

The Remnant

(Est. in 1967)

“... At the present time there is a remnant left, selected out of grace.” - Romans 11:5



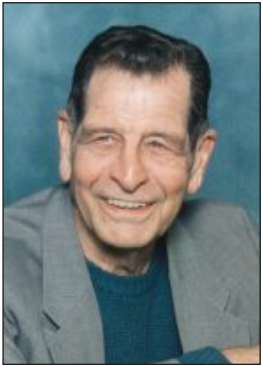
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From the Editor's Desk...

by Michael J. Matt

George Osborne, RIP



George T. Osborne, age 83, went to his eternal reward on June 9, 2016. His traditional Requiem Mass took place on June 16th at St. Augustine Catholic Church, offered by our dear

friend, Father John Echert.

Longtime readers of The Remnant may recall reading in these columns almost 50 years ago how George and his wife, Joan, had been of such invaluable assistance to my father after he'd left The Wanderer to found The Remnant. George had served in the Navy as an aviation electronics technician during the Korean Conflict. He was an extremely talented engineer, having become head of the electrical engineering department at Univac at age 27. He is responsible for several important patents that led to technology we find commonplace today, and he was a pioneer in the field of automated typesetting equipment.

So you can imagine how providential it was back in those pre-computer days, when my father walked out of The Wanderer only to have George Osborne walk into his life. They became fast friends, and through George's genius, the fledgling Remnant quickly became the product of high-tech typesetting equipment, that in those days was truly

~ See Editor's Desk Page 2



July is the Month of the Most Precious Blood

It is said that the Blessed Virgin venerated the Most Precious Blood of her infant Son on the day of His circumcision as she collected the first relics of His Precious Blood on a piece of cloth. On that momentous occasion she united her tears with that of the Word Incarnate on account not so much of the sensible pain but of His supernatural sorrow for the hard-heartedness of mortals. - Mary of Agreda

The Solemn Consecration of the City of Aliquippa: Tradition to Change the Future

By Father Ladis J. Cizik

On the First Saturday of the Month, dedicated to the Mother of God, June 4, 2016, in the month dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the City of Aliquippa, in western Pennsylvania was solemnly consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This consecration was done by all three of the Catholic Pastors of Aliquippa along with the Mayor of the City of Aliquippa, who is not Catholic. The Consecrators and the faithful gathered for this historic spiritual event were united in prayer to humbly implore

Almighty God, through the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to bestow His graces and protection upon this economically challenged former steel mill town along the banks of the Ohio River.

Catholic Tradition played an important role in planning and carrying out this holy effort to transform the old City of Aliquippa into a new brightly shining City of God. The idea for this consecration came from the men of the Knights of Columbus Woodlawn Council 2161 Traditional Latin Mass

~ See Aliquippa/Page 4

The Rise and Fall of Pope Francis

By Christopher A. Ferrara

Yet again Francis has told us what he thinks, yet again the Church is rocked by scandal, and yet again the Vatican has had to issue a “clarification” in an effort to calm the storm. As the whole world knows by now, during rambling remarks at a “pastoral conference” for priests of the Diocese of Rome at Saint John Lateran on June 16, Francis declared that [“the great majority of our sacramental marriages are null”](#) because the spouses “don’t know what they say” when they say “Yes, for life.” But Francis is also “sure” that couples in the countryside of northeast Argentina who cohabit out of the husband’s superstitious fear of marriage vows, avoiding Catholic nuptials until they are grandparents, have [“a true marriage, they have the grace of marriage, precisely because of the fidelity they have.”](#)

Before we assess the latest Bergoglian scandal, including the hastily revised and censored transcript of his remarks, an initial objection: Couples who exchange marriage vows before a priest also live together and commonly exhibit “fidelity” over a period of many years thereafter. Even supposing they somehow had no idea of what their vows meant when they recited them, under Francis’s view would not they also have “a true marriage” and “the grace of marriage”?

~ See Fall of Francis/Page 5



Dwan B. Walker, Mayor of Aliquippa, PA, does what popes don't

From the Editor's Desk Continued...

state of the art. My father often credited his dear friend, George, with having provided the technical assistance without which The Remnant would never have survived the first six months.

George and Joan were blessed with 9 children, and, up until the day he died, it was a familiar thing to see George's car, bedecked with pro-life bumper stickers, heading down the highway from Cambridge, Minnesota to So. St. Paul (some 50 miles one way) to attend the Traditional Latin Mass every Sunday and Holy Day. It was also a common sight to see old George walking his dog Buster and then Lena, praying his rosary as they walked along.

George was one of the great Catholic gentlemen from the old days—a man for whom our increasingly evil world has little time and even less appreciation. He served God and Country all of his life, loved his wife and children and many grandchildren, had friends and he will be greatly missed. Eternal life grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May George rest in peace.

Antipope Francis?

In recent weeks The Remnant has been accused of lacking the intestinal fortitude required to 'say it like it is' where "Antipope" Francis is concerned.

I would like to put this matter to rest. In my opinion, proclaiming Francis an antipope—even if I believed it to be the case—would be a zero sum gain for traditionalists that would only play into the hands of those most desperate to dismiss our larger arguments, not merely against the myriad errors of Pope Francis, but also against the

central thesis of the Modernists and the revolution they spawned.

This is the perfect storm for traditional Catholic newspapers and websites. The credibility of a pope—who in substance isn't much more radical than his post-conciliar predecessors, although he's angrier and seems to harbor inordinate resentment for Europeans—is wavering just now, and we have this golden opportunity to connect a whole host of dots about what's happened over the past 50 years especially, but also long before that.

Francis is having so much fun "being pope" and shooting off his mouth that he's single-handedly outing the entire revolution. As far as The Remnant is concerned, we say let him speak as there's nothing we could say by way of exposé that would be more damaging to the Revolution of Vatican II than the words of Pope Francis.

At a moment like this it seems to us that the bizarre circumstances of his election, Benedict's unseemly desire to be co-Pope, the St. Gallen Mafia (which every granny in cyberspace knows all about, by the way...odd for something supposedly so top secret) — all of it pales next to the awesome opportunity that's been dropped in our laps to blast huge, gaping holes in the great façade and to remove the blindfolds from tens of thousands of our co-religionists.

If the baddies can dismiss us as quasi-sedevacantists, obviously they will. They have nothing else to throw at us anymore, and I think a declaration of antipope from us only makes their day. Total vindication of Tradition will be squandered in the fever swamps of sedevacantism. And for what?! Maybe not the war but this battle at least, has become ours to lose all of a sudden.

The Remnant intends to stay focused on this opportunity to undermine much more than just Pope Francis. We have much work to do, and we're quite content to let Pope Francis continue to peck himself to death while we mount a full frontal assault on the great façade of Vatican II.

When is Canada going to apologize to the Nazis?

LifeNews.com reports that Canada's [Senate has passed Bill C-14](#)—the euthanasia and assisted suicide bill after the House of Commons removed a controversial amendment that would have prohibited a beneficiary from participating in a person's assisted death or signing the person's request for assisted death. This was an amendment that protected people from a greedy beneficiary or an unscrupulous family member. The final bill allows a beneficiary to participate in the act of 'mercy killing', even to lethally inject a loved one. Bill C-14, which determines how Canadians will kill Canadians, now goes to the Governor General to be signed.

Here we see 'enlightenment' in action. Since western societies decided they no longer need God or His Church to help govern their peoples and maintain the common good, they have excelled at one thing – killing people. They have become the most proficient mass murderers in history, in fact, whether in

the womb, the battlefield or the nursing home.

The revisionist historians never tire of telling us all about how evil were the societies of the 'dark ages' of Faith. Why, remember that big, bad Inquisition? Or how about those murderous Crusades? And who can forget those 'wars of religion' where thousands died for NOTHING! Frightful stuff!

Well, we at The Remnant would like to try a little thought experiment. Imagine for a moment that you know nothing, and for the first time in your life you're reading a history text about life in Catholic France, for example, back in the day:

By the end of the 11th century, the King of the Franks had developed war technology whereby he was able to wipe out hundreds of thousands of women and children in the process of destroying entire cities. It is estimated that his war machine claimed the lives of several million human beings during his reign. He waged wars, not because the kingdom was being attacked from the outside, but rather because he wanted to make the whole world safe for monarchy. And so all those who didn't want his rule received what amounted to a death sentence, as he sent his war machine to the four corners of the earth to kill, murder and maim all those who disagreed with him.

He was, after all, a truly Christian king. But, wait. There's more! Before the King's reign had ended, he had passed laws whereby the people of France could also kill their own families, pretty much at will. A son, for example, who stood to inherit his father's castle and lands, could legally behead his father if he seemed to be committing patricide for compassionate reasons. In fact, it is said that the King of France had developed better means of killing large numbers of people in short periods of time than had ever existed in human history. And his killing fields extended throughout the realm. He encouraged mothers to kill their babies, children to kill their parents, as he himself developed new and improved ways of exterminating millions already among the living, and many millions more in utero.

This monarchical penchant for death had a contagious effect on society in general, with young people especially losing all respect for human life to such an extent that they regularly stabbed and killed their teachers, their friends, street rivals, and sometimes even those who just had better sandals on their feet. Skulls became the cultural symbol of the day, while wearing black and listening to music about suicide and death became all the rage with young French Christians at the time.

You get the picture? There is nothing that even Catholic-bashing revisionists have come up with so far that can compare in sheer horror to what

the modern state is perpetuating on a daily basis here in the real world. The Nazis came close. The Soviets came even closer. But in the ages of faith such institutionalized barbarism had never even entered into the minds of men. And yet we're the supposed "enlightened" ones while our Christian fathers are the barbarians. We kill more people, we kill more efficiently, we kill more often. Clearly, we're more sophisticated than they'd ever hoped to be.

At least that's what we poor, dumbed-down morons would have our delusional selves believe. In reality, we have become the "enlightened" agents of the Light Bearer himself as we engineer a self-inflicted and suicidal global chastisement such as the world has never seen. But in our benighted little world of death and darkness, we see only light and evolution.

Please God, don't let us get us.

New from Remnant Press

Don't forget to order our new book. For just \$15 (P&H included), you can get your copy of "The Catholic Homeschool: A Practical Guide."

The indefatigable president of Our Lady of Victory Home School, Mr. Scott Jones—a man who knows something about home education—wrote the following of Sherry Foster's excellent new book:

"This book is a must for every home schooling library, to be sure. But it's also a must for every Catholic educator's library. The content is not only fascinating, it is amazingly informative and inspirational as well. Whether you are a veteran or just getting ready to embark on this academic adventure, *The Catholic Home School, a Practical Guide* is a guidebook to be read over and over again. P.S. - Some dads really like it too!"

With a Foreword by yours truly (a proud home school father who believes home schooling is the most counterrevolutionary, pro-life, pro-God and pro-family thing we can do), I'm sure this book will not disappoint home-schooling parents and educators. It makes a great gift from grandparents, too.

So order your copy now in time for the new school year. (Call: 651-433-5425), order online at [RemnantNewspaper.com](#) or send a check to The Remnant through snail mail. ■

The Remnant

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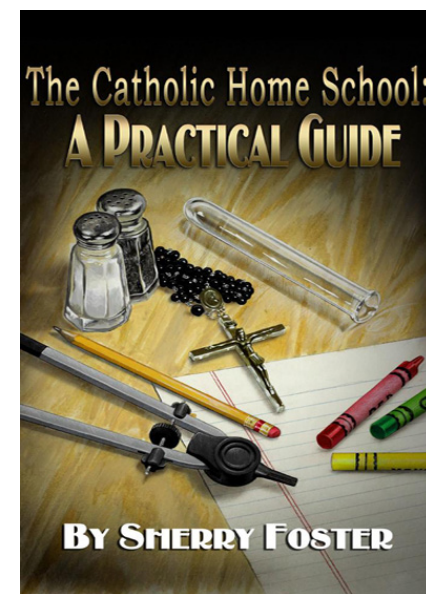
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The Remnant Speaks

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The Vatican and Fatima's Secret

Editor, *The Remnant*: Patrick Archbold began his May 31st article by asking the very interesting question: why did the Vatican waste time offering Pope Benedict XVI's denial of a statement attributed to him by Fr. Dollinger concerning the Third Secret? Except for the handful of Fatimists in the world it would seem that the average Catholic (which includes the average priest) knows virtually nothing about Fatima. The Vatican's 2000 release of the Vision of the Third Secret ended the affair as far as the non-Fatimists were concerned---interpreting the vision as relegated to past events. Furthermore while the Church instructed the faithful that Fatima was worthy of belief it never encouraged its message to be spread. And Archbold rightly points out that Chris Ferrara's and Soccia's work about Fatima were much more hard-hitting than Dollinger's statement yet the Vatican was silent. Why did the Vatican respond to the 1Peter5 blog? Given that the Vatican did respond, Archbold tries to understand the psychology (?) behind the Vatican response. His best guess was that Benedict XVI, through mental reservation, felt it necessary to deny the existence of Our Lady's interpretation of the Vision. Under the legal/moral doctrine of "mental reservation" one may omit/withhold the truth, deceive others by withholding the truth or deny some truths if one can justify it with sufficient (and presumably morally good) reason(s).

Archbold suggests that those at-the-top of the Vatican may have had mental reservations about Our Lady's interpretation of the Vision. And that they may have justified their mental reservation by questioning the authenticity of the text. This makes no sense because "mental reservation" involves the withholding of truths not the withholding of something whose truth is questionable. If the text of Our Lady's interpretation was not considered authentic then "mental reservation" doesn't apply. Lack of authenticity would be reason enough to withhold the text. Although the Vatican would have been obliged to explain what facts lead them to believe that the text of the Vision was authentic while the text of Our Lady's interpretation was not? If part of Our Lady's interpretation of the Vision is what Dollinger reported (and several others have suggested) then it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what's going on at the Vatican---- does it? What's less clear and far more interesting is why the Vatican wasted any time on answering a blog that most Catholics (or anyone else) don't even know exists.

Anthony Pagano
Bethlehem, PA

Saint Catherine of Aragon?

Editor, *The Remnant*: It strikes me that

gathering signatures of the canonization of Catherine of Aragon might be a good idea. What better saintly role model for protecting marriage and the family? Think about it.

Irene Groot

Editor's Note: Great idea. I'm all for it!
MJM

Papal Pardon for the Devil?

Editor, *The Remnant*: I laughed and then sighed (in despair) at your recent comment, "So, what next? A papal pardon of Lord Lucifer?" ("Francis Goes to Hollywood"). At once very wry and very sad because it's so very possible.

Mike Spaniola
Minturn, CO

Sedevacantism Anyone?

Editor, *The Remnant*: Thanks for your article by Salsa on Sedevacantism. The information and ideas in this article plus the public anti traditional teaching of Post Vat2 popes on union with Prots, no conversion, no evangelization of heterodox Greeks and Russians, copts, no revoke of old testament, and same god as Mohammedans proves the new church is not catholic. Keep up your good work, the sooner duped catholics realize the fraud of the great St. John Paul the apostate and his ilk the better. Thanks again. Christ is our captain,

Korporal Larry

Keep It Up, Remnant!

Editor, *The Remnant*: Thank you for the work you are doing informing the ordinary faithful like myself on the state of things in the church, particularly with the growing state of open heresy and blasphemy; and exposing the scourge of practicing sodomites increasingly standing on the altars representing our Lord. I am just an ordinary Catholic with no official training or deep theological knowledge so I rely on the wisdom and teaching of good Christian writers to help me in my faith. My experience in reading a lot of Pope Francis' teachings and homilies is what I can only describe as a drink that will not go down. At times feel Jesus is being deeply disrespected, and all the various quotes provided in your articles - I too have felt those sentiments in my spirit when I read them - they only produce a sadness in the spirit as well as anger at times especially in terms of the Holy Name.

Please emphasize the aspect specifically of the Holy Name of Jesus and how it is being blasphemed by the Pope himself and how by promoting Timothy Radcliffe, who openly blasphemes the name of Jesus, that this is in effect walking in communion with the very thing. I don't think it was a coincidence that only a couple of weeks after this promotion, the Pope's staff broke.

Just after the one year anniversary of this promotion, I had something said in my spirit after I received communion (which had the sensation of tasting stale) that the heavens were amazed that this abomination was able to stand

unchecked - that the men of the church thought so little of the Holy Name that they felt it was okay for this to stand and even to let him carry on to the Eucharistic Congress earlier this year and continue to openly blaspheme - this representative of the Pope himself. The words that came to me after the 'stale' taste sensation was: "The bread has grown stale and the wine has run out"... and then write to defend my name.

Please use competent writers to speak of this boldly, loudly and continually until this scourge is removed from the church, for I believe we are even bringing judgment on ourselves if we do not speak out as seemed to be indicated in Ezekiel as the protective X was put on those who 'moaned and groaned' over all the abominations taking place on the altars of the Lord.

As well in seeking understanding in spirit of what that phrase that came to me after the 'stale' tasting communion meant came to me that phrase 'standing where it should not' which describes the abomination of desolation that is the homosexual priest.

Judgment is quickly approaching for this - either we stand on the Holy Name and in doing so stand up boldly FOR the Holy Name to the point of death, or we will not stand at all.

Yours in Christ,
Zita Mary Downey

Another Grateful Chartres Pilgrim

Dear Remnant Readers and Sponsors: This year I was blessed with the opportunity to attend the pilgrimage to Chartres, France with the Remnant Tours. Traveling from Paris to Chartres, we experienced a grueling but rewarding journey together. This journey was a spiritual one that strengthened my belief in the restoration of the traditional Catholic faith. Throughout this experience I was able to learn so much from all of my fellow pilgrims and my faith greatly increased. Following the 3 day, 70 mile walk to Chartres, we continued our pilgrimage by visiting many holy places. Some of these experiences included venerating St. Catherine Labouré and St. Vincent de Paul in Paris, traveling to an apparition site of Our Lady in La Salette, and to St. Maximum, where we had mass in St. Mary Magdalene's cave. This trip was a life changing experience. After being on this journey with the remnant group, I believe this pilgrimage is so valuable in spreading the traditional Catholic faith. I am so grateful to all of my sponsors

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and to those who made this pilgrimage possible.

Sara Bischel
Harrison, Ohio

Editor, *The Remnant*: If you have survived being a crash test dummy for the Novus Ordo Catholic experiment, the first question you ask yourself is how did I end up in this smashed vehicle? Second question, am I hurt?, check for damage, limbs intact, no head injuries, whoops soul a mess, thank God for confession. Emerging from the wreckage you are startled to find 100s, no millions of other cars headed on the same road straight into the brick wall you hit. Even more surprising, you see that the traffic cops are redirecting traffic from a safe road (tradition) to the new road with the brick wall at the end. The third question you ask yourself is why are they actively sending us to destruction? You speculate, the leaders do not appear insane, why are they doing this? Answer, because they live and breathe an artificial fantasy world, no amount of real data will register, i.e. the sound of millions of cars crashing into walls, no for people whose world is false any recognition that they are wrong however small will cause their entire worldview to collapse. If this theory is correct then what the world can expect is no change from the media, secular, or church leaders. In fact a dramatic acceleration into the wall is what we can expect, with Dr. Goebbels style cries "Do you want total Vatican II? Onward, Vatican IV, onward more, more and straight into that very real Russian wall. Our Lady of Fatima pray for us.

Bill Choquette ■

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The Solemn Consecration of the City of Aliquippa

Fr. Cizik/Continued from Page 1

Guild, stationed at Saint Titus Church in Aliquippa. The Traditional Latin Mass Guild is a *de facto* association of the Christian faithful. The Guild was founded on November 12, 2007 to support the implementation of our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum*. In addition, the Guild's establishment was also dedicated to promoting the celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass and Sacraments, particularly at Saint Titus.

The Woodlawn Council 2161, of which I serve as Chaplain, has also been instrumental in supporting the annual Catholic Identity Conference held each year in nearby Weirton, West Virginia (next Conference September 9-11, 2016). One of the other events that the Traditional Latin Mass Guild also regularly sponsors is a Traditional Latin Mass and Banquet honoring Blessed Karl of Austria, which draws many from outside the Latin Mass Community to attend the Mass of the Ages. It was at the Blessed Karl Banquet last year that renowned author and speaker Suzanne Pearson delivered a most excellent talk on Blessed Karl and the Message of Our Lady of Fatima. It was from Suzanne that the Knights got the idea that rather than wait indefinitely for the collegial consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by the Pope and bishops, we should endeavor to work at the local level to consecrate our cities and states. She even provided the Knights with the formula that the Bishops of Portugal used to consecrate their country to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on May 13, 1931. This formula was adapted for use by the Priests consecrating the City of Aliquippa.

Heaven's desire for this consecration of Portugal was communicated by Sister Lucia of Fatima through her bishop, Bishop da Silva, to the other Portuguese bishops. After these bishops consecrated Portugal to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, that country was spared from the evils of Communism surrounding the Spanish Civil War and from the ravages of World War II. In addition, Portugal then underwent a miraculous transformation whereby their government turned completely away from its hatred of Christ and His Church. In addition, the Church in Portugal grew in fervor and in numbers of holy vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The model for the Priests' Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus came from Pope Leo XIII, as directed in his Encyclical *Annum Sacrum*, of May 25, 1899, regarding the "Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus." For the Mayor of the City of Aliquippa, we significantly modified the Mayor of Miami's Consecration of his City, done at Miami's Cathedral on May 30, 2013, since it was not explicitly a consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Icon of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary featured in Aliquippa, was a reproduction of the "United Hearts of Jesus and Mary" Icon, which was



Just prior to the start of Mass, Mayor Walker read the proclamation of consecration.

commissioned for the Miami event.

The consecrations followed an 11:00am Byzantine Divine Liturgy, dedicated to the Mother of God, at Saint George Byzantine Catholic Church in Aliquippa. This beautiful mysterious traditional Eastern Liturgy featured the Choir of Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church of nearby Ambridge. The priestly Consecrators were the Reverend Fathers: Mykhaylo Shkyndya, Pastor of Saint George's; Michael Polosky, Pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian

Catholic Churches in Aliquippa and Ambridge; and Paul C. Householder, Pastor of Saint Titus Roman Catholic Church in Aliquippa. The Honorable Dwan B. Walker, Mayor of the City of Aliquippa, also knelt before the Icon of the "United Hearts of Jesus and Mary," as he too consecrated his beloved City and its people to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

It should be noted that Mayor Walker is no stranger to the Traditional Latin

Mass Community at Saint Titus Church. Annually, he attends the Traditional Latin Blue Mass and Banquet sponsored by the Traditional Latin Mass Guild to honor police and law enforcement officers in Beaver County, where Aliquippa is situated. He is a true friend and has a big heart filled with love of God and neighbor.

Following the Byzantine Liturgy and Consecrations, we moved to Saint Titus where an awesome Traditional Latin Solemn High Mass was offered in Thanksgiving for the historic Consecrations. With Mayor Walker and Father Householder in attendance, the Votive Mass of Christ the King was celebrated by Canon Jean-Marie Moreau, ICKSP, assisted by myself as Deacon, and Father David G. Rombold, as Subdeacon. The Holy Sacrifice featured the Bach Choir of Pittsburgh admirably performing Mozart's Coronation Mass.

We have great hope that as with the Country of Portugal, the future of the City of Aliquippa will be blessed by its having been consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and, also, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. These consecrations of Aliquippa were rooted in Catholic Church Tradition and surrounded by two of the highest forms of worship ever known to man: the venerable Byzantine Liturgy; and the immemorial Traditional Latin Mass. May God bless these efforts. May God bless the City of Aliquippa and all of its people. ■

The Words of the Consecrations

CONSECRATION of ALIQUIPPA to the IMMACULATE HEART of MARY by the Priests

We, the shepherds chosen by Thy Son to watch over the City of Aliquippa, and to feed in His name the sheep that He hast acquired at the price of His Most Precious Blood,

We come to Thee today, Mother of God and Mother of us all, as the official and consecrated representatives of Thy Divine Son's flock, and in an act of filial homage, of faith, love and trust – we now solemnly Consecrate the City of Aliquippa to Thy Immaculate Heart.

We implore Thee to take the City of Aliquippa from our fragile hands into Thy own, defend it and guard it as Thine own property, make Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, reign, conquer and rule in it. For, outside of Him, there is no salvation. Amen.

CONSECRATION to the SACRED HEART of JESUS by the Priests

Most sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon us humbly prostrate before Thy Altar.

We the shepherds chosen by Thee to watch over the City of Aliquippa and to feed in Thy Name the sheep that Thou hast acquired at the price of Thy Most Precious Blood, We come to Thee

today, Our Lord and God, as the official and consecrated representatives of Thy flocks, and in an act of filial homage, of faith, love and trust – we now solemnly Consecrate the City of Aliquippa to Thy Most Sacred Heart.

Grant O Lord, we most humbly beseech Thee, peace and order to the City of Aliquippa, and make this portion of Thy Kingdom resound from border to border with one cry: Praise to the Divine Heart that wrought our salvation; to It be glory and honor forever and ever. Amen.

CONSECRATION of ALIQUIPPA to the IMMACULATE HEART of MARY by the Honorable Dwan B. Walker, Mayor of Aliquippa

I, Dwan B. Walker, Mayor of Aliquippa, Consecrate the City of Aliquippa to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

I put into Your maternal hands, my government, with all of its employees, and all of the citizens under my responsibility. I offer to You all of my thoughts and decisions, as Mayor of Aliquippa, so that I may use them for the good of the City, and to always be aware of the Ten Commandments of God in governing it.

In making this Consecration, may Your Immaculate Heart intercede for us before the throne of God for the forgiveness of all of Aliquippa's past transgressions, such that our beloved home may be transformed into a true City of God, an

example of hope for all other cities.

I, Dwan B. Walker, Mayor of the City of Aliquippa, declare this solemn oath before God and the great people of this City on this 4th day of June, in the year of Our Lord 2016. Amen.

CONSECRATION to the SACRED HEART of JESUS by the Honorable Dwan B. Walker, Mayor of Aliquippa

I, Dwan B. Walker, Mayor of Aliquippa, Consecrate the City of Aliquippa to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

I place before You, my God and King, Jesus Christ, my government, with all of its employees, and all of the citizens under my responsibility. I offer to You all of my thoughts and decisions, as Mayor of Aliquippa, so that I may use them for the good of the City, and to always be aware of Your Gospel message in governing it.

In making this Consecration, may Your Sacred Heart have mercy on us and forgive of all of Aliquippa's past transgressions, such that our beloved home may be transformed into a true City of God, an example of hope for all other cities.

I, Dwan B. Walker, Mayor of the City of Aliquippa, declare this solemn oath before God and the great people of this City on this 4th day of June, in the year of Our Lord 2016. Amen. ■

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No, apparently. As we shall see, Francis thinks that in the “great majority” of cases the sacramental marriage rite not only results in a nullity, thus failing to impart grace, but actually leaves the parties in a worse spiritual condition than people who cohabit in “fidelity” because they *fear marriage*. (And let us not hear the excuse that Francis was merely comparing natural marriages to truly null Catholic marriages, for cohabitation, even in northeast Argentina, is not any kind of marriage, especially when it is motivated by an aversion to marriage.)

In short, these astonishing statements—if Francis has not already exhausted the capacity for astonishment—mean this: *a Roman Pontiff* has declared that most sacramental marriages are null while many illicit sexual unions are actually true marriages. If only it were a joke. Let examine more closely the relevant papal remarks and the Vatican’s ineffectual attempt to undo them (but only in part).

Francis and the New Moral “Realism”

Francis’s remarks at the Lateran began with a reprise of his theme in *Amoris Laetitia* (AL) that the moral precepts against illicit sexual unions represent merely the “objective ideal” of conduct toward which the Church must take a “realistic” approach given the “concrete complexity of one one’s limits” (AL 303). In other words, situation ethics as to sins of the flesh, but *not* as to certain other sins Francis constantly condemns. Quoth Francis at the Lateran:

Evangelical realism engages with the other, with others, and not does make of ideals and of the “must be” an obstacle to encountering others in the situations in which they are found. This does not mean not *proposing the evangelical ideal*. No, it does not mean this. On the contrary, it invites us to live it *in history*, with all that this entails [my emphasis]. And this does not mean not being clear in doctrine, but rather to avoid falling into judgments and attitudes that do not take into consideration *the complexity of life*.... This requires us to develop a family pastoral capable of *welcoming, accompanying, discerning and integrating* [emphasis in original].

This was the same theme enunciated in the [“sermon heard round the world”](#) on June 9, wherein Francis, provoking yet another storm of justified outrage among the faithful, falsely depicted Our Lord’s teaching on sexual morality thus: “But do that up to the point that you are capable.”

At the Lateran, a woman in the audience addressed to Francis a question about how to “avoid a double morality in our communities: one demanding, and one permissive, one rigorist and one laxist.” In answer to this floating softball, involving the classic sophistical ploy of the false alternative, Francis elicited thunderous applause and a radiant, satisfied smile from the woman:



Both are not true: neither rigorism nor laxity. The Gospel chooses another road. For this, these four words [emphasizing]: *welcome, accompany, integrate, discern—without putting one’s nose into the moral life, so called, of people* [gesturing to indicate skeptical quotation marks]. [Note: the Vatican deleted the words “so called” from this remark.]

Yes, we actually have a Pope who thinks the Church has no business inquiring into people’s “so called” moral lives. That would make administration of the Sacrament of Confession and spiritual counsel rather difficult, not to mention the whole mission of the Catholic Church to convert sinners and save souls.

In answer to the same question, Francis repeated his familiar refrain that Catholic moral teaching is not “mathematical,” another of the straw men he is constantly assailing: “But we wish, so many times, that secure doctrine have a mathematical certainty that does not exist, neither with laxism, nor with indulgence, nor with rigidity.” If doctrine has no “mathematical certainty,” what kind of certainty does it have? For Francis, as Chapter 8 of AL makes clear, only the certainty of a “rule” or “ideal” to be applied according to varying circumstances.

But again, as discussed [elsewhere](#), such Bergoglian dicta apply only to sexual sins. Thus, for example, the absolute indissolubility of marriage and the absolute impermissibility of cohabitation become an “evangelical ideal” that must be accommodated to “the complexity of life” without “nosy” inquiries into personal behavior, whereas the avoidance of fossil fuels and excessive air conditioning are ironclad mandates binding “[every person living on this planet](#).” In purporting to reject a double morality, Francis advances precisely that; and that double standard informs the rest of his comments at the Lateran and indeed his whole pontificate.

A Preposterous Claim

It was in answer to a third and final question, concerning the “crisis in

marriage,” that Francis opined the “great majority” of Catholic marriages to be nullities. As the respected canonist Dr. Edward Peters observes, the claim is simply “[preposterous](#).” Church law, reflecting all of Tradition, natural justice and simple common sense, presumes the validity of marriages (CIC 1060) and further presumes “the consent of the mind... to the words or the signs used in the celebration of a marriage.” (CIC 1101.1) Francis, however, blithely presumes exactly the opposite.

And what is the basis for the Bergoglian Presumption? Did Francis empanel a canonical commission to study the question? Did he review statistical data from diocesan marriage tribunals around the world? Has he received a report on the prevalence of invalid marriages based upon an examination of decisions in the Roman Rota? Did he consult even something as dubious as sociological surveys of Catholic spouses in various nations regarding their attitude toward the marriage bond?

None of the above. Francis declares that the vast majority of Catholic marriages are nullities simply because that is what he thinks. That is his *impression*. But what is the source of this impression? Apparently, nothing more than Francis’s own catch phrase: “provisional culture.” Quoth Francis:

... [W]e live also in a culture of the provisional. A bishop, I heard him say, some months ago, was presented with a young man who had finished his university studies, a fine youngster, and he said: “I want to become a priest, but for ten years [laughter].” It is the provisional culture. And this is happening everywhere, even in the sacerdotal life, in the religious life. The provisional.

And for this reason a great majority of our sacramental marriages are null, because the spouses say: “Yes, for life”, but they don’t know what they say, because they have another culture. They say it, and they have good faith, but they don’t have [the awareness, la consapevolezza, a word added to the published transcript]

So, according to Francis, couples undergoing a Catholic marriage ceremony are not validly married even

though they acknowledge that marriage is for life, do not feign their consent, and are in *good faith* when they recite their vows before the priest. Francis’s only explanation for this absurd opinion is that the “provisional culture” deprives couples of any knowledge of the meaning of the very words they utter at the altar. According to Francis, while their minds consent to the words they have spoken *in good faith*, as Church law rightly presumes they do, somehow they “don’t know what they say” when they say “Yes, for life.”

How can that be? How does Francis know that the “provisional culture” produces such zombie-like behavior in millions of *admittedly* good-willed people who appear to be aware of what they are saying and doing? Well, of course he doesn’t know. But that is what he *thinks*. Let the marriages fall where they may! And into the bargain throw “the vast majority” of priestly ordinations, just as Francis suggests with his anecdote about the young man who supposedly contemplated being a priest for only ten years. The “provisional culture” clearly negates consent to such onerous spiritual obligations as lifelong marriage and priestly celibacy.

But Francis’s anthropological construct seems suspiciously limited in scope. He does not suggest that the “provisional culture” negates people’s understanding of the meaning of other very serious and binding commitments, many with terms far more complicated than simple marriage vows, such as contractual obligations that often last for most of a lifetime, military service from which there can be no escape once agreed to, the ethical rules of various professions, oaths of citizenship under penalty of treason, judicial oaths in legal proceedings, and so forth. Nor, under his double standard of moral accountability, does he allow the plea of ignorance on account of the “provisional culture” when it comes to comprehension of other obligations he constantly condemns people for neglecting: care for the environment, social justice, an end to the arms trade, the death penalty and discrimination against women, the redistribution of wealth, and so on down the litany of politically correct commandments.

How is it, then, that the “provisional culture” induces brute incomprehension of the most basic duties to God and others *only* when it comes to matrimony—a commitment, moreover, divinely aided by the grace of baptism that instills in children [a habitus of faith](#)? It would appear that like AL as a whole, Francis’s “provisional culture” is an *ad hoc* rhetorical device in aid of his obsessive drive to erect a vast ecclesial apparatus to accommodate deviations from the Sixth Commandment while reducing the indissoluble marriage bond to an “ideal” as opposed to what God has ordained as an absolute, exceptionless moral requirement for licit conjugal relations.

Here it must be noted, however, that Francis’s comments at the Lateran flatly contradict his formal declaration less than five months ago in an address to officials of the Roman Rota. On that

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occasion (January 22, 2016), Francis declared as follows:

It is worth clearly reiterating that the essential component of marital consent is not the quality of one's faith, which according to unchanging doctrine can be undermined only on the plane of the natural (cf. CIC c. 1055 §§ 1,2). Indeed, the *habitus fidei* is infused at the moment of Baptism and continues to have a mysterious influence in the soul, even when faith has not been developed and psychologically speaking seems to be absent. It is not uncommon that couples are led to true marriage by the *instinctus naturae* and at the moment of its celebration they have a limited awareness of the fullness of God's plan. Only later in the life of the family do they come to discover all that God, the Creator and Redeemer, has established for them. *A lack of formation in the faith and error with respect to the unity, indissolubility and sacramental dignity of marriage invalidate marital consent only if they influence the person's will* (cf. CIC c. 1099). *It is for this reason that errors regarding the sacramentality of marriage must be evaluated very attentively.*

This excellent statement reflects the orthodox teaching that the consent giving rise to a valid marriage requires only that the parties "be not ignorant that marriage is a permanent partnership between a man and a woman ordered to procreation of offspring by some means of procreation," which ignorance "is not presumed after puberty." (Canon 1096, §§ 1, 2)

That is, no elaborate understanding of the Catholic doctrine on marriage is required, *and the parties may even be mistaken about "the unity, indissolubility and sacramental dignity of marriage,"* so long their that mistake does not preclude a basic intention, at the natural level, to enter into a permanent marital relationship and have children (an intention not negated by use of [contraception](#), so long as there was an intention to have children at some point). Ironically, the requirement for valid consent to marry is essentially the same minimum Francis now purports to discern in cases of mere cohabitation, yet he denies that it can be found in the "great majority" of sacramental marriages!

What is to account for this blatant self-contradiction? Only one answer seems possible: the statement before the Rota, as its clear and precise language suggests, was written by an orthodox expert on the subject, whereas the comments as the Lateran, spoken off-the-cuff, are what Francis actually thinks. With AL in view, the remarks at the Lateran support the conclusion that, regardless of the prepared statement before the Rota, Francis cannot abide the teaching of Our Lord on the *absolute* indissolubility of marriage and the *absolute* impermissibility of what Our Lord called adultery—a word Francis refuses to employ. Francis insists upon calling adulterous relationships "irregular unions," always placing even that euphemism between skeptical quotation marks. A dramatic example of this aversion to the Gospel truth occurred as recently as June 10, 2016. On that day the Gospel reading in the Novus Ordo lectionary was Matt 25:27-32:

Jesus said to his disciples:
"You have heard that it was

said, *You shall not commit adultery.* But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

"It was also said, *Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.* But I say to you, *whoever divorces his wife causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*"

During his Mass at Casa Santa Marta [that morning](#), however, Francis ignored the Gospel reading and spoke only on the Old Testament reading from the Book of Kings (Joshua on the mountain), which has nothing to do with the Gospel. That is, *the Vicar of Christ refused to mention the teaching of Christ* appointed for the Mass of that day.

Clearly, Francis cannot bring himself even to speak, much less defend in a sermon, Our Lord's unsparing condemnation of divorce, adultery and fornication and His warning of the eternal punishment of these sins if unrepented. Perhaps this has something to do with the state of Francis's own family: a divorced and "remarried" [sister](#) with a child by two different fathers; a

[niece](#) whose civil marriage to a divorced man, years before he obtained an annulment, had uncle Mario's blessing; and a [nephew](#) with a live-in girlfriend who hopes his uncle the Pope will officiate at his wedding—if he ever mans up enough to pop the question to his main squeeze.

Cohabitation as Marriage Preparation

The remarks at the Lateran also reveal not only that Francis refuses to condemn cohabitation as intrinsically immoral but, on the contrary, views it rather benignly. In answer to the question about "the crisis in marriage" Francis related how, when he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he had prohibited religious weddings in cases of out-of-wedlock pregnancy. This was apparently not a case-by-case pastoral determination of whether a couple was freely undertaking the marriage obligation as opposed to being pushed into it, but rather a blanket prohibition: "I prohibited them from doing it, because *they are not free, they are not free!* Perhaps they love each other, in which case, then, *after two or three years*, they are married, and I have seen them come into church, mother, father and child in hand. But they knew well what they were doing."

Incredibly, Francis thinks the correct pastoral approach to an out-of-wedlock pregnancy is to require the couple, *even if they love each other*, to cohabit for "two or three years" as some kind of test of their "love" and until they "know well what they are doing"—as if the mere passage of time while living in a state of objective mortal sin would somehow make them more amenable to the marriage commitment! In fact, Cardinal Bergoglio's pastoral practice denied even willing couples in a spiritually perilous situation the precious grace

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of the sacrament of Holy Matrimony while dramatically increasing the likelihood that the relationship would founder and the child would be deprived forever of an intact family. Moreover, even sociologists admit that premarital cohabitation dramatically increases the likelihood of divorce.

Francis, however, views cohabitation as a kind of marriage preparation. When confronted in Buenos Aires with the prevalence of cohabitation, Francis's approach was one of wait-and-see rather than counseling couples to end their mortally sinful relationship or marry in the Church: "They prefer to live together, and this is a challenge. It requires work. Do not say immediately: 'Why do you not marry in church?' No. Accompany them: wait and mature. And mature in fidelity." Francis apparently sees no spiritual peril in couples habitually engaging in sexual relations out of wedlock; the threat of eternal damnation is evidently of no account to his notion of "accompanying" people living in sin; it seems never to have occurred to him that this "pastoral approach" might be accompanying people on the road to hell. And while the idea that people living in sin experience a *maturation of fidelity* as the years go by might appeal to the ethics of Hollywood, it certainly cannot be reconciled with the ethics of Christ.

In was in this context that Francis, going even further in his condonation of cohabitation, declared that cohabiting couples *can even have the grace of matrimony*. As he explained to his delighted audience at the Lateran:

In the Argentinian countryside, in the northwest region, there is a superstition: that where an engaged couple has a child, they live together. In the country this happens. Then, when the child must go to school, they have a civil ceremony. And then, when they are grandparents, they have a religious wedding. It is a superstition, because they say that to do it immediately *will scare the husband* [loud laughter]. We must struggle against this superstition. Yet I really must say that *I have seen such fidelity in these cohabitations [convivenze], so much fidelity; and I am sure that this is a true marriage, they have the grace of matrimony, precisely because of the fidelity that they have...*"

For Francis, it seems, marriage is a state of mind and God is not concerned with such "external" details as marital vows and sexual relations outside of marriage. Even those who *fear* marriage can be married in God's sight with all the graces of Holy Matrimony! "Fidelity" to one's partner in sin is all that counts—as if "fidelity" could coexist with a refusal to take vows of lifelong fidelity before a priest. No discussion is required to demonstrate that this astounding bit of nonsense flies in the face of the divine and natural law, the words of Christ and the Gospel, and every teaching of the Church on marriage for the past 2,000 years.

The Vatican Emergency Editing Team

At least some members of the Vatican apparatus know they have runaway Pope on their hands and that they must try to contain the damage he is causing.

In this case, facing worldwide protests over the spontaneous "universal nullity decree" from the Lateran, the Vatican doctored the transcript of Francis's remarks, replacing his words "the *great majority* of our sacramental marriages are null" (*una grande maggioranza dei nostri matrimoni sacramentali sono nulli*) with "a *portion* of our sacramental marriages are null" (*una parte dei nostri matrimoni sacramentali sono nulli*). Taking issue with John Allen's attempted whitewash of the scandal, [Dr. Peters mocked the claim](#) that this was merely the editing of a minor error: "This changes his [Francis's] statement from one portending shocking problematics into a truism that any sapient observer could utter or agree with [i.e. that *some* marriages are invalid]. Small changes, my foot."

Tellingly, however, there was no attempt to correct Francis's other "small" error: that cohabiting Catholics can have "true marriages" because of their "fidelity." This too is what Francis thinks, divine and natural law to the contrary. Nor was there any correction of the related implication that civil marriages entered into by "faithfully" cohabiting Catholics can likewise be "true marriages." Absent due canonical form, Catholics who marry only civilly, [as Peters notes](#), "are (outside a few rare exceptions) no more married than are couples just cohabiting ('faithfully' or otherwise)." Moreover, writes Peters, "because of the inseparability of the marriage contract from the sacrament, if one is invalidly 'married' (and 'marriages' among Catholics who disregard canonical form are invalid) then one does not receive the sacrament of Matrimony either nor any of its graces. Why? Because, no marriage means no Matrimony."

We are told that the revised transcript reflects what Francis "intended" to say, but in fact it reflects only what the reviser knows he *should* have said. What Francis should have said, however, is not what Francis thinks, even if the Vatican claims that he approved the "correction" of his remarks on this particular occasion. For as Francis declared [without correction](#) in September 2015, [during the flight back to Rome](#) from the "beach party Mass" in Rio (citing his predecessor as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Quarracino): "half of all marriages are null.... Why? Because they are married without maturity, they get married without realizing that it's for an entire lifetime, or they are married because socially they must get married."

That is what Francis thinks. At the Lateran he merely upped the ante from "half of all marriages" to "the great majority," while expanding his blanket declaration of marital nullity to include not merely couples who get married for social reasons and feign consent but even those who *in good faith* say: "Yes, for life." All the Vatican has done in this case is to paper over what Francis really thinks and what he said in one venue. But Francis will still think what he thinks and will still *say* what he thinks even if, as with the statement before the Rota in January, what he says off-the-cuff and "from the heart," as likes to put it, flatly contradicts some formal statement to be found elsewhere that no one except dogged researchers, such as Remnant columnists, will ever read.

By the way, another telling example

of the emergency censorship the Lateran debacle required is deletion from the transcript of the following quip, uttered after Francis had made fun of his moral theology professor in seminary: "Because of this thing, do not go to Cardinal Müller to accuse me [uproarious laughter]!" What a spectacle before the Church and the world: an insouciant Pope clowning before a laughing crowd in one of the Church's holiest places, concerning a member of the Roman Curia widely perceived as the only serious check on his heterodoxy.

Another embarrassment that had to be censored was Francis's characterization of Jesus' initial silence before the crowd that was preparing to stone the woman caught in adultery: "he played the fool a little bit [*fa un po' lo scemo*]," which the Vatican revised to read "he played dumb a little bit." This insult of Our Lord is only in keeping with the "humanized" Bergoglian Jesus, so typical of a liberal seventies-era Jesuit, who "[pretends to be angry](#)" with His disciples and has to "[beg forgiveness](#)" for his "little escapade" in the Temple while Joseph and Mary were searching for him.

Unimpressed by the (only partially) "corrected" transcript, even [Phil Lawler](#) at the resolutely mainstream CatholicCulture.org has had enough of this nonsense:

Should we conclude, then, that everything is fine, and no harm was done? *Absolutely not!*

First, because those shocking statements were widely disseminated through the news media, to be *heard or read by millions of people who will never see the official transcript*.

Second, the Pope's remarks were consistent in their tone—a *tone that encouraged listeners to question the authority of Church teachings*.

At one point [Pope Francis light-heartedly said](#): "Don't go telling on me to Cardinal Müller"...

Third and most important, because *this pattern keeps recurring: the astonishing statements, the headlines, the confusion, followed by the explanations and clarifications that never clear away the fallout*.

A bit more guarded than it had to be, but the shift in commentary we see here is quite dramatic, reflecting the drama of the situation with this bizarre pontificate.

Conclusion: a Papal Assault on Holy Matrimony

Dr. Peters [rightly discerns](#) that with "the debacle of assertions of massive nullity supposedly plaguing Christian marriage still reverberating, something deeper may be emerging here..." The deeper problem, although Peters does not put it this way, is that we have a Pope who thinks the Church ought to conform itself to his personal view of the way things should be without regard to the teaching of all his predecessors or the Church's bimillennial discipline.

Where marriage is concerned, Francis just *feels* (to quote Peters) that "most marriages are not marriage but lots of non-marriages are marriage." Only this, Peters reasonably deduces, would explain Francis's "annulment reform," which is designed to dispense with all the canonical marriages he views as null, and his relentless push, culminating with

AL, for the "pastoral integration" of Catholics living in "second marriages" that the Church, following Our Lord, must view as public adultery.

Francis, in short, has little concern for marriage as an objective fact as opposed to what people, Francis included, subjectively feel about the status of relationships the Church can never recognize as matrimony. The result, Peters concludes, is that thanks to Francis:

a crisis (in the Greek sense of that word) over marriage is unfolding in the Church, and it is a crisis that will, I suggest, come to a head over matrimonial discipline and law.... I think the marriage crisis that *he is occasioning* is going to come down to whether Church teaching on marriage, which everyone professes to honor, will be concretely and effectively protected in Church law, or, whether the canonical categories treating marriage doctrine become so distorted (or simply disregarded) as essentially *to abandon marriage and married life to the realm of personal opinion and individual conscience*. History has always favored the former; disaster lurks behind the latter....

When even a commentator as reserved as Peters, who is hardly a "radical traditionalist," reaches a conclusion of this magnitude, it should be obvious to all Catholics, traditionalist or not, that Francis poses an unprecedented threat to the integrity of the Church. And that concern was only heightened by his [public admission](#), two days after the Lateran conference, to a group of students at Villa Nazareth University:

Many times I find myself in a crisis with the faith. Sometimes I've even had the impudence to scold Jesus—"But why did you permit this?"—and even to doubt: "But is this the truth or is it a dream?" And this as a boy, as a seminarian, as a priest, as a religious and [with emphasis] as Pope....

A Christian who does not feel this sometimes, who does not enter into a crisis of faith, is missing something. He is a Christian who is content with a little worldliness, and so he goes ahead in life....

They tell me that in Chinese the word "crisis" is made with two ideograms: one ideogram "risk" the other "opportunity" [[an urban legend Francis has cited before](#)]. This is true, eh? When one enters into crisis—as Jesus said to Peter, *the devil would put him in crisis, like one does with wheat....* there is always a danger, a risk—a risk not in a good sense—and an opportunity. This I have learned: you must not be afraid to enter into a crisis. It is a sign to go ahead, that you are not anchored to the bank of the river that opens to the sea, and go ahead....

[**Note:** Translation mine from the video, as the media quotations are sketchy and inaccurate.]

We have Pope who, before an audience of impressionable youth, thinks nothing

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of admitting to many crises of faith even as Pope, belittles Christians who have not had his experience of doubt, and views as an *opportunity* the devil trying to sift a soul like wheat. It seems impossible to believe, even after three years of this sort of thing—even after a half-century of revolution in the Church—that a Vicar of Christ could speak and act as Francis does. Putting aside all the nonsensical, false, and outright heterodox pronouncements of the former Archbishop Bergoglio since his election—[so numerous they would fill a book](#)—the past two weeks of eruptions alone are enough thoroughly to discredit this pontificate.

Indeed, if only to give Francis the benefit of the doubt concerning motive, which we must do, the issue of mental competency must be considered. There are signs that Francis inhabits a kind of dream world in which realities do not penetrate very well. Francis himself [has boasted](#) that “God is good to me, he has bestowed on me a healthy dose of unawareness. I just do what I have to do.” Perhaps there is a worsening clinical aspect to this dreamlike state.

One telling example of an alarming lack of awareness of reality is Francis’s defense of AL during the Lateran conference as “Thomistic from beginning to end” according to “the words of a great theologian *who was Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, Cardinal Schönborn, who presented it...” Schönborn was never Secretary of the CDF but only a member, as even informed members of the laity know. Yet Francis had no clue. And this was the *second* time he cited Schönborn’s nonexistent credential in support of AL’s orthodoxy (will no one correct him?), the first being the inflight press conference during the return to Rome from Lesbos.

This is only one of [a long series of gaffes, urban legends and factual blunders](#) that pepper Francis’s rambling, often disjointed discourses in various places, all tending to indicate a significant impairment of mental acuity that would not be unexpected in anyone his age.

The situation has deteriorated to the point that even a Fox News commentator, following the remarks at the Lateran, [has called upon Francis to resign](#)—a form of protest, not a realistic expectation, to answer the anticipated the banal objection—in order to prevent further damage to the Church:

Once upon a time Catholics would have been stuck with a bad pope, but since Pope Emeritus Benedict opened the door for a pope resigning when he can no longer do his job, it is time for the faithful to look at Francis and ask—“is this man able to lead the Holy Catholic Church?”

At this point it is clear, Bergoglio has repeatedly proven himself unable to lead, and is doing incalculable damage to the Church that will take decades to heal.

Pope Francis should resign, and

Catholics should demand it, so the Church can begin recovering from *the havoc his ill-advised and arrogant papacy has wrought*.

Incredibly, with Francis we are witnessing the *Humanae Vitae* scenario in reverse: the laity defend Catholic teaching on marriage and procreation against the Pope! In this connection recall that Francis has also declared that the use of contraception to prevent transmission of diseases is licit as “the lesser of two evils” and that Father Lombardi insisted [this is exactly what Francis meant to say](#).

We have reached a turning point in the history of the papacy, the Church and the world. For the first time in 2,000 years, the Church is afflicted by a Pope who has demonstrated beyond doubt that he simply cannot be trusted to speak the truth regarding matters of morality on which the eternal fate of countless souls depends. Quite the contrary, whatever his motive, of which God alone is the judge, Francis has shown that he can be expected to twist the Gospel, descend to demagoguery, and indulge in sophistry to advance a grandiose “revolution of tenderness.” And this is not even to mention all the other papal words and deeds that seem designed to reduce the Church to what Antonio Socci has called “a social assistant” to the New World Order.

But at least Francis is awakening more and more serious Catholics to the magnitude of the ecclesial crisis of which his pontificate, with its attack on

the last bastion of morality itself, only represents the final and most dramatic stage. As Robert Spaemann has just written regarding the proper approach to criticism of a Pope: “Even in the Catholic Church there is a limit to what is bearable.” Francis has gone far beyond that limit, and we owe a debt of gratitude to the many commentators outside the traditionalist constituency, such as Dr. Peters and Phil Lawler, who now see this and are speaking the truth about our situation without regard to the impact it may have on their position or prestige within the ecclesial “mainstream.” Their witness will be critical in alerting the faithful at large in a way traditionalist sources alone cannot do, given the anti-traditionalist ideology so prevalent in the Church today.

Yet there are still Catholic commentators who cling to the truly fatuous argument that to disagree with Francis is to engage in “private judgment” à la Luther. But it is precisely Luther, the greatest enemy of the papacy the Church has ever encountered, whose life Francis intends to commemorate in Sweden during the run-up to the 500th anniversary of the “Reformation” that destroyed the unity of Christendom. As they would have it, however, one is guilty of Protestant “private judgment” if he objects that the Pope must not honor the *originator* of Protestant private judgment!

These ecclesial nominalists, obliterating any meaningful distinction between the exercise of authority and the objectivity of truth, confidently assert that the faithful are not competent to

judge whether Francis has departed from sound orthodoxy or practice no matter what he says or does, and that even if he should appear to contradict all his predecessors in some matter it is impossible for us even to judge that there is a contradiction! For them, the Faith is like a mysterious black box in the Pope’s sole and exclusive possession, whose readings only he can decipher. And now the inscrutable black box declares that most marriages are not marriages, while many non-marriages are. The Church is being turned on her head, so they will obligingly stand on *their* heads in order to declare that she is still right side up. This willful suspension of reason, they tell us, is what it means to be a faithful Catholic. If Luther is in a place where laughter is possible, he must be laughing now. The very Catholics who think they are opposing “private judgment” have adopted the Protestant caricature of the inerrant oracular papacy [that Saint Robert Bellarmine refuted](#) during the Counter-Reformation.

We ought to leave these people to their intractable delusion. Their sophistry need occupy us no longer. The important task at hand is to speak the truth in union with every other Catholic who has the sense to demand that it be defended rather than belittled and subverted by the successor of Peter. Many have said that we deserve this awful pontificate on account of our own failings. Then let us make amends now, with prayer and Catholic action, that the madness descended upon us as a divine chastisement may, by a divine favor, be brought to an end at last. ■

One More Reason to Never Lose Hope...

A Call to Holiness in Northeastern Pennsylvania

By Stephanie Pendrak

(A Remnant Exclusive)

In a world ever looking to ensnare and trap youth, there is a great need for an effort to rebuild a Catholic society. Each society is made up of many groups. Each group is made up of many individuals. The holiness of the individuals therefore defines the sanctity of the society. It is therefore necessary that each individual must strive to be holy.

One such group which aids its members to be holy is the Fœderatio Internationalis Juventutem, or Juventutem for short. (Aside from the debate on whether or not the name should be with an “I” or a “J”) Juventutem is an organization that seeks to unify and sanctify Catholic souls to the Traditions of our Holy Catholic Faith. It is a mission that is inspiring and slowly taking root across the world.

Juventutem knows that as a young Catholic, you can’t leave your faith to chance, hoping that you can endure the onslaught of the world. Catholic sacraments, fellowship and evangelization are key to matching the world, the flesh and the devil, punch for punch. Their newest Chapter just opened in Scranton, PA, by a small group immediately drawn to the idea of



(Left to right: Stephanie George, Anthony George, Stephanie Pendrak, Father Jose Zepeda, FSSP, Caroline Gillenkirk, Jim McWhirter, Mary LaFata, Brian Palmiter)

helping Catholic youth discover, grow and live the Catholic Faith. As it says on the Scranton Chapter’s website, “Our Catholic Faith is our passion.” Thanks to the vision of FSSP pastor Father Jose Zepeda, Juventutem Scranton has its base of operation at the FSSP Parish St. Michael’s, in Scranton, PA.

Anyone 18 years old and up, living in Northeastern PA, is welcome to join Juventutem Scranton. Each month

they will meet for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, followed by a meeting or activity, depending on what is scheduled. Apologetics, Devotions, and Catholic comradery will be employed to help all grow in holiness.

For more information or schedule of current events, please visit the Juventutem Scranton website at: www.juventutemscranton.com. And please, pray for us, we need it! ■



What Heretics Believe...

Calvinism

*"I labored at the task [writing *The Institutes*] especially for our Frenchmen, for I saw that many were hungering and thirsting after Christ and yet that only a few had any real knowledge of him." – John Calvin*

Born on July 10, 1509, in Noyon, Picardy, France, John Calvin was a law student at the University of Orléans when he first joined the cause of the Reformation. In 1536, he published the landmark text *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, an early attempt to standardize the theories of Protestantism. Calvin's religious teachings emphasized the sovereignty of the scriptures and divine predestination—a doctrine holding that God chooses those who will enter Heaven based on foreknowledge of their good deeds.

As Martin Luther's successor as preeminent Protestant theologian, Calvin was known for an intellectual, unemotional approach to faith that provided Protestantism's theological underpinnings, whereas Luther brought passion and populism to his religious cause.

The Calvinist system of belief is most often summarized by the deceptively sweet little acronym, TULIP:

T is for Total depravity – This doctrine teaches that there is no part of our human nature which has not been affected by the taint of sin. Our intellect, emotions, will, and even physical bodies, have been corrupted by the Fall. As a point of clarification, total depravity does not mean that humanity is as bad as possible or that no good in any sense can be done by unbelievers (though ultimately any good that does come about should be attributed to God's grace). Rather, it means that in the natural fallen state we are born into we are unable to do any spiritual good that will please God and we cannot come to God by our own strength. This is why some theologians refer to this point, perhaps more accurately, as *total inability*. In other words, despite the ability of people to outwardly uphold the law, there remains an inward distortion which makes all human actions displeasing to God, whether or not they are outwardly good or bad. Even after regeneration, every human action is mixed with evil. God is Sovereign, which Calvin understood to mean that not only is every atom and molecule, every thought and desire, kept in being by God, but every twist and turn of each of these is under the *direct control* of God... including evil. Calvinists

today often fail to consider that this must further imply that sin and hell are also willed, *planned, designed* and rendered certain by God.

U is for Unconditional election – Calvin's *Institutes* states, "All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death." If a person comes to Christ and is saved, it is because he was chosen by God to be saved. God selects some people out of the "mass of perdition" that humanity is, to be saved. Others are left to their deserved damnation. This is the troubling doctrine of **Predestination**, which attempts to explain away the mystery of Divine Providence.

L is for Limited atonement – Christ died only for a limited selection of people. Though the death of Jesus Christ is sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world, it was the intention of God the Father that the merit of Christ's death would work itself out in the elect only, thereby leading them without fail to salvation. The Calvinist atonement is called *definite* by some because they believe it certainly secures the salvation of those for whom Christ died, and it is called *limited* in its extent because it affects salvation for the elect only.

I is for Irresistible grace – It is also called Efficacious Grace or Invincible Grace. According to John Calvin, "The doctrine of free will is always in danger of robbing God of His honor." Saving grace extended by God to the elect cannot be resisted by them. It is always effectual. Part and parcel of this is the idea that regeneration, being "born again," happens *before* conversion. An elect person, predestined by God for salvation, will freely choose to repent and believe *because* he or she has already, perhaps unconsciously, been regenerated by the Spirit of God. Regeneration precedes faith. Calvinists say the Lord, through the Spirit, must appear to the sinner in a direct, miraculous way in order to bring about the sinner's conversion. And if the sinner is one whom God had predestinated to life before the foundation of the world, that sinner **must** submit to God's grace as revealed to him by the Spirit.

P is for Perseverance of the saints – This fifth and final tenet of Calvinism is also referred to as the doctrine of "once saved always saved;" "the impossibility of apostasy;" "the

security of the believer;" and "once in grace always in grace." The doctrine results from the tenets which precede it. The "logic" of Calvinism states that since man is entirely hereditarily depraved and can do nothing on his own but evil, unconditional election is required to save him. God must then call him in an irresistible way to salvation. Therefore, since he needs to do nothing to be saved, he needs to do nothing to remain saved and that anything he would do in any way that would affect his salvation would negate the miraculous work of God in saving him. A truly saved person cannot fall away and be forever lost. That is because he or she is one of God's elect and God would not elect a person and then allow him or her to fall from grace. The elect are saved, like it or not!

And what of the Frenchman to whom these tenets are credited? He went to great lengths and perils to transmit his version of Protestantism to the world. With his brother and sister and two friends, John Calvin was forced to flee Catholic France and seek refuge in the free city of Strasbourg. It was the summer of 1536; Calvin had recently converted to the "evangelical" faith and had just published *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which articulated his Protestant views. He was a wanted man.

The party put up at an inn in Geneva, and word quickly passed to local church leader William Farel that the author

of *The Institutes* was in town. Farel was ecstatic. He was desperate for help as he strove to organize a newly formed Protestant church in town. He rushed to the inn and pleaded with Calvin, arguing it was God's will he remain in the city. Calvin said he was staying only one night. Besides, he was a scholar not a pastor. Farel, baffled and frustrated, swore a great oath that God would curse all Calvin's studies unless he stayed in Geneva.

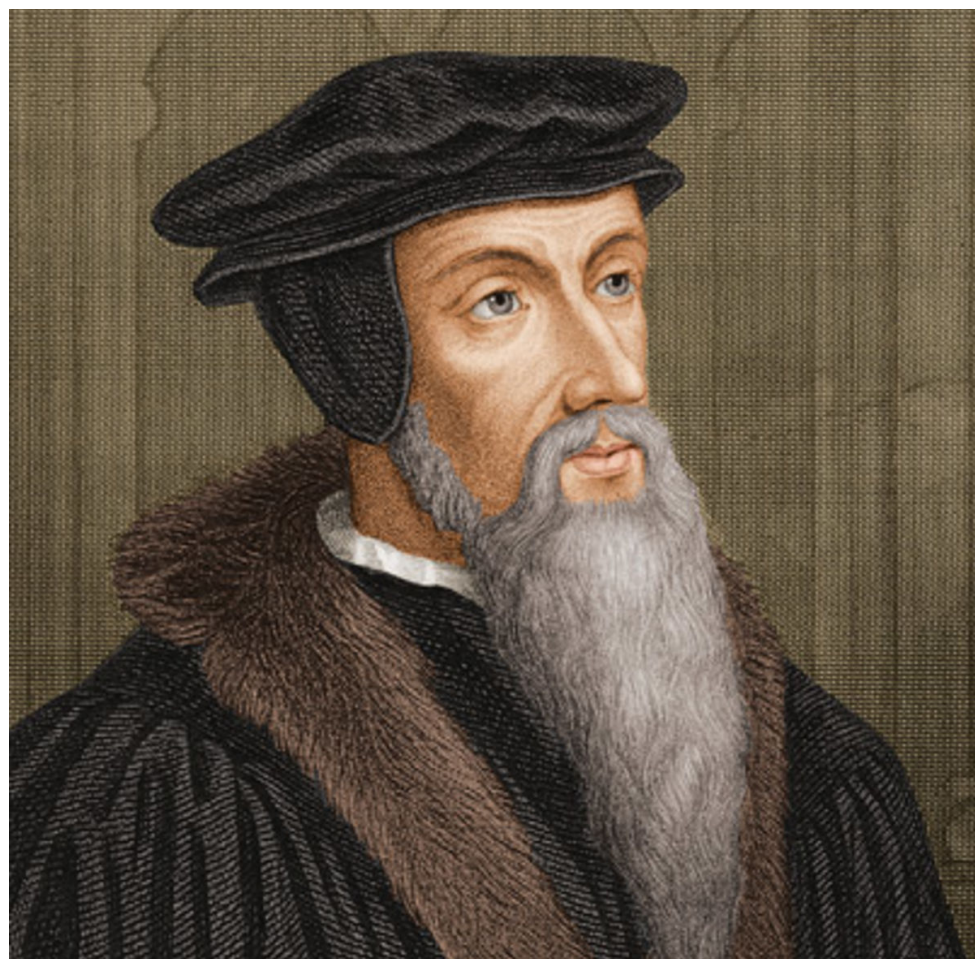
Calvin, a man of tender conscience, later reflected on this moment: "I felt as if God from heaven had laid his mighty hand upon me to stop me in my course—and I was so terror stricken that I did not continue my journey."

To this day, Calvin's name is associated, for good and for ill, with the city of Geneva. Calvin died there on May 27, 1564. It is unknown where he is buried.

Today, Calvin remains widely credited as the most important figure in the second generation of the Protestant Reformation. ■

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John Calvin

“The Sadness of Christ”: Sleeping Bishops in the Garden of Gethsemane

- By St. Thomas More (1478-1535) -

Introduced and Edited for The Remnant by Connie Bagnoli

Thomas More rose from humble origins to achieve the highest political and judicial office of England, second only to that of the King. He was recognized throughout early sixteenth-century Europe as one of the great lawyers, Christian humanists, and classical scholars of his day. During his years of studying and teaching, More continued an intense life of prayer. At age 26, he was elected to Parliament; at 27 he married Jane Colt and fathered four children in the next five years. Jane died when More was 33, leaving him with four young children. Despite his deep sorrow, he remarried again within one month for the sake of his children. He married the best woman he knew, Alice Middleton.

After fifteen years of prosperous civil life, More was called to serve the King at court, a position he did not want and would not seek out. Yet as a loyal citizen, More considered it the “duty of every good man” to contribute to the service of his country.

Once in the King’s service, More commanded Henry VIII’s friendship and trust, serving primarily as his personal secretary, but with some administrative and diplomatic responsibilities. He rose steadily over the next ten years, finally became Chancellor in 1529, at the age of fifty-one. More was Chancellor for only thirty-one months. He resigned on May 16, 1532, the day after Henry VIII manipulated the Parliament to take away the traditional freedom of the Church, a freedom that had been written into English law since the Magna Carta. At issue was the survival of the Church as well as the nature of law and the scope of the state’s legitimate authority.

Imprisoned in the Tower of London for fifteen months before his execution, Thomas More was heavily pressured by family and friends to sign the oath accepting Henry VIII as the Supreme Head of the Church of England. More steadfastly refused but never expressed animosity towards those who complied. During this time, he wrote a number of devotional and exegetical works, including *“The Sadness, the Weariness, the Fear and the Prayer of Christ Before He was taken Prisoner”*, an in-depth study and meditation on Our Lord’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

What Thomas More writes applies pointedly to the individuals of his own age who were responsible for the virtual destruction of the Church in England. He writes of the Apostles falling asleep at their post and Judas’ betrayal of Christ as “a mirror image of what has happened through the ages.” More’s message is not limited to the issues of his own time. Intentionally universal, it is applicable to every age and every individual. More sees the “sleeping Apostles” as a “mysterious image of future times”—it is a lesson for all time.

That St. Thomas More was “the King’s good servant, but God’s servant first” was readily seen in his life of prayer



A young Thomas More

and penance. From the time he was a young man, More started each day with private prayer, spiritual reading, and Mass, regardless of his many duties. He lived demanding mortifications in his characteristically discreet and merry manner. He generously cared for the poor and needy and involved his own children in this same work. He had special devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, to frequent meditation on the Passion, and to the rosary.

Thomas More was executed on July 6, 1535, and canonized as a martyr by Pope Pius XI on May 19, 1935. He has become a symbol of professional integrity, famous for balanced judgment, ever-present humor, and undaunted courage that led him to be known, even in his own lifetime, as “The Man for All Seasons.” He is the Patron Saint of Statesman, Politicians, Lawyers and Civil Servants. St. Thomas More’s feast day is June 22nd.

Profound Thoughts and Lessons from The Sadness of Christ:

And He said, “Sit down here while I go over there to pray.” And He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with Him. He began to feel sorrow and grief and fear and weariness. Then He said to them: “My soul is sad unto death. Stay here and keep watch with Me.” (Mt 26-36-38, Mk 14:32-34)

Commanding the other eight to stop somewhat lower down, He went further on, taking with Him Peter, John and his brother James, the three whom He had always singled out from the rest of the Apostles by a certain special privilege of intimacy. These were the three to whom He had formerly granted the secret knowledge and open sight of His glorified body. He took the chosen three to the foot of the mount, to stop there and to bear up and watch with Him; but He Himself withdrew from them about a

stone’s throw. He presented the most humble mode of subjection and

venerated His heavenly Father in a bodily posture which no earthly prince has dared to command. Our Savior Christ saw that nothing is more profitable than prayer, but He also was aware that this means of salvation would very often be fruitless because of the negligence of men and the malice of demons--so much so that it would very frequently be perverted into an instrument of destruction.

And He went to His disciples and found them sleeping. (Mt 26:40; Mk 14:37, Lk 22:45)

Notice here how much greater one love is than another. Notice how Christ’s love for His own was much greater than the love they gave in return, even those who loved Him most. For even the sadness, fear, dread and weariness which so grievously assailed Him as His most cruel torment was drawing near could not keep Him from going to see them. But they, on the other hand, however much they loved Him even at the very time when such an enormous danger was threatening their loving Master, could still give in to sleep.

And He said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not stay awake one hour with me? Stay awake and pray that you may not enter into temptation. For the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mt 26-40-41, Mk 14-37-38)

This short speech of Christ is remarkably forceful: the words are mild, but their point is sharp and piercing. For by addressing him as Simon and reproaching him under that name for his sleepiness, Christ tacitly lets it be known that the name Peter, which Christ had previously given him because of his firmness, would hardly be altogether appropriate now, because of this infirmity and sleep. Moreover, not only was the failure to use the name Peter a barbed omission, but the actual use of the name Simon also carries a sting. For in Hebrew, the language in which Christ was speaking to him, “Simon” means “listening” and “obedient”. But in fact, he was neither listening nor obedient, since he went to sleep against Christ’s express wishes.

Our Savior’s gentle words to Peter seem to carry certain other barbed implications, which if He were chiding him more severely would be: “Simon, no longer Cephas (Peter), are you sleeping? How do you deserve to be called Peter, which is Rock? I singled you out because of your firmness, but now you show yourself to be so infirm that you could not hold out even for one hour against the inroads of sleep. I always made much of you, Simon, and yet you are sleeping? I paid you many high honors, and yet, you are sleeping? I am being pursued to the death, and you are sleeping? What can I expect from the others, when in such great and pressing danger, not only to Me but also to all of you, that I find you sleeping?

Then, lest this seem to be a matter which concerned Peter only, He turned and spoke to the others: “Stay awake and pray that you may not enter into

Continued Next Page

Continued...

temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

And again He went away for the second time, and said the same prayer over again in these words: "My Father, if this cup cannot pass away without my drinking it, let your will be done." And He came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And they did not know what answer to make to Him. And leaving them, He went away again and, kneeling down, said the same prayer in these words: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me. Yet not my will, but yours be done." (Mk 14:39-40, Mt 26:42-44)

When Christ came back from that prayer to see His apostles and found them sleeping and so startled by His arrival that they did not know what to say, He left them, so that it might seem He had come only for the purpose of finding out whether they were awake, whereas He could not have lacked this knowledge (insofar as He was God), even before He came. The answer is: Nothing Our Lord did was done in vain. It is true that His coming into their presence did not rouse them to complete vigilance but only to such a startled, half-awake drowsiness that they hardly raised their eyes to look at Him; or else (what is worse yet) if His reproaches did wake them up completely, still they slipped back into sleep the moment He went away. He Himself both demonstrated His anxious concern for His disciples and also by His example gave to the future pastors of His church a solemn injunction not to allow themselves the slightest wavering, out of sadness or weariness or fear, their diligent care of their flock, but rather to conduct themselves so as to prove in actual fact that they are not so much concerned for themselves as for the welfare of their flock.

And when He had arisen from prayer and come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sadness, and He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Sleep on now and take your rest. That is enough. Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation. Behold, the hour is coming when the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us go. Behold, the one who will betray me is near at hand" (Mt 26:45-46, Mk 14:41-42)

When Christ comes back to His apostles for the third time, there they are, buried in sleep, though He commanded them to bear up with Him and to stay awake and pray because of the impending danger; but Judas the traitor at the same time was so wide awake and intent on betraying the Lord that the very idea of sleep never entered his mind. Does not this contrast between the traitor and the apostles present to us a clear and sharp mirror image, a sad and terrible view of what has happened through the ages from those times even to our own? Why do not bishops contemplate in this scene their own somnolence? Since they have succeeded in the place of the apostles, would that they would reproduce their virtues just as eagerly as they embrace their authority and as faithfully as they display their sloth and sleepiness! For very many are sleepy and apathetic in sowing virtues among the people and maintaining the truth, while the enemies of Christ, in order to sow vices and uproot the faith are wide awake—so much wiser are the sons of darkness in their generation than the sons of light.

But although this comparison of the sleeping apostles applies very well to those bishops who sleep while virtue and faith are placed in jeopardy, still it does not apply to all such prelates at all points. For some of them—alas, far more than I wish—do not drift into sleep through sadness and grief as the apostles

did. Rather, they are numbed and buried in destructive desires; that is, drunk with new wine of the devil, flesh and the world. They sleep like pigs sprawling in the mire. Certainly, the apostles feeling sadness because of the danger to their Master was praiseworthy, but for them to be so overcome by sadness as to yield completely to sleep, that was certainly wrong. To grieve because the world is perishing or to weep because of the crimes of others bespeaks a reverent outlook.

Sadness of this sort produces repentance that surely tends toward salvation. If a bishop is so overcome by heavy-hearted sleep that he neglects to do what the duty of his office requires for the salvation of his flock—like a cowardly ship's captain who is so disheartened by the furious din of a storm that he deserts the helm, hides away in some cranny, and abandons the ship to the waves—if a bishop does this, I would certainly not juxtapose and compare his sadness with the sadness that leads, as St. Paul says, to hell; indeed, I would consider it far worse, since such sadness in religious matters seems to spring from a mind which despairs God of help. Far worse, consists of those not depressed by sadness at the danger of others but rather by a fear of injury to themselves, a fear which is so much the worse as its cause is the more contemptible, that is when it is not a question of life or death, but of money.

Our Lord commands: "Do not be afraid of those who destroy the body and after that can do nothing further. But I will show you the one you should fear: fear him, who, when he has destroyed the body, has the power to send the soul also to hell. This I tell you, is the one you must fear." If every good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, certainly one who saves his own life to the detriment of his sheep is not filling the role of the

good shepherd. Even worse, if driven by fear, he denies Christ openly in words and forsakes Him publicly. Such prelates do not sleep like Peter, but deny his waking. But under the kindly glance of Christ, many of them through His grace will eventually wipe out that failure and save themselves by weeping, if only they respond to His glance and friendly call to repentance with bitterness of heart and a new way of life and leave behind the shackles of evil which bound them to their sins. But if anyone is so set in evil that he does not merely neglect to profess the truth and preaches false doctrine, whether for sordid gain or out of a corrupt ambition, such a person does not sleep like Peter, but rather stays awake with wicked Judas and, like Judas, persecutes Christ. This man's condition is far more dangerous than that of the others, as shown by the sad and horrible end Judas came to.

Christ did not merely order the apostles to pray but shows them the need for it and teaches what they should pray for. Pray that you may not enter into temptation. Prayer is the only safeguard against temptation which permits the besieging troops of the devil to enter the castle of the soul. From the example of bad priests, the contamination of vice spreads easily among the people. During these times of severe crisis in Our Lord's Church, it is necessary for the people to stay awake, get up, and pray all the more earnestly for themselves—and not only for themselves but also for the Successor of St. Peter, the Princes of the Church, and all clergy. Let us imagine that Christ is addressing us: **"WHY ARE YOU SLEEPING? SLEEP ON NOW AND TAKE YOUR REST. THAT IS ENOUGH! GET UP AND PRAY! THE ONE WHO WILL BETRAY ME IS AT HAND."**

St. Thomas More, Faithful Servant of God, Pray for Us!



Before they'd all fled, the first bishops slept

Vatican Watch...

The Vatican's 'Greatest Supporter' and Collaborator

By Elizabeth Yore

Be forewarned. This photo speaks volumes about this papacy and its collaborators. Know them by the radical company they keep.

Clout affords him heightened access to the Pope, as he sits prominently at the speaker's dais when [Pope Francis addresses](#) the Pontifical Academy's Human Trafficking Judicial Conference in early June 2016.

He smiles and listens as Francis acknowledges and thanks "a number of prestigious external collaborators—to whom I offer my heartfelt thanks—have engaged in important activities in defense of human dignity and freedom in our day."

He nods knowingly because he ranks foremost as the Pope's 'prestigious external collaborators.'

As the Pope's address continues, Francis identifies these 'collaborators.' "We can also count an important and decisive collaboration with the United Nations. I am grateful for the fact that the representatives of the 193 UN member states unanimously approved the new Sustainable Development Goals."

After three years of intense geopolitical chicanery, Francis unabashedly concedes that the Vatican's 'important collaborators' are none other than the United Nations and its pro-abortion Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Despite the outcry from The Remnant, [The Lepanto Institute](#), [Voice of the Family](#) and [LifesiteNews](#) and, many others, who repeatedly warned of the anti-life, anti-Catholic goals and tactics of the gender-bender, contraceptive ridden, and abortion laden UN/SDGs, Francis is not backing down of his SDG support. Since his election, his papacy quickly embraced the eco agenda of the secular global elite by *collaborating* with the United Nations, as the bureaucratic global savior of the environment.

In three short years, the unthinkable envelops the seat of Peter, a radical secular agenda which undermines the deposit of faith. How did it happen so quickly? The answer lies in the man seated at the papal dais. His name is Jeffrey Sachs and he is the UN/SDG mastermind behind the papal eco doctrine of faith. Make no mistake. He operates with impunity and with the explicit blessing of Francis.

Sachs dominates the Vatican as its prominent eco-mouthpiece who has racked up over 9 appearances and speeches at the Vatican's Pontifical Academy in the last 3 years.

Sachs serves as the United Nations



Left to right: Jeffrey Sachs, Bishop Sorondo, Pope Francis and Margaret Archer

(Photo courtesy of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences)

jack-of-all-trades expert propounding on everything from rising seas to rising population.

Sachs squires around fellow secularists, Ban Ki Moon and Bernie Sanders throughout the halls of the Vatican.

Sachs drafts [Vatican documents on climate change](#).

Jeffrey Sachs far surpasses the mere role of Vatican collaborator. He is described by Pontifical Academy President Margaret [Archer](#) as one of its "greatest supporters."

Who is Jeffrey Sachs, this greatest supporter of the Vatican? He is Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University and director of the UN Millennium Development Goals Network, a special advisor to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and author of (what else) *The Age of Sustainable Development*.

More troubling, Sachs perches as a permanent fixture within the Vatican walls of the Francis papacy, acting as a one-man climate change curia, incessantly promoting the UN global warming agenda. He is the self-appointed expert on all things global and his troubling influence continues to grow in the Vatican.

This "greatest supporter" functions as the Vatican's most frequent invited speaker and climate global advisor. In the last 3 years, Sachs opines from human trafficking, to climate change to income redistribution. Sachs poses as an expert on an array of subjects insisting that they all lead to the sustainable green brick road of his precious UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[Jeffrey Sachs acknowledged](#) that Pope Francis and his encyclical "Laudato Si made the adoption of both the passage of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Sept. 2015 and the Paris Climate Agreement in December 2015 possible."

You heard that right. The collaboration worked masterfully! Sachs' unrelenting Vatican presence provided assurance and coordination that the UN agenda of climate change and sustainable development would be fortified and championed by Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Laudato Si*. How clever and political of them all.

The highly controversial and scientifically challenged climate change manifesto, *Laudato Si* released on June 18, 2015, paved the way for the passage of the abortion and contraception-infused UN Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015. To further guarantee SDGs victory at the UN, Pope Francis sealed the deal and addressed to the UN General Assembly on September 25th and urged that:

"The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the World Summit, which opens today, is an important sign of hope. I am similarly confident that the Paris Conference on Climatic Change will secure fundamental and effective agreements."

Presto, following the release of *Laudato Si* and the papal UN Address, the SDGs were passed by the UN General Assembly followed by the passage of the Paris Climate Treaty in December of 2015. Those secular milestones signal quite a political accomplishment for the Vicar of Christ!

After three years of intense coordination and delicate timing, the plot hatched at the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences reveals an ongoing radical, secular, political, and global partnership under this pontificate.

Jeffrey Sachs is now comfortably embedded as the Pope's point man orchestrating the UN/Vatican/Obama administration collaboration and partnership to promote population control, masking as global climate change. As a willing stooge in this globalist movement to build one world order through population control, decarbonization, climate taxation, deindustrialization, and redistribution of wealth, the Vatican dispatches all its precious resources, including summits, pontifical academies, slick papal videos, St. Peter's animal laser shows, and yes, a papal exhortation to lend its moral voice to an immoral global strategy.

If only the millions of threatened unborn children and persecuted Christians could be afforded those vast Vatican resources. ■

This *greatest supporter of the Vatican* wrote that abortion is a "lower-risk and lower-cost option" (that's an economist talking) than bringing a child into the world.

This *greatest supporter of the Vatican* believes that "high fertility rates are deleterious to economic development."

This *greatest supporter of the Vatican* forcefully argues "legalization of abortion reduces a country's total fertility rate significantly, by as much as half a child on average." That's a good thing for Sachs.

This *greatest supporter of the Vatican* has advocated for 20 years a UN global reproductive health policy, which is flush with abortion and contraceptives.

This *greatest supporter of the Vatican* promotes the new UN Sustainable Development Goals which are replete with the promotion of sexual and reproductive health resources, including abortifacients, contraceptives and abortion services.

Can you hear the collective gasp of horror from the tombs of popes beneath St. Peter's Basilica?

The Plot Thickens

Two weeks ago at the Vatican *Judicial Human Trafficking Summit*, Sachs spoke again (although he's certainly not a judge) and seized the opportunity to again further the implementation of his pet project, the new UN Sustainable Development Goals. In his revealing opening statement, Sachs underscored the close collaboration and scheme between the UN and the Pope's Eco Exhortation, *Laudato Si*.

The Suffering Souls in Purgatory

The Commemoration of the Dead

by Father Ladis J. Cizik

In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Where the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church has traditionally promoted indulgenced prayers and Masses for the souls in Purgatory, there are some today tainted by Modernism, who deny the very existence of Purgatory. Supported by the Baltimore Catechism, the good religious Sisters taught many of us as children the fundamentals of the Catholic Faith. These unchanging truths still define our ongoing war with Modernism, such as the definition of Purgatory: "Purgatory is the state in which those suffer for a time who are guilty of venial sins, or without having satisfied for the punishment due to their sins" (Balt. Cat. No.3, Lesson 37, Q. 1381). The Traditional Latin Mass serves to preserve the traditional teaching on Purgatory, most especially in the **Commemoration (Memento) of the Dead**:

"Be mindful, also, O Lord, of Thy servants and handmaids, N. and N. who are gone before us with the sign of faith and repose in the sleep of peace. To these, O Lord, and to all who rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light and peace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen."

Unlike the Memento for the Living (*Memento, Domine*), where the faithful unite with the Priest in offering Sacrifice, the Memento for the Dead (*Memento etiam, Domine*), takes place after the Consecration. This is because, unlike the living, the deceased can no longer offer their prayers and sufferings for themselves, but are dependent upon us to be also (*etiam*) mindful of them as the Divine Victim is Present upon the Altar. Note that in return for praying for them, the prayers of the souls in Purgatory are indeed powerful and efficacious in return for us. Saint Padre Pio said: "The souls in Purgatory repay the prayers that we say for them."

In praying for the dead, the Priest neither prays for the Saints in Heaven or for those unrepentant sinners condemned to the everlasting fires of hell. The sole focus of the Commemoration of the Dead is directed towards the suffering souls in Purgatory, in the hope of hastening their entry into the eternal happiness of Heaven. The Council of Trent (1545-1563), responding to the Protestant 'De'-Formation, decreed: "...there is a Purgatory and that the souls there detained are aided by the suffrages of the faithful and chiefly by the acceptable Sacrifice at the Altar..." (Session XXV). The Poor Souls cannot help themselves, but we can help them.

Charity and Catholic Tradition demands that we pray for the faithful departed, contrary to Protestant false teaching. The Second Book of Maccabees, shamefully removed by Protestants from their abridged Bible, admonishes: "And because he considered that they who had

fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (2 Macc 12: 45-46). In his classic work, *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass*, Father Nicholas Gehr writes: "The Church's practice of offering the Holy Sacrifice for the departed and praying for them during its celebration, dates from apostolic times and is an apostolic ordinance, as the ancient liturgies and the writings of the Fathers clearly prove."

At the Memento of the Dead the Priest with hands joined, symbolic of peace and rest, prays for his deceased loved ones and others without prejudice to the Mass Intention. Pope Saint Gregory the Great said that: "The sufferings of the dead for whom the Mass is said, or who are especially mentioned by the Priest, are suspended or lessened during that time." In the early Church there used to be a special two-paneled diptych upon which was inscribed the names of the departed who were especially to be prayed for, such as benefactors. After those chosen names, the Priest extends his hands and prays for "all that rest in Christ" (*omnibus in Christo quiescentibus*). All other faithful departed souls are prayed for at this time as St. Augustine observes: "...that such religious duty, whenever it is neglected by parents, children, relatives or friends, may be supplied by our common Mother, the Church."

The Priest then joins his hands and bows his head at the concluding formula of this prayer for the dead, as he prays: "Through the same Christ our Lord" (*Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum*). The head bow here is unique as it is required nowhere else in the Mass without being united with the Holy Name of Jesus. For centuries, commentators have ascribed a "mysterious signification" to this - related to Our Blessed Lord finally bowing His Sacred Head on the Cross as He died and descended to the region of the dead. Here, at this poignant moment of the Mass, we can imagine the salvific Precious Blood of Christ flowing forth from the Holy Sacrifice to provide relief and comfort to all of the faithful souls in captivity.

The Commemoration of the Dead includes all those who have went before us "with the sign of faith" (*praecesserunt cum signo fidei*) and "repose in the sleep of peace" (*dormiunt in somno pacis*). As such, Gehr comments that the prayer refers to "true believers and... members of the Church (who) have departed this earthly life in communion with the Church. Accordingly, here all are excluded from being mentioned by name who have died outside the pale of the Church." This is a reflection of the dogma "Outside the Church there is no salvation" (*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*) (see: Pope Innocent III, Fourth Lateran Council, 1215; Pope Boniface VIII, the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302; Pope Eugene IV, the Bull *Cantate Domino*, 1441).

In addition, even as children growing up, many of us were taught from the Baltimore Catechism (Q. 1384) that the souls in Purgatory are called the "faithful departed."

In addition to heretics, schismatics, and apostates, the "sleep of peace" would not apply to the unbaptized who lack the indelible mark of Baptism, the initial and essential sign of faith (*signo fidei*). Indeed, Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ said: "Amen, amen I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5). In the Roman Catacombs the term "Rest in Peace" (*Requiescant in pace*) can frequently be found engraved on the tombs of the martyrs and the faithful departed. Interestingly, the word "cemetery" derives from the Greek word, *koimeterion*, meaning "dormitory" or "sleeping place."

The Memento for the Dead asks that the Almighty be mindful of His servants and handmaids who "repose in the sleep of peace." Gehr comments as to how a poor soul in the torments of Purgatory could repose in a peaceful condition: "The suffering souls indeed enjoy peace and rest, in as much as they are removed from the discord and the turmoil of this sinful and deceitful world; but as long as they remain at a distance from the vision of God in a place of silent suffering, their peace and rest are still imperfect; therefore, we implore for them full and eternal peace in Heaven."

Whenever prayers are offered for the souls in Purgatory, the relief that comes to them is always in the form of a "resting place of refreshment, light and peace" (*quiescentibus, locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis*). The word *refrigerium* (related to "refreshment") has the meaning of making something cold, an appropriate reference to quenching the heat of the purifying fires of Purgatory. For those who do not believe in the fires of Purgatory, Saint Padre Pio was once asked to compare a fire in the hearth to the flames of Purgatory. Padre Pio

said: "They compare like fresh water and boiling water." In the Memento for the Dead, God is asked to grant "light" (*lucis*) insofar as Purgatory is considered to be a place of darkness.

The good religious Sisters used to teach us from the Baltimore Catechism (Q. 1385) that "the faithful on Earth can help the souls in Purgatory by their prayers, fasts, alms, deeds; by indulgences, and by having Masses said for them." For those who ask if prayers are wasted for souls that are already in Heaven, Saint Padre Pio once directed someone who asked if her deceased parents were safe: "Even if your parents are in Paradise we need to continue to pray. If they don't need prayers the suffrage are applied to other souls" - perhaps to those souls that "have no one to pray for them" - as the good Sisters in school used to instruct us. Even a child once knew these truths of our Faith. Today, 'grown-up' Modernists, claiming to be 'scholars,' are vincibly ignorant of the truth or in open rebellion towards it.

For those who forgot, or who had never learned the traditional Catholic catechism, or who are in denial of the truth, be certain that there is a Purgatory and that the souls there are known as the "Church Suffering." They, along with the Saints in Heaven (the "Church Triumphant") and the faithful on Earth (the "Church Militant") make up the "Communion of Saints." Understanding the Commemoration of the Dead will help us to recall or to learn these and other unchangeable teachings of our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Be assured that the One True Faith, handed down to us from the Apostles, and thrown out the 'open window' by the Modernists, is preserved by the prayers of the Traditional Latin Mass.

Always remember my Three R's of Modernism: **Recognize it; Refute it; and Return to Tradition.**

In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. ■



The Coming Decentralization of the Catholic Church

(We Have a Situation Here!)

By Torben Riis
The Remnant's Correspondent from Denmark

In the wake of the Family Synod in Rome, and especially in the light of *Amoris Laetitia* including Pope Francis' subsequent confirmation of his intention to change Church discipline concerning divorced and remarried Catholics, I feel that the time is ripe for taking the discussion to the next level, in other words, to ask what we actually know about the overall agenda of this papacy.

In Pope Francis' 17 October 2015 address commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops, he announced his intention to "build a synodal Church" and, to this end, promote "a sound decentralization".

First, what exactly did he mean by "decentralization"?

Francis explains in *Evangelii Gaudium* (32) that "decentralization" implies the assignment of "genuine doctrinal authority" to episcopal conferences, something unheard of until now. To justify this drastic measure, which he describes as a "conversion of the papacy", Francis refers in three footnotes to 1) The Second Vatican Council (*Lumen Gentium* 23), 2) to Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter "Apostolos Suos – on the theological and juridical nature of episcopal conferences" and 3) to his encyclical "Ut Unum Sint – on commitment to Ecumenism." (95)

Quoting the latter, Francis claims that John Paul *asked for help in finding* [emphasis added] "a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation."

Did John Paul II really ask for help? He certainly did not. What he actually wrote was this: "... in heeding the request made of me to find a way of exercising the primacy ..." In other words, the quotation as such (in inverted commas) is correct but connected with the preceding words "asked for help in finding," utterly misleading. In this context, John Paul II is talking about

"the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of Christian Communities"; merely stating that he intends to pay due attention to concerns expressed by non-Catholic communities.

In the same paragraph (32), quoting *Lumen Gentium* (23), Francis states that like the ancient patriarchal Churches, episcopal conferences are in a position to "contribute in many and fruitful ways to the concrete realization of the collegial spirit." But does this general statement necessarily corroborate the view that there is any need to change the present status of episcopal conferences? Does the assertion "episcopal conferences should be endowed with genuine doctrinal authority" logically follow from "episcopal conferences should contribute to the realization of the collegial spirit"?

Finally, Francis claims that "a juridical status of episcopal conferences which would see them as subjects of specific attributions, including genuine doctrinal authority, has not yet been sufficiently elaborated" – thus suggesting that we are still in need of a clear definition of the authority of episcopal conferences. In support of this assumption, Francis places a reference to John Paul II's apostolic letter *Apostolos Suos*, which ironically provides precisely the desired clarification.

Interestingly enough, the footnote has no reference to any of the 23 paragraphs of this document. So the question remains: Did John Paul II anywhere in *Apostolos Suos* express support of the idea of assigning doctrinal authority to episcopal conferences? The answer is no. Did he say anything about his reasons for writing this document? He did indeed: "In strict fidelity to the documents of the Second Vatican Council, its aim is to set out the basic theological principles regarding Episcopal Conferences, and to offer the juridical synthesis indispensable for helping to establish a theologically well-grounded and juridically sound praxis for the conferences". (7)

And this is what John Paul actually does in this document, notably in paragraphs 20 and 22, where he explicitly

maintains that pronouncements issued by episcopal conferences "do not have the characteristics of a universal magisterium."

In short, Pope Francis fails to provide convincing documentation for the suggestion that his decentralization project should be in accordance with Church Tradition or with the clear teaching of John Paul II. Moreover, his use of misquotations and quotations out of context leaves us with the impression that his references have no other purpose than covering up the fact that decentralization is without support in Church teaching.

As for that, I should like to quote this thought-provoking observation made by Cardinal Pell in a homily, 24 October 2014, where he discussed the importance of the papacy, "In every country where the Communists gained power, they tried to separate the local Catholics from the Pope into national, so-called 'patriotic' Churches. We know from Hitler's table talk that if he had won the Second World War he would have set up a Pope in every Catholic country."

However, decentralization is not an isolated item. It should be viewed as an element of the much more ambitious project of building a so-called synodal Church. So let's now return to Pope Francis' 17 October address to the Synod Fathers.

In this address, Pope Francis defines the synodal Church as "a Church which listens" and adds: "It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn". Next, he draws the contours of the future synodal Church distinguishing three levels: the people of God, the pastors, and the Bishop of Rome. And finally, he reveals how decisions are going to be made in this future Church: "The Synod process **begins by** [emphasis added] listening to the people of God, which "shares also in Christ's prophetic office" (*Lumen Gentium* 12).

Francis develops this point further stating that "in this Church, as in an

inverted pyramid [emphasis added], the top is located beneath the base. Consequently, those who exercise authority are called "ministers", because, in the original meaning of the word, they are the least of all. It is in serving the people of God that each bishop becomes, for that portion of the flock entrusted to him, *vicarius Christi*, the vicar of that Jesus who at the Last Supper bent down to wash the feet of the Apostles. And in a similar perspective, the Successor of Peter is nothing else if not the *servus servorum Dei*."

Convinced? I am not. The foot washing (Jn 13:1-15) is an admonition directed to the Apostles reminding them that they should always be humble servants of God: "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him" (15-16). And in the beginning of this admonition, Jesus says: "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am."

So what has the foot washing got to do with an inverted pyramid? To the best of my knowledge, the foot washing is about humility and surely also about the bishops' duty to serve the people of God – provided we are talking about their duty to proclaim the Gospel, enlighten the faithful "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Mat 28:20) and thus leading them on the path to salvation. It is not, however, about inverting the hierarchy of the Church, not about "all listening to each other" or sending questionnaires to the particular Churches. It is about humbly serving the truth.

The second level in the synodal Church is about listening to the pastors (particularly the Synod Fathers) and about the pastors listening to God, "so that with him we may hear the cry of his people; to listen to his people until we are in harmony with the will to which God calls us." Notice the claim that the condition of being in harmony with God's will is that the hierarchy listens to the people (!). The "organs of communion" in the local Church (presbyterial council, college of consulters, chapters of canons and the pastoral council), "we are told, "should keep connected to the "base" and start from people and their daily problems ... only then "can a synodal Church begin to take shape."

And the third level? "The Synod process culminates in listening to the Bishop of Rome, who is called to speak as pastor and teacher of all Christians." Francis emphasizes that in this capacity he should not speak "on the basis of his personal convictions, but as the supreme witness to the *fides totius Ecclesiae*," the faith of the whole Church, or as *Lumen Gentium* (12) puts it, "the whole peoples' supernatural discernment in matters of faith when from the Bishops down to the last of the lay faithful they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals" – a condition which was not, to put it mildly, present at the recent Family Synod.



Pope receives applause after speaking at the 50th anniversary of the Synod of Bishops in Paul VI hall at the Vatican Oct. 17.

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In short, the Synod process starts “from people and their daily problems”. It then passes through several “screenings” by the various “organs of communion” notably the Synod Fathers (level 2) and “culminates in listening to the Bishop of Rome” (level 3).

As to level 3, Francis explicitly underlines that the Pope is “the guarantor of the obedience and the conformity of the Church to the will of God, to the Gospel of Christ, and to the Tradition of the Church.” The Synod, he claims, “always acts *cum Petro et sub Petro*.” But how does this agree with the idea of an inverted pyramid, with the synodal Church’s listening to the base? Or, for that matter, with the idea of decentralization?

Does any of this make sense? Only if these inconsistencies are seen as a camouflage to conceal what synodality is really about, and if the guarantees of conformity with Church teaching are actually the sugar that is supposed to make us swallow the pill.

In that case, level 1 and 2 would serve no other purpose than to legitimize the whole project, making it look like a democratic process (but is the Church a democratic institution?) where decisions reflect the aspirations of the people and the will of God.

Level 1 would make it possible for the Pope to claim that his decisions, whatever they might be, were made after listening carefully to the concerns of the laity.

Level 2 would furthermore enable Francis to claim that his decisions have not been made without engaging an untold number of bureaucratic instances at all levels including the bishops participating in future synods.

Level 3 would consequently allow the Pope to conclude whatever he likes from the recommendations made at level 1 and 2.

In this future Church, the Magisterium would consequently lose its *raison d’être* and Tradition soon be seen as irrelevant. What happens here is that the framework within which a Pope normally exercises his authority (his duty to act in conformity with Tradition) is blown to pieces, thus in principle investing the Pope with unlimited power to change or to ignore magisterial teaching.

So, in so far as my reading of the above-mentioned documents is fairly accurate, we are facing an attempt to destroy the catholicity of the Church and to undermine its very foundations. In other words, we have a situation – a situation unprecedented in the history of the Church. ■

About the author: Torben Riis received his M.A. in French and Danish Language and Literature from the University of Copenhagen. Besides his teaching activities, he served as editor-in-chief of the Danish Catholic diocesan newsletter *Katolsk Orientering* 2005-2008. He is currently the editor of the Danish Pro-Life magazine “*RFM Nyt*” as well as the Danish Catholic website www.katolskmagasin.dk

The Last Word...

Is He Really Who He Says He Is?



By Father Celatus

One of the longest running game shows on American television, spanning several decades, is *To Tell the Truth*. This game show features a panel of celebrities whose task it is to ask questions and then choose from among three contestants which one of them is telling the truth about his real identity. Two of the contestants are imposters whose role is to deceive the four celebrities whereas the real mystery contestant, who has an interesting occupation or has undergone some unusual experience, is sworn to tell the truth.

Let’s imagine for a moment that the mystery contestant is the pope and the celebrities must choose from among three contestants which one really is the pope. *The Last Word* suggests that if Francis was among the three contestants and was sworn to tell the truth, in ordinary times no one would pick him out as pope. If you doubt me on this, imagine this Q&A exchange between four celebrities and contestant Francis:

Celebrity: What is your personal view of the Mother of Jesus?

Francis: She was an angry woman who may have called God a liar for having cheated her.

Celebrity: Are you supportive of large Catholic families with many children?

Francis: Good Catholic parents do not need to breed like rabbits.

Celebrity: What do you believe about Catholic sacramental marriages?

Francis: The great majority of our sacramental marriages are null.

Celebrity: Are you opposed to cohabitation of unmarried couples?

Francis: Cohabitation is real marriage with the grace of real marriage.

Let’s face it, prior to three years ago no one but a modernist would ever recognize Francis as a real pope. But this is not a game show we are talking about, though we wish it were only a game and not the absurd reality under which the Church must labor. And nearly every day now the degree of absurdity intensifies.

Take, for example, the recent statement of Francis that “the great majority of our sacramental marriages are null.” This papal zinger is not only theologically absurd but it is also pastorally reckless. For if Francis is correct then statistically speaking a Catholic couple has a very slim chance of being counted among the validly sacramentally married elite. If “great majority” is 90% then a couple stands a one in ten chance. How’s that for odds? Not bad if you are playing a lottery, not good if you are gambling on your marriage. But Christ did not institute a crapshoot; He instituted an inseparable bond between a baptized man and woman which is rooted in creation and sanctified by a sacrament. And the Church has provided a form to the celebration of Holy Matrimony such that couples who approach the sacrament without deception and with true intentions can have moral certitude that they are validly married. But not under the Francis plan.

Under the Francis plan for matrimony, the presumption is that you are not sacramentally married regardless of the vows and your good intentions. Under the Francis plan, there is no moral certitude that you are truly married and it is more probable that you are not. How unedifying for Catholic couples who are committed to each other and how convenient for couples wanting divorce and remarriage. Smell a rat?

Enough of absurdity! It’s time to turn the tables on Francis. Were it up to him he would have us all uncertain as to the validity of sacramental marriages when in reality solid Catholics are increasingly uncertain as to the validity of this papacy. No, *The Last Word* is not declaring itself sedevacantist, for while we do lack moral certitude that Francis is the pope we also lack moral certitude that Francis is not the pope. To tell the truth, we are morally uncertain about the status of the squatter on the Petrine Chair.

In fact, while we can have absolute certainty about matters of Faith that are divinely revealed we do not have absolute certainty in many matters

related to these same truths. For instance, we know with absolute certainty that Christ instituted the sacrament of marriage, because it is divinely revealed in the Sacred Scriptures and confirmed by Sacred Tradition. But as to whether or not a particular Catholic couple is sacramentally married is not divinely revealed; therefore, we have only moral certitude in this regard. Under the Catholic plan for marriage, moral certitude favors validity; the Francis plan favors invalidity.

Applying this now to the papacy, it is divinely revealed in Sacred Scripture and confirmed by Sacred Tradition that Christ directly commissioned Peter as Pope. But as to the validity of particular subsequent popes in the long history of papal successions, this has not been divinely revealed; therefore, we can have only moral and not absolute certitude as to whether a particular individual man is validly the true pope.

For most of the popes throughout the history of the Church there has been moral certitude regarding the validity of a particular individual sitting upon the Chair. But not always! At times there were multiple contenders or claimants to the Chair and often cardinals and monarchs and even saints had differing opinions and divided loyalties. Conclaves were sometimes contested and outcomes uncertain.

But uncertainty of that nature was confined to the primitive and medieval periods and couldn’t possibly arise in the *springtime* era of the Church, or could it? Certainly there is increasing cause to wonder about the validity of Francis. We had an unprecedented abdication of a pope who retains the appearance, the title and possibly even an aspect of the papal office; there have been credible revelations that contrary to papal decree, cardinals had conspired to insure that Jorge Bergoglio was elected pope—and he concurred.

Beyond these and other deductive arguments that may call into question the validity of *Pope Francis* are the inductive; namely, the *great majority* of the words and the actions of Jorge Bergoglio have very little in common with what one would expect from a pope, or from any true Catholic for that matter. Worse than that, many of his words and actions are actually contrary to the Catholic Faith and Catholic practice.

So what shall we say: is Francis of Rome the Pope? *The Last Word* does not pretend to know but we have learned to live with this uncertainty. Were it manifested tomorrow or any time after that he is not validly the pope we would not be surprised and our faith would not be shaken. To tell the truth, we have more moral certitude as to the validity of traditional Catholic marriages than the validity of this absurd papacy. ■

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