



# SEMINARIANS FOR LIFE

A NEWSLETTER FROM HUMAN LIFE INTERNATIONAL®

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Dear Brothers in Christ,

In this issue of *Seminarians for Life* we would like to continue our analysis of the document “The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality,” which was published fifteen years ago by the Pontifical Council for the Family. We are grateful for the letter received from Bishop Jean Laffitte, secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Family, that expressed his appreciation for the previous issue of this newsletter dedicated to this document.

We should analyze the value of this important document in the light of the contemporary realities of societies which have moved further away from the natural law and the teachings of the Gospel in a growing process of secularization. One of the problems that a formation in chastity has to address is the current tendency to tamper with the differences that exist by the will of the Creator between men and women. This also should bring us to reexamine the question of coeducation.

An important element for the interpretation of “The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality” should be the Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri (On Christian Education)*, issued on December 31, 1929, which eighty years after its promulgation still continues to offer us very valid and insightful teachings concerning the education of the youth. “The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality” is on a line of continuity with many other fundamental documents of the Church like the Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, of the II Vatican Council and the *Letter to Families*, of John Paul II February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1994.

The main concern of the article of Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro Carámbula, *Perspectives of Catholic Education*, is to demonstrate that education for chastity should be an integral part of the education in the faith and natural sciences that a young man should receive. On the last page we have placed different recommended resources for additional study in this issue.

God bless all of you!

John W. Fusto  
Human Life International  
International Network Manager



John Fusto, Director SFLI

# Perspectives for Catholic Education

Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro Carámbula, J.D., S.T.D.

A starting point to better understand the education of the young in chastity is to reflect briefly on the value of Catholic education as whole, because education in this virtue has to be integrated within the general formation of the person.



*Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro-Carámbula, JD, STD, Director of HLI Rome of fice and Interim President of HLI.*

It should not be over emphasized, giving way to the pressures of the contemporary ethos that view the human person as dominated by his sexual powers, nor should it be ignored as a wrong reaction to those pressures. At the same time, persons with the most basic common sense should also look at the fact that for thousands of years, people grew into maturity, entered into marriage, and begot children without the “benefits” of a school program of sexual education. When people did not have those “benefits,” marriages were more stable nor did we suffer the demographic winter that is affecting so many contemporary societies.

The best education for chastity is not primarily the fruit of a specific formation for this virtue, but is the consequence of an integral formation in the faith and natural values that are vivified and strengthened by the faith. More so the faith in its integrity has to be the driving force behind every activity of any institution of Catholic education. It is a broad and comprehensive education that avoids the risk of narrowness. There is always the danger of over concentrating in a particular aspect of reality, or the particular problems that affect one given aspect of human reality, losing the view of the universal picture on which this particular reality is placed. Benedict XVI recently gave good examples of the risks of this serious intellectual and psychological shortcoming when he said, “The world needs good scientists, but a scientific outlook becomes dangerously narrow if it ignores the religious or ethical dimension of life, just as religion becomes narrow if it rejects the legitimate contribution of science to

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Human Life International

**Interim President of HLI**  
Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro-Carámbula,  
JD, STD

**Director SFL**  
John Fusto

**Consultants**  
Joseph Meaney  
Brian Clowes, Ph.D.

**Editor**  
Anthony Mioni

*Seminarians for Life* is published quarterly. To order copies or subscribe to the newsletter contact:

Human Life International  
Attn: *Seminarians for Life*  
4 Family Life Lane  
Front Royal, Virginia 22630  
USA

Email: [semsforlife@hli.org](mailto:semsforlife@hli.org)  
Phone: 540-635-7884

Information about SFLI is also available on our Web site: <http://www.hli.org/seminarians.html>

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our understanding of the world. We need good historians and philosophers and economists, but if the account they give of human life within their particular field is too narrowly focused, they can lead us seriously astray.”<sup>1</sup>

## The Nature of Catholic Education

As Pius XI affirms, “Education is essentially a social and not a mere individual activity. Now there are three necessary societies, distinct from one another and yet harmoniously combined by God, into which man is born: two, namely the family and civil society, belong to the natural order; the third, the Church, to the supernatural order.”<sup>2</sup> This is an affirmation that has universal and permanent value. It is also a societal ideal that we should be moved to establish, inspired by the permanent values of the Gospel. At the same time, in the contemporary world when society becomes further separated from the truth we have to insist upon the primary role of the family in the integral formation of the young. But the family by itself can not provide this integral education, so society should come to its assistance. But because in most societies today the political community is delinquent in its natural duties, the Church has to reinforce her role of assisting families in their educational roles.

Catholic education has as its aim the integral formation of the human person, both at a supernatural and natural level. It searches to impart the truth that saves, developing all the natural potentials of the human person. This is clearly explained in Vatican II’s Declaration on Christian Education that states, “To fulfill the mandate she has received from her divine founder of proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother the Church must be concerned with the whole of man’s life, even the secular part of it insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling.”<sup>3</sup> (Hence,) education is a fundamental activity of the Church and is totally con-



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*... for thousands of years, people grew into maturity, entered into marriage, and begot children without the “benefits” of a school program of sexual education.*

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nected with the substance of her mission. As Benedict XVI, explains, “All the Church’s activities stem from her awareness that she is the bearer of a message which has its origin in God himself: in his goodness and wisdom, God chose to reveal himself and to make known the hidden purpose of his will.”<sup>4</sup> Due to “her institution by Jesus Christ, because of the Holy Ghost sent her in His name by the Father, the Church alone possesses

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1 Benedict XVI, *Meeting with the world of Catholic Education*, Address to the Pupils, Sports Arena of St. Mary University College, London, September 17<sup>th</sup> 2010.

2 Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri* (On Christian Education) 31<sup>st</sup>. December 1929. p. 11.

3 II Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1965., Introduction.

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4 Benedict XVI, *Meeting with Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America*, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

what she has had immediately from God and can never lose, the whole of moral truth, *omnem veritatem*, in which all individual moral truths are included, as well those which man may learn by the help of reason, as those which form part of revelation or which may be deduced from it.”<sup>5</sup>

In Catholic education two desires come together: first and foremost the desire of God of communicating himself and, in a corresponding way, the innate desire of all human beings to know the truth and move towards happiness. Both desires work together because God created the human person to receive his communication. In the same way that “nature intends not merely the generation of the offspring, but also its development and advance to the perfection of man considered as man, that is, to the state of virtue,”<sup>6</sup> parents should generate children for their advance towards perfection, which is the completion of the potentialities that God has given to each and everyone of his children. This is done with the objective that each person might achieve the general and particular call that he has received from God. The general vocation calls all persons to salvation and the particular one actualizes this general vocation in the fulfillment of a specific task within the Church and society.

## Moral Discernment

The Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis* of the II Vatican Council makes it clear that the moral discernment in sexual matters should be a consequence of an education that, “is designed not only to develop with special care the intellectual faculties but also to form the ability to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a sense of values, to prepare for professional life.”<sup>7</sup> It is within this frame of reference that this Declaration indicates that the young, as they advance in years, should receive “a positive and prudent sexual education.”<sup>8</sup>

John Paul II teaches in *Evangelium Vitae* the obvi-



ous truth that, “It is an illusion to think that we can build a true culture of human life if we do not help the young to accept and experience sexuality and love and the whole of life according to their true meaning and in their close interconnection.”<sup>9</sup> As *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* will later insist, a precondition for the formation in sexual morality is a previous general Catholic moral formation that would allow the person to judge rightly in accordance with a well formed conscience. “As its departure point, the formation of conscience requires being enlightened about: God’s project of love for every single person, the positive and liberating value of the moral law, and awareness both of the weakness caused by sin and the means of grace which strengthen us on our path towards the good and towards salvation.”<sup>10</sup> The integral education of the human person has to be done with an utter realism that accepts the wounded nature of the human person. “In fact it must never be forgotten that the subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties natural and supernatural, such as right reason and revelation show him to be; man, therefore, fallen from his original estate, but redeemed by Christ

5 Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri (On Christian Education)* 31<sup>st</sup>. December 1929. p.20.

6 Suppl. S. Th. 3; p. Q. 41, a. 1

7 II Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis*, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 1965., p. 5.

8 *Gravissimum Educationis* p. 1.

9 John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1995, p. 97

10 Pontifical Council for the Family, *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1995, p. 95.

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*“[T]he formation of conscience requires being enlightened about the truth and God’s plan and must not be confused with a vague subjective feeling or with personal opinion.”*

— Pontifical Council for the Family, *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, p 95.

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and restored to the supernatural condition of adopted son of God, though without the preternatural privileges of bodily immortality or perfect control of appetite. There remain therefore, in human nature the effects of original sin, the chief of which are weakness of will and disorderly inclinations.”<sup>11</sup> Taking into account the effects of original sin, Pius XI encourages parents and educators to correct disorderly inclinations and encourage good tendencies from early childhood.<sup>12</sup>

To avoid the risks of subjectivism and relativism, that have been eloquently denounced by the Holy Father,<sup>13</sup> the document then adds,

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11 Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri (On Christian Education)* 31<sup>st</sup>. December 1929. p. 58.

12 Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri (On Christian Education)* 31<sup>st</sup>. December 1929. p. 59.

13 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Homily at the Mass “Pro Eligendo Romano Pontifice”* April 18<sup>th</sup> 2005. “How many winds of doctrine have we known in recent decades, how many ideological currents, how many ways of thinking. The small boat of the thought of many Christians has often been tossed about by these waves - flung from one extreme to another: from Marxism to liberalism, even to libertinism; from collectivism to radical individualism; from atheism to a vague religious mysticism; from agnosticism to syncretism and so forth. Every day new sects spring up, and what St Paul says about human deception and the trickery that strives to entice people into error (cf. Eph 4: 14) comes true. Today, having a clear faith based on the Creed of

“Therefore, the formation of conscience requires being enlightened about the truth and God’s plan and must not be confused with a vague subjective feeling or with personal opinion.”<sup>14</sup> This right judgment on moral matters is not only a question of a right intellectual judgment but is a matter of the proper affinity with a living faith, which has been incarnated in a given culture. This proper affinity with those principles will be greatly facilitated if the person is incorporated into the living river of the cultural legacy of previous generations as *Gravissimum Educationis* indicates. It is very interesting that after enunciating important philosophical considerations this document mentions the preparation for professional life. This is done because those prin-

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the Church is often labeled as fundamentalism. Whereas relativism, that is, letting oneself be “tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine”, seems the only attitude that can cope with modern times. We are building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one’s own ego and desires. We, however, have a different goal: the Son of God, the true man. He is the measure of true humanism. An “adult” faith is not a faith that follows the trends of fashion and the latest novelty; a mature adult faith is deeply rooted in friendship with Christ. It is this friendship that opens us up to all that is good and gives us a criterion by which to distinguish the true from the false, and deceit from truth.”

14 *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 95.

ciples have to be incarnated in a concrete professional activity. Following the school of God’s service of St. Benedict, man has to pray and work. He has to adore and worship God and transform the world. The proportion of the energies that he will engage in each of those tasks will depend on his particular vocation.

## **Social integration of the Young in Society**

One of the problems of our contemporary society is that many young men have a sense of alienation because the formation they have received in school does not prepare them to be properly integrated into the market place. Instead, a well grounded view of the faith will prepare the young to be mature and responsible members of the political society. Here is where the teachings of the Church on life and family come together with the social teachings of the constant Magisterium. Here we have a case in point that demonstrates the need for an integrated approach. This capacity to integrate themselves in the market place has many benefits. It would allow men to marry young as nature requires. It does not need to be demonstrated that a desirable age for women to start having children is in their twenties. Young men and young women should be encouraged to marry young, as soon as they

have sufficient maturity to make a life time commitment. Young men should be strongly encouraged to acquire a know-how that will allow them to integrate themselves in the professional world and be able to support their families in such a way that their wives would be able to remain at home taking care of the children. It should be underlined that “society must be structured in such a way that wives and mothers are not in practice compelled to work outside the home.”<sup>15</sup> At the same time the work that women do within the family should be highly appreciated by society.<sup>16</sup> And a woman who has received from the Lord particular talents should use them for the common good if she is not married and, if married, in ways that will not affect her duties as a mother and a wife. Last, but not least, this professional capacity should lead men to engage into an intelligent transformation of the world so that it might become the Social Kingdom of Christ.

At the same time, to prepare young people to be able integrate themselves in an increasingly secularized society dominated by all sorts of forms of hedonism, it might be useful that particular attention should be given to the formation in chastity as it is underlined in the introduction of *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*.<sup>17</sup> But with particular care that what is planned as a remedy to sin, should not become an occasion of sin as it happens in many contemporary programs.

### **Value and necessity of the separate education of young men and young women**

Coeducation that seems to have been accepted in the vast majority of Western countries needs to be revisited. Coeducation ignores the radical differences



*Young men should be strongly encouraged to acquire a know-how that will allow them to integrate themselves in the professional world and be able to support their families in such a way that their wives would be able to remain at home taking care of the children.*

<sup>15</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio*, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1981, n. 23

<sup>16</sup> John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1994, n. 17 “While speaking about employment in reference to the family, it is appropriate to emphasize how important and burdensome is *the work women do within the family unit: that work should be acknowledged and deeply appreciated*. The “toil” of a woman who, having given birth to a child, nourishes and cares for that child and devotes herself to its upbringing, particularly in the early years, is so great as to be comparable to any professional work. This ought to be clearly stated and upheld, no less than any other labor right. Motherhood, because of all the hard work it entails, should be recognized as giving the right to financial benefits at least equal to those of other kinds of work undertaken in order to support the family during such a delicate phase of its life.”

<sup>17</sup> *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 1.

between men and women in their biology, physiology, psychology, and their proper roles in family and society.<sup>18</sup> Behind coeducation we have ideological and practical motivations. The ideological motivation is the feminist ideology of the radical equality and of interchangeability of both sexes. The practical motivation is that many educational institutions would not be able to survive economically if they had to establish separate study programs for men and women. If we

<sup>18</sup> Rev. C. John McCloskey III, S.T.D., *Coeducation Revisited for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Faith & Reason, Vol. XXI, nos. 1-2, Spring-Summer 1995, p. 123.

are convinced that it is necessary in accordance with nature and the will of the Creator to have separated education, we would strive to find the practical means necessary to enact this separation.

Pius XI, in continuity with the constant tradition of the Church, is highly critical of the shared education of boys and girls. He points out that co-education is a consequence of naturalism and the denial of original sin, and thus leads to a deplorable confusion of ideas that mistakes a leveling promiscuity and equality for the legitimate association of the sexes.<sup>19</sup> This position was reiterated by Congregation for Religious in 1957.<sup>20</sup> The Second Vatican Council declared that “in every phase of education” there should be “due consideration to the difference of sex and the proper ends Divine Providence assigns to each sex in the family and in society.”<sup>21</sup> This declaration gives a very strong anthropological foundation to separated education. It is based on the different but complementary plans that the Creator has in establishing human sexual differentiation.

## Pastoral considerations

Within this overall view that formation in chastity is part of the general formation of the youth, we can usefully analyze several concrete aspects: First and foremost the conviction that all our behavior has a final goal to love God and, for His sake, our neighbors to arrive one day to the Kingdom of God in Heaven. So if we integrate the sexual powers within this overall goal, the Christian would be able to realize that this gift from God has to be used in his service as are the many other gifts we have received from Him.

Second, the constant risk that all persons have always suffered of self closing. A self closing to the love of God and the persons that the Lord has placed close to us, this tragic decision could be an anticipation of the terrible solitude which we risk of encountering in the place of perdition. So we have to train the youth to be constantly open to the self communication of God and to always open to the love of our neighbors. *Truth*

19 Pope Pius XI, *Divini Illius Magistri*, cit. p. 68.

20 Sacra Congregatio de Religiosis, *De iuventutem utriusque sexus promiscua institutione*, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1957.

21 *Gravissimum Education*, p. 8.

*and Meaning of Human Sexuality* gives a timely warning of this problem, showing with a very useful quote from the First Letter of St. Peter that this tendency could be have as its source the enemy of mankind.<sup>22</sup>

Third, chastity requires self control, but all the moral life requires this fundamental auxiliary virtue. We can see that anger or gluttony can not be kept under control without the assistance of chastity. If a child is trained in self-control since his early childhood, he will have a better ability when he reaches puberty to resist sexual temptations. The document teaches that, “*self-control*” is “a necessary condition for being capable of self-giving. Children and young people should be encouraged to have esteem for, and to practice self-control and restraint, to live in an orderly way, to make personal sacrifices in a spirit of love for God, self-respect, and generosity towards others, without stifling feelings and tendencies, but channeling them into a virtuous life.”<sup>23</sup>

## Conclusions

In this brief article we have tried to demonstrate how the formation in chastity has to be duly integrated into the general formation in the faith and human science that young persons will receive from their parents and the school system. The formation in this virtue should not be over emphasized but duly placed in the context of an integral and wise education.

22 “Through loving and patient advice, parents will help young people to avoid *an excessive closing in on themselves*. When necessary, they will also teach them to go against social trends that tend to stifle true love and an appreciation for spiritual realities: “Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you” (*1 Peter* 5:8-10).” *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 95.

23 *Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 58.

## Recommended Resources

### Written materials

*Casti Connubii* (1930). Papal encyclical by Pius XI:  
[www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P11CASTI.HTM](http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P11CASTI.HTM)

*Humanae Vitae* (1968). Papal encyclical by Paul VI:  
[www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P6HUMANA.HTM](http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P6HUMANA.HTM)

*Evangelium Vitae* (1995). Papal encyclical by John Paul II: [www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/JP2EVANG.HTM](http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/JP2EVANG.HTM)

John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" conferences. Includes original unity of man and woman and reflections on *Humanae Vitae*. Available through HLI's bookstore: [www.hli.org](http://www.hli.org).

*Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* (1995), [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/family/documents/rc\\_pc\\_family\\_doc\\_08121995\\_human-sexuality\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_08121995_human-sexuality_en.html)

*Educational Guidance in Human Love by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education* (1983) [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_19831101\\_sexual-education\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19831101_sexual-education_en.html)

*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994)

### Links

[www.humanaevitapriests.org](http://www.humanaevitapriests.org) Great information about *Humanae Vitae* as well as many good articles and resources.

[www.hli.org](http://www.hli.org) Human Life International's website. Of particular note are the pages:

[www.hli.org/contraception\\_resources.html](http://www.hli.org/contraception_resources.html)  
Good articles about contraception.

[www.hli.org/condom\\_expose.html](http://www.hli.org/condom_expose.html)  
Exposes many of the myths about condoms. Shows the condom's high failure rate for preventing sexually transmitted diseases.

### Bishops Pastoral Letters and Articles

*Human Sexuality from God's Perspective: Humanae Vitae 25 Years Later*, by The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB): [www.usccb.org/prolife/humanae25.shtm](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/humanae25.shtm).

*Marriage: A communion of Life and Love*, Bishop Victor Galeone (Bishop St. Augustine Florida USA). The pastoral letter can be found at the following sites: [www.ewtn.com/library/prolife/zbodtrut.htm](http://www.ewtn.com/library/prolife/zbodtrut.htm) and at [www.staugcatholic.org/archives/july-aug2003.pdf](http://www.staugcatholic.org/archives/july-aug2003.pdf).

### Electronic Resources:

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