



VATICAN - WORDS OF DOCTRINE - De facto couples and homosexual persons (I) Rev Nicola Bux and Rev Salvatore Vitiello

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - There are Catholics who tend to think that political and legislative activity is not bound by the moral and social teaching of the Catholic Church and even less by the fact that they are members of the Church: dualism of conscience. Hence the need to re-propose the essential contents of two documents issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith respectively in 2002 and 2003: a doctrinal Note on certain matters regarding the behaviour of Catholics in political life and Considerations with regard to proposals to give legal recognition to same sex unions.

What the human person, man and woman is, and how the being together of a man and a woman can receive juridical form, is no longer an univocal fact in today's dominant culture. Gnoseological and moral relativism has affected philosophical and theological anthropology and there have emerged new opinions which lead to the dissolution of man's image, with consequences which can be extremely dangerous, indeed they can already be seen in the slippery slope of the debate on de facto couples, artificial insemination, 'marriage' between persons of the same sex and the opportunity to adopt children.

Assessing these erroneous opinions, Catholic doctrine first of all reaffirms the unconditioned nature of human dignity and human rights, as values which take precedence over any state jurisdiction and which have, as their origin, the Creator (1): what is reaffirmed in the permanent value of the Decalogue. In this sense it is important to analyse, as did John Paul II, the relationship between human freedom and nature: "At this point the true meaning of the natural law can be understood: it refers to man's proper and primordial nature, the "nature of the human person", which is the person himself in the unity of soul and body, in the unity of his spiritual and biological inclinations and of all the other specific characteristics necessary for the pursuit of his end"(2).

Secondly, since in a sense faith in Revelation has changed, because relativism leads people to no longer perceive the natural order as a source of rationality, today paradoxically the Church has to defend reason more than faith; and therefore the relationship between reason and faith in order to heal the mortal separation of thought and morals; and also highlight the rational aspect of human nature as John Paul II in his comment on the Encyclical *Humanae vitae*.

In this regard it would suffice to bring those who insist on the 'naturalness' of homosexuality to ask themselves: why are there men and women, and not all men or all women? In the face of this evidence, homosexuality would seem to be impossible attempt to homologise human nature on one sex or the other to the point of cancelling that obvious difference, ready to have recourse to the same difference in order to claim the "right to be different" and obtain juridical recognition (3).

At this point it is convenient to explain the significance of the term "right": if it is a personal right, or a civic right, or a right of an active minority, and shows it can form pressure groups, does not necessarily implicate recognition of that right. Our reflection at this point is on the terrain of right, the philosophy of the right. With regard to the gay demand for homosexual marriage, it helps to know and to say that this involves a minority which in no way represents the majority of homosexual persons, but which claims to represent them and finds political support to impose its views. Therefore leaders of gay groups and the like when they postulate same sex "marriage", union or pact absurdly without realising it end up reaffirming the difference. Hence in contradiction with what they presuppose, namely that state and society are incompetence with regard to their union since for the latter it concerns the private sphere of interpersonal affective relations, they end up demanding this public juridical recognition from the state, also for reasons of economic convenience. If it is a question of a "private sphere", the state should not interfere. The same goes for de facto couples. (to be continued) (Agenzia Fides 15/2/2007; righe 50, parole 663)

1. Cfr J.Ratzinger, *Europa. I suoi fondamenti spirituali ieri, oggi e domani*, in M.Pera-J.Ratzinger, *Senza radici*.

Europa, relativismo, cristianesimo, islam, Milano 2004, p 67.

2. Enciclica Veritatis splendor, 50.

3. Cfr : Ne deviens pas gay, tu finiras triste, Ed.du Seuil, Paris 2001. The book is a violent testimonial of a former member of the gay community who rejects even the idea of a pact of solidarity, an idea which he considers hypocritical and dangerous for children adopted by same sex couples.