

1. If you had the opportunity to ask people
  - a. To define the teaching of the Catholic Church,
  - b. Most people would probably mention things that we are against;
    - i. We are AGAINST abortion,
    - ii. AGAINST artificial contraception
    - iii. AGAINST sex outside of marriage
    - iv. AGAINST gay marriage
    - v. AGAINST, AGAINST, AGAINST.
2. To many people the Church's teaching
  - a. can be summed up in one word – a great big NO.
3. But when we ask people *in* the church to define it,
  - a. We begin not with what we are against
  - b. But what we are for;
    - i. And that usually gets summed up in two phrases;
    - ii. We are PRO family PRO Life.
4. We say this so often that some grow tired of hearing it.
  - a. But if we have to say this so often it is because so many of us in America seem to have forgotten what those two phrases mean.
    - i. We see children living in the streets with out their parents.
    - ii. Married couples, who hate the idea of children.
    - iii. Women struggling to raise children with out the support of a husband or family
    - iv. Men who consider it a badge of honor to have fathered so many children by so many different women.
    - v. And everywhere we see people eating alone, drinking alone, sleeping alone, and living alone.
5. When we question this state of affairs
  - a. People accuse us of trying to control them;
  - b. And say that being alone is preferable to being saddled with unwanted children, an unbearable spouse, or people we just can't stand.
6. And maybe that is true. But then I think about a conversation I had with my Spanish teacher in Bolivia many years ago.
  - a. He told me that many young Bolivians were following the American pattern of moving out of the home early, getting an apartment and going to university.
  - b. I said (in my baby Spanish) that Americans though this was good because it taught us to be independent.
  - c. At which point he slammed his fist on the table and said, "Who in their *sano juicio* thinks it is good to be independent from their family???"
7. He clearly did not think it was good for us to be alone.
8. And clearly he is not the only one.
9. For if we ask ourselves
  - a. After God created the world in the first chapter of Genesis and pronounced it all VERY good
    - i. When the first moment was
    - ii. that something NOT good entered into creation;
  - b. we would say that it was the temptation of Eve by the serpent,
    - i. or Adam's eating of the apple.
  - c. But we would be wrong.

10. The very first evil, the very first wrong, the very first thing that was not good in God's good creation we encounter in today's first reading
  - a. when no one less than God looks around and proclaims:
  - b. "It is not good for the man to be alone!"
  - c. And thus creates Adam a partner named Eve; one who was like him, and could support him and love him.
11. The first evil then is loneliness; and to combat it
  - a. God created community.
  - b. God created sexuality,
  - c. God created marriage and family.
  - d. Because it is not good for us to be alone.
12. To understand this is to understand so much;
  - a. It helps us to understand why Jesus condemned divorce and remarriage;
  - b. For if according to God it is not good for the man to be alone,
    - i. in Jesus' day it was even worse for the woman to be.
  - c. In Jesus' day a marriage was your protection; your place of employment; it was your health insurance; it was your life insurance.
    - i. Divorce and remarriage cut the woman off from all of this and condemned her to a life of poverty and loneliness.
  - d. And thus to prohibit divorce and remarriage for Jesus was to insist on the responsibilities of the man and the rights of the woman, and, even when it is difficult, to insist that the community called marriage should be preserved.
    - i. For it is not good for us to be alone.
  - e. It helps us to understand why people like our patroness Teresa of Avila, who had no desire to be married, sought out religious life, and even when it was difficult struggled to make it better, because she insisted, the community called religious life is good.
    - i. For it is not good for us to be alone.
  - f. It helps us to understand why our church insists that we cannot be Catholics by ourselves; we need this weekly community called the mass in which we worship and pray, think and believe, EAT and DRINK together.
    - i. For it is not good for us to be alone.
13. It is not surprising that in a world where we spend our days
  - a. working in cubicles,
  - b. driving in cars,
  - c. sitting on busses
  - d. and surfing the internet all walled off in our own little worlds
14. In a world where not even families eat together any more,
  - a. that we no longer understand this;
    - i. And that we live in a world
      1. filled with the sadness of broken promises, and shattered community
      2. And graced with the irony
        - a. that so many people who should get married do not
      3. And those who cannot
        - a. are the only ones who want to any more.
  - b. That simple fact, that nowadays it is gays and lesbians who have to preach to the rest of us about the goodness of marriage,
    - i. speaks volumes about our inability to listen to what the Church believes,

- ii. and reveals God's continuing ability to use anyone and anything in God's good creation to proclaim the truth first proclaimed in Genesis;
  - iii. that is it not good for us to be alone.
  - iv. And that human community, that marriage and family,
    - 1. is good, very good.
15. Perhaps if we began with that
- a. People would begin to hear the Church's teaching
  - b. Not as the NO so many hear;
  - c. But as the YES; Yes, to the intimacy and responsibility of marriage
  - d. Yes to the richness and diversity of children and family
  - e. Yes to a life lived in community
  - f. For surely this is the root of what it means to be Pro Family and Pro Life; Surely this is where to begin if we are ever to help other people understand the no's and yes's of our Church's teaching; and we are ever to begin to live it ourselves.
    - i. Such life is not easy; of course not;
    - ii. It requires us
      - 1. To unplug from the iPod, and turn off the TV
      - 2. To use the kitchen table for shared meals and conversation
        - a. rather than just a place to throw the mail
    - iii. It requires us
      - 1. to teach our children when we would prefer to ignore them
      - 2. To talk with our spouses when we would prefer to avoid them
      - 3. To share our money, our houses, and our beds with people
      - 4. and to do it not only when it is easy but when it is hard,
        - a. all the days of our lives.
16. It is not easy; no – *loneliness* is easy; which maybe why so many of us end up there.
- a. but then Jesus never promised it would be easy.
  - b. And God never intended it to be;
  - c. God intended it to be work; perhaps the greatest work;
  - d. to write the great wrong present at the beginning of Creation;
    - i. for it is not good for us to be alone.
  - e. And when we work and struggle to create and sustain our communities
    - i. be they a marriage
    - ii. a family or the Church;
    - iii. even when we fail
  - f. We participate in that great work and give our lonely, broken world a glimpse of what God sees in it; a world which is good very good.