



## **Troubled Love Theology and Pastoral Care for *all* Families**

International Symposium, KU Leuven  
**26 - 28 April 2018**

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## **Keynote Speakers**

### **Susannah CORNWALL**

University of Exeter

#### **Theology and families: un/familiar approaches**

One way to effectively welcome, support, and guide contemporary families that do not conform to the traditional marriage-based family is to be aware of the continuities and flashes of affinity between different family types – namely, that we do recognize them as families. Another is to be aware that as receivers and transmitters of transmission we are both shaped by what we have known and experienced, and have the freedom and responsibility to reshape it ourselves. Marriage is a human institution: we know it and recognize it only via our experience of actual human marriages. Shifts and changes do not inevitably entail stubborn sin and rejection of a divine plan, but are, in fact, a means by which we respond appropriately as creatures whose generativity and capacity to make and transform is precisely an aspect of the image of God. How far may such changes go before they represent a rupture from the tradition? I ask whether permanent covenanted relationships between more than two partners could ever be

understood to mediate grace in the way that marriage does. I conclude that identifying continuity – even if of a limited kind – between the goods promoted by those who reject marriage on political or ethical grounds and the goods within more traditional marital arrangements will, however, take humility on the parts of those who have sought to uphold ‘Christian marriage’ and ‘traditional family values’, to recognize that theirs are not the only circumstances in which human flourishing may be nurtured.

Susannah Cornwall is Senior Lecturer in Constructive Theologies at the University of Exeter, UK, and Director of EXCEPT (Exeter Centre for Ethics and Practical Theology). Her most recent book is *Un/familiar Theology: Reconceiving Sex, Reproduction and Generativity* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017). She is also the author of *Sex and Uncertainty in the Body of Christ: Intersex Conditions and Christian Theology* (Routledge, 2010); *Controversies in Queer Theology* (SCM, 2011); and *Theology and Sexuality* (SCM, 2013). She edited *Intersex, Theology, and the Bible: Troubling Bodies in Church, Text, and Society* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); and, with John Bradbury, *Thinking Again About Marriage: Key Theological Questions* (SCM, 2016). She currently directs the Modelling Transgender Spiritual Care project in partnership with the West of England NHS Specialist Gender Identity Clinic, developing spiritual care pathways for people transitioning gender in the National Health Service (England).

### **Martina KREIDLER-KOS**

PTH Münster/ Diocese of Osnabrück

#### **Spiritual resources in non-normative families: A pastoral-theological approach**

‘The Pope does not change a single doctrine and thus changes everything’, said Walter Cardinal Kasper in an interview in *Die Zeit* (17/2016, 14 Apr 2016) after the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia*. A concrete illustration of this shift can be found in an interview with another cardinal, Louis Antonio Tagle, a President of the Synod of Bishops on the Family (*Die Zeit* 44/2015, 29 Oct 2015): ‘Families are not there to please the Church; rather, the Church is there for the families’. There is the opportunity in this change of perspective to appreciate the spiritual resources found in all families, not only in those that conform to the ideal Catholic marriage. Such non-ideal family groupings are often seen to be

lacking, but *Amoris laetitia* teaches us to appreciate their special gifts. Virtues can be found in these families, such as the courage to take small steps, the ability to seek help when needed, the concentrated search for solutions that all can live with, the recognition of boundaries, the preservation of hope, the desire for reconciliation, and the experience of surviving mistakes and working on improvement. And it is precisely these families that give witness to the need to protect love, even at times from an institution that itself wants to protect love. On this basis the faithfulness of many of these families to the Church—regardless of the rejection they experience—deserves special attention. Pope Francis shows great trust in all who, in the midst of the normal chaos of love, seek to be responsible and good before God: '[The Church finds] it hard to make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations' (AL 37). Ultimately, however, the spiritual resources in non-conforming families are none other than those found in families that reflect the ideal of the fullness of Catholic teaching. Spirituality does not stop at the boundaries defined by norms, nor can it be limited by these boundaries. Neither intensity nor practice can be limited by these boundaries; they extend to where there is the courage to fight for dignity, responsibility, and love.

Martina Kreidler-Kos was born in 1967. From 1987-1993, she studied Catholic Theology at Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen. In 1999, her doctoral dissertation was awarded the *promotionspreis* by the Department of Catholic Theology of the Universität Tübingen. From 2006-2013 she worked as diocesan spokesperson for the pastoral care of women for the Diocese of Osnabrück. She has taught Spiritual Theology, specializing in Franciscan Theology, at the Philosophisch-Theologischen Hochschule in Münster since 2009. Since 2013 she has served as head of Marriage and Family Pastoral Ministry for the Diocese of Osnabrück. Dr. Kreidler-Kos has authored books, articles, and radio programs. She has four sons, who were born in 1993, 1995, 1998, and 2001. She lives with her family in Germany in the region of Osnabrück Land.

## **Jean MARSH**

Marriage Care, UK

### **What do families most need today? A counselling perspective**

One way of viewing contemporary families, whatever their composition or marital status, is that they are small rafts riding on the waves of a tsunami of political, economic, social, environmental, and religious instability, communicated via the internet. Alongside this is the pressure for those in work to stay online and available into 'family time' for fear of undermining career progression or losing their jobs. Accountability, a necessary good, is often interpreted as a bullying critical eye. The gap between the rich and poor, a scandal of our time, means that working families on the margins are easily thrown into financial crisis. This ignores the added stressors on families of refugees, asylum seekers, prisoners, and those with mentally and physically sick members. Other things being equal, what then makes the difference between those families who ride the waves, make good use of the changes in society and technology, successfully negotiate interdependence in peer groups for child care and community engagement, and evidently live rich and fulfilling, if still challenging lives, compared to those who struggle to survive or experience family breakdown? There is a simplicity and challenge in naming the difference as the depth and security of the couple's attachment bond, thus providing a secure base for them and their children. The complexity enters in opening our minds to how this can be achieved for many more and the significance of faith in God in its achievement.

Jean Marsh is a volunteer relationship counsellor, supervisor, and trainer for Catholic Marriage Care, a national charity providing relationship counselling and marriage preparation courses. Her work has included training relationship counsellors nationally and as centre tutor, running marriage preparation courses, training marriage preparation course providers, supervising counsellors, and counselling couples. Principal of St. Mary's College, Crosby, Liverpool until 2008, she subsequently trained as a Spiritual Director in the Ignatian tradition at Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality in Dublin, Ireland. For the past six years Jean has been working as a Spiritual Director with the Jesuit Outreach programme at the Manchester University Catholic Chaplaincy, Manchester UK. Married to David,

they live in Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire UK and have two married sons and four grandchildren.

## **Elisabetta RUSPINI**

University of Milano-Bicocca

### **Families: Where to go from here? Sociological perspectives on contemporary family life**

Family forms, what it means to be a member of a family, and the expectations people have of family relationships vary with time and space. Today marriage and family relationships are formed and maintained in an environment of greater choice in how people can live their lives than has been possible for past generations. Choices are made in a world that no longer has universal certainties, risks, and fixed models of life (Beck, 1992). During the last five decades remarkable changes in family and household structure and gender roles have occurred in Europe (see for example Pailhé et al., 2014). We notice a move towards more individualised and flexible decision-making processes, distant from the formal frameworks that used to shape the individual (women's and men's) decisions in matters of relationships and family life. A growing diversity of family forms and relationships along the life course has emerged: one parent families, unmarried couples with children, LGBTTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer) families, divorced families, reconstructed families, mixed families, couples where the two partners live in separated domiciles, asexual and childfree couples (Ruspini, 2013). Changing gender identities has had a direct impact on the processes of family formation and models of motherhood and fatherhood in the Western experience: women and men are increasingly refraining from long-term commitments with respect to partnerships and childbearing (Olah et al., 2013). It is likely that the pluralisation of family forms and arrangements will further increase with the generational turnover: the younger generations are negotiating their love and sexual relationships in an increasingly fluid environment (Giddens, 1992). Following some evidence (Taylor and Keeter, 2010; Stanton and Hess, 2012), Millennials are clearly delaying marriage longer than any generation before them and are increasingly in favour of new family forms: Millennials are more tolerant than adults in other generations of a wide range of 'non-traditional'

behaviours related to marriage and parenting. These transformations raise key issues for family, gender, and policy research also because, today, the Millennial generation has grown old enough to have children.

Elisabetta Ruspini is a senior Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy. She has a Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Research from the University of Trento. Since 2012 she has coordinated the Research Section "Studi di Genere" (Gender Studies), part of the AIS (Associazione Italiana di Sociologia/Italian Sociological Association). She is a board member of the ESA Research Network 33, "Women's and Gender Studies", and coordinator of the Framework Convention "Gender and Religion" at the Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milano-Bicocca. Her research interests include the social construction of gender, gender and the generational turnover, men and masculinities, family change, gender and religion, religious values and beliefs across generations, gender and tourism, tourism and peace, tourism and generational changes, and future studies. In the area of methodology, she studies longitudinal research and gender issues in social research. She has published a number of books and articles and has contributed papers to national and international conferences in these fields.

<http://www.sociologia.unimib.it/ricerca/ricerca/scheda.php?idUser=50>

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=rG08mDUAAAAJ>

## **Jochen SAUTERMEISTER**

University of Bonn

### **New forms of family life: Theological-ethical perspectives and norms**

Theological ethics has not until recently ventured beyond the normative framework of moral theology in regard to marriage and thus is only newly engaged with 'new' forms of family life such as patchwork families, second marriages, and other relationships that diverge from the ideal. At last, with the promulgation of *Amoris laetitia*, this has changed. Theological hermeneutics have changed, and the coordinates for pastoral practice have shifted. While previously the approach started from the norm and analysed these relationships for their defects, church teaching is shifting to an approach that starts by looking at the positive qualities that exist and building there towards a theological assessment. The new focus seeks to understand the inner logic and dynamics of these relationships, situating

them within the individual life stores, the reality of lived love. It looks for expressions of Christian values and traces of the Kingdom of God and the Gospel in the lives of these people. In my presentation, I will investigate which Christian and normative perspectives can be helpful for pastoral guidance and for successful relationships and families.

Jochen Sautermeister, born in 1975, Prof. Dr. theol. Dr. rer. soc. He studied Catholic Theology, Psychology, and Philosophy in Tübingen and Jerusalem. Since 2016, he has held a chair of Moral Theology at the Universität Bonn. He is a psychological counselor for marriage, family, and life issues.

## Moderators

### **Aldegonde Brenninkmeijer-Werhahn**

Director of INTAMS

### **Elizabeth Davies**

Marriage Care, UK

### **David Dawson Vasquez**

Pontifical Beda College  
Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, Rome

### **Thomas Knieps-Port le Roi**

KU Leuven, Belgium

### **Alfons Vansteenwegen**

KU Leuven, Belgium

## Symposium secretariat

### **Dominique van Haelst**

INTAMS (International Academy for Marital Spirituality)  
[www.INTAMS.org](http://www.INTAMS.org) / [seminar@intams.org](mailto:seminar@intams.org) / Tel. +32 2 359 9202

## Panel discussions participants

### **Caroline Landuyt (Belgium)**

Home nurse for the white-yellow cross. Consciously single mother of 2 children via donor insemination.

### **Nathalie and Christian Mignonat (France)**

Married couple actively involved in Equipes Reliance / Sedire Lyon, France  
[www.equipes-reliance.fr](http://www.equipes-reliance.fr)  
<http://sedirelyon.fr/>  
<https://synodequotidien.wordpress.com/>

### **Alfred Natterer (Austria)**

Divorced man, Head of the Family and Life Support Department, Diocese Innsbruck  
[www.dibk.at/ful](http://www.dibk.at/ful)

### **Maria Grazia and Luigi Pasqualetto (Italy)**

Divorced-remarried couple with children from previous and current marriages  
Marcon (Venice), Italy

### **Martin Pendergast and Julian Filochowski (UK)**

In a same-sex relationship since 1976, and civil partners since 2006.

### **Mieke Van Reeth (Belgium)**

Hospital Chaplain, Antwerp, Belgium. Married to Griet since 2008, both proud mothers of 2 sons.