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## Chancellor's Update

### Intellectual Perversion

In our last three issues we have studied the philosophy and ideas that were important in the founding of the American Republic, as well as the identifying feature of national greatness. In this issue we ask ourselves the question that is popular today in many surveys, namely, “Is America in 2008 on the right track or on the wrong track?” The correct response may be that not only is America on the wrong track; it has been derailed and is just navigating through the mud.

Recent years have witnessed an alarming increase in public **lying**, which often goes unchallenged. A pernicious lie, which is a fabricated lie, “uttered for the sole purpose of creating mischief, or injury to the reputation or good name of others, is beyond question the vilest lie of all. It is thoroughly destructive in character, destructive of that which is infinitely more valuable than any amount of material goods. For a man or an institution whose good name has been blackened by the tongue of a calumniator is an object of distrust and of hatred. All sympathy is denied them; their power is nullified; they are socially dead. Unfortunately the days of the muckraker and the professional calumniator are not past. Money is still coined from the ruined reputations of honest opponents of certain political theories or religious beliefs.” (Miltner, C.S.C., Ph. D., *The Elements of Ethics*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936, p. 203).

Also new is an attempt to dishonor and discredit the traditional family. Instead of simply referring to the family and acknowledging that some families are missing a component, new definitions abound: nuclear family, empty nesters, single parent families, extended families, etc. If a nuclear family is not perfect, it is at risk of being identified as a **dysfunctional family**. Dictionaries prior to the middle of the last century did not even include the word ‘dysfunctional’. However, today any kind of odd activity, rather than an egregious or blatant form of physical, verbal or sexual abuse by a parent, can render a family dysfunctional.

Another attack on the traditional family is the encouraging of new ‘family’ arrangements. As recently as the last century, families, which appeared to have a missing parent, were identified by the cause: abandonment by husband, death of spouse, divorce, etc. Since the middle of the last century new methods of producing **fatherless children** have been designed, especially when used by single women, namely, artificial insemination donors, in vitro fertilization, fertility treatments, egg donors, etc. Also, when the state steps into divorce cases, fathers are often penalized by loss of or minimizing visitation rights because they did not provide adequate financial support or they are presumed guilty of domestic violence.

Antecedent to the family is usually a loving relationship that culminates in marriage. In his book Love and Responsibility Karol Wojtyła, later Pope John Paul II, refers to a current attitude in relationships. **Utilitarianism**, though not new, is “characteristic of modern man’s mentality and his attitude to life...a conscious utilitarianism, formulated from philosophical premises, and with scientific precision.” Derived from the Latin, meaning useful, the aim of the utilitarian is to be happy by doing whatever gives pleasure. “I must then look at every person other than myself...as a possible means of obtaining the maximum pleasure...(thus) treating a

person as the means to an end.” In the area of real love and sexual relations, usefulness develops into “egoism quite incapable of evolving into authentic altruism...In this type of harmony...these two egoisms, the man’s and the woman’s, will match each other and be mutually advantageous. The moment they cease to match and to be of advantage to each other, nothing at all is left of the harmony. Love will be no more...it will not be an objective reality.” Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1981, pp. 34-39).

**Artificial birth control**, while wrong because it frustrates nature, is a worse horror, because of its effects on society. In his book *The Republic and the Church* Rev. McClorey in 1927 predicted that artificial birth control would promote divorce and fornication among the unmarried. “What led to the downfall of Rome and Greece would cause the race to perish.” His prediction is coming true in the falling birth rates and loss of population in Europe. The eugenicists of the last century, while feigning sympathy for overburdened mothers with many children, were really neo-Malthusians, who wanted to limit the earth’s population. Rev. McClorey further predicted that because artificial birth control does away with “being with child, for the unmarried woman promiscuous sexual unions will become the normal condition of society.” (McClorey, *The Republic and The Church*, St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Book Co., 1927, pp. 129, 136). Today how many young couples live together for a number of years before deciding to marry?

While marriage is a natural institution and historically dates back to the origin of the human race, today people and interest groups are actively pursuing the **redefinition of marriage**. The dictionary defines ‘marry’ as ‘to join as husband or wife to one of the opposite sex’. Wife is defined as ‘a woman joined in marriage to a man as husband’, and husband is defined as ‘a man joined in marriage to a woman as wife’. A moral theology textbook defines the marriage contract as ‘a contract by which two competent persons of the opposite sex give to each other the exclusive and irrevocable right over their bodies (*ius in corpus*) for the procreation and education of children’. Since this process has been ongoing for millennia, why the drive to redefine marriage?

Similarly, the justification for abortion has been the **right of a woman to control her own body**. While everyone is responsible for his or her own body, the situation changes when a man and a woman marry. St. Paul wrote, *The wife has not authority over her body, but the husband; the husband likewise has not authority over his body, but the wife* (1 Corinthians 7 v. 4). St. John Chrysostom reaffirmed this when he wrote in Homily 19, “Neither husband nor wife is his or her own master, but rather are each other’s servants...’My body is not my own, but my wife’s’...’My body is not my own, but my husband’s.’” Consequently, while abortion is wrong because it kills a human life, in the case of a married couple it also strikes a blow at marriage because it violates the reality that the husband, not the wife, has authority over the woman’s body.

Do these examples indicate that America is on the wrong track? If so, and if Americans don’t remedy the situation, what will be the outcome? St. Paul warned us, *Although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God...but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless minds have been darkened. For while professing to be wise, they have become fools...Although they have known the ordinance of God, they have not understood that those who practice such things are deserving of death* (Romans 1 v. 21-22, 32). **As dire as the situation sounds, still a loving God awaits the return of His prodigal sons and daughters.**

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