

Science just keeps proving the Church is right



Catholic beliefs have long been challenged by that elite triumvirate of academia, media and government. Today, many of us are also finding our beliefs challenged in our daily lives — in our professional careers, our parenting and how we live.

Adult Catholics need to understand and intentionally embrace Catholic teaching with our intellects and reason. We can't be content to believe and accept the teaching of the Church solely because our parents and teachers "said so". In this process, we may struggle with particular teachings due to our own flaws, lack of good catechesis and other reasons. And even as adults, our faith may be challenged when the lives and practices of people we respect and love contradict Catholic doctrine. When this happens, I try to see the relevance of my beliefs to their lives.

The values espoused by the Church can seem harsh and even unfair in our live-and-let-live ethos. It's understandable that many today believe that the Church is out of step with the modern world and that its teachings are no longer relevant.

But what is amazing (and certainly unintentional) is the fact that modern science — which so many assume is the antithesis or even enemy of Catholic teaching — actually bears out the truth and value and relevance of what the Church has taught for 2,000 years. Here are ten examples to illustrate my point.

1. The Church teaches that pride is the root of all vices. Research studies in psychology show that narcissism and irrational thinking are on the rise, especially in our younger generation, and are creating a "community" that is disjointed, disenchanting and confused. The traits of narcissists — self-centeredness, inflated self-esteem, lack of empathy, aggressiveness — are harmful to others, to society, and eventually to the narcissists themselves.

2. The Church teaches that a valid marriage is forever and indissoluble. Science tells us that growing up in an intact family with one's biological parents who are married to each other confers the greatest benefit to children and other arrangements result in varying degrees of social, psychological, emotional and academic harm.

3. The Church teaches that fear prevents love and that, above all, we should trust in God's providential care and not be afraid. Studies show that anxiety is the number one psychological complaint in youth and adults (see, e.g., Cartwright-Hatton, McNicol, & Doubleday, 2006; Muris & Steerneman, 2001). At unhealthy levels, anxiety is associated with a myriad of negative health outcomes.

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