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"The first: Do I ask the Lord for the grace that my heart might be opened? The second question: Do I seek to hear the Holy Spirit, His inspirations, the things He tells my heart that I might advance in the Christian life, and that I too might bear witness that Jesus is the Lord? Think about these two things today: Is my heart open? Do I make an effort to listen to the Holy Spirit, to what He tells me? And so we advance in the Christian life, and we too bear witness to Jesus Christ." **Pope Francis**

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BANGLADESH : College students arrested on suspicion of homosexuality By Sumon Corraya

Dhaka (AsiaNews via CNUA) The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), an elite police unit, arrested 27 young men, aged 20 to 30, on suspicion of being homosexual. The operation took yesterday morning in Keraniganj, near Dhaka. A RAB unit reached the site overnight and surrounded a community centre where the young men had gathered. "A total of 27 young people gathered in the Atizabar area of Keraniganj," said RAB-10 Capitan Md Jahangir Hossen. "We got information and surrounded the community centre. Later, we caught them. We had heard that they were involved in same-sex activity." According to police, the men met each month. During the raid they found drugs. Since they were not engaged in any sexual activities at the time of their arrest, police did not charge them with homosexuality, which is a crime in Bangladesh. The police took into custody the owner of the community centre, who said he rented the space for 10,000 takas (US\$ 125). Most of those arrested are college students who met through social media and mobile phones. Since they were not caught in homosexual acts, they were charged with drug possession. Being gay in Bangladesh can be deadly. Last year, Islamic extremists killed Xulhaz Manna, editor of Roopbaan, a LGBT publication, in a particularly vicious attack. The Islamic State group later claimed responsibility for the murder. Gay activist Rafiqul Islam (not his real name) spoke to AsiaNews about the situation. "We live like prisoners in this society," he said. "The country's laws and our relatives are against us. Every day we face difficulties because we are gay. I hope police do not behave inhumanly with these young detainees." He hopes that

see those arrested will be soon released. Speaking to AsiaNews, Theophil Nisharon Nokrek, secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh, noted that the Catholic Church does not approve of same-sex acts; however, the young people in question should not be persecuted. "They are human beings and have the right to live," he said. "If police need to enforce the country's laws, they can do so without violating human rights." Boys of Bangladesh, i.e. BoB, is main network of Bangladeshi gay people at home and abroad. Millions of gay Bangladeshi men and women live in a difficult situation because of society's opposition to them.

> > > <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Some-27-college-students-arrested-in-Dhaka-on-suspicion-of-homosexuality-40794.html>

COLUMN : Supporting Family Values By Ron Rolheiser OMI (CNUA) The issue of "*family values*" has long divided liberals and conservatives. It constitutes an ideological fault-line, determining what newspapers we read, what television programs we watch, what circles we socialize in, what jokes we tell, what political party we vote for, and sometimes even what church we attend.

And the issue colours the debate on many things: same sex- marriage, sex and violence on TV, abortion, the traditional idea of family as heterosexual and two-parented, the role of women within society, the role of a wife within a marriage and family, the place of motherhood, what constitutes pornography, what should be allowed under the right of free expression, sex education in schools, prayer in schools, censorship, the place of religion in politics, and whether society should be allowed to impose structures that protect traditional values.

Irrespective of how one feels on these issues, what is now evident is that there is a clear connection between the demise of the family and the increase in youth delinquency, crime, drug use, suicide, violence in general, bullying in schools, teenage pregnancy, personality breakdown, bad manners, and the weakening of civic communities. Family life is important and its demise has real, measurable consequences.

But beyond agreeing on this, conservatives and liberals pretty much disagree on what constitutes the problem and on what should be done about it. Why is the family in trouble?

Conservatives see the family in trouble because of our reluctance to address certain issues: sex and violence on television, unchaperoned access to information on the internet, the existence of non-traditional families, same-sex marriages, pornography, opposition to all censorship, promiscuous sex, marital infidelity, and a culturally-accepted scorn of respect, taste, and manners. What's needed to stem the tide, they believe, is the courage to stand up and challenge these things. Conservatives believe that family values should be supported culturally and politically.

Some conservative groups go further and lay particular blame for the crisis in family values on certain groups and certain ideologies: the gay-lobby, single-mothers, working-mothers, welfare recipients, feminism. But honesty compels us to admit that when our marriages break up and our families break down, usually the issue is not feminism, same-sex marriages, or single-mothers. Almost always there are other reasons, much closer to home, as to why our relationships fall apart. Yet, conservatives are right in their basic assertion that the family needs to be protected culturally and politically.

Liberals, sadly, have been slow to admit both the importance of the family and its need for protection. Perhaps it's been an over-reaction to certain excesses within the conservative agenda on family values, but many liberals have simply abdicated on this issue. As well, liberals have tended to be naive about the effects on marriage and family of marital infidelity, casual sex,

what young people are exposed to on television, and the dumbing-down and vulgarizing of much of the entertainment industry.

But liberals have been very right on something else, the conservative blind spot on this issue, the impact of economics on family values. Where conservatives have tried to protect family values culturally and politically, liberals have tried to protect them economically.

A number of studies, including a much-quoted one by Anna Greenberg, suggest that biggest challenge facing families today is that they don't have enough time for each other. This is especially true for parents, who never have enough time to give their children the attention they need. And why isn't there enough time? Too much pressure from the workplace! Too many families find themselves in a never-ending, all-consuming struggle for adequate pay, proper health care, decent housing, access to decent education. That struggle constitutes a virtual conspiracy against family life. People are working more and more hours and having less and less time for family. The economic squeeze, perhaps more than any cultural shift in attitudes, is the real cancer working against family values. The pressures of the workplace and the marketplace are killing families.

Family values, liberals say, have to be protected economically. If we value the family we have to make the economic adjustments needed so that mothers can be mothers, fathers can be fathers, and families can have the time, security, health, and housing they need to live as family. Those adjustments do not flow from a conservative economic agenda.

But there's good news: Conservatives and liberals, especially those trying to raise children, are beginning more and more to agree with each other on the value of family. Unfortunately, they still tend to disagree on what is needed to protect family.

Conservatives are right when they say family values must be protected politically and culturally, but liberals are also right when they say the family must be protected economically.

The issue of family is too important to let ideology divide us. We need to learn from each other that family and family values must be protected in ways both conservative and liberal. > >

> <http://ronrolheiser.com/supporting-family-values/#.WSLVHGdS3cc>

COMMENTARY : Official teaching has changed throughout the whole history of the Church By Sarah Maitland (The Tablet via CNUA) I find myself darkly baffled by the – to me bizarre – conviction held by clearly honest and profoundly faithful Catholics – including many theologically well-trained highly placed clerics – that the teaching of the Church cannot change. I am baffled on two levels simultaneously: in the first place it is patently untrue, and more seriously I don't understand why anyone sane would want it to be true.

Official teaching – not just on ethics, but on fundamental doctrine – has changed (or “developed” to the point that it might more honestly be called changed) throughout the whole history of the Church. Perhaps the most egregious example was in 1014 when Pope Benedict VIII officially inserted the “filioque” clause into the Nicene Creed, in contradiction of the ecumenical councils and in the knowledge that this would be deeply offensive to the Churches of the East. The “procession of the Holy Spirit”, and therefore the “economy” of the Trinity, is a major, central theological issue, part of our primary orthodox understanding of the person and nature of God – and it changed.

The Church has changed its teaching on the geocentric universe. In 1615 the Inquisition declared that heliocentrism was “foolish and absurd in philosophy, and formally heretical

since it explicitly contradicts in many places the sense of Holy Scripture". In 1992, after "only" nearly 400 years, John Paul II officially announced that Galileo had been wrongly condemned. Do people who believe that the Church's teaching cannot change hold out for a pre-Copernican universe?

The Church has changed its teaching on witchcraft more than once. From about the eighth to the tenth centuries it was the belief that witches existed that was wrong, criminal and even heretical. After *Malleus Maleficarum* was published in 1487, the Church taught that witches did indeed exist, were heretical, could be tortured and should be burned. Not many of even the most conservative Catholics think that now (I hope).

The Church has changed its teaching on which was the first Gospel to be written, on evolution, on slavery, on the morality of trade unionism, on the status of Judaism, on interest on loans, on whether or not women can vote, on whether Origen is a saint and on how long you should fast before receiving Communion (for example!).

And on marriage. For more than half its temporal existence the Western Church has not even been sure if marriage was a sacrament at all. The first official declaration that marriage was a sacrament did not occur until 1184 at the Council of Verona. Until as recently as 1907 a marriage did not need a priest or even any witnesses to be valid. No one (except her ex-husband) seems to have had much problem with Radegund leaving her marriage and taking monastic vows instead; the Church made her a deacon in order to protect her from his attempts to get her back. The Byzantine Emperor gave her a relic of the True Cross and she was canonised very promptly after her death in 587.

But, for me, it is not just that manifestly the Church's teaching does change (though usually very slowly); I find it delightful, proper and enriching that it changes. This is because both as individuals and particularly as a Church we are in a love-relationship with God; the relationship is – to push language to the deepest level of metaphor and almost to the point of collapse – spousal. And if you talk to two people who have been married, or who have been in love with each other for a long time, they will often speak of "always learning something new about him", "she can still really surprise me" or "it's an ongoing conversation – it deepens and deepens". Such blessed people are talking about a relationship that is dynamic not static, increasing not diminishing, exciting not repressive. It is not that the beloved has "changed" into someone else, it is that our capacity to see, to know, to understand has expanded, refreshed itself.

As so often, Jesus gives us the best images: "Indeed, the water I give you will become a fount of water springing up to eternal life" (John 4:12-14). The water that flows out of a fountain, or natural spring, is never stagnant – the water is fresh and new and yet the fountain is the same fountain each time you drink from it. Or as the Breviary puts it: "You are unchanging, always new" (Prayer during the Day; Friday Week 3). And what is so terrible about that? **Sara Maitland** is a novelist and writer.

> > > <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/columnists/3/9937/official-teaching-has-changed-throughout-the-whole-history-of-the-church>

HOLY FATHER : Open your heart to the Holy Spirit- Vatican Radio



Pope Francis during Mass at the Casa Santa Marta on Monday.

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