

**MORAL MATTERS**

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Why do certain Irish rock stars feel compelled to act as the moral conscience of their country? Consider Sinead O'Connor, a woman who apparently believes she possesses the moral authority to wage war on the Vatican. A perfect example of this is her recent 'open letter' responding to Pope Benedict XVI's Christmas Address to the Roma Curia.

In the course of a wide-ranging speech, the Pope once again confronted the terrible scandal of clerical child abuse. Reflecting on 2010, Benedict spoke of how 'to a degree we could not have imagined', the world 'came to know of abuse of minors committed by priests who twist the sacrament into its antithesis, and under the mantle of the sacred, profoundly wound human persons in their childhood, damaging them for a whole lifetime'.

But then the Pontiff strayed into territory which was always going to antagonise the liberal lobby. While admitting the 'gravity of this sin committed by priests and our corresponding responsibility', the Pope states that we cannot remain silent regarding the wholesale sexualisation of Western culture. 'There is', he says, 'a market in child pornography that seems in some way to be considered more and more normal by society'.

There is sex tourism which 'trades with bodies and souls and treats them as commodities'. There is also the associated problem of drugs which, 'with increasing force extends its octopus tentacles around the entire world'. In order to counter these forces, the Pope recommends 'we turn our attention to their ideological foundations'.

Benedict believes, quite rightly in my view, that the prevalence of sexual abuse across society is a direct consequence of the decoupling of sex and morality. He writes in words which Sinead O'Connor finds offensive, that in the 1970's, 'paedophilia was theorised as something fully in conformity with man and even with children'. Even within the realm of Catholic theology, it was held 'that there is no such thing as evil in itself or good in itself'.

In her letter, O'Connor disingenuously misinterprets the important point the Pope is endeavouring to make. She does so by rewriting, and thus distorting, the following line of Benedict's address: 'In the 1970's, paedophilia was theorised [by the Church] as something fully in conformity with man and even with children'. She then inquires of the Pontiff: 'Exactly who held the theory that paedophilia was fully in conformity with man and with children? Please give us their names.'

The Pope did not say that paedophilia was theorised by 'the Church'.

He made no mention of the Church, but suggested that it was theorised by society. However, by inserting 'the Church' into that sentence, Sinead O'Connor makes it seem as though Benedict is protecting those within the Church who would rationalise the evil actions of some deviant clerics.

That is why she wants the Pope to hand over names, and why she asks: 'Exactly when did they hold this theory? Exactly when, if ever, did they cease holding this theory? Why was this information never given to victims?'

I am not going to second guess why a woman, who for years publicly posed as a priest, would do such a thing. Still, her intervention has served to emphasise just how incisive the Pope's remarks were. For the truth is that thanks to the writings of liberal luminaries like Sigmund Freud, sexologist Alfred Kinsey, psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich and philosopher Michel Foucault, paedophilia, and many other perversions, was intellectually justified.

It is thanks to such people that premature sexualisation of our children is such a rotten feature of modern life. It is because of their 'findings' that contemporary 'sex-education' now looks with suspicion on the old virtues of restraint, shame and guilt. And it is thanks to their enduring influence, that innocence is routinely snatched from the young.

Look, for example, at a report just published by the United Nations on the 'right' to sex education 'from the early stages of life'. Such 'education', it states, should include information on 'sexual diversity', and should also reject abstinence programs as they 'normalise stereotypes'. This follows a similar report issued by the UNESCO in 2009, which advocates that children from 5-8 years of age should be informed that 'touching and rubbing one's genitals is called masturbation', and that this 'can feel pleasurable'.

More than most, the Pope understands the severity of crimes committed by clerics inside the Catholic Church. And despite accusations to the contrary, he has never made any attempt to either excuse or deny them.

But he also realises that abuse is certainly not confined to Catholic clerics. Due to a warped ideology which seeks to pillage innocence, abuse of the young is all-pervasive.

Why is that so difficult for secular saints such as Sinead O'Connor to acknowledge?

Why is it that few of them can see the damage inflicted on our children through 'progressive' programmes which teach, as the Pope puts it, that 'anything can be good or also bad, depending upon purposes and circumstances'?

Why, when confronted with the truth, do people with a brass neck opt to bury it in the sand?