

1. Changing understandings of marriage

The classical view of marriage

Thirteen years ago, then a newish bishop, I had the privilege of giving the annual Harman lecture at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family. I noted that marriage had traditionally been understood as “the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life” – a definition that had been clarified in the Australian *Marriage Act* that very week. I argued that this understanding of the institution had a deep anthropological and sociological basis, had been the place where most people were nurtured as children and found their happiness as adults, had been the shared understanding in every known civilisation till very recently, and had for good reasons been acknowledged and even privileged in international and national law. Those reasons included the demonstrable good of the spouses themselves, their children, their community and ultimately the kingdom of God.

In that earlier lecture, however, I identified a series of cultural waves that had stripped the popular understanding of marriage of many of these dimensions: its for-childrenness, its permanence, its exclusivity, its for-man-and-wifeness, and its sacredness. I predicted that if this continued all that would be left to call ‘marriage’ would be the desire of one person to commit publicly to another in a wedding ceremony.

Around that time a few jurisdictions around the world were already redefining marriage at law to allow same-sex couples to wed. The Howard government sought to head off such social experimentation by legal definition. Of course, for more than a decade, governments had been gradually reducing the differences at law between marriage, strictly understood and partners in 'de facto' marriages, including same-sex relationships. But most people still recognized the specialness of marriage.

Nonetheless, I predicted at that time that the institution of marriage would continue to sustain the buffeting I described and that the result would be growing ambivalence about the desirability of marriage, declining confidence in its achievability, and an ongoing battle for the very soul of marriage. If in the very week that I last gave this address the Parliament was clarifying that marriage is between a man and woman only, this very week the Government would seem to be caving in to the push to de-sex marriage for ever.

I will not rehearse my case for marriage as traditionally understood and for retaining that understanding of marriage in our laws which I have offered on many occasions.¹ Instead I will seek to examine tonight where marriage and family are going and what we might do about it.

Contemporary (mis)understandings of marriage

In February 2004 Christelle Demichel married her dead boyfriend, a former policeman who was killed by a drunk driver in 2002.

With the permission of the French President she was married and widowed in the one act. After all, it was explained, marriage is about love, and Demichel had enough for both of them.² Several other weddings have since been solemnized between a living person and a dead one in France.

Now, if someone can marry a non-living person, how about a living non-person? In the last few years there have been reports of people marrying their pets (cats, dogs), their farm animals (a cow, a goat), or more exotic varieties (a dolphin, a snake).

How about marrying a non-living non-person? Well, several people have taken the Eiffel Tower, the Berlin Wall, various buildings and bridges, rollercoasters and a ferris wheel not as wedding venues but as their lawful or unlawful wedded spouse. More manageably, some have purported to marry motor vehicles, dolls, a body pillow, a hi-fi system, a cardboard cut-out and even virtual characters in video games.³

Several, unable to find anyone or anything good enough, have purported to marry themselves. There are also several reports of marriages of 'throuples' (three people). 'Love is love, after all', one threesome explained.⁴ Many advocates of 'marriage equality' now argue that people of marriageable age should in future be

free to marry without restrictions regarding sex or gender, number of partners, blood relationship or the like.

About one in ten nations, mostly in the Anglosphere or Europe, have now legalized same-sex marriage and it is certainly a hot political topic in Australia. Some have done so after a plebiscite, some by legislation, and some by court decision as in the United States where a bare majority of 5-4 of the Supreme Court imposed same-sex marriage without consulting the people or their representatives.⁵

To acknowledge the range of so-called marriages in the past decade is not to imply that all are equal or that there is a necessary 'slippery slope' to all such things once any redefinition is admitted. But it does demonstrate that there is a range of views today about what marriage is, that the slogan 'love is love, after all' can play out in many directions, and that we do still need some sort of shared social understanding of marriage if the term is not to become meaningless. But this is increasingly difficult in the 'marriage is what you make it' culture.

Marriage in popular culture

One of the big drivers of changing attitudes to marriage is surely the media. The multiple pairings, break-ups and repairings of celebrities have always been the stuff of the gossip columnists, but nowadays they are presented as ordinary life. We've also had a spate of unreality TV shows that trivialise love, marriage and

family. In the *Married at First Sight* series participants go through a quasi-wedding ceremony on first meeting, and only later decide whether to stay together; after four series involving 24 couples so far, only one couple is still together.⁶ The Nine Network has also offered nine series so far of *The Farmer Wants a Wife* in which country boys are presented with a bevy of city girls to choose for wife. Network Ten have offered several series of urban equivalents, *The Bachelor Australia* and *The Bachelorette Australia*. Not to be outdone by the commercials, SBS recently showed *Undressed*, a series in which couples meet, strip and inspect each other as if in a slave market, comply with orders received on a monitor and answer personal questions while in bed together. Whether this will lead to better marriages is uncertain, but SBS claims it explores the serious question of whether it is “possible to fall in love with someone in just half an hour” and build a longer-term relationship on that.⁷ Contemporary pop culture is at once fascinated by marriage and very confused about it.

Apart from such romance and wedding focused series, some with twists like rodeo, stripping or weight reduction added in, several TV series and also aim to mainstream more exotic family arrangements. *Modern Family*, *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Friends* and *Desperate Housewives* all have same-sex couples with a kid, as well as episodes on surrogacy and insemination.⁸ Meanwhile Medibank Private, Magnum ice-creams and others bombard us with advertisements that likewise seek to normalize such

'families'. Very few TV series today present families with stable parents married to each other and devoted to several kids as normal. Far from merely reflecting back to the community social changes with respect to marriage and the family, the modern media are driving them in certain very particular directions.

Then there are the more overtly opinionated columns and only slightly less subtly opinionated reporting of the marriage debate in our mainstream media, let alone the world of the blogs and trolls... When the ABC's *Media Watch* said it was time to give both sides a hearing,⁹ it was roundly scolded on the basis that hate has no rights and that it is 'false balance' to give the pro-traditional-marriage side any attention at all.¹⁰ As Brendan O'Neill observed, "a chokingly conformist climate" now prevails on this and many other issues in Australia, so that those who dare to disagree will be demonised, harassed and marginalized rather than refuted.¹¹ The likelihood that arguments like mine will receive a fair hearing in our culture has declined tremendously in the past few years.

Marriage in political and commercial culture

I have already adverted to the change in political culture that has occurred in the past decade, so that many of the very politicians who defended traditional understandings of marriage are now same-sex 'marriage' evangelists and dub as mad or bad anyone who thinks and says what they thought and said before their 'conversion'. The pressure being brought to bear on politicians in this arena is enormous. And as the latest private members' Bill to

redefine marriage demonstrates, there will be little lee-way for dissent for the vast majority of religious believers, even if some clergy will be exempt, at least for now. The persecution of Archbishop Julian Porteous of Hobart via that state's anti-discrimination commission, however, makes it clear that no-one will really be immune from the use of state power to impose conformity to the PC ideology in this area.¹²

If political and judicial power will be used against traditional conceptions of marriage and the family so, predictably, will commercial and industrial power. Some media outlets, though desperately hungry for advertising revenues, have refused to run paid advertisements for the pro-traditional marriage side.¹³ Only the biggest and bravest corporations, and those small enough to fly under the radar, have been able to resist the pressure to lend their logos (and possibly their resources) to a cause which has nothing to do with the objects of their business. 'Marriage equality'-friendly CEOs have been pressuring the executives of other corporations to join them, and applying pink bans to companies and executives who do not. Following lobbying of Price Waterhouse Coopers last year, senior executive Mark Allaby was forced to resign his board membership of the Australian Christian Lobby, apparently because of its traditional Christian position on marriage; he was then effectively hounded out of his job. On moving to IBM as managing partner he has again been targeted, this time for his association with the Lachlan Macquarie Institute, another Christian organisation that does not support 'marriage

equality'. The Coopers Ale company was also battered for being too friendly to the Bible Society.¹⁴ Employees of many companies now report bullying by executive staff to take part in supposedly optional LGBTI events and gay marriage lobbying.¹⁵ And through a strange alliance of corporate CEOs and social media trolls, pro-marriage organisations are denied hotel venues for their functions and their directors have been forced into hiding – from the public register at least.¹⁶

Decline in marriage and family

Meanwhile many 'ordinary' people seem to be losing interest or confidence in marriage altogether. For the first time in recorded history, the most recent Australian census reported that only a minority of our families today (45%) involve a Mum, Dad and kids;¹⁷ many of these Mums and Dads are not married to each other; and most 'families' now involve single parents with a child or children, older couples, or childless couples. Though they've always evolved, marriage and family patterns now seem to be changing more rapidly than ever before. We all know that the rates of cohabitation, 'de facto' unions, marital breakdown and divorce have risen exponentially in our life-time, but only recently has it been clear that an ever-growing proportion of people of marriageable age will never even attempt a marriage.

As Pope Francis pointed out in *Amoris Laetitia*: "In many places... the practice of living together before marriage is widespread, as well as a type of cohabitation which totally excludes any intention

to marry... legislation facilitates a growing variety of alternatives... Many countries are witnessing a legal deconstruction of the family, tending to adopt models based almost exclusively on the autonomy of the individual will."¹⁸

Despite a growing population (due to immigration), the number of marriages celebrated in Australia has now declined to just over 100,000 a year, with most of those outside a sacred place.¹⁹ The most recent official census report celebrates one area of growth, however: since the 2011 Census there has been a 42% increase in the number identifying as same-sex couples. Read the small print, and you will find that this is still fewer than 1% of 'families'; but perhaps the next census will help get the numbers up by offering 'same-sex family' as the first option to tick!

Mess with marriage and the marriage-based family, and children will be the ones most affected. Far fewer households in Australia today have any children in them at all; the media declares that "not wanting children is entirely normal";²⁰ those that have children have them in smaller numbers and later in life; and many of those children grow up without the benefit of a stable Mum and Dad committed to each other and to them over the long haul.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* recently reported that many economists now regard children as a 'private consumption good' and argue that government should cease subsidising families, through child endowment, childcare subsidies and free

education;²¹ if people want to indulge in the expensive recreation of breeding and child-rearing, these economists suggest, it should be user-pays all the way... Happily this view is yet to catch on formally in government, but ask any couple with a large family and they can list for you many ways in which our community disincentivizes parenting, especially of more than 1.2 children, and even undermines parents who are trying their best. As our culture gets more and more muddled about the human person, life and love, marriage and family, there will be more confusion, as well as ideology, affecting child-rearing: we can expect bad laws like the proposed same-sex marriage bill and bad programmes like 'Safe Schools'²² to bully people in unhealthy directions; children will be encouraged into gender fluidity and unconventional relationships of various sorts; and many young people will grow up without the aspiration to marry and parent themselves, or without the confidence or wherewithal to do so successfully.

Social implications

As Pope Francis recently pointed out, contemporary culture often "exalts narcissistic individualism", promotes a "freedom disengaged from responsibility" and the common good, imposes "ideologies that attack the family project directly", uses technologies in ways "contrary to the dignity of human life", and so undermines the natural and divinely-given plan for marriage and the family.²³ The Holy Father argued that upon the health of marriages and marriage-based families depend individual

happiness and holiness for many, the transmission of faith and ethics, the vigour of economies and polities, the care of life and the generations, and thus the very direction of peoples through history.²⁴

To those who think changing the definition of marriage won't affect them, Pope Francis answers: such a change would be an 'anthropological regression'²⁵ and gravely harm us all – homosexuals included – because the health of the 'human ecology' depends on a healthy marital culture.²⁶ That includes drawing the two sexes together in married life and giving children the gift of the contributions of both male and female parents, committed to each other and to them.²⁷ Quoting from the Australian Bishops' Pastoral, *Don't Mess With Marriage*, and making it his own in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, at paragraph 172, the Pope insists that each of the spouses "contributes in a distinct way to the upbringing of a child. Respecting a child's dignity means affirming his or her need and natural right to have a mother and a father." The 'ideological colonisation' resulting from confusing presentations of sexuality and marriage disfigures God's plan for creation, harms individuals and communities, and must be resisted.²⁸

To sum up the causes for concern: marriage is more and more understood today as infinitely malleable, leaving people free to couple with whom they wish, as they wish, for as long as they wish, unbound by any norms of sacredness, permanence,

exclusivity, sexual complementarity or openness to children. Family, likewise, is manufactured on demand by the powerful and on their terms. In this process norms of sexuality and procreation, marriage and family, are radically stretched, compromised, trivialised or undermined. Modernity is less certain about the meaning of marriage, less sold on its desirability, and less capable of sustaining it – and families based upon it – than any culture or society of which we are aware in all of history. And this will have implications for many aspects of life for many years to come.

2. Causes for hope

The resilience of marriage and the family even in secularising societies

Yet there are causes for hope. For all the muddle of our contemporary marital culture, quasi-marital cohabitation, same-sex coupling, marrying pets and dolls, and living alone, are still minority domestic arrangements. While divorces in Australia hover around 50,000 a year, the divorce rate seems to have peaked in the early 2000s and now be declining. There are still more than twice as many marriages as divorces each year, and nearly three quarters of these are first marriages; the number of marriages registered has been higher this past decade than in the one before.²⁹ This suggests that despite witnessing so many failed marriages, many people still think it worth giving a go. It also suggests that the institution of marriage itself, though buffeted from all sides, has proven remarkably resilient. Instead of accepting the inevitability of marital breakdown and eschewing

marriage altogether, most people when polled still have high aspirations for marriage and most remain hopeful of making a good marriage themselves.³⁰

So, too, the marriage-based family. Just as the divorce rate peaked in the early 2000s and has been declining ever since, so the birth rate declined for some decades, plateaued in the early 2000s, and seems to have been rising ever since. Indeed, the number of couples with children increased between the 2011 census and the 2016 by nearly 180,000. Despite media valourising of YUPPIes and DINKs,³¹ and despite growing up in or witnessing many broken families, most people still believe that it is worth founding a family upon marriage and seeking to rear their children in a stable marital context. The institution of the marriage-based family, though it has taken quite a beating, has proved itself remarkably robust.

In *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis thanks God that though no family is perfect, many “live in love, fulfil their calling and keep moving forward, even if they fall many times along the way.” He thinks this enduring reality means we should not waste our energy “in doleful laments”, but rather “seek new forms of missionary creativity. In every situation that presents itself, the Church is conscious of the need to offer a word of truth and hope. The great values of marriage and the Christian family correspond to a yearning that is part and parcel of human existence”³² and so, in

their heart of hearts, even the most secular societies seek authentic marital and family life.

In the same exhortation the Holy Father acknowledges that contemporary culture has achieved *some* real progress in understanding concerning human dignity and rights, especially of women and children, the importance of respect, intimacy and love, the psychological barriers to commitment and therapies for them, the wickedness of domestic violence and child sexual abuse, and so on.³³ Even the sentimentalizing of love, the hyperbolization of wedding ceremonies, and the desire to make marriage available to all, speaks to a certain natural craving that has survived modernity's muddle.

The contribution of the Church

In addition to such secular progress, the Church has made enormous strides in its own understanding of the human person and God's plan for marriage and the family. We think of the very many writers on these subjects in the past century – more, I would suggest, than in all previous centuries put together – and many of them lay people with lived experience of marriage and parenting. We think of the richness of the magisterium since at least Paul VI, and especially of that “Theology of the Body” of St John Paul II that Cardinal Trujillo expounded in the first Harman Lecture and which our Institute has been exploring ever since, summarized and expanded upon by Pope Francis in chapters 1, 3, 4 and 5 of *Amoris Laetitia*. Together St John Paul and his

commentators have enormously enriched the Catholic understanding of 'the nuptial mystery' and inspired a generation of lay Christians to embrace that mystery with passion and authenticity, assisted by generous pastors, marriage educators and counsellors.

On 27 October last, Pope Francis addressed the faculty and students of the John Paul II Institute for Studies of Marriage and the Family worldwide. He described the Institute's invention by St John Paul II 35 years ago as farsighted then, fruitful ever since, and more timely than ever today. That Pope had, he said, "by his wise discernment of the signs of the times, vigorously drawn the attention of Church and society to the profundity and delicacy of the marital bonds of man and woman"; as the challenges to marriage and family had multiplied, the Institute's presence on all continents had become more crucial and its programme even more relevant.³⁴

Recalling God's plan for marital and family life revealed in the Scriptures, as well as modernity's "rediscovery of the dignity of sexual differentiation", the Holy Father argued that the health of individuals, societies and the Church depends significantly upon the health of marriages and marriage-based families.

Rehabilitating and transmitting God's creative plan for marriage and the family is therefore not an act of finger-wagging but of active charity by which the Church contributes to human happiness. This "divine project" will require all our spiritual

resources, including “a special intelligence of love, a strong evangelical dedication, and a great compassion” for vulnerable humanity. This is obviously a much bigger project than that of the Institute alone, and we are blessed in Australia now to have a whole generation of graduates to give a lead in many new projects to sustain and strengthen our marital culture and family life.

In *Amoris Laetitia* Pope Francis declares that that with profound joy and comfort the Church looks to faithful families, encouraging and thanking them for the credible witness they offer to the beauty of marriage as indissoluble and faithful. Within their ‘domestic church’ individuals experience a communion among persons which reflects that of the Holy Trinity. “The Church is a family of families, constantly enriched by the lives of all those domestic churches... The Church is good for the family, and the family is good for the Church.”³⁵

How is the Church good for the family? The Pope goes on to explore the Church’s role as teacher of the virtues and principles of marital and family life, as the sanctifier of marriages through the sacraments of Matrimony but also of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, and as a pastor for individuals and families especially when they are struggling. In Chapter 6 of *Amoris Laetitia* the Holy Father emphasizes the importance of proclaiming the Gospel of the Family today, providing the best pastoral care through parishes, small communities, family movements and associations,

and forming people well for such evangelical and pastoral activity. We should be preparing engaged couples better for marriage through a kind of marital catechumenate, and then accompanying them more intentionally through the first years of married life and family formation, asking long-married couples to mentor younger ones. For marriages at all stages we should be offering “meetings of couples living in the same neighbourhood, brief retreats, talks by experts on concrete issues facing families, marriage counselling, home missionaries who help couples discuss their difficulties and desires, social services dealing with family problems like addiction, infidelity and domestic violence, programmes of spiritual growth, workshops for parents with troubled children and family meetings.”³⁶ Some of this is happening today, more indeed than in the past; but there is still much for the Church to do.

Evangelisation through the family

In John Paul II’s great charter on the theology and pastoral care of the family, *Familiaris Consortio*, and Pope Francis’ response, *Amoris Laetitia*, marriage and the family are presented as havens for people in a sometimes unloving or uninspiring world, as agents of evangelisation of that world, and as schools of a deeper humanity and holiness for those evangelists. Pope Francis opens his document by recalling what *Good News* marriage and the marriage-based family is for our world: “The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church... For all the many signs of crisis in the institution of marriage, the desire to

marry and form a family remains vibrant, especially among young people, and this is an inspiration to the Church. As a response to that desire, the Christian proclamation on the family is Good News indeed."³⁷

If the family is a haven for many people – and saying that need not involve underestimating the difficulties in many families – then that ‘family of families’ that is the Church is often a place of companionship, inspiration and pastoral care for families.

Spouses, parents and children will feel at home in a community that not only recognises the validity of their choice, but celebrates it, and offers a helping hand when needed. In chapter 7 of *Amoris Laetitia* the Holy Father addresses the need for a certain kind of education of children if they are to grow up to be good spouses and parents themselves.

Evangelising the community about the Gospel of the Family, then, like so much else, begins at home. The acceptance of responsibility within the family and acknowledgement by others of the family as the first educational setting for the young, the provision in that setting of a sound ethical formation and sex education of children according to Catholic principles, eschewing the promiscuity and gender ideology³⁸ of our age, a patient realism amongst parents and teacher – the Pope explores many themes here, and recognizes that much of this is already done well, even if it could be done more and better. Likewise in chapter 8 about “Accompanying, discerning and integrating weakness”

and chapter 9 on “Promoting a spirituality of marriage and the family”.

Have re-evangelized ourselves and our own community about the Gospel of Life and Love, we have a big task in helping our wider society recover its compass regarding marriage and family life. But as Pope Francis insists that Christians cannot stop advocating marriage simply to avoid being unpopular or because we feel helpless; that would be to deprive the world of values we can and must offer. This does not mean endlessly decrying evils or insisting on the rules. “What we need is a more responsible and generous effort to present the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and the family, and in this way to help men and women better to respond to the grace that God offers them.”³⁹

The Pope is convinced that weakening of the family as that natural society founded on marriage “poses a threat to the mature growth of individuals, the cultivation of community values, and the moral progress of cities and countries... Only the exclusive and indissoluble union between a man and a woman has a plenary role to play in society as a stable commitment that bears fruit in new life... De facto or same-sex unions simply cannot be equated with marriage [because] no union that is temporary or closed to the transmission of life can ensure the future of society. But nowadays who is making an effort to strengthen marriages, to help married couples overcome their problems, to assist them in

the work of raising children and, in general, to encourage the stability of the marriage bond?"⁴⁰

Who, indeed, if not the Church? Such work will, of course, require Catholic schools, universities and theologates, seminaries and religious communities, diocesan adult formation programmes, and the like, to educate people in that wisdom that Pope Francis, like the several Popes before him, has been so confident the Church has to offer regarding the human person, life and love, marriage and family. More than ever the Church needs well-educated and mission-minded laity, religious and clergy. Institutions and programmes such as those offered here may come and go, but that charge and need remains for every generation.

Conclusion

A traveller, on his way to Jericho, was once beaten and left for dead. He might be the individual needy person, or the culture, or even the institution of marriage today. He might be the Church, for the Church *is* bashed-up humanity, abandoned beside the road, desperate to be nursed by Christ the Good Samaritan and to learn from him how to be a field hospital for all. The other Samaritan described at length in our Gospel was, of course, the Woman at the Well (*John* ch. 4), the woman "with several husbands and now living with one who is not". She likewise represents needy individuals, the institution of marriage today, and our whole culture. She is also the Church, abashed humanity, thirsty, tired and ashamed beside the well, desperate to

encounter Christ and be taught by Him, so she can tell all her neighbours about the One “who knows everything about me”.

I have suggested tonight that there is every cause to think that marriage and the marriage-based family are like that bashed man left for dead, that abashed woman messed up by sin and thirsting at the well. But that only means there is much for us to do, much we are charged to do, and much that we can do, with the help of that Good Samaritan, that Spring of living Water, who is Christ in His Church.

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- 1 “Same-sex ‘marriage’: Evolution or deconstruction of marriage and the family?” St Mary’s Cathedral Hall, 22 July 2015 www.sydneycatholic.org/people/archbishop/addresses/2015/2015722_1232.shtml; “The public goods of marriage, or why Church and state should protect and support real marriage and family,” in Kenneth Whitehead (ed), *The Church, Marriage and the Family* (South Bend: St Augustine’s Press, 2007), 53-74; “Same sex marriage undermines purpose of institution,” *Australian* 1 June 2015; “Don’t mess with marriage,” *Catholic Outlook* May 2012, 2; “Powerful forces determined to bully us into submission on marriage,” *Catholic Weekly* 19 July 2015, 4-5, 12-13.
 - 2 Associated Press, 11 February 2004.
 - 3 ‘World’s strangest marriages and relationships’ http://www.oddee.com/item_97042.aspx; ‘15 of the world’s weirdest marriages’ <http://thefw.com/weirdest-marriages-of-the-world-photos-videos/>; ‘Top 10 bizarre marriages’ <http://listverse.com/2012/11/12/top-10-crazy-marriages/>.
 - 4 C. Moynihan, ‘The advance of the throuple’, *MercatorNet* 9 March 2015; Janel Saldaña, ‘Are throuples the relationship of the future?’ *After Ellen* 17 January 2017.
 - 5 *United States v Windsor* 570 U.S. ___ (2013) (Docket No. 12-307); *Obergefell v. Hodges* 576 U.S. ___ (2015) (Docket No. 14-556).
 - 6 Fortunately under the Australian *Marriage Act* the show is not able to perform a legal marriage at the first meeting, though this does occur elsewhere in the world. <https://www.9now.com.au/married-at-first-sight>
 - 7 Maureen Matthews, “SBS Undressed: Getting naked is the latest trend of the TV dating show”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 January 2017, <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-and-radio/disrobing-in-front-of-a-stranger-is-the-latest-trend-of-the-tv-dating-show-20170102-gtkptw.html>; Cindy Tran, “Would you spend your first date naked?”, 16 January 2017 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4123258/SBS-reality-Undressed-sees-strangers-strip-jump-bed-date.html>
From America we have been blessed with 21 seasons of *The Bachelor*, 13 of *The Bachelorette*, 10 of *Bridezilla*, 10 more of *Marriage Boot Camp*, 5 seasons so far of *Married at First Sight*, as well as *The Marriage Ref* and *Shedding for the Wedding*. Not to be outdone by its neighbours, Canada offers several series with titles like *Teenage Wedding*, *Rich Bride Poor Bride*, and *Bulging Brides*. Britain has graced us with 13 seasons so far of *Don’t Tell the Bride*, as well as several of *Farmer Wants a Wife*, *Four Weddings*, and *The Marriage Ref*. Other countries have similar.
 - 8 <https://www.coparents.com/blog/10-best-gay-parents-on-tv/>
 - 9 “Media Watch,” *ABC*, Episode 29, 17 August 2015; “Media Watch Dog: Same ABC opinions on same-sex marriage” *Australian* 14 August 2015.
 - 10 Emily Moulton, “Q&A recap: Same-sex marriage, relevance of royal commissions and corporate tax practices,” *news.com.au* 18 August 2015. See also R Hini, “‘You Tedious Imbeciles,’” *The Catholic Weekly* 30 August 2015, 1, 10-11.
 - 11 Brendan O’Neill, “The new dark ages, where the perfectly normal are branded bigots,” *The Australian* 19 August 2015. Justice Alito, dissenting in *Obergefell*, feared the majority court decision would “be used to vilify Americans who are unwilling to assent to the new orthodoxy... Those who cling to old beliefs will be able to whisper their thoughts in the recesses of their homes, but if they repeat those views in public, they will risk being labeled as bigots and treated as such by governments, employers, and schools.” 576 U. S. ___ (2015) Alito J at 6-7.
 - 12 “This is a legislative Trojan Horse that would allow LGBTI folk of various and divergent sexual proclivities to mobilize the power of the state against any persons or institutions (especially religious ones) that they could claim were discriminating against them”: Merv Bendle, “Turnbull and Conservatism’s Rekindling,” *Quadrant Online* 16 September 2015.
 - 13 Wendy Squires acknowledged but defended the bias in “Yes, the media is biased on the issue of same-sex marriage,” *Mamamia* 18 August 2015; “Marriage Alliance angry after channels ‘refuse to run ads against gay-marriage’” *SBS* 7 August 2015.
 - 14 Nathan Hondros & Tom McIlros, “Coopers brewery gay marriage back-down a ‘craven capitulation’: MP Andrew Hastie”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 March 2017; Paige Cockburn, “Coopers Brewery distances itself from Bible Society’s same-sex marriage video, faces backlash”, *ABC News*, 15 March 2017; Frank Chung & Rohan Smith, “Coopers boycott over Bible Society video ‘absurd’”, *News.com.au*, 15 March 2017; Rachel Olding, “Pubs boycott Coopers beer following Bible Society marriage equality marketing campaign”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 March 2017; “Was Coopers bullied in the marriage equality debate?”, *ABC Religion and Ethics Report*, 15 March 2017; Dennis Shanahan, “Freedom of speech exits the churches for new life in pubs” *Weekend Australian*, 18 March 2017; “The culture war of marriage equality in Australia”, *ABC Religion and Ethics Report*, 22 March 2017.
 - 15 Miranda Devine, “The pink mafia silences dissent”, *Daily Telegraph*, 22 March 2017.
 - 16 Andrew Bolt, “Attack on church a cultural assault”, *Herald Sun*, 30 March 2017.
 - 17 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing: Australia Revealed 2016* (No. 2024.0), 27 June 2017.
 - 18 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family* (2016), 53.
 - 19 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Marriages and Divorces in Australia 2015* (No. 3310.0).
 - 20 e.g. Jessica Valenti, “Not wanting kids is entirely normal”, *The Atlantic* 19 September 2012.
 - 21 Matt Wade and Jessica Irvine, “It All Adds Up podcast: Are kids a luxury or a social necessity?”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July 2017.
 - 22 On which see Moira Deeming, ‘Sexualising school kids’, *The Spectator Australia*, 22 April 2017.
 - 23 Pope Francis, *Address to the Faculty and Students of the John Paul II Institute for Studies of Marriage and the Family*, 27 October 2016, <https://zenit.org/articles/popes-address-to-john-paul-ii-institute-for-studies-on-marriage-and-family/> See also Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 33-34, 39-40 etc.
 - 24 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 52.
 - 25 Edward Pentin, ‘Pope repeats that same-sex ‘marriage’ is “anthropological regression’ *National Catholic Register*, 3 January 2014.

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- 26 Pope Francis, *General Audience*, 5 June 2013; *Address to the European Parliament*, Strasbourg, 25 November 2014.
- 27 Pope Francis, *Address to the European Bishops Conference*, 3 October 2014; *Address to the European Parliament*, Strasbourg, 25 November 2014; *Address to the Filipino Authorities and Diplomatic Corps*, Manila, 16 January 2015; *Amoris Laetitia* 81-83, 166ff, 172ff etc.
- 28 Likewise in Pope Francis, *Address to Filipino Authorities and Diplomatic Corps*, Manila, 16 January 2015.
- 29 Australian Bureau of Statistics, **xxx**.
- 30 **xxx**; cf. Brian Willoughby and James Spencer, *The Marriage Paradox* (OUP, 2017).
- 31 Yuppies = young upwardly-mobile-professional-people; DINKs = dual-income-no kids couples.
- 32 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 57.
- 33 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* **xxx**.
- 34 Pope Francis, *Address to John Paul II Institute for Studies of Marriage and the Family*, 2016.
- 35 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 86-87.
- 36 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 229.
- 37 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 1.
- 38 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 56: “Yet another challenge is posed by the various forms of an ideology of gender that denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time. It is a source of concern that some ideologies of this sort, which seek to respond to what are at times understandable aspirations, manage to assert themselves as absolute and unquestionable, even dictating how children should be raised. It needs to be emphasized that biological sex and the socio-cultural role of sex (gender) can be distinguished but not separated.
- 39 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 35: “As Christians, we can hardly stop advocating marriage simply to avoid countering contemporary sensibilities, or out of a desire to be fashionable or a sense of helplessness in the face of human and moral failings. We would be depriving the world of values that we can and must offer. It is true that there is no sense in simply decrying present-day evils, as if this could change things. Nor it is helpful to try to impose rules by sheer authority. What we need is a more responsible and generous effort to present the reasons and motivations for choosing marriage and the family, and in this way to help men and women better to respond to the grace that God offers them.” 40: “We need to find the right language, arguments and forms of witness that can help us reach the hearts of young people, appealing to their capacity for generosity, commitment, love and even heroism, and in this way inviting them to take up the challenge of marriage with enthusiasm and courage.”
- 40 Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 52.