

**This article first appeared in the March 2019 print edition of *Catholic Family News* (click [HERE](#) to subscribe; current subscribers can access the E-Edition [HERE](#)). We post it here today in honor of the Feast of the Annunciation to highlight the fact that Our Lady is the holy antithesis of the feminist movement. May we all strive to imitate our Immaculate Mother's humility and eagerness to conform ourselves to the will of God, rather than pridefully asserting our own will. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).**

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**Editor's Note:** *Catholic Family News* is pleased to welcome Stefanie Nicholas as a new contributor. As a young mother and zealous Catholic convert (she and her young son were received into the Church last Easter - see [here](#) for her conversion story), Miss Nicholas has a unique and valuable perspective on the challenges facing young adults and the Church, in general, at this critical time. Her sincerity, humility in sharing about her past, and firm commitment to pursuing sanctity as a "Rad Trad" Catholic are an inspiration to her many online followers. May her joyful witness and powerful testimony inspire many more conversions!

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As Catholics, we rightly condemn the so-called "[Women's March](#)" for a myriad of reasons. First and foremost, the Women's March is primarily a march for death. "Reproductive rights" - meaning the "right" of mothers to murder their own children in the womb - is the banner issue for the hundreds of thousands of shrieking ideologues who have been storming Washington, DC every January since the inaugural event took place in 2017.

When one examines the official "[agenda](#)" (platform) of the 2019 Women's March in tandem with the [platform](#) of the Communist Party USA, the similarities are hard to miss. It's all there - the shared commitment to so-called "LGBT rights", class warfare, "anti-racist" racist policies, leftist immigration policies, et al. It is especially fascinating to examine the graphic design ethos of the official Women's March website, social media accounts, and signage, as Matt Gaspers did in an [online article](#) shortly after the event. One needn't be an art critic to take note of the parallel stylistic choices employed by the former Soviet Union!

This concordance between feminist and communist agitation is most certainly troubling, but it shouldn't be the least bit surprising. Nor should we be surprised by the "radical" views that the mainstream pro-abortion politicians and public figures are pushing. In reference to Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton actually stated

something quite profound: “When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.” (The same applies to her, by the way!)

Turns out, it was originally a quote by American poet and activist Maya Angelou, but the point still stands. The feminists have told us who they are from the start. Why is it that we don’t take them at their word? Our inability (or in some cases, unwillingness) to do so is doing more to cripple us in this war against evil than most of us can imagine.

## “Radical Feminism” - Defining Our Terms

The initial “red pill” which led me away from the generally left-wing politics of my formative years was examining feminism. I have been explicitly identifying as an anti-feminist since around 19 years of age, long predating my later acceptance of “right-wing” politics (broadly speaking) and, later, Catholicism. I began by exploring mainstream content which decried “social justice warrior” feminist excesses and eventually, with further study, I realized that I actually opposed not only these obviously malicious manifestations but feminism *as such*.

Any rational person can see that the 2019 Women’s March (held Jan. 19 in Washington, D.C.) was an example of radical feminism. However, I question how many realize that the definition of “radical”, on which they are basing their opinion bears little resemblance to what the word actually means. Complicating matters further is the existence of a semi-coherent segment of feminist thought known specifically *as* “radical feminism”, borne out of the 1970s “second-wave”. My criticisms are not restricted to this particular faction.

The word “radical” originates from the Latin word *radix* (“root”), and later *radicalis* (of, or having, roots). As early as the 1600s, the word “radical” came to be understood as meaning “going to the essential, origin”, and this definition developed for the next few hundred years while remaining congruent with the same basic meaning, often in reference to far-reaching political reforms such as those of the Radical factions in post-Revolution France.

The evolution of what it means to hold “radical” ideas is hardly pernicious, in and of itself. Language naturally evolves and grows, so it is certainly true that not every word that comes to mean something different over time falls under Orwell’s literary admonition against Newspeak. However, I would contend that the change in political language which took place particularly in the latter half of the 20th century was not primarily organic, but based in ideological propagandizing.

The term “radical” serves as an excellent microcosm to observe. Although it was used in the U.S. to denote an idea as “unconventional” as early as the 1920s, I would argue that the use of the term in Saul Alinsky’s 1971 playbook for community organizers (also a must read for

anyone seeking to understand today's political climate), *Rules for Radicals*, denoted an interesting point of rupture.

No longer did a faction or point of view deemed "radical" carry the old meaning along with new connotations. Instead, the new meaning more or less entirely superseded the old: a *radical* had become synonymous with an *extremist*. No longer was one called a radical because they sought to go to the root of something, but because they wished to go beyond the borders of it. After all, Alinsky's radicals were not defined by any coherent set of principles or common rule for ethical behavior. His disciples were (and are) characterized, instead, by the idea that the ends justify the means, and that *the process* of "have-nots" taking power from the "haves" is paramount.

In regard to Catholic criticisms of feminism today, this is more than a mere piece of etymological trivia. The grave misunderstanding of what exactly constitutes "radical feminism" and the resulting acceptance of 1970s far-left propaganda language, is a matter of life and death – foremost, for the millions of innocent souls lost to the daily genocide of abortion and abortifacient contraception.

## Does "Feminism" Have Some Root Problems?

I don't need to remind anyone who attends the Traditional Latin Mass of the importance of language. Call it a secular version of the old maxim *lex orandi, lex credendi*, but good language is inextricably linked with good thought; and even if one is able to think well in a world wherein good language is at the risk of extinction, it is impossible to propagate good ideas with toxic words.

Take, for example, the following statement of Pope John Paul II found in his 1995 encyclical, [\*Evangelium Vitae\*](#):

"In transforming culture so that it supports life, women occupy a place, in thought and action, which is unique and decisive. It depends on them to promote a 'new feminism' which rejects the temptation of imitating models of 'male domination', in order to acknowledge and affirm the true genius of women in every aspect of the life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence and exploitation." (n. 99)

While I consider it praiseworthy that John Paul II recommended a "new feminism" (as opposed to the more popular "real feminism" or "true feminism" called for by political

conservatives and pro-lifers of all stripes today), we are still faced with a problem. If feminist ideology is, at its *radix*, a condemnable evil, should we be using the term to describe ourselves? Would it be acceptable, for example, for any Pope to imply that a Catholic can call himself a Freemason, provided it is baptized as a “new Freemasonry”?

Archbishop Fulton Sheen famously once said, “There are not over a hundred people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church. There are millions, however, who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church.” Many feminists and feminist sympathizers use a similar argument to marginalize individuals such as myself who oppose feminism wholesale. Feminism is self-evidently good in its core elements, so the logic goes. Therefore, an anti-feminist must be deluded as to what those core elements consist of, or they must be a monster who hates women and wants to see them subjugated. Oh, and if it is a woman opposing feminism, she must suffer from “internalized misogyny”.

What, then, according to feminists, are the core elements of feminism?

“‘Feminism’ just means you want women to be equal!”, so they say. They will gleefully point to the Merriam-Webster definition of feminism as “the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes”. I find it amusing that these very same people will decry the same dictionary as a compendium of oppressive patriarchal mutterings when it comes to the definition of racism, which does not presuppose an exclusion of white people as possible victims, as is fashionable today! At any rate, a dictionary is inherently a descriptive document, not a prescriptive one, and thus their citation of Merriam-Webster as though it is some sort of Papal bull codifying the acceptable theological formulations of feminism is laughable.

If, indeed, being a feminist means no more than to accept its implied goals vis-à-vis the dictionary definition, why is it so often deemed necessary in the eyes of progressives to accept the label of “feminist”? According to a 2016 Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation Poll, 43 percent of women consider themselves feminists, but as the authors of the study themselves admit, their arrival at this number was dependent on how the questions were asked. They note that in other studies beginning in the 1990s, where the answer is posed as a yes-or-no, this number drops to 20 percent or lower.

I doubt that even the most ardent feminist would imply that upwards of 80 percent of women are misogynists. Whether they admit it or not, they must presume that the vast majority of women simply do not understand feminism. In other words, if you’re not a feminist, you’re stupid. And we’re supposed to grovel at the feet of these champions of female empowerment!

There exists a third possibility, unthinkable to those who are intellectually poisoned by ideology. Most women refuse to identify as feminists not because they reject political, social, or economic equality of the sexes, but *because they rightly perceive that feminism at its essence is a sociopolitical ideology with specific dogmas that they cannot accept*, even if most are unable to articulate exactly what those dogmas are.

## Rational Grounds for Opposing Feminism

It's not surprising that the average person who doesn't feel comfortable calling themselves a feminist cannot give a two-sentence answer to what it is they are opposing. They know that if they simply were to out themselves as anti-feminists (notably, 4% of respondents in the Washington Post Poll did just that), the response would consist of practiced feminist sophistry, difficult to cut through for those who lack experience with the specifics. Feminists will often muddy the waters, bringing up the various waves of feminism, the complex history of feminist writings and thought, the red herring of specifically "radical feminism", and so on.

In an excellent essay entitled *Abuse of Language, Abuse of Power*, Catholic philosopher Josef Pieper had this to say:

"Whoever speaks to another person - not simply, we presume, in spontaneous conversation but using well-considered words, and whoever in so doing is explicitly not committed to the truth - whoever, in other words, is in this guided by something other than the truth - such a person, from that moment on, no longer considers the other as partner, as equal. In fact, he no longer respects the other as a human person. From that moment on, to be precise, all conversation ceases; all dialogue and all communication come to an end."[\[1\]](#)

Whether wittingly or unwittingly, this is the backdrop we are faced with in the vast majority of discussions with feminists. They have rejected out of hand the possibility that their core assumptions about gender might be wrong, and therefore anyone who believes that they are must be an evil or ignorant person. The correct response to this, of course, is not to treat feminists with an equal disregard for their dignity as human beings by attacking a straw man of their positions. Instead, we must understand what it is that *radical, essential, core* feminism consists of, and base our interactions with any individual on how much or little they accept of it. Although most feminists are Alinskyites, not all Alinskyites are feminists, and feminists most certainly do have a fairly simple structure of orthodoxy that we can point to in determining membership.

I do not, in fact, reject all feminism, only that which agrees with these two propositions:

1. Women as a group were/are oppressed by men as a group, historically and/or today.
2. Society was set up (whether by men or by nature) to benefit men as a group at the expense of women as a group.

In other words, to be a bit facetious, I reject all feminism. You will not find disagreement with these basic elements anywhere in the first, second, third, or fourth waves of feminism, in “radical feminism”, in intersectional feminism, or in any of these brilliant and complex feminist writings you’re supposedly missing out on. The only feminism I accept, therefore, is the “new feminism” or “true feminism” or “real feminism” of people like Pope John Paul II, which is not feminism at all, but rather a misguided attempt to create our own morally acceptable Catholic Newspeak.

There are many wonderful individuals praised as “real feminists”. I do not intend to demean those who use this terminology to venerate motherhood, fight for the rights of the unborn, help women victimized by such evils as domestic violence and sexual assault, or any other legitimately praiseworthy act. However, in good conscience I must fervently caution Catholics against this attempt to “reclaim” the language of feminist ideologues and Alinskyites.

When you call yourself a “real feminist”, you are giving credence to the idea that feminism is an acceptable ideology *if accepted in its essential form*. Look closely, with first principles in mind, and you will find that virtually any defense of feminism boils down to something even shallower than the Decree of Merriam-Webster Against the Anti-feminists: “We obviously need feminism, because without feminism, we wouldn’t have [insert so-called self-evidently positive benefit, self-evidently gained due to feminism].”

## **We Must Stop Aiding the Enemy**

Likely as a result of accepting Alinsky’s thought, modern-day feminists, at least, feel no need to argue positively for feminism’s end goals, if they can even elucidate what a post-feminist society should look like if it were achieved. And why should they? All they have to do is regurgitate their own “pinkwashed” revision of history and supposed feminist victories, a far easier task!



The present feminist domination of society and politics is not surprising when we understand that the very language we often use in regard to our opponents is based not on truth, but on *usefulness* – that is, language that has no regard for truth and therefore no regard for us as human beings created in the image of God. This is justified in the minds of many who use such abusive language (if they consider the implications of their language at all), because we as well as they have accepted *a priori* that the moral superiority of feminist thought is self-evident.

Thus, it becomes a self-perpetuating system. There is no need for a shadowy cabal of man-hating feminist overlords. All that is required is that the masses never question whether the two statements of belief qualifying radical feminism (listed above) are acceptable or not. All that is required is that the very same people who can see the “problems with feminism today” go on to *de facto* accept the feminist version of history, of language, of first principles, as gospel truth.

If feminism is evil now, why do we so easily assume that they were right at some point closer to the advent of their movement? Why do we assume that the outrageously evil fruit we see today comes forth of a pure root? To criticize the outrageous moral offenses of events such as the Women’s March and the recent advancement across the United States towards legalizing abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy is a good thing. To do so with an incorrect understanding of what we are criticizing at a *radical* (root) level is gravely dangerous.

Too often, we not only lessen our effectiveness in this war for souls, but inadvertently *aid the very enemies we seek to overthrow*. Let us make no mistake, we are losing this war in the temporal realm, and we are losing badly. While we can find comfort in knowing that Our Lady’s Immaculate Heart will triumph in the end, that does not mean we are not called to wield every weapon we can, both spiritual and temporal, in the greatest example of a just war ever fought on earth.

## Radical Catholicism Is the Answer

Unborn babies are being murdered each and every day, and we simply do not have time to wait as the language of the “new feminism” attempts to re-define the first principles (which often devolve to no unchanging principles at all) that our progressive, secular society rests upon. Instead, we should strive ever more fervently in every area of our lives to become the radical Catholics we were created to be.

The root of Catholicism is not only a set of ideas, but a Person: Truth, the Word of God,

Jesus Christ, Who can never contradict Himself, or lie, or teach that the ends justify the means. Pontius Pilate asked, “What is truth?” (John 18:38) and we owe it to Our Lord, to His people, and even to those made in His image who presently reject His love to make sure that we answer rightly.

### Notes

[1] Josef Pieper, *Abuse of Language, Abuse of Power* (trans. Lothar Krauth) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), p. 21.