

May 2018

Dear Father,

As you will be aware, this year marks the 50th anniversary of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. In that encyclical the Pope upheld the Church's traditional teaching on marriage despite it being controversial and challenging. After half a century, we can see how truly prophetic Pope Paul's encyclical was.

As priests, especially, we witness daily the crisis in family life and marriage. Fifty years after it was first written, *Humanae Vitae* has proved itself more relevant than ever. The teaching on the inseparability of the procreative and unitive ends of marriage needs to be proclaimed again with confidence.

With this in mind, we have put our names to the enclosed letter, which we intend to be published in the Catholic press. We have been encouraged to do this by many lay people who have found the message of *Humanae Vitae* to bring inspiration and joy, and we believe that our people will be encouraged by this positive message of fidelity from their pastors. We hope that you will join us in signing this letter, and so help to encourage a rediscovery of the truth and beauty of the Church's teaching at a time when it is sorely needed.

Please sign the letter today and return it in the envelope provided.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Robert Farrell
Fr. Timothy Finigan
Fr. David Marsden
Fr. Francis Marsden
Fr. John Seward

Fr. David Palmer
Fr. Andrew Pinsent
Mgr. Gordon Read
Canon Luiz Ruscillo
Fr. Michael Woodgate

May 2018

HUMANAE VITAE 50

In 1968 Pope Paul VI issued a re-affirmation of central aspects of the Church's traditional teaching on human sexuality. The encyclical *Humanae Vitae* affirmed, in harmony with the Church's traditional teaching, the purity and beauty of the spousal act, always open to procreation and always unitive.

Humanae Vitae predicted that if artificial contraception became widespread and commonly accepted by society then we would lose our proper understanding of marriage, the family, the dignity of the child and of women and even a proper appreciation of our bodies and the gift of male and female. The Holy Father warned that governments would begin to utilise coercive methods to control what is most private and intimate.

At the time of the publication of *Humanae Vitae* many rejected its message and its warnings. Many found the teaching that the use of contraception was in all cases 'absolutely excluded' and 'intrinsically wrong' difficult to accept and challenging to proclaim. Fifty years later so much has unfolded in our society that has been to the detriment of human life and love. Many have come to appreciate again the wisdom of the Church's teaching.

As priests we desire to affirm on this 50th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* the noble vision of procreative love as the Catholic Church has always taught and understood it. We believe a proper 'human ecology', a rediscovery of the way of nature and respect for human dignity is essential for the future of our people, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. We propose discovering anew the message of *Humanae Vitae*, not only in fidelity to the Gospel, but as a key to the healing and true development of our society.

Please sign here

Please PRINT your name here

Please return the signed letter to 'Humanae Vitae 50', 218 Varsity Drive, Twickenham, TW1 1AN