

# 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

### The “Clans” Unite Against Amazon in Rome

#### Due to Amazon Synod – Only One Remnant in October

For the past three weeks, I have been in Rome covering the Amazon Synod for Remnant TV, and taking part in several initiatives of public opposition to what has to be one of the biggest news stories in a thousand years—the human element of the Church’s formal surrender to the modern world at the Synod from Hell, where ‘Holy Mother Earth’ has almost completely eclipsed Holy Mother Church.

Consequently, we were obliged to merge the two October issues of The Remnant into one double issue—an issue that is largely devoted to the crisis in Rome, which I consider to be little more than the final culmination of the Revolution of Vatican II.

#### Good News from the Amazon Synod

The Vatican is in the hands of clumsy revolutionaries. Many journalists are seeing through this charade to deface the Bride of Christ, and faithful Catholics around the world are going on offense.

~ See Editor's Desk/Page 2

## Appeal to the Angels



Michael J. Matt (far right) joins Prof. De Mattei (center) in prayerful demonstration against the Amazon Synod

### Rome, on the Vigil of the Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel

Lord, *congrega nos de nationibus!*

Our rally is made up of lay Catholics coming from many different nations, who are above all asking the Lord to gather together all those who are fighting for a good cause, with the purpose of forming a united army against the enemies of God and of the Church.

As we muster in this piazza, we want to offer a symbolic yet real expression of our will to resist and not to yield in the battle for the

~ See Appeal to Angels/Page 3

## The Catholic Obligation to Resist

BY PROF. ROBERTO DE MATTEI

**Editor's Note:** This talk, a powerful call to arms for the ages, was delivered at the launch of a new book-length interview of Bishop Athanasius Schneider in Rome. The book that covers everything from Vatican II, to Archbishop Lefebvre's role in the resistance and even the role of Freemasonry (see Bishop Schneider's address below the fold).

In the middle of the Amazon Synod, Cardinal Burke and Bishop Schneider—the two most outspoken ecclesiastical critics of the Amazon Synod—collaborated in the launching of a book published by Diane Montagna (one of the most traditional Catholic vaticanistas in Rome) in the presence of Cardinals Muller and Arinze, at an event covered by several topnotch Vatican journalists and members of the world press (including The Remnant) and at which the “Papal Posse’s” own Father Gerald Murray served as enthusiastic emcee.

People often complain that we need to “do something” about what’s happening in Rome. Well, here it is! **MJM**

It is a great honor for me to participate alongside Cardinal Burke and Bishop Schneider, in the presentation of Diane Montagna’s book-interview with the same Msgr. Athanasius Schneider, entitled: *Christus Vincit: Christ’s Triumph Over the Darkness of the Age*<sup>1</sup>.

1. *Christus Vincit: Christ’s Triumph Over the Dark-*

~ See Capital/Page 6

## Christus Vincit: Christ’s Triumph Over the Darkness of the Age

BY BISHOP ATHANASIOS SCHNEIDER

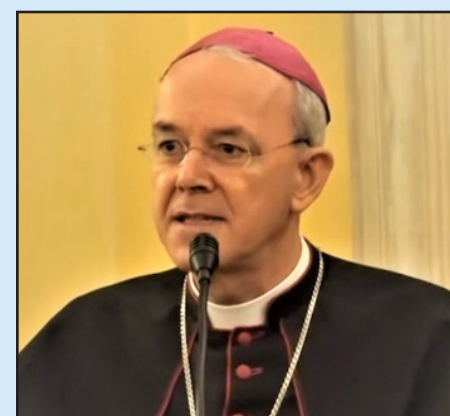
**Editor’s note:** Introduced by *The World Over’s* Fr. Gerald Murray, Bishop Schneider delivered the following address at the launch of his book, *Christus Vincit: Christ’s Triumph Over the Darkness of the Age* in Rome on October 14, 2019. The book, published by Angelico Press, is now available through Amazon.com. You can watch his address online at [www.RemnantNewspaper.com](http://www.RemnantNewspaper.com). **MJM**

*Laudetur Iesus Christus!*

Your Eminences, Reverend priests, Religious Sisters, dear faithful, ladies and gentlemen.

From different sides I was asked several times to consent to the publishing of a book length interview. In doing so, my first thought was directed to the brave lay faithful, to fathers and mothers of families, to young men and

~ See Christus Vincit/Page 6



Bp. Schneider speaks at Vatican book launch



# Editor's Desk, Continued...

The alliances formed between The Remnant and many other groups give promise to a long and bitter war over the very soul of our Church under siege.

The Remnant was honored to team up with Roberto de Mattei's Lepanto Foundation, LifeSiteNews, the TFP, the Voice of the Family and several prominent journalists, priests, bishops and even cardinals for the purpose of holding a number of meetings, conferences and counterrevolutionary demonstrations, including the *Acies Ordinata* prayer protest at Castel Sant'Angelo (in the very shadow of St. Peter's) on the eve of the Amazon Synod.

I attended the daily press briefings at the Vatican Press Office, and our team then posted daily video reports from our temporary RTV set located on one of the rooftops of the famous Borgo Pio. We have set up a special Amazon Synod page to host all the RTV coverage and events at [www.RemnantNewspaper.com](http://www.RemnantNewspaper.com).

With accreditation from the Sala Stampa, I was also able to do things like cover the canonization of Cardinal John Henry Newman from the top of the colonnade overlooking the Piazza San Pietro, and that video coverage is also available on our website.

## Catholic Identity Conference

Several speakers will be delivering talks on the Amazon Synod at the Catholic Identity Conference 2019, to be held in Pittsburgh on the first weekend in November.

Unfortunately, that conference—which will include a keynote address by Bishop Athanasius Schneider—is sold out.

However, my son Walter Matt and the Remnant TV crew will be there to make every talk available online an hour after it will be delivered live.

So please sign up for **Exclusive Access to CIC 2019 Via On-Demand Video** at: <https://remnantnewspaper.com/web/index.php/cic-on-demand-subscriptions/view-membership-details/12-catholic-identity-conference-online>

Not only will this give you access to the 2019 Catholic Identity Conference both on the day of and whenever you care to watch at your leisure in the comfort of your own home, but it will also go a long way toward helping The Remnant financially.

Proceeds from every subscription to the CIC On-Demand Video will go to The Remnant, which will help us continue the work of organizing and staffing the CIC in order to make it one of the most successful and well attended conferences of the year.

## Voice of the Family's Roundtable: "Our Church – Reformed or Deformed?"

On October 4, Voice of the Family hosted a press conference roundtable of Catholic leaders who sought to warn of the problematic proposals of the Amazon Synod. Each participant on the roundtable presented an initial position

paper on a given topic, and then for the next two hours there was a question and answer period livestreamed to a worldwide audience.

I was indeed honored to take part in this crucial piece of Catholic action on the eve of the Amazon Synod, and the paper I presented was on the post-conciliar collapse of the Catholic missionary spirit. Video highlights of the entire event are available at LifeSiteNews.com, and a transcript of my statement appears below (read Prof. de Mattei's statement on page 8):

### The Disappearance of Traditional Missionaries and Religious Orders Rome, October 4, 2019

Over the past half century, there has been a paradigm shift in the Catholic Church's attitude toward missionary activity and evangelization—a shift which, based in doctrinal reorientation, has naturally led to a dramatic decline in traditional missionary priests and religious orders throughout the world.

These days, we hear much about the New Evangelization and no doubt much good has come from this effort, which essentially is introspective in essence and pertains to those who are already baptized Catholics.

But the very idea of a New



John Smeaton, Michael Matt and John-Henry Westen  
Voice of the Family's Roundtable in Rome (October 4, 2019)

Evangelization prompts two rather pressing questions: What was wrong with the old evangelization? And why would the Church launch a new evangelization unless the point and purpose of the old one had changed?

The old evangelization, let us recall, saw Catholic missionaries from France and Spain and Portugal and Italy and many Catholic countries and over the centuries send missionary priests all over the world in an effort to lovingly lead the world's indigenous peoples out of the darkness of paganism and into the light of Christ.

This meant conversion based—not on intimidation, not on coercion, and certainly not on black legends such as “forced baptisms”—but rather on one simple reality: Obedience to the great commission given to the Church by Jesus Christ Himself: Go forth and convert all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.



Michael Matt speaks on Catholic action to Voice of the Family's youth conference held at the Lepanto Institute in Rome on October 2, 2019 (watch the recording at [Remnantnewspaper.com](http://Remnantnewspaper.com))

The Church over the past fifty years has moved away from this idea, citing as its authority the Second Vatican Council—the spirit of which more or less reneged on the Catholic Church's own claim to be the sole means of salvation. And if there are many other roads to salvation, the Catholic missionary mandate of old is not only pointless but offensive to the Church's dialogue partners.

and everything to do with dialogue for endless dialogue's sake.

Perhaps some of you have wondered as I have: What is the endgame of interfaith dialogue when it's obviously not conversion—unless by “conversion” you mean the Church's converting from the missionary Church of Christ into an ecumenical Church of Man, where even false religions will be regarded as good and holy...false religions which St. Paul warned in 1 Corinthians “make sacrifice to devils, and not to God.”

At the Pan-Amazon Synod will we see the Church abandon that Divine Commission to convert and baptize all nations? Will the Vatican bless and approve a certain indigenous theology whose animating principle is essentially pagan? Will the Church teach that pagan cultures themselves are of God because to suggest otherwise would be to engage in a sort of religious supremacism that holds Christianity as the only true religion?

We shall have to wait and see. But is it any wonder that the missionary spirit itself is fading into irrelevancy, when the Divine Mandate of Christ Himself has been undermined if not replaced altogether by the new and creative mandate of the Church of Accompaniment?

After all, isn't it true that Francis himself has proffered novelties no pre-conciliar

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# Appeal to the Angels

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The rally was organized by *Acies Ordinata*, with the participation of the TFP and Professor Roberto de Mattei's Lepanto Institute in Rome.

defense of the Faith, but our rally goes beyond the confines of one place and one day. We intend to gather all of the sons and daughters of the Church militant who are united with us in spirit and in prayer.

The enemies have penetrated to the heart of the citadel, and they worship idols even in the sanctuary, “*ubi sedes beatissimi Petri et Cathedra veritatis ad lucem gentium constituta est* [where the seat of Blessed Peter and the Chair of Truth which brings light to the nations has been established” (Exorcism of Pope Leo XIII). Here at the foot of Castel Sant’Angelo, the fortress which so often has defended the Papacy throughout its history, we call upon the help of the Angels, and above all Saint Michael, the prince of the heavenly host, asking them to protect the defenders of the Church and Christian civilization and to disperse their enemies.

Confusion, which is the smoke of Satan, is enveloping the battlefield. In order to defeat the forces of chaos what is necessary is purity of doctrine, clarity of words, firmness of example, accord of soul and of works, because, as Saint Paul teaches: “*If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will ever prepare himself for battle?*” (1 Cor 14:8).

In order for this to happen, let us call upon the Blessed Mother, Queen of the Angels, asking her to make us in her image, today and always, into an *Acies Ordinata* (*Song of Songs* 6: 3,9), an army ready to fight, with that tranquility which is born from the peace of Christ which is in our hearts and which we wish to extend to the whole world. ■



## Michael Matt, Continued...

pope ever imagined: that souls don’t go to Hell, for example, but rather are somehow annihilated?

After Abu Dahbi, isn’t it true that Pope Francis suggested diversity of religions is necessary and in accord with God’s permissive will, and that what God wants is a universal brotherhood of religions rather than a universal missionary campaign?

Isn’t it true that Francis warns against the “solemn nonsense” of proselytism, which is nothing more than the active attempt to lead non-Catholics back into the bosom of Mother Church?

Didn’t he rather famously say that atheists can go to Heaven, as long as they are of “good will”?

Given all this, is it surprising when the world begins to wonder if even the pope still believes baptism is necessary to salvation?

When missionary activity is reduced to vague invitations to non-Catholics to

join our religious club if they feel like it—even though they can be saved in their own religious club if they prefer—isn’t it only natural that missionary orders would decline? After all, the imperative is, it would seem, no more.

Cardinal Walter Kasper—president emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity—has said that the “ecumenism of return” is over! In other words, using truth and charity to share the good news and work to convert non-Catholics is no longer the Church’s goal.

And now we face a synod of bishops that promises to embrace an indigenous theology that would essentially abandon the Church’s missionary effort altogether while embracing an eco-theology that would send forth missionaries of climate change to teach all nations to listen to the cry of Mother Earth.

Please God, may this not come to pass, for if it does it will surely represent the Catholic Church’s formal surrender to the world and to the spirit not just of the age but also the jungle.

To prevent this crisis of faith, may I suggest Catholics the world over make special appeal to the intercession of the great St. Boniface...and for obvious reasons. The great 8<sup>th</sup> Century ‘Apostle to the Germans’ who famously took an ax and chopped down the pagan Thunder Oak, which the pagans had previously

boasted the God of Boniface could not destroy, and replaced it with the cross of Christ—the first Christmas Tree—in order to break the hammer of the false god Thor.

**St Boniface Patron Saint of the Amazon Synod, Pray for us ■**



Don't miss any of Michael Matt's coverage of the Amazon Synod! Check out The Remnant's YouTube channel: [www.YouTube.com/user/TheRemnantVideo](http://www.YouTube.com/user/TheRemnantVideo)



# Catholic Obligation to Resist

R. de Mattei/Continued from Page 1

The interview with Bishop Schneider is very beautiful and I congratulate not only the bishop, but also the journalist, who in her questions touched on every aspect of the contemporary religious debate. But I don't want to deprive you of the pleasure of reading the book by telling you what it says. I believe that the best way to present it is to insert it into the historical horizon in which it was written and published, as a Synod is now underway that can rightly be described as one of the most dramatic events for

Council fathers. The great historian of the Councils, Hefele, explains that in Nicaea the Orthodox bishops were a minority. Together with Athanasius and his friends, they constituted the right, or rather the ranks of the far right. Arius and his partisans formed the left, while the center-left was occupied by Eusebius of Nicomedia and the center-right by Eusebius of Caesarea.<sup>3</sup>

Among these positions there was only one true position, only one Catholic

The Catholic Church is a mysterious organism, and it is important to strive to understand its physiology. Today nearly all of the mass media embraces a secularist ideology and does not understand the supernatural nature of the Church. The different theological positions are reduced to political positions and politics is in turn reduced to a clash of economic interests

The Church has a visible body; it is a society formed by living men and

Professor Roberto de Mattei



wisdom, until the end of the centuries.

To deny the human and visible element of the Church is to fall into Protestantism, but to deny its divine and invisible aspect is to equate the Church with any human society. To remove from the Church one of these two elements, the human or the divine, is to destroy it.

Those who ignore the Holy Spirit's action on the Church will never be able to understand its reality. We often hear, for example, that the Popes are assisted by the Holy Spirit, and that is true. But all Christians, albeit in different ways, are assisted by the Holy Spirit. Through Baptism, they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the spirit of Christ.

The Holy Spirit not only assists the heads of the Church, but every baptized person. The least of the Amazonian Indians who receives Baptism is incorporated into the Church of Christ and is assisted by the Holy Spirit. For this reason, we cannot understand those, like Bishop Erwin Kräutler, bishop emeritus of Xingu, Brazil, who boast of never having baptized an Indian.<sup>5</sup>

The Sacrament of Confirmation perfects Baptism and makes the Christian an authentic "soldier of Christ," as it was once said: a son or daughter of the militant Church who fights courageously against the flesh, the devil and the spirit of the world. With Baptism and Confirmation, the Christian also receives a supernatural light that theologians call "Catholic common sense" or the "*sensus fidei*," that is, the ability to adhere to the truths of faith by supernatural instinct, even prior to theological reasoning. St. Thomas teaches that the universal Church is governed by the Holy Spirit who, as Jesus Christ promised, "will teach [her] the whole truth" (*Jn* 16: 13).<sup>6</sup> The supernatural capacity that the believer has to penetrate and apply in his life the revealed truth comes from the Holy Spirit.

In 2014, the International Theological Commission, chaired by Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Faith, published a study entitled "*Sensus fidei in the*

5. <https://panamazonsynodwatch.info/it/2019/09/26/lamazzonnia-impari-dalla-cina-dove-la-chiesa-fioriva-con-pochissimi-missionari-celibati/>

6. St Thomas of Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-IIae, q. 1, a. 9.

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*We are not heretics, for heresy repels us... We are not schismatics, for schism repels us... But if Pope Francis or any other Pope pronounces words or commits acts that seem to be at odds with the doctrine and customs of the Church, then we have the right to separate ourselves from these words and acts.*

the Church in recent centuries.

Cardinal Burke and Bishop Schneider have launched an appeal to pray and fast so that the Synod on the Amazon does not approve the errors and heresies contained in the *Instrumentum laboris*. And for that we thank them. They were among the few Pastors of the Church who broke the silence in which the worldwide episcopate is immersed amid the current crisis. By doing so they have fulfilled their mandate as successors of the Apostles. Saint Augustine says that those who do not publicly profess what they believe are only half faithful: "*Non enim perfecte credunt, qui quod credunt loqui nolunt.*"<sup>2</sup> Not only those who abandon truth to embrace error, but also those who do not confess it publicly when necessary. For silent Pastors in times of darkness, such as the one in which we live, we recall the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Woe to me, for I have kept silent" (cf. *Isaiah* VI, 5).

As he recounts in his book, Bishop Schneider received from Divine Providence, at the hands of his religious superiors, the name Athanasius, and Athanasius is a name that is certainly a model for him.

Saint Athanasius was the indomitable defender of the Catholic faith against the Arians and Semi-Arians in the terrible religious crisis of the fourth century. When the Church's first Ecumenical Council, convened by Emperor Constantine, opened in the city of Nicaea, in May 325, many errors and heresies regarding the persons of the Holy Trinity were circulating among the approximately three hundred



Cardinals Burke (left) and Müller (right) were present at the launch of *Christus Vincit*

position, that of St. Athanasius. But Athanasius, to whom Saint Hilary of Poitiers attributes the greatest influence over the formulation of the Nicene Creed,<sup>4</sup> was then neither a bishop, nor a priest, nor a famous theologian, but only a young deacon who was just over 25 years old, and was a collaborator of Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius did not limit himself to praying, but organized, behind the scenes, the bishops' resistance to Arianism. Thanks to him, the Nicene Creed was formulated and constituted an impregnable bulwark against Arianism. This is proof of Holy Spirit's action in the Church.

3. Charles Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles d'après les documents originaux*, Letouzey et Ané, Paris 1907, vol. I, I, p. 431.

4. St Hilary of Poitiers, *Fragmenta*, I, II, c. XXXIII.

endowed with a juridical structure. This society brings together all those who, having received Baptism, profess the faith taught by Jesus Christ, participate in the Sacraments and obey the authority established by Jesus himself. The Church, however, is not a society like any other. Its structure cannot be likened to that of a company, nor of a political, democratic or dictatorial regime. The Catholic Church is a Mystical Body, of which Christ is the Head, the faithful are the members and the Holy Spirit is the soul. Leo XIII (*Satis Cognitum*) and Pius XII (*Mystici Corporis*), but also Benedict XVI (*Angelus* 31 May 2009), have called the Holy Spirit the "Soul of the Church." The presence of the Holy Spirit abides in each soul that is in the state of grace, but His indefectible presence also abides in the whole body of the Church, as the Spirit of truth and

ness of the Age, Bishop Athanasius Schneider in conversation with Diane Montagna, Angelico Press, New York 2019.

2. St Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 115, n. 12.



## Roberto de Mattei/Continued...

*life of the Church*”,<sup>7</sup> which explains that the *sensus fidei* is not a reflective knowledge of the mysteries of faith like the knowledge gained through theology, but a spontaneous intuition, by which the believer adheres to the true faith or rejects what is opposed to it.<sup>8</sup> The faith of the faithful, like the doctrine of pastors, is influenced by the Holy Spirit, and the faithful, through their Christian sense and profession of faith, contribute to expounding, manifesting and attesting to Christian truth.

Every baptized member of the faithful has the *sensus fidei*, and this *sensus fidei* has a rational foundation, because the act of faith is, by its very nature, an act of the intellectual faculty. Today the true notion of faith has been lost, because it is reduced to sentimental experience, forgetting that it is an act of reason, which has truth as its object. Fideism was condemned by the Church. At the First Vatican Council, she instead defined as dogma the harmony between faith and reason (DENZ-H, n. 3017).

Everything that appears irrational and contradictory repels true faith. Therefore, when the *sensus fidei* highlights a contrast between certain expressions articulated by ecclesiastical authorities and the Tradition of the Church, the believer must have recourse to the good use of logic, enlightened by grace. In such cases, the believer must reject any ambiguity or counterfeiting of the truth, relying on the unchangeable Tradition of the Church, which does not contrast with the Magisterium, but includes it.

The Vatican Theological Commission stated that: “alerted by their *sensus fidei*, individual believers may deny assent even to the teaching of legitimate pastors if they do not recognise in that teaching the voice of Christ, the Good Shepherd”<sup>9</sup>. For this reason, the *sensus fidei* can lead the faithful, in some cases, to refuse their assent to certain ecclesiastical documents and to place themselves, before the supreme authorities, in a situation of resistance or apparent disobedience. Such disobedience is only apparent because in these cases of legitimate resistance the Gospel principle applies that one must obey God rather than men (*Acts* 5: 29).

Confronted with a proposition that contradicts faith or morals, we have a moral obligation to follow our conscience which opposes it, for as St. Cardinal Newman says, “conscience is the aboriginal vicar of Christ.”<sup>10</sup>

Today those who, following their conscience, resist the words or acts of ecclesiastical authority which diverge from the Tradition of the Church are sometimes accused of being “enemies of the Pope,” or even “schismatics.” But these words must be weighed. The most serious faults for a Catholic are opposition to the doctrine of Christ, or separation from the Church that Christ

founded. In the first case one is heretical, in the second case one is schismatic.

We are not heretics, for heresy repels us: we believe in the doctrine of Christ as it has been taught always and everywhere.

We are not schismatics, for schism repels us: we firmly believe in the papacy, which is today represented by Pope Francis whose supreme authority we recognize.

But if Pope Francis or any other Pope pronounces words or commits acts that seem to be at odds with the doctrine and customs of the Church, then we have the right to separate ourselves from these words and acts. Ours is not a juridical separation, but a moral separation, not from the Petrine office, which is an office of service to the Church, but a separation from the evil service that is given to the Church by those who hold this Petrine office.

extravagant way in interviews, letters, and even telephone calls.

We kneel before the Pope, because in him we recognize the Vicar of Christ, but we suffer when he does not kneel before the Blessed Sacrament, which is Christ himself — body, blood, soul and divinity.

We not only experience a kind of suffering; it is also a feeling of indignation that we feel when we see pagan ceremonies taking place in the presence of the Holy Father in the Vatican Gardens. It is the same indignation we felt when we saw Saint Peter’s Basilica desecrated by the images that were projected on its facade on December 8, 2015.

They accuse us of being enemies of Pope Francis, but this accusation is meaningless. We are neither enemies nor friends of Pope Francis. We are, and we

I speak as a layman, on behalf of many laymen. The laity do not have the authority to teach anyone the Church’s doctrine, because they do not belong to the teaching Church. But they have the right and duty, which canon law accords them, to preserve, transmit and defend the faith they received at their Baptism.

As a simple layman, spiritually united with the successors of the Apostles present here, I believe I can say: Today we are the voice of Tradition, which is asking the Pope to be heard. Our voice transmits a teaching that comes from afar and it asks the Pope to listen with no less attention than he reserves for the so-called “ancestral wisdom” of the indigenous peoples. We too are the echo of an ancestral wisdom, an ancient wisdom that dates back to Jesus Christ, Incarnate Wisdom.

A wisdom, writes Saint Louis Marie Grignion of Montfort in his inspired book, *L’amour de la sagesse éternelle*, which is summed up in these words: *Verbum caro factum est*: “The Word became flesh, eternal Wisdom became incarnate, God became man without ceasing to be God: the Man-God’s name is Jesus Christ, that is, Savior.”<sup>11</sup> How relevant are these words of the great French saint!

Let us regard with deep gratitude those men of the Church, such as Cardinal Burke and Bishop Schneider, who by their voices bear witness to Incarnate Wisdom. Every time they break the silence, our gratitude for them increases and our supernatural hope that other cardinals and bishops will soon join them increases. The book-interview with Bishop Schneider is a precious help in maintaining hope, but also balance, in these difficult hours.

In *Christus Vincit*, Bishop Schneider quotes this beautiful passage from St. Hilary of Poitiers, the Athanasius of the

The *Papal Posse*’s Fr. Gerald Murray emceed the event



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*Ours is not a juridical separation, but a moral separation, not from the Petrine office, which is an office of service to the Church, but a separation from the evil service that is given to the Church by those who hold this Petrine office.*

We recognize the Pope’s primacy of jurisdiction over all the bishops of the world, but we suffer when we see the Pope, in the name of synodality, supporting claims of episcopal conferences which point him down a heretical or heretically leaning synodal path.

We recognize the highest charism that the Church attributes to the Pope, that of infallibility, and we would like the Pope to exercise it in all its breadth to define truths and condemn errors. But we suffer if the Pope refrains from exercising this charism to express himself in an

wish to be, friends of truth and goodness, enemies of error and evil, friends of the Church’s friends and enemies of the Church’s enemies.

They accuse us of wanting to break the unity of the Church, but there can be no unity without truth. The Church is one, because she is unique, fashioned in the image of Christ, who is the same yesterday, today and forever. In his likeness, the nature of the Church must remain identical until the end of the world, for as St. Paul says, “There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all” (*Eph* 4:5).

West: “In this consists the particular nature of the Church, that she triumphs when she is defeated, that she is better understood when she is attacked, that she rises up, when her unfaithful members desert her”.<sup>12</sup> And, we might add, she triumphs when her faithful members fight for her. Thank you, Cardinal Burke; thank you, Bishop Schneider; and thank you, Diane Montagna, for giving Bishop Schneider a voice through this book. ■

7. COMMISSIONE TEOLOGICA INTERNAZIONALE, *Il sensus fidei nella vita della Chiesa*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 2014.

8. *Ivi*, n. 54.

9. *Ivi*, n. 63.

10. *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, it. tr. Paoline, Milan 1999, p. 219.

11. St. Louis Marie Grignion of Montfort, *L’amour de la Sagesse éternelle*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, Seuil, Paris 1966, p. 152-153.

12. St. Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trin.*, 7, 4.



# Christus Vincit: Christ's Triumph Over the Darkness of the Age

B. Athanasius Schneider/Continued from Page 1

young women, who are living amid the darkness of our unbelieving, hubristic and decidedly anti-Christian age. Unbelief and human hubris towards God and His supernatural Revelation have already penetrated widely into the life of the Church in our time. The brave lay faithful, the “little ones” in the Church, feel abandoned, since the vast majority of the shepherds seek their refuge in silence, while other shepherds for different motives have passed over to the enemies, thereby becoming wolves in sheep's clothing.

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*I wanted to share something of my experience of the Catholic Faith and life, primarily with those who truly constitute the existential periphery within the Church of our time, that is to say: the “little ones,” who are confused, scandalized, and marginalized by worldly-minded churchmen, i.e. the simple faithful.*

While speaking in my book as clearly as possible, I wanted to share something of my experience of the Catholic Faith and life, primarily with those who truly constitute the existential periphery within the Church of our time, that is to say: the “little ones,” who are confused, scandalized, and marginalized by worldly minded churchmen, who unscrupulously sell in the temple of God the white doves, i.e. the simple faithful. One can recall in this regard the following commentary of Origen from the beginning of the third century:

The bishops and presbyters have been entrusted the first seats by the people, and nevertheless, they deliver the Church over to those whom they should not and install those who should not be leaders, these are the ones selling doves, whose seats Jesus overturned (*In Matth. XVI, 22*).

To the current situation within the Church one can fully apply the following lucid words of Pope Pius X:

The relentless enemy of mankind never sleeps; according to the events of the times, and the occurrence of events, he tactically changes language, but is always ready for the fight. Indeed, the more that error pursued by the truth is condemned to hide, the more one must fear for the perilous ambushes behind which it will not be long that he will re-establish his always deadly artilleries. Therefore, we can never abandon ourselves to a false security without incurring those anathemas launched against the false prophets who announced peace where peace was not and sang the victory when everything called us to fight. It is therefore necessary in all times, and especially in this one, when the great conspiracy is hatched directly against our Lord Jesus Christ, against his supernatural and revealed religion,



The launch was attended by several high-ranking Church officials and many longtime Vatican journalists and members of the world press.

against the people, whose false teachers say evil is good and good is evil, calling darkness light and light darkness, *vocantes tenebras lucem et lucem tenebras*, seducing many minds that bend to every wind of doctrine. That is why we believe the time to speak, the *tempus loquendi*, has come (*Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Epistolae ad principes. Positiones et minutae* 157 (1907-08), fascicolo 35a).

In modern times we possess an admirable example of the fidelity to one's baptismal vows in Blessed Karl of Austria, the last Emperor of Austria. In the extremely difficult times of the First World War and occupying the highest political and social position, he nevertheless denied any compromise which would undermine the validity of the commandments of God in public life and which would dethrone Jesus Christ from His influence over social life. Blessed Karl categorically refused any collaboration with sin and with godless powers. During his Swiss exile, more than once high-level exponents of Freemasonry had offered Emperor Karl to work for the recovery of the throne under the condition of a freer marriage legislation, a freer school education and the admission of Freemasonry in Austria.

The response of the Blessed Karl to this offer was truly exemplary. He answered: “What I have received from God, I cannot accept from the hand of the devil” (*Summ. test. p. 145, § 221, Anna Francesca Lamich*).

What a glaring contrast we see between such a heroic testimony of fidelity to his baptismal vows on the part of a lay faithful, in this case of Blessed Emperor Karl of Austria, and those churchmen who, in our day, actively collaborate with the promotion of sin and with anti-Christian and freemasonic powers. Such churchmen betray not only their baptismal vows, but even more the vows of their episcopal ordination. Indeed, many influential churchmen in our days engage in promoting



Bishop Schneider hands Michael Matt a signed copy of *Christus Vincit*

age the light of Christ's truths and the sweetness of His kingdom, are, in fact, the greatest benefactors of humankind. In that sense we may understand and recall also the following prophetic words of Pope Pius XII:

“Precisely because of this apocalyptic foresight of disaster, imminent and remote, We feel We have a duty to raise with still greater insistence the eyes and hearts of those in whom there yet remains good will to the One from Whom alone comes the salvation of the world — to One Whose almighty and merciful Hand can alone calm this tempest — to the One Whose truth and Whose love can enlighten the intellects and inflame the hearts of so great a section of mankind plunged in error, selfishness, strife and struggle, so as to give it a new orientation in the spirit of the Kingship of Christ” (*Encyclical Summi Pontificatus*, 24).

*Christus vincit!* Thank you for your attention! ■

Watch Bishop Schneider's excellent presentation and all of Michael Matt's Amazon Synod coverage online at:

[www.RemnantNewspaper.com](http://www.RemnantNewspaper.com)

the equality of all religions and the substitution of active evangelization with interreligious dialogue. In this way they not only betray Christ, but commit a great sin against the love for their neighbor. Those, however, who are bringing to the people of our dark

The event wrapped with a blessing from Cardinals Arinze (left), Muller (right), Burke (not pictured), and Bishop Schneider; after which Schneider intoned the hymn *Christus Vincit*.





# An Open Letter

# to Pope Francis

## Your Holiness:

My name is Michael Matt. I'm a cradle Catholic, educated in Catholic schools from the first grade through university. I am also the father of seven children.

I'm a Catholic newspaper publisher, and I come from a long line of Catholic newspaper publishers. My grandfather was made a Knight of St. Gregory right here in Rome by your predecessor of happy memory, Pope Pius XI.

For 150 years, my family has been in the Catholic press apostolate, defending the Church against aggressors on all sides. When the Nazis occupied Rome, my grandfather's newspaper was placed on a blacklist and banned from being mailed into Germany by order of Adolf Hitler himself.

When I say I am a loyal Catholic, I am speaking for myself, my father, my grandfather and my great-grandfather. Catholic men of the press who devoted their lives to the defense of Catholic Tradition and the infallible teachings of your predecessors.

I come to you today with sadness in my Catholic heart, as the winds of that very modernism condemned by your sainted predecessor and resisted by my own fathers, are today blowing through the colonnades, down the Via della Conciliazione, over the Tiber and out into the whole world.

The spirits of our fathers cry out from their graves as Rome is raising the white flag of surrender and losing the Faith. This Eternal City, baptized in the blood of your martyred first predecessors, is returning to its pagan roots under your watch.

At your Amazon Synod here in Rome this week, the world was told that Peter himself is looking to the pagans for enlightenment, listening to them, learning from them, accompanying them.

But is this what Christ asked of you, Holy Father -- to listen to and learn from the world?

The Word was Made flesh and dwelt among us for another reason, or so the Church taught for two thousand years.

He hung from the Cross so that he could take the sins of the world upon Himself, so that he could open the gates of heaven that were, according to Scripture, closed by the sin of our first parents in the Garden of Eden.

The Holy Ghost descended upon your own predecessors in order to establish a Church that would make all men on earth heirs of heaven and sons of God.

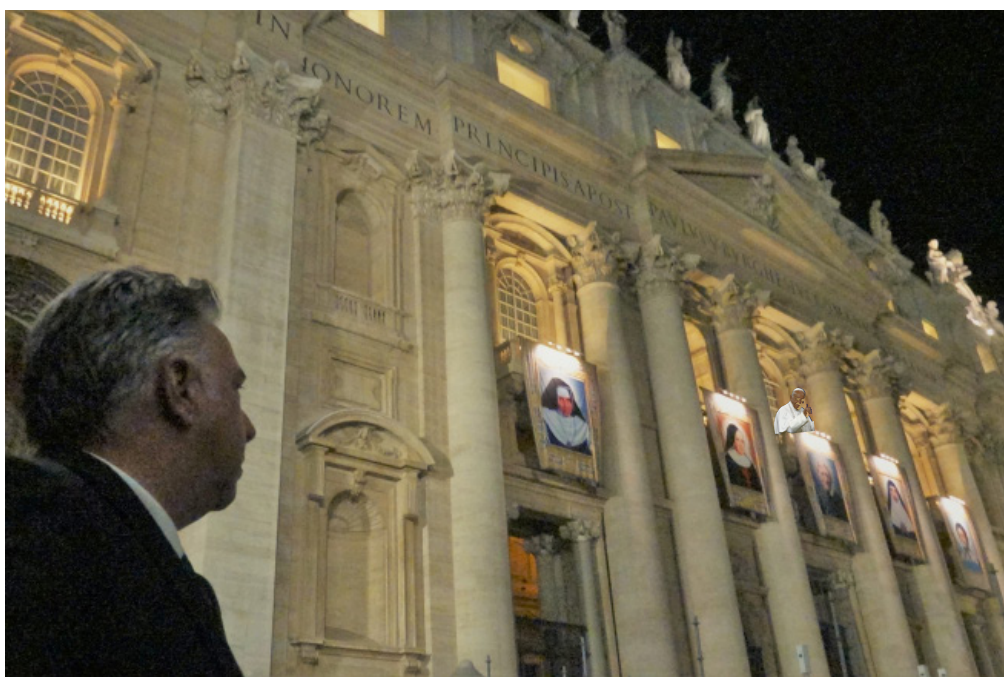
The Church Christ founded is, according to the infallible teachings of the Church—the sole means of salvation. It is the only true Church outside of which there is no salvation.

Do you, Holy Father, still accept this dogma of the Church?

If it has done anything, this Synod has conveyed the impression to the world that you, Holy Father, have reneged on the Church's own teaching that she is the sole means of salvation.

Is this the message you intended to send? If not, please know that it is the message the world press received this week here at the Synod—along with the message that you may or may not believe Hell exists, that you may or may not believe Jesus Christ was God while here on earth.

In the face of such confusion, Holy Father, faithful Catholics are left with a choice



between your words and those of your predecessors. Who are we to believe—you or them?

Your predecessors up to and including Paul VI took the oath of coronation in which they vowed to *change nothing of the received Tradition--to alter nothing, nor to permit any innovation;*

*They swore to keep whatever has been revealed through Christ and His Successors and whatever the first councils and predecessors have defined and declared.*

*In their coronation oath they subjected to severest excommunication anyone – be it ourselves or be it another – who would dare to undertake anything new in contradiction to this constituted evangelic Tradition and the purity of the Orthodox Faith and the Christian Religion.*

Holy Father, I beg you to explain how “listening to and learning from pagans” is not in contradiction to that Catholic Tradition your own predecessors swore to defend.

In *Amoris Laetitia* you have told the world that unrepentant public adulterers may in certain circumstances return to the Sacramental life of the Church, thus placing your own teaching in direct contradiction with the infallible teaching of the Church, reiterated most recently by Pope John Paul II in *Familiaris consortia*.

After Abu Dhabi, you informed the world that God wants a brotherhood of religions.

But how does this not contradict the Divine Commission of Christ Himself who ordered you to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

When you came to my country, you stood before Congress, in the presence of some of the most powerful leaders of the world, and you said not one word about Jesus Christ. Why not, Holy Father?

In Lund, Sweden, you met with Lutherans pretending to be bishops in a cathedral stolen from Mother Church and prayed with them in commemoration of the Protestant Revolt, which tore Christendom in half.

Himself said about those who scandalize the little ones, that it would better for them to have millstones tied round their necks and be cast into the sea.

I am a little one, Holy Father. As are my children and children all throughout the world. And we are scandalized, not because we want to be but because we are, because we see what our father is doing and saying in contradiction to 2000 years of Catholic teaching and example.

Is it any surprise so many of your own subjects are resisting you, are praying to God for your conversion, even questioning whether you are still a Catholic at all? Imagine for just a moment the horror of children in the face of such paternal scandal.

I pray for you, Holy Father, every day. I refer to you as Holy Father—because the office you hold is holy above all others, and even you cannot make it unholy.

Yours is the seat of the Holy Father, at the Holy See of Peter, and I honor that too much to allow even you to destroy it.

You have made it clear that, though you wish to listen to pagans, you have no interest in listening to your own scandalized children. In your eyes, we are rigid and fanatical and pharisaical. But, if is true, then so too were some 260 of your own predecessors rigid, fanatical and pharisaical. And this cannot be.

We pray for you; we weep for you and for our children in this dark moment of confusion for Catholics throughout the whole world.

We also are bound in conscience, before the dread judgment seat of God Himself, to resist you honorably to your face.

In fact, we loyal and faithful Catholics promise from this moment forward to put every effort from now until the day we die into resisting you and your agenda of revolutionary Change to the Church.

We promise to teach our children, in fidelity to Catholic Tradition, to resist you to your face and to teach their children to do the same.

We also promise to love and pray for you every day of our lives, and should the grace of God prompt you to become fully Catholic again before you die, we promise you, Holy Father, that you will have no greater defenders in all of Christendom than the traditional Catholics who from all around the world are begging you to become not the vicar of the world but rather the vicar of Christ.

Indeed, the true friends of the pope are neither revolutionaries, nor innovators: they are traditionalists.

Holy Father we beg you, for God's sake and that of the whole world, listen to cries of your scattered sheep and become shepherd to them once again.

Until that happens, we your most loyal subjects have no alternative but to resist you to the face. ■

Why, Holy Father?

And How is this not in direct contradiction to the teachings of Pius XI in *Mortalium Animus*, which condemned such pan-Christian gatherings on the basis that Christian unity can only be promoted by calling for a return of all Christians to the Catholic Church?

You have said that atheists can go to heaven, thus conveying the impression to the world that salvation is possible even outside of any belief in God at all.

You said it is not your job to judge homosexual priests, thus allowing the world to conclude that the Church has abandoned her own teachings on the sins that cry to heaven for vengeance.

You even honored a gay and supposedly “married” couple with a private audience at which the cameras recorded every moment of your implicit abandonment of the moral teachings of the Catholic Church.

And now the Amazon Synod is opening the door to women deacons and priests, in violation not only of the recent teaching of your canonized predecessor in *Ordinatio sacerdotalis*, but also of the will of Christ himself.

Given all this, Holy Father, what would you do if you were in my shoes? Whose teachings would you follow: the scandalous novelties of Pope Francis or the constant and infallible teachings of all his predecessors? We know what Christ



# I Accuse the Synod

BY PROF. ROBERTO DE MATTEI

**Voice of the Family roundtable  
Statement, Hotel Massimo d'Azeglio,  
Rome, 4 Oct 2019**

There are, at this moment, two religions within the Catholic Church. The first is the traditional Catholicism, the religion of those who, in the current confusion, continue to be faithful to the immutable Magisterium of the Church.

The second, until a few months ago without a name, now has a name: it is the Amazonian religion because, as declared by the person currently governing the Church, there is a plan to give the Church "an Amazonian face".

What is meant by an Amazonian face is explained in the *Instrumentum laboris* for the October Synod and the many declarations of the theologians, bishops and cardinals who have prepared this document. It is a matter of "reinventing" the Church in the words of Leonardo Boff (*Ecclesiogenesis*). The base communities are reinventing the Church, Borla, Rome 1978). The Boff ecclesiogenesis has become a cosmogenesis in line with post-modern environmentalism. Its objective is now broader: reinvention not only of the Church, but of creation as a whole on the basis of a new "cosmic pact". (*Cry of the Earth, cry of the poor - For a cosmic ecology*, Italian translation Assisi, Cittadella, 1996).

This objective is achieved through the method of reinterpretation of the truth of the Catholic faith. Modernism had previously taught that the most effective means of denial of the truth is distortion, rather than outright attack. Reinterpretation is an indirect negation of the teaching of the faith, more profound than outright denial, and means that the same words are ascribed a new meaning.

For example, the first Article of our Creed teaches: "I believe in God the Almighty Father, Creator of heaven and earth".

The *Instrumentum laboris* proposes a "worldview captured in the mantra of Francis: everything is connected" (section 25). However, in no part of the document is it affirmed that all things

are hierarchically ordered to God, their Creator, and distinct from the latter. The Earth is presented as a biosphere, an ecosystem, which includes God within it and in which the supreme law is that of equality of all things. In reality, the prime rule of creation is not the egalitarian interconnection of all things, but their *ordinatio ad unum*. The

citing the "ancestral wisdom" of the indigenous peoples who see God in the physical elements of nature, without comprehending that God transcends these elements. They have no notion of 2 transcendence, because they have no notion of creation, and they confuse God with nature, which for them is a Whole which contains God. Christianity

By polytheism we mean belief in a plurality of gods, contrary to monotheism, which is belief in one God. The Amazonian religion is a polytheistic religion because it applies the notion of God to individual elements in nature, reducing the Absolute to the level of the finite, the spiritual to the level of the material.



Leonardo Boff, the liberation ecotheologian who collaborated in *Laudato si* affirms: "However we wish to interpret it, we have to recognise that the pagans had this extraordinary capacity: they could glimpse the presence of gods and goddesses in all things. In woods, Pan and Silvanus, in the Earth, Gaia Demeter (= Mother Earth) or Ceres, in the sun, Apollo and Phoebus, and so on" (*Cry of the Earth and cry of the poor*, p. 355).

The *Instrumentum laboris* summarises the same pantheism and polytheism in these lines, which refer to *Laudato si*: "The lives of Amazonian communities, still free of the influence of Western civilisation, are reflected in their beliefs and rituals in

relation to the actions of spirits, of divinity - invoked in many ways - with and in the territory, with and in relation to nature. This worldview is captured in the mantra of Francis: everything is connected" (LS 16, 91, 117, 138, 240)". This same worldview is expressed in many other passages in the document.

With all respect owed to the ecclesiastical authorities, I accuse all those who have approved, or will approve, the *Instrumentum laboris* on the Amazon, of polytheism and, more specifically, polydemonism because "All divinities of the Gentiles are Demons; our Lord has instead created the heavens" (Psalms, 95, 5).

Two religions cannot coexist within the same Church.

I call upon the Cardinals and Bishops who are still Catholic to raise their voices against this scandal. If their silence continues, we will continue to seek the intervention of the Angels and Mary Queen of Angels, to save the Holy Church from every form of reinvention, distortion and reinterpretation. ■

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errors of ancient and modern pantheism, which absorbs God in the world or the world in God, have been repeatedly condemned by the Church. According to the Catholic faith, "God is distinct from the world" (Vatican Council I, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei filius* in *Denz.*, section 3001) and, as reiterated in Vatican Council I, "if anyone says that the substance and essence of God and all things is one and identical, let him be anathema" (section 3923 therein).

The new Amazonian religion reinterprets and distorts the first Article of the Creed,

has instead explained that God created everything and is in everything, yet no place can contain Him because God is immense, not in a material sense, but in a metaphysical and transcendent sense. God fills the heavens and the Earth, but the heavens and the Earth do not contain Him.

The Amazonian religion not only negates the transcendence of God by including Him in nature, as do pantheism, panentheism and monism; but also denies His Oneness, as does pagan polytheism.



# Father Spadaro: Amazon Synod Insider

BY ROBERT SULLIVAN

On October 17, 2019, Antonio Spadaro SJ, published a blog on Medium, the blog platform created by Evan Williams, one of the founders of Twitter. Fr. Spadaro's blog was an attempt to slather lipstick on a pig named Amazon Synod. The blog is titled: **The Synod for the Amazon: from faith to politics, all is connected.**

Fr. Spadaro is one of Pope Francis' most aggressive apologists.

The blog is aptly named, as since Pope Francis and his advisors took control of the Vatican, they truly have attempted to connect everything to the faith, especially politics and the most worldly of concerns. The result has been a significant lowering of the trajectory of the mission of the Church, which though evident early in his pontificate, has become focused after one week of the Amazon Synod.

Fr. Spadaro starts off by calling the Amazon Synod a "great ecclesial event". I suppose that is appropriate if you also consider Judas' kiss in the Garden of Gethsemane to be a "great ecclesial event". Great, not as good, but as significant or big.

There have been an abundance of bizarre occurrences since shortly before the opening of the Synod, including a tree planting ceremony in the Vatican Gardens in which even Pope Francis himself was so disturbed that in lieu of reading his prepared statement to the indigenous people who planned and performed the ceremony, he simply recited the Lord's Prayer with them. Possibly he was concerned about the overtly pagan nature of the event, or he was concerned that he had introduced it into the Vatican?

However, the strange and unsettling occurrences did not stop once the Synod opened. There have been strange rituals in Catholic churches in Rome, which have caused many people to wonder why the Church is allowing things like pagan idol worship and witchcraft to take place in the churches of the Eternal City.

A young lady danced with the Gospels as a group of people carried another young lady into a Catholic church in a dugout canoe.

Another ritual took place at Santa Maria in Traspontina, at which participants knelt and bowed their heads to the floor in front of a bowl of dirt (many of them with their backs to the Tabernacle). Shrines to various versions of "life" and "mother earth" are found in and around other churches in Rome. There are discussions of the environment, "Amazon Cosmvision", Pachamama, and "structural sin", and apparently very little discussion of conversion, repentance, kerygma, and Jesus.

The Synod attendees are very diverse. From Pope Francis to Rev. Emilie Smith, an Anglican priestess who is "married" to another woman. Though Pope Francis is there in an official capacity and Smith

is apparently there to participate in the pagan rituals (not the canonization of St. John Henry Newman), they do seem to act as interesting bookends for the attendees.

Faithful Catholics are very concerned about these occurrences and many of the topics of "discussion" at the Synod, such as ordination of women and the ordination of married men. In his usual



Fr. Spadaro, the Pope's advisor

method, Fr. Spadaro attempts to turn the concerns of faithful Catholics back on the faithful Catholics by passive-aggressively stating that their concerns are not based on faith, but based in their own prejudices and insecurities.

Fr. Spadaro does not seem to realize that the Vatican is allowing, even participating in, events which most pastors would not allow in their own small parish. Such is the problem of a hierarchy which is totally detached from the faithful and at times, reality.

Fr. Spadaro writes: "... today the Church has an extraordinary need for prophecy in the face of the great challenges of the present, and to discern what future we want to build." He cites a Euro-Atlantic center of gravity to the Catholic faith, which he apparently sees as a bad thing because the Amazon region contains, "... a people that does not coincide with a national state, a group of people, persecuted and threatened by many forms of violence."

One has to wonder what Fr. Spadaro would have thought of every other culture

where the Church was nothing more than a mission when it began evangelizing the people. In fact, this would describe every culture outside of the 11 Apostles and a handful of disciples on the first Easter. Was the Church too Galilee-Jerusalem centered to evangelize the Jews and Gentiles of the first century?

Fr. Spadaro then moves from subtle passive-aggressiveness to outright

pagan religions and ideologies with some trappings of the Catholic faith).

Fr. Spadaro calls this a "mature experience", which will "point out new paths for the universal Church". Many disagree. Instead, many Catholics see the Synod as a highly immature experience which will divert people onto the wide and easy path to destruction. Superstition and pagan gods have no place in the Catholic faith.

Fr. Spadaro also discusses the lack of priests in the Amazon region. He says that the lack of priests calls for "a broader and more mature vision of the Church, finally alienated from clericalism, aware of the need to imagine new ecclesial ministries, also for women."

In other words, he believes the Church should ordain married men and also ordain women to, at least, the diaconate. There has certainly been talk of a lot of fires in the Amazon, yet none of these were the fire of the Holy Spirit. Either the Holy Spirit lacks the missionary spirit required to work in the Amazon (as much as the priests and bishops mentioned by Brazilian Bishop Wellington Tadeu de Queiroz Vieira<sup>1</sup>), or the Vatican and the bishops vested with the care of souls in the Amazon region, have really dropped the ball. I suggest the problem does not lie with the Holy Spirit.

The fact is, the approach to evangelization and catechesis in the Amazon region appears to be even less engaging and inspiring than the lackluster effort in the Northern hemisphere over the past century. St. John Paul II called for a new evangelization because of this, but the Amazon Synod would seem to go for a quick fix which might be more aptly described as an even more intense devangelization.

Fr. Spadaro calls it a hybrid soul. I agree with him. A hybrid is something which results from combining two different things in order to come up with one new one. This has happened many times in the history of the Church, including the Great Schism and the Protestant Revolt.

It is happening right now in Germany with the strange theological [heresies of the German bishops](#). A hybrid is often an experiment which does not necessarily take the best from each "thing" and often does not result in anything better. One thing it often creates is something quite different, and that is not something the Catholic Church has ever needed. Christ Himself prayed for unity, and this has been a consistent and unchanging mission of the Church since the Ascension.

The original organism in all of this is the Catholic Church, and if the current pontificate cannot figure out how to evangelize an entire region without changing the Church, it is time for a new pontificate, not a new Church. ■

defensive: "This is why the preemptive attacks aimed at the Synod, dressed up as a fundamentalist religiosity that does not disdain racist tones, come from groups that protect political-economic interests."

Ah, those concerned about the Synod are fundamentalist (a.k.a. crazy and dangerous), racist, and greedy. He seems to pick up where Archbishop Orlando Brandes left off when the Archbishop said critics of the Synod are violent.

It should be noted that there has been absolutely no report of violence of any kind on the part of the people voicing concern over and opposition to the ideas being floated at the Synod or the activities taking place. There is, however, an ideological assault by some participants and attendees of the Synod, and it is directed at the Church and those faithful to the Church's teachings.

Fr. Spadaro believes that the ecological themes of the Synod are deeply connected to the salvation of souls. While this could be somewhat accurate if the salvation of souls was the primary goal of the Synod, it appears that the theme is far too heavy toward climate control and far too entrenched in syncretism (the fusion of

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Wellington Tadeu de Queiroz Vieira of Cristalândia in Brazil



# The Catholic Nuns Who Tolerated Infanticide in the Amazon

BY KATHY CLUBB

A previous article of mine attempted to show that the traditional Amazonian cultures which are being lauded by the Synod Fathers contain many practices which are both immoral and abhorrent. *The Real Face of the Amazon: a Culture of Death*, explained that there are around 20 tribes which still today practise infanticide and that other hallmarks of the culture of death are prevalent: these include euthanasia, suicide, shamanistic rituals which include drug-taking, and high rates of violence.

Last week, Synod spokesmen questioned the existence of infanticide in contemporary Amazonian life, during a press conference. They stated that the practise died out as missionaries did their work of evangelising the natives.

However, Jonas Marcolino Macuxí, an Amazonian chief, told Edward Pentin<sup>1</sup> that there are still cases of infanticide. Apparently, it had all but died out until Modernist missionaries, preaching liberation theology in the '70s, allowed the practice to be revived. In a strange turn of events, information related to infanticide being tolerated by the Church was scrubbed from a website related to the Brazilian bishops' conference after the revelations were made public.

I decided to take a closer look at the study in which it is claimed that Catholic nuns allowed infanticide to continue for cultural reasons, which was only touched on in my previous article. This 2009 paper, entitled *Bioethics, culture and infanticide in Brazilian indigenous communities: the Zuruahá case*<sup>2</sup>, was written by five academics from the University of Brazil. It analyzes a specific case which occurred in the Zuruahá tribe but also looks generally at how indigenous Brazilians view infanticide. The paper also studies a public hearing about infanticide which took place in the Brazilian National Congress in 2005.

The authors clearly find the practice of infanticide abhorrent, but believe it must be tolerated unless interventions to stop it are culturally sensitive. They suggest that it is a form of colonialism



'Catholic' nuns

to influence tribal members with western morality. This is a view held in common with a surprisingly large number of academics, missionaries and western activists.

The part of the study which concerns us is the case of the Little Sisters of Jesus who went to minister to the Tapirapé people in the State of Mato Grosso, in 1952. When the sisters arrived, there were only 47 members of the Tapirapé tribe. Their goal was to live among the people without conducting any kind of evangelisation; the nuns were devotees of Charles de Foucauld and proposed to live the philosophy of the 'silent mission.' This extended to their toleration of the tribe's practice of infanticide as a form of birth control, described in the study as 'rigorous'.

It was only when the nuns realised that the tribe was under threat of disappearing due to so few babies being born that they decided to try and reverse

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the trend. Apparently, this discussion was made possible because of the nuns' empathy with the Tapirapé's oppression by white colonialists. According to the document, the topic of infanticide could only form part of a wider discussion of land rights, health concerns and so on - issues which had to be resolved if the Tapirapé were going to accept more children.

Eventually through some undocumented process, the Tapirapé were able to secure their land and the population grew to around 500 in 2009. The Little Sisters of Jesus are still with the tribe, and the authors cite this case as an example of successful intervention by westerners into tribal life.

The Wikipedia page for the Tapirapé reveals more startling details about their culture. (The page is based on a 1983 book by Charles Wagley, called *Welcome of Tears*, which isn't available online.)<sup>3</sup>



The population-control policy cited in the study put a limit on three children per couple, and more than two of the same sex were prohibited. The Wiki entry includes the chilling statement:

“This was implemented by immediate infanticide of any extra newborn babies.”

Since the Little Sisters tolerated infanticide, it is reasonable to assume that they did nothing to discourage the tribe's other practices: multi-partner intercourse - the tribe believed more semen produced stronger children, sodomy, and shamanism involving divination and mind-altering drugs. Their mythology also contains

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references to bestiality<sup>4</sup>. Wagley's book states that the tribe practised total nudity except for body-paint, and didn't start to wear clothing until the mid-sixties. This was apparently due to the 'negative' influence of white colonialists, and not

due to suggestions from the Catholic nuns!

There is a little more to this story. The Little Sisters of Jesus stayed on with the Tapirapé people. Sister Geneveva, one of the original nuns who had arrived in 1952, died in 2013. An article by Leonardo Boff<sup>5</sup> describes her death and sheds more light on the sisters' form of 'evangelisation.'

Similar to what we have heard from other Modernist missionaries in the Amazon, the sisters made *no baptisms* during their time there. The article states that they actually *adopted* the Tapirapé's shamanistic religion and became part of the tribe. Sister Geneveva was buried according to a pagan ritual; she died without the sacraments.

Boff seems to misrepresent the cause of the tribe's near-extinction. Instead of mentioning infanticide, White Culture is blamed for almost wiping out the tribe and the sisters' wisdom is credited for its preservation. The website claims that the Tapirapé had "internalized the thought that they were worthless" - an idea apparently thrust on them by westerners. An alternative explanation for the tribe's regeneration is proposed:

“The Tapirapé's self-respect grew. Thanks to the mediation of the Little Sisters, Karaja women married Tapirapé men, thus guaranteeing the multiplication of the people. From 47 they now number almost one thousand. In 50 years, the Little Sisters *did not convert* a single one member of the tribe. But they accomplished *much more*: they became midwives of a people, following the light of He who understood His mission as "bringing life and life in abundance", Jesus of Nazareth.” [emphasis added]

<sup>5</sup> <https://leonardoboff.wordpress.com/2013/10/12/the-death-and-the-burial-of-little-sister-geneveva-midwife-of-the-tapirape-people/>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/amazon-synod-day-4>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/csp/v26n5/02.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tapirap%C3%A9>

<sup>4</sup> <https://pib.socioambiental.org/en/Povo:Tapirap%C3%A9>



# AMAZON SYNOD:

## What's with the Capital 'N' for Nature?

BY HELEN M. WEIR, MI

With the Amazon Synod upon us at last, unbiased observers of this fastidiously managed act of political theater are beginning to acknowledge that the earthly leadership of the Catholic Church has embarked upon an adventure so insidiously malevolent, so potentially disastrous, and so overtly diabolical as to defy all hyperbole. How is it possible to overstate the magnitude of the threat with which we are faced? When the *Instrumentum laboris* (*IL*) was released last July, incisive analysts immediately set about noting the names of those who ought to appear when the credits finally roll--Rousseau with his Noble Savage, Leonardo Boff of "Liberation Theology" infamy, Teilhard de Chardin of the pseudomystical "Omega Point," and the various "climate change" champions on center stage at the present moment figuring prominently. There remains, nonetheless, an important historical connection which has yet



that capital-n *Nature* is also known as *Mother Earth*, cogently points out, "Our mother is a person, not the earth. And our mother in faith is Mary."<sup>2</sup> From his self-imposed exile, Archbishop

implicitly prompts us to take a much closer look at the resuscitated "goddess" whom the Bergoglians are attempting to usher into the vacuum.

“““

The Führer made about as much sense, in other words, as Bergoglio does, and like the latter took predatory advantage of the confusion occasioned by his subversion of Christian-sounding verbiage.

to be investigated. Its touchstone lies in the fact that, when Jorge Bergoglio writes the word *nature*, he capitalizes it (either literally or in effect).

Based upon this usage, some of the Synod's critics detect an "implicit pantheism" stemming from pagan superstition.<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Müller, noting

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in "Cardinal Burke and Bishop Schneider Announce Crusade of Prayer and Fasting," by Edward Pentin, *National Catholic Register* online, September 12, 2019.

Viganò asks rhetorically, "Where is the Christian message here?"<sup>3</sup> Well within his rights to point out that "the figure of Christ is absent" from the *IL* and from the worldview of the Synod's protagonists in general, the courageous anti-McCarrick whistleblower

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in "Cardinal Müller: Amazon Synod is a 'pretext for changing the Church,'" by Diane Montagna, *Lifesite News* online, July 15, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in "Archbishop Viganò: 'The figure of Christ is absent' from Amazon synod working document," by Martin M. Barillas, *Lifesite News* online, August 2, 2019.

As anyone unwilling to be intellectually bullied by mere political correctness can easily confirm, the former Archbishop of Buenos Aires is far from the first major figure in recent times to turn the word *nature* into a proper noun, proposing the "person" so contrived as an object of idolatry for all. Bergoglio may be many things to many men, but even his most star-struck adulators stop short of crediting him with a notable capacity for original thought. As Anthony Blanche once observed to Charles Ryder concerning Sebastian Flyte, they can't claim *that* for him, can they, much as they love him? It behooves us all to ask, in other words, where this vaunted notion of capital-N *Nature* comes from to begin with.

In a valiant foray into a *verboten* field, an author named Richard Weikart has recently published a book entitled *Hitler's Religion: The Twisted Beliefs that Drove the Third Reich*.<sup>4</sup> His resoundingly documented thesis is that National Socialism may best be understood as the cult of this selfsame entity. On the pages of Hitler's infamous manifesto, in countless speeches, and by means of many high-profile, mesmerized surrogates, the Führer positively identified capital-n *Nature* as his worldview's "cruel Queen

<sup>4</sup> Weikart, Richard. *Hitler's Religion: The Twisted Beliefs that Drove the Third Reich*. (Washington, D.C.; Regnery History, 2016).

of wisdom," to whom both his person and his cause were dedicated without any reservation whatsoever.<sup>5</sup> Those who currently suspect, in other words, that the Amazon Synod is secretly motivated by concerns markedly more German than indigenous could well be onto something, after all.

The authors of both *Mein Kampf* and of the Synod's *IL*, first of all, credit capital-N *Nature* with an inexplicable ability of universal generation which is carried out within the confines of time but not beyond it. "In many cases where Hitler referred to a Creator," Weikart writes (p. 223):

... he used it in a context that also referenced "eternal nature" or equated his Creator with nature (or both). This suggests he was not intending his use of the term to imply that God created nature at a finite point in the past, as a deist or theist would believe. God or nature was a "Creator," but it is not clear at all from Hitler's discourse whether he believed God created through natural or supernatural processes. . . . Hitler often spoke about nature creating organisms, again implying (that) nature is synonymous with the Creator.

A Bergoglian quote from the *Instrumentum laboris* recycles this attitude rather eerily (no. 121):

It is necessary to grasp what the Spirit of the Lord has taught these peoples throughout the centuries: faith in the God Father-Mother Creator, communion and harmony with the earth, with one's companions; striving for 'good living;' the wisdom of civilizations going back thousands of years that the elderly possess and which influences health, life together, education, cultivation of the land, the living relationship with nature and "Mother Earth".

In Christian thought, the living God is not a "Father-Mother Creator," as Bergoglio himself incoherently affirms in other contexts. Like Hitler, however, the white-cassocked Argentinian vacillates between orthodox and Gaia-worshipping sentiments by occasionally conflating the two. When we read in *Laudato si'*, then, that "Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live" (no. 139), and that human beings made in the image and likeness of God are to be accounted instead as merely a "part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it" (no. 139), and that "our very bodies are made up of her elements; we breathe her air and we receive life

<sup>5</sup> Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, copyright renewed 1971; trans. Ralph Manheim), p. 132.

### Kathy Clubb/continued...

Boff concludes:

"Should not Christianity follow that path if it wants to have a future in a globalized world? The Gospel without power, and coexistence that is tender and fraternal?"

Fraternity. Now where have we heard that before? Bishop Erwin Krautler remarked at the Synod, that "... in the name of human rights and under the pretext of suppressing infanticide, a broad ethnocide, a cultural murder<sup>6</sup>" is taking place. He thus suggests that this

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/top-synod-bishop-knows-about-doesnt-want-to-punish-amazon-infanticide>

'cultural murder' is on a par with the physical murder of innocent newborn babies.

Faithful Catholics can't fail to see that this emphasis on tolerance and dialogue is eclipsing the Church's true mission to evangelise.

Perhaps papalators and others who fail to see the threat posed to souls by the NewChurch model of evangelisation can muster a little outrage for the physical threat posed to tiny Amazonian babies by a Church which preaches accompaniment as a theological virtue. ■

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## Helen Weir/Continued...

and refreshment from her waters” (no. 2), anyone possessing even a passing familiarity with the contours of National Socialist materialism ought to find himself on red alert.

In the second place, the “cruel Queen” to whom we evidently owe our existence is associated in both cases with the concept of *wisdom*. This buzzword, by definition temporally restricted, cannot mean to the Brownshirts and the Synod bosses what it signifies in the Sacred Scriptures. For them, it slyly appropriates the majesty of revealed and therefore objective *truth*, becoming, for the Creator’s subjects, the new standard of acceptable conduct. In a world where nothing is right or wrong in and of itself, in other words, the only possible *sin* would consist in offending not God, but *her*.

“Hitler’s devotion to nature as a divine being,” writes Weikart, in the Introduction (p. *viii*):

...had a grim corollary: the laws of nature became his infallible guide to morality. Whatever conformed to the laws of nature was morally good, and whatever contravened nature and its ways was evil.

We all know the crimes against humanity which ensued when this inversion took place in the middle of the twentieth century. And yet the Synod proponents are, even now, attempting to foist upon us “a Church called to be ever more synodal by listening to the peoples and *to the earth*” (*IL* no. 5; emphasis added). Such a “church,” if any society so constituted could be considered worthy of the name, would be one in the process of replacing both the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments on which they are based with something entirely foreign to Christianity itself (as observers of the Bergoglian onslaught have been pointing out as transpiring from the start, on any number of fronts). Simultaneously elucidated is the apparent contradiction found in a world leader ostensibly committed to dialogue and mercy, yet who perpetually excoriates those admitting the existence of the *intrinsece malum* in the least decorous terms conceivable.

Thirdly, not only does this ersatz “wisdom” become that to which all must offer religious submission of the intellect and will. In the *novus ordo Naturae*, the redemptive suffering, death, and Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ gives way to

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the “passion” of the “goddess” herself, for the grievous infliction of which all humanity must instead atone. As we read in *Laudato Si*, Nature now (no. 2):

...cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself,



On 27 May 2019, SDSN and the Pontifical Academy of Sciences hosted a meeting between Pope Francis, Climate Scientists (including Jeffery Sachs), and more than twenty Finance Ministers to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change.

burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor.

On the strength of this worldview Bergoglio and his climate-change shock troops base their incessant doomsday predictions, lacking or even contradicting existing scientific data. Theirs is another religion, in other words, to be taken on faith—or *else*. Or else, what? For Hitler, “or else” the Master Race would not survive. The Bergoglians have merely upped the ante by alleging that, “or else,” no one is going to. The hectoring of the Gaia contingent about the dire environmental consequences of failing to honor their demands is too tedious and too widely recognized to catalogue here. Suffice it to note that the Führer puts the matter much more succinctly by declaring, “Eternal Nature inexorably avenges the infringement of her commands”.<sup>6</sup>

It might be objected, at this stage, that playing the “Hitler Card” against the Amazon Synod is a bridge too far. After all, Bergoglio is purportedly the Vicar of Christ on earth. Many quotes could be adduced to show that he is a believer (if those quotes, quite conveniently, happen to escape juxtaposition with their own stark and

<sup>6</sup> *Mein Kampf*, p. 65.

copious self-contradictions). Moreover, many of the loquacious Argentinian’s less palatable statements are typically excused by fans and critics alike with the assertion that they do not represent what Bergoglio really means, or by the insistence—as though the one justification doesn’t abjectly invalidate the other—that they are amenable to realignment within the parameters of perfect orthodoxy.

The problem comes in when we recognize that Adolf Hitler once wrote and spoke in what has come to be known as “word salad,” too. His

Another reason to examine the *capital-n Nature* comparison is that if the Saint Gallen Mafia members, official and unofficial, can dish it out, then they can take it, too. After all, it was Bergoglio himself who insinuated the subject into the run-up to the Synod, infamously remarking this past August that he is “concerned because we hear speeches that resemble those of Hitler in 1934”.<sup>10</sup> There may be a grain of truth in what he says, if the talks to which he is alluding happen to include some of his own.

In the same way Cardinal Cupich of Chicago, arguably Bergoglio’s preeminent water-toter in the United States, made a suspicious trip to Auschwitz over the summer as well—suspicious, because the protagonists of the Synod seem unaccountably eager to claim the high ground where the Holocaust is concerned. According to coverage by the National Catholic Reporter, always on hand to amplify the Left’s narrative *du jour*, Cardinal Cupich contends that “Adolf Hitler’s rise to power and the policies that led to the Holocaust all began with words, including words that targeted ‘the other.’”<sup>11</sup> The full extent of the Chicago prelate’s authoritative scholarship on the matter is revealed in related remarks of his own, offered in response to a question posed by his travelling companion, the Holocaust survivor, Fritzie Fritzsall. “You are a man of God, you are a religious man. What are the reasons?” this woman asked Cardinal Cupich. And Cupich replied:

I have no answer. I have no explanation. How can somebody’s humanity be so riven and shredded? . . . There’s no clear answer for, ‘why?’<sup>12</sup>

*Au contraire*, Your Eminence. There is an reason as unavoidable as the nose on Pinocchio’s face in his less honorable moments, even if you yourself are doing your level best to direct our attention elsewhere. The Holocaust happened because the cult of *capital-n Nature* was successfully insinuated into the mentality of a certain society, under the guise of being an acceptable alternative to Christianity or even, in some attenuated sense, as Christianity itself. Heaven help us, if the entire globe should fall victim to this selfsame deception when the “Church-changing”<sup>13</sup> Amazon Synod comes to a cataclysmic close. ■

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in “Pope Francis again warns against nationalism, says recent speeches sound like ‘Hitler in 1934’” by Siobhán O’Grady, *Washington Post* online, August 9, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in “Cupich: ‘Never Forget’ policies that led to Holocaust began with words,” by the *Catholic News Service*, in *National Catholic Reporter* online, July 31, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in “Holocaust Survivor Fritzie Fritzsall Returns to Auschwitz with Cardinal Blase Cupich,” by Alan Krashesky and Ross Weidner, *ABC7chicago.com*, July 19, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Bishop Franz-Joseph Overbeck of Essen contends that “the Amazon Synod will lead the Catholic Church to a ‘point of no return’ and that, thereafter, ‘nothing will be the same as it was.’” (Quoted in “Why Amazon summit ‘could change the Church for ever’” by Francis McDonagh and agencies, in *The Tablet* online, May 9, 2019.)

<sup>7</sup> Weikart, p. 71.

<sup>8</sup> *Mein Kampf*, p. 65.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in “Cardinal Mueller criticizes ‘false teaching’ on revelation in Amazon synod doc,” *Catholic News Agency* online, July 16, 2019.



*Just for Laughs...*

# When You're Married... to the Pope

BY MICHAEL LOFTON, M.A.

**Background:** Christina recently discovered her husband Peter committed adultery with her friend, Sarah. She confronts Peter about it in the middle of their next marriage counseling session with Dr. Neo.

**Christina:** Peter, I brought you here today in order to confront you, in the presence of a mediator, about what I discovered.

**Peter:** What are you talking about?

**Christina:** I discovered that you have been cheating on me. I've read all of your messages to Sarah, so there is no denying it.

*Peter is silent.*

**Christina:** Well, say something!

**Peter:** ...

**Christina:** Are you going to say something?

**Peter:** [I will not say a single word on this.](#)

**Christina:** Are you kidding me? I've invested my entire adult life into this marriage, you have been unfaithful

and you don't have anything to say?

**Peter:** [When some time passes and you have drawn your conclusions, I may speak.](#)

**Christina:** Are you serious? What kind of arrogant response is that? You were supposed to be faithful to me. Remember our marriage vows? How could you do this to me?

**Peter:** You are so [rigid](#). You present yourself as "[perfect](#)" and [you lack the spirit of liberty](#). What is wrong with you, you Pharisee? You [lack the primacy of mercy](#). I think your heart has [stiffened and turned to ice](#) because you [sacralized the value of laws lacking in humanity and mercy](#)! You are the kind of pharisee who would [throw stones and then hide their hand](#).

**Christina:** Excuse me! You are the adulterer and you're telling me that I lack mercy simply for that fact that I am confronting you about your sin against God, myself and our family?!

**Peter:** I don't have anything else to say other than that I'm going to keep my [irregular union](#) with Sarah, who is currently pregnant with my child.

**Christina:** If you don't leave her, I will have no other choice but to take the children and separate myself from you.

**Dr. Neo:** Let me step in here. Christina, don't you think you are expecting too much of Peter? The [commitment to exclusivity and stability](#) is what we call the "[ideal of marriage](#)" and just because Peter is in an [imperfect situation](#) does not mean you can be [inflexible](#).

**Christina:** Wait, I'm confused. Dr. Neo, are you defending Peter?

**Dr. Neo:** It seems to me that you have a [persistently critical attitude towards your partner which is a sign that the marriage was not entered into as a project to be worked on together, with patience, understanding, tolerance and generosity. Slowly but surely, your love has given way to constant questioning and criticism, dwelling on his bad points, issuing ultimatums and engaging in competition and self-justification.](#)

**Christina:** What? How could you say such a thing when all I'm doing is confronting the offender and asking him to stop committing adultery!

**Dr. Neo:** Christina, let me be frank for a moment. How dare you! This is your husband who is the head of your household. 1 Corinthians and Ephesians clearly indicate that he functions in the place of Christ in your home. By rebuking him and threatening to separate yourself from him, you are rebuking your superior and threatening to separate yourself from the visible representative of Christ in your home. You have been too harsh on Peter and have expected him to live up to an ideal. Moreover, you are ignoring the good that exists even in irregular unions such as the one he has with Sarah. You are being intolerant, lacking in mercy and are simply wrong to require him to separate from Sarah, especially when they now have a child together.

**Christina:** I don't believe what I'm hearing.

**Peter:** If you don't calm down I will be forced to have you admitted into a mental institution.

**Dr. Neo:** I agree; I will confirm such a decision if you keep this up, Christina. ■

*Christina goes home in utter dismay over her discussion with Peter and Dr. Neo. To be continued...*





*A Letter from Rome...***WHY WE DEFEND THE CONSTANTINIAN CHURCH**

BY ROBERTO DE MATTEI

The sky in Rome is the most beautiful sky in the world, because it is the sky that witnessed the Church establish herself, and in which today there is reflected Saint Peter's Basilica, the center of Christianity for the whole world.

This Roman sky has witnessed decisive events in the history of the world, now preserved in stone and historical memories which seem to touch each other.

Today only a few meters separate two monuments: the Flavian Amphitheater, constructed by the Emperor Titus in the year of Our Lord 80, and the Triumphal Arch erected by order of the Roman Senate in the year 315 to celebrate another emperor: Flavian Valerian Constantine.

We may say that these two monuments – the Colosseum and the Arch of Constantine – summarize two eras.

The Flavian Amphitheater, which became known as the Colosseum because of the "Colossus" or huge statue of Nero which stood next to it, is the symbol of three centuries of persecutions which bloodied the Empire from Nero to Diocletian. In this great stadium cruel and spectacular games took place, which lasted from dawn to dusk, where the Roman people amused themselves by watching bloodshed. To the abundantly flowing blood of the games, gladiators and slaves, there was soon added the blood of Christians, sacrificed to the divinity of Caesar whom they refused to adore.

In 1749 Pope Benedict XIV declared the Colosseum to be a church consecrated to Christ, and Saint Therese of Lisieux recounts in her *Story of a Soul* how as a fourteen-year-old pilgrim to Rome she was moved to kiss the dust that had been reddened by the blood of the first Christians, asking for the grace to be a martyr.

The Colosseum is the symbol of three centuries of persecutions, while the Arch of Constantine is dedicated to the Emperor who with the Edict of Milan in 313 brought an end to those persecutions, granting full liberty to Christians and permitting the development and spread of Christianity in Rome and in every corner of the earth. The Constantinian Age takes its name from him, which ended the age of the catacombs and opened an historic era of freedom, progress and triumph for the Church.

Only a few meters separate these two monuments, but it is also the case that only a few years separate them in time: the darkest moment of persecutions and the happiest hour of the freedom of the Church.

The three centuries of persecutions reached the apex of their ferocity under



St. Peter's Basilica facade at sunset

the Emperor Diocletian and also under the Emperor Galerius, whom Diocletian associated with himself in the system of the Tetrarchy, in which two *Augusti*, or two emperors, governed, assisted by two vice-emperors who were called Caesars.

In the last two years of the reign of Diocletian, from 303 to 305, there was an atrocious persecution carried out against the Christians, which was continued until the year 311 by Galerius, who succeeded Diocletian as *Augustus* of the East.

Eusebius narrates the story, to which he was a direct witness:

It was the nineteenth year of the reign of Diocletian, the month of Dystros which the Romans call March, just when the Feast of the Passion of the Lord was approaching, when an imperial edict was issued through the whole Empire that ordered the churches to be razed to the ground and the Scriptures to be burned. It was also decreed that those who held public office were to be dismissed and members of the Imperial Palaces were to be deprived of liberty if they persisted in the profession of Christianity. This was the first edict against us; not long after there appeared other edicts that ordered all the heads of the churches to be put in chains, in every place; and then to compel them by every means to offer sacrifice (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book VIII, 2., 2-3).

The persecution raged and saw thousands and thousands of martyrs, in Palestine, Phoenicia, Egypt, the Thebaid, Phrygia, Cappadocia; they were flayed, crucified, burned, torn apart by beasts, or in the best cases beheaded, as happened to the Roman youth Pancratius for refusing to offer sacrifice to Diocletian.

Christianity was to be annihilated, extirpated from the face of the earth.

Humanly speaking, the situation was desperate. The Church seemed to be out of options. Christians were helpless and had only the strength of their faith and the help of the Holy Spirit who fortified them.

Who would ever have said that the hour of resurrection, known only by God, was so close? And yet, that is what happened.

In 305, Diocletian abdicated. Flavius Valerius Constantine, a young official who was covered with valor from fighting against the Persians and Sarmacians, fled from Nicomedia, where the other Emperor Galerius planned to incarcerate him, and by forced stages he reached his father Constantius Chlorus, the *Augustus* of the West, in Britain. About a year later, on July 25, 306, Constantius Chlorus died near what today is the city of York, and his troops proclaimed Constantine as the new *Augustus* of the West. Galerius did not recognize this title and commuted it to merely Caesar. From this moment there began a confusing struggle of succession, which came to its definitive moment six years later in the clash between Constantine and Maxentius, who was also proclaimed as *Augustus* of the West by his own praetorian guard

Constantine found himself in the imperial city of Trier on the Moselle River in Germania, when, in the summer of 312, news reached him that the legions of Maxentius were advancing towards northern Italy. Gathering his army, he crossed the Alps at the pass of Montgenevre, and entering into Italy he conquered the city of Susa, and defeated the rival army at Turin, Aquileia, and Verona. Then, following the Via Flaminia,

he descended on Rome, where Maxentius did not seem to sense the danger that threatened him.

Maxentius was a dissolute and superstitious man, who counted on the help of his faithful praetorian guard and the pagan gods. Constantine was not Christian, but he was an upright and religious man, accustomed to seeking the presence of God. And only a divine intervention could explain the lightning-like success of the army of Constantine against the army of Maxentius, which was superior in both numbers and equipment.

We know with certainty that a miracle happened. We do not know if it happened at the gates of Rome, as Lactantius wrote some time earlier, or in the Alps, as Eusebius relates. Both of them, Lactantius and Eusebius, were contemporaries with these events and are historians of the highest credibility, above all Eusebius of Caesarea, who is considered the father of Christian historiography, and both attest to the miraculous event.

Eusebius affirms that he learned what he writes in his *Life of Constantine* directly from Constantine himself and that it was confirmed under oath.

This is his account:

Around the hour of noon, when the sun began to decline, Constantine related that he saw with his own eyes in the middle of the sky a luminous tropaeum in the form of a cross that covered over the sun, and next to it a written phrase that said: "Conquer with this!" Before this spectacle a general sense of dismay pervaded the emperor, and the entire army which had followed him in all of his movements was a spectator to the marvel (*Life of Constantine*, I, 28).

**Continued Next Page**



## Roberto de Mattei/Continued...

We note that the luminous *tropaeum* in the form of a cross did not appear only to Constantine but to the entire army. The flaming sign that appeared in heaven did not leave any room for doubts. It was the distinctive sign of Christians, it was the same Cross on which Jesus Christ had poured out his Redeeming Blood. This Cross was unknown, not yet celebrated as it is today, after 1700 years of history. The apparition thus had the same significance as if a Cross today would be silhouetted in the sky over Arabia.

It was not an optical illusion; it was not an astronomical conjunction: everyone saw it, no one doubted it. And underneath the Cross there was a written phrase which could not have been caused by a conjunction of the stars. Everyone distinctly read the words: "In this sign you shall conquer"; in Greek ἐν τούτῳ νικά, in Latin *in hoc signo vinces*. To this sign is linked the victory that, for an army on the march, does not mean the individual victory of the Christian over sin and disordered passions, but victory with arms, on the field of battle. The message was clear and evident for everyone. And the truth of the marvel is attested to not only by Constantine in the account which he gave to Eusebius, but also in this detail that Eusebius makes reference to:

Before this spectacle a general sense of dismay pervaded the emperor, and the entire army which had followed him in all of his movements was a spectator to the marvel.

This affirmation is remarkable, because when Eusebius wrote between 324 and 337, the veterans of the battle of Saxa Rubra were still alive, and Eusebius could not risk being disproven by them. Eusebius was accused of being an adulator of the Emperor, but there was no need to resort to making up a miracle in order to extol the warrior virtues of Constantine, and if anyone had told him an untrue story that could easily be disproven by other witnesses, certainly Eusebius would not have taken it into consideration, all the more so because of the great esteem and friendship he had towards the Emperor. The Greek historian bases his testimony on Constantine himself:

If any other witness besides the emperor had told us about this, we would have difficulty in believing it; but having this prince himself, after an exact recounting, attest to what was written with an oath, who could ever doubt it?

But in addition to the explicit testimony of Constantine there is also the witness of thousands of soldiers, none of whom denied what they saw with their own eyes.

But the marvel is still not finished: there was a second vision, which this time was reserved for Constantine alone: it was an apparition of the Lord Jesus who explained to Constantine alone, a commander in the field of battle, how to conquer in the name of the Cross. In a dream, Constantine was shown Christ, with the sign that had appeared

in the sky, and Christ ordered him to construct an imperial *labarum*, which Eusebius describes as being formed by a long golden shaft that had an antenna in the form of a cross. At the very top of the shaft there was a crown of gold and jewels, in the middle of which was inscribed the monogram of Christ.

According to Lactantius, the Lord ordered him to place this sign that he had seen in the sky on his shields and arms (*De Mortibus Persecutorum*, XLI). We do not know exactly when this second vision happened. What is certain is that at dawn on the 28th of October, when the army of Constantine arrayed itself, the monogram of Christ shone on their banners, their shields, and their armor.

We know that the battle began at Saxa Rubra, between the river and the hill, and that it reached its conclusion at the Milvian Bridge, in the area that is now called Tor di Quinto.

The army of Maxentius, after crossing the Tiber, formed columns along the Via Flaminia, and when the advance guard reached what is today the Prima Porta,



Statue of St. Peter at the Vatican, shot by Michael Matt during the canonization of John Henry Newman

perhaps occupying the hills, the last soldiers crossed the Milvian Bridge and the bridge of boats that the emperor had built.

They were an army of at least 100,000 men, against Constantine's 40,000. At the head of the army of Maxentius was heavy cavalry, the terrible *catafractarii*, completely covered from head to foot in iron but slow in their movements because of this heavy armor. Constantine first attacked the enemy cavalry that, finding itself in difficulty, retreated, disrupting the long column behind it. Constantine, with a rapid maneuver, swooped onto their rear along the ancient Via Veientana that connects the Via Cassia and the Via Flaminia, ambushing them below Grottarossa.

Maxentius was so certain of victory that he behaved with an arrogance that cost him the battle. He could have remained behind the impregnable walls of the city of Rome, that stretched for over 11 miles around the perimeter of the city.

But the magicians and fortunetellers who accompanied him encouraged him to attack Constantine specifically on the 28th of October, which was the sixth anniversary of Maxentius' proclamation as emperor. On that day, according to the Sibylline books, the enemy of Rome would perish. In his pride, Maxentius ordered his troops to cross the Tiber, and in order to facilitate the operation he had them construct a bridge of boats across the river, only 100 yards upstream from the Milvian Bridge. He remained behind in the circus, when a knight galloped up carrying the news that his army was retreating from the field. Maxentius hastened forward, wearing his heavy armor, and reached the Milvian Bridge just as the battle was ending. His troops were so closely pinned against the river that, according to the chroniclers of the era, the last rows had their feet in the water. The praetorian guard fought to the very end in order to protect him, but Maxentius was forced to flee. The bridge of boats that he had constructed over the Tiber became a terrible trap. The bridge of wood collapsed under the weight of so many troops in flight. Maxentius

the Milvian Bridge: not only the military enterprises from which, over the course of 25 years, Constantine always emerged victorious, but also the legislative and moral work undertaken by him as the ruler of the Empire, beginning with the Edict of Milan. Only an ideological prejudice can deny that this radical and sudden change took place after an extraordinary event, especially when this event is attested to personally by the one to whom it happened and also by his contemporaries. Less than ten years had passed since the beginning of the persecution of Diocletian, only one since the last persecution of Galerius.

The Emperor Constantine is celebrated for the Edict of Milan that brought an end to the era of the persecutions and opened a new era of freedom for the Church. And it is thanks to this edict that we speak of the "Constantinian Shift" in the history of the Church.

And yet, in the life of Constantine and the life of the Church, the decisive hour was what preceded the Edict: it was the hour in which for the first time the Cross of Christ appeared above the field of battle, defended by the swords of the legionaries, imposed by force on the enemy.

Why is this event important? We are speaking above all of a miraculous intervention that confirms that God is not indifferent to human affairs, that God guides history and visibly intervenes in it. It is the affirmation of the primacy of Providence over history.

Eusebius compares the undertaking of Constantine to what happened to the Jewish people when, according to Scripture, God opened the waters of the Red Sea in order to make the Hebrews pass through. When the army of Pharaoh went in after them, "*Pharaoh's chariots and army he hurled into the sea, the elite of his officers were drowned in the Red Sea*" (Exodus 15:4).

But if modern Biblical scholars do not believe in the miracle at the Red Sea, placing Sacred Scripture in doubt, which is divinely assisted and inspired in every syllable, how can "adult" Catholics of our day, whether lay or religious, believe in the human authority of Christian historians who recount the miraculous vision of Constantine? To modern critical sensibilities, it is repugnant to believe that God can intervene in such a dramatic manner in history. In moments of difficulty, when some misfortune threatens us or our loved ones, when some anguish oppresses us, we turn our eyes to Heaven and we ask, and sometimes we even demand, a miracle, and if it does not happen we almost get angry with God for not hearing us. We expect God to enter miraculously into our lives, but then we refuse to read the supernatural signs of his presence in history. Yet what happened on October 28, 312, reminds us.

The event of Saxa Rubra is also important because it demonstrates the legitimacy of Christian warfare. In the first three centuries after Christ the Roman Empire

Continued on Page 16



# The Dangers of Self-Righteousness

BY CLARE WILSON

A behavior that I observe quite frequently in colleagues from my professional life and also among my secular friends is one that I have heard referred to as ‘virtue signaling.’ The basic goal of the action is to make other people in your social group aware of the fact that you are attuned to and fully aligned with the standards and principles of that group. In many cases, virtue signalers even go beyond that in an apparent attempt to inform everyone around them that they are actually far *more* attuned and aligned than the normal person. To borrow a helpful term from modern slang, they want you to be inescapably aware of how very, very ‘woke’ they are—by which they mean they are deeply aware of and sensitive to society’s inherent privileges and inequities, from which they either benefit or suffer depending on race, background, socioeconomic status, and other factors. They imagine, I presume, that through this virtue signaling they can avoid the imputation of cultural insensitivity, bias, bigotry, racism and the other capital sins of modern culture.

To illustrate this attitude with an example, during the final months of my recently completed graduate program, one of our professors (a man in his sixties who grew up in an entirely different era culturally) mentioned during a poetry workshop that he very much enjoyed 2019’s Academy Award nominated movie, *The Green Book*. This movie has received a great deal of negative backlash from critics as yet

another instance of the ‘white savior’ storyline, in which an African American person is somehow aided and elevated through the assistance of a white person.



The ire was particularly fierce due to the fact that the movie portrayed a true story and, many felt, downplayed the fact that the African American man in question was an accomplished musician who in reality was never in need of white help.

I myself did not see the movie—not because of the cultural issues, but because one of the main characters practiced homosexual behavior in

discussion quickly grew heated; one of the girls in the class became so outraged that she left the room. Those not involved in the argument watched uncomfortably from the sidelines, and everyone was left with a bad taste in their mouth. Given that no one in the room was actually African American, moreover, the only thing that my peers had accomplished with their outrage was to let everyone else know that even as white people they are still aware of the issues facing people of color in our society. They had signaled what they probably considered to be their unassailable moral superiority over the professor in question.

A similar, if less dramatic, instance came up recently while I was at a work meeting. The director of a city organization was concerned that all the pictures on the organization’s website were of white people and wanted to change that in order to make sure that people of other ethnic origins still felt welcome and included in the organization’s scope. This led to a brief discussion around the table of just how ‘white’ the city is. One of the men at the table hastened to add that this fact quite astonishes him because his parents raised him in the Midwest, where they were often the only white family in diverse neighborhoods. He is used to multicultural living and prefers it to the whitewashed existence in the Inland Northwest. Moreover, he chose to marry a biracial woman; he expressed his disdain of the white people in the city who often make comments and inquire

real life. No one else in my class had seen the movie, either—doubtless for various reasons of their own. This did not, however, in any way stop several of them from immediately challenging the professor over his opinion. The

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## Roberto de Mattei/continued from Page 15...

denied every form of freedom and recognition to the nascent Church, but Christians did not cease to manifest their loyalty towards the Empire, even in the line of battle; a fact that is even more worthy of consideration if we consider that military service in the Roman Empire was neither universal nor obligatory, except for in exceptional situations.

But the apparition of the Cross to Constantine signifies something further: Christians were good soldiers, but no religious war had ever been conducted under the sign of the Cross; now for the first time in history, a Christian army appeared: an army of men who were not all Christians but who were disposed to fight in the name of Christ. Less than ten years prior, an entire legion composed of Christians, the 6000 martyrs of the Thebean Legion, had been massacred under the *Augusti* Diocletian and Maximian in the Valais in Helvetia (today Switzerland), not because its men refused to fight but because they refused to sacrifice to the gods. Now, the legions

of Constantine fought in the name of the one true God. The battle of the 28th of October not only demonstrated the legitimacy of Christians serving in the army but also announced the first holy war of the Christian era.

For the first time, the Cross was not only the symbol of suffering in martyrdom: it became the symbol of suffering in battle. It was Christ himself who asked Constantine and his legions to fight, and he asked them to fight in his name: one may thus fight in the name of God, when the cause is just, when the war is holy, when God himself wills it, as has happened many times in history.

We do not know with certainty if Constantine was instantly converted. Only God knows the secret of the human heart. But men can judge what appears visibly. And what appeared visibly on October 28, 312, was a Christian monogram inscribed on the banners and arms of the Roman legions. This sign sanctified an army but also rendered

sacred a political power, and it contained in itself the model of the Holy Roman Empire, which would be dreamed of by Saint Ambrose of Milan but which came to be realized in the West only by Charlemagne.

The “Constantinian Shift” has been demonized for a long time. On October 11, 1962, the day of the solemn opening of the Second Vatican Council, Father Yves Congar writing in his diary deplored the fact that the Church had never attempted “*to exit from the Constantinian era.*” His thesis was that it was necessary to purify the Church, to cut away every tie to the structures of power, to make the Church “poor” and “evangelical,” listening to the world. The rejection of the “Constantinian” Church today finds its expression in the proposal of a “Church with an Amazonian face,” that is, a Church turns its back on the Christian civilization constructed over centuries, beginning with the victory of Saxa Rubra.

We must not fear fighting in the name of the Cross against the persecutors. When a State commits sacrilege and murders,

as happened in Mexico and Spain in the 20th century, armed resistance was legitimate and often a moral duty. When the persecution is juridical, cultural, and psychological, as is happening today in the West, the struggle ought to be peaceful, conducted on the juridical and cultural level. But it may happen, as is happening today, that the persecution against faithful Catholics comes from the very authority that governs the Church. Even in this case, one cannot renounce the struggle, because suffering an unjust peace that strips us of what we most hold dear – our spiritual goods – is worse than suffering faced by those who fight to defend these goods. And the Church on earth is called the Church Militant precisely because it is purified by means of struggle, and it is in the struggle that her children earn their heavenly reward. For this reason, the banner of Constantine, like the banner of Lepanto, is today not the banner of an armed war, but the symbol of our spiritual and moral resistance against those who want to transform and destroy the Church of Christ, the Holy Roman Church. ■  
Translated by Giuseppe Pellegrino



## Clare Wilson/Continued...

about his wife's ethnicity. There was a lot of headshaking about how frustrating it is to live in such a small-minded, non-diverse community. I looked around the table. Once again, not a single person of color was present. It was just another instance of white people letting each other know that they are sensitive to the concerns of non-white people.

It seems easy to write off this virtue signaling as a form of modern hypocrisy by which secular people give lip-service to modern cultural trends so that they can continue to live their highly privileged lives without guilt. Before we condemn their behavior, though, perhaps it would be wise to take a look at ourselves. Do we fall into the same poisonous attitude of self-righteousness and self-justification, where we congratulate ourselves for having the right thoughts and ideas and condemn others for their failings? Is this actually our way to disguise an unwillingness to change?

I used to think that I never slipped into virtue signaling. Then, over the past few years, as I've grappled with my spiritual life, I realized that in fact I often fell into extraordinarily judgmental attitudes. *I am better than that person because I don't do such and such*, was often my thought pattern. I could give many examples from my own experience, but I'll choose modesty.

Most Latin Mass communities are quite concerned with the issue of female modesty. Beleaguered in a world of rank immorality, it only makes sense that Catholics who are trying to preserve the ancient ways of the Faith would also try to preserve traditional cultural standards of decorum in dress and behavior. Skirts—at least for Mass—are the norm for women in many of these communities, and many of us also spend a great deal of consideration on our necklines, hem lengths, and general tightness of our garb. It cannot be denied, however, that women also want to fit in with the beauty and fashion standards of the day, and that men, being constantly exposed to women who follow those standards, have learned to see them as attractive. Thus, it is not uncommon for good young women of Latin Mass communities to wear pants in their daily life or choose dresses that are a bit shorter or a bit tighter or a bit lower-cut than anything Pius XII's modesty guidelines would have approved. Additionally, it is not uncommon for good young men of the same communities to cheerfully ask these same young women on dates and then marry them.

In response, I have found myself, along with other young women who have made the choice to be stricter in their adherence to traditional modesty, passing judgment on our peers who

are more relaxed. During the years in which I was completely single, with no one showing interest in me, it was an easy salve to my disappointment to condemn others. *Maybe she has found someone to love and marry*, I'd catch myself thinking, *but at least I am not compromising my standards just to catch a man*. What this really meant was not that I was more virtuous than the girls in question, but that I was envious of their good fortune, petty about their motives, and insecure about my own worth and attractiveness. None of these attitudes are virtuous or charitable, but nonetheless, in conversations with friends and family, I'd find myself virtue-signaling just as much as my secular acquaintances, in the hopes of earning some affirmation that I was doing the right thing.

This brings me to the parable of the pharisee and the publican. If anyone in the Bible could be counted as 'woke,' it would have to be the pharisee. He gives alms! He fasts! He obeys all the commandments! He is sensitive to the issues of his day, which certainly sets him apart from the publican who, as a tax collector in Roman pay, probably was skimming money off the top of his fellow Jews' taxes. In the way he announces his virtue as an excuse to pass judgment on the publican, however, we can see clearly that he is completely lacking in charity. Probably, like me, he was also envious, petty, and insecure. He did not want to praise God; he wanted God to reassure him that he was good enough. Meanwhile the publican, in true love of God and humility, only worried about his own sins and felt no need to broadcast his virtues to anyone. Moreover, he was the one who went home justified, rather than the pharisee.

The reason I bring all this up is to suggest that the person (whether secular or Catholic) who feels compelled to virtue-signal is probably masking some fear or other deep-seated feeling of inadequacy. It is much easier to see the mote in our brother's eye, after all, than to do the work of pulling the beam out of our own. It soothes us if we can say we are better than others. Believing this spares us the difficult work of perfecting ourselves and acquiring true virtue, charity, and humility. In my case, my self-righteousness in regard to other women whose dress I found less modest than my own masked those faults that I mentioned before: envy, pettiness, insecurity. Once I acknowledged them, however, and at least began the attempt to correct them, I found myself suddenly far less concerned with what other women were wearing and doing. I had much more serious problems to tackle in my own soul; there was no point worrying about other people at the same time.

Being aware that judgment and self-righteousness is just

a way of protecting our own vulnerabilities can also make us more compassionate. When confronted with the at times irritating virtue-signaling of secular people, we don't have to roll our eyes. Instead we can understand that these 'woke' people are probably terribly afraid of being condemned for privileges of birth and socioeconomic status that they really can't help. Their only recourse is to let everyone know that they have earned a right to those privileges by cultivating an awareness of and sensitivity toward social inequities. Additionally, when confronted with the slightly different but still real virtue-signaling of our own Catholic peers (often manifested in conversation as gossip and detraction), we can refrain from condemning them and instead remember that they too are probably suffering through some personal struggle which makes them worry that they will be judged and rejected if it is found out. We can remember that those who speak loudest about their own virtue are probably the most afraid of their own faults.

In addition, we can apply this wisdom to ourselves. An area of profitable examination in every Catholic's life would probably be the things we congratulate ourselves on. When do we find ourselves saying, "Oh Lord, I thank thee that I am not like other men"? Where are we trying to pretend one lesser virtue is an adequate substitute for another, more difficult one (e.g., modesty for generosity towards others, if I take my own case)? Self-righteousness is a totally understandable and human behavior, but it cannot in any way be taken as virtuous, even when it manifests as virtue-signaling! More profitable is the realism of humility that says, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." By acknowledging only our own faults, instead of broadcasting our virtues in comparison with others', we will curtail our tendency to judge. After all, what is the point of judging others once we have examined ourselves and realized how many weaknesses we do have?

We can never know the innermost heart of another person. We can only know our own hearts—and gaining that knowledge is a lifelong labor. Who am I to say that a woman should be condemned because her skirt ends above instead of below her knee? What makes more sense is to worry that I am the sort of woman who thinks she should be congratulated because her skirt ends below instead of above her knee. That expectation, after all, indicates a complacency with self that is much more



the enemy of perfection in holiness than are the dimensions of one's clothing. On the social level, too, we should focus not on patting our own backs over good behavior, but on being truly kind and loving toward every person, regardless of their origin or race. Self-righteousness, in the end, accomplishes very little other than soothing our own insecurities. It may be more daunting to undertake the hard task of virtuous behavior whether or not anyone notices, but we can rest in the fact that God at least will notice and reward us, as He did the widow with her mite. ■

## The Remnant

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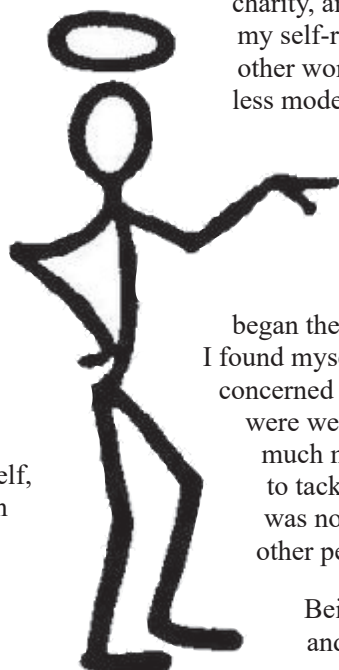
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# The Remnant Speaks

Letters to the Editor: The Remnant Speaks P.O. Box 1117, Forest Lake, MN 55025 ~ Editor@RemnantNewspaper.com



## Feedback on RTV in Rome

Editor, *The Remnant*: I want to thank you Mr. Matt for changing my views on the Church bringing me closer to Traditional Catholicism. #UnitetheClans is exactly the right approach.

Kevin Collins

Editor, *The Remnant*: We can't thank you enough for the insightful reporting that you did while in Rome for the Synod. You are a master at delivery and we couldn't wait for the next one to be available.

We thank God for those courageous prelates who made their voices heard in defense of the true Faith. God in His goodness has provided us with Catholic heroes once again.

May God bless you and all those who stood with you in defense of our beleaguered beautiful Faith.

Joan L.

Editor, *The Remnant*: Hi from St. Marys Kansas, thank you for all you do!! We are having a Public Rosary under the banner of "Unite the Clans" this Saturday in St. Marys. We invited the SSPX, The Fraternity, and the Novus Order to come together as one voice to pray together on a united front. All have agreed "it's time". "The hour is late". Everyone is very concerned. God bless you!

Shelly Dagenais

Editor, *The Remnant*: Seriously, your "holiness", global warming is the greatest threat to mankind? Here's one for ya, uh maybe SIN and DEATH? Jesus seems to think those things are a big deal. I was under the impression that He came to save us from those things? Not global warming and other such nonsense!

Augustine Kirkman

Editor, *The Remnant*: You got it, Michael Matt: Language gymnastics: Mother church = Mother earth; Hell fire = Global warming; Confession = Listening; Heaven = Our common home; Missionary church = Church of "accompaniment"; Sin = Poverty/Capitalism/Colonialism. When we talk of the need for a firm and solid faith, they talk of over population and the need to reduce the carbon foot print (Population reduction?), etc...

Oh, the inversion of language: Calling the good evil & the evil good. Maranatha!

Craig Axel

Editor, *The Remnant*: I live in Brazil. The Brazilian Catholic Church is losing their indigenous people to the Evangelicals for the simple reason that the Indians are not stupid, they are fed up with so-called priests who teach them Marxist revolution, hatred against the oppressors, the white oligarchy who is there to exploit them. That is all they teach them.

The Catholic missionaries and priests are totally Marxist and revolutionary in character, ideology and praxis. So here the Evangelicals come, and teach them of a loving Saviour who died to save them from eternal death and hell, and who is there for them, who loves them personally and who has shed His holy blood for them to give them eternal life.

Does this sound familiar to any one of you? They also bring practical help, not marxist ideology and preaching upheaval against the oppressors. They teach them skills, jobs, they house them, care for them, bring them doctors, show them love and bind them in closely knit communities based on prayer and communal living where they are taught christian virtues and holiness. And you know what? Our Indians love that. Because they want God, they want to pray to an Almighty, All-loving Saviour who loves them personally and communally.

Shame on Brazil and Catholics for having transformed the Catholic pure teaching into a Third World Revolutionary Manifesto to fight Capitalism. The Indians don't simply care for this. And they do well. So, yes, 80% of Amazon Indians have become Evangelical Christians. And many of them have a daily routine of prayer, holy living and love for neighbour. What about the other 20% remaining in the Catholic Church? They are filled with revolutionary zeal, anger and hatred for those "capitalist pigs" who are there to "destroy" their "perfect Eden-like egalitarian utopia" which has never existed to begin with.

Teddy

Editor, *The Remnant*: I listened last night to "The Sham is On" update. Thank you for continuing the great and insightful coverage of the synod.

One thing I would like to bring to your attention...

My name is Fr. Jeffrey Ellis, a diocesan priest from the tiny diocese of Norwich, CT. I am studying canon law at the moment in addition to my parish duties. Just this week I completed a small paper about the canonical history of priestly celibacy. The research I did was fascinating.

Throughout the church's history, "clerical celibacy" refers to three separate (but related) things:

(1) Clerical celibacy refers to the prohibition against bishops, priests, and deacons marrying after ordination. This prohibition has been part of Church praxis since the beginning, and is not controversial. The first canons regarding this practice date to 314 and the councils of Ancyra and Neocaesarea.

(2) Clerical celibacy refers to the prohibition of the ordination of married men. Surprisingly, even in the West, this was not really ever a huge deal. This was the praxis of the Western Church long before it came into actual law; I have not found a reference to any official canon that prohibits this until the 1917 code, although it has been the practice for much of the last millennium and was very common even before that.

(3) This one is the most important re: today -- Clerical celibacy refers to the total continence that is mandated for married clergy (and of course, unmarried as well). Married men, upon ordination, were required to cease conjugal relations with their wives. AND THIS HAS BEEN THE CANONICAL PRACTICE SINCE THE BEGINNING.

The earliest canons go back to the local councils of Elvira (305-ish) in Spain and Arles (314) in Gaul. (Before Elvira, we have virtually no documentation of any kind... Christianity was still illegal.) Pope Siricius, at the end of the fourth century, wrote a letter to Bishop Himerius (the first preserved papal decretal) where he said that the expectation of all (major order) clergy was perfect chastity and perpetual continence with their wives. Innocent I (401-417) and Leo the Great also wrote letters explaining that clerical continence was to be observed ALWAYS, with the harshest penalties for disobedience. Throughout the 4th-7th centuries, Church councils and popes continually made the claim that clerical continence was a tradition of apostolic origin, and that disobedience was to be severely punished.

The first reference ANYWHERE to clergy being able to enjoy marital relations was in 691 at the Council of Trullo. This was a council of Eastern fathers (and was not accepted by the West), where they referred to clerical continence as a Western practice, but nevertheless confirmed the essential need for continued clerical continence in two cases: (1) for bishops, perpetually; (2) for priests and deacons who are serving at the altar, offering the Holy Sacrifice. In other words, it was STILL tradition, even in the east, seven centuries after Christ, that bishops and clerics offering the sacrifice necessarily remained continent.

There is so much more, but the important point is this: in your valiant work to expose the corruption of the Synod, I ask you not to cede ANY ground AT ALL to the forces pushing for married priests. Marriage is not the issue; it never has been. PRIESTLY CONTINENCE, abstaining from sexual relations with wives, IS the issue. This

is the ANCIENT AND CONSISTENT teaching of the Church, even in the East, and it is this issue that the internal enemies of the Church wish to destroy.

I recognize that I am just a stranger with no credentials to you. I recommend checking out this book: <https://www.amazon.com/Apostolic-Origins-Priestly-Celibacy-Christian/dp/0898709512> The author is an Italian Jesuit, and he wrote the book in 1981. It is very well researched and very detailed. From what I could see, opponents of priestly celibacy attack it because it does not fit their narrative, but not on any factual grounds. (Comments like, "well we just know that it's not true," without any factual, evidentiary support.) There is also a very good dissertation by a priest named Anthony McLaughlin from 2010 that details this history. There are other sources too, such as the original canons, but unless you are hunkered down in a canon law library (as I have been the past week), these are probably the easiest to find.

Again, thank you for all that you are doing! I write this to assist you. The attack is not against a 1000-year old tradition; the attack is against a known 1700-year-old tradition, the earliest authorities of which claim actually goes back to the apostles. God bless you.

Fr. Jeffrey Ellis

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# Now It's the Whore of Babylon

BY JASON MORGAN

For years—in the case of the Matt Family since long before Vatican II—faithful Catholics have been warning of the dangers inherent in the attempt to “modernize” Holy Mother Church. Viewing the Bride of Christ as one would a fixer-upper bungalow was bad enough, but the nature of the “reforms” that progressive churchmen said they wanted to effect was so radical, even when couched in their usual weaselly idiom of pompous faux-theology, that every good Catholic had no choice but to raise his voice in protest.

I entered this fray much later than most. I had fallen away from the Faith in my twenties and when I returned—a shell-shocked modern who had learned, like the Prodigal Son, that apart from God life is a brothel and a pigsty—I was ashamed to find that I didn't know much about Catholicism at all. I devoured books on Fatima, the saints, the Eucharist, the Mass, and more, not infrequently with tears of gratitude and joy streaming down my face. By the Grace of God, I had not fallen into the pit. Thank God Almighty, there was Truth, and man could know it and even love it. I joined the fight and was overjoyed to be a part of it.

At the same time, my joy and thanksgiving were shadowed by alarm. The catechism I had received as a youth, after the cataclysm of the 1960s, had been, I began to realize, the thin gruel of the Second Vatican Council and its aftermath. Under green felt banners and to the tune of sappy Protestant music, I learned the rudiments of, well, Catholicism of a kind, but in many ways Catholicism in name only. As a returned Catholic and an adult who had seen some of the world and learned that men are wicked at least as often as they are sincere, I felt a rising distress, even anger at times, at the arrogance of the slew of priests and bishops who had made a plaything out of the Deposit of the Faith. They said they were helping, but I began to suspect that they were really trying to destroy. The Truth I loved late was under attack. The Magisterium was in the hands of those who clearly did not believe in their souls what they professed—when they bothered to do that much—with their mouths.

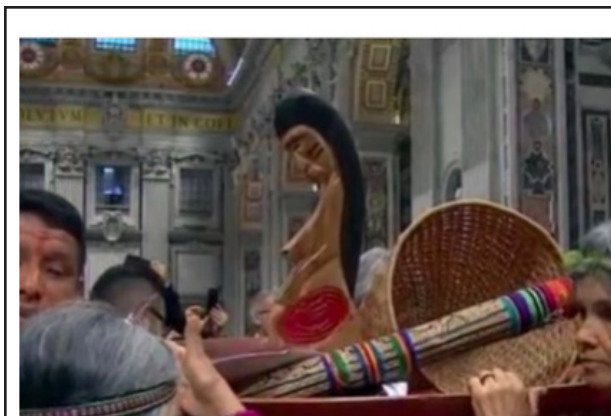
Eventually, I, too, joined the small army of the faithful, the remnant, the traditionalists (for who could continue as a Vatican II stooge who truly loves the Church?) fighting to preserve the Faith whole and entire, as it was given to us by Our Blessed Lord. I counted myself a happy warrior, and I was hopeful that, even after the election of the Marxist eco-pagan Jorge Maria Bergoglio to the See of St. Peter, things might in my lifetime work out all right. The road ahead seemed long, but I thought I

could detect the first sketchings of dawn faint above the far horizon.

I was wrong. Looking through coverage of the Amazon Synod being held in Rome, I saw the video—everyone has surely seen the same footage by now—of an actual pagan idol being processed, as though it was a statue of the Blessed Mother or the Cross of her Crucified Son, through the front doors of the basilica named for the first pope, a procession led by none other than St. Peter's successor himself. This artifact of demon worship, this material thing



Pope Francis and cardinals take part in bizarre ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica



most likely possessed by a myriad of devils and other evil spirits, was venerated—bowed down to—right in the narthex of the church at the heart of the Catholic Faith. Cardinals joined the ring of idol-worshippers, singing songs and openly lauding the pagan god as though they had never read the First

Commandment, had never opened the Old Testament to the part about the Israelites and the golden calf. In the name of God, what was going on? I was frozen in place as I watched the video, expecting a Heaven-sent calamity to

wipe the brazen idolaters off the face of the earth, or at least clear out of the house of the God of Isaac and Abraham.

Imagine the shrieking in hell, the gloating and the twisted glee. Satan's plan, to infiltrate the holiest thing in the universe, the Church, has succeeded. He has coopted the cardinals, the priests, the laity, and now the bishop of Rome. My heart is broken and I do not know what else can be done. The Church has been betrayed from the inside, and from the very top of the human hierarchy. It is a disaster unlike any I have witnessed in my lifetime.

When I was a Catholic growing up in the Bible Belt, my friends, God bless them, sometimes repeated the usual Baptist blathering about the Church being the “whore of Babylon”. This vile slander was one of Martin Luther's (Satan's apprentice par excellence) preferred phrases, and the Protestant brood that grew up around Satan's rehashed *non serviam*, helpfully translated into German and other vernacular languages for maximum effect, delighted in repeating the blasphemy that is surely one of the mottoes of hell. The whore of Babylon. I cannot think of anything worse to say about the Body of Christ extended through time and space.

But now I must admit that the church, the earthly collection of sinners whom God allows, for some reason, to take the wheel of the Barque of St. Peter, has been completely overtaken by the ancient enemy. The sickening caricature of the Church that was on display during the Amazon Synod, the festooning of and craven prostrations before pagan images, is, in truth, the whore of Babylon, the mistress of the devil who is tended to by the apostates Satan has won over to his side.

Chief among those apostates is Jorge Maria Bergoglio. Infidel, pagan, heretic, liar, and knave, Pope Francis, the bellwether of the apocalypse, is the leader of a sulfurous band of apostates, many worse than he, and their prize is the nauseating inversion of the Church Christ founded with His Precious Body and Blood. I do not know where the earthly headquarters of God's Church is. But Rome has been lost to the evil one. My Baptist friends, *now* you may call the Vatican the whore of Babylon. Now, God help us, it is true.

May God have mercy on Bergoglio and the millions he is betraying. If Mary, through her tears, can see fit to intervene before it is too late for us all, then, for God's sake, Our Mother, intercede for us. ■

--Jason Morgan is associate professor at Reitaku University in Chiba, Japan



# From "Essays on Catholicism, Liberalism, and Socialism"

by Juan Donoso Cortes (1809-1853)

"There is no man, let him be aware of it or not, who is not a combatant in this hot contest; no one who does not take an active part in the responsibility of the defeat or victory. The prisoner in his chains and the king on his throne, the poor and the rich, the healthy and the infirm, the wise and the ignorant, the captive and the free, the old man and the child, the civilized and the savage, share equally in the combat. Every word that is pronounced, is either inspired by God or by the world, and necessarily proclaims, implicitly or explicitly, but always clearly, the glory of the one or the triumph of the other. In this singular warfare we all fight through forced enlistment; here the system of substitutes or volunteers finds no place. In it is unknown the exception of sex or age; here no attention is paid to him who says, I am the son of a poor widow; nor to the mother of the paralytic, nor to the wife of the cripple. In this warfare all men born of woman are soldiers.

"And don't tell me you don't wish to fight; for the moment you tell me that, you are already fighting; nor that you don't know which side to join, for while you are saying that, you have already joined a side; nor that you wish to remain neutral; for while you are thinking to be so, you are so no longer; nor that you want to be indifferent; for I will laugh at you, because on pronouncing that word you have chosen your party. Don't tire yourself in seeking a place of security against the chances of war, for you tire yourself in vain; that war is extended as far as space, and prolonged through all time. In eternity alone, the country of the just, can you find rest, because there alone there is no combat. But do not imagine, however, that the gates of eternity shall be opened for you, unless you first show the wounds you bear; those gates are only opened for those who gloriously fought here the battles of the Lord, and were, like the Lord, crucified." ■




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# Violating the First Commandment

## - Synodal Style -

BY KATHY CLUBB

Idol worship was on full display in preparation for the Pan-Amazon synod, with the tacit approval of Pope Francis. Although the Synod hadn't yet started, the celebration of pagan ceremonies added weight to the concerns being voiced by prominent prelates and laymen that the Synod will be a vehicle for apostasy. Accusations of narrow-mindedness and even racism were thrown at faithful Catholics who were left shocked and outraged as the videos showing the rituals circulated on social media, along with suggestions that this outrage was nothing more than a Protestant style condemnation of the worshipping of graven images.

The first ritual was a garden ceremony that was ostensibly a dedication of the synod to St Francis. Although the Vatican did not organise the event, officials were invited to attend. Indigenous attendees literally worshipped the earth and bowed down before idols of fertility goddesses, as Pope Francis and his cardinals watched the 90-minute ceremony in its entirety. The Pope also joined in the planting of a holm oak from Assisi - the tree was meant to symbolise 'integral ecology'. For the occasion, soil had been brought in from various locations around the globe to denote injustices which occurred there. The crimes of human-trafficking and landowner-murder rated a mention, but there was nothing of the deaths of the millions of babies killed through abortion each year.



Pagan or Christian? Vatican won't say.



The ritual was led by an indigenous woman, a concerning message at a time when there is such a strong push from some sectors for women priests, and when the Synod is suspected of being the vehicle to deliver this unwelcome innovation. She presented the pope with some gifts, including a tucum ring - a symbol of liberation theology - while an indigenous man presented the carved image of a naked, pregnant woman.

According to CNA<sup>1</sup>, the woman celebrant claimed that the idol was "Our Lady of the Amazon". However, Our Lady of the Amazon is represented as a beautiful woman holding the Child Jesus; as elegantly and modestly dressed as every other image of Our Lady. Incidentally, this relatively obscure devotion is nowhere near as popular as Our Lady of Nazareth. That feast is celebrated on the second Sunday in October - which falls during the Synod - when up to two million pilgrims will walk through the streets of Brazil in the largest Catholic procession in the world.

While the exact nature of the ritual isn't certain, one thing is clear: it definitely wasn't

Catholic. Catholicism is the right worship of the One True God, not of a pantheon, not even with a sign of the cross thrown in for good

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/indigenous-ritual-performed-in-vatican-gardens-for-popes-tree-planting-ceremony-60523>

measure. Meanwhile, in another part of the Vatican, a liturgy (of some kind) featured a barefoot indigenous woman wearing leggings and dancing with a book of Sacred Scripture.

Ironically, Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, had earlier stated that "Chaos with the Word of God becomes 'Cosmos.'" However, despite the Word of God being present, there was only chaos evident in this Church, where congregants elbowed each other to take pictures and video of the girl on their phones, even stepping onto the sanctuary to get a good view. A fertility idol, similar to one



used in the garden ceremony was again present, having been placed on the floor in front of the altar, surrounded by candles.

Among the groups who organised the garden event were the Global Catholic Climate Movement,

REPAM, and the Order of Franciscan Friars Minor. Some of these groups are known for their involvement in left-wing social justice causes, for example facilitating Catholic participation in the Paris agreement and supporting climate strikes. Other organisations aren't Catholic and have backing from the UN and the EU.

A collaboration by two of the groups produced some extraordinary videos in the leadup to the Synod: the seventeen videos were on the theme of "Save the Amazon. She will save us."

One video featured an indigenous leader from Colombia by the name of Anitalia Pijachi. Pijachi claims



she communicates with nature spirits, which she says are a gift from the Creator Father. In her video, Pijachi asks that the Church refrain from evangelising, but says that instead it should concentrate on sympathising with Amazonians about the environment.

Pijachi (see photo) also gives us a definition of that Synod buzz-word, integral ecology, which she describes as "me, ... each human being in relation to what is around us."<sup>2</sup>

A surprising addition to the lineup is German Cardinal Marx, who gives a brief speech on how "everything is connected." Unfortunately, his talk is so convoluted that it would appear very little in his train of thought is connected, but he confides that "the Church is not the only institution that knows the future of the world."<sup>3</sup>

One wonders what institutions Marx could be referring to. ■

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cidse.org/voices-about-the-amazon/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cidse.org/voices-about-the-amazon/>



## IN THE SPIRIT of BONIFACE...

## Pachamama Thrown into the Tiber

BY MICHAEL J. MATT

## Who is Pachamama?

Leaving aside desperate Neo-Catholic claims to the contrary, the Pachamama (pronounced Pawch-mama) that is dominating the Amazon Synod is, in fact, the pagan “Earth Goddess” worshipped by the Incas of South America.

The Inca Empire (1200-1532) is the best documented of all the Peruvian civilizations and, as a result, much of what is known about the deities of the empire is also well-documented and relies less on the myths and conjecture typically associated with the study of other pagan religions.

The Incas worshipped the Sun God Inti and the Earth Goddess Pachamama. They also engaged in human sacrifice. In fact, the Andes Mountains were regarded as the sacred dwelling places of respected spirits, the 22,960-mountain peaks having once served as sites of human sacrifices. (Pachamama: Incan Earth Goddess)

## What about Our Lady of Guadalupe?

When Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to Saint Juan Diego in 1531, she made it clear that her mission was to dispel from the Americas the old serpent—Satan himself—and to reclaim those lands for her Son, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ the King.

According even to Wikipedia, “the woman, speaking to Juan Diego in his native Nahuatl language (the language of the Aztec Empire), identified herself as the Virgin Mary, ‘mother of the very true deity.’”

It can thus be argued that Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared for the specific purpose of teaching the indigenous peoples not only Who the very true God is, but also who His very true mother is—not a dragoness, not Mother Earth, but rather a flesh-and-blood human being, whose fiat had played a pivotal role in giving all baptized men and women the chance to become children of God and heirs of heaven.

Our Lady of Guadalupe was to put an end to the pagan worship of false gods such as Pachamama who, according to the Incas, lived beneath the mountains and revealed herself by the occasional “quiver” which sent earthquakes to remind the indigenous peoples to always worship Mother Earth.

Conspicuous by her absence from the Amazon Synod is, of course, Our Lady of Guadalupe. While in Rome covering the Amazon Synod, I heard not one mention of the Empress of the Americas—the iconic symbol of and mother to the converted indigenous Christians of South America especially.



Why is the Vatican so terribly silent where Our Lady of Guadalupe is concerned?

Why would a Synod ostensibly called to listen to the peoples of South America not be dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe and the indigenous St Juan Diego to whom she appeared? And why in Heaven's name would said Synod promote the false earth goddess which Our Lady herself had come to replace in the lives of the indigenous peoples?

The authors of “Pachamama: Incan Earth Goddess” tell us that the “Incas of ancient Peru believed that Pachamama personified the Earth” but that the goddess was replaced by the Virgin Mary when the Spanish conquistadors came to the New World for the sole purpose of “pillaging and plundering the gold and silver possessed by the indigenous people.”

Little if any mention is ever made of the “evil” Spanish missionaries setting the foundations stones of some of the greatest cities in South American civilization, including São Paulo, which was founded by Jesuit missionaries in 1554 and named after the Apostle to the Gentiles himself.

Rarely do the revisionist attacks on the “evil” Spanish mention the indigenous conquests and enslavement of their own neighboring tribes that had gone on for centuries -- conquests which finally came to a merciful end after the Spanish began inviting them all into their own beloved Catholic Church as brothers and sisters in Christ. And what about the great saints of the region -- men such as St. Martin de Porres and women such as the first canonized saint of the New World, St Rose of Lima, who died in 1617 and was to become the Patron Saint of Peru and all of South America? Not a word at the Amazon Synod about the Peruvian woman honored for 500 years by Christians all over the world. But, again, no mention of any of this at a

Bishops Synod in Rome now dominated by the pagan goddess Pachamama.

## Some Obvious Questions in Need of Synodal Answers

When the Vatican's Amazon Synod representatives, along with the pope himself, insisted that the world must “listen to the cry of the earth”, are they referring to the cries of Pachamama?

When the Synod fathers solemnly insist that we all need to repent of our sins against “Mother Earth”, to which “Mother Earth” are they referring -- the Inca fertility goddess Pachamama (Mother Earth, as she is called in the South American Quechua language), or the earth as our “common home”? Surely they would tell us if they're referring to the special and unique place that for all eternity was destined to become earthly home to the incarnate Lord of History.

Pachamama, let us recall, was replaced by the Virgin Mary after the conquistadors in South America had brought missionaries to teach the indigenous peoples about Christ. If Pachamama is supposed to represent the Virgin Mary, why not make that clear? Why is the Vatican being at best intentionally vague about this most crucial distinction?

I was sitting in the Vatican press conference myself just days ago when I heard with my own ears an official Synod representative tell the media that it is simply not necessary to clarify any of this.

When asked if the image of Pachamama, which debuted in Pope

Francis's bizarre tree-planting ceremony in the Vatican Gardens, was Christian or pagan, official Synod spokesman, Bishop David Martínez de Aguirre Guinea of Peru, said:

“Probably those who used this symbol demonstrated, wishes to reflect fertility, to women, to life, the life presence among these Amazonian people ... and Amazonia is meant to be full of life. I don't think we need to create any connections with the Virgin Mary or with a pagan element.”

In other words, draw your own conclusions—pagan...Christian... whatever! According to the Vatican, it just doesn't matter.

It is true that Pachamama is sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary by some indigenous Christians, but that the Vatican refuses to point this out at the Amazon Synod suggests that the Vatican is perfectly comfortable with Pachamama being welcomed into the heart of Christendom—into St. Peter's Basilica itself—as the pagan Dragoness Goddess known as Mother Earth to the Indigenous peoples of the Andes.

This is a blasphemous outrage that has no precedent in the annals of Catholic history.

Is Pope Francis suggesting that Our Lady of Guadalupe's conquest of the Land of the Serpent was, in fact, a heavenly error in judgment?

Is the Amazon Synod an implicit Vatican apology for the Catholic missionaries of old who brought the Lumen Christi into the darkness of the New World?

Until the Vatican decides to man up and tell the world what's really going on here, is it any wonder that a few valiant men of Christendom saw it as their duty before God and the Virgin of Guadalupe to step in and do an inherently Catholic thing by collecting a number of Pachamama idols—the veritable mascot of the Amazon Synod—and throwing them into the Tiber? ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoB\\_gjuZgf8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoB_gjuZgf8))

**Viva Cristo Rey, brothers, and viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!**





# Pan-Amazon Synod:

## *From Evangelisation to “Intercultural Exodus”*

BY JOSÉ ANTONIO URETA

*Kiwxi* is the title of a movie [1] issued by the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network to pay homage to Brother Vicente Cañas SJ, a Spanish missionary murdered in 1987 for his intervention in territorial disputes between Indians and newly arrived landowners in the northwest of the state of Mato Grosso in what was then a real Brazilian “wild west”.

Sometime before, in the early 1970’s, Br Cañas (“Kiwxi”, for the Indians) and his colleague, Fr Thomaz Aquino Lisboa SJ (“Yauca”), had maintained their first contacts with two isolated indigenous tribes in that region: the Mýky and the Enawene Nawe. Imbued with the new post-conciliar missionary paradigm of “inculturation”, the two Jesuits not only learned the tribal dialect but also gradually adopted all the customs of the indigenous people.

The movie begins with a scene filmed in 1985 that shows a ritual dance of the Mýki in the midst of which a dancing Fr Lisboa stands out, in close up, “dressed” with the attire required for the ceremony. In the next sequence, seated next to a hut, he explains:

“All this is filled with spirituality, a deep knowledge of nature, respect for nature. Here we are eating what they eat, sleeping in the same house in which they sleep in the hammock they themselves manufacture, because the faith I have in Christ does not stop me from living the same life the Mýki are living. For whether I wear this object or not [a rod through the septum of his nose], whether I pierce the nose or ears or not, wear painting or not, that is culture. That is not faith.”

With his nose piercing and other ritual attire, we could say that Fr Lisboa had, 30 years ago, anticipated the “Amazonian face” which the Synod of Bishops now seeks to give the Church in that “multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious region”.

In fact, the preparatory document of the synod, *Instrumentum laboris*, states that it is necessary to listen to indigenous peoples in order to build “intercultural” networks, to discover new ways for the Church’s pastoral policy in the Amazon to deepen the “inculturation” process and facilitate the “inculturation of the rites” produced by the ancestral wisdom of Amazonian peoples for their celebrations. Moreover, the document continues:

“We are called as Church to strengthen the protagonism of the people themselves: we need an intercultural spirituality that will help us to interact with the diversity of peoples and their traditions.”



José Ureta (right) delivers his statement at the Voice of the Family roundtable in Rome on October 4, 2019.  
Also pictured: Taylor Marshall (left) and Jeanne Smits (center)

The *Instrumentum laboris* emphasises “inculturation” because since the Sixties this word has been the talisman of the transformation of evangelisation from a theological focus to one based on pastoral considerations. The old model that sought to convert native peoples and nurture Christian culture among them was gradually replaced with a missiology aimed at inter-religious dialogue devoid of any intention of proselytisation. One which, conversely, can help to reinforce the pagan identity of those being “evangelised”.

This article will attempt to describe the transformation from the theological to the pastoral model. The first part will address what inculturation meant from the earliest days of evangelisation until the first half of the twentieth century. In the second part, we will see how “inculturation” is understood today.

### Part one

In reality, the problem of relations between Christianity and culture is as old as evangelisation. By stripping themselves of the legal obligations of Judaism and by preaching the Good News to the Gentiles, the Apostles categorically affirmed the universality of salvation: “There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:28) While other religions are linked to a culture, Christianity with its supernatural origin and character is directed at all men and radically transcends any purely human content. In this sense, it is totally outside of culture. Furthermore, Christianity is

not a religion of worship or law, but a religion of faith by which man recognises the word of God, submits to it, and enters into an inner communion with his Creator.

However, Christianity is not pure interiority for the essential reason that it is a religion of the Incarnation. God speaks to us through Jesus Christ, who is true God and true Man, and as such is historically situated. Upon founding the religion of the New Covenant, He leaned upon the Old: “Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” (Mt. 5:17)

Likewise, in order to continue the work of Christ, the Church had to express herself throughout history with forms and formulas that she did not create out of nothing but elaborated based on the culture that surrounded her, first Jewish, and then Greek-Roman, taking various elements not only from their worship but also their organisation and even thinking. [2] She continued doing the same later, when she penetrated other cultures. However, despite having become closely linked with such cultures, the “transcendental” aspect of Christianity always remained a priority, because the meaning of the cultural elements that the Church assumed was radically modified.

Despite this transcendence of Christianity in relation to all cultures, it can be said that in its relations with the Church, western culture has a particular status, since the bonds of connaturality between the Church and the West are twofold and very tightly knit.

On the one hand, because from the conversion of the barbarians and throughout the Middle Ages the Church was the main inspiration to western culture, permeating it and establishing such a profound symbiosis with it as to forge what was later called Christendom.

On the other hand, because there is a close link between faith and reason (“*fides quaerens intellectum*”) and since no other civilisation developed rationality as much as western classical culture (which is why the Church assumed and preserved everything that Greek philosophy and Roman law possessed as positive rational values), it became part of her DNA.

In his famous speech at the University of Regensburg, Pope Benedict XVI highlighted how the “inner rapprochement between Biblical faith and Greek philosophical inquiry was an event of decisive importance, not only from the standpoint of the history of religions, but also from that of world history - it is an event which concerns us even today. Given this convergence, it is not surprising that Christianity, despite its origins and some significant developments in the East, finally took on its historically decisive character in Europe.” Maintaining this western character, which was originally Latin, the early missionaries who were sent to convert the Saxon barbarians knew nevertheless to adapt to the cultural differences of the populations they wished to evangelise, following the archetype of *ad hominem* argumentation that was the

Continued on Page 24



# Pan-Amazon Synod: From Evangelisation to “Intercultural Exodus”

J. Ureta/Continued from Page 23

discourse of St Paul in the Areopagus of Athens. To facilitate the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, for example, St Gregory the Great informed his missionary in England, St Augustine of Canterbury, that he should allow them to keep the gastronomic feasts once celebrated in honour of their idols, but purifying them of idolatry and giving them a Christian content.[3]

The Church showed the same respect for authentic, or at least corrigible, cultural values of local populations as she evangelised Asian peoples. An eloquent example of this is the instruction that the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith sent in 1659 to the Apostolic Vicars of the Society of Foreign Missions working in the Far East, which recommended:

“Do not be anxious or persuade those peoples to change their rites and customs, provided they are not openly opposed to [Catholic] religion and morality. Because nothing would be as absurd as introducing into China [the way of life] of France, Spain, Italy or any other European nation. Do not introduce your civilisations into those nations but only your faith, which not only does not despise or contradict people’s rites and customs as long as they are not reprehensible, but on the contrary, seeks to keep and bring them to perfection. ... Try therefore not to compare the customs of those nations with those of Europe but rather adapt yourselves to them. Praise everything in them that is worthy of admiration. As far as things that do not deserve such praise, although it is true that we should not imitate flatterers, be at least prudent not to overly criticise them. As for really bad customs, try to reject them with your silence more than with your words, using those occasions so that those who are determined to embrace our faith are the first to eliminate them little by little, and by their own accord.”[4]

This instruction is a model of balance because it leads the missionary to make a judgment about the local culture that he seeks to evangelise in order to incorporate everything that is wholesome or recoverable and gradually reject everything that is unacceptable from the standpoint of faith and morals.

In fact, underlying the instruction are two levels of cultural values. On a superficial level, there are ways of dressing, eating and lodging, artistic styles, forms of treatment, etc. At a deeper level, there are the ways to bury or incinerate the dead, to conceive family life, and to organise social relations, which necessarily embody or convey the religious and moral conceptions of each people. Like it or not, such ancestral choices are either in harmony, or clash with the content of Christian revelation, and in the latter case they need to be purified or eventually eliminated altogether.

Hence, a true missionary effort

necessarily introduces into the very bosom of pagan cultures a conflict from which it is not possible to escape on the pretext of adaptation: revelation illuminates the fundamental deficiencies of pagan conceptions and their practical

“““

*From the beginning the Church adapted to the cultures of the peoples she successively evangelised - preserving and improving everything that was good, beautiful and true, and eliminating everything that was bad, ugly and wrong. This resulted in a culture that was authentically local and profoundly Christian.*

consequences, and makes a call to conversion.

Therefore, it would be disloyal to pretend that missionaries in the past did not intend to modify non-Christian cultures in their substance. Through the missionary, the doctrine of the Gospel, the tradition of the Church, and to some extent the worldview underlying Catholic dogmas consciously and voluntarily entered into contact with the values of non-Christian cultures.

It was not a question of changing these cultures on a superficial level, whose elements could largely remain, but of converting on a deeper level. The mission *ad gentes* explicitly sought a true metanoia of the evangelised peoples, that is, a reconstruction of their base values from the inside. In this way, some positive or neutral cultural values would be revitalised in a Christian sense, while those incompatible with Catholic values should be rejected, according to the famous phrase of St Remigius to Clovis, the first converted Frankish king: “Burn what you had adored and adore what you had burned”.

To a greater or lesser extent, this inner reconstruction ends up reaching the entire culture of a people that converts to Christianity. For every culture is an integrated reality in which all components, superficial and profound,

form an organic unity. And since religion (or irreligion, as in modern culture) is the supreme factor of integration of all culture, it turns out that it is not possible to change religion without modifying to some extent all the other elements of the culture of a people that embraces a new faith.

In reality, this incarnation of the Faith in the cultural forms of those converted to Christianity is neither done by missionaries nor happens as an imposition of superficial aspects of their culture. It is a gradual and profound process of Christianisation of customs and traditions carried out by the converts themselves in their everyday life. The new Catholic communities – and above all the saints that flourish in them – are those that must forge the Gospel values in the depth of their own culture, creating a living reality that aspires to become a culture at the same time profoundly Catholic and entirely local.[5]

The Middle Ages was a true paradigm

“““

*With both fear and with sympathy, the concept of “inculturation” began to suffer a semantic slip in the ecclesial vocabulary. The emerging concept of evangelisation insisted less and less on the missionary vocation of transmitting the Faith and more and more on the convenience, or even the obligation, of preserving the integrity of the indigenous culture.*

of successful evangelisation and inculturation. Other missionary efforts were more or less successful to the degree they approached that ideal. In Latin America, the evangelisation originally carried out by the Catholic monarchs and the crown of Portugal was largely successful, although the colonisers, and to some extent even the missionaries, were influenced by the evil

effects of Renaissance humanism and its materialistic and neo-pagan conception of life.

In spite of that, thanks to the numerous apparitions of the Blessed Mother, and especially that of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the immense majority of native peoples converted to Catholicism, gradually abandoned their superstitions and Christianised their customs. From there a Creole culture emerged very different from European culture but a mixture of the Catholicism of Spain and Portugal in the baroque era combined with the mentality, genius and artistic gifts characteristic of the indigenous people. Latin American culture had its best expression in the saints of the continent, some white Creoles such as St Rose of Lima or the Venerable Mariana de Jesus Torres of Quito, some mestizos, like St Martin of Porres or natives like St Juan Diego.

Another notable example of successful evangelisation and inculturation that respects local values was that of the Philippines.

In all these cases there was a real incarnation of Christianity in the local culture, preserving the plurality of cultures (whose diversity is desired by God) and avoiding any form of cultural “colonialism” while maintaining the substance of the Gospel faith and morals in its integral purity.

Albeit in passing, it is worth mentioning the great improvement in living conditions of the evangelised peoples that resulted from the action of missionaries and European settlers.

The above considerations express with all their nuances the true meaning of the “inculturation” effort the Catholic Church carried out over two thousand years of her missionary work fulfilling the Divine mandate to the Apostles: “Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Mt. 28:19)

We now need to look at the false principles which resulted in this approach being abandoned for the sake of an “interculturality” that led missionaries to dress up as fake Indians, as did the Jesuits Kiwxi and Yauca when they came into contact with the Mýky and the Enawene Nawe.

## Part Two

From the beginning the Church adapted to the cultures of the peoples she successively evangelised - preserving and improving everything that was good, beautiful and true, and eliminating everything that was bad, ugly and wrong. This resulted in a culture that was authentically local and profoundly Christian. How did this authentic inculturation become a dialogue between aboriginal peoples and missionaries who adopted their customs while

Continued Next Page



# José Ureta/Continued...

confirming them in their pagan culture? One factor was the missionaries' fear of being branded as fellow travellers of European colonialism. Indeed, under the influence of anti-western or Marxist "decolonisation" movements, a guilt complex about the evangelisation carried out in former colonies began to infiltrate the Catholic Church following the Second World War.

At the same time, there was growing public interest in, and enormous sympathy towards, indigenous peoples, whose folklore, lifestyles and dialects seemed threatened by the penetration of technology and modern life. Missionaries were not exempt from this sympathy, which extended to all aspects of their culture, including the most reprehensible ones.

With both fear and with sympathy, the concept of "inculturation" began to suffer a semantic slip in the ecclesial vocabulary. The emerging concept of evangelisation insisted less and less on the missionary vocation of transmitting the Faith and more and more on the convenience, or even the obligation, of preserving the integrity of the indigenous culture. From adaptation to the local mentality it became mimicry, then a "conversion" of the missionaries, and of the Church herself, to the (pagan) values of the ancestral culture of the peoples being evangelised.

All missionary congregations and all regions where the Church developed its mission *ad gentes* (the Far East, Oceania, Indian subcontinent, Africa and the three Americas) were victims of the ideology which substituted pastoral care for theological conversion, but it is the Amazon region, which is the focus of the upcoming synod.

It would be beyond the scope of this article to analyse the semantic slippage of the concept of "inculturation" since the Vatican II decree *Ad gentes*, passing through the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* of Paul VI, and the meetings of the Latin American Episcopate in Medellin (1968), Puebla (1979), Santo Domingo (1992) and Aparecida (2007). For this reason, we will study only the most "advanced" expressions of the concept of "inculturation" from the writings of the greatest intellectual of the new "missiology", Fr Paulo Suess, a German priest based in Brazil and one of the consultants of the committee preparing the Pan-Amazon synod (and probably the main drafter of its working document).

In the chapter titled "The dispute for inculturation" of his book *Evangelizar desde los proyectos históricos de los otros: Diez ensayos de misionología (Evangelising from the historical projects of Others: ten essays on missiology)*,[6] Fr Suess presents the philosophical



God help us... Does the new evangelisation look something like this?

premises of the existentialist, subjectivist, and relativistic matrix of the new "paradigm of inculturation" based on "the recognition of the irreducible otherness of Others":[7]

- "All peoples and social groups have a historical project of life" codified in their respective culture, which defines their identity and creates "a second environment".
- "For human beings, the perception of reality always goes through a cultural 'filter' so that the vision one group has of another hardly coincides with the vision that the group has of itself."
- "Subjectivity and cultural identity erase any objective, unique and universal mediation of reality"; the "objective vision", unfettered by the specific angle of each culture, is a mere "utopian horizon that moves history".
- "Neither the culture of any social group" nor "the culture that occasionally conveys the Gospel" can be "normative for another group".
- Hence, "the full subject of inculturated evangelisation are the respective people who receive the Gospel. The poor, the others, the people are the protagonists of the history of their salvation and of the process of their evangelisation."

Paraphrasing the Latin formula of the Fourth Lateran Council, according to which salvation is ordinarily found only in the Church, Fr Suess states that "there is no revelation or salvation *extra culturam*."[8]

In this new paradigm, the preaching of a missionary becomes irrelevant because the Church "must experience its metalinguistic irrelevance and lack of language, and must again become capable of speaking a contextual language that is specific to the culture in question",[9]

which supposes "a process of divestment, *metanoia* and *kenosis*".[10]

Evangelisation becomes, then, merely "a catalytic presence" of the missionary "that provokes cultural changes without explicit interference",[11] because "a Gospel ontologically perfect but socio-culturally and historically distant from peoples would become an irrelevant Gospel and a dead letter."[12]

Therefore, people accede to the revelation by themselves and not by the preaching of a missionary: "The full subject of inculturated evangelisation is the respective people that receive the Gospel. The poor, the "Others", the peoples are the protagonists of the history of their salvation and of the process of their evangelisation ... The interpretation or revelation of Jesus Christ as *logos*, for example, is an absolutely contextual 'discovery' and therefore a cultural and historical one."[13]

Contrary to traditional mission, "the Gospel and evangelisers respect otherness and preserve the identity of messages and cultures. Inculturation seeks a respectful proximity in a tone of otherness."[14] Moreover, "evangelising a people means collaborating with the strengthening of their identity and believing in their specific future,"[15] otherwise Christianity would become "a secularising force, since – as in the case of an indigenous people that live their religion intimately linked to their culture – it disassociates religion and culture."[16]

The foregoing implies, for the Church, the obligation to preserve the pagan religion of the natives in its integrity: "“Being Guaraní” means belonging to the worldview of the Guaraní, since religion in a respective indigenous society, which is monocultural, is always also an expression of that monoculture.... Belonging to the Guaraní people means

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## José Ureta/Continued from Page 25...

not only having kinship with the Guaraní people but also belonging to the religion, worldview and social order of the Guaraní.”[17]

Inculturation becomes, then, an “evangelisation” without the Gospel — because the latter would be “introducing a new, competing, or parallel memory” and one which, moreover, rejoices in recognising pagan gods: “Any intent to replace indigenous religious memory with the memory of Israel would be a new attempt at colonisation. Colonising means not only ‘unmasking’ the ‘false gods’ of others as ‘real demons’, but imposing ‘the best’ someone has as if it were also best for others.”[18]

What importance, then, do the history of Israel and the life of Jesus, nuclei of Divine Revelation, have for evangelisation? They are a mere source of inspiration: “Clearly, this paradigmatic ‘salvation history’ cannot replace the history of any people, just as the historical culture of Jesus cannot impose itself as a model culture by prevailing over other cultures. Any salvific project structurally incapable of formulating itself from the historical-cultural roots of a people would be in advance an alienating and colonial project and not a salvific or liberating project.”[19]

This naturally begs the question: If that is so, what role does a missionary play in the midst of an “evangelised” population if he cannot even talk about Christ? His presence there is reduced to showing “solidarity and bearing witness”, “accompanying in the struggle” against the “colonialist” cultural hegemony of western civilisation and showing the indigenous people that “the only rupture the Gospel proposes is breaking with infidelity to their own life projects”,[20] since “the project of the Kingdom is at the heart of their projects.”[21] “Strictly speaking, evangelisation is to always recover the coherence of the life project of the Other poor, a project always threatened by death structures in the historical conditions in which it is carried out.”[22]

In this task, as the “Yauca” precedent (Fr Thomaz Aquino Lisboa SJ) shows, the “evangeliser is evangelised, and the evangelised become evangeliser” because the evangelisation process consists “in a dialectic relationship” in which “there are no ‘agents’ facing ‘patients’, nor ‘teachers’ facing ‘pupils’.”[23]

On the part of the people of God this implies a “cultural exodus” that requires “rethinking old formulas of our faith that have become incomprehensible” and “re-contextualising ritual practices and symbols of faith.” [24] In straight talk, such inculturation results in a renunciation by missionaries of their Christian faith and worship to adopt the superstitions and ancestral idolatrous rituals of their “dialoguing” comrades.

Such a “cultural exodus” is precisely what Raúl Fornet-Betancourt calls for. He is a Cuban philosopher living in Germany,

where he has worked as director of the Latin American Department at the Catholic *Missio* Institute, in the city of Aachen. In his lecture at the Fourth Parliament of the World’s Religions, titled “Towards an Interreligious and Intercultural Theology of Liberation”,[25] Fornet deems the inculturation paradigm insufficient, as its language “betrays an awareness of superiority and, with it, of the supposedly obvious right of the Catholic Church (sic) to incarnate the Gospel in different cultures.” That aggressive attitude “supposes dragging cultures - along with their religious traditions - before the tribunal demanding the universalisation of Christianity...to dictate the course that their development must follow.” The basic vision of inculturation, he continues, “does not lead it to ‘relativize’ its own tradition in the sense of relating it to others on a plane of equality.”

Thus, it would be the case to move “to a culturally polycentric universal Christianity,”[26] that is, a configuration of faith “no longer centric but pilgrim” and which is best expressed by the term “interculture”.

According to the Aachen-based Cuban philosopher, interculturality “is not mission but resignation”, an existential attitude of “permanent resignation of the cultural rights we hold as our own” so that “welcoming contexts, free, unoccupied spaces can emerge in us”. This is about “a patient act of renunciation”: “renouncing to sacralise the origins of cultural or religious traditions”; “renouncing to convert the traditions we call our own into a scrupulously established itinerary”; “renouncing to decant identities by distinguishing between what is our own and what is others”; “renouncing to syncretise differences on the basis of a supposedly stable common ground.”

These fundamental renunciations “can inspire and guide a new transformation of Christianity” that “would change its inculturations into interculturalisations”, remaking Christian identity in a process that “continuously reconfigures itself” and “enables it (Christianity) for a plural exercise of its own memory.” In this way, “members of different religious communities relearn to confess their religious identity from the transformative experience of the pilgrimage, the exodus, where trans-religious spaces are created.”

This call for a multicultural exodus, launched by Fornet-Betancourt, seems to have been fully approved by the final message of the Latin American Seminar of Bishops and Secretaries of Episcopal Commissions on Pastoral Care for Indigenous Peoples, held in November 2018 in Bogotá, which states:

“The fact of recognising and valuing indigenous cultures with their spiritualities and wisdom rooted in the earth’s cosmos, challenges us to review and update our way of evangelising. We want to go a step further from inculturation towards interculturality.”

That call was fully accepted also by the editors of *Diálogo Indigenista Misionero*, an organ of the National Coordination of the Indigenous Pastoral of the Paraguayan Bishops’ Conference. On the back cover of the December 2013 edition, they published a poem titled “Missionaries with an Intercultural Face”, an expression repeated throughout the text as a refrain:

We are protagonists in this conglomerate of cultures, encounters and disagreements, alliances and fractures. Let us configure the future of this mosaic of identities from interculturality, the main challenge in all latitudes. ...

Let us live our “intercultural” being by: Promoting cultures instead of rescuing or saving them, respecting and appreciating them, instead of judging and condemning; ... Learning and listening, instead of teaching and overwhelming them. Let us go to the sacred ground of others with bare feet, hat in hand, and gifts ready to reach out to them. Let us smell the scent and collect the flowers from fields of other worlds, and let us learn to drink the water of life from other deep wells. Let us go meet other faces, reflections of our humanity. Let us open what is ours to what is theirs, in a relationship of equality.[27]

Consistent with these premises, it is not surprising that the same bulletin reproduced the following passage from the lecture by Fr Bartomeu Meliá, the first person in charge of indigenous pastoral policy in the Paraguayan Bishops’ Conference, during the 2013 Missionary Week:

“We asked ourselves this question: To what extent can we practice indigenous religions? Almost all religions have two essential elements: listening to the ‘revealed word’ and communicating with the community (for Indians, dance and chicha) ... Indigenous religions seem strange to us, but that does not remove the challenge of participating in religious spaces; yes, one can practice the indigenous religion without denying one’s own, this even widens our hearts.”[28]

The past 60 years have seen a radical transformation in evangelisation. In light of this, the upcoming Synod’s aim of building a Church with an “Amazonian face” means that fears that Catholic communities will be incited to return to the idolatrous practices of indigenous religions are not unjustified. ■

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### Endnotes:

- [1] La Vida por la Amazonia-Capítulo KIWXI [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbTnBO5s\\_vQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbTnBO5s_vQ)
- [2] According to Pius XII, “The Catholic Church has neither scorned nor rejected the pagan philosophies. Instead, after freeing them from error and all contamination she has perfected and completed them by Christian revelation. So likewise, the Church has graciously made her own the native art and culture which in some countries is so highly developed. She has carefully encouraged them and has brought them to a point of aesthetic perfection that of themselves they probably would never have attained. By no means has she repressed native customs and traditions but has given them a certain religious significance; she has even transformed their feast days and made them serve to commemorate the martyrs and to celebrate mysteries of the faith.” (Evangelii praecones, no. 58, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_02061951\\_evangelii-praecones.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_02061951_evangelii-praecones.html)).
- [3] Faith, Reason and the University Memories and Reflections, University of Regensburg 12 September 2006 [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html)
- [4] Luis Jolicoeur, “El Cristianismo aymara: inculturación o culturización?”, in Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change, serie V, Latin America, vol. 3, p 295.
- [5] The above considerations on the relations between Christianity and culture are a summary of some lectures during the 29th Week of Missiology held in Leuven (Belgium) in 1959, reproduced in the volume *Mission et cultures non-chrétienne*, published by Desclée de Brouwer. The main authors whose thought was summarised are J. Ladrrière (“La culture et les cultures”, pp. 11-44), Fr J. Bruls Sam (“L’Attitude de l’Église devant les cultures non-chrétiennes”, pp. 45-57), Fr Segura PB (“L’Initiation, valeur permanente en vue de l’inculturation”, pp. 219-223) and Fr Boritius SCJ (“Le Groupe familiale et ses formes”, pp. 236-253).
- [6] Ediciones Aya-Yala, Quito (Ecuador) 1995.
- [7] *Ibid.* p. 150.
- [8] *Ibid.* p. 189.
- [9] *Ibid.* p. 99.
- [10] *Ibid.* p. 112.
- [11] *Ibid.* p. 125.
- [12] *Ibid.* p. 159.
- [13] *Ibid.* p. 189.
- [14] *Ibid.* p. 163.
- [15] *Ibid.* p. 168.
- [16] *Ibid.* p. 174.
- [17] *Ibid.* pp. 179-180.
- [18] *Ibid.* p. 183.
- [19] *Ibid.*
- [20] *Ibid.* p. 200.
- [21] *Ibid.* p. 204.
- [22] *Ibid.* p. 203.
- [23] *Ibid.* p. 176.
- [24] *Ibid.* p. 206.
- [25] Interculturalidad y Religión: Para una lectura intercultural de la crisis actual del cristianismo, Ediciones Aya-Yala, 2007.
- [26] Phrase by Juan José Tamayo, following a proposal by Johann Baptist Metz.
- [27] DIM no. 70, year XXVI, back cover.
- [28] *Ibid.* p. 32.



*The Last Word. . .*

# Amazon Animal Farm

BY FATHER CELATUS

*Animal Farm* is a short novel written by George Orwell first published in the wake of the Second World War. According to Orwell the allegorical fable reflects events leading up to the Russian Revolution and the early Stalinist era of the Soviet Union. This clever satire tells the story of a group of farm animals who rebel against their human master and seize control of the farm with the hope of creating an animal utopia in which all animals are equal, free and happy. Led by farm pigs the revolution starts well but the end state is ironically no better than before. After all, "All animals are equal, but some more than others."

In the same spirit that inspired Orwell to allegorize with animals a revolution and a dictator in his own time, the *Last Word* now offers an allegory about a revolution and a dictator in its own time, namely the Modernist Revolution and the Dictator Bergoglio. We are calling this novella *Animal Rainforest*, which spans from the Modernist conclave that treacherously brought Bergoglio to power to the Amazon Synod.

## *Animal Rainforest*

The pack of jackals met under the cover of night, as was fitting for their purpose. They had successfully forced the abdication of the two-toed sloth who had slowed their revolution and now they conspired to secure the election of a new ruler of the rainforest, the anaconda. This serpent was the perfect choice and had been their candidate once before. He was merciless toward victims and spoke with a forked tongue.

It did not take long for the jackal pack to convince the conclave that anaconda should be elected. After all, most of the electors were corrupt or cowardly. "Imagine, our first anaconda ruler," gibbered a giddish gecko. "It will show the world how species tolerant we are," added a poisonous dart frog. And so the anaconda was elected as the new ruler of the rainforest, in a conclave as crooked as a sidewinding serpent.

Upon accepting the office of Rainforest Ruler anaconda quickly shed his skin, as was his wont whenever it suited him, revealing a false veneer of holiness and humility. He slithered up a tall tree to the cheers of the rainforest faithful, who shouted repeatedly "Anaconda, Anaconda, Anaconda!" Motioning for silence with his twisting tail he cried out, "I love all animals!" and then he hissed to himself, "They taste great!"

It was soon apparent to all the rainforest malcontents and misfits who had earlier been banished to the swamps by the two-toed sloth that the revolution was once again underway, more mightily than

before. Chief among these troublemakers were various classes of primates, most especially from among the baboons, who preferred the intimate company of males and baboon boys over females of their species.

Anaconda quickly surrounded himself with these gay baboons, placing them in charge of his snake lair and various rainforest congregations that overlooked the rainforest. One aged baboon in particular, who had been sidelined by the two-toed sloth, was rehabilitated by anaconda so that he might continue his practice of grooming young males for more than lice and sleeping with them upon a solitary tree limb.

Anaconda shielded himself with a sycophantic rainforest press corps that consisted mostly of myna birds who were pleased to repeat word for word whatever the serpent said. A parrot which had never had an original thought of its own but rather stole the words of others was made director of communications. And there was an arsenal of spiders which were charged with spinning the incoherent words of anaconda.

Old as he was at the time of his election anaconda wasted no time in reforming the rainforest in accord with revolutionary principals of his predecessors. He abolished the monasteries of the capuchin monkeys and forbade them from following the ancient practices of the rainforest. He spewed insults against the tortoises that had lived long and were wise enough to know and practice the traditions of their ancestors.

Anaconda championed radical causes



and enacted many policies, all of which were intended to ruin the rainforest. Chief among these was his Open Forest policy which invited in all of the most pernicious and destructive invasive species on the planet. Before long the rainforest and its waters were invaded by every imaginable creature and plant to include stink bugs and crazy ants, cane toads and slimy snails, blood grass and chinese creepers, ship rats and roof rats, cinnamon fungus and root rot, snake wood and devil weed. Soon it was no longer safe to swim in the waters, climb in the trees or sleep on the forest bed.

Anaconda declared new rules for the rainforest, the first being that anaconda is infallible in all that he says and does. Rule number two was that everything must change and nothing may remain the same. The third rule was that two legs are better than four but no legs is best of all. His most ridiculous rule was that all animals could have multiple mates and breed freely while remaining in good standing in the rainforest.

The inhabitants of the rainforest soon became divided in their opinions of anaconda. The wild jackals and hyenas continued clapping their paws in praise for him. The media dung beetles

continued to roll out fake news for anaconda. The borrowing ground rodents were oblivious to the nefarious words and deeds of anaconda. The ostriches buried their heads in sand lest they face the reality that anaconda was evil. It was only a remnant of the rainforest, the tortoises, who saw the anaconda for what he was: a deadly serpent.

Then to quicken the rainforest revolution anaconda convened a synod and invited all the Amazon activists to participate. These malefactors included dissident dodos, modernist monkeys, gay baboons, black widow feminists, caiman cannibals and screech owl environmentalists. Meanwhile the remnant of the rainforest who held to tradition, the tortoises, kept up a steady vigil of prayer and fasting for deliverance.

"Save us, O Lord of the rainforest, from this wicked infestation of our habitat!" they implored. "Are there no scarlet birds to depose this monster? Is there no kingfisher to denounce the serpent?" they asked. But none were found. Even so, the tortoises remained steadfast in their traditions, for that is what tortoises do. ■



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