

'Sex-ed' violates Subsidiarity

SYLLOGISM

'Sex-ed' in schools violates subsidiarity.

Violations of subsidiarity are immoral.

Therefore 'sex-ed' in schools is immoral.

Note: a syllogism means putting ideas together. It is a three-sentence piece of logical reasoning. It has a particular assertion (minor premise), plus a more general assertion (major premise), and a conclusion.

MINOR PREMISE

'Sex-ed' in schools violates the principle of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity? A higher organization practises it by helping a lower organization to fulfil its own role but without usurping it: see next column.

'Sex-ed' in schools *usurps* home and parents, rather than helping them to fulfil their proper role.

So-called sex-ed is put in inverted commas, as though handled with tongs. In schools it is mostly a crude and falsifying activity that reduces sex to bodily functions. Thus it:

- ignores the plan of God;
- ignores the salvation history of original righteousness;
- ignores the salvation history of original sin;
- ignores life-experience of the effects of original sin;
- ignores the necessity of grace;
- ignores the means of acquiring spiritual strengths;
- ignores free will and responsibility.

LONG AGO, in 1935, Dr Alexis Carrel wrote *Man, the Unknown*. In it, he said, "It is convenient to divide the mental activities into **intellectual, moral, aesthetic and religious**." He lamented their reduction to a mere rump of intellect, with the virtual elimination of the moral and aesthetic senses.

The Second Vatican Council has a brief mention of "education in matters relating to sex". Note its delicate and felicitous wording: it did not say 'sex-ed'. It taught that, "**As they grow older they [the young] should receive a positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex.**" *Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis, hence GE) §1*.

Moreover, §1 deals with education at home, what we call "an upbringing", and not at all with schools. Schools come in at GE §5... "nurturing the intellectual faculties [which] is its special mission." In other words, **education is not to be equated with schooling, and education in matters relating to sex belongs to the home, not to the school.**

Back in 1975, Catholic Education Office authorities of the (then) Archdiocese of Sydney quoted GE § 1 **out of context** to justify their first 'sex-ed' programs in the schools. Objectors and objections were ignored.

Incidentally, on school teachers, VCII said, "Above all, they [teachers] should work in close co-operation with the parents. In the entire educational programme they should, together with the parents, **make full allowance for the difference of sex and for the particular which Providence has appointed to each sex in the family and in society.**" GE §8. Thus the Council warned against treating boys and girls as interchangeable, as unisex human beings. This quoted in the Catholic Family Catechism Disciples, Edition p. 111, in the 9th Commandment.

If parents fail in their role in this matter of "education in matters relating to sex", or in any other

matter, they should be **helped, not usurped**. That is subsidiarity.

MAJOR PREMISE

VIOLATING subsidiarity is immoral because it is a fundamental principle of social morality. The idea of subsidiarity is found in St Thomas Aquinas; the technical word 'subsidiarity' was coined by Bishop von Kettler of Mainz in the 19th century. Here is the Church's teaching:

"In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, neither the state nor any larger society should substitute itself for the initiative and responsibility of individual and intermediary bodies." *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (henceforth CCC) §1894.

Again, "A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in the case of need and help to co-ordinate its activity with the activity of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good." CCC §1883, quoting *Quadragesimo Anno* (henceforth QA) of Pope Pius XI §§184-186, of 1931. cf. CCC §1885). See also the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§402, 403.

And specifically on the family: "**The family must be helped and defended by appropriate social measures. Where families cannot fulfil their responsibilities, other social bodies have the duty of helping them and of supporting the institution of the family. Following the principle of subsidiarity, larger communities should take care not to usurp the family's prerogatives or interfere in its life.**" CCC §2209.

IGNORANCE OF SUBSIDIARITY

CHURCHMEN in Australia sometimes mistake **SUBSIDIARITY** for **SUBSIDIARY**. Indeed, these can be opposites. A little '**IT**' makes the difference.

Subsidiarity is the higher helping the lower to fulfil its role, whereas subsidiary means the lower working for the higher as its 'servant'. Maybe ecclesiastical confusion of subsidiarity with subsidiary explains why at times church schools usurp homes; dioceses usurp parishes; and diocesan education offices (and civil governments) usurp parents.

For dry and lucid explanations, see *The Socialist Trend in the Catholic Church in Australia and New Zealand* (abbreviated TST), by Father Patrick Ford, published by the John XXIII Co-op in 1988. Copies are still available from the Cardinal Newman Faith Resources Inc, contact details below, at \$5.

Thus Pope Pius XI taught, "This [subsidiarity] is a **fundamental principle of social philosophy**, unshaken and unchangeable. Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to the community at large what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an injustice, a grave injury, and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies. Of its very nature, **the true aim of all social activity should be to help the**

individual members of the social body, but never to destroy or absorb them." QA §79 (quoted in TST, p. 13).

Even graver is the Pope's assertion that **violation of subsidiarity is "Modernism in the moral, juridical and social order."** (QA §46.) Here Pope Pius XI was quoting his own words: "There is a species of moral, juridical and social Modernism which We condemn, no less decidedly than We condemn theological Modernism." *Ubi arcano*, 1922 (quoted in TST, p. 20).

Until quite recently, subsidiarity was not found in ordinary dictionaries. However, it is described accurately in Chambers *Encyclopedic English Dictionary* (1994), perhaps due to its popularization by Mr John Major, the then British Prime Minister, who was resisting the usurpation of the United Kingdom's national sovereignty by the European Union.

The social teaching of the Church is set out in Question & Answer form in the *Catholic Family Catechism Apostles' Edition* §§464-469 — "clear, brief and easily assimilated by all".

Any violation of subsidiarity is against God's general plan in the 4th Commandment for authority in society. With 'sex-ed', the violation of subsidiarity, is against God's particular plan of parental rights and duties in the 4th Commandment.

SEPARATE ISSUE

BE VERY CLEAR about what this article asserts. It is not primarily about the content or method of what has been, is, or should be, taught in schools as 'sex-ed'.

Rather, this article asserts that the whole idea of classroom sex-ed is itself immoral, not so much under the 6th Commandment as under the 4th Commandment.

However, to treat the 'sex-ed' situation as it is in practice, here is a list of the evils in content and method in 'sex-ed', evils chiefly under the 6th Commandment, in that they affirm:

- insensitivity to the most delicate personal matters;
- contraception and details of contraceptive devices;
- that an evil means is justified by a good end;
- harm-minimalization (physical) justifies immoral acts;
- morality without moral principles (situation-ethics);
- ignoring Biblical revelation and Church teaching;
- a feminist unisex idea of life;
- an institutionalized form of child abuse.

Again, school programs do not wait for the children to "grow older" (GE§1), but start in Kindergarten.

LAST RESORT SOCIALIZATION

ARE there any exceptions to the principle of subsidiarity? Yes, there are. Some usurpations can be justified as a last resort, but never as a first resort.

'Last resort' government socialization of property can be justified morally in extraordinary circumstances. See the page references in TST, listed p. 231.

Now *if* a particular father and mother proved negligent or incompetent over the knowledge component of 'sex-ed' for their child, it could be appropriate to offer them help. N.B. Help is not usurpation. This 'last resort' might justify adult education teachers, but not schools as such, helping the parents to fulfil their rights and duties at home, if the parents requested it (e.g. in the case of a broken home).

However, not even a 'last resort' could justify classroom 'sex-ed'.

"Positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex" must always be given **privately**. This respects the child's right to privacy. And that is *prudent* — as laid down by Vatican IPs GE§1. This excludes joint evening for parent-child, father-son, mother-daughter, on sexual reproduction.

Reserve, reverence, respect... are no longer held in regard. These are the guardians of modesty and purity, and must be re-instated. Intimate sensitive matters do not suit group" instruction and discussion.

'Last resort' could never justify boys and girls getting their "positive and prudent education in matters relating to sex" in each other's company. How could any one ever have thought so, in an age supposedly so conscious of interactions and group dynamics?

GOD VERSUS CAESAR

THE 'sex-ed' programs mandated by governments for 'personal development' and 'protective behaviour' can be replaced by catechetics on 'becoming a saint'. See marriage and 6th and 9th Commandments, with pictures but without body details, in *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition* pp. 80,104,110; *Apostles' Edition* pp. 94,117,122.

REAL LIFE TODAY

THOSE ANCIENT DAYS are long since gone when fathers and mothers were too embarrassed to help sons and daughters with reproductive information.

Parents are no longer passive.

Their very life-style, living together in holy matrimony and having a family, is their witness to 'the facts of life', to sexual morality, and a teaching by example of what husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, should be doing.

They have set their face like flint against sex as a national sport; against the explicit pictures and immoral message of the mass media; and against its open mockery of chastity and marriage; and they **do give explicit information to their children.**

The pornographic and allied 'industries' in contraceptives and abortion 'services' are making so much money that parents *do* give their children 'the facts'.

TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT

ONE EVIL is not fixed by another: getting rid of 'backyard' abortions in 1973 with government approved abortions; or "bringing 'sex-ed' into Catholic schools in 1975 to 'fix up' the alleged silence of parents.

Yes, some modern parents do have personal moral problems. They contracept, commit adultery, perhaps tolerate sodomy and other disordered behaviour. Some are happy to let school teachers give 'sex-ed' classes. Perhaps it assuages their consciences and life-style.

But once again, **two wrongs don't make a right.** The natural moral law of subsidiarity, plus Church teaching on parents and children, must be upheld.

Classroom 'sex-ed' is, of its very nature, immoral.