



Dear Friends,

As Christians we believe that God became man to save us. This is the Good News! This love that God has shown to his people and his example is nowadays often put aside to focus on questions about moral issues and especially sexuality, where we are dismissed in contemporary society as promoting a set of frustrating rules. Just imagine, the public opinion showed as much interest to Christ's love and message as it does today in what it thinks Christianity teaches about sexuality! The contrary is true however, the sexual union is an expression of the fulfilment of love and an expression of us being created in the image and likeness of God (see our newsletter of November "The Body reveals God"). Sexuality is such a precious gift, we should not waste it! We should come to understand it better and deeper every day. Read in this Letter for Europe Monsignor Leonard's thoughts on why we should respect what is so intimately connected to who we are.

For a renewed Europe based on Christian values!

Your Europe for Christ Team

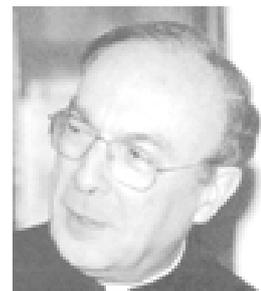
PS: Don't forget to pray the Our Father for a Europe based on Christian values!

- * - *

Prophets are often those that are right too early

By Monseigneur André-Mutien Léonard

A German newspaper announced that Germany has just hit an all-time low in natality rate, which is now by 8.5 births per 1000 habitants. The fertility rate is actually 1.36 children per woman, but it could easily drop below 1. It is high time to start making tapes of Goethe's language since demographers foresee that unless a fast and energetic turnaround is made, the German people - including the language - will have disappeared after 12 generations, that is to say around 2300. This trend can be noted in most modern societies, a collective suicide through the pill and abortion...



The teachings of Paul VI and many Church leaders on the matters of abortion and contraception were often represented as old-fashioned. With time coming, they will appear more and more prophetic.

First the issue of contraception: The relation between carnal love of man and women on the one hand, and the opening to life on the other, is a very deep one. It is inscribed in the deepest part of our being, but also of our psyche, as Freud well demonstrated. This relation is entrusted to our responsible liberty. In animals the connection between coupling and reproduction depends on the power of instinct. In the human species it is liberty that should be in charge, in a responsible way. This responsibility is connected to

respect and not only to our control. Even in considering our physical nature, we have learned at our expenses that absolute control results in ecological catastrophes. What can we say then about our human nature which is carnal and at the same time spiritual? The danger of contraception is that in the long run it disconnects love and procreation. This is what we are currently experiencing. On the one side, sex only for its own purpose, turning only around itself, disconnected from the gift of life and resulting in sterility, in the "demographical winter." On the other side, the production of human life disconnected from the carnal love between a man and a woman, with all the wrong ways that surface at the horizon or which even already exist.

With time one understands better the wisdom that lies in the Christian Tradition when it is recommended that man and woman live their fertility without resorting to non-natural methods of contraception. Man and a woman - on an equal basis - well knowing the few days of a month when the woman is fertile, and for good reasons temporarily needing to avoid having a child, can have intimate relations on the infertile days. These methods are nowadays well investigated and reliable. Besides their ecological plus (no pills to swallow) they have the immense advantage to encourage man and woman to better get to know each other and to speak with one another. At the same time, the deep relation between love and the gift of life is respected instead of destroyed.

The Church is also prophetic in the question of abortion. If we are here now, it is because we were respected when we ourselves were tiny embryos, very small fetuses. Why would others now not enjoy the same respect? No one would practice abortion, no Parliament would legalise it, if it could have retroactive effects: if now all those could be put to death who were not aborted when abortion was illegal. It is worthwhile thinking it over. May the Church be thanked for helping us to do so and to teach us to love at the same time the child to be born and the woman sometimes so deeply troubled by an undesired pregnancy!

Prophets are often those who are right long before their time. But they still are right!

Mgr. André Léonard is bishop of Namur (Belgium) since 1991 and Professor of philosophy at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium. He was also member of the International Theological Commission in 1987, the advising Council for the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.