

Movimiento internacional
Somos-Iglesia

Movimento Internazionale
Nós somos Igreja

Movimento Internazionale
Noi siamo Chiesa

Mouvement international
Nous sommes Eglise

Internationale Bewegung
Wir sind Kirche

International Movement **We are Church**

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40 Years Encyclical "Humanae Vitae" – July 25th, 1968

"We Are Church" keeps calling for future-oriented Christian sexual ethics

"The Roman Catholic church urgently needs a new sight on sexuality – humane, loving and free from fear, because sexuality is a life-giving energy of every human being created and loved by God", says the International Movement We Are Church commenting the 40th anniversary of the encyclical "Humanae Vitae", that was published on July 25th, 1968. **"The church's ministry shouldn't any longer barricade itself behind centuries-old walls. Likewise, it shouldn't any longer ignore the well-proved knowledge of human sciences on sexuality and sexual ethics",** We Are Church says.

It was the goal of that Encyclical to value love in marital partnership and individual shaping of sexuality higher than the sole purpose of transmitting life. But this goal could scarcely be perceived by the faithful people, the catholic reform movement regrets ; too dominant was the message that "conception may only be prevented by 'natural' means". What is even more, this doctrine has been **recently confirmed by pope Benedict XVI, without any ifs and buts.**

Remembering the proclamation of "Humanae Vitae" there should not be forgotten: The majority of the commission established 1962 by Pope John XXIII and enlarged by Pope Paul VI. had voted for a responsible parenthood without banning any means of contraception. **It was Pope Paul VI who did not follow this overwhelming majority vote, but proclaimed the contrasting minority vote as official doctrine of the Church.** This fact caused fatal consequences: The encyclical's positive reception and perception was defeated. Thus the Catholic Church lost its competence and credibility in questions of human sexuality and sexual life in great extent.

The basis of future-oriented sexual ethics in Christian responsibility should be the study, analysis and consideration of social developments in the broadest sense, but not any condemnation. That is the point of view of "We Are Church". The "Aggiornamento" of new Christian sexual ethics could be successful this way.

- ⌚ It is essential to accept the latest scientific knowledge concerning human sexuality, as well as homosexuality, and to take leave of previous incongruous valuations caused by ignorance.
- ⌚ The situation of women, men and families which changed because of global, social, political and technical developments has to be considered.
- ⌚ Many Bishop's Conferences established declarations interpreting carefully the traditional doctrine of conscience. Their Arguments are still valid and must not be cancelled under no circumstances.
- ⌚ The problem of HIV/AIDS was unknown at the time of the encyclical but nowadays is an urgent problem as well as the consequences of a rapidly growing world population. More sophisticated responses to these subjects will have to be made rather than categorically banning condoms or merely appealing on abstinence.
- ⌚ All religions having established the protection of life and transmission of life in their doctrines, a process overlapping confessions and religions should be contemplated to formulate generally accepted and effective guidelines for humane sexual ethics.

A positive approach to sexuality is one of the five demands of the referendum of We Are Church, which was signed by more than 2.3 million people alone in Austria and Germany in 1995 and which was the

foundation stone of the International Movement We Are Church (IMWAC) that is now represented in all the continents.

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International Movement We Are Church

Background Information

The International Movement We Are Church, founded in Rome in 1996, is represented in more than twenty countries on all continents and is networking world-wide with similar-minded reform groups. We Are Church is an international movement within the Roman-Catholic Church and aims at renewal on the basis of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). We Are Church was started in Austria in 1995 with a church referendum.