



'Legio Sanctae Familiae' The Legion of the Holy Family

Under the Patronage of
The Sacred Heart of Jesus
The Immaculate Heart of Mary
The Most Chaste Heart of St Joseph



Tel: +353 (0)85-1208779

Web: www.truedevotions.ie

E-mail: john@truedevotions.ie

Pope Pius XI, published his encyclical letter "Casti Connubii", on Christian marriage, on the last day of the year 1930. He urgently wanted this encyclical to be published in 1930 because this was the year that another great divide was driven between those who call themselves Christians. This deep wound was inflicted on mankind by the Lambeth conference of the Anglican bishops in July of 1930. At this conference, the Anglican communion, for the first time in the history of Christianity, broke with the unchanging acceptance by all Christian denominations of the immorality of contraception. Resolution 15 of that conference marks a dark day in the history of mankind.

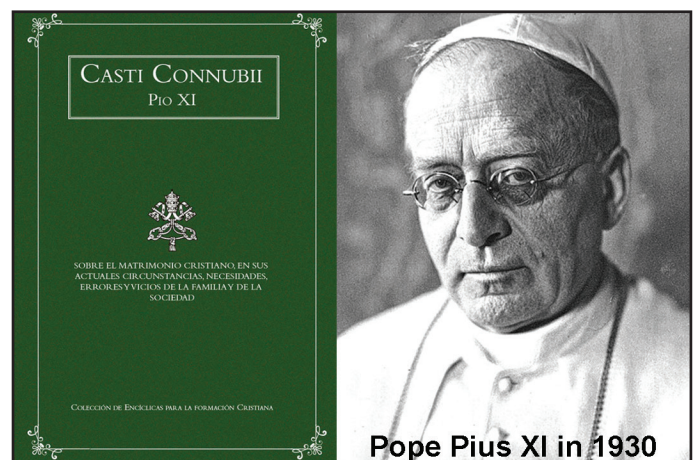
Resolution 15 - Lambeth Conference 1930

The Life and Witness of the Christian Community - Marriage and Sex

Where there is clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, the method must be decided on Christian principles. The primary and obvious method is complete abstinence from intercourse (as far as may be necessary) in a life of discipline and self-control lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless in those cases where there is such a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles. The Conference records its strong condemnation of the use of any methods of conception control from motives of selfishness, luxury, or mere convenience.

Voting: For 193; Against 67.
(Source www.anglicancommunion.org)

Pope Pius XI immediately realised the danger and he saw that a great evil had been unleashed against God and against His desire for mankind to "increase and multiply". He recognised that a ferocious attack had just been launched against the traditional Catholic family and he urgently wanted to proclaim the infallible teaching of the Catholic Church that



Pope Pius XI in 1930

contraception is intrinsically evil. At the same time he wanted to encourage Catholics by reaffirming the Catholic understanding of Matrimony.

This series of articles will look at what the Pope said.

"How great is the dignity of chaste wedlock, Venerable Brethren, may be judged best from this that Christ Our Lord, Son of the Eternal Father, having assumed the nature of fallen man, not only, with His loving desire of compassing the redemption of our race, ordained it in an especial manner as the principle and foundation of domestic society and therefore of all human intercourse, but also raised it to the rank of a truly and great sacrament of the New Law, restored it to the original purity of its divine institution, and accordingly entrusted all its discipline and care to His spouse the Church.

In order, however, that amongst men of every nation and every age the desired fruits may be obtained from this renewal of matrimony, it is necessary, first of all, that men's minds be illuminated with the true doctrine of Christ regarding it; and secondly, that Christian spouses, the weakness of their wills strengthened by the internal grace of God, shape all their ways of thinking and of acting in conformity with that pure law of Christ so as to obtain true peace and happiness for themselves and for their families."

(Casti Connubii 1 - 2)

Pope Pius XI proclaims the Catholic doctrine that Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ. This doctrine is rejected by the Anglicans who only recognise two sacraments as being ordained by Jesus Christ - Baptism and Eucharist. The Pope, aware of this error, states that, in order for there to be a renewal of matrimony it is necessary to proclaim the full truth about the sacramental nature of marriage. For, it is only by conforming their lives to the teachings of the Catholic Church, that Catholic spouses can have true joy in their families. The Pope seeks to encourage spouses in attaining holiness.

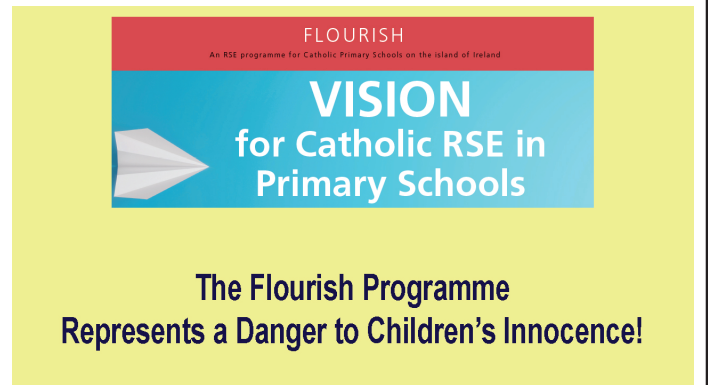
Pope Pius XI now begins to address the problem caused by the Lambeth Conference.

“Yet not only do We, looking with paternal eye on the universal world from this Apostolic See as from a watch-tower, but you, also, Venerable Brethren, see, and seeing deeply grieve with Us that a great number of men, forgetful of that divine work of redemption, either entirely ignore or shamelessly deny the great sanctity of Christian wedlock, or relying on the false principles of a new and utterly perverse morality, too often trample it under foot. And since these most pernicious errors and depraved morals have begun to spread even amongst the faithful and are gradually gaining ground, in Our office as Christ’s Vicar upon earth and Supreme Shepherd and Teacher We consider it Our duty to raise Our voice to keep the flock committed to Our care from poisoned pastures and, as far as in Us lies, to preserve it from harm.”

(Casti Connubii 3)

One can detect the anguish that the Pope feels at this grave attack on married life. He raises his voice in public in order to warn the faithful of the danger. Sad to say, his words are no longer heeded and we now have Catholic bishops allowing contraception to be promoted on so-called Catholic pre-marriage courses and to be included in RSE lessons given in Catholic schools. Indeed, a recent example from 2021 in Ireland, shows an RSE programme for primary school children exposing these vulnerable young children to sexually explicit materials in a classroom setting.

“We have decided therefore to speak to you, Venerable Brethren, and through you to the whole Church of Christ and indeed to the whole human race, on the nature and dignity of Christian marriage, on the advantages and benefits which accrue from it to the family and to human society itself, on the errors contrary to this most important point of the Gospel teaching, on the vices opposed to conjugal union, and lastly on the principal remedies to be applied. In so doing We follow the footsteps of Our predecessor, Pope Leo XIII, of happy memory, whose Encyclical Arcanum, published fifty years ago, We hereby confirm and make Our own, and while We wish to expound more fully certain points called for by the circumstances of our times, nevertheless We declare that, far from being obsolete, it retains its full force at



the present day.” **(Casti Connubii 4)**

What Pope Pius XI says about the encyclical letter Arcanum, applies just as much to his own encyclical letter, ‘Casti Connubii’. ‘Casti Connubii’ is just as relevant today, and even moreso, than it was back in 1930, where the poisonous teachings of the Lambeth Conference had yet to take a hold on society.

“And to begin with that same Encyclical, which is wholly concerned in vindicating the divine institution of matrimony, its sacramental dignity, and its perpetual stability, let it be repeated as an immutable and inviolable fundamental doctrine that matrimony was not instituted or restored by man but by God; not by man were the laws made to strengthen and confirm and elevate it but by God, the Author of nature, and by Christ Our Lord by Whom nature was redeemed, and hence these laws cannot be subject to any human decrees or to any contrary pact even of the spouses themselves. This is the doctrine of Holy Scripture; this is the constant tradition of the Universal Church; this the solemn definition of the sacred Council of Trent, which declares and establishes from the words of Holy Writ itself that God is the Author of the perpetual stability of the marriage bond, its unity and its firmness.” **(Casti Connubii 5)**

Modern civilisations have deposed the law of God concerning marriage. Legislation is passed which claims to allow the civil authority to set aside the permanent bond of marriage through divorce proceedings. These laws are invalid because they contradict the law of God and they cause grave harm to society. They are opposed to the common good.

“Yet although matrimony is of its very nature of divine institution, the human will, too, enters into it and performs a most noble part. For each individual marriage, inasmuch as it is a conjugal union of a particular man and woman, arises only from the free consent of each of the spouses; and this free act of the will, by which each party hands over and accepts those rights proper to the state of marriage, is so necessary to constitute true marriage that it cannot be supplied by any human power.

This freedom, however, regards only the question whether the contracting parties really wish to enter upon matrimony or to marry this particular person; but the nature of matrimony is entirely independent of

the free will of man, so that if one has once contracted matrimony he is thereby subject to its divinely made laws and its essential properties. For the Angelic Doctor, writing on conjugal honour and on the offspring which is the fruit of marriage, says: "These things are so contained in matrimony by the marriage pact itself that, if anything to the contrary were expressed in the consent which makes the marriage, it would not be a true marriage." **(Casti Connubii 6)**

Here we learn one of the essential elements of matrimony, namely, the free consent of the couple. A valid marriage cannot take place without this free consent. Where it can be established that this consent was absent, even though there was an apparently valid marriage ceremony, this marriage will be declared null and void. This declaration of nullity is nothing like a divorce. In the case of a declaration of nullity what is established is that the marriage never in fact took place because of a certain defect or impediment.

Pope Pius XI is careful to point out that the rules governing Holy Matrimony are not dependent on the free consent of the couple. The couple are freely consenting to the rules established by God and proclaimed through the teachings of the Catholic Church which He founded.

"By matrimony, therefore, the souls of the contracting parties are joined and knit together more directly and more intimately than are their bodies, and that not by any passing affection of sense or spirit, but by a deliberate and firm act of the will; and from this union of souls by God's decree, a sacred and inviolable bond arises. Hence the nature of this contract, which is proper and peculiar to it alone, makes it entirely different both from the union of animals entered into by the blind instinct of nature alone in which neither reason nor free will plays a part, and also from the haphazard unions of men, which are far removed from all true and honourable unions of will and enjoy none of the rights of family life." **(Casti Connubii 7)**

Holy Matrimony has been granted an incredible dignity by God. As a sacrament, it is a channel of the sanctifying grace which is needed by the spouses for them to grow in holiness together. The Catholics of today need to be properly instructed in this great dignity of matrimony.

"From this it is clear that legitimately constituted authority has the right and therefore the duty to restrict, to prevent, and to punish those base unions which are opposed to reason and to nature; but since it is a matter which flows from human nature itself, no less certain is the teaching of Our predecessor, Leo XIII of happy memory: "In choosing a state of life there is no doubt but that it is in the power and discretion of each one to prefer one or the other: either to embrace the counsel of virginity given by Jesus Christ, or to bind himself in the bonds of matrimony. To take away from man the natural and primeval right of marriage, to circumscribe in any way the principal ends of marriage laid down in the beginning by God Himself in the words 'Increase and multiply,' is beyond the power of any human law." **(Casti Connubii 8)**



The liberal societies of today pay no heed to this solid reasoning. They grant an equal legal status to same-sex unions, claiming to put these base and immoral unions on the same level as true marriage. Such laws are an abomination and must be opposed by faithful Catholics.

Many Catholics are unaware that civil unions between a man and a woman are opposed to God's law and should not be legalised. Marriage is a gift from God and not from the secular State. Catholics should not attend a civil wedding ceremony where Catholics have decided not to have a church wedding. Such attendance is a cause of scandal. In countries where the secular authorities demand a civil ceremony before the Catholic ceremony can take place, Catholics can attend so long as it is clear that they do not recognise the civil ceremony as a valid marriage. But Catholics in these countries also have a duty to oppose this tyrannical misuse of authority on the part of the State.

"Therefore the sacred partnership of true marriage is constituted both by the will of God and the will of man. From God comes the very institution of marriage, the ends for which it was instituted, the laws that govern it, the blessings that flow from it; while man, through generous surrender of his own person made to another for the whole span of life, becomes, with the help and cooperation of God, the author of each particular marriage, with the duties and blessings annexed thereto from divine institution." **(Casti Connubii 9)**

This last paragraph beautifully encapsulates the reality of a Godly marriage. The partnership is a sacred union. It is willed by God and it is willed by the two parties to the marriage. The couple strive to conform their wills to the Will of God. The laws governing the duties of the state of married life come from God. The blessings on marriage come from God. The graces necessary to bear the hardships of married life come from God.

The man and the woman are the ministers of the sacrament. They are asked, separately, to confirm their free consent by an independent act of their free wills. Thereby they agree to the marital terms and conditions given by God who has vested His authority over the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony in the Catholic Church. It is a glorious sacrament. **(to be cont'd...)**