

Theologian: Church must ‘prioritize’ procreation in marriage to combat abortion, gay ‘marriage’

By Lisa Bourne

ROME, May 18, 2017 ([LifeSiteNews](#)) -- There is a need to “prioritize” procreation as the primary end of marriage today, because when this “distinctive” and “proper” purpose is questioned or doubted, the “marriage institution itself — and society thereafter — begins its slide down the slippery slope.”(1) the head of Human Life International’s (HLI) Rome office told an international gathering of pro-life and family groups there today.

Father Francesco Giordano, a professor in Rome who addressed the fourth annual Rome Life Forum today, said that a de-emphasis of procreation within marriage has not only resulted in legalized abortion, but homosexual “marriage.”

To illustrate his point, he presented the main argument behind the U.S. Supreme Court 2015 decision that legalized same-sex “marriage.”

We read in a Catholic World News article from the day: “Claiming that the institution of marriage has “evolved over time,” Justice Kennedy wrote that the essence of the marital bond is a sharing of intimacy, which does not require partners of opposite sexes. He argued that the plaintiffs in the Obergefell case were not undermining the institution of marriage, but showing their respect for that institution by seeking to participate in it. The majority opinion reasoned that the ability to marry would help to stabilize same-sex unions, and benefit the children raised by homosexual partners. Justice Kennedy explicitly rejected the notion that marriage is intrinsically oriented to procreation, writing: “An ability, desire, or promise to procreate is not and has not been a prerequisite for a valid marriage in any state.”” With the stress on the end or good of union, we are seeing these sorts of results, so it only confirms me in stressing the procreative end as the *proprium* [essence] of marriage.(2)

Giordano noted how Pope Paul VI’s 1968 Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which outlined the moral evil of contraception, was a “novel” approach to conjugal relations in that it “placed the unitive end of marriage at par with the procreative end.”(3)

He said that while the unitive purpose of the conjugal act “works with the procreative end in harmonizing the love between the parents” it is the procreative purpose which makes the act “unique” when compared to any other human act.

“The telos [purpose by nature] of the union between man and woman is generative. It is the *proprium* of marriage after all. It is the first end of the sexual act to be intimately united to the second end, but we have to prioritize the procreative end of marriage because it is the distinctive, proper and privative end of marriage,” he said.

He went on to quote the first account of Creation, including that God created man in his image, created them male and female, and told them: “Be fertile and multiply.”

“So it is clear that the first duty of the first family was to generate children,” he said.

Not only is this the Church’s teaching, he said, it is substantiated by natural law, not something we just follow in an abstract way.

“We adhere to a teaching because of its compelling truth,” Giordano said, “a truth which the Church naturally defends.”

Giordano’s presentation comes days after rumors began circulating in Rome of a secret committee set up by Pope Francis to study *Humanae Vitae*.

Francis’ position on contraceptive practices — which the Church has always taught to be gravely immoral — remains sufficiently ambiguous to be interpreted as lending support to the use of contraception and condoms, in certain cases.

In a [March 2014 interview with *Corriere della Sera*](#), Francis said that the question of birth control must be answered not by “changing the doctrine” but by “making pastoral (ministry) take into account the situations and that which it is possible for people to do.”

During a [November 2015 press conference](#) on his return flight from Africa, Francis, when asked if it was time for the Church to allow the use of condoms to prevent HIV agreed that condom use is “one of the methods,” but that it brought into conflict the fifth and sixth commandments.

And during his [February 2016 return flight from Mexico](#), Francis said that contraception may be the “lesser of two evils” for parents wanting to avoid conceiving a child in areas affected by the Zika virus. Vatican spokesman Fr. Federico Lombardi [confirmed](#) the pope’s words the following day, stating: “The contraceptive or condom, in particular cases of emergency or gravity, could be the object of ‘discernment’ in a serious case of conscience. This is what the Pope said.”

Giordano also outlined a number of threats facing the family, including gender ideology and transhumanism.

“The end of man is the adoration of God. The end of gender ideology is the adoration of the body,” he said.

Giordano also discussed how the negative social changes resulting from the family’s decline, including the breakdown in the understanding of the human being as male or female, are now being advanced by a transhumanist mentality.

“Unlike animals, men can truly shape their lives, and this the transhumanists understand. However, what the transhumanists do not seem to understand is that there are limits posed by our nature on what we can do to shape our lives,” he said.



“In order to bring about the reduction of human identity to a freely chosen, mutable sexual orientation and avoid its formation in the countless influences besides sex, the elimination of these other influences—such as family, culture, and religion—are necessary [for the transhumanists,]” he said.

This mentality represents a sign of man's demise, he said, “and the only response to all of these threats is found in strong traditional family units.”

Giordano went on to explain how the transhumanist movement is based on the belief that man is a failed experiment, and its assumption that man can come to salvation by knowing or doing something particular displays elements of the Gnostic-Pelagian heresies.

As man moves further away from human nature today, and we also see an increase in barbarous acts, it shows rejection of God and His law, said Giordano.

Conversely, he said, “When we search for that which is most elevated, dignified, and noble, we inevitably find God who is Truth, Beauty, and Goodness itself.”(4)

“The Magisterium in the papal teachings on Marriage and the Family has been attentive to the family seeing it as a real jewel of a social institution to be protected for the greater common good of society and each man,” stated Giordano.

“If the family unit is hurt, man is ultimately hurt, and the results are evident all around us that there is indeed an abolition of man in course. If instead, the family unit is united and faithful to God, focused on Our Lord, then there is order in its life and that of its members,” he added.

From 'us to 'me'

In discussing the importance of marriage, Giordano said emphasis has shifted from the family to the individual since the time of the French Revolution.

The family is understood as an institution that is beyond social functions, however, the priest said. And he told the forum “the family is very much under attack, starting with the very sacrament that is its foundation: marriage.”

He explained how problems have emerged from the center of work being moved from the household to outside the home since the Industrial Revolution.

Further, divorce has come about from many social, economic and political issues. Giordano cited the sexual revolution, the move to an industrial society over the last 200 years, and the way governments have interfered in marriage, being agents of divorce.

“We know from our fight with the abortion industry just how important legalization of such matters is in influencing the mindset,” said Giordano.

A long time coming

A look at the works written by the popes since the 19th-century on the subjects of family and marriage show they were already addressing the crisis then, he continued, citing Benedict XIV, Pius IX and Leo XIII.

“The popes were very conscious of the fact that the Church's role was to protect sacred matrimony from all sorts of confusion because both the Church and society as a whole would suffer,” Giordano stated.

“Marriage is not merely a convention which the State can decide upon at whim,” he said, quoting Pope Leo XIII's *Arcanum divinae Sapientiae*. “Marriage was established by God after the creation of our first parents so that they would transmit the life that He had given to them.”

“Marriage sanctifies the union of man and woman, and in these two accounts we see two ends of marriage clearly identified: procreative and unitive,” explained Giordano. “Through marriage, there is a remedy in store for man's wounded nature.”

He told the forum that the Congregation for Rites having inserted the Feast of the Holy Family in the Calendar of the Roman Rite in 1921 upon the directive of Pope Benedict XV, while not the beginning of the devotion to the Holy Family, displayed the deep concern of the Holy Father for the breakdown of the family.

“Each time I read documents from the early part of the 20th century I notice that many good Catholic writers were lamenting the breakdown of the family and society back then, and I wonder: what would they say today?” the priest queried for those in attendance. “In many ways, they predicted what is happening today.”

Regarding gender, Giordano discussed St. Thomas Aquinas's definition of man as a composite of body and soul; the two are not separate.

He explained how a number of subsequent modern philosophies reject this. And also that disruption of the natural order of man's make-up, whether material, physical, spiritual or psychological, can have devastating effects on the whole.

These can lead to gender confusion and transhumanism

“In a time when nature itself is questioned,” Giordano said, “when its goodness is doubted and reproduction altered, when it is no longer considered enough in itself, and attempts are made to go beyond it in the realm of transhumanism, St. Thomas' insights are now quite valuable to consider.”

“St. Thomas teaches that even in the state of being separate, the soul is inclined to being united to its specific body,” he told the forum. “It is in this union that we see how maleness and femaleness characterize the whole person, uniting the body's biological structure to the soul.”

“Even if this can be a debated position,” said Giordano, “we affirm that the soul is itself not a gender, or else the distinction between men and women would make them different species. The gender is in the body, but the soul is not immune from its influence since it is so integrally united to the body.”

Further, he said, if gender deals with the whole person the way that the soul does, then sex-reassignment surgery really cannot change one's gender.

According to St. Thomas, the common end between male and female is the procreative end, he said. The particular material ends between male and female, though, are complimentary, but different.(5)

Editor's note: Pete Baklinski contributed to this report.

(1) Consider that the opposite of “procreation” is “anti-creation” or “against –creation” or “against-conception” or “contra-conception” which contracts to the common “contraception”.

Before Charles Goodyear began making high quality condoms (called “rubbers”) in 1840, there was not much available for contraception in America. The average woman birthed 7 children in 1800. Children were considered a blessing. The demand for effective contraception dropped this average from 7 to 2 by 1940. During that 100 years, laws were passed attempting to prevent distribution of rubbers; Margaret Sanger distributed them; WWI GIs found them; they were approved for disease prevention, and distributed free to WWII GIs.

(2) That procreation is the essence of sexual intercourse should be obvious because of its unique ability to create human life, but only if God decides to do His part. In His humility, He requires us to initiate conception, and then sometimes (though quite rarely) He cooperates in generating life.

(3) The unitive end is a consequence of the great delight that accompanies sexual intercourse. Without that intense joy there would not be the almost universal desire to participate in this union. That’s why God included it, and why Man loves contraception. Separating procreation from the act while limiting adverse consequences has long been the impossible goal, probably since Original Sin, but intensified by modern technology.

This effort to separate the procreative and unitive characteristics of sexual intercourse has not been confined to the laboratory but was officially sanctioned by Anglican Christians when the *Lambeth Conference* succeeded (it failed in 1920) in approving contraceptive use within marriage for “serious reasons” in 1930. *Humanae Vitae* approved use of Calendar Rhythm for “serious reasons” in 1968. Father Giordano states that *HV* “*placed the unitive end of marriage at par with the procreative end.*” In the full text, he follows this statement by, “. . . it was soon after *Humane Vitae* that we had *Roe vs Wade* (1973); in fact, it was only five years thereafter.”

(4) It is intrinsic to our nature to seek Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Our sinful nature inherited from Adam & Eve blinds and distracts us. That is why it is so important to avoid the occasions of sin that are common in the Culture of Death. Seek Truth in good Catholic media like EWTN, OSV, NCR, Life Site News, Radio Maria and many other of the huge Catholic media presence available today, including dozens of bloggers.

(5) The so-called “gender issues” is the latest in the “slippery slide” that Father referred to at the beginning of this article. Since contraception’s wide acceptance we have had easy divorce, legalization of sodomy, same sex “marriage”, in vitro fertilization (another way to separate unity and creation), a million frozen