

## **At The Frontiers of Human Ecology**

It's impossible... I simply can't forget the face of this young Indian woman who just gave birth to a child 'ordered' by a homosexual couple from Eastern Europe. Scarcely emerged from his mother's womb, without having rested for even one second on her stomach, her baby is taken away and handed to the "customers."

This video posted on YouTube compels me to ask: Lord, what do you expect of us consecrated women and men in these times of ethical upheaval?

One thing is certain: the mission entrusted to us and to all Christians by the Lord has been and will remain to proclaim the gospel. Jesus said to the apostles: "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you." (Jn 20: 21) And since Jesus was sent "to preach the gospel to the poor" in order to "proclaim liberty to captives," (Lc 4: 18) such is our mission as well.

But how to proclaim the "Good News" of the gospel so as to reach this young Indian woman or this East European couple?

### **The New Avenues of Contemporary Ethics**

Let's consider for a moment the stakes of the new avenues opened by contemporary ethics. The trivialization of artificial contraception and abortion, homosexual "marriage," unrestricted medically assisted procreation, gestational surrogacy, gender specific education and euthanasia, all have a common dynamic: through science and new civil laws, we are now able to rid ourselves of many constraints specific to human nature: we become the masters of life and, for the majority of Westerners, this is "good news."

The desire for omnipotence, inherent to the hearts of women and men, has found in this an unfurling of vast proportions. But where do these new avenues actually lead us? To a renewed and liberated humanity, radiant with hope and joy? Will this ethical shaking up lead to true justice and peace? What consequences can we expect from this wave controlled by omnipotent humans? Isn't this a runaway train? Is this behaviour in compliance with "the love of the Father?" (1 Jn 2:15)

The questioning here is colossal, it's destabilizing. It can lead to panic. Or else, opting for a form of "ethics devoid of goodness," it can only lead to judgement, exclusion and condemnation. And we forget that such omnipotence already inhabits our own hearts....

### **A Proactive Conduct**

To the contrary, Pope Francis invites us to "fight the temptation simply to react to complex problems as they arise today," and to create a "proactive mindset." (CELAM Episcopal meeting, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013)

It's a matter of sitting at the table with this young Indian woman and this Eastern European couple, of loving them, and of breaking the extraordinary news to them! The child she has carried, the child they are raising... is, just as themselves, a child of God, loved and chosen from eternity. For him and for them, Jesus entered into the realm of

death so the gates of heaven may be opened to them. And in response to their trading in life, to their takeover of our nature originally designed by God, all of which wounds His heart, the Father responds by offering the free gift of his pardon.

Our love for the Father, just like theirs, is so inadequate... yet the Father will never tire of loving us. This sense of almightiness is our ruin. Yet the Father's love restores and leads us into his divine joy.

### **A New Ecology of the Human Being**

Let us go further. The death and resurrection of Jesus have revealed the incalculable value of all human life, including the awaiting life in countless supernumerary embryos. In light of the paschal mystery, sexuality appears as a sign engraved in our very flesh of our calling to communion, a calling henceforth within reach of our hearts. As for marriage, it becomes a sacrament that makes visible the eternal love of Christ the Bridegroom for our humanity.

Life, sex and marriage, in their great fragility and vulnerability, can be immersed in God's Love. It is thus that a new ecology of the human being can be developed.

An ecology utterly respectful of life, of sex and of marriage, always viewed in the light of God's tender love.

An ecology that concerns itself with the well-being of the human family with its well-being on earth as well as its ultimate well-being: eternal life and the resurrection of the flesh.

An ecology whose priority is to care for the most vulnerable among us, in keeping with the teachings of the beatitudes.

A human ecology that does not reject science, much to the contrary. Yet a human ecology that does not allow itself to be dominated by science nor by technology.

### **Servants and Witnesses**

So what about us, consecrated women and men? Could we not become the servants and witnesses of this new human ecology?

Do our vows not take on a new relevance? Because they connect us to Jesus, the only human being free of any desire for power. Because our vows lead us to become poor before life, chaste before others, and obedient before God. Because they transform us into witnesses of hope for the eternal wedding feast. Because they lead us on the path of true joy.

So many consecrated women and men already care for the most vulnerable... An example comes to mind, that of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Belgium who protected a senior woman against euthanasia chosen by her family and against her will. Another example: that of the Misericordia Sisters who care for single mothers, notably in Montreal. And that of the Sisters of Life in New York who accompany women confronted by abortion.

And what about you? To whom are you being sent? For whom will you care? Whom will you love? For whom will you pray? How will you express the beauty of this human ecology?

Tomorrow, through you and through us all, will the tender love of the Father who cares about our humanity be truly visible?

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