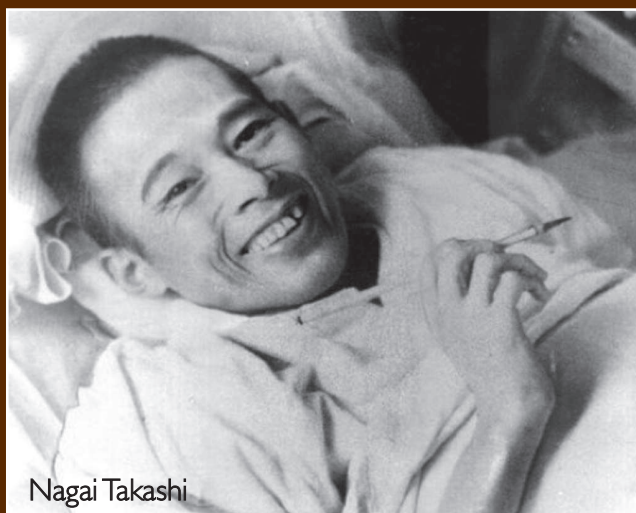


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THE HOLY FAMILY IN EXILE

Semper Idem is the newsletter of the Catholic Medical Association's Committee for the New Evangelization. The Committee for the New Evangelization aims to support young Catholics in healthcare. Semper Idem is one way in which we hope to do this.

EDITORIAL

The Editor writes...

By the time you read this, our third annual CMA youth conference 'Catholics in Healthcare: Building a Culture of Life' will have taken place. The take home message from this conference is that our Catholic faith should permeate our entire lives.

The CMA's Committee for the New Evangelization continues this theme focusing on 'building a culture of life' with the 2019 youth retreat entitled: The Role of the Family in Building a Culture of Life. Thus in the build up to this, the current edition of Semper Idem focuses on the family.

After the birth of our Lord, Joseph received a message from an angel in a dream.

"Rise, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." (Mt 2:13)

In order to flee the persecution of Herod, Joseph led the Holy Family into Egypt. The Holy Family was threatened with certain death by Herod (a man who is reputed to have killed his favourite wife, and three sons!). The family remains under attack, although the attacks are rather different. In this edition of Semper Idem, Piers Shepherd of the Family Education Trust writes about two contemporary attacks on the family.

Then in the bioethics column, Thaddeus discusses what is healthcare. In the book review, Gregory Scriptorum reflects on the importance of starting out everything with prayer and the desire to be in uniformity with God's will when providing healthcare.

At the February 2019 youth retreat, there will be talks addressing the importance of the family and a young nurse will offer a heartfelt reflection on how prayer helped her family to journey through the death of her father, and then caused her to choose to dedicate her life to palliative care nursing. We will also reflect on the life and work of Fr Patrick Peyton, known as the Rosary Priest, who encouraged devotion to the rosary and is remembered for his famous catchphrase: the family that prays together stays together.

In these times, the Church seems to lurch from crisis to crisis. Let us remember to turn to prayer and the study of the Faith, and to not lose heart. To this end we encourage all young (18yrs +) Catholics in Healthcare to come to the February youth retreat.

THE FAMILY UNDER ATTACK

BY PIERS SHEPHERD OF THE FAMILY EDUCATION TRUST

Since 1971 the Family Education Trust has studied the causes and consequences of family breakdown. We have consistently sought to defend the traditional family from an increasing onslaught which both seeks to undermine it and to weaken the role of parents as the primary educators of their children.

One of our most important outreaches is that of keeping our supporters updated about the latest attacks on the family. At present, two of the most pressing issues are the attempts to liberalise divorce laws and to remove the right of parents to determine what their children are taught about sex and relationships.

Divorce on Demand

Under the Divorce Reform Act 1969 the sole ground on which a divorce can be obtained is evidence that 'the marriage has broken down irretrievably.' In order to prove irretrievable breakdown the petitioner must present evidence of their spouse being at fault or else the couple must have lived apart for a number of years. The government recently announced that it will consider legislating in favour of 'no fault' divorce, meaning that couples would be able to divorce without giving a specific reason for their decision.

The government's announcement was prompted by a long campaign carried out by The Times newspaper, the Marriage Foundation and the family lawyers group, Resolution. Under this campaign's proposals, one of the spouses can simply give notice that the marriage has broken down and the divorce can be finalised after a period of six months.

The Coalition for Marriage, of which Family Education Trust is a part, has produced a fact sheet opposing 'no reason divorce'. It states eloquently of the plans to eliminate fault from the divorce process:

Removing the need to prove such a breakdown means that the law would allow spouses to walk away from the most significant commitment in their lives without providing a reason.

Making divorce easier is unlikely to have good outcomes for children. A study from the Marriage and Religion Research Institute highlighted numerous negative consequences for the children of parents who divorce including a greater alienation from parents and a higher likelihood of engaging in crime, drugs and risky sexual behaviour.

Relationships and Sex Education

Another ominous danger facing the family is the coming implementation, in September 2019, of compulsory Relationships Education (RelEd) in primary schools and compulsory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in secondary schools. The most concerning part of the new legislation is that parents

will have no right to withdraw their children from RelEd in primary schools and the government has indicated that it plans to limit the right of parents to withdraw their children from RSE in secondary schools. It has been suggested that in the latter case the right may revert to the child once they reach a particular age.

We do not know the exact form that RSE and RelEd will take but the government consultation on the issue, which closed in February, gives us some clues. The consultation document attempted to reassure those concerned that teaching will be age-appropriate, the rights of parents respected and faith schools free to teach about sex and relationships in accordance with their religious and moral beliefs.

However, there are serious causes for concern. One is the prominent endorsement of the government's plans by Stonewall. This suggests that teaching about same-sex partnerships could form a significant part of primary school RelEd and ministerial responses to parliamentary questions have consistently insisted that all young people 'whatever their developing sexuality and identity' should feel that RelEd and RSE are inclusive of their 'needs'. The consultation document also bore less resemblance to previous sex education guidance, which made ample reference to parents, and is more like the 2014 document Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) for the 21st Century, published by the Brook Advisory Service, which provides confidential information on contraception and abortion to young people, including those under the age of consent.

Family Education Trust was active in encouraging our supporters to respond to the consultation and in suggesting the insertion of positive content including information about the importance of loving parents for a healthy childhood, the complementary virtues of motherhood and fatherhood, the association of marriage with a higher degree of stability than other living arrangements, and how stable families contribute to a healthy society.

We will continue to be alert to the government's plans for RSE and RelEd and will seek to influence the political process in a manner favorable to marriage, family and the welfare of children.

<http://familyeducationtrust.org.uk/>

THE BOOK REVIEW

THE BOOK REVIEW IS A NEW REGULAR COLUMN IN SEMPER IDEM

WRITTEN BY A JUNIOR DOCTOR
(PEN NAME): GREGORY SCRIPTORUM

Uniformity with God's Will

by St Alphonsus Liguori
TAN Books and Publishers, 2009
Paperback, 31 pages

A few years ago I decided to read *Uniformity with God's Will*, one of St Alphonsus Liguori's most well-known books. It appealed to me as a practical book to help strengthen my spiritual life. St Alphonsus (1696-1787), a Doctor of the Church, founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer. The Redemptorists exist to bring Christ the Redeemer to the poor and marginalised of society.

This backdrop helps us to understand the key message of the book; namely that the more we submit our will to God's will the more we love God. St Alphonsus goes on to explain that we have to bear certain crosses and difficulties in life; but if this is God's will we should embrace these: "It would be the greatest delight of the seraphs to pile up sand on the seashore or to pull weeds in a garden for all eternity, if they found out such was God's will." This challenged me but as I read on I realised what a strong and profound message this is.

In today's society it is so easy to follow the status quo. This book re-iterated to me that when making decisions in all aspects of our life we should ensure our will is in unity with God's will. Of course this cannot be done without a personal relationship with God Himself through prayer.

When starting work as a doctor I was overwhelmed by the many decisions I had to make – prescribing, diagnosing and of course difficult ethical decisions. We should always seek to make these decisions in conformity with Natural Law which is a manifestation of God's will and not based on the secular values of the day. This is not always easy but, to quote St Alphonsus: "To do God's will -- this was the goal upon which the saints constantly fixed their gaze."

The Bioethics Column

What is healthcare?

By Thaddeus, a young Catholic bioethicist

As promised in the last issue, we will now consider what healthcare is, and what that means for us as Catholics working (or training to work) in healthcare. This will provide the necessary foundation for future reflections on the principles governing ethical reasoning in healthcare.

Healthcare, is the care of health, but there is actually quite a lot of debate on what health is, with opinions ranging from the absence of disease and infirmity to a state of total (physical, mental and social) wellbeing. The

risk of using a wide-ranging definition of health is that this might include such a variety of aspects of daily life that it becomes indistinguishable from other areas of life and become too intrusive into private affairs of people, such as their home economics and how they choose their friends. While the way we spend our money and the people with whom we choose to spend our time surely have an impact on our wellbeing, it is clearly ridiculous to think that buying someone an expensive car (which might well improve their social and psychological wellbeing) should constitute healthcare! As such, it is perhaps best to understand health as the physical and psychological state in which the members of one's body can appropriately fulfil their function. This recognises both the good of God's creation (Genesis 1:31), that we as people have purpose, and that we need to take care of our bodies to be able to fulfil that purpose. Importantly, health is only one of the goods of life, and as various Saints have testified, it can be sacrificed for other goods: one's spiritual goods, the salvation and well-being of our brethren, and the glory of God.

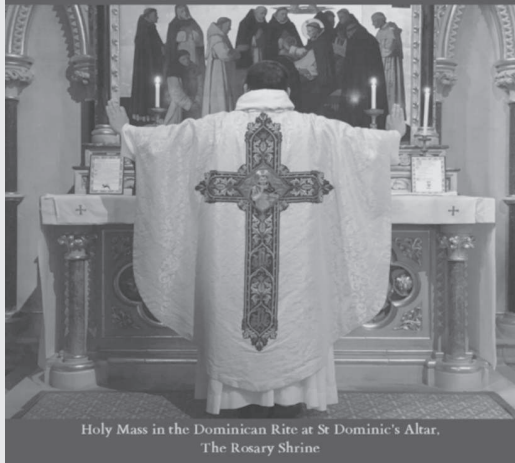
Recognising that as healthcare professionals we are responsible for the health of our brethren, for whom (as much as for us) Christ died on the cross and who are made in the image of God, should keep us on our toes. We are not only responsible for the provision of a service (both as professionals but also as servants of our Lord), but we must do it in a manner that respects the dignity of every individual in the unbroken Tradition of our forefathers who always emphasized the worthiness of every life, however weak. In our day and age, this involves not only opposing abortion and assisted suicide or euthanasia, but with the progress of medical science and technology will involve careful use of any new advances in medicine. When offering treatment and care we should always keep in mind that God gave us bodies which are good, and form as much a part of us as our souls do, and should not be instrumentalised for the purpose of fulfilling vanity, which damages what should be the temple of the Holy Spirit.

THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN BUILDING A CULTURE OF LIFE

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CONFERENCE REPORT:

EVANGELIUM CONFERENCE (17-19/08/2018)
THE ORATORY SCHOOL, READING
BY A YOUNG CATHOLIC STUDENT

The Evangelium weekend (Friday – Sunday) was a wonderful opportunity for time in prayer, growth in knowledge of the Faith, and friendship for young Catholics. The liturgies were beautiful and included Adoration and Benediction in the evening alongside daily Mass during which the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate led the chant and hymns. Opportunities for confession were also given and many people took advantage of the opportunity to discuss questions with fellow Catholics, lay and clergy alike. We were blessed to have Mass celebrated by Bishop Mark Davies who was present at the conference to give a talk entitled 'Renewal of Faith in the Holy Eucharist'. This was fitting in the lead up to the National Eucharistic Congress. The grounds of the Oratory School are stunning and provided the opportunity for walks and sports in the afternoons and we were fortunate to have beautiful weather. We were also treated to delicious meals from the school kitchen.

The theme of the conference was: 'explaining the Catholic faith in the modern world.' Particularly relevant to this topic was the presentation by Kerry Day in which she addressed the very pressing issue of gender ideology. She broke down the concepts clearly and concisely and clarified the many areas, which often cause confusion in a very compassionate manner. Additionally, Ryan Day spoke about *Humanae Vitae*, a topic which has been discussed a great deal in this the year of its 50th anniversary. Of particular interest was the historical context of the encyclical and the changes that took place in the official position of other non-Catholic denominations regarding contraception. This provided an excellent background for helping us to understand the contemporary context. Both these topics were particularly pertinent to the overall theme of the conference as these issues are frequently discussed on the news and pushes to change legislation occur frequently. Within the wider theme of the conference there were however a wide range of talks and workshops of different difficulties were offered making the conference accessible. We heard about Dr Jacob Phillips' ongoing research on Mary and Marian devotion; from Fr Peter Stravinskis who described in detail the way in which our methods of exegesis contrast with other denominations. All of these excellent talks, presentations and workshops are available online. The apologetics panel responded to a wide range of questions and this proved to be very informative. Issues ranging from liturgy to recent changes in the catechism were discussed in depth.

It is wonderful to see that this endeavour which has been running for just under 20 years is growing and continues to provide excellent support for young Catholics in their growth in faith.