

# THOMAS MORE SOCIAL ACTION GROUP

# NEWSLETTER

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Editorial:

Issue  
**IDENTIFICATION.**

**Children are an  
inheritance from  
the Lord (Ps 127)**

Are they? Or are they something that adults can make any old way they like? Recently the media have been talking about Artificial Reproductive Technology: that is single women and lesbians using Artificial Insemination or IVF, because they are "psychologically infertile"; and 'fetal reduction', the killing of an unwanted, unborn twin or triplet.

What a tragedy. The views that are being presented by secular society are wrong. Children are being turned into objects for adults to have a right to possess or reject. They are also wrong about parents: not possessors, users, but treasurers of the gift of children. If we are right about marriage (two people making a gift of themselves to each other), we will be right about children (gifts from the Lord).

Pope John Paul II, in his Apostolic Exhortation to the Church in Oceania, which includes Australia, states that:

*"In the more secularised and affluent societies..., the right to life is the one most under threat." 30*

He also states that

*"The Christian concept of marriage and the family is being opposed by a new secular, pragmatic and individualistic outlook" 45*

Therefore we have a job to hold up the Gospel vision of both life and love, because if you get one wrong, the other will suffer. However, if you get one right, you'll tend to be right on both.

Michael Casanova

## Catholic Social Teachings APPLICATION

The Church upholds about the two meanings of marriage - the unitive and the procreative, life and love. Think about the following questions and see whether life and love are being separated or not. In your reflection, it would be beneficial to think in terms of the rights of the child.

### Discussion Questions

1. What is wrong with single women or lesbians, through the aid of taxpayer funded money, being allowed to conceive children?
2. Why would parents want to abort one of their twins or triplets? What alternative is there for them?
3. What is wrong if the man who makes a woman into a wife isn't the one who makes her into a mother (eg, Artificial Insemination)?
4. Pope John Paul II states that an individualistic outlook is causing problems to marriages and families. Why is this so? What is the alternative?

### Important dates:

**National Civic Council End of year  
Mass of Thanksgiving  
Wednesday 5th December**

Our Lady of Victories Basilica  
548 Burke Rd, Camberwell,  
7:30 pm

**Thomas More Summer School  
8 - 10 February**

Thomas More Centre,  
582 Queensberry Street  
North Melbourne

## Catholic Social Teachings READINGS

### Bible

**Psalms 127:3** "Sons are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward."

### Catechism of the Catholic Church

**2363.** The spouses' union achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. **These two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated** without altering the couple's spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family.

The conjugal love of man and woman thus stands under the twofold obligation of fidelity and [fruitfulness].

**2366.** [Fruitfulness] is a gift, an end of marriage, for conjugal love naturally tends to be fruitful. A child does not come from outside as something added on to the mutual love of the spouses, but **springs from the very heart of that mutual giving**, as its fruit and fulfillment.

**2376.** Techniques that entail the **dissociation of husband and wife**, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques (heterologous artificial insemination and fertilization) infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses' 'right to become a father and a mother only through each other.'

**2378.** A child is not something owed to one, but is a gift. The 'supreme gift of marriage' is a human person. **A child may not be considered a piece of property, an idea to which an alleged 'right to a child' would lead.** In this area, only the child possesses genuine rights: the right 'to be the fruit of the specific act of the conjugal love of his parents,' and 'the right to be respected as a person from the moment of his conception.'

## Catholic Social ACTION

Over the Months of December and January, why not concentrate on: raising questions with your friends about Catholic Social Teachings; being active; being a leaven in our country? Pope John Paul said to us in his Apostolic Exhortation that *"It is the fundamental call of lay people to renew the temporal order in all its many elements.... In this way, the Church becomes the yeast that leavens the entire loaf of the temporal order."*

Try raising the topics we have looked at over the year and mention the Thomas More Social Action Groups. **IN PARTICULAR**, prepare to come to the Thomas More Summer School in the second weekend of February and invite friends to come along too.

John Paul II also says, *"The way of Christ cannot be walked without an ardent sense of mission."* **This is what Jesus wants, and what the world needs, from us.**

**Here is the challenge: can you bring one friend to the Thomas More Summer School?**

PRESS RELEASE: "Psychological infertility"

Today's Herald Sun reveals that 'radical new guidelines' from the Infertility Treatment Authority will allow AI and IVF not only for clinically infertile women, but also for 'psychologically infertile' women who feel they cannot have sex with men. The Catholic Church has four serious concerns about this proposal:

1. The restriction of access to taxpayer-funded artificial reproductive technologies to the genuinely infertile was unanimously agreed to by all sides of politics only a few years ago. ...
2. This decision assumes that the desire of a woman to get pregnant is the only issue ... The interests of children – especially their interests in having a father – are being completely ignored.
3. This is one more step in the direction of artificial reproductive technologies being seen as a 'lifestyle choice' and children being seen as a commodity to which adults have a 'right'.
4. It is a misuse of scarce medical resources...

Monsignor C. Prowse VICAR GENERAL

14th November 2001

### **The Benefits of Mariage.**

From Bill Muehlenberg, National Secretary of the Australian Family Association (Updated May 2001).

**Physical Health:** A Dutch scientist found that divorced people suffered from 30% more chronic conditions.

**Mortality rates:** The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare study in 1994 found that never married and previously married people had mortality rates twice that of married people.

**Mental Health:** A University of Oslo study involving 19 countries in 1994 concluded that there is clear evidence in most countries of a relationship between marital status and at least some psychological well-being measures. The previously married are clearly worse off, but the differences are also found between never married and the currently married.

**Suicide:** A recent study (2001) by the Institute of Health and Welfare found that divorced men are at least three times as likely to commit suicide as any other group.

**De factos:** People who have cohabited before marriage are twice as likely to divorce once married. Cohabitation leads to greater risks of problem behaviours (eg. drunkenness, adultery and drug abuse). A US Justice Department study of 1992 found that a cohabiting woman is 56 times more likely than a wife to be assaulted.

**Marriage and children:** Former Human Rights Commissioner Brian Burdekin in Australia stated that there was an alarming 500 to 600 % increase in sexual abuse of girls in families where the adult male was not the natural father. Professor Sarantakos of the Charles Sturt University conducted a survey (1984) of 512 children and found that children of cohabiting couples were assessed by their teachers to be performing at lower levels in language, mathematics, social studies and sport than children of wedded parents.

## *Review of the year*

### **February Vilification Bill**

"By the Natural Law every human being has the right to freedom in searching for truth and in expressing and communicating his opinions... within the limits laid down by the moral order and the common good..." John XXIII *Parcem in terris* 12.

### **March/April Eminem**

"Whatever insults human dignity...are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury" Church in the Modern World 27

### **May/ June Relationships Bill**

CCC 1603 "God himself is the author of marriage." [87] Marriage is not a purely human institution.

### **July Bishop Spong**

CCC 639. The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness.

### **August Cloning**

CCC 2274. Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.

### **September Embryo experimentation**

...as a "human individual" [an embryo] has the right to its own life; and therefore every intervention which is not in favour of the embryo is an act which violates that right. PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR LIFE

### **October Economics**

CCC 2424. "A theory that makes profit the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity is morally unacceptable. The disordered desire for money cannot but produce perverse effects. ... 'You cannot serve God and mammon.' [Mt 6:24 ; Lk 16:13 .]"

### **November Elections**

CCC 2240. Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory to pay taxes, to exercise the right to vote, and to defend one's country

## Thomas More Centre Summer School 2002

**"You, too, go into my  
vineyard"**

**8-10 February, 2002  
Thomas More Centre,  
Queensberry Street,  
North Melbourne**



**Friday 8 February  
7:30 Public Lecture:  
*The Fabulous Role of the Laity,*  
Archbishop Denis Hart**

*Topics include:*

- Human Genome Project – Are we more than DNA?
- Building a Christian Social Order
- Islam's Origins – Islam Today
- Restoring the Liturgy in the New Millennium
- They Answered His Call: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Catholic Action
- Sts Thomas More and John Fisher: Examples to follow
- Saying Yes to God

### **Action Stations!**

Ballarat Courier, Wednesday Nov 7th.

#### **People's bank would make a difference**

Recently Will Bailey, former ANZ bank chief, was criticised by Westpac chief David Morgan for looking through a rear-vision mirror (The Age October 25) with regards to his proposal of the creation of a people's bank. Mr Bailey, though, is really suggesting a banking U-turn.

The "new model car", a people's bank, would not be running over people with unreasonable

fees and charges. It would provide moderate interest on basic savings accounts and would provide credit card facilities where fees and charges are not accelerated. By providing low-cost long-term finance, the people's bank would also provide badly needed electronic fuel injection for struggling small business and farmers. Most importantly, a people's bank would not have to generate high profits to satisfy share-holders.

-THOMAS MORE SOCIAL ACTION GROUP,  
c/o JACINTA HELEY, Ballarat.

### **Thomas More Social Action Group Newsletter**

Editor: Michael Casanova. Sub-Editors: Catherine Sheehan, Anthony Cappello, Eilis O'Reilly, M.J. Donnellan, Laura McCormick.

The Thomas More Social Action Groups are the work of the National Civic Council. Our groups are bringing together young people to be formed in the Catholic Social Teachings and to move on to activism and evangelisation based on the principles of the Church's Social Teachings.

If you are interested in knowing more about the work of the Thomas More Social Action Groups please call the Thomas More Centre on 9326 5757.

Please note: It is important to submit any published letters or any replies arising from the actions proposed in this newsletter. The editor also encourages contributions and comments.

Hard copies of the Newsletter are also available – simply call the Thomas More Centre. Other journals available from the Thomas More Centre are: *AD2000*, *News Weekly* and the *Thomas More Bulletin*. Please call the Thomas More Centre for subscription details.

**PLEASE NOTE: IN ORDER TO CONTINUE THIS WORK THE THOMAS MORE CENTRE WELCOMES DONATIONS- C/O The Director 582 Queensberry St. North Melbourne 3051**