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Marriage Tribunal Report

CONFERENCE - TRIBUNALE APOSTOLICO DELLA ROTA ROMANA

November 26 – 30, 2019, Marriage and Marriage in Crisis

Basilica Sant Andrea della Valle

Rome, Italy

In mid September I was asked by Fr. Greg Elder, Chancellor, Fr. Maurice Fiolleau, Vicar General, and Fr. Michael Fahlman, Vice-Chancellor; and with the permission of Bishop Albert Thevenot, to consider attending a conference in Rome at the Roman Rota Tribunale on Marriage and Marriage in Crisis. And to represent our Diocese on this topic. Of course I was in shock at the invitation, and agreed as long as my husband Don was willing to go along with me, and to make this an extended holiday with this time away.

I am forever grateful and humbled by such an opportunity to attend this conference, and for the ability to travel to Rome, a place I never thought I would have a chance to visit.

These are some highlights and key points of my notes taken from the conference

Conference Highlights

There were over 400 people in attendance for this important conference on marriage and marriage in crisis. Clergy and lay people who attended from all over the world. This was reported to be one of the higher in attendance for conferences held by the Roman Rota.

The speakers all spoke in Italian, there were translators that translated in Spanish and English, so those of us who needed translation equipment traded a photo ID for a headset to hear the translation, each day.

Day 1, Conference: The main speaker of the conference for the week was S.E. Mons. P.V. Pinto, Dean of the Roman Rota.

- Pope Francis says that we must know where we started from, it is important to look back on the beginning of faith to look forward, the beginnings of the laws of the church.
- We must preach the gospels of family that 'Consecrated Life' is key.
- The Pope will ask 'How is the family life going, how is Christian family going?' he says that family is a light everywhere, that Christian marriage and family is key everywhere.
- The mission of the Roman Rota is to help write trials of sentences for nullity.
- We talked about Privilege of the Faith "For the Salvation of Souls" privilege of the faith is another form of dissolution. And how different cases should be resolved, ultimately Bishops need to be the final judge to decide.
- We should ask ourselves to remember mercy!
- Key point that Bishop's have the ultimate power to make final decisions with assistance from

the Curia, canonist advice of the law.

- Marriage bond is a public bond and considered valid until proven invalid.
- Talked in detail on grounds of ‘non-consummation’ and the facts needed in proving these cases. Rules of the church very poorly meet modern culture.
- We need to walk together in order to feed the faithful, faith must be practised and lived.
- Baptism is a living experience, not just a document.
- The laws of the church were created, not be absolute, but to be serving of the faithful, to observe with compassion and love.
- People wanting to receive communion who are in irregular situations, it is not up to the priests to decide but rather up to the Bishops to give the grace or not.
- Bishops also need to be careful of scandalous situations and consult the Roman Rota when in question.

Day 2, Conference:

- Looking to the past to see the future. Building the body of Christ is for the unity of faith and Christianity.
- Marriage is a natural covenant and a union of bodies.
- Priests, deacons preparing marriages should always try to see if there is possibilities for reconciling spouses.
- Only the Holy See gives judgements of certain grounds.
- Sacred order on marriage and sacrament, a natural covenant by God, founded on human choice. Baptism was created and established by the Lord himself.

Day 3, Conference:

- Started with Dean Pinto stating that Pope Francis asks that as Bishop, also being a sacrament, that it should be mentioned, Jesus Christ is the fundamental head of the church.
- Bishops have to be the head and the heart of the church and to be leaders of the sacraments.
- The church is the family, to be clear to all of us and insists that we must love the poor. Pope Francis makes time to visit and be with the poor, to recognize the poor with love and mercy.
- The church is suffering with fewer marriages and baptisms, we need to reform for the conversion of hearts.
- We need reform to shorter marriage nullity processes, Bishops need to rely on those around him to assist in these matters and needs competent people to help him.
- The sacrament of marriage is the strength of the church and the church suffers when people are not allowed to practise their faith.
- The Appeal Tribunal in Rome was recently shut down and now cases go through the Roman Rota, due to less cases and changes in the process.
- In the end, marriage is not a prison, young people need the opportunity to end a marriage and have the possibility of happiness.

Day 4, Conference:

- Church is a Sacrament, we need to help each other to save marriages and families.
- Church is not only prayer, but actions under the Holy Spirit.
- The Church is faith in young people, faith will animate our lives.
- Nullity of marriage is given for the reason to serve the conscience of the faithful, to keep the heart of the people with the Holy Spirit.

- Fr. Kapello, a master of the conscience preached to not condemn but to love and listen, to be patient and to confess to the Holy Spirit, to pay attention to the faithful in what comes first.
- Judges and canonists are the instrument to serve and love. The law is not considered a way to reach the salvation of souls, but a guideline. The marriage sacrament is not to be condemned but to be saved.
- Priests and Deacons preparing people to marriage need to pay attention. They need help from people to prepare and really help young couple be ready for the sacrament of marriage.
- We need to rely more on Deacons to assist, to spread the good news,
- People receiving communion in irregular situations, we have to allow people to use their own good conscience, to educate without condemning, the eucharist is not an automatic right but must be met with willingness to receive the Holy Spirit, a way, a path for the following of the church, it is not an award for the perfect faithful, but a salvation for the weak and the sinners.
- We heard testimonies for 2 different couples. The first couple, he is employed with the Roman Rota and they gave their story of dating, marriage, and starting a family in the church. The second couple from Columbia shared their story, and how they started a marriage enrichment program in their country and won an award for their efforts.
- Inclusion is the key of Papalcy (no one to be excluded). We need to include. The church will divide if we continue to mis-treat people, and exclude people from communion. Pope Francis feels we need inclusion, leave judgement to God, do our best to *save all souls*.
- Live the catechumen, live the bible in the family, read the bible, not just in church. Live the word of God, not just read it. Unity. Welcoming.
- We cannot be too strict or too freely. There are no rules, just guidelines and criteria. In the end it us up to every Bishop to implement criteria, and we must respect our Bishops.
- Respect that people have a personal relationship with God, we cannot exclude people of the church or of forgiveness of sins. Church needs to have the merciful heart of Christ and the forgiveness of heart is always mercy.
- Every Bishop is a Shepherd and we must trust our Bishops. Think, pray, try to heal with prayer.

When I was first asked to attend this conference, I was shocked that I was asked. I kept asking myself the questions “Who am I go be given such an incredible opportunity?” Who am I?

Day 5, Conference: Audience with Pope Francis, St. Peter’s Basilica

When my husband Don and I reached our turn, hand in hand, to meet Pope Francis ‘Papa Francisco,’ and he reached out to take our hands into his, a divine grace smiled down at us. As he spoke to us in words I did not understand, my questions were answered.

I am a baptized Christian

I am of the faithful

I am divorced and remarried

I am of the poor

I am of the savior of all souls

I am of inclusion



POPE

[POPE FRANCIS](#)[FAMILY](#)[MARRIAGE](#)

Pope Francis: The Church suffers with married couples in crisis

Pope Francis receives participants taking part in a Formation Course for the Protection of Marriage and the Pastoral Care of married couples in crisis, organized by the Rota Romana. He tells them that the Church always and only seeks the good of those facing marriage difficulties.

By Vatican News

Greeting course participants on Saturday, Pope Francis got straight to the heart of the argument, saying the theme of this course has combined two crucial aspects: the protection of marriage and the pastoral care of couples in crisis.



The difficulties of marriage today, he said "come from many different causes: psychological, physical, environmental, cultural...; sometimes they are caused by the closure of the human heart to love, by the sin that touches us all."

That is why, the Pope continued, the Church, when she encounters these realities of couples facing difficulties, first of all weeps and suffers with them.

The Pope noted that the Church is never "impersonal or cold in the face of these sad and troubled stories of life. For this reason, even in her canonical and jurisprudential procedures, the Church always and only seeks the good of those facing marriage difficulties".

The Pontiff continued by saying, that is why every ecclesiastical body, that faces a marriage that is suffering, "must always first of all entrust themselves to the Holy Spirit, so that, guided by Him, they may listen with the right criteria, and be able to examine, discern and judge."

The Sacrament of marriage "cannot be improvised", the Pope pointed out.

He went on to say that Christian couples preparing for marriage must "nourish and progressively increase within themselves that specific call to model themselves as Christian spouses."

But the Pope also emphasized, that the bishop, or parish priest, who prepare engaged couples for this sacrament, "must help them to be living and apostolic cells of parish communities"

The Pope commented that "the married saints Aquila and Priscilla, friends and collaborators of Saint Paul, are a beautiful example of this vocation to the conjugal apostolate.

The Church, in its parish structure, he concluded, "is concretely a community of families, called to become, like Aquila and Priscilla, witnesses of the Gospel in that territory."

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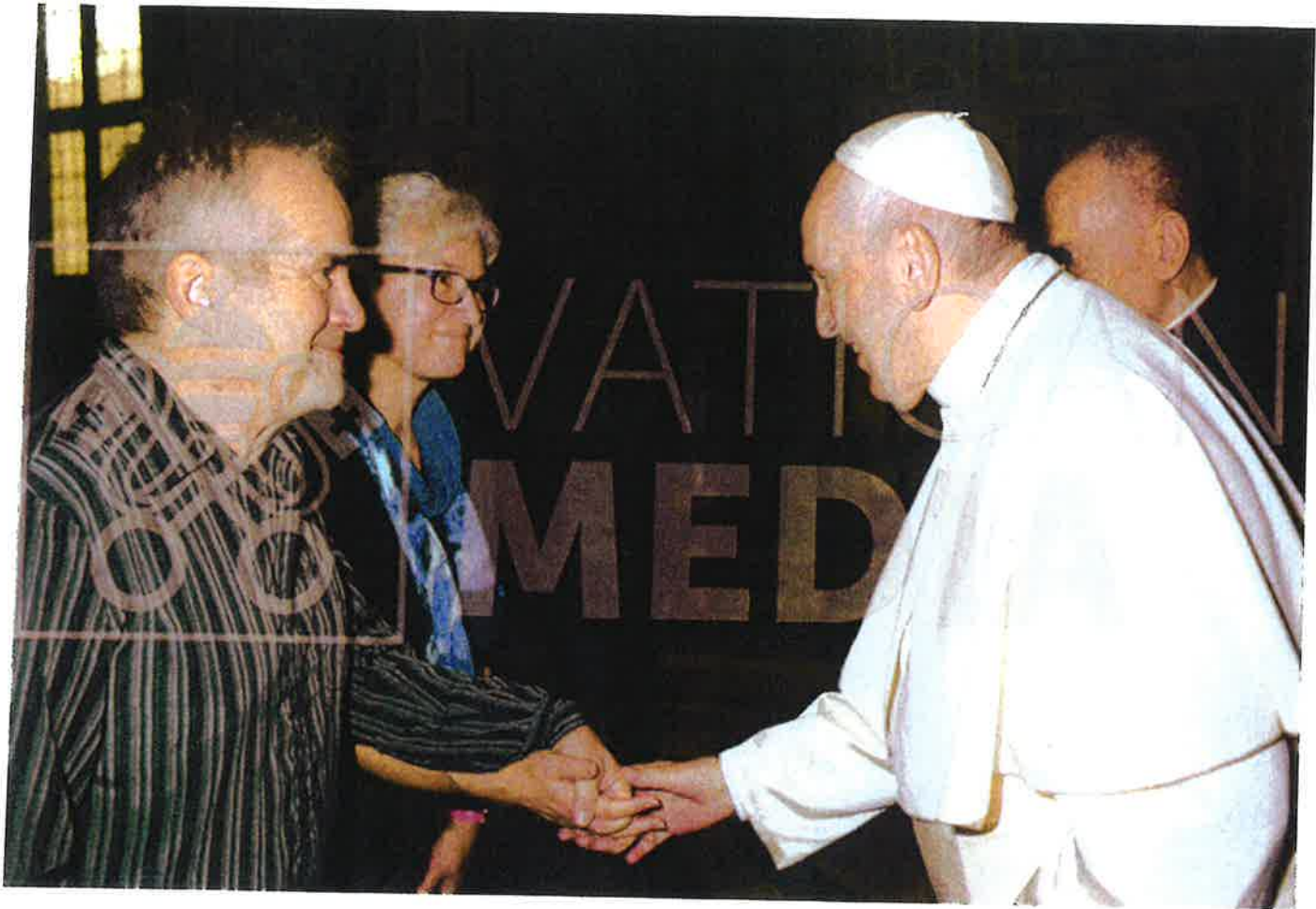


PARTECIPANTI AL CORSO PROMOSSO DAL TRIBUNALE DELLA ROTA ROMANA

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