



## PASS President Margaret Archer's reply to First Things

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Mr Gennarini,

I was frankly amazed at the distorted criticism (First Things May 29 2015) you chose to aim at the Chancellor of the two Pontifical Academies. As the President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, I organized the Plenary Meeting on Human Trafficking: Issues beyond Criminalization (April 17-21), was personally responsible for inviting Jeffrey Sachs to speak, and was present, working in the Vatican, until after the April 28 meeting on sustainable development, Protect the Earth, Dignify Humanity, at which I organized a Panel to dialogue with Ban Ki-moon. The nature of your questions raises some very serious questions about your understanding of Catholic Social Doctrine.

### **1. Is your sole concern with human dignity confined to the period between conception and live-birth?**

If so, this is a travesty of Catholic Social Teaching, whose concern is not confined to the newborn but extends to the development of all those potentialities and powers that exist only in potentia at birth (such as walking and talking) that develop or can be irreparably damaged throughout life. This is why, from *Rerum Novarum* onwards, CTS has defended the 'living wage' (sufficient on which to raise a family), morally deplored poverty, and all social conditions that militate against human well-being during the life-course (which, if you recall we were exhorted to enjoy 'in abundance').

### **2. Why are you so totally uninterested in vicious practices, such as human trafficking that are an offence to the human dignity and right to life that you purport to defend?**

In the last two weeks of April in question, mass graves were found in Malaysia and Thailand of those killed by their intended traffickers; tens of thousands were set adrift at sea without food or water by those intending to traffic them before they feared for their own lives through the 'civilized' solution of a 'blockade'. Is this of no concern to you? Not to mention the 'regular' human trafficking whose profits from modern slavery that now exceed those of the drug trade? Nor the lives subsequently lived out in forced labour and forced prostitution or the harvesting of their vital organs? This was what our meeting was concerned with; the word 'abortion' was never once mentioned. The same was the case for PAS, where the human effects of the Anthropocene dwelt on its impact upon the poorest. Of course, your comments imply that you are a climate change denier, but I had to laugh at 18 years being cited as a reasonable period in which to measure such change. The most recent statistics now do show that 95% of natural scientists accept the contribution of emissions, attributable to human doings, as responsible.

### **3. Why do you direct a hate message to Bishop Sánchez Sorondo alone?**

Various Cardinals were present at different meetings. Instead, blame me, blame PAS. We are respected academics who take full responsibility for our actions and have, according to our Statutes, the duty and privilege of advising the Church on matters of Social Doctrine and its application. I am appointed by the Pope and responsible directly to him. I'm afraid that leaves you and your cohort out in the cold. Moreover, we work pro bono and are therefore self-supporting, which makes me wonder which lobbyists meet your salary bill?

### **4. Why are we not allowed to speak to Jeffrey Sachs or the Secretary General of the UN?**

Professor Jeffrey Sachs concentrated his talk on how we (PASS) could influence the Sustainable Development Goals about to be re-designated by the UN. This was extremely helpful because human trafficking did not appear in the draft proposals. Some good things did, such as the elimination of child labour and especially child soldiers. He willingly sat down with me for hours and drafted inclusions to take back to New York that he thought were propitious for inclusion. We should never forget that every Social Encyclical since Vatican II is addressed to 'All people of goodwill' – and that he showed himself to be.

The Secretary General is to be shunned too! Well, that was not the attitude of Pope Francis who invited him to a private Audience, immediately prior to our joint PAS/PASS meeting on 28 April – to discuss climate change and human trafficking. Do you really have a higher moral standard than the Pope? Or is your own minimalistic version of the Creed, consisting of the single item: "We believe in the ethical depravity of abortion' considered to be an improvement?

### **5. A better precedent**

Was set by Queen Silvia of Sweden on the day before (27 April). She talked about the multifarious sufferings of children worldwide and what we could do to alleviate them. It seems as if abject poverty, malnutrition, no schooling, and the prospect of no employment are of little concern to you after they have been born.

Please feel free to publish this where you will; though preferably as a Reply to your comments on our Chancellor. At the same time I would ask you to cite and reference the Recommendations of our Plenary meeting, which say nothing on abortion but attempt to improve the lives of 20-30 million trafficked people.

Yours,

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