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**“*Humanae Vitae* and *Veritatis Splendor*, rooted in the Perennial  
Magisterium  
of the Catholic Church”**

As in 2017, 2018 is also a year that is rich with important and significant anniversaries which we need to remember, because the roots of the present are found in the past.

The best known anniversary needs no explanation; a date is enough: 1968, the Student Revolution that begins at Berkeley explodes at the Sorbonne and spreads throughout Europe.

The 1968 Revolution was not a political revolution. It was a cultural revolution. Roger Kimball dedicated an interesting book to ***The Long March. How the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s changed America.***<sup>1</sup> “A cultural revolution,” Kimball observes, “whatever the political ambitions of its architects, results first of all in a metamorphosis in values and the conduct of life.”<sup>2</sup> But 1968 ought to be remembered for another reason. On July 25th of that year, Paul VI’s encyclical ***Humanae Vitae*** was promulgated which, in a certain way, constitutes the antithesis of the revolutionary spirit of ‘68.

The essence of the student revolution was found in the slogan “it is forbidden to forbid.” This slogan expresses the rejection of all authority and of every law, in the name of a liberation of instincts, needs and desires. Forbidden to forbid means: everything is allowed. Sexual freedom and drugs were the two ingredients for affirming this new philosophy of life.

*Humanae Vitae*, in reiterating the condemnation of abortion and contraception, recalled that not everything is allowed, that there are absolute and unchangeable moral laws, and that a supreme authority does exist, the Church, which has the right and the duty to propose what is good and prohibit what is evil, that is, what is contrary to the divine and natural law.

But the roots of the denial of the natural law go back further in time. And I wish to recall another event whose anniversary is not being marked, but which is at the origin of the anniversaries that we have mentioned. It is an event that took place within the Church, during the **Second Vatican Council**. It occurred in Rome, in the conciliar assembly, on **October 29, 1964**. I am recalling so that we can better understand the existence of the connection between **two parallel revolutions**: the **cultural** revolution of ‘68 and the **ecclesiastical** revolution that exploded the same year, in the form of an opposition to *Humanae Vitae*.

At this point, we need to recall what was, and still is, the Church’s doctrine on marriage.

Marriage, according to the Magisterium of the Church, is a unique and indissoluble institution, destined by God for the propagation of the human race.

According to the doctrine of the Church, **there are three ends of marriage**: and not on the same level, but ordered.

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<sup>1</sup> ROGER KIMBALL, *The Long March. How the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s changed America*, Encounter Books, San Francisco 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 6.

The **first end** is procreation, which doesn't only mean bringing children into the world, but forming them intellectually, morally and above-all spiritually, to guide them toward their eternal destiny, which is Heaven.

The **second end** is the mutual help of the spouses, which is not merely material help, and which is not only a sexual or romantic understanding, but which involves first and foremost spiritual help and understanding.

The **third end** is the remedy for **concupiscence**, which is a consequence of original sin, but which should not be confused with sin. Luther maintained that concupiscence, in itself, is sinful and insurmountable. But the **Council of Trent** distinguished between original sin, which wounds all men, and the concupiscence which remains in man after baptism, and is not a sin in itself, but only an inclination to sin; not irresistibly, because man can overcome it by good will and divine grace.

That the proper end of marriage is the propagation of the human race is attested to by the passage from Genesis (1:28): **"Increase and multiply."**

The vision of the Church on the issue of the regulation of births has always been restrictive, because Sacred Scripture says: "Increase and multiply." **Don Pietro Leone** rightly observes that "multiplying, in the common sense of the term, means the multiplying of one factor to more than one, such that it excludes maintaining the status quo, which would be done by having only two children."<sup>3</sup>

Practically speaking, this means that a family normally should have at least three children.

Professor **Ettore Gotti Tedeschi** has demonstrated in numerous writings that one of the causes of the current economic crisis is the demographic collapse, and the demographic collapse comes precisely from the fact that the average number of births is less than a rate of two to one, which is the only rate that would enable population growth.<sup>4</sup> With an average of two children or less per couple, the population will decrease and move toward extinction.<sup>5</sup> Gotti Tedeschi says that economic growth corresponds to demographic growth, but I would add that spiritual growth does as well, because large families mean a spirit of sacrifice, and the spirit of sacrifice is a factor in spiritual and moral development, because it implies the existence of principles and values for which one lives and, if necessary, one dies.

One of the last addresses of **Pius XII** was an allocution to large families, delivered on January 20, 1958: *"Only the divine and eternal light of Christianity enlightens and vivifies the family, such that both in its origin and development, large families have often been considered as synonymous with Christian families.*

*Respect for the divine laws has made them abound with life; faith in God gives parents the strength and vigor they need to face the sacrifice and self-denial demanded for the raising of their children; Christian principles guide them and help them in the hard work of education; the Christian spirit of love watches over their peace and good order, and seems to draw forth from nature and bestow the deepest family joys that belong to parents, to children, to brothers and sisters. Even externally, a large, well-ordered family is a kind of visible shrine: the sacrament of Baptism is not an exceptional event for them but something constantly renewing the joy and grace of the Lord. The series of happy pilgrimages to the baptismal font is not yet finished when a new one to Confirmation and First Communion begins, aglow with the same innocence. The youngest of the children will scarcely have put away his little white suit among the dearest memories of life, when the first wedding veil appears to bring parents, children, and new relatives together at the foot of the altar. More marriages, more baptisms, more first Communions follow each other like ever-new springtimes that, in a sense, make the visits of God and of His grace to the home unending."*

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<sup>3</sup> DON PIETRO LEONE, *Il matrimonio sotto attacco*, Solfanelli, Chieti 2017, p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> LORENZO FONTANA-ETTORE GOTTI TEDESCHI, *La culla vuota della civiltà*, Gondolin, Verona 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Ivi.

This doctrine was expressed in the schema on marriage and the family approved by John XXIII<sup>6</sup> in July 1962, on the eve of the opening of Second Vatican Council. This schema would later be rejected by the Council Fathers. But a new philosophy of life had made strides in Catholic circles under the influx of new secular intellectual currents, like the **Frankfurt School**, in which Marxism and psychoanalysis merged. This new Catholic philosophy of life tended to remove the idea of an absolute and objective natural law, and countered it with the value of the human person, attributing a normative value to individual conscience. Conscience lost its reference point, which was natural and divine law, and itself became the established norm of human action.

In 1960, in America, the famous pill of Doctor **Gregory Pincus (1903-1967)** was marketed. Pincus had worked on [in vitro] fertilization since the 1930s and had been removed from Harvard University for his unscrupulousness in research (they had nicknamed him Doctor Frankenstein) but his projects began to come to fruition in the Fifties thanks to decisive support from feminist activist **Margaret Sanger**.<sup>7</sup> The birth and marketing of the first oral contraceptive, Enovid, Dr. Pincus's famous pill, marked a historic turn. In his book *The Birth of the Pill: How Four Crusaders Reinvented Sex and Launched a Revolution*<sup>1</sup>, Jonathan Eig ascribes the birth and spread of the pill to four "crusaders": the feminist star Margaret Sanger, the iconoclastic scientist, Gregory Goodwin Pinkus (1903-1967), the Catholic doctor John Rock (1890-1984), "and the supplier of cash behind it all," Katharine McCormick (1875-1967).

Science made artificial birth control possible, and in those same years, a group of progressivist theologian saw in this scientific innovation the occasion for changing Catholic morals on matrimony. The new progressivist morality had as one of its centers the **University of Louvain**, whose protector was the Cardinal Primate of Belgium, **Leo Joseph Suenens**.

### **Suenens' Speech**

Many of the new theologians were *periti*, experts who assisted the Council Fathers. And on October 29, 1964, all of the Council Fathers awaited the speech of **Cardinal Suenens**.

Suenens, then sixty years old, was the undisputed protagonist of Vatican II. Cardinal Suenens was a young cardinal from Brussels who, just after his elevation to the cardinalate, rushed to Rome to suggest to John XXIII that he give a pastoral character to the Council, to adapt the Church to the modern world and allow collaboration with Protestant and Orthodox churches. It was Suenens who, at the beginning of Council, established an iron pact with Bishop **Helder Câmara**, auxiliary bishop of Rio, later archbishop of Recife, who communicated with him using a secret code, calling him "Father Miguel."

Suenens was the one chosen to guide the four "moderators" of the Council: a key position which he would hold for three years.

At that time, two commissions in the Church were working on the family and marriage. The first was the commission which prepared the constitution ***Gaudium et Spes***.

The second was an ***ad hoc* commission**, suggested by Suenens himself to John XXIII, to study the problem of birth control. This commission, secretly formed in 1963 and made public by Paul VI in 1964, was made up of members tapped above-all by Suenens, and which kept in close contact with him.

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<sup>6</sup> *Schema constitutionis dogmaticae de Castitate, Matrimonio, Familia et Virginitate*, in Concilio Vaticano II, *Acta Synodalia*, vol. II, Periodus I, Pars IV, *Congregationes generales XXXI-XXXVI*, Typis Poliglottis Vaticanis, Città del Vaticano 1971, pp. 718-771. Cfr. la tr. it. a cura e introduzione di R. DE MATTEI, *Il primo schema sulla famiglia e sul matrimonio del Concilio Vaticano II*, Edizioni Fiducia, Roma 2015.

<sup>7</sup> JONATHAN EIG in *The Birth of the Pill. How Four Crusaders Reinvented Sex and Launched a Revolution* (W. W. Norton & Company, New York 2014),-

Suenens took the floor, and referring to the ad hoc commission, said:

*“The first task of this committee lies in the line of Faith and must consist of this: to check if we have sufficiently highlighted all aspects of Church teaching on marriage. (...) It may be that we have over-stressed the words of Scripture: ‘Increase and multiply’ to the point of leaving in the shadows the other Divine words: ‘And the two shall be in one flesh.’ (...) It will be up to the Commission to tell us if we have not overly-emphasized the primary purpose, which is procreation, at the expense of an equally imperative purpose, which is growth in marital unity. Similarly, it is up to the Commission to respond to the immense problem posed by the current demographic explosion and overpopulation in many parts of the earth. (...) The Commission’s second task lies in the line of scientific progress and more in-depth knowledge of natural ethics. The Commission will have to examine whether traditional doctrine, especially in the manuals, takes into sufficient account the new data of today’s science. We have made progress since Aristotle and discovered the complexity of the reality in which biology interferes with psychology, the conscious with the subconscious. New possibilities are constantly discovered in man, in his power to direct the course of nature (...) Who does not see that in this way we will be perhaps led to further research on the problem of what is for or against nature? Let’s follow the progress of science. I beg you, Brothers. Let’s avoid a new ‘Galileo trial’. One is enough for the Church.”<sup>8</sup>*

At the final words of Cardinal Suenens, thunderous applause broke out in the hall. Bishop **Helder Câmara** recounted in his correspondence that Suenens himself had tasked him with organizing the “claque.”<sup>9</sup> And Helder Camera, commented: “He said everything that one could dream of hearing regarding birth control, this even included the courage of affirming - he, a cardinal of Holy Church, a moderator of the Council - in the full Basilica of Saint Peter: “let us not repeat the trial of Galileo!”<sup>10</sup> In listening to his speech, Cardinal Ruffini could not contain himself and pounded the table out of indignation, and two days later he vented to Cardinal Cicognani, the Secretary of State, calling Suenens’ words “horrendous,” and requesting his removal as a moderator.

Paul VI, who did not share the progressivist positions on moral issues, was bewildered and in a turbulent audience with Suenens, scolded him for a lack of good judgement.

What had Suenens said, that was so revolutionary?

He attacked the traditional concept of matrimony, according to which, the first end of marriage is that of procreation, affirming that the primary purpose was instead, that “**the two shall be in one flesh.**” Marriage was presented not as a bond, or a commitment rooted in nature and dedicated to the propagation of the human race, but as an **intimate communion** between the spouses, having as its end their reciprocal love.

We move from a theological and philosophical definition to a psychological definition of marriage. But if matrimony is reduced to a communion of love, birth control — natural or artificial, as the case may be — is seen as something good and is encouraged under the name of “**responsible parenthood,**” inasmuch as it contributes to strengthening the conjugal union, and it is clear that at the moment when this intimate communion fails, the marriage would dissolve.

The inversion of the ends is accompanied by the inversion of the roles within marriage. Large families imply a notion of the value of sacrifice, but now the idea of sacrifice is removed. The woman’s psycho-physical wellbeing substitutes her mission

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<sup>8</sup> ROBERTO DE MATTEI, *Il Concilio Vaticano II. Una storia mai scritta*, Lindau, Torino 2011, pp. 418-419.

<sup>9</sup> HELDER CÂMARA, *Lettres Conciliaires (1962-1965)*, 2 voll., Cerf, Parigi 2006, vol. II, pp. 696-697.

<sup>10</sup> *IVI*, p. 696.

of motherhood. The birth of a child is seen as something which disturbs the balance of the family. The child is seen as an unjust aggressor, to be defended against through contraception, and in extreme cases, with abortion. To “increase and multiply,” Suenens counterposes: reduce births in the name of science, because science offers the means to do so. Which means? The birth control pill, which led to another pill: the abortion pill, which is presented as a contraceptive even though it is a form of chemical abortion.

What do the two pills combine? Not only their refusal of births but also a private revolution. They are the fulfillment of the 1968 slogan “The personal is political.” Abortion needs public structures, the approval and support of the State: the pill, contraceptive or abortive respectively, is left to conscience. A false conscience which overlooks the natural law.

### **The Work of the Commission after the Council**

Vatican II closed, but a large part of the Council Fathers, of the bishops who returned to their dioceses, followed the ideas of Suenens that were promoted by the mass media throughout the world. Meanwhile, the commission that was studying the pill continued its work. Paul VI had progressivist ideas in liturgical and political-social areas, but not in the field of morals, and did not share the positions of the progressivist theologians who favored contraception. To force the situation and put media pressure on the Pope, in April 1967, the progressivist lobby leaked the rumor that the commission had decided to authorize contraception to the main press services of the international media. The belief that Paul VI had changed the doctrine of the Church on birth control spread through public opinion. In part, this occurred because, nearly everywhere, family planning was presented as a necessity for the modern world, and birth control pill was presented as an instrument of women’s “liberation.”

After several months of agonizing indecision, on July 25, 1968, Paul VI published the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*.<sup>11</sup> In this document, contrary to the opinion of the majority of experts he had consulted, the Pope reaffirmed the traditional position of the Church on artificial contraception with these clear words:

*“Similarly excluded is any action which either before, at the moment of, or after sexual intercourse, is specifically intended to prevent procreation—whether as an end or as a means. Neither is it valid to argue, as a justification for sexual intercourse which is deliberately contraceptive, that a lesser evil is to be preferred to a greater one, or that such intercourse would merge with procreative acts of past and future to form a single entity, and so be qualified by exactly the same moral goodness as these.”* (n. 14)

Paul VI expressed himself with *Humanae Vitae* in a way that theologians would judge infallible, and therefore, unchangeable, because he reaffirmed a doctrine always taught by the perennial Magisterium of the Church.

### **Protesting *Humanae Vitae***

The words of Paul VI were unable to put out the fire that had spread for months across Europe: the fire of May 1968 in France. It was in this white-hot atmosphere that the protest against *Humanae Vitae* developed.

A few days later, on July 30, 1968, under the title *Against the Encyclical of Pope Paul*, the New York Times issued an appeal signed by over 200 theologians who invited Catholics to disobey the encyclical of Paul VI. This statement, also known as the

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<sup>11</sup> Paul VI, Encyclical *Humanae vitae* del 25 luglio 1968, in AAS, 60 (1968), pp. 481-503.

“Curran Declaration,” (the name of one of its promoters, Charles Curran, theologian of the Catholic University of America) was something never before witnessed in the whole of Church history. The exceptional fact is that the dispute was not only between theologians and priests, but also between some episcopates, including, first of all, the Belgian one headed by Cardinal Primate Leo Suenens. *The Declaration of the Episcopate of Belgium on the Encyclical **Humanae Vitae*** of August 30, 1968 was, together with that of the German episcopate, one of the first drafts elaborated by a bishops’ conference, and served as a model of rebellion for other episcopates.

A group of protagonists of the Council, opposing the encyclical of Paul VI, including Cardinals Suenens, Alfrink, Heenan, Döpfner and König, met in Essen to decide on opposition to the document and on September 9, 1968, during the *Katholikentag* of Essen, in the presence of the pontifical legate Cardinal Gustavo Testa, an overwhelming majority voted for a resolution to review the Encyclical.

In 1969, nine Dutch bishops, including Cardinal Alfrink, voted for the so-called *Independence Declaration*, inviting the faithful to refuse the teaching of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. On the same occasion, the Dutch Pastoral Council, with the abstention of the bishops, supported the *New Catechism*, refusing the corrections suggested by Rome and calling for the Church to remain open to “*new radical approaches*” on moral issues, which were not mentioned in the final motion but which emerged from the Council’s work, such as premarital intercourse, homosexual unions, abortion and euthanasia. This request was consistent with the role of sexuality as recognized by progressivist theology: an instinct that men do not have to suppress through asceticism but rather “liberate”, finding in sex a form of “realization” of the human person.

“In 1968,” recalled Cardinal Francis J. Stafford, “*something terrible happened in the Church. Within the ministerial priesthood, among friends, fractures occurred everywhere, which would never again be healed, those wounds continue to afflict the whole Church.*”<sup>12</sup>

Paul VI was almost traumatized by the dispute, which emerged from some of the Council’s main characters closest to him. And in the ten years following *Humanae vitae*, he did not publish any other encyclical, after having published seven of them between 1964 and 1968.

It was also in 1968 that Paul VI, in an address to the Lombard Seminary on December 7th, spoke of the **self-demolition** of the Church, that is, of a process which shook and destroyed the Church from within. There is a relationship between the self-demolition of society provoked by student protests and the self-demolition of the Church provoked by the protests of ecclesiastics.

## **The Catholic World**

*Humanae Vitae* was unable to stop the consequences of ‘68. In Italy, the feminist movement and the radical party, with the support of the mass media, were able to impose the legalization of divorce, abortion and new family rights. The laws on **civil unions** and **living wills [Disposizioni anticipate di trattamento - DAT]** meaning homosexual so-called marriage and the opening to euthanasia, are the latest expressions of this path to annihilation of the moral law, which is self-annihilation, the suicide of society.

It was the Catholic ruling class which approved these laws, wished for by the secular left. The law on divorce was promulgated on December 1, 1970 under the Christian Democrat government, presided by Catholic **Emilio Colombo**; the law on abortion of May 22, 1978 was signed by the President of the Council, **Giulio Andreotti**; just as Civil Unions were legalized in the Italian State on May 20, 2016

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<sup>12</sup> Cardinal Francis Stafford: *1968, l’anno della prova*, in “*L’Osservatore Romano*”, 25 July 2008.

under the government of the “Catholic” **Matteo Renzi**, as did living wills (DAT) on December 20, 2017 under the government of “Catholic” **Paolo Gentiloni**. None of these “Catholic” Council presidents felt the moral need to resign, rather than sign these things into national law, in open contrast with the principles of natural law.

This occurred because the Cultural Revolution of 1968 was preceded and accompanied, in the years of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar era, by the process of auto-demolition of the Church which psychologically disarmed Catholics, pushing them to dialogue, to embrace and surrender to the moral deviations of the modern world.

The first university to be occupied by students was the Catholic University of Milan, on November 17, 1967. Mario Capanna, of the “Catholic” University of Milan recalled: “*We spent nights studying and discussing those held to be cutting-edge theologians: Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Bultmann (...) together with the documents of the Council.*”<sup>13</sup>

Another exponent of the “Continuous Struggle” of those years, Paolo Sorbi, the key player of the “Lenten center” on the steps of the Cathedral of Trent, wrote: “We were the interpreters of the thought of Father Milani, Father Mazzolari, Father Balducci, of Father Camillo Torres. Persons who handed on to us the dream of a utopia which we sought to bring about on earth. Now, the words are like stones. We took those words seriously, we radicalized them.”<sup>14</sup>

I was twenty years old in 1968. I lived it, I fought it, I am a witness to the politics of surrender by the men of the Church, first regarding divorce, and then abortion.

Among my memories is a meeting which, I had, thanks to Professor Wanda Poltawska who was very close to John Paul II, on May 22, 1980 together with Agostino Sanfratello and Giovanni Cantoni with Bishop Achille Silvestrini, Secretary of the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church. Silvestrini had succeeded Cardinal Agostino Casaroli in 1973, in the role of secretary of the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church. He was a close collaborator of Casaroli, but above all, was a “spiritual son” of Bishop Salvatore Baldassari, archbishop of Ravenna, demoted by Paul VI for his ultra-progressivism.

In the course of the meeting, we expressed the urgency of an abrogative referendum on the abortion law, supported by the indispensable cooperation of at least an adequate part of the Italian bishops, for the goal of collecting the necessary 500,000 signatures. Bishop Silvestrini in a smarmy tone, countered us with his consideration on the importunity of such an anti-abortion referendum, because it would have caused, to use his expression, a damaging “counter-catechesis” on abortion, in the sense that reacting to the anti-abortion stance of Catholics, the pro-abortionists would increase their dedication in favor of abortion. But isn’t the Catholic world – we stated to the Bishop – already subjected to growing abortionist aggression? And if defending the truth and doing good is the occasion for a counter-catechesis, would we then need to abstain from proclaiming the truth and doing good? Bishop Silvestrini observed as a second reason for its importunity, the still-stinging defeat of the referendum against divorce. But wasn’t it true – we replied – that the battle was lost because it wasn’t fought adequately, and generously? And if the memory of such a defeat was bitter, wouldn’t the memory of the inertia of which it was the cause have to be even more bitter?

Bishop Silvestrini said that “the party, also” (he was referring to the Democrazia Cristiana, or Christian Democracy party) would be adverse to the idea of an anti-abortion referendum.

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<sup>13</sup> Interview in “Avvenire”, March 20, 1998. Sull’influenza del cattolicesimo nel movimento del Sessantotto cfr. ROBERTO BERETTA, *Controstoria del Sessantotto cattolico*, Rizzoli, Milano 1998

<sup>14</sup> PAOLO SORBI, *Mea culpa sul '68*, “Avvenire”, March 26, 1998.

How could we be surprised, we responded, if the party favored the law in parliament, and some of its greatest spokesmen signed the law, assuming full moral and political responsibility? In reality, we spoke two different languages and there was no possibility of dialogue.

Cardinal Suenens retired in 1979, but designated as his successor Cardinal **Godfried Danneels**, who followed his line. Cardinal Danneels wanted to name his successor as well, but Pope Benedict XVI intervened and named Bishop **Andrè-Joseph Léonard** archbishop of Bruxelles-Malines. Cardinal Danneels, however, was part of the group that has been called the “Saint Gallen Mafia,” composed of the heirs of the protestors of *Humanae Vitae*, which supported the candidacy of the archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, in two conclaves.<sup>15</sup> They were not victorious in 2005, but they did succeed eight years later, in 2013. Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, still alive, was also part of the group.

### ***Humanae Vitae and Amoris laetitia***

The post-synodal exhortation of Pope Francis, *Amoris laetitia*, is a manifesto which re-proposes ideas that were condemned by Paul VI: the primacy of conscience over law, and the possibility of concrete exceptions to that presented as a moral ideal, which is sometimes impossible.

The strategies of those who contested *Humanae Vitae*, then, was that of rereading the encyclical of Paul VI in the light of *Gaudium et Spes*. The heirs of that protest today propose “reinterpreting” *Humanae Vitae* in the light of *Amoris Laetitia* (2016), presented as a pastoral revolution in the Church. The goal is always the same: to change the teaching of the Gospel in order to adapt it to the changing needs of the world.

Today, Catholic morals adjusts itself to secularized ethics, which reduces rational love to sensual love and holds that man has as his primary end the search for sensual pleasure, wellbeing and the psycho-physical health of the individual. Every pain, every sorrow is refused, because the only evil is not sin, but suffering. The expiative and redemptive value of suffering is denied.

This is the relativistic and hedonistic ethics of the English judges and doctors who condemned Alfie Evans to death. But this culture of death was created specifically by the English bishops who justified the Liverpool hospital, instead of supporting the fight of Alfie’s parents.

This culture of death has already been theorized by Herbert Marcuse, who in *Eros and Civilization* exalts the principle of pleasure and the nihilistic principle of nirvana as two sides of the same coin. “The redemption of pleasure, the halt of time, the absorption of death: silence, sleep, night, paradise – the Nirvana principle not as death but of life”.<sup>16</sup> **Christian civilization is founded on the primacy of being, while post-modern dis-society is founded on nihilism.**

To combat this mentality, to change the evil laws which this mentality has produced, it is not enough to go back to *Humanae Vitae*, we need to return to the traditional conceptions of family and matrimony. We must thank Paul VI for *Humanae Vitae*, which reiterated the Church’s ban on contraception, but today we need to go beyond *Humanae Vitae*. We need to re-read *Humanae Vitae* in light of *Casti Connubii*.

To the world vision of morality’s dissolvers, we need to counterpose a philosophy of life which comes from the very teachings of Our Lord Who said: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (*Mt 24:35*).

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<sup>15</sup> JUERGEN METTEPENNINGEN- JARIM SCHELKENS, *Gottfried Danneels biographie*, Editions Polis, Anvers 2015

<sup>16</sup> HERBERT MARCUSE, *Eros and Civilisation*, Beacon Press, London, 1966., p. 164.

There is no stable family without a single, indissoluble marriage. And there is no marriage without defining the hierarchy of ends. And the first end of matrimony is the procreation and education of children, which, together with the family, form the trinomial which Benedict XVI defined “non-negotiable values.”

Reversing the words of Cardinal Suenens, we can say that perhaps in the last few decades, we have stressed God’s words: “And the two shall be in one flesh” so much, to the point of leaving the other Divine words: “Increase and multiply” in the dark. We need to understand all the richness of these words of Sacred Scripture.

The procreation and education of children entail sacrifices. But Divine Providence does not abandon those who entrust themselves to it. The extraordinary reward is eternal life, and also that hundredfold on earth which the Gospel promises to those who seek before all else, the Kingdom of God and His justice (*Mt 6:33*).

God does not abandon those who are faithful to His Law. God abandons and blinds those who turn their backs on His Law, holding that it is mistaken or impossible to practice.

Divine Law impressed upon our consciences, is not a surpassed or unattainable ideal: it is lived Christianity, which, with the help of God, is possible for every baptized person. The deep joy of those who live it, fighting on earth, prefigures the eternal happiness they will one day come to enjoy in Heaven.

*Translation by Brendan Young*