

## X Incontro Mondiale delle Famiglie

Roma 22 - 26 giugno 2022



## Due vocazioni complementari e corresponsabili

don Juris Jalinskis con Daina e Uldis Zurilo

-Lettonia-

Panel 2.3





## **DUE VOCAZIONI COMPLEMENTARI E CORRESPONSABILI**

don Juris Jalinskis

Città del Vaticano, giugno 2022

Nell'Udienza generale del 10 ottobre 2018 papa Francesco ha affermato che “ogni vocazione cristiana è sponsale, perché è frutto del legame d'amore in cui tutti siamo rigenerati, - è il legame d'amore con Cristo”. Di conseguenza, la vita d'amore a cui ogni cristiano è chiamato si realizza sia nel matrimonio che nel sacerdozio. La Chiesa non ha mai visto il sacerdozio e il celibato in contrapposizione al matrimonio e alla vita familiare. Entrambe queste vocazioni non sono in opposizione, ma si completano a vicenda nella vocazione integrale dell'uomo ad amare e dare la propria vita.

Nel perseguire questa vocazione all'amore disinteressato, noi tutti, sacerdoti e sposi, raggiungiamo rapidamente i limiti delle nostre capacità, poiché la nostra natura umana è influenzata dai cambiamenti dei sentimenti e degli stati d'animo, dalle nostre ferite personali, dal nostro egoismo e dalle nostre debolezze. Ben presto scopriamo una fondamentale incapacità di donarci completamente nell'amore. Questa esperienza non è altro che un invito ad aprirci a Dio, che è la fonte di ogni amore autentico, e alla cui presenza possiamo imparare a diventare più capaci di un amore ancora più pieno.

Sulla base di questa stretta connessione tra i sacramenti dell'Ordine e del Matrimonio, vissuti secondo la propria vocazione con i successi e difficoltà, sentiamo tutti il bisogno non soltanto del aiuto di Dio, ma anche di reciproco sostegno, cooperazione e corresponsabilità nella Chiesa.

A questo proposito, mi permetto di condividere con voi la mia personale testimonianza su come Dio ha collegato la mia vocazione sacerdotale e pastorale al servizio per le famiglie e con le famiglie. Vent'anni fa, quando dopo gli studi sono



tornato in patria da Roma, ho iniziato a lavorare come vicario giudiziale in Lettonia presso il Tribunale della Chiesa, dove, come sapete, si affrontano le questioni dell'invalidità del matrimonio. Innegabilmente, è un importante servizio pastorale e di giustizia per le famiglie, ma come sacerdote e giudice ho dovuto ascoltare anche le storie molto tristi e persino tragiche della vita matrimoniale. Tuttavia, Dio ha avuto molto presto pietà di me e ho incontrato famiglie dell'Associazione "Incontri per le Coppie Sposate", il cui carisma è aiutare a preparare i fidanzati al matrimonio, nonché organizzare ritiri per le coppie già sposate per rafforzarle. E così, parallelamente al mio lavoro nel Tribunale della Chiesa, sono diventato assistente spirituale nell'Associazione di "Incontri per le Coppie Sposate" e lavoriamo con i nostri coniugi dell'Associazione in modo preventivo per rafforzare le future famiglie e quelle già esistenti. Non nascondo l'interesse egoistico per questo ministero, perché ho sempre detto che mi piacerebbe avere meno lavoro nel Tribunale della Chiesa.

In ogni modo sono molto grato a Dio e alle tantissime famiglie che mi aiutano a vivere nella realtà e non fuori di essa. Conoscendo le gioie e le ansie delle famiglie, posso capire meglio la vita reale delle persone di oggi, perché la famiglia è, come sappiamo, il fondamento di ogni società. Conoscere e amare le famiglie è la nostra vocazione di sacerdoti che proviene da Cristo, che come il Buon Pastore conosce le sue pecore e dà la vita per loro.

Quanto agli sposi, vorrei dire che il loro ruolo nella Chiesa non deve limitarsi soltanto nel "dare una mano" al clero nel loro ministero. La vocazione dei coniugi non è un'assistenza marginale ai sacerdoti, ma loro sono i veri protagonisti, capaci di portare i frutti abbondanti alla vita della Chiesa, secondo la loro vocazione e carisma.

Confronta con testo pronunciato



## **MARRIED COUPLES AND ORDAINED MINISTERS: TWO COMPLEMENTARY AND CO-RESPONSIBLE VOCATIONS**

Uldis and Daina Zurilo

We have come here to Rome as a married couple from Latvia, because we wish to convey a message that we think is very important. This message is based on our own personal experience as active volunteers in the Church community. Over the course of many years, we have devoted hundreds of hours to help other married couples strengthen their relationships, which in some cases, have reached crisis situations. We have often worked with these couples in partnership and with the assistance of Catholic priests.

From these experiences, we have gained the conviction that married couples and ordained ministers must work closer together to promote the spiritual development of the Church. In our opinion, married couples and priests need to strengthen their cooperation in every parish, and we would like to highlight two crucial aspects of this cooperation: **complementarity and co-responsibility**.

What does this mean? In his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis encourages married couples to get involved and to be co-responsible in the pastoral ministry of the Church. In spite of the fact that this appeal has been relevant since the Second Vatican Council, married couples often feel apprehensive and unsure of how to contribute to the spiritual life of their parishes, since for centuries, priests have been the main expressers of the values of the Church, whereas lays have engaged in a more passive role. This has placed the bulk of the responsibility for spiritual development on the shoulders of priests, with lays reluctant to get involved. We believe that such a situation is especially dangerous in today's world, where so much information and so many temptations attract people's minds and feelings.

When we were first asked to present this speech about the two complementary and co-responsible vocations, we felt a bit confused, because we hadn't established a firm opinion on the relationship between married couples and priests. Nevertheless, upon deeper reflection, we understood that this is exactly what we have been inviting married couples to do during all of these



years – to boldly complement their priests by sharing their testimony about aspects of family life that ordained ministers can grasp only on a theological and theoretical basis.

Our spiritual lives as married couples, for their part, are strengthened thanks to the priests who preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. Priesthood is an important form of service to the community. Without this ministry, it would be very difficult for family life to develop and move upwards. For example, we have met many couples who were going through difficult relationship crises and whose members were deeply hurting each other. Such situations couldn't possibly be healed without God's intervention, and particularly through the Sacrament of Confession. The Sacraments are graces that Christ intended for us all, but that we cannot acquire without the intercession of priests. The Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist offer a new lease on life, giving married couples the love that they need to engage in meaningful dialogue, and the strength to serve others.

Let us also recall that every priest's initial formation takes place in his family home. Since priests provide the Church's fundamental sources of grace – they preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments – it is desirable for them to be in good spiritual and mental health. If priests are raised and grow up in healthy families, then as children they will gain self-confidence, self-esteem, a sound identity, and the experience of the trustworthiness of a loving God, through the positive example of their loving, earthly father and mother.

However, growing up in dysfunctional families can leave deep scars on children's souls, such as insecurity, mistrust, low self-esteem, and co-addiction. Priests who come from dysfunctional families need to know about the existence of positive family environments already before their ordination, while they are still studying at the seminary. As we know, exposure to positive and healthy experiences can provide healing and solace, and change people's outlook on things for the better.

One alarming fact that we cannot deny is the drastic decline in the number of priests in Europe and elsewhere. As we previously said, priests are the principal purveyors of the Church's teachings and values. How will we cope when their number is sharply falling? Who will stand by us as married couples when we share our testimony and preach the Gospel?



As we previously said, we, as married couples, must stand by our priests and complement them in their endeavours to strengthen the Church's foundations. However, in order for us to be valuable witnesses, we first need to know ourselves. Therefore, an inner dialogue with ourselves and with God is indispensable, as is a continually open dialogue with our spouses. Spouses can mirror each other and highlight the good in each other, but they can also make their partners see the dark side of their own personality. This self-realisation makes us more mature and truthful as individuals.

While preparing testimony topics for married couples based on our personal life experiences, my husband and I have sometimes identified deficiencies in our own selves that need to be healed. We have come to realise that if our wounds remain hidden and unidentified, then our listeners will detect a dissonance between our testimony and our actual behaviour. They will be less receptive to the word of the Gospel that we seek to communicate, and they will be less inclined to trust in the strength of the grace that is concealed in the Sacraments.

In conclusion, we would like to share how we, personally, have experienced the tremendous benefits of mutual complementarity with an elderly parish priest. In the beginning, we invited him to gatherings of married couples at a family home. We prayed together with him, and all of us felt strengthened spiritually. We then continued to meet with the priest in this setting. At one of these early gatherings, we were surprised to see tears well up in his eyes. The priest said that he had never before visited family homes on an informal basis, and that he felt profoundly moved by the atmosphere of friendship that had taken hold among us on our joint spiritual path to establish a closer relation with God.

We would like to stress through this example that as married couples and as priests, we are both equal before God and complementary. As each of us becomes aware of our needs, limitations and strengths, we learn how to help each other on the path to sainthood. This mutual dialogue and assistance between our complementary vocations builds up co-responsible action for the benefit of the entire Church.

We are infinitely grateful to God for the two complementary and co-responsible vocations of married couples and ordained ministers, through which we have personally witnessed and shared the reality of God's love on earth. This necessary form of cooperation between married couples and priests makes the Church alive, and makes us all alive in the Church.

Compare with spoken text