The Evolving Methodological, Anthropological, and Normative Developments in Catholic Sexual Ethics

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Abstract
There is a long-noted methodological and anthropological divide between Catholic social and sexual ethics. We argue in three cumulative sections that Pope Francis’s Amoris Laetitia moves towards a methodological and anthropological integration of Catholic social teaching and Catholic sexual teaching. First, we explore Amoris Laetitia’s methodological integration of Catholic social and Catholic sexual teaching, second, we explore its anthropological integration of Catholic social and sexual teaching; finally, we demonstrate how the methodological and anthropological insights of Amoris Laetitia might provide a more integrated and credible response to a contemporary ethical issue.

A. Biological Complementarity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hetero-Genital Complementarity</td>
<td>The physically functioning male and female sexual organs used in sexual acts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reproductive Complementarity</td>
<td>The physically functioning male and female reproductive organs used in sexual acts to biologically reproduce</td>
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B. Personal Complementarity

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communion Complementarity</td>
<td>The two-in-oneness within a hetero-gendal complementary marital relationship that is created and sustained by sexual acts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affective Complementarity</td>
<td>The integrated emotional, psychological, spiritual, relational dimensions of the human person grounded in hetero-gendal complementarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Complementarity</td>
<td>Hetero-gendally complementary parents who fulfill the second dimension of reproductive complementarity, namely, the education of children</td>
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2. Theological

1. Scripture
St. Paul’s First Corinthians (13:4-7) and a focus on virtues (AL Ch. 4)

2. Ecclesiology
Local Bishops: AL renews extensively to bishops’ conferences and how they have responded to particular ethical questions with respect to married and family life. Francis Fulfill: “the instinctive capacity of the whole church to recognize the infallibility of the Spirit’s truth.” Synodality: journeying together and listening to the input from all quarters of the Church, laity and clerics alike.

3. Integration of experience, human culture, and the sciences (GS 44)

3.1. Conscience
Reinforces the authority and inviolability of conscience

3.2. Discernment
The place of discernment in moral decision-making complements the role and authority of conscience and seeks to inform and form it

3.3. Virtues
Shift in focus from doing and acts to being and virtues (AL Ch. 4)

4. New Pastoral Methods
Respect “both the church’s teaching and local problems and needs” (AL 199)

B. AL and Anthropological Developments

1. Inductive
Focus on particularity of culture and context and Aquinas, ST, 1-2, q. 94, a. 4 (AL 304)

2. Historical Consciousness
The person “knows, loves, and accomplishes moral good by different stages of growth” (AL 293).

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C. AL and Normative Developments

“Irregular Situations” Cohabitation for economic reasons (AL 294)