

Cardinal Burke: Gender theory is ‘madness,’ transgender bathrooms ‘inhuman’

Claire Chretien Aug 1, 2016

July 29, 2016 ([LifeSiteNews](#)) — Contraception is at the root of the culture of death and the defense of family is inseparable from the defense of life, Cardinal Raymond Burke says in a broad book-length interview.

In his lengthy interview with French journalist Guillaume d’Alançon, titled *Hope for the World: To Unite All Things in Christ*, the American cardinal calls gender theory “madness,” addresses the question of Communion for the divorced and remarried, and offers remedies for the crisis in the Church.

Burke is the patron of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the former Prefect of the Apostolic Signatura, the Vatican’s highest court.



“I do not see how it is possible to talk about the family without talking about the defense of human life,” Burke said. “It is fundamental. Contraception and abortion are two stages in the attack on conjugal love. In contraception there is a fear of new life, and this practice often leads to abortion. It is of fundamental importance to associate works on behalf of the family with pro-life works, because marriage is the source of new life.”

“The Lord created man and woman to love each other and to marry, and they express their love more fully in conjugal union, which is by nature procreative,” Burke explained.

“Gender theory” is an attack on this truth, he said.

“Gender theory is an invention, an artificial creation. It is impossible to have an identity that does not respect the proper nature of man and that of woman,” Burke said. “It is madness that will cause immense damage in society and in the lives of those who support this theory. With gender theory, it is impossible to live in society. Already today, in certain places in the United States, anyone at all can change identity and say, ‘Today I am a man; tomorrow I will be a woman.’ That is truly madness. Some men insist on going into the women’s rest rooms. That is inhuman. In the schools, you can imagine the confusion. ... Nowadays there is enormous confusion, which is based on the false idea that there are practically an infinite number of possible sexual orientations. The twofold expression of the human person is not heterosexuality and homosexuality, but male and female. This is the authentic theology of anthropology: that God created man: ‘male and female he created them.’”

Burke warned that Christians must defend the natural law from legislative attacks that contradict what “is inscribed in the heart of man by the sovereign will of God.”

“Not to speak about the natural law is to deny reason,” he said.

Similarly, people who experience same-sex attraction deserve authentic pastoral care, Burke said, care that doesn’t cause them harm by encouraging them to follow “inclinations against the natural law.”

Homosexual acts ultimately cause suffering, he said, because they go against the natural “complementarity of the sexes and the sexual faculty’s potential for procreation.”

But the Church offers those with same-sex attraction the opportunity to “discover what authentic love means,” Burke said. He cited the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church that people attracted to the same sex must be “accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity” (CCC 2358).

In addition to the dismantling of natural law, Burke said [Islam’s inability to peacefully coexist with other religions](#) and President Obama’s attacks on religious liberty pose threats to the Catholic Church.

“President Obama wants to push the Church back behind the walls of her church buildings and to prevent her from applying her law to her own hospitals and schools,” the cardinal cautioned. “He claims that the Church may not intervene on the question of abortion, of homosexuality, but that the State alone must manage these questions.”

The U.S. government “wants citizens to obey unjust laws,” he said, such as requirements that Catholic hospitals commit abortions and dispense contraceptives. “To that, I reply: We cannot do it,” because “there are situations in which the Christian must disobey when civil law commands an action contrary to the moral law.”

‘There is no justification for saying that a certain percentage of marriages are null’

“It is impossible to say anything other than what Saint John Paul II said” on the question of whether non-abstinent divorced and remarried couples may receive Holy Communion, Burke insisted.

He addressed the controversial topic that has been the source of a heated debate within the Catholic Church by quoting the late Pope’s exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, which reiterated the Church’s longstanding teaching of not admitting to the Sacraments the divorced and civilly remarried unless they live as brother and sister.

“The state of life of divorced-and-remarried Catholics is not consistent with the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church,” Burke said.

Liberal prelates such as Cardinal Walter Kasper pushed for the Church to admit the divorced and remarried to Communion at two contentious synods on the family. Pope Francis brought up the topic in his April 2016 exhortation.

Many see Pope Francis’ exhortation [Amoris Laetitia](#) as having poured gasoline on this fire with its [seeming suggestion](#) that in some cases the Church will allow those living unrepentantly in situations it labels objectively sinful to receive Holy Communion.

“In the recent synod ... the tendency was sometimes to dwell at length on all the problems of the family, at the risk of speaking only about that, giving me the impression that the family I knew as a child, that the [healthy] families I met during the first years of my priesthood no longer exist,” Burke said. “I can tell you that there are many magnificent families that function well!”

After the exhortation’s release, Burke wrote in the *National Catholic Register* that it [must be read through the lens of Catholic doctrine](#).

No pope could change the Church’s moral teaching even if he wanted to, Burke told d’Alançon.

“It is impossible for the Church to change her teaching in matters concerning the indissolubility of marriage,” he said. “The Church, the Bride of Christ, obeys His words in chapter 19 of the Gospel of

Saint Matthew, which are very clear insofar as they concern the nature of marriage. No one disputes the fact that these are the words of Christ Himself, and after the response of the Apostles, the import of these words for those who are called to married life is quite clear.”

As one of the Catholic Church’s most well-established canonists, Burke has spent a good part of his career in the Vatican working on cases of marriage validity. In other words, Burke has defended unions as being valid marriages and reviewed cases when the Church declared that a marriage never actually existed and thus is null.

Pope Francis [made waves](#) in June when he said that the “great majority” of Catholic marriages are “null.” [The Vatican subsequently altered his remarks](#) in their official transcript of his speech, and numerous canon lawyers and theologians [responded](#) that his remarks were [incorrect](#).

Although d’Alançon did not mention the pontiff’s remarks explicitly, he asked Burke if “many marriages” are “actually null from the start.”

“It is difficult to say how many marriages are null from the moment when consent is exchanged. ... There is no justification for saying that a certain percentage of marriages are null,” Burke said. “That would open the door to a mentality favoring divorce, which would dissolve some valid marriages because no one investigates whether there are grounds for the request for a declaration of nullity.”

Poor catechesis and ‘unrecognizable’ liturgy have contributed to Church’s crisis

Throughout *Hope for the World*, Burke spoke warmly of the love for the Catholic faith that his parents instilled in him as a child.

He lamented the “invasive secularization of the culture” which he found had also “entered into the life of the Church” as the biggest obstacle to his ministry as a bishop.

Bad catechesis and changes to the liturgy falsely believed to have been sanctioned by the Second Vatican Council or the “spirit” of it have contributed to this crisis, Burke said.

“I remember that in the years after 1968, I attended liturgical celebrations that had retained almost nothing of what could be a Mass,” the cardinal recalled. “I had gone to the Netherlands, at that time, and witnessed a Mass in which the priest arrived in civilian clothing. The whole celebration was totally unrecognizable as a Holy Mass.”

“More and more man became his own idol, making his subjective impressions the judge of good and evil,” he said. “Very often he has forgotten or denied the sense of mystery, and therefore he has no longer been able to marvel at it. Along with mystery, the sense of the faith and of the sacred has gradually faded. At the same time, people have suffered cruelly from a lack of formation and, at best, have kept up a rootless formalism, whether in their human relations or in their liturgical practice.”

“Worship centered on man is a self-contradiction, and this is what led many people to stop attending Sunday Mass and other sacramental celebrations,” the cardinal noted.

Burke said he has noticed the younger generation craves more traditional forms of worship and are “thirsting to hear the truths of the faith.” Growing up in a secularized culture, rather than the Christian one in which the prelate was raised, has stifled and in many cases wounded young people. The divorce of parents, pornography, and “liberation” from morality” contribute to these wounds, but many are still “looking for true love” and God nonetheless.

“I observe also that many of these young people, who live in this world from which God is excluded, feel a great attraction to a beautiful, holy liturgy that is celebrated with the dignity that befits the Holy Sacrifice, whether in the Extraordinary Form or in the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, provided that there is great devotion and the sense of transcendence that indicates that we are turned toward the Lord and that the sacrifice on Calvary is being renewed,” Burke said.

He also echoed the sentiment of [Cardinal Robert Sarah](#), the Prefect for the Congregation for Divine Worship, that receiving Holy Communion kneeling and on the tongue fosters respect for the Eucharist, which the Catholic Church teaches is the literal body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ.

Post-abortion women ‘told me that at night they would hear the cries of their unborn child’

In addition to the restoration of the liturgy, Burke said people must reject “narcissistic individualism,” rediscover the meaning of family life, and promote virtue in order to fix the deep crises the modern world faces.

“Lack of moral life” is more grave than material poverty, Burke said, and he noted the “emotional frailty” that many young people experience after having multiple sexual partners.

“Emotional instability is a terrible form of poverty,” he said.

Burke encouraged Catholics to never cease defending life and family, and to look to the examples of soon-to-be-canonized Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Professor Jérôme Lejeune, and people like Bishop Austin Vaughan, an Auxiliary Bishop of New York, “who went to prison for their commitment to the service of life.”

“Calm and strong” pro-life witness “bears fruit,” Burke said, and pro-life activists would do well to look to converts to the pro-life cause like former abortionist Bernard Nathanson and Roe v. Wade plaintiff-turned pro-life activist Norma McCorvey.

And pro-life advocates can never forget to show compassion and mercy toward those who have participated in abortion, he said.

Burke said that throughout his priesthood he has encountered many people suffering from abortion and several post-abortion women “told me that at night they would hear the cries of their unborn child.”

“We must understand and listen to the great suffering of women who have experienced an abortion and stand beside them as witnesses of divine mercy, of the unfathomable love of Jesus, who opens the riches of His Heart to those who, despite their sin, dare to turn to Him with trust,” he said.

Burke also revealed in *Hope for the World* that a [doctor pressured his mother to abort him](#) after she became seriously ill while pregnant, but his parents believed that “Christ would give them the necessary help” and he was born in good health.