

The Church and Asmodeus - Part 1

By Don Pietro Leone

A spiritu fornicationis

libera nos, Domine

(invocation from the Litany of the Saints)

Sister Lucia of Fatima wrote to Cardinal Caffara that the final clash between the Devil and the Church would be in the area of the family and marriage. A dispassionate survey of recent Church history serves to assure us that the clash has already begun, that is to say with the entry into the Church of the Demon Asmodeus : the spirit of fornication.

The question that we wish to address in this essay is how Holy Mother Church, who has for 2,000 years resisted, been able to overcome, and indeed been purged and exalted by, all the cruel and inhuman violence of her persecutors and all the abstruse subtleties of the heretics, is now succumbing to something as base and as primitive as the concupiscence of the flesh.

To attempt to answer this question, we shall briefly present—

- 1) The Church's traditional attitude to sexuality, in contrast to that of the World;
- 2) The attitude to sexuality of the modern Church (or rather of the modern Churchmen) from the time of the Second Vatican Council to the accession of Pope Francis; and finally
- 3) The attitude manifest in the encyclical *Amoris Laetitia*.

I

SEXUALITY IN THE EYES OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

a) The Nature of Sexuality

In the eyes of the Church, sexuality has a finality : it is a faculty of the human person oriented to procreation. Since procreation necessitates the existence of a marriage and a family for its proper use, sexuality belongs within marriage and the family, and sexuality thus falls within marital ethics.

In the eyes of the World, by contrast, sexuality does not necessarily belong to marriage or fall within marital ethics, but rather has its own ethics, that is to say sexual ethics. To the Church the atomic cell is marriage ; to the World it is sexuality.

To the World, again, sexuality does not have a 'finality', or orientation, as such. Rather, as sense-love, it is an end in itself and speaks for itself ; it does not require justification, even if it impels the agent to act counter to reason. Indeed the very concept of 'finality' is distasteful to the children of the World[1], because their *Weltanschauung* is essentially subjectivist and self-centred. In a word, they are interested only in their own finality (or desires), and in not that of God, Who, according to them, may

very possibly not exist at all.

Their conception of sexuality ranges from the superficial to the worldly-wise : from the conception simply of something which brings pleasure, alone or with another irrespective of the other's age, sex, or marital status ; to the conception of love between two adults, male and female, but which is typically not confined to marriage alone. Sexuality, according to them, has its own dynamic : it grows, fades, dies, brings pleasure but also sadness ; it attaches to one person and then to another ; it is as variable and as bittersweet as life itself.

b) The Evaluation of Sexuality

The Church teaches that sexuality, being a sense faculty, is, in our fallen human nature, and as a consequence of Original Sin, disordered. Like all the operations of the senses and the emotions, it must therefore be controlled and kept in check by the cardinal virtue of moderation, which in the area of sexuality is known as 'chastity'. Marriage, in providing the context for the proper use of sexuality, is termed 'the remedy for concupiscence'. For those who are married, chastity signifies moderation of the use and pleasures of this faculty ; for the unmarried it signifies total abstinence.

Apart from chastity, there is another virtue which the Church advocates in the sexual domain, and that is modesty, or the sense of shame, *pudor*. This virtue relates to demeanour, dress, and speech. Indeed sexuality is not discussed by committed Catholics except with the utmost tact and discretion.

The World, by contrast, views sexuality as good in an unqualified sense, inasmuch as it belongs to human nature, which it also views as good in such a sense. 'God made me that way', they are wont to say, about any desire that might afflict them.

The World is not interested in modesty. It advocates complete license in the exercise of sexuality, in dress, and in speech. It is open and candid when it comes to this, its favourite topic. Jokes, *double entendres*, stories of affairs, 'conquests', and scandals are merrily bandied about as though a sure index of manliness and emancipation [2].

c) The Abuse of Sexuality

Inasmuch as it is ordered to procreation, to the creation of beings after the image and likeness of God, for the conservation of the human race and for the population of Heaven, sexuality is ordered to a great good, and consequently its abuse is a great evil. For this reason the Church teaches that all sexual sins, all sins against purity, are of grave matter : whether alone or with another, whether both are single, or one or both are married to another, whether they are of a different or of the same sex, whether the sin is of the natural or unnatural order. If committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent, such sins, if not confessed before physical death, will merit the eternal death of Hell. Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin is a further mortal sin : that of sacrilege.

The World, by contrast, views this vision as exaggerated, puritanical, prudish, psychologically unenlightened, inhibited, repressive, killjoy, moralizing, pharisaic, 'only for nuns', 'positively medieval' and 'hopelessly out of step with the times'. The Children of the World defend themselves

from the criticism of impurity by saying that they are 'not harming any-one'. This they say because they subscribe to hedonism, which constitutes the sum total of all their sexual ethics[3].

In conclusion, then, the Church teaches that :

- a) Sexuality has a finality and is ordained to procreation.
- b) Sexuality is in itself disordered ; in marriage it is permitted as the 'remedy of concupiscence' ; it must be moderated by asceticism : by chastity and modesty.
- c) Its abuse is gravely sinful.

The World teaches, by contrast, that :

- a) Sexuality does not have a particular finality. Its use is pleasurable and a means for expressing love between two persons, not necessarily married to each other.
- b) It is unqualifiedly good, and is to be used and talked about with complete license.
- c) Its morality is determined by the canons of hedonism.

Translation: Contributor Francesca Romana

Footnotes

[1] as to Modern Philosophers in general

[2] whereas quite the opposite is true: they are signs of effeminacy and self-indulgence : the incapacity to be a man, to take courage and responsibility ; the index of enslavement to lower desires.

[3] we note here that hedonism is incoherent, since self-indulgence brings sadness, while it is self-discipline (within the context of the Christian virtues) that brings happiness.

The Church and Asmodeus - Part 2

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(invocation from the Litany of the Saints)

II

RECENT CHURCH MARITAL DOCTRINE UNTIL POPE FRANCIS

From the beginning of Her history, the Church had taught and practised the ascetic life. In fact this is one of the features which distinguished Her from the World, and which indeed corroborates the very authenticity of Her Faith[1]. For how could She live, and convert such multitudes to, a mortified and chaste life so at variance with Fallen Nature, if the Faith which She preached were untrue ?

Until the XXth century, this spirit of asceticism had prevailed in the Church : until it began to be sapped by an opposing spirit : that of the World, namely of Fallen Nature. The latter spirit had, over the course of the centuries, grown in extent and power, and was now in the course of penetrating the minds and souls of the Churchmen themselves. Vacillating Faith, poor doctrinal formation, moral weakness, lack of courage, superficiality, and sentimentality [2] on the part of the Hierarchy certainly all played a role in their subsequent endeavours to accommodate this spirit to the Catholic Faith. The moment for its official entry into the Church was marked by the Second Vatican Council.

As far as sexuality is concerned, this spirit is manifest in a new emphasis on an undefined 'love' at the very heart of marital ethics.

This emphasis is first manifest in recent Magisterium in the Council document *Gaudium et Spes* (§ 48), and was later codified by Canon Law (CIC 1983) in terms of a reversal of the order of the ends of marriage. The teaching of the Magisterium on sexuality was later notably affected and developed by official dispositions on the reception of Holy Communion, and by 'Theology of the Body'.

Consequently we shall now proceed to examine:

- 1) The new conception of love in *Gaudium et Spes*, and then in Canon Law ;
- 2) The relation between mortal sin and the reception of Holy Communion ;
- 3) Relevant elements of 'Theology of the Body'.

1. 'LOVE'

A. *Gaudium et Spes*

In the Second Vatican Council there was a move to place the two ends of marriage (procreation and conjugal love, see below) on the same level, contrary to the constant teaching of Tradition which had culminated in the declaration of a commission of Cardinals set up by the *Pastor Angelicus*, and in his own express declaration only a decade prior to the Council. [3] The Dominican Master General, Cardinal Browne, rose with the words *Caveatis! Caveatis!* and warned the assembly that to accept this definition would be to go against the entire Tradition of the Church and to pervert the whole meaning of marriage [4], but his words were met with amusement by the Council Fathers [5].

After a heated debate, an obscure compromise statement was agreed upon, namely that : 'By their very nature the marriage covenant and conjugal love are ordered to the procreation and education of children' (GS § 48). In the light of traditional marital ethics, this statement is orthodox in maintaining that both the marriage covenant and conjugal love are ordered to the procreation and education of children ; it is open to heterodoxy, by contrast, in making a close connection between marriage and love, a connection which is in fact capable of supporting the doctrine [6] that marriage is love (as in the description of marriage as 'an intimate partnership of married love and life' at the beginning of the same section of GS), or the doctrine that marriage has love as its primary end (as already manifest in *Humanae Vitae* [7], and as insinuated in the new canon, as we shall now see).

B. Canon Law

In the Code of Canon Law 1917 (can. 1013) we read : 'The primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of progeny ; the secondary end is the mutual assistance and the remedy of concupiscence.' [8] In The Code of 1983 (can. 1055) we read by contrast : 'The marriage covenant ... is ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of children'. [9]

The later canon differs from the earlier one in that:

- i) The end previously taught as the primary end (the procreation and education of children) is placed after the one previously taught as the secondary end (the good of the spouses) ;
- ii) The good of the spouses is no longer defined at all : either as 'love' or as anything else ;
- iii) The good of the spouses is not designated as 'primary', nor is the good of the children designated as 'secondary', although the reversal of their order suggests this ;
- iv) The remedy of concupiscence is no longer mentioned ;
- v) The term 'end' is no longer mentioned either.

We shall now briefly consider in their relation to the new canon:

- a) 'The good of the spouses' ;
- b) 'The remedy of concupiscence' ;
- c) The notion of finality.

a) The Good of the Spouses

We note that the term 'the good of the spouses', which signifies love, comes to be understood, in the absence of a definition, as emotional, and more particularly as sexual, love. The reason for this is that emotional love is the most obvious sense of 'love', and in the marital context the most obvious type of emotional love is of a sexual nature. [10]

That the author of the canon intended the good of the spouses in a sexual sense is corroborated by his placing 'the good of the spouses' before the 'procreation and education of children', thereby suggesting that the love he refers to is indeed sexual love : as a means to the end of procreation.

In short, the canon, foreshadowed in *Gaudium et Spes*, has the eroticizing tendency that 'sexual life... acquires in the mind and conscience of the average reader the idea and value of an end in itself'. [11] This tendency was to intensify in subsequent [exercises of the] Magisterium.

According to traditional doctrine, by contrast, the good of the spouses (conjugal love) is understood in the first place as 'mutual assistance' and only in the second place as 'the remedy of concupiscence'. Since mutual assistance is designated as secondary to the 'procreation and education of the children', it must clearly consist above all in their collaboration for the primary end of their marriage: that is the procreation, and, in particular, the education of their offspring. The fact that 'the remedy of concupiscence' is mentioned after 'mutual assistance', signifies that the role that sexuality plays in marriage is a subordinate one.

b) The Remedy of Concupiscence

The Church teaches that sexuality is disordered as a consequence of Original Sin. This sin was the cause, amongst other things, of the concupiscence of the flesh which is a disorder, a lack of control, and a striving of the senses and the emotions for their own satisfaction in independence from Reason. Marriage provides the 'Remedy for Concupiscence' in offering a suitable and honest context for the exercise of this faculty. In Traditional Church teaching, this aspect of marriage is designated either as the third finality of marriage, or, as here, as part of the second finality.

In suppressing this aspect of marriage, the innovators seem to treat sexuality as a purely natural phenomenon and as something intrinsically good, prescinding from the doctrine of Original Sin and from the negative light which it sheds on this faculty.

c) Finality

We have observed that the word *finis* (end, or finality) is missing from the new definition (as it already was in *Gaudium et Spes*). This corresponds to an aversion to scholastic thinking and terminology which characterizes the Second Vatican Council and recent Magisterium as a whole. [12] The result is a lack of precision and clarity in general, and in this canon in particular. The end, or finality, of a thing determines its nature. The Church had always taught that the (primary) end of marriage is procreation. It is this that defines its nature : God instituted marriage for progeny.

What does it mean to say that marriage is 'ordered to the good of the spouses and the procreation of children' ? Are the two elements on the same level, as the innovators had wished to declare in the Council ? But if so, how can the nature of a single thing be determined by two disparate ends ? Or is the former element the principal one because it is mentioned first ? But if so, what would it mean to say that the principal end of marriage is 'the good of the spouses' or sexual love, as the canon insinuates (see above) ? Is sexuality not itself oriented to procreation like the stomach for digestion and the eye to sight ? And does this not entail that the end of marriage is procreation after all ? And in this case why not place procreation first?

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In this subsection we have seen how traditional marital teaching has been obscured ; and how 'love', and specifically sexual love, has been emphasized to the expense of concupiscence, finality, and procreation. In short, we have seen how subjectivism has gained the ascendancy over objective reality, and 'positive' over 'negative' elements.

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Before proceeding to the next subsection, let us briefly show how the importance here accorded to sexual love has been corroborated by subsequent Magisterium. The new conception of marriage codified in Canon Law (CIC 1983) has been quoted in various papal encyclicals such as *Familiaris Consortio*, and in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (§ 1601).

In that Catechism we also find the doctrine that 'sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of the man and woman' (§ 2360). Here conjugal love is understood as sexual love, and there is no longer even a mention of procreation.

A further novel doctrine on sexuality is found in the Catechism at § 2332 : ‘Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others’.

But what does it mean to say that ‘Sexuality affects *all* the aspects of the human person’ ? How can it affect the purely spiritual aspect of the person, involved for example in his relationship with God ? And how does it concern ‘the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others’ ? Bonds of communion can be forged or strengthened either rationally, as when I give alms to some-one, or emotionally, as when I express my affection for some-one. But sexuality certainly does not pertain to the former case, and it does not necessarily pertain to the latter either. The latter case involves sense-love, but sexual love is not the only form of sense-love that there is ; there is also family love, for instance, as when a mother embraces her child.

Here sexuality is again accorded importance, this time by universalizing it, more in accordance with Freudian psychology than to any sane, let alone Catholic, anthropology.

From the promulgation of *Gaudium et Spes* onwards we see, then, an ever-intensifying spirit of eroticism in marital ethics.

Translation: Contributor Francesca Romana

Footnotes

[1] cf. The *preambula Fidei* in the discipline of Apologetics

[2] - all features of Fallen Nature. Their philosophical formation in particular was coloured by Modern Philosophy, which may be described as ‘The Philosophy of Fallen Nature’. Limits of space prevent the author from expounding this notion at this point.

[3] AAS XXVI, 1944 ; Address to the Italian Midwives, 1951.

[4] as reported by Mgr. Lefèbvre, cf. Pope John’s Council p.67, Michael Davies, Augustine Publishing co. 1977

[5] as reported by Archbishop Dwyer, *ibid.*

[6] an eroticizing doctrine, as we shall shortly see

[7] cf. ‘Family under Attack’.

[8] *Matrimonii finis primarius est procreatio atque educatio prolis; secundarius mutuum adiutorium et remedium concupiscentiae.*

[9] *Matrimoniale foedus... ad bonum conjugum atque ad prolis generationem et educationem ordinatum.*

[10] The same may be said of the description of marriage as an ‘intimate partnership of married life and love’, see above.

[11] Pope Pius XII in his Address to Fathers of Families 1951, warning them of propaganda contrary to Church teaching

[12] Other examples are the doctrine that marriage is an ‘intimate partnership of married life and love’ (cf. GS 48), which is a psychological description rather than a theological definition in terms of

the *vinculum* or spiritual bond (cf. the Catechism of Trent), and the doctrine that sexuality is ordered towards 'conjugal love' rather than towards procreation (see below).

The Church and Asmodeus - Part 3 (and the fallacy of Theology of the Body)

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III

RECENT CHURCH MARITAL DOCTRINE UNTIL POPE FRANCIS

2. MORTAL SIN AND HOLY COMMUNION

The Traditional Doctrine

The Church has always warned the faithful against receiving Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin. In the Maundy Thursday liturgy and in the Feast of *Corpus Christi*, the Church in Her Old Rite liturgy presents for our meditation the passage from chapter 11 of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians 11 warning against the reception of Holy Communion to one's damnation. On the latter feast, St. Thomas Aquinas himself, its author, pointedly repeats the phrase in the *Communio* prayer; and in the sequence *Lauda Sion* he unambiguously declares :

Sumunt boni sumunt mali, sorte tamen

Inaequalis, vitae vel interitus.

Mors est malis, vita bonis: vide paris

Sumptionis quam sit dispar exitus.

"The good receive, the evil receive, but their destiny is different : life or death. Death is for the evil, life is for the good : see how unequal is the end of an equal reception."

The Church teaches traditionally that any-one in the state of mortal sin must make a sacramental confession before receiving Holy Communion. Otherwise, when he attends Mass, he must refrain from communicating sacramentally and receive only a spiritual Communion. It is true that an act of perfect contrition outside the Sacrament of Confession suffices for absolving a person from mortal sin, but since it is impossible to know whether the contrition in any given case is perfect, the person in question would in effect be risking committing a further mortal sin by receiving Holy Communion in such circumstances, and therefore it would be wrong to do so.

Accordingly we read in the Catechism of St. Pius X (§ 630) : '...the person who knows that he is in a state of mortal sin must, before Communion, make a good confession; since it is not sufficient to make

the act of perfect contrition, without confession, for someone who is in mortal sin in order to communicate properly[1]’.

The New Doctrine

Both in the new liturgy and in recent Church Magisterium, we find that the above-described traditional doctrine has been diluted.

In the *Novus Ordo* [2] St. Paul’s admonition against receiving Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin has been excised from the liturgy both of Maundy Thursday and of Corpus Christi (in two instances in the latter feast, see above). Furthermore, the Sequence *Lauda Sion* has been made optional ; alternatively a shorter version has been provided (see for example the ‘American Bishops’ Site’) which no longer contains the two verses quoted above.

As for recent Magisterium, we read in the Code of Canon Law : ‘A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession, unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess ; in this case the person is to remember the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition which includes the resolution of confessing as soon as possible’ (CIC 1983 can. 916 [3]).

The Canon refers in the first instance to priests, but clearly applies to laymen as well. It justifies Holy Communion for a ‘grave reason’ but what could this grave reason possibly be ? For a priest it could perhaps be the obligation to celebrate a Mass for a given congregation [4], but what could it be for a layman ? What could constitute a reason grave enough to risk a sacrilegious Communion ? Embarrassment at what others might think or say ? Human respect ? ‘Solidarity’ with the couple whose marriage he is attending for example ? The thought that Holy Communion might somehow help him to overcome his sin ?

We observe that this canon, already questionable enough in itself, is quoted in an abbreviated form in the Catechism of the Catholic Church as follows (§ 1457) : ‘Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion even if he experiences deep contrition, without first having received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession’. Here only two of the conditions listed in the canon are explicitly quoted, namely the impossibility of a sacramental confession and the ‘grave reason’ ; the act of contrition is mentioned, but not explicitly as a condition ; whereas the fourth condition, namely the resolution to confess as soon as possible after Holy Communion, has been entirely left out.

The modern clergy seems, by contrast, typically to insist only on the fourth condition, for all too often laymen will blithely announce to a Confessor that a priest had told him that it was sufficient to confess *after* receiving Communion. What is most remarkable here is the lack of logical coherence on the part of all concerned.

If we still lived in the happy age and the territory and of the Holy Roman Empire, and the Emperor had expressed his intention to visit us in our home, would it be sufficient to welcome him into a stuffy apartment with curtains drawn, unmade beds, unwashed clothes and plates, dust, dirt, and piles of

rubbish everywhere, and assure him that the next day we would be cleaning the whole place up for his visit ?

The more permissive stance of the Church in regard to the reception of Holy Communion is relevant to the issue of sexuality inasmuch as, belittling the gravity of Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin, it belittles the gravity of mortal sin itself of which impurity is, sad to say, one of the most common forms.

However much these liturgical and magisterial innovations may have affected the faithful's understanding of the gravity of impurity, we must in all honesty admit that the clergy in recent times has been far from assiduous in inculcating true Christian values pertaining to this sin and to its opposing virtue.

When, O Gentle Reader, did you last hear a sermon on the glory of purity or the abomination of impurity ? When did you last hear a priest warn the congregation not to receive Holy Communion after committing an act of impurity, even alone ? When did he last admonish you in the confessional on the danger of impurity for the salvation of your eternal soul or encourage you to offer to God the sacrifice of a life of perfect chastity ? [5]

3. 'THEOLOGY OF THE BODY'

Faithful attending Pope John Paul II's *Angelus* discourses from September 1979 –November 1984 and hoping for catechism or pious disquisitions, would surely have been disappointed. Instead they were to hear him propound in all freedom his personal theories of sexual morality. We shall here briefly examine two tenets of the personalistic 'Theology of the Body', having already discussed the theory in detail in our book.

a) The Divinization of Conjugal Love

We have seen how recent Magisterium presents conjugal love as sexual love ; with Theology of the Body, we see how Pope John Paul II presents conjugal love as divine love. This he does, in effect, by designating conjugal love as 'total self-giving'. Of this total self-giving he distinguishes two types : a 'total personal self-giving', which is the conjugal love in the permanent sense, and a 'total physical self-giving' which is the act of conjugal love, 'the sign and the fruit' of the former love (*Familiaris Consortio*). The love that he so defines is in effect divine love, inasmuch as total self-giving love is nothing other than the love that man owes to God.

The Pope does not however stop at relating the act of conjugal love to man's love for God, but seeks to divinize it yet further, by relating it both to the love of God for man, and to that of God for Himself.

This theory may be criticized in various ways. The first is in regard to the identification of conjugal love with 'total self-giving' ; the second is in regard to its alleged relation to God's love.

i) Total Self-Giving Love in Itself

There are various difficulties with this identification. A first is that it is in fact impossible for one

human person to give himself totally to another human person, whether on the metaphysical or on the physical plane. A second is that it runs counter to the Faith, for Our Blessed Lord commands us to love God with a total love (*ex toto corde tuo...*), but the neighbour with a lesser love, that is, 'as oneself'.

A further difficulty of this definition is that it confuses the natural and supernatural orders. For the Pope divinizes conjugal love on the grounds of its purely natural features, that is to say, above all on the basis of its alleged 'total self-giving', without reference to the supernatural order, such as Grace or conformity to the Catholic Faith.

A consequence of this confusion is that the definition is too wide in ambit for the Pope's purposes, since the property of 'total self-giving love' (at least as the Pope envisages it) is not confined to sacramental marriage alone, as he intends, but rather is a property of every valid form of marriage, and even of certain extramarital relationships, provided that the two persons in question (who may even be adulterers) commit themselves to live together for life with the appropriate sentiments of mutual devotion.

ii) Total Self-Giving Love in Relation to God's Love for Man and for Himself

The love of God for man that the Pope has in mind is Christ's love for His Church. He relates the act of conjugal love to this love in various ways, of which we shall mention only three.

a) The Church's Subjection to Christ

The Pope interprets this phrase as the spouses' mutual subjection of total self-giving in the conjugal act. St. Paul, by contrast, understands the phrase as the model for the wife's subjection to the authority of her husband.

b) The 'Union in one Flesh' as a Sign of Christ's Union with the Church

The Pope understands this phrase of the spouses' carnal union. The Council of Trent, by contrast, understands the phrase of the unity of the spouses' spiritual bond.

c) The Expression of *Agape*

The Pope presents the conjugal act as 'the most profound expression of *Agape*'. Here he confuses two radically different forms of love : natural sense-love and supernatural rational love (that is to say *Agape*, or Charity). The former love is too different from the latter to be able to serve as its expression.

A similar objection may be made to the Pope's vision of the conjugal act as an expression of inner Trinitarian love.

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We see how the Pope endeavours to relate conjugal love to God's love in novel and eroticizing ways, without foundation either in Sacred Scripture or in Tradition.

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In a general concluding commentary on 'Theology of the Body', we may say that in effect the Pope elevates conjugal love to the level of divine love by identifying conjugal love with the love of Charity :

the Charity of man for God [6], the Charity of God for man, and the Charity of God for God. But this is illicit, for, as we have just said, conjugal love is a radically different type of love from that of Charity. [7]

Certainly the most innovative aspect of Theology of the Body is the divinization of the conjugal act, even if the Pope views that act as the 'sign and fruit' of a life of mutual loving commitment. Since 'total self-giving love' may, however, be found outside marriage, as we have observed above, this divinization becomes in the end a divinization of carnal union itself. To find such concepts, characteristic rather of the clouded vagaries of Fallen Nature and the perverse lucubrations of its mouthpiece, Gnosis, in the Catholic Magisterium and in the mouth of the Vicar of Christ himself, is testimony to the remarkable expansion of eroticism in the bosom of the Catholic Church in the twenty years following the promulgation of *Gaudium et Spes*.

The overall effect of Pope John Paul II's Personalism, and particularly of his Theology of the Body, is to substitute sanctity for sexuality (sic) at the very heart of Catholic morality. Even if the above critique were unconvincing, this fact should suffice to show the fallacy of this theory [8] to anyone of a Catholic sensibility. [9]

b) Marriage in Relation to Virginity and Celibacy

One consequence of the divinization of conjugal love is that all [reference to what]... is negative in sexuality, such as its inherent disorder, or concupiscence, must clearly be suppressed. Another consequence is that it can no longer be lent a status inferior to that of virginity and celibacy.

In this vein Pope John Paul II declares that : '... the biblical texts do not furnish a motive to sustain either the 'inferiority' of marriage, or the 'superiority' of virginity and celibacy' based on sexual abstinence' (Discourses 14th April 1982) [10]. St. Paul, however, says precisely the opposite (I Cor. 7. 25-40). We note in particular : 'He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord' (v.32) and 'he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife' (v.33).

In any case, to know what Holy Mother Church teaches on any given subject, an authority higher than that of the Sacred Scripture is enjoyed by defined dogmas. And the Council of Trent declares dogmatically in this regard (s. 24 can.10) : 'If anyone were to say... that it is not more blessed and better to remain in virginity or celibacy than in marriage : Anathema sit'. *Si quis dixerit... non esse melius ac beatius manere in virginitate aut caelibatu, quam matrimonio: Anathema sit.*

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Before proceeding to examine the [apostolic exhortation] of Pope Francis, we shall briefly investigate the influence of the spirit of the World on marital ethics in the recent Magisterium, in the light of our brief synthesis of that spirit above.

In the first subsection, on *Gaudium et Spes* and the modified code of Canon Law, we saw how the concept of the finality of marriage was suppressed and how 'procreation' then moved into the background and 'conjugal love' into the foreground. We then observed how this love acquired an

erotic content which was to intensify over the succeeding years.

In the second subsection, on the liturgical changes and on a new code of Canon Law, we saw how the gravity of mortal sins was (indirectly) belittled.

In the third subsection, on 'Theology of the Body', we saw how conjugal love, and particularly the act of conjugal love, was glorified, and how 'negative' concupiscence was left out of the account. We witnessed a complete openness, or license, on the part of the Pope in talking about such matters. At the same time we saw nothing in his words to diminish the gravity of impurity. In fact one of the great strengths of this Pontiff's moral teaching is his upholding of the Natural Law, and his consequent insistence on purity.

Translation: Contributor Francesca Romana

Footnotes

[1] *Chi sa di essere in peccato mortale, che cosa deve fare prima di comunicarsi ? Chi sa di essere in peccato mortale, deve, prima di comunicarsi, fare una buona confessione; non bastando l'atto di contrizione perfetta, senza la confessione, a chi è in peccato mortale per comunicarsi come conviene* (n. 630).

[2] as observed in our booklet 'The Destruction of the Roman Rite'

[3] (quoted in *Redemptoris Sacramentum* ch. 4, 81) The Code of Canon Law is not infallible, nor does a subsequent version of it necessarily represent an improvement over a previous version. In this its canons are similar to the non-infallible declarations of a Council.

[4] He is faced with a *choix corneillien*, but how is it that he does not have more respect for the sacred priesthood, of which he bears the indelible and eternal character in his soul. Did he never study such Doctrines ? Did his seminary confessor never avert him to the gravity of such sacrileges ?

[5] We mention in this connection the suppression on the part of the Vatican Hierarchy of the initiative to make St. Aloysius Gonzaga patron of the youth. Even if this action, which we have been unable to substantiate, did not occur, it would be typical of the contemporary Church outlook towards purity.

[6] the love of man for God immediately, not his love for God mediately through the neighbour.

[7] It may amount to Charity, but only when the agent is in the state of Grace.

[8] An employee of the Propaganda of the Doctrine of the Faith informally admitted as much to the author in a conversation at the Sant'Ufficio some ten years ago.

[9] In conformity with this vision, we note Pope John Paul II's initiatives to raise to the honour of the altar married individuals and couples.

The evils of Amoris Laetitia: The Church and Asmodeus - Part IV

By Don Pietro Leone

A spiritu fornicationis

libera nos, Domine

(invocation from the Litany of the Saints)

IV

AMORIS LAETITIA

How can we doubt that this [apostolic exhortation], publicly called into question by the same Cardinal Caffarra (amongst others) to whom Sister Lucia had written, is not part of the clash between the Church and Satan that we have mentioned above ?

In this brief glance at *Amoris Laetitia* we consider marriage, adultery, and 'sex education'.

1. MARRIAGE

The Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* states in § 80 : 'Marriage is firstly an 'intimate partnership of life and love' which is a good for the spouses themselves, while sexuality is 'ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman'... Nonetheless the conjugal union is ordered to procreation by its very nature'.

In the footnotes, four references are provided for this text : *Gaudium et Spes* § 48 with regard to the 'intimate partnership'; the Code of Canon Law (1983) c. 1055 with regard to the 'good of the spouses'[1] ; the Catechism of the Catholic Church § 2360 with regard to the ordering of sexuality to conjugal love ; *Gaudium et Spes* § 48 again with regard to the ordering of marriage to procreation.

There are two things to note when comparing this passage of the Exhortation with recent Magisterium:

- 1) It represents a step forward, inasmuch as it now explicitly presents married love as the primary end of marriage ('Marriage is *firstly*... conjugal love') ;
- 2) This doctrine is a further example of the eroticizing tendency in recent Magisterium, manifest here also in the re-iteration of three doctrines (which we have treated above) describing marriage as an 'intimate partnership of life and love' and a 'good for the spouses', and concerning the 'ordering of sexuality to conjugal love'. The suggestion that conjugal love is essentially sexual in content will indeed subsequently be elaborated in exclusively secular terms in § 150 entitled 'The Erotic Dimension of Love'.

Pope Francis follows Pope John Paul in no longer treating marriage as inferior to virginity and celibacy (Exhortation § 159 citing the above-quoted passage of Pope John Paul II). This certainly corresponds to the importance he too accords to conjugal love.

2. ADULTERY

It is certainly the spirit of eroticism already manifest in the above quotations that is behind the Pope's indulgent attitude towards adultery.

a) Advocacy of Adultery

In the document *Amoris Laetitia* § 298, the Pope speaks of 'divorced and remarried' couples in the

following terms : 'The Church acknowledges situations 'where, for serious reasons, such as the children's upbringing, a man and woman cannot satisfy the obligation to separate' (*Familiaris Consortio* § 84), and he adds in footnote 329 'In such situations, many people, knowing and accepting the possibility of living 'as brothers and sisters' which the Church offers them, point out that if certain expressions of intimacy are lacking, it often happens that faithfulness is endangered and the good of the children suffers' (*Gaudium et Spes* § 51).

Commentary

'Expressions of intimacy' refers to sexual relations, as appears from a reading of the complete passage of *Gaudium et Spes*, and from the fact that the said 'expressions of intimacy' are contrasted to cohabitation 'as brother and sister'. Consequently, the text may be summarized as follows : Many divorced and remarried couples who live together for the good of their children, find that sexual relations (i.e. adultery) are fruitful for their relationship and for the good of their children.

We see then that :

- i) Adultery is justified ; that is :
- ii) as a means to an end : namely the couple's fidelity and the good of their progeny ;
- iii) in a particular situation, indeed a situation experienced by 'many' ;
- iv) in purported continuity with preceding Church Magisterium.

We may reply to each of the points as follows:

- i) Adultery is condemned *expressis verbis* in the Old Testament in the VIth Commandment, and by Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the New (Matt. 19.9 ; Mark 10.11-12). Furthermore, Our Blessed Lord specifies it as one of the sins that exclude the sinner from eternal life (Matt. 19. 17-18), in other words as a mortal sin. Being, therefore, an intrinsic evil, it can in no way be justified.
- ii) St. Paul (Romans 3: 8) declares explicitly that an evil cannot be done as a means to a good ;
- iii) Here 'Situation Ethics' is in operation with the principle that the conscience creates a norm according to the situation in which the individual finds himself. The Church has, by contrast, condemned situation ethics and understands the conscience as a judgement which applies objective moral principles to particular actions ;
- iv) The Pope (or his collaborators) suppresses essential parts of the passages from which he quotes. In the first passage, Pope John Paul II, when speaking of the 'divorced and remarried' who live together for motives which include the good of their children, declares that they must live in perfect chastity : if they do not, they cannot receive Holy Communion. In the second passage, the Council recommends sexual relations for reasons of fidelity and the good of the children, but only among those who are sacramentally married.

In other words, Pope John Paul II states that a 'divorce and remarried' couple may live together for the good of their children *but in perfect chastity* ; the Council states that sexual relations can promote the fidelity of a couple and the good of their children *within marriage*. By combining the two passages while cutting out the references to chastity and marriage, Pope Francis purports to justify adultery on the basis of preceding Magisterium.

b) The Ecclesial Status of Adulterers

The Exhortation states in § 299 that the ‘divorced and remarried’ are, ‘as living members, able to live and grow in the Church’ and proposes that they be integrated in the public life of the Church, as godparents for example. The Church’s Tradition along with St. Thomas Aquinas on the other hand, consider them as dead members of the Church, like dead branches of a living tree. For this reason, and by reason of their bad example, it is clearly not appropriate for adulterers to assume positions in the public life of the Church, nor has it ever been permitted for them to do so.

c) The Admission of Adulterers to Holy Communion

We may conclude from § 298 and footnote 329 analyzed above, that if adultery is no longer considered as a mortal sin it follows that adulterers have the right to be integrated into the life of the Church, even as far as receiving Holy Communion is concerned. Let us now examine one of the passages of the document that says so explicitly : ‘[...]the consequences or effects of a rule need not necessarily always be the same [...] This is also the case with regard to sacramental discipline, since discernment can recognize that in a particular situation no grave fault exists’. (§ 300 with footnote 336).

What kind of justification for access to Holy Communion does the Pope here have in mind ? ‘Situation Ethics’? But, as we have already explained, this [ethical system] is null and void. Or is it perhaps the ignorance on the part of the couple that adultery is a mortal sin, or that Holy Communion in a state of mortal sin is a further mortal sin ? It is true that a mortal sin is not imputed to a sinner who did not know that it was mortal ; nonetheless, the sin in question is mortal *objectively* and is a grave offence against God. For this reason, any form of spiritual assistance, discernment, declaration, or intervention on the part of the Church must be directed towards instructing the couple concerning the objective natural and Divine law, and to leading them to live in the Grace of God : not leaving them in ignorance and sin for fear of offending their sensibilities. In short, the Church’s task here is not to avoid offending the faithful, but to avoid offending God.

3. ‘SEX EDUCATION’

Now that European schools have been flooded with ‘sex education’ programmes of an immoral and purely hedonistic order (and we fear that even worse is to come), an intervention from Holy Mother Church becomes increasingly more opportune and urgent with every day that passes. With the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*, one might perhaps have hoped that the Hierarchy would have adopted some truly Catholic stance in regard to the issue, for example :

- i) A proposal to found new, and authentically Catholic schools, or at least to found new institutes to teach Catholic doctrine in existing schools ;
- ii) An appeal to parents to educate, or at least to supervise the education of, their children themselves as they are indeed obliged to do in accordance with the primary end of marriage (i.e. the procreation and *education* of children) ;
- iii) A clear exposition of Catholic doctrine on marriage, on the acts contrary to it, on purity, on impurity, and on the fact that all sins against purity are mortal.

Instead of this, the [section] § 280-286 entitled ‘The Need for Sex Education’ is singularly lacking on all of these counts.

- i) Far from proposing alternatives to the present 'sex education' programmes, the document limits itself to suggesting certain modifications or change of accent within them ;
- ii) The educative role of parents is not even mentioned, in marked contrast to the document 'The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality', promulgated by the Vatican some 20 years before (in 1995), which, in view of the dangers of treating such matters in school, firmly collocated 'sex education' within the family. [2] In the passage in question *Amoris Laetitia* in fact entirely ignores the primary end of marriage, concentrating (except for one single reference to the 'natural procreative end of sexuality') on the secondary end of marriage, i.e., love : indeed on a love understood exclusively in an emotional, and above all in a sexual, sense. One reads for example about 'education for love, for mutual self-giving' (§ 280) ; about the 'capacity to love' (§ 281-2) and the way that 'young people show love' (§ 284).
- iii) With respect to Catholic doctrine on marriage and purity [3], nothing at all is said. Sexuality is in fact treated in an exclusively psychological manner without so much as an allusion to morality. The evil to be avoided is no longer sin but rather sociological or psychological problems such as : 'trivialization and impoverishment' (§ 280) ; 'the flood of pornography', the deformation of sexuality, the crippling and 'distortion' of the capacity to love (§ 281-2) ; 'narcissism and aggressivity' ; 'toying' with bodies and desires (§ 283) ; immaturity (§ 284) ; isolation (§284-5), not accepting one's own body, fear of the other (§ 285).

We see that sexuality outside marriage is not condemned. Rather, it seems actively to be encouraged, so that the section in the final analysis is entirely compatible with 'sex education' programmes : those already in force and those yet to be imposed upon the children : 'The sexual urge can be directed through a process of growth in self-knowledge and self-control capable of nurturing valuable capacities for joy and for loving encounter' (§ 280). 'The important thing is to teach them sensitivity to different expressions of love, mutual concern and care, loving respect, and deeply meaningful communication' [4], in preparation 'for sexual union in marriage as a sign of an all-inclusive commitment enriched by everything that has preceded it' (§ 283, viz. also § 284).

Indeed, the section is compatible even with 'Gender' [5], inasmuch as its author contemplates sex education not only for adolescents but even for 'children' (§ 280 and 281) ; and is pleased to assert: 'Nor can we ignore the fact that the configuration of our own mode of being, whether as male or female, is not simply the result of biological or genetic factors [6], but of multiple elements having to do with temperament, family history, culture etc. [...] ; But it is also true that masculinity and femininity are not rigid categories [...]'. The section ends with a warning against 'condition[ing] legitimate freedom and hamper[ing] the authentic development of children's specific identity and potential' (§ 286) [7]

Translation: Contributor Francesca Romana

Footnotes

[1] cf. Footnote 9 above

[2] The document breathes an authentically Catholic spirit, apart from a personalist over-insistence on 'love'.

[3] Again in marked contrast to 'The Meaning and Truth of Human Sexuality'.

[4] It is uncertain what is being referred to here. Certainly the Greek and Roman 'love-poets', for instance, would have imagined they were engaged in some such communication, but certainly in abstraction from chastity.

[5] An ideology as bird-brained as it is despicable

[6] But in which case why, pray, is 'not accepting one's own body' a problem (cf. § 285) ?

[7] The deleterious effect of this passage is not diminished by Papal disapproval of 'Gender' on other occasions, since the latter statements have the effect only of confusing, rather than of correcting, the former statements

The Church and Asmodeus - Part 5, conclusion

By Don Pietro Leone

*A spiritu fornicationis
libera nos, Domine*

(invocation from the Litany of the Saints)

V

CONCLUSION

The intention in writing this essay was to investigate how the concupiscence of the flesh, or, more particularly, the spirit of fornication, or impurity, has been able to penetrate the mind of the contemporary Church. We have been at pains to trace it back through various canons of the New Church Law and various doctrines of recent Magisterium to the Second Vatican Council where the spirit of Fallen Nature made its official entry into the Catholic Church.

This spirit of impurity corresponds to the World's vision of sexuality. Quoting our earlier analysis of this vision, and alluding briefly to the period extending from the last Vatican Council to the present pontificate we shall proceed to examine how and to what extent this spirit informs the [apostolic exhortation] *Amoris Laetitia*.

A. 'Sexuality does not have a particular finality. Its use is pleasurable and a means for expressing love between two persons, not necessarily married to each other'

We have seen how *Gaudium et Spes* suppressed the term 'finality', a suppression all the more evident in the New Code of Canon Law when one compares the new and the old canons. Subsequently, up to and including *Amoris Laetitia*, the procreation and education of children has never regained its previous, traditional, status.

The suppression of this term, either in isolation or in association with the designation 'primary',

certainly marks the breach in the bastion of perennial Church marital teaching, on the part of the Demon Asmodeus [1].

It is this suppression that has permitted an undefined 'love' to move into the foreground of marital ethics, contemporary Churchmen not viewing sexuality solely as pleasurable (in conformity to the most superficial of worldly attitudes).

In the period inaugurated by *Gaudium et Spes* Church Magisterium insinuated increasingly that this 'love' was in fact the primary end of marriage and erotic in content until the [apostolic exhortation] *Amoris Laetitia* was finally to state both doctrines explicitly (see above).

Up to this point the [apostolic exhortation] represents solely a development of recent marital heterodoxy ; in its advocacy of adultery, by contrast, it represents a *novum* of particular moral gravity ever closer to the spirit of the World in all its headstrong and brazen audacity [2].

B. 'Sexuality is unqualifiedly good, and is to be used and talked about with complete license'

The unqualified goodness of sexuality had been insinuated since the Council by the suppression of the Church doctrine on the concupiscence of Fallen Nature. This suppression was particularly evident in Canon Law, and in 'Theology of the Body' where Pope John Paul II did not hesitate even to advocate a return to 'Original Purity' [3].

Its putative goodness was elevated to a divine level by Pope John Paul II, albeit in the context of marital love as a whole [4]. In conformity with this view, marriage was no longer regarded as inferior to virginity or celibacy. Pope Francis followed his predecessor, at least on the latter count.

Both popes, while sustaining Church teaching on sins against purity [5], speak about such themes with complete license [6], Pope Francis in effect recommending this license also publicly inasmuch as he supports school programs of 'sex education'.

C. 'Sexual morality is determined by the canons of hedonism'

If the Church officially maintains Her position on the gravity of sins against purity, we have observed how recent modifications in Canon Law and the Magisterium have opened the door to Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin under certain conditions. The dispositions of Pope Francis for adulterers to communicate (also under certain conditions) must be seen in line with this relaxation of Eucharistic discipline.

As noted above, the great novelty of *Amoris Laetitia* is the advocacy of adultery. In the light of this laxity one cannot but be alarmed at the Pope's analysis of the sexuality of contemporary youth in exclusively sociological and psychological terms without so much as a hint at morality. Impurity, alone or with another, is nowhere condemned. Indeed, as we observed above, it seems actively to be encouraged as in the phrase : 'The important thing is to teach them sensitivity to different expressions of love...' in preparation 'for sexual union in marriage as a sign of an all-inclusive commitment

enriched by everything that has preceded it'. What is the nature of the love that is supposed to enrich sexual union if it is not sexual love ? But if the author of the text does not intend this, because it is contrary to Church teaching, why does he not say so?

In short, although the [apostolic exhortation] does not promote sexual hedonism explicitly, it advocates impurity of a particularly grave type ; it analyzes sexuality in terms of psychology which, typically, is allied to a hedonistic world-view ; it instils a permissive spirit into the faithful ; and it passes over the Church's perennial condemnation of impurity in complete silence.

*

In a word, what we are hearing ever more clearly, from the Second Vatican Council to the [apostolic exhortation] *Amoris Laetitia*, is the voice of the World. This voice proclaims the following message : 'Sexuality is for love ; it is an unqualified good ; it should be used for the pursuit of happiness'. Cardinal Browne OP has been proved correct in stating that the innovations proposed at the Council were to 'pervert the whole meaning of marriage'.

Some-one might object : 'The Church has changed Her outlook on these matters—and about time too'. To which we might reply : The Church in Her declarations is not like a government or a firm which changes its policies according to changing circumstances : Rather She is Guardian and Teacher, Guardian and Teacher of the Faith and morals. Faith and morals constitute Supernatural Truth, Revelation, the *Depositum Fidei*. The Truth does not change in itself, but only in the depth and profundity of its expression ; Revelation is a revelation of x and not of y; the *Depositum Fidei* is deposited as it is and not as anything else.

In the face of Truth, which in the last instance is God Himself, the virtues required of man are humility, docility, obedience, subjection, and subjugation. Man is on this earth to serve, he is a 'useless servant' in the words of Our Blessed Lord, a mere instrument, whether he is Pope, King, or layman. When a Council member or a Pope takes it on himself to touch, alter, or reform that which is untouchable, unalterable, and irreformable, then the consequences will be grave indeed.

Postscript

The Status Quo

Amongst the various indignities that have followed *Amoris Laetitia* we wish to mention solely : 'The Meeting Point, Course of Affectivity and Sex Education for Young People', emanating from the Pontifical Council for the Family, and widely distributed to the young on 'World Youth Day' in Poland last year. Here the Personalism of Pope John Paul II encounters the sexual amorality of Pope Francis, in a glorification of love, where neither mortal sin nor parental responsibility is mentioned even once. The document is charged with eroticism, which does not shrink even from pornography, a fact which is entirely reprehensible.

The glorification of eroticism has drawn a veil of obscurity over both marriage and (perfect) chastity : over marriage, by obscuring its finality which is the procreation of children ; over (perfect) chastity, by obscuring its very possibility. The result is that married couples enter marriage without knowing

what it is, and hence end up by failing in the enterprise ; while fewer and fewer young people embrace the religious state [7]. For the religious makes a vow of perfect chastity but if the Church does not say what that vow is or what it means why should a young person make it ? And if marriage is on the same level as the religious state (which is virginity \ celibacy in its ecclesial form), then why take the trouble to embrace the latter ?

The Hierarchy and the Clergy are not fulfilling their duty to communicate the Faith on these matters. A number of their members seem saturated by the same spirit of eroticism that they are preaching. They demand liberation from celibacy, and their scandals [8] continue day by day, as monotonous as they are nauseating. Here we see Asmodeus at work again, in this his most gratifying, and final, assignment : that of contaminating the [members] and the doctrine of the Church.

God has been passed over and ignored, together with His purpose inscribed in human nature, which is the procreation of children for the population of Heaven ; together with His Real Presence in the Blessed Eucharist sacrilegiously received ; together with the love due to Him, which is total self-giving love, the love of perfect chastity, the love of purity, the supernatural love of Charity in its perfect ordering to Him, the love with undivided heart, the love which is more blessed and higher, and a more perfect sign of Christ's union with His Church, than is marriage itself [9], the love of which Our Blessed Lord Himself said : 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'.

Mater Divinae Gratiae, ora pro nobis

Mater Purissima, ora pro nobis

Mater Castissima, ora pro nobis

Sancte Joannes Evangelista, ora pro nobis

Sancte Aloisi Gonzaga, ora pro nobis

Sancte Dominice Savio, ora pro nobis

Sancte Joannes Baptista, ora pro nobis

Sancte Joannes Fisher, ora pro nobis

Sancte Thoma More, ora pro nobis

Footnotes

[1] We have accordingly chosen as frontispiece for this essay a detail from the Ysenheimer Altar by Matthaeus Gruenewald represented an androgyne demon storming a church.

[2] connected with this, we observe the intellectual dishonesty of the argumentation for adultery (analyzed above). Besides, how could argumentation against the Natural Law and Faith be otherwise ? Such dishonesty was a feature of the Council (see the book on the book on the Second Vatican Council by Professor de Mattei) but this is surely its first instance in a Papal document.

[3] cf. 'The Family under Attack'

[4] although see above for the theological problem involved

[5] although see the next section for a doubt in the case of Pope Francis.

[6] Pope Francis not hesitating even to speak publically of perversions in this field with complete

nonchalance

[7] It seems that recent Vatican documents on the religious life tend to its further diminution

[8] Let them meditate on the pains that they are accumulating for themselves, either in Purgatory where a rigorous reparation will be exacted even for a single sign of the Cross made without reverence, or in the deepest abysses of Hell reserved for the damned clergy. Or, if they have no pity for their own souls, let them at least have pity on the victim souls who have offered their lives in expiation of the sins of the clergy.

[9] cf. *Sacra Virginitas*, Pope Pius XII
