Department of Health, *Best practice guidance for doctors and other health professionals on the provision of advice and treatment to young people under 16 on contraception, sexual and reproductive health* (2004).
8. “David Cameron’s full Paxman interview”, *Newsnight*, 23 April 2010; Jerome Taylor and Andrew Grice, “Clegg lays down law to Cameron on gay rights”, *Independent*, 13 January 2010; Mary Riddell, “Ed Balls: People who stammer avoid certain situations, but in my job you can’t”, *The Telegraph*, 23 January 2010; Ed Balls, “Faith Schools and Homophobia”, *The Times*, 23 February 2010.
9. Cf. Upper Key Stage 2, “Imagine a World”; Year 7, Session 4, “Where do we come from?”; Year 8, Session 9, “Wider World”; Year 9, Session 5, “Marriage”; Year 9, Training, “Love Honour Cherish”; Year 9, Session 1, “The Search for Love; Year 10, Training, “Babies”.
10. Congregation For The Doctrine Of The Faith, *Considerations Regarding Proposals, To Give Legal Recognition, To Unions Between Homosexual Persons* (2003), 5.
11. *Ibid*, 7.
12. John Finnis, “Reason, Faith and Homosexual Acts”, *The Catholic Social Science Review*, Vol. VI (2001), pp 61–70.
13. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2357.
14. *Ibid*, 2358.
15. Dr Michelle Cretella, “Deconstructing Transgender Pediatrics”, *The Academy Review*, Summer Term, Issue 1, June 2021, The John Paul II Academy for Human Life and the Family; Family Education Trust, *Gender Ideology and our children*.
16. Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* (1931), 71; Pope Pius XII, *Address to Doctors*, (1948); Pope Pius XII, *Address to the Medico-Biological Union of St Luke* (1944); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Doctrinal Note on the Moral Limits to Technological Manipulation of the Human Body* (2023), 21.
17. Piers Shepherd, *Gender Ideology and our Children* (Family and Education Trust, 2022); Gavin Ashenden, *How the gender ideology war is destroying the lives of young girls*, *Catholic Herald*, 25 January 2023; Dr Michelle Cretella MD, *Transgender Belief in Pediatrics: A Call to Heal Minds, Embrace Bodies and Save Lives*, *The Academy Review of the John Paul II Academy for Human Life and the Family*, No 1, June 2021.
18. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), 58, 62.
19. J Langman, “Medical Embryology” 3rd edition (E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1975), p3; R.J. Scothorne, *A Companion to Medical Studies* (Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1976), p19; J B Basmajian, *Primary Anatomy*, 7th edition. (The Williams & Wilkins Company, 1976) p8; Editors; Warwick & P L Williams, *Gray’s Anatomy*, 35th edition (Longmans, 1973) p71; R J Harrison, *Cunningham’s Textbook of Anatomy*, 12th edition. (Oxford University Press, 1981); R O’Rahilly, *Developmental Stages in Human Embryos* (Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1973) Publication 631, p9; J M McLean, *Haines & Taylor’s Obstetrical & Gynaecological Pathology*, 4th edition (Churchill Livingstone, 1987) p1; Anthony Fisher, “Who Or What Is An Embryo?” in *IVF The Critical Issues* (Collins Dove,

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20. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2370, citing Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* (1968), 14.
 21. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2352.
 22. “How Childline was captured by trans ideology”, by James Esses, a former volunteer counsellor for Childline, in *The Spectator*, 8 January 2023.
 23. <https://www.childline.org.uk/about/confidentiality-promise/>
 24. <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/friends-relationships-sex/sex-relationships/abortion>
 25. Cf. Valerie Riches with additional research by Norman Wells, Sex education or indoctrination how ideology has triumphed over facts (Family and Youth Concern, 2004) p 25, footnote 30, p 31; *Safe Sex for Teenagers* (Brook Advisory Centres, London) 1978; Ann Farmer, *By Their Fruits, Eugenics, Population Control and the Abortion Campaign*, (Catholic University of America Press, 2008) p 233, footnote 158.
 26. <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/sexual-identity/sexual-orientation/>
 27. <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/sexual-identity/gender-identity/>
 28. <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/sexual-identity/lgbtq-terms/>
 29. Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929), 67.
 30. *Ibid*, 67.
 31. *Ibid*, 86.
 32. *Ibid*, 92.
 33. Maeve McCormack, “The continuing tradition of Catholic education”, *The Guardian*, 7 May 2011.
 34. Bishop Clemens August Count von Galen, Sermon (20 July 1941).
 35. Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929). 74.

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VOICE OF THE FAMILY is an initiative of Catholic laity from twenty-three major pro-life and pro-family organisations formed in support of the Synod on the Family 2014–2015.

The following truths are at the heart of Voice of the Family's work:

MARRIAGE, the exclusive, life-long union of one man and one woman, is the foundation of a stable and flourishing society and is the greatest protector of children, born and unborn.

THE SEPARATION of the unitive and procreative ends of the sexual act, which is intrinsic to the use of contraception, has acted as a major catalyst of the culture of death.

PARENTS are the primary educators of their children and the protection of this right is essential for building a culture of life.

