

Changanassery (Kerala, India), February 1, 2024-. We need to do more, much more, to proclaim the Gospel of the family and theological reflection is still weak. This was stressed by Msgr. Vincenzo Paglia who was in Changanassery, Kerala, today to attend the opening day of a course for family pastoral experts, organized by the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family, affiliated with the Rome office. “Starting with the magisterium of Pope Francis and the great changes marking the present era – noted Archbishop Paglia – theology is confronted with a new challenge, that of addressing the topic of the family in an adequate and renewed manner. Unfortunately, theological reflection on the family, considered as a body of relationships, is still insufficient. Much thought has been given to the husband/wife union, to the dimension of spousal love, and there are numerous studies on marriage – understood as the realization of the couple – especially from the juridical-canonical perspective, even though Family Law is virtually absent from the Code of Canon Law. But even rarer still is a true Theology of the Family, with a few exceptions. A deeper theology of marriage is essential and urgent. And that is what the *John Paul II Pontifical Theological Institute for Marriage and the Family Sciences* has set out to promote”. Their new curriculum is aimed at resolutely restoring the Christian and human significance of the family institution, recognising in it the actual *locus* of the very fruitfulness of the Christian sacrament. The idea behind the project has a clear purpose: the family, with all its constellation of relationships, internal and external, is not the mere ‘consequence’ of marriage, it is rather its ‘development’ and its extension in society, in the Church. “Theology, which has rightfully rediscovered the foundational character of the intimate and fruitful love of the human couple, with its capacity to evoke the Christological and Trinitarian depths of the mystery of God’s love, has decidedly lagged behind vis-à-vis the family and the complexity of its relationships. It is a gap that must be bridged”.

Then Archbishop Paglia has underlined that “is a mistake to eliminate the difference between man and woman. This elimination, regardless of one’s life project, is a loss for everyone. This is not to deny, of course, the fact that the interpretation of this difference and its social and cultural expressions belong to our freedom and responsibility. However, the fundamental traits of this difference and the covenant to which it is primarily destined, must be appreciated as a gift, not conceived of as an obstacle”. In that sense “the biblical message is clear: man and woman come from God and are inextricably linked to each other. It is impossible for one to live without the other. The man–woman creaturely polarity is constitutive according to biblical humanism. The image of God on Earth, therefore, is fraternity among all. We complete each other. According to the biblical narrative, God’s allies are man and woman together. The end of the creative process is humanity: man and woman as custodians of creation, understood as a common home”. In conclusion “if it is true that marriage is indissoluble, even truer is the indissolubility of the Church’s bond with her sons and daughters: for it is like the bond which Christ established with the Church, full of sinners who were loved when they were still sinners. And who are never forsaken”.

The visit to India of Msgr. Paglia continues tomorrow with a stop in Bangalore, for the Plenary of the Episcopal Conference, and to pronounce a speech on the topic of Artificial Intelligence and the problems it opens up for the Church and humanity.

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