

Facts and Quotes – Second Thoughts on the Sexual Revolution

Visit our event page (<https://catholicwomensforum.org/event/metoo-moment-second-thoughts-sexual-revolution/>) for more information on the agenda, speakers, and for conference videos.

“The #MeToo movement opened up space for more honest—and long-overdue—conversations about sexuality and male-female relationships. This creates the opportunity for a larger conversation about the effects of the sexual revolution and how women in particular are faring. We now have decades of evidence to suggest that the freedom, equality, and happiness promised by the sexual revolution were a mirage. The experts gathered here—all women professionals, by the way—highlight evidence from law, medicine, and the social sciences showing that current cultural practices around sex are having a devastating impact, particularly on the lives of real women and their children. My hope is that this conference will inject new facts into the public discourse around sexuality, morality, and relationships—and that the weight of the evidence and the power of women’s voices will prompt ‘second thoughts’ about the sexual revolution, and be the turning point towards a culture of sexual integrity.”

– **Mary Rice Hasson**, Kate OBeirne Fellow and Director, Catholic Women’s Forum at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, co-sponsor, with Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture, of this event.

“Thank you for today’s important conversation. I’m pleased that the Center for Ethics and Culture and the University of Notre Dame can be involved. [This] gathering aims to take a clear-eyed analysis of the consequences and effects of the sexual revolution, including especially the unique impact on the health and flourishing of women.”

– **O. Carter Snead**, William P. and Hazel B. White Director of the Center for Ethics and Culture, Professor of Law, Concurrent Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame

Keynote Address

Cardinal Donald Wuerl’s remarks can be found at <https://catholicwomensforum.org/sexual-revolution-conference-videos/>

Opening Remarks: The Cultural Moment

Mary Eberstadt

- "Once the facts of any event are admitted to the record, to pretend we do not see them is to sin by omission, figuratively speaking, against truth itself. And so it is with the sexual revolution."
- "The libertarian conceit of pornography as a victimless crime is over."
- "Where in the world do otherwise sophisticated and knowledgeable men as those in the MeToo scandals learn such obtuseness, such emotional unintelligence? The question answers itself. Pornography, a bastard child of the sexual revolution."

- "Disproportionately, prominent men brought down in these scandals have been closely identified —and sometimes indistinguishable from—a political worldview that could be called the 'revolution-first.'"
- "Contrary to what women are tirelessly told by pro-revolution activists, being pro-abortion and being pro-woman aren't the same thing."
- "Until now, many adults have simply accepted it with childlike faith, as a non-negotiable fact of life. The MeToo movement gives us an opportunity to move beyond childlike faith about our sexual non-order, and into moral and intellectual maturity."

Panel I: Women's Health: Evidence and Concerns

Suzanne Hollman

- "The #MeToo movement has forced us to confront the reality that when it comes to sexual politics, women remain very much at risk."
- "The sexual revolution over-promised a landscape that would allow women to experience 'no strings attached' sex without physical or emotional risk."
- "It is possible that women now feel more pressure to *appear* free, emotionally unaffected, and to consent even when not entirely comfortable."
- "Men's pleasure and comfort still appear to be paramount, in which case, the sexual revolution was not that revolutionary at all."
- There are comparative psychological effects of shame with rape and consensual hook ups.
 - 77% of unwanted sex occurs within hookup relationships (Flack et. al, 2007)
 - 78% of women regret their most recent hookup encounter (Fisher 2012)

Monique Chireau

- Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the United States and is associated with oral, cervical and penile cancer.
- At the 55th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) in 2013, in Atlanta, Georgia, Farzan Siddiqui, MD, PhD, of Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, noted: "The growing incidence in oropharyngeal cancer has been largely attributed to the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, which led to an increased transmission of high-risk HPV" [emphasis added]
- Women's fertility regulation strategies have unintended consequences
 - Use of abortion as a fertility regulation strategy may be a risk marker for future infertility, or difficulty carrying to term
 - Abortion is known to be associated with increased risk for future preterm birth

Marguerite Duane

- 65% of women who stop using oral contraceptives do so because of side effects - <https://www.aafp.org/afp/2010/1215/p1499.html#afp20101215p1499-b1>
- Use of hormonal contraception, especially among adolescents, was associated with subsequent use of antidepressants and a first diagnosis of depression, suggesting depression as a potential adverse effect of hormonal contraceptive use - <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2552796>

Panel II: Exploitation: A Booming Business

Jennifer Lahl

- “This is the largest social human experiment of our time – we are learning *as we go* of the harms to women and children. Where else in medicine do we allow such things to happen?”
- Surrogate pregnancies add additional risk and are linked to higher obstetrical complications, such as gestational diabetes, hypertension, congenital heart defects, placenta previa, antibiotics required during labor, and caesarean sections. (Woo et. al, 2017)

Mary Leary

- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (“NCMEC”) studied its reports of suspected child sex trafficking over a 5 year period and found an 846% increase in reports of suspected child sex trafficking online.
- “Having an open market normalizes prostitution which enables businesses to profit from what was previously regarded as an illicit business.”
- 89% of women in prostitution want to leave because of violence. (Farley, 2004)

Mary Anne Layden

- “If we want to fix the problems exposed by the MeToo movement, we need to know what’s causing the problem.”
- Pornography’s overwhelmingly violent content leads to violence against women. (Bridges, 2010, Foubert 2017)

Closing Remarks: A Way Forward

Helen Alvaré

- “The Sexual Revolution at law is really the story of the growth, at law, of the valorization of any adult sexual expression, recklessly indifferent to children and to marriage.”
- “Now we probably shouldn’t be surprised that laws that invaded privacy and laws that punished kids for their parents’ behavior were overturned or withered, but what is surprising is the new regime: the degree to which the law began to valorize adult sexual expression...knowingly at the cost of children’s welfare.”
- “In fact, depending on the sources that you look at, we either have the same or increased amount of unintended pregnancy since...widespread distribution of contraception.”
- “The state does ‘ok’ at keeping people fed and housed, but [it is] ineffective at replicating what stable families do.”
- “Not only women but neither men really prefer sex without commitment to sex within commitment before pornification.” (U Chicago report of 1990s)
- “‘Unprotected sex makes babies’, as a government message, has really distanced people from their children and what they have done.”