

Neither Amoris Laetitia nor Argentinian Guidelines Prescind from Gospel or Tradition

[\(New Era World News\)](#)

PART ONE OF THIS TWO PART ARTICLE on *Amoris Laetitia* concluded that liberal minded bishops have been aided in their drafting and implementation of erroneous Pastoral Guidelines by a barrage of mistrust and confusion engendered by some traditionalists. If instead of contention, they had fallen in-line behind the pope, like Cardinal Mueller and other loyal bishops and Cardinals, if they had clarified the difference between dogmatic and pastoral theology and properly interpreted *Amoris Laetitia*, they would have significantly reduced the liberal ability to operate under the penumbra of confusion. **If instead of confusion, they would have promoted unity, the liberal bishops would have little room to operate.** Since both sides are actively engaged in attacking the pope, [Cardinal Mueller's](#) rebuke to those who are “*talking too much*” can be taken to apply to both liberal and traditional prelates and laymen:

“To all those who are talking too much, I urge them to study first the doctrine on the papacy and the episcopate of the two Vatican Councils. ... The bishop, as teacher of the Word, must himself be the first to be well-formed so as not to fall into the risk of the blind leading the blind...The Church can never justify a situation which is not in accordance with the will of God.”

Consequently, Cardinal Muller concluded:

*"I urge everyone to reflect, studying the doctrine of the Church first, starting from the Word of God in Sacred Scripture, which is **very clear** on marriage. [...] **The Word of God is very clear and the Church does not accept the secularization of marriage. The task of priests and bishops is not that of creating confusion, but of bringing clarity. One cannot refer only to little passages present in Amoris Laetitia, but it has to be read as a whole, with the purpose of making the Gospel of marriage and the family more attractive for persons. It is not Amoris Laetitia that has provoked a confused interpretation, but some confused interpretations of it.**"*

This article will focus on the supposed liberal interpretations and the pope's supposed responses to them, responses that are being attacked by some traditionalists who are using them as fuel to throw on the fire they have ignited to burn papal heresy. What exactly are these acts of the pope that some traditionalists have adopted as an advanced strategy to forward their contention that the pope is a heretic? These acts include papal responses to the guidelines produced by the Bishops of Malta, the German Bishop's Conference, and especially the Bishops of Argentina and those of the Diocese of Rome, headed by the pope himself. It is claimed that in all these dioceses, traditional church teaching about divorced and remarried couples living in adulterous relationships are being ignored and that divorced-remarried adulterers living in objective sin are being admitted to the sacraments.

While there is some truth to this contention; it is *not* true that the pope is supporting these initiatives nor is it true that any of the accusations about him are even correct.

Neither the Argentine Bishops nor the Bishop of Rome permit access to the Eucharist by divorced-remarried people living in adultery as the traditionalists and their erstwhile allies have loudly and boldly proclaimed. In other words, the traditionalists are wrong, wrong when they say the pope is

supporting liberal guidelines, and wrong when they say the above mentioned guidelines teach heresy when in fact, some of them do not! Although a few do teach heresy, these are *not* supported by the pope; the ones that the pope does support such as the Argentine Bishops and those of his own diocese hold to the truth about marriage contrary to what many traditionalists and ideological news outlets have reported. They are either ignorant themselves or hide behind a veil of obfuscation (exactly what they accuse the pope of doing) dependent on other's ignorance, subversion of facts, and regular mis-reading of documents as will be shown document by document in the following.

The Argentine Bishops Guidelines

The issue with the Argentine Bishops comes down to the relationship between [Articles Five and Six](#) of their pastoral guidelines, which state:

5) *"Whenever feasible depending on the specific circumstances of a couple, especially when both partners are Christians walking the path of faith, **a proposal may be made to resolve to live in continence.** Amoris laetitia does not ignore the difficulties arising from this option (cf. footnote 329) and offers the possibility of having access to the sacrament of Reconciliation if the partners fail in this purpose (cf. footnote 364, recalling the teaching that Saint John Paul II sent to Cardinal W. Baum, dated 22 March, 1996).*

6) ***In more complex cases, and when a declaration of nullity has not been obtained, the above mentioned option may not, in fact, be feasible.** Nonetheless, a path of discernment is still possible. If it is acknowledged that, in a concrete case, there are limitations that mitigate responsibility and culpability (cf. 301-302), especially when a person believes*

he/she would incur a subsequent fault by harming the children of the new union, Amoris laetitia offers the possibility of having access to the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist (cf. footnotes 336 and 351).

Those reading these words with a hard heart looking for error rather than truth come across a line that seems to support their contention that the pope is teaching heresy and they jump all over it; they simply become intellectually disconnected at their glee of finding what they think is an error and then become obstinately unreasonable. For example, in this case, they read Article Five which speaks of a "Proposal" to live in continence" and connect it to Article Six that says, "the above mentioned option (to live in continence) may not, in fact, be feasible." **Then they forget (or ignore) the two clauses preceding that statement and those that come after it.** They then jump to an unsubstantiated conclusion that adulterers can receive Holy Communion because Article Six ends by saying that:

"Amoris laetitia offers the possibility of having access to the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist"

They are way too quick in making a connection between the two clauses that precede this concluding statement:

1. "The above mentioned option (to live in continence) may not, in fact, be feasible."

(Nonetheless)

2. *"Amoris laetitia offers the possibility of having access to the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist"*

They think, or want to believe, that this means that a couple living in sin may have access to the the Eucharist WITHOUT the requirement to live in continence, which is a total perversion and misreading of the text.

Before analyzing the relationship between these two articles (and their perverted interpretation), it is necessary to point out that **the Argentine Bishops prefaced this section with a clear teaching about the need to meet sinners and help them find a way to Christ. There is always a path that leads to salvation and union with Christ; it is the job of the pastor to lead penitents to this path and accompany them along it as good shepherds who know their sheep. Moreover, according to the Argentine Bishops and to Pope Francis, the penitents intention to change and to grow in Christ must be “sincere”, what the Argentine Bishops refer to as “righteous intention”, a firm resolve on the part of the penitent couple to “devote their whole life to the light of the Gospel”. The couple must be penitent or there is no possibility of “accompaniment” – this is clear, but somehow missed by the dissenters; they blatantly disregard the most common English text – it is even in black and white: They must have a “righteous intention”, a firm resolve to “devote their whole life to the light of the Gospel”.**

*“Pastoral accompaniment is an exercise of the “via caritas.” It is an invitation to follow “the way of Jesus, the way of mercy and reinstatement” (296). This itinerary requires the pastoral charity of the priest who **receives the PENITENT**, listens to him/her attentively and shows him/her the maternal face of the Church, while also accepting his/her **righteous intention** and good purpose to **devote his/her whole life to the light of the Gospel and to practise charity** (cf. 306).”*

In other words, it is accompaniment is a very difficult path and it is a rare couple that meets these specifications – **there cannot be a path of discernment leading to the Eucharist**

unless the above conditions are first met.

Pope Francis ingrained these same requirements into *Amoris Laetitia* from which the Argentine Bishops gathered them. In the pope's words,

"For this discernment to happen, the following conditions MUST NECESSARILY be present: humility, discretion and love for the Church and her teaching, in a sincere search for God's will and a desire to make a more perfect response to it". These attitudes are ESSENTIAL for avoiding the grave danger of misunderstandings, such as the notion that any priest can quickly grant "exceptions", or that some people can obtain sacramental privileges in exchange for favours" (300).

Thus, according to the pope, couples must first of all be

- humble
- discrete
- they must love the Church
- love her teaching
- be sincerely in search of God's will and
- desire to make a more perfect response to it.

These are NOT suggestions; they are NECESSARY REQUIREMENTS. As Pope Francis states, "These attitudes are ESSENTIAL". They are essential to avoid any misunderstanding or CONFUSION!

Moving from this general preface to Articles Five and Six, it becomes necessary to examine these two articles, the logic that connects them, and what they say and DO NOT say.

As was just stated above, papal detractors are way too quick in making a connection between the two clauses:

1. "The above mentioned option (to live in continence) may not, in fact, be feasible."

(Nonetheless)

2. "*Amoris laetitia* offers the possibility of having access to the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist"

Nonetheless, they have hastily, rashly and erroneously connected these two clauses because without this rash and faulty connection they are unable to make their specious case.

However sincere their case might be, it suffers from a lack of recall, false propositions, and an inability to correctly connect the two articles thereby resulting in unsound conclusions.

Article Five pertains to a couple that has been meeting the above bulleted requirements necessary to be invited to a path of discernment and continence leading to possible reception of the Eucharist. Because such a couple has been observed by their pastor to be making progress walking with Christ, he is encouraged to invite them further, further along a path that can lead to Holy Communion. This path is made possible by a proposal followed by a ***sincere*** vow to live in continence as Pope John Paul II spoke of in [*Familiaris Consortio*](#). This much is facile and very clear. Apparently, the detractors get confused when the case becomes more complex, as is the reality in many pastoral situations, complex situations that priests will encounter and must learn to deal with mercifully and with compassion as good shepherds rather than as judgmental myopes limited to seeing everything in black and white thereby facilitating easy *albeit* alienating judgements that turn people away from God rather than toward Him as Pope Francis has stated numerous times.

Looking at Article Six, it is clear that the Argentine Bishops have moved from a more simple scenario (Article Five) to a more complex one. They even alert the reader to the fact: Article Six begins with the words, "in more complex cases."

Then they proceed to tell the reader exactly the type of complex case they are referring to, *viz.*, a case that involves

married couples involved in an adulterous relationship who have NOT received an annulment and who also have children. These are two realities *not* mentioned in Article Five, realities that, as they indicate, make the case more complex.

Thus, we are invited to examine the complexity and how it affects the couple before making a snap judgement that would preclude them from eventually being admitted to the sacraments. The Argentine Bishops are NOT saying that these complexities excuse a couple from a vow of continence necessary to be admitted to Holy Communion as the dissenters have weakly argued.

They are saying that because the case is more complex, different dimensions need to be considered before a process of discernment can be entered into according to the above bulleted GENERAL CRITERIA necessary for ALL cases of discernment. The bulleted criteria are *general and always required*; they are NOT to be forgotten. Nonetheless, there is a more potent point to be made: **The reason the case is more complex is due to the lack of nullity and the additional presence of children.**

Lack of Nullity

Lack of nullity means that the adulterous partners are both married to someone else – they are still bound by marriage vows to their real husband and wife. Because annulments have *not* been obtained, there is no possibility of this relationship ending in marriage, which the *Final Report of the Synod of Bishops* ([*Renatio Finalis*](#)) included as a goal of discernment:

54. “When a couple in an irregular union reaches a noteworthy stability through a public bond – and is characterized by deep affection, responsibility towards the children and the ability to overcome trials – this can be seen as an

opportunity, where possible, to lead the couple to celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony. A different case occurs, however, when persons live together without a desire for a future marriage, but instead have the decided intention not to establish any institutionally recognized relationship" (they cannot be invited to walk a path of deeper discernment).

*"Hopefully, dioceses will promote various means of discernment for these people and to involve them in the community to help and encourage them to grow and eventually make a conscious, coherent choice. **Couples need to be told about the possibility of having recourse to a process of a declaration of nullity regarding their marriage.**"*

Pope Francis repeats this theme in *Amoris Laetitia*(293, 294):

*'When a couple in an irregular union attains a noteworthy stability through a public bond – and is characterized by deep affection, responsibility towards the children and the ability to overcome trials – **this can be seen as an opportunity, where possible, to lead them to celebrate the sacrament of Matrimony**'.*

*"Whatever the case, **ALL these situations require a constructive response seeking to transform them into opportunities that can lead to the full reality of marriage and family in conformity with the Gospel.**"*

The situation discussed in Article **Six** violates this basic stipulation, *viz.*, it cannot be open to sacramental marriage because the couple has not obtained an annulment. Moreover, the relationship referred to in Article Six is ridden with a much deeper scandal than the situation in Five. Because the

couple in Six are still married to others, most everyone in their parish community is aware of the fact. Thus, **the level of scandal is exceedingly high**, esp. if the situation is uncorrected. Little children looking on learn to accept this situation as normal and valid and thus are lured to future sin themselves:

“But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea” ([Matt 18:6](#)).

Moreover, by abandoning their marital partners, these men and women are also responsible for the adultery committed by their spouses and responsible for those who commit adultery with their spouses – they are spreading a spiritual and moral epidemic:

“Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery” ([Luke 16:18](#)).

Clearly Article Six is significantly more complex. The reason why the above proposal of continence *cannot* be made to the adulterous couple is because the two SHOULD NOT EVEN BE LIVING WITH EACH OTHER – THEY SHOULD SEPARATE! Why, because there is no possibility of marriage as both the pope and bishops stated above! They should NOT be encouraged to continue living with each other; they should be reconciled with their spouses.

However, if reconciliation proves impossible, the second complicating factor, **the reality of children, might make it necessary for the adulterous pair to continue living with each other** for the good of the children who need both a mother and a father esp. if the children are theirs. We are talking about people who meet the bulleted requirements not every Joe Blow out there. If the couple are living on adultery and have not

obtained an annulment, they cannot embrace the requirements for discernment; they cannot make a sincere promise to follow Christ nor can their relationship ever end in marriage; in this case they should be told to separate. However, if they have children, it might be necessary to remain together because children are a mitigating factor in their decision to live together despite all the other objective moral aberrants that make their relationship sinful.

Thus, Article Six does refer to Article Five. But the reason the proposal to live in continence made in Five might *not* be feasible in Six is because both partners are already married and do not have an annulment. However, there are mitigating circumstances for them to remain together (**not mitigating adultery but their moral responsibility for living together**) – the existence of biological children that seems to necessitate that they remain together. Thus, when the Guidelines state that some civilly remarried couples who can't adhere to the Church's teaching of "living like brothers and sisters," who have complex circumstances, and who can't obtain a declaration of nullity for their first marriage, might undertake a "journey of discernment," and arrive at the recognition that in their particular case, there are limitations that "diminish responsibility and culpability." it is referring to living together because of the children! If the Guidelines were interpreted as the dissenters insist *viz.*, as a dispensation to keep sinning and also be admitted to the sacraments two problems arise:

1. First, this type of interpretation does damage to the text as a systematic whole, as Cardinal Mueller stated about *Amoris Laetitia*, the text must be read as a complete WHOLE. If this is remembered, there is a built in check against making a too hasty and faulty interpretation that prescind from the Gospel and the bulleted guidelines necessary for a process of discernment to begin according to the Argentine Bishops. The way the dissenters want to

interpret *Amoris Laetitia*, and the Guidelines that follow, prescind from the Gospel and from the essential requirements for discernment, which both texts caution against.

2. If the Guidelines are read as an excuse for coitus, the remainder does not make sense. **Why would children be hurt if their parents stopped engaging in sexual relations** in the privacy of their own room apart from the children, who might *not* even know about them.

On the other hand, the children would certainly know about and experience the loss of a parent from their home (if asked to separate-as would *normally* be the case); **that would harm them.** This makes sense. This is what Article Six is referring to. **A priest might *not* be able to make a proposal to live in continence to an already married and adulterous couple causing public scandal because he should be telling them to separate due to the danger they are putting themselves and their partners in,** that is, contributing to the sin of their actual spouses as well as the grave scandal they are causing by living together. **Moreover, even if they are permitted to live together for the sake of the children, a proposal to live in continence might not be appropriate because they have no intention of changing;** they might not be living the life of the Gospel or practicing their faith seriously or any other number of many possibilities. The bottom line is that they should NOT be living together and thus such a proposal cannot be made unless there is a mitigating reason for them to remain together such as the existence of children. Even then, a proposal to live in continence, though possible, might not be made to them if they fail to meet the bulleted requirements above. Nonetheless, a path does remain open to them, *esp* if they decide to get serious about their faith and live in continence as brother and sister.

Thus, [Pope Francis teaches](#) in *Amoris Laetitia* (298):

“The Church acknowledges situations “where, for serious

reasons, such as the children's upbringing, a man and woman cannot satisfy the obligation to separate".

Then in the footnote to this sentence, he adds:

"In such situations, many people, knowing and accepting the possibility of living "as brothers and sisters" which the Church offers them."

[Pope Francis also applauded the Argentine Bishops](#) Pastoral Guidelines by saying that they corresponded with what he is trying to teach:

"The document is very good and thoroughly specifies the meaning of chapter VIII of Amoris laetitia. There are no further interpretations. I am confident that it will do much good."

It was following this statement that the dissenters jumped all over both the bishops and the pope saying that they taught and he supported their heresy and thus had intended heresy in *Amoris Laetita* all along. As has been shown, this is *not* only an unfair stretch, it is an untrue judgement, a judgement that if *not* corrected will come back to haunt those audacious enough to claim they know more than the pope and thus should be teaching him, audacious enough to call the Vicar of Christ a heretic. Perhaps the shoe is on the other foot as is often the case for those who make it a habit of condemning others; apparently this is the case.

How is it that two people can read the same document and come to such divergent understandings? I would like to suggest that it has to do with the spirit with which a person approaches papal writings. If the reader is mistrusting, if he does not like this pope, if he has been conditioned by the negativity of others and allows them to make claims with little or no evidence etc, than his approach to the document is likely

conditioned by negative affect.

If on the other hand, the reader loves both Christ and His Vicar, has confidence in the papacy and trusts that the pope is speaking the truth, then the document is approached with a spirit of confidence and love. Men and women approaching papal writings (or any writings) with a positive spirit are *not* trying to catch the pope in error, not looking everywhere for evidence of heresy thereby missing the beauty of the forest because they are looking for fault on every tree. The later are no better than those Jesus condemned as blind guides; they claim to see and want to correct everyone else's blindness. Their pride reached such heights that they even thought Jesus was a heretic Himself. They dare to call others prideful and blind but fail to see that it takes a tremendous amount of pride to call the Vicar of Christ a heretic and to dismiss the Prefect of the CDF as a school boy whom they believe in their audacity should be learning from them. People such as these, people who accuse others of pride and spiritual blindness, those who believe the Vicar of Christ is an arrogant liberal blind heretic approach papal writings infected with a good dose of their own pride. The prefect of the CDF assures the people of God that *Amoris Laetitia* is faithful to long standing Catholic tradition and to the Sacred Scriptures, but the detractors say that he does not know what he is talking about; they look at the same document he is looking at and see only error when he sees systematic truth; they fail to see plain black and white English (but insist on black and white pastoral theology) how can this be?

The Gospel of Luke provides insight into such a phenomenon. In this Gospel, both Zacharias and the Virgin Mary are visited by the Archangel Gabriel, both are presented with miracles involving the birth of a son (Son). Both ask the same question, (How can this be?). One, however, is punished for asking this question while the other is blessed. How can this be? **It is all about their attitude of Heart.** The Virgin Mary

trusted God and thus believed what Gabriel was conveying to her. Her question was simply one of how exactly this miracle was going to take place since she was a vowed perpetual virgin. Her question is not one of doubt or disbelief or incredulity. Her question was an innocent reflection on how God was going to accomplish this miracle as indicated by the fact that once the Angel told her, she assented: "Be it done unto me..." Zachariah, on the other hand, did not trust and had trouble believing that a son could be born to him and Elizabeth in their old age; he had so much trouble believing that he dared to ridicule an Archangel (perhaps God Himself) for which he was punished for his disbelief:

"And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be able to speak until the day wherein these things shall come to pass, because thou hast not believed my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time" ([Luke 1:20](#)).

This case before is is similar. Some, like true devotees of the Virgin Mary, wisely, yet humbly, measure all things in the love of Christ with a trusting and joyful heart: "My spirit rejoices in God my saviour" ([Luke 1:47](#)). They have little or no trouble believing. Papal detractors, on the other hand, are riddled with all kinds of trouble, constantly looking for bad in others, constantly complaining about how bad the Curia and pope are, how sinners should be punished *etc.* Like Zacharias, they have no problem belittling the authority of God's highest ministers. They are weighed down by negativity and habituated to looking for all that is bad rather than searching out the good in all things. Preoccupied with such thoughts, they become laden with misery and doubts that enable them to ridicule others, even the Vicar of Christ, Christ whom the Pharisees had no scruple correcting for his supposed error. As Christ, so too His Vicar; as the pharisees, so those who follow in their negativity, legalism and supposed ritual purity.

They seem to have forgotten the good news and instead think it their duty to inform the rest of the Body of Christ, just how bad things are. The mission of the Church is *not* to renounce, but to pronounce, to pronounce the good news of the Gospel.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the contrite of heart, To preach deliverance to the captives, and sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of reward” ([Luke 4:18-19](#)).

The mission of the bishops is NOT to renounce the papacy but to teach the NATIONS, to fill them with the Holy Spirit, the spirit of Love and Truth

“Going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” ([Matt 28:19](#)).

Rather than do this, papal detractors spend their time looking for papal error, when in truth, they are the ones spreading error. As demonstrated above, they are so busy distorting document by leaving clauses/phrases out, skipping contrary evidence, forgetting general statements, adding occasional vindictive to spice it up in order to vindicate their false supposition etc. They are so busy with these things, that they have difficulty seeing plain truth, the same type of difficulty the pharisees had when TRUTH looked them right in the face. Instead of plain truth, they saw (see) error and then try and pawn it off on the rest of the Church, try to convince anyone silly enough to accept their gross distortions and weakly supported diatribe, diatribe they concoct in order to justify ludicrous assertions such as the the pope is a heretic. When they broadcast such irreverent and blasphemous ideas, simply ask them for corroborating evidence, real formal evidence, primary documents etc. If they are able to produce

any, be sure to review them carefully and compare them to the originals. If the reader habitually does such things, he/she will soon find out how distortion takes place and where the confusion is actually coming from. Lord have mercy!

NOTE:

1. The detractors like to point out that the Apostle Paul corrected Peter publicly so they should do the same. What they fail to tell you is that the rebuke given by Paul was a different species altogether from the rebuke they are advocating. Paul's correction of Peter was a pastoral correction, it was *not* dogmatic, Paul corrected Peter for sitting with the Jews. Is it a sin to sit with Jews? On the other hand, the correction that the dissenters are attempting is DOGMATIC; heresy is a sin against the faith. Paul's correction is NOT applicable; it is a different species altogether. Paul was not accusing Peter of heresy, nor was Catherine's correction of Gregory XI.
2. The author had intended to cover the Diocese of Rome Guidelines as well as those of the Bishops of Malta, however internal policies governing article length are about to be exceeded; therefore, an additional article will have to be included following Easter Monday.

Bogus Attack on Pope Moves

from *Amoris Laetitia* to Subsequent Pastoral Guidelines

[\(New Era World News\)](#)

AFTER PRESENTING AN ARTICLE on the moral soundness of the the document [*Amoris Laetitia*](#), the author was applauded for doing a good job using the document itself to demonstrate its moral rectitude and loyalty to both scripture and tradition. However, it was argued that the article, "[*Cardinal Burke Still At It, Causing Confusion on an Already Settled and Clear Issue*](#)", failed to take into account the subsequent "acts" of various Bishop's Conferences, Conferences that drafted various Pastoral Guidelines, some of them very liberal, and the pope's responses to them. These diverse guidelines, and papal responses to them, supposedly reveal the pope's true intent as a liberal reformer committed to a modernist liberal agenda, which is the cause behind his subtly introducing heresy into *Amoris Laetitia* by way of purposeful confusion. The pope has been assailed for these Episcopal Guidelines and supposed responses to them and the author lambasted for failure to cover them, as if they were approps for an article limited to the moral rectitude of the document *Amoris Laetitia* itself – the *document* and *subsequent acts* intended to implement its propositions are different topics. Thus, in this article, the author will take up the issue of subsequent "acts" that followed in the wake of the document to demonstrate the claim that *Amoris Laetitia* introduces heresy by way of confusion, is as bogus as the claim that the pope's subsequent responses are proof of his intent to introduce heresy by way of confusion.

Moreover, it will be demonstrated that the most confused people are the ones making the claims about the pope causing confusion; their confusion not only pertains to the post-

synodal exhortation, it carries right on up to and includes the various Episcopal Guidelines being drafted to implement *Amoris Laetitia* in the various dioceses throughout the world. Some of the confusion is due to a seeming inability to integrate and adequately recall the set of systematic data presented in *Amoris Laetitia* as explained in the previous article. This intellectual, perhaps moral limit is related to a further inability to comprehend meaning or due to a willful desire to remain ignorant so that the detractors can continue their tirade against the Vicar of Christ. Under the guise of reverence and loyalty to the truth, some of these vehement detractors appear to be among the most disloyal and erroneous "Sons of the Church". [Cardinal Ratzinger](#), while serving as Prefect of the [Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith](#) (CDF), captured the latter idea:

"It is necessary to be strong in faith and to resist error even when it masquerades as piety."

The culprit is brought into stark relief when Sacred Scriptures shed their light on the theme of error masquerading in piety: false apostles masquerading as "apostles of Christ."

*"And what I do I will continue to do, **in order to end this pretext** of those who seek a pretext for being regarded as we (the apostles) are in the mission of which they boast. For **such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, who masquerade as apostles of Christ**. And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of light. So it is not strange that his **ministers** also masquerade as ministers of righteousness" ([2 Corinthians 11: 12-15](#)).*

Before continuing, it must be pointed out, that the author is NOT referring to traditionalists who have sought union and are in union with the See of Peter, like the good priests of [The Priestly Order of St. Peter \(FSSP\)](#); he is referring to those who have separated themselves, those who consider the Vicar of

Christ to be some type of false prophet, who consider him to be an ersatz pope, those who teach that the Chair of Peter is vacant and who reject ecumenical council Vatican II. Those who like [Bishop Williamson](#) (head of the SSPX Resistance excommunicated for ordaining a bishop in 2015), argue that the Vatican headed by Pope Francis is a “cuckoo’s nest”:

*“Wherever the remainder of the true nightingales (traditionalists) are visibly gathered, in whatever makeshift nest, they are in the Church, **they are the true visible Church**, and their beautiful song testifies to anyone who has ears to hear that **the cuckoos are nothing but cuckoos who have stolen the Catholic nest which they presently occupy,**”*

The [SSPX Resistance](#) believe that the SSPX (from which they broke) has compromised too much with Rome (esp. about Vatican Council II) in order to be brought back into union, (something that has NOT been achieved), SSPX Resistance holds that Rome is the “enemy” of the Catholic “Faith”:

*“Unless the Society’s (SSPX) leadership is shaken out of its **dream of peace with Conciliar Rome** as revealed by them, then the last worldwide bastion of Catholic Tradition risks being on its way to surrendering to **the enemies of the Faith**. Maybe bastions are out of date.*

Sedevacantists (supposed Catholics who [generally] believe and teach that there has not been a valid pope since Pius XII) object to supposed errors that have infected the Church since Vatican Council II, but rather than work for internal reform through a process of cooperation, they exacerbate the problem by rejecting every pope since John XXIII and the Ecumenical Council that he called into being. The movement, in its most illustrious form began with Archbishop Lefebvre who started the Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX) in 1983. **Originally schismatic and favoring sedevacantism, SSPX has since modified its views. Like a Protestant sect, SSPX has spawned other**

dissident groups that have either held it to be too lenient or too lax.

For example, The [Society of Saint Pius V \(SSPV\)](#) was formed when Archbishop Lefebvre expelled Frs. Clarence Kelly, [Anthony Cekada](#), Daniel Dolan and Eugene Berry from the SSPX due in large part because Lefebvre instructed them to accept new members previously ordained to the priesthood according to the revised rites of Pope Paul VI. These priests were also opposed to Lefebvre's insistence that they use the 1962 edition of the Roman Missal, which was issued by Pope John XXIII. [Fr. Dolan later admitted](#) that while still a member of the SSPX, he believed that the See of Peter was vacant:

*" As a seminarian at Ecône (SSPX Seminary in Switzerland) back in the autumn of 1973, he had already come to the conclusion that the only logical explanation for evil of the New Mass and the errors of Vatican II was that **Paul VI**, due to personal heresy, had lost the pontificate. Ever since, he has steadfastly held that position regarding Paul VI and his successors, and never once acknowledged them as popes in the Canon of his Mass. This explanation for the situation after Vatican II later came to be known popularly as "sedevacantism" (from the Latin term for the interregnum between popes) – "the seat is vacant"*

Other groups that broke off from the SSPX include [SSPX Resistance](#), quoted above, various sedevacantist groups such as the highly suspect [Holy Family Monastery](#) in Fillmore, New York run by an [ersatz monk](#) who, like many who accuse others of heresy, [teaches heresy himself](#); at least that is what some other sedevacantists say about him. Still others have come back into union with Rome such as the FSSP, also mentioned above. Groups like the FSSP and others such as the Fraternity of [Saint Vincent Ferrer](#) in principle accept the Second Vatican Council, as well the Novus Ordo Mass, which they regard as a *legitimate* but somewhat imprudent compromise with the the

modern world. Thus, with the approval of the Holy See, they continue to celebrate the Tridentine Mass while being in union with Rome.

In summary, traditionalists are a broad group of diverse Catholics, some of whom have separated themselves from communion with Rome and others who have sought after and obtained communion after splitting from the SSPX or affiliated societies. It is the former group that this article is critical of, critical because they have dared to be critical first, critical of the papacy, of the liturgy, and of the church's evangelization efforts in the modern world; most egregious is the issue they have with the pope, thinking it little offense to call him a heretic, schismatic, moron, false-prophet, you name it; they like to call Pope Francis, "Bergoglio". If they think they have a right to demean, twist and distort the truth, to be critical of the pope, than they should accept criticism themselves and learn to grow accustomed to it and to a whole lot more which is coming their way for obstinate refusal to accept the Vicar of Christ; for sins against the papacy; sins against unity; since against truth, which they claim to uphold; for the sin of scandal and, like the Pharisees, for the sin of leading others into schism and error.

"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves" ([Matt 23:15](#)).

What are the acts subsequent to *Amoris Laetitia* that these so-called traditionalists are referring to as proofs that Pope Francis intends heresy? They are Bishop's Guidelines written by various bishops and Bishop's Conferences throughout the world for the purpose of localizing and implementing the teaching contained in *Amoris Laetitia* at the diocesan level. First they reject *Amoris Laetitia* by falsely claiming that it

contains error or at least confusion that leads to error.

When they lose this argument, they resort to subsequent acts uncharitably and falsely claiming that the pope has supported mortal sin by admitting public adulterers to Holy Communion because of his approval of the Maltese Bishop's Guidelines, the acceptance of the Guidelines for his own diocese, the Diocese of Rome, which they claim admit divorced-remarried adulterers to Holy Communion and other such subsequent Guidelines, Guidelines that they claim are proof of the pope's intent to teach heresy by means of so-called "confusion", which they claim is stealthily woven into the fabric of *Amoris Laetitia*.

We have reviewed, studied, examined, and analyzed the document many times and not once have we spotted error or been confused, nor has Cardinal Mueller, the current Prefect for the CDF. After demonstrating its adherence to truth in the above linked article that shows in detail that *Amoris Laetitia* is firmly rooted in both Scripture and long-standing Tradition, after pointing this out, instead of gracefully admitting their error, radical proponents of traditionalism rather than admitting their error, deflect it. They continue their merciless onslaught by claiming that it is clear that "Bergoglio" stealthily planned to teach heresy as verified by his subsequent approval of mortal sin in various Bishop's Guidelines. **What was implicit in the document they claim, is explicit in the subsequent Guidelines.**

It is true, some of these Guidelines do contain moral error, error that is due to liberal interpretations that permit adulterous divorced-remarried couples to receive Holy Communion under certain conditions as in the Diocese of Malta. The errors contained in these Guidelines have been blamed on the pope rather than on the bishops themselves. If some admit that the bishops are to blame, they then castigate the pope for purposefully causing "confusion" that has enabled such errors to be promulgated by some bishops. They

fail, however, to realize that not only are several of their claims erroneous, (for example, that the Diocese of Rome Guidelines permit adulterers to receive Holy Communion) but that it is they, the accusers, who are the primary purveyors of the “confusion”, confusion that has enabled liberal-minded bishops to pursue their erroneous theology contrary to both scripture and tradition and the true intent of *Amoris Laetitia* wherein it is stated several times that its interpretation can neither “prescind from the Gospel” nor the constant tradition of the Catholic faith, including John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio*.

The more **liberal minded bishops have been aided in their drafting and implementation of erroneous Guidelines by the barrage of mistrust and confusion engendered by the traditionalists**. That is, if they had fallen in-line behind the pope, like Cardinal Mueller and other loyal bishops and Cardinals, if they had clarified the difference between dogmatic and pastoral theology and properly interpreted the document, **they would have significantly reduced the ability to operate under the penumbra of confusion**. That is, if there was unity by promoting clarity, there would be little disunity facilitated by claims of confusion spearheaded by a few radical traditionalists. **If instead of confusion, they would have promoted unity, the liberal bishops would have little room to operate**. As it is, [the traditionalist approach has provided their supposed liberal enemies, on the opposite end of the theological spectrum, a wide swathe for operation contrary to the wishes of the magisterium as expressed by Cardinal Mueller, Prefect of the CDF:](#)

“Adultery is always a mortal sin and the bishops who create confusion about this must study the doctrine of the Church...Amoris Laetitia must “clearly be interpreted in the light of the whole doctrine of the Church. [...] It is not right that so many bishops are interpreting ‘Amoris Laetitia’ according to their way of understanding the Pope’s teaching.

This does not keep to the line of Catholic doctrine."

"The magisterium of the Pope is interpreted only by him or through the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. The Pope interprets the bishops, it is not the bishops who interpret the Pope, this would constitute an inversion of the structure of the Catholic Church."

"To all those who are talking too much, I urge them to study first the doctrine on the papacy and the episcopate of the two Vatican Councils. ... The bishop, as teacher of the Word, must himself be the first to be well-formed so as not to fall into the risk of the blind leading the blind...The Church can never justify a situation which is not in accordance with the will of God."

Again, what are these acts of the pope that some traditionalists have adopted as a more advanced strategy to forward their contention that the pope is a heretic? These acts include the guidelines produced by the Bishops of Malta, the German Bishop's Conference, and especially the Bishops of Argentina and those of the Diocese of Rome, headed by the pope himself. It is claimed that in all these dioceses, church teaching about divorced and remarried couples living in adulterous relationships are being violated because in these dioceses divorced-remarried adulterers living in objective sin are being admitted to the sacraments.

While there is some truth to this statement; it is not true that the pope is supporting these initiatives nor is it true that any of the accusations are even correct. Neither the Argentine Bishops nor the Bishop of Rome permit access to the Eucharist by divorced-remarried people living in adultery as the traditionalists and their erstwhile allies have loudly and

boldly proclaimed. In other words, the traditionalists are wrong in every case, wrong when they say the pope is supporting liberal guidelines, and wrong when they say some guidelines teach heresy when in fact, they do not! Although some do teach herey, these are *not* supported by the pope; the ones that the pope does support such as the Argentine bishops and those of his own diocese hold to the truth about marriage contrary to what many traditionalists and other ideological outlets have reported. They are either ignorant themselves or hide behind a veil of obfuscation (exactly what they accuse the pope of doing) dependent on other's ignorance, subversion of facts, and regular mis-reading of documents as will be shown document by document in the following article.

Amoris Laetitia Endorsed by Cardinal Mueller: “No Problem with its Doctrine”

THE ISSUE OF THE APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION, *Amoris Laetitia* is still in the air. However, this morning it took a sharp turn towards closure; it did so for two reasons. One, Pope Francis punctuated his push for pastoral theology both clarifying his intent and strengthening its dynamism by tying it to the issue of “*authority*”, authentic Christ-like authority. The linking of pastoral theology to authority by the pope was complimented by Cardinal Mueller, the Prefect for the Sacred Congregation of Faith, who also spoke out clearly, two days earlier, on the doctrinal message and pastoral dimensions of the document, *Amoris Laetitia*.

PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND CHRIST-LIKE AUTHORITY

This morning January 10, 2017 [Pope Francis gave a homily on authority during morning Mass at Casa Santa Martain](#) in which he stated

“Authority, if true, will enter hearts, like Jesus’ did. But if it’s just formal, it won’t ...”

To clarify his meaning the pope juxtaposed top down authority imposed by means of bureaucratic position (like that exercised by the Pharisees) to “real” authority acquired by affinity of hearts (like that exercised by Jesus, the Good Shepherd). To further clarify his meaning, Francis examined three characteristics of “real authority”.

He begins by noting that the scriptures reveal people were amazed at the teaching of Jesus; they were “amazed” because He taught “as one with authority and not as their scribes” ([Matt 7:29](#)). Francis explains that the teaching of the legalistic Pharisees did *not* enter the hearts of those who heard it. True authority penetrates into the heart. Like the Pharisees, Jesus did *not* neglect any point of the law, yet He taught it in such a way that His words entered into people’s hearts.

A priest who teaches with true authority is able to penetrate hearts because he is a servant of rather than a lord over his flock. **It is servant-leadership that confers genuine authority.**

Pharisees teach, but they do *not* touch hearts because they are too “clerical”, too concerned about their positions of authority. This type of priest, Francis emphasized, is infected with a

“...psychology of princes: ‘We are the masters, the princes, and we teach you. Not service: we command, you obey.’ And Jesus never passed Himself off like a prince: He was always

the servant of all, and this is what gave Him authority.'"

Moreover, a true servant leader is in close relationship with those whom he serves.

"Jesus did not have an allergy to the people: touching the lepers, the sick, didn't make Him shudder."

The Pharisees, however, assumed a position of superiority. A Pharisees eshews "the poor people, the ignorant," they liked to parade about the piazzas, in soutains and genteel garb.

*"They were detached from the people, they were not close [to them]; **Jesus was very close to the people, and this gave authority.** Those detached people, these doctors, had a clericalist psychology: they taught with a clericalist authority – that's clericalism."*

Quoting Blessed Paul VI (*Evangelii nuntiandi* 48), Pope Francis made clear: **"One sees the heart of a pastor who is close [to the people]."**

In addition to service and closeness to his people, a man with authority is **"coherent"**.

Coherence distinguishes the authority of the scribes from that of Jesus. That is, Jesus' life corresponds to His words. A coherent shepherd lives what he preaches as Jesus "lived what He preached." A clericalist is more intent on looking good and dazzling people with his brilliance while assuming a posture of superiority. Consequently, they are not coherent; their personality is divided on a central point about which Jesus warned His disciples:

"But, do what they tell you, but not what they do': they said one thing and did another. Incoherence. They were incoherent. And the attitude Jesus uses of them so often is hypocritical.

*And it is understood that **one who considers himself a prince, who has a clericalist attitude, who is a hypocrite, doesn't have (true) authority!** He speaks the truth, but without authority. Jesus, on the other hand, who is humble, who is at the service of others, who is close, who does not despise the people, and who is coherent, has authority. And this is the authority that the people of God senses."*

A priest with authority is a servant that is close to his people, a servant who lives a coherent life. Like Jesus, he is a good shepherd, a good pastor. **A pastor knows the truths of the faith but is able to concertize them in love as a shepherd having authority over his flock because he knows them, serves them and coherently loves them.** It is the pastoral dimension of his formation that confers the fullness of authority necessary for his office, necessary for success as a pastor.

THE PASTORAL DIMENSION OF AMORIS LAETITIA

To grasp *Amoris Laetitia*, it must be interpreted in this light, in the light of pastoral theology deeply rooted in the wisdom and truths of the faith, in the constant teaching of the Church, as Francis points out twice in [paragraph 300](#) of *Amoris Laetitia*"

"Priests have the duty to "accompany [the divorced and remarried] in helping them to understand their situation according to the teaching of the Church"

"This discernment can never prescind from the Gospel demands of truth and charity, as proposed by the Church."

Clearly, the issue at hand is a pastoral one, viz., how to uphold the teachings of the Church in the modern world, a world void of a sense of the sacred, a world in which divorce

and remarriage are common place, a world in which the sons and daughters of the Church have been inculturated without their awareness of its effects. Since the whole process is about salvation and pastoral accompaniment during an Hour of Mercy, pastors are being nudged into being more pastorally minded. This is clear to the Archbishop of Dublin, to the Prefect for the Sacred Congregation of the Faith, and to many other cardinals and bishops who stand with the pope in opposition to Cardinal Burke and the misinformed lay men who have lined up to bat for him against the pope.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not Christ our Lord, but their own belly; and by pleasing speeches and good words, seduce the hearts of the innocent. For your obedience is published in every place. I rejoice therefore in you” ([Romans 16:17-19](#)).

Men causing dissension are all misreading the document, which is clear enough to many others, and to the *New Era* staff. Thus, according to Cardinal Mueller:

“It is a misreading” of the Pope’s exhortation to say it has been the cause of polemics.”

“The Church has no power to change the Divine Law”...not even a pope or council can do that.”

Some, like those at *Church Militant* and *The World Over*, like to point out that there is confusion and therefore implicitly (in Arroyo’s case – explicitly) take the side of Cardinal Burke. It must be admitted: Yes, there is confusion, but that does not mean that Cardinal Burke is correct in his assessment of *Amoris Laetitia* and that the pope must answer in some way

to him.

There is confusion because men like Mr. Arroyo, and ultra-traditionalist or liberal bishops are manufacturing confusion. In a response to *New Era's* third article on the issue ([Attack on Pope Francis: Supposed Loyal Catholics Distort Information Defame Pope](#)), Dr. Marzak pointed out that there is always confusion where there is disobedience and pride, when people pursue their own path rather than submit to legitimate magisterial authority in humble obedience. He pointed out that it is liberal bishops and schismatic *seda vacantists* who are causing the confusion; they are often supplemented by well meaning but over-zealous laymen who misunderstand pastoral theology and the relationship between the practical and speculative intellect as examined in [Article One](#). In response to a comment pertaining to [Article Three](#) in the series on *Amoris Laetitia*, Dr. Marzak stated.

“Watch what will happen this year when Cardinal Mueller begins to deal with them (those liberal and ultra-conservative bishops causing confusion). Now that the Church is fully aware of their aberrant policies the CDF (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) will act – let’s watch and see.

“It is just not liberals causing confusion, how do you account for pious sedivacantists who ordain their own bishops contrary to what the Church teaches; they are causing confusion too (and most of it).”

“Nonetheless, it is not confusion that is the issue, it is pride leading to willful disobedience which the self-righteous perpetrators then try to mask in confusion to cover their errancy by instead attacking the papacy as if they were some type of holy body constituted to lead the church instead

of the See of Peter.”

In this regard, Cardinal Mueller has spoken out, and spoken out clearly. In a January 8, interview with tgcom24, Cardinal Mueller objected to Cardinal Burke and those “Princes of the Church” who publicly challenged the pope by questioning the doctrinal accuracy of *Amoris Laetitia*. According to Cardinal Mueller, the Church’s highest ranking doctrinal official, the prefect for the Sacred Congregation of the Faith, according to Cardinal Mueller: ***Amoris Laetitia* is “very clear”**. This has been *New Era*’s position from the beginning of the controversy, so much so that the staff here has been in a continual quandary over Cardinal Burke and Raymond Arroyo’s failure to “get it” speculating that the problem might be either a clerical error having to do with authority or a failure to appreciate the fine differences between the intellectual work of pastoral theology *vis a vis* dogmatic theology. Now that Cardinal Mueller has vociferously supported the clarity of the document, the staff here is relieved.

Highlighting the pastoral dimension of *Amoris Laetitia*, Cardinal Mueller stressed that it is Pope Francis’ desire that priests take time

*“...to discern the situation of ... persons living in an irregular union – that is, not in accordance with the doctrine of the church on marriage – and asks for help for these people to **find a path for a new integration into the church** according to the condition of the sacraments (and) the Christian message on matrimony.”*

Cardinal Mueller clearly understands the difference between pastoral and dogmatic theology and how they intersect; consequently he sees clarity in the document:

*“In the papal document, he said, “I do not see any opposition: On one side we have the **clear doctrine on***

matrimony (dogmatic), and on the other the obligation of the church to care for these people in difficulty (pastoral)."

Cardinal Mueller evidently understands [Amoris Laetitia is a "call for the pastoral accompaniment of people who are divorced and civilly remarried or who are living together without marriage."](#)

Concerning the doctrinal clarity of the document, Mueller told the Italian television network:

*"A possible fraternal correction of the pope seems very remote at this time because **it does not concern a danger for the faith.**"*

["Amoris Laetitia is very clear in its doctrine and we can interpret \(in it\) Jesus' entire doctrine on marriage, the entire doctrine of the Church in 2000 years of history."](#)

We hope this is clear enough. **According to the highest ranking doctrinal official in the Catholic Church; AMORIS LAETITIA DOES NOT CONCERN A DANGER FOR THE FAITH."**

Further, in response to a query which asked are the divorced-and-remarried in some cases permitted to receive the Eucharist "without the need to change their way of life" Cardinal Mueller responded:

"If Pope Francis' exhortation "had wanted to eliminate such a deeply rooted and significant discipline, it would have said so clearly and presented supporting reasons,"

Cardinal Mueller is not confused, nor are score of other bishops, nor is the staff at *New Era*. As Dr. Marzak has previously pointed out, the confusion is being caused, on the one hand, by disobedient liberal bishops such as the one in

San Diego and, on the other hand, by far right leaning bishops and churchman nearing schism or already in schism. Confusion emanating from diverse poles of the theological spectra helps generate more confusion among the larger body of sheep and lambs. The confusion is *not* coming from either Pope Francis or *Amoris Laetitia*; the confusion is rooted in clericalism, intellectual arrogance, liberal moral weakness (concupiscence and irascibility) that blinds and, above all else, it is rooted in disobedience and pride.

No where does the document *Amoris Laetitia* admit people living in mortal sin to receive the sacraments. What the Pastoral Exhortation does encourage, [as Cardinal Mueller correctly points out is:](#)

“A process of (pastoral) discernment, (that), might eventually lead to a determination that access to the sacraments is possible.”

If its detractors better understood and appreciated the pastoral dimensions of theology and the extreme difficulties, sacrifice and self-giving pastoral theology demands; if they understood what Francis means by “authentic authority”, they might “get it”. Some seem more intent on running the Church like a police state, a state in which they can comfortably sit back and play the judge as if God were some type of task master watching closely every day to espy and root out all errors rather than a God of LOVE who humbles Himself, who abases Himself to become little like his flock in order to tenderly serve, love and nurture them by knowing their names and sharing their lives, their pains, joys, sorrows and tribulations and by confirming His life to the doctrine of His Cross (coherence).

It is too easy to play the judge; it costs nothing but an easy arm-chair accompanied by good cuisine and an ever watchful eye always ready to catch a sinner and even a pope in error. In

this they feel self-satisfied and accomplished. This might be dogmatic theology, but without love and authentic authority it fails even at that and it is certainly not pastoral theology, the theology of the Good Shepherd” who lays down his life for his sheep. This is the type of shepherd Francis is endeavoring to be, the type of shepherds he is calling the priests of the Catholic Church to become.

Pope Francis – Confusing Traditionalists – Homosexuals-Homosexuality & God’s Mercy

[New Era World News and Global Intelligence:](#)

EXACTLY ONE YEAR HAS PASSED since Cardinal Burke and three other “Red Hats” issued their well known clerical “dubia”, which might be interpreted as a public prosecutorial attempt to “cross-examine” the Vicar of Christ ([Amoris Laetitia](#)) whose pastoral approach to divorce and remarriage is not quite to their liking and apparently beyond their comprehension. Although two of the original dubia architects have gone to their death during this one-year period and although the former [Prefect for the Congregation of the Faith \(CDF\)](#) clearly [indicated that there was nothing in the pope’s exhortation on](#)

[divorce and remarriage that contradicted the Church's perennial teachings about marital union](#), despite these things, the remaining two cardinals have *not* relented, have *not* relinquished their demand to publicly cross examine the Vicar of Christ as if somehow they, they and not the Successor of Peter, are the guarantors of the Supreme Magisterium.

Rather than continue to deflect the assault on the papacy regarding the issue of *Amoris Laetitia*, [as we have done elsewhere](#), it is hoped that there is didactic value in demonstrating the ludicrous and base assertions contained in three related attacks on the reigning pontiff (homosexuality, the death penalty, and marriage) thereby lending credence to the supposition that it is *not* the Vicar of Christ but the prelates who are causing the confusion. The fact that the pope's rudimentary remarks on these three topics, in the context of mercy, *supposedly* caused confusion among ranking churchmen raises various questions: Are their aging minds becoming too feeble to remember basic catechesis or to dull to make moral distinctions necessary for pastoral theology or are they so rooted in negativity that they are unable to see the good being proposed by the pope ([Luke 6: 40-42](#))? Since these men are towering "Princes of the Holy Roman Catholic Church", questions about their intellectual ability should be readily dismissed; it is safer to presume that they are endowed with the requisite intellectual virtues. It is *not* they but their readers and facilitators who are either easily confused or willing purveyors of their confusing confusion, purveyors who should be clarifying the confusion rather than enhancing it.

If questions regarding intellectual ability are dismissed, as it seems they should be, other more *dubious* questions arise pertaining to motive, intriguing questions, which require investigation beyond the scope of this article. **The purpose of this article** (and two companion articles) **is to explore the absurdity of what now seems to be daily base assertions,**

assertions that are so clearly fallacious that they tend to force the inquiring mind to pray for rational insight that explains their ongoing dogged persistence, a persistence that has the net effect of defaming this pope. When these three issues are examined (homosexuality, the death penalty, and marriage), when it is demonstrated that any person trained in rudimentary catechesis should be able to grasp what the pope is saying, it should be clear, or at least plausible, that it is *not* Pope Francis who is causing confusion; rather, the confusion is being engendered by a set of dubious detractors.

HOMOSEXUALITY

Several adherents of the extreme “Religious Right” stepped up their attacks against Pope Francis following his July 29, 2013 statement in response to a question posed by journalist Ilze Scamparini during a press conference granted to journalists on a flight back from Rio de Janeiro following World Youth Day. A veritable fire storm broke out over the pope’s response:

“If a person is gay and seeks the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge that person?”

Ilze Scamparini

Scamparini’s specific question was:

“I would like permission to ask a delicate question: another image that has been going around the world is that of Monsignor Ricca and the news about his private life. I would like to know, Your Holiness, what you intend to do about this? How are you confronting this issue and how does Your Holiness intend to confront the whole question of the gay lobby?”

Scamparini’s inquiry consists of two parts; to the first question Pope Francis replied:

"I did what canon law calls for, that is a preliminary investigation. And from this investigation, there was nothing of what had been alleged. We did not find anything of that. This is the response. But I wish to add something else:...If a person, whether it be a lay person, a priest or a religious sister, commits a sin and then converts, the Lord forgives, and when the Lord forgives, the Lord forgets and this is very important for our lives. When we confess our sins and we truly say, "I have sinned in this", the Lord forgets, and so we have no right not to forget, because otherwise we would run the risk of the Lord not forgetting our sins. That is a danger. This is important: a theology of sin. Many times I think of Saint Peter. He committed one of the worst sins, that is he denied Christ, and even with this sin they made him Pope. We have to think a great deal about that. But, returning to your question more concretely. In this case, I conducted the preliminary investigation and we didn't find anything."

This first query involving interim Vatican Banker, Msgr. Ricca is *not* relevant here; we are (as is Pope Francis) interested in the second query, dealing with homosexual "tendencies" and a purported "gay lobby" (or any perverse lobby) operating at the Vatican. Before proceeding to the second part, the part dealing with the "gay lobby" and homosexual tendencies, it is important to note that **the pope's remark, "who am I to judge" was NOT made in reference to the first question**, although his detractors like to make it appear as if it did.

As [John Thavis astutely noted](#):

"Amid the media attention that inevitably followed, it's important to note that although the pope was responding to a question about an alleged "gay lobby" in the Vatican, his comment was not specifically about gay priests."

“Some media have portrayed the pope as saying he would not judge priests for their sexual orientation, which would seem to call into question the Vatican’s 2005 document that ruled out ordination for men with “deep-seated homosexual tendencies.” Based on the pope’s actual words, I think that’s a stretch.”

In fact, Pope Francis did make a judgement to conduct an investigation, as he should of. **The words “who am I to judge were made in reference to the second question pertaining to a gay lobby which takes precedence over the question about gay priests. Francis shifted emphasis from gay priests, such as Ricca, to focus on the question pertaining to a gay lobby, but he never separated the gay lobby from his response about penitent gays, which he expands in response to the second question.** This is clear because at the end of his first answer, following the words “ I conducted the *preliminary investigation* and we didn’t find anything”, he stated

“This is the first question. Then, you spoke about the gay lobby.”

In answer to this latter question, Francis responded:

*“So much is written about the gay lobby. I still haven’t found anyone with an identity card in the Vatican with “gay” on it. They say there are some there. I believe that when you are dealing with such a person, you must **distinguish between the fact of a person being gay and the fact of someone forming a lobby**, because not all lobbies are good. **This one is not good** (a gay lobby). **If** (on the other hand) **someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him?**”*

“The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains this in a

beautiful way, saying: “no one should marginalize these people for this, they must be integrated into society”. The problem is not having this tendency, no, we must be brothers and sisters to one another, and there is this one and there is that one. The problem is in making a lobby of this tendency: a lobby of misers, a lobby of politicians, a lobby of masons, so many lobbies. For me, this is the greater problem.”

On Return Flight from World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro Pope Francis asked: ‘If a person is gay... who am I to judge?’

The problem is not the tendency but making a lobby of the tendency. In other words, being penitent and remaining “in the closet”, that is keeping one’s homosexuality tendency to one’s self **while working on it** is *not* a problem that deters the pope or the Church from conducting its works. **What is a problem**, a BIG problem, however is *not* being penitent, but rather **being defiant, publicly defiant and forming a militant yet mondaine lobby of dilettante rebellious sophisticates to challenge the Church from the inside**. The pope clearly says that **this is a problem**. This problem is obviously on his mind!

Before continuing, Francis states clearly that such a gay lobby is **“NOT GOOD”**. He then states, that in contradistinction to a “bad”, defiant, publicly vocal, and rebellious gay lobby of homosexual sophisticates, a single person who is penitent and fighting homosexual urges while keeping peace in the community is *not* a problem, *certainly not*, especially when compared to the former, which he hints might exist at the Vatican:

*“I still haven’t found anyone with an identity card in the Vatican with “gay” on it. (Nonetheless) **They say there are some there.**”*

Msgr Ricca, however is not one of them, presumably he falls into the second grouping to which the pope addressed his now famous words:

“If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him?”

The pope reiterates this point by quoting the Catechism followed by some more personal remarks that drive his point home :

“No one should marginalize these people for this, they must be integrated into society”. The problem is not having this tendency, no, we must be brothers and sisters to one another, and there is this one and there is that one. The problem is in making a lobby of this tendency: a lobby of misers, a lobby of politicians, a lobby of masons, so many lobbies. For me, this is the greater problem.”

This problem has grown so acute that it has apparently penetrated the hallowed ramparts of Malta leading [Pope Francis to order a purge of Freemasons from the Knights of Malta.](#)

For a long time, many on the right have been pleading for the popes to clean house; now that the cleaning has commenced many of the supplicants ravenous for a papal crackdown, are finding themselves on the bristles tips.

In the Holy Father's own words:

“There are also cases of malicious resistance, which spring up in misguided minds and come to the fore when the devil inspires ill intentions (often cloaked in sheep's clothing).”

“This last kind of resistance hides behind words of self-justification and often accusation,” he said. “It takes

*refuge in traditions, appearances, formalities, in the familiar, or else in a desire to make everything personal, failing to distinguish between (among) the **ACT**, the **ACTOR** and the **ACTION**" (please remember that Francis said this).*

By using words such as *traditions, appearances and formalities*, it is quite clear whom the pope is referring to. [His words are similar to those of Cardinal Ratzinger](#) when he headed the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF):

"It is necessary to be strong in faith and to resist error even when it masquerades as piety."

The culprit is then brought into stark relief when the sacred scriptures point their light on the theme of error, piety, tradition etc:

*"And what I do I will continue to do, **in order to end this pretext** of those who seek a pretext for being regarded as we are in the mission of which they boast. For **such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, who masquerade as apostles of Christ**. And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of light. So it is not strange that his **ministers** also masquerade as ministers of righteousness" ([2 Corinthians 11: 12-15](#)).*

The Issue is Clear enough for a School Boy, Why are the Dubia Cardinals Confused?

Clearly, Pope Francis was speaking about penitent homosexuals who in humility keep their sins to themselves rather than forming lobbies of defiant and rebellious epicurean gourmands working to undermine the Church. Moreover, the distinction that he made by the words "Who am I to judge" is so basic a

mere school boy possessing elementary catechesis could make the distinction necessary to understand what the pope was saying in this *supposedly* confusing case.

The folks as Novus Ordo Watch ([NOW](#)) are apparently as confused as the dubia cardinals and other purveyors of dubious papal ideas. According to them (NOW):

*“For a supposed Vicar of Jesus Christ to make such a comment is beyond irresponsible and foolish, not to mention harmful and scandalous. Francis plays right into the wrong-headed but widespread idea that some people are homosexual in their identity, **in their nature**, as part of “who they are”. This is exactly what modern-day liberals want you to believe, that just as people are biologically either male or female, so they are also biologically either heterosexual or homosexual.”*

The pope *never* made any mention of biological determinism. He merely said, “The problem is *not* having this tendency” (or, the problem is *not* this tendency). To say that he meant a biologically determined tendency is to put words into his mouth, corrupt words that vitiate his meaning. More positively, Francis’ words can be taken to mean concupiscence, urge, temptation etc. which when acted upon habitually orient a person towards sin. This is the “tendency” he is talking about. **The problem is not concupiscence, but acting on it.** A worse problem, the one pointed out by Francis, is not only acting on the tendency but also flaunting it, defending it and militantly fighting for it by forming an advocacy group such as a lobby of churchmen; this he refers to as “bad”, very bad indeed. Is anyone with a sane mind going to disagree with his analysis thus far? What is worse (1) having a temptation to sin and fighting it, (2) having a temptation and acting on it but afterward expressing penitence and remorse as well as a resolve to fight it and keep it private while admitting error or (3) arguing that homosexuality is not morally illicit, but

a natural expression to be lauded and publicly supported by high ranking churchmen? Now, honestly, which is worse, if you said (3) then you agree with the pope. Why is this confusing?

An even more basic distinction is the one between **judging actions** and **judging intentions** (actor) having to do with eternal salvation. Clearly such distinctions must be made, as Francis indicates, among Act, Actor and Action. Almost every lay person is familiar with the famous dictum to “hate the sin (act) but not the sinner” (actor) or to “judge the sin but not the sinner”. This distinction is so basic, how can any honest person miss it. Are we to presume that the self proclaimed brilliant theologians at Novus Ordo et al, those brilliant enough to call the pope a heretic and schismatic, are we to suppose that such brilliant people are bereft of elementary school knowledge as to be unable to make such a rudimentary distinction? What in Heaven’s name is going on here?

To quote scriptures, as they do, about the necessity of judging all things does nothing to counter the pope’s remarks. He is well aware of the distinction. Every schoolboy knows it is licit to judge acts but impossible to make judgements about eternal salvation, which belongs to God alone ([Revelation 20:11-14](#)). Thus, when scripture says to judge all things, it is referring to acts.

“But the spiritual man judgeth all things; and he himself is judged of no man” ([1 Corinthians 2:15](#)).

Because they fail to distinguish among act, actor and action, they also fail at understanding the pope’s meaning. When Francis asks “who am I to judge”, he is referring to eternal damnation or intentions in the soul (the actor-not the act) which only God knows. Because radical sedevacantists and many less radical traditionalists fail to give the pope this much, this much that even a Catholic school boy can be presumed to

know it, they not only [get it all wrong](#), they cause scandal and disseminate confusion as do the folks at [NOW](#):

“So, Francis asks rhetorically, “Who am I to judge?” Holy Scripture may help in answering this question: “But the spiritual man judgeth all things; and he himself is judged of no man” (1 Cor 2:15). So, who is Francis to judge? Well... obviously not the spiritual man! Thanks for making it clear, Mr. Bergoglio.”

Not so quick boys, Francis is the pope; he is not your straw man. Clearly he is referring to subjective intentions and eternity not *about* objective acts. HE IS TALKING ABOUT AN INABILITY TO JUDGE SUBJECTIVE CULPABILITY (the actor) especially the moral or theological culpability of a person who manifests “good will” and “who seeks God”. Francis is *not* referring to those so steeped in sin that they make a lobby out of it; these he has no problem judging; clearly their acts are, as he says, “bad”. By referring to such perverse lobbies as “bad” Pope Francis has made a judgement in accord with ([Jude 1:22](#)):

“And some indeed reprove, being judged: But others save, pulling them out of the fire. And on others have mercy, in fear, hating also the spotted garment which is carnal.”

Clearly, the pope has no problem judging manifest corrupt actions. But he carefully and correctly refrains from judging the eternal destiny of any man, his subjective culpability before the Throne of God. Those who need reproof, those whom he does judge as “bad” are the scandalous non-penitents. So to argue that the pope refrains from judging and somehow approves of sin or somehow supports it, is not only puerile it is basically ridiculous, perhaps intended for the ignorant and easily persuaded or for the naysayers looking for anything to defame another, esp another whom they dislike, such as the pope who as the Vicar of Christ has many enemies. Are you

going to be dissuaded by this childish cabal meant only to confuse?

More recently ([Nov 30, 2015](#)), the pope reiterated and clarified his thoughts on this issue:

*“I will repeat what I said on my first trip. I repeat what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: that they must not be discriminated against, that they must be respected and accompanied pastorally. **One can condemn, but not for theological reasons, but for reasons of political behavior (that is for crimes)** ... But these are things that have nothing to do with the problem. **The problem is a person that has a condition, that has good will and who seeks God, who are we to judge?** And we must accompany them well...this is what the catechism says, a clear catechism.”*

Ultra Right Sedevacantists have twisted the hell out of this by failing to distinguish between penitent and manifest non-penitent sinners as Pope Francis does and by failing to make a proper distinction between condemnation of acts as crimes and condemnation of persons to hell, and also failing to make clear the fact that judgement **MUST PRECEDE** condemnation. One cannot condemn a person until one has judged that person. Clearly, a “political judgment” (a licit condemnation) for a violation of a moral precept resulting in temporal punishment for a “crime” can be made as Francis clearly states, but not a theological judgement leading to condemnation of a person for eternity, which only God can make. Why is this so hard?

The pope clearly states that evil acts or “behaviors’ can be judged as bad (he even referred to the homosexual lobby as bad). However, when he speaks about an inability to judge, he is **NOT** speaking about **Time** but **Eternity**, not speaking of judging a person’s objective acts but the subjective guilt or innocence of a person’s soul. T sedevacantists at [One Peter Five](#) not only miss this basic distinction; they misuse the

words judge and condemn:

"Amidst that super-sized word salad are some key points...and a reinforcement (rather than a corrective clarification) of Francis' own controversial stance on this issue. Francis asserts that "One can condemn, homosexual people/behaviors but not for theological reasons...(so far ok).

But then they assert:

*"Of course, this is absolutely false. **Not only can we condemn sodomy**, we must if we wish to exercise an authentic pastoral care and concern for souls."*

Sorry, but NO we cannot "condemn sodomy" (unless it is a crime – did they miss this?). **God does not condemn sodomy; He proscribes sodomy** (act) as a moral evil **and condemns sodomites** (actors or persons). A human judge however, can both judge sodomy to be wrong and condemn a sodomite to prison (if such a law exists-Francis refers to this as a "political" condemnation – not a theological condemnation, which is not possible). When it comes to the pope's statement about not being able to make a judgement, he is referring to making a judgement about a person's intentions and eternal destiny. **He is aware, as is any school boy, that acts can be judged, but persons cannot be condemned "theologically"**. Francis judges homosexuality (action) to be objectively bad, but he is unable to either condemn the homosexual (actor) "*theologically*" or to make a judgement about a homosexual's hidden intentions or the eternal destiny of their souls. No one can condemn another (to hell), only God can do this. **Thus, the pope is correct, there is NO THEOLOGICAL REASON for condemning a soul**. Rather, it is the correct attitude, an attitude of love and mercy, to accompany a sincere soul seeking God on the road to perfection, a road on which they will conquer their sins and wrongful inclinations. Now who is confused, the pope or the traditionalists at One Peter Five?

In saying “Who am I to judge”, the pope is clearly referring to a person who is penitent and seeking God (see video 1:00). Why is this hard to understand?

Francis was clearly making a distinction between judging acts and judging person’s intentions. Moreover, he was making a distinction between penitent and non-penitent sinners. To drive the point home, consider the following:

In the wake of the “Who am I to judge” affair, Monsignor Krzysztof Charamsa, a Polish priest who worked for the CDF, **publicly announced** that he was in a gay relationship. Following the spin given by the pope’s enemies and detractors, would you be surprised to learn that [Msgr. Charamsa was relieved of his duties at the Vatican](#) as well as his teaching posts at two of Rome’s Pontifical universities? He was relieved of his duties because he intended to remain in a sinful relationship.

In fact Msgr Charamsa wrongfully [insisted that Pope Francis “revise Catholic doctrine on homosexuality, which considers same-sex relationships sinful.”](#)

The pope had no problem judging the monsignor’s acts as wrong – they were obvious, he persisted in, boasted about, and sought to justify his sin thereby hurting himself and causing scandal; nonetheless, **Francis did not and could not ‘condemn’ the churchman** (that is for eternity), but he did judge his blatant actions. As far as his intentions, the msgr. made them known to all by persisting in sin and seeking to justify it, thereby making it easy to judge his ill intentions – a person who sins and repents and acts well does not provide any evidence by which to judge his intentions. The non-penitent, who claims he has a right to sin, who forms a bold lobby thereby loudly proclaiming his intentions can be judged (but not condemned **unless his corresponding acts are also crimes**),

in such a case, he can be politically or temporally condemned. The forgiven penitent who seeks to serve God can be both judged and condemned politically, his acts can also be judged theologically (acts of which a sincere penitent presumably has few if any, in fact, there might not be any remaining acts to judge), but he *cannot* be condemned theologically – this is Francis point!

Clearly, the pope's "Who am I to judge" remarks have been twisted, perverted and misrepresented. **It is not the pope who is causing confusion, but his detractors.**

If this is not enough, the pope chose to answer his detractors in his recently released book ["The Name of God is Mercy "](#) in which he states:

"On that occasion I said this: If a person is gay and seeks out the Lord and is willing, who am I to judge that person?" the pope says. "I was paraphrasing by heart the Catechism of the Catholic Church where it says that these people should be treated with delicacy and not be marginalized."

"I am glad that we are talking about 'homosexual people' because before all else comes the individual person, in his wholeness and dignity," he continues. "And people should not be defined only by their sexual tendencies: let us not forget that God loves all his creatures and we are destined to receive his infinite love."

*"I prefer that homosexuals come to confession, that they stay close to the Lord, and that we pray all together," says Francis. "You can advise them to pray, **show goodwill, show them the way, and accompany them along it.**"*

The pope clearly has no problem clarifying his statements,

apparently to good-willed people not intent on perverting them. Even a schoolboy can follow the pope's elementary thinking. How often did Jesus refuse to answer his detractors?

Please ask yourself: Am I confused because I actually read what the pope said (if so please re-read with these notes in mind). Or am I confused because someone else told me about what the pope wrote? If so please ignore that person and find out for yourself.

Part II to Follow

Tradition Family Property (TFP) Committed to Causing Confusion over Fatima

[\(New Era World News\)](#)

Error on the Right: Tradition Family and Property

BOTH ULTRA-LIBERALS and ultra-conservatives have their own version of the Virgin Mary, a version they think should be adopted by the rest of the Church, a version that they spare no cost in advancing. Disobedience might be expected on the left, but it is surprising when it comes from the right as with the zealots from Tradition Family and Property (TFP) and their subsidiary, *"America Needs Fatima."*

Tradition Family and Property

Tradition Family and Property (TFP) is a traditionalist community founded in 1960 by Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, a Brazilian

politician and intellectual activist. TFP claims to be “the world’s largest anti-communist and anti-socialist network of Catholic inspiration.” As such, it was founded to “confront the profound crisis shaking the modern world” ([1](#)), a crisis rooted in something it refers to as “Cultural Marxism”.

Although it is to be lauded for its efforts in this area, it seems, nonetheless, overly committed to anti-socialism and too *uncritical* of capitalism. According to TFP, the social-cultural problem facing the modern world is rooted in “materialism”, but when considering the social effects of materialism, TFP limits its analysis to socialism and then proceeds to an unsustainable conclusion that the American Founders (certainly not socialists) rooted the country in moral values.

“Since [materialism is the root of socialism](#), today’s widespread practical materialism prepares the ground for the germination of the socialist seed.

*“By agreeing to compromise on moral values, one betrays the principles contained in the **legacy given to the Founding Fathers**. An **America of moral values** is the foundation of the nation and especially the bulwark of the conservative movement.”*

A review of [Benjamin Franklin’s autobiography](#) in which he turns fornication and adultery (which he referred to as venery-[Article 12](#)) into virtues, as long as they are practiced according to Aristotle’s maxim of moderation, manifests a serious misunderstanding of virtue by some of the founders. If that is not enough, consider that the US Constitution is a secular document void of any mention of God, divine law, or even natural law, and it is easy to see that the [Christian morality that the folks at TFP want to sustain, was not a concern of the Founding Fathers](#) whom they applaud.

The Christian founding motif is a typical theme of the religious right coming from the Conservative Camp. Thus, it is not surprising that,

under the guise of anti-Socialism, TFP has successfully forged political connections with prominent people on the political and religious right along with whom they have become advocates of a type of American Manifest Destiny associated with Neoconservatism.

TFP is so intent on mounting a counter-revolution against Communism, and promoting renewal and advancing of Christian civilization, that it seems to get confused and conflates those goals with its *Americanism*. For example, one [prolifer blogger](#) recently posted the following:

*“At the Arkansas March for life, I was handed a pamphlet from an organization called TFP (Tradition, Family, Property). This is apparently a paleoconservative Catholic movement. The pamphlet was explaining how we need to return to the values of historical Christendom. It **listed one such value as representative government.**”*

*“This is how deep the “liberal mind trap goes (blogger is correctly Identifying representative government, and therefore TFP itself, with “liberalism”). Even if you are a Catholic who explicitly recognizes that authority comes from God, you’ll still probably toss a pinch of incense to republicanism without even blinking an eye. The mind trap goes so deep that even an organization which expressly wants a return to the values of the medieval past, still doesn’t even think of the fact that **medieval Christendom was not democratic.** (or a republican form of government).”*

[Nor were the main architects of the Constitution](#) (Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, Franklin, Madison) [Christian](#). Nonetheless, TFP leaders hold these men up as shining examples of the type of elite class that should lead America in this its hour of great need. According to a [TFP publication](#),

“Outrage against the liberal establishment has sparked increased talk about America’s Founding Fathers. However, few remember to

note, much less ponder on how they were members of the social, cultural, and political elite of their time."

TFP holds up the Founding Fathers as elite men to imitate without demonstrating that they realize the Fathers whom they honor were the authors of the liberalism they profess to be crusading against. Rather, they advocate the need for a similar contemporary elite. Clearly, for members of TFP, those on the political left are too decadent to lead; leadership for our times requires men and women of virtue on the right. Unfortunately, members of TFP seemingly fail to realize that the contemporary Conservative Republicans they honor, represent the liberal tradition (economically-politically) they ashow. Thus, under the guise of fighting communism, they unwittingly and at least partially promote capitalism, although John Hovart's Book, *"Return to Order"* is a move in the correct direction (it would benefit by a more precise critique of finance and usury). Nonetheless, they have focused myopically on communism.

"Let us eschew all muddled, anti-elitist thinking and rhetoric and remain faithful to America's principled and battle-seasoned anti-communist and anti-socialist past. Should we do this, the troubles we are going through may well become America's "finest hour."

It might be a hard pill for TFP members to swallow, but as Cardinal Glemp, Primate of Poland, stated: "Communism is dead." Fighting communism is not going to make America great again. TFP could use a dose of Saint Padre Pio, a Catholic who when asked to compare communism and capitalism said that

"They are both indescribably evil. In the East they deny God from the head to the belly button. In the West, they deny Him from the belly button to the feet."

In other words, both communism and capitalism are two sides of the same coin, viz., materialism. The East under communism was guilty of scientific or atheistic materialism (in the head) while the West was

guilty of hedonistic materialism (sexual organs – belly button to feet).

Thus, TFP falls into the trap of elevating the right due to its sole critique of those on the left. Materialism is *not* limited to communism/socialism (or to “Cultural Marxism”); it is manifest in capitalism as well. If TFP continues to conduct its crusade against socialism, it might end up being guilty of advancing the very liberalism that it claims to be combatting.

Unfortunately, although TFP representatives speak admirably of Christian culture, they often seem over embroiled in the liberal economic-political program of Americanism as evidenced by their anti-papal stance, and willingness to act as moral arbiter of presidents while concomitantly taking pope’s to task on Catholic Social Teaching applied to America, among other things.

No Problem Disagreeing with the Pope’s Judgments

With the outbreak of the Iraqi War in 1992, leaders of the TFP such as Vice President John Horvat lined up behind President Bush in full support of the invasion. Mr. Horvat wrote the following letter to President Bush:

9 March 2003

*The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500*

Dear Mr. President:

"I am writing to express the American TFP's full support for our Armed Forces which you, as Commander-in-Chief, have sent into combat against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq.

As you have often said, the United States, as a sovereign nation, has a right to declare war when its people, territorial integrity, or interests are attacked or threatened. Our sovereignty allows us to make this decision independent of international organizations or bodies.

Moreover, natural law does not distinguish between defensive or offensive war. It is sufficient that the threat be real and menacing. That same law supports the right of a sovereign state to come to the aid of an oppressed people that suffers under the yoke of an unjust regime, and, depending on the circumstances, this natural law right may even oblige in charity.

The September 11 attacks underscored the existence of an enemy whose ideologues proclaim their goal shamelessly: the extermination of America and Western civilization.

Nevertheless, throughout the world a chorus of socialists, liberal clergy, radical pacifists, anarchists, and leftist non-governmental organizations dispute not only the cause for this war, but even America's right to declare war. Such a position is unacceptable since it would leave America dishonored and defenseless before a very real threat."

According to Mr. Horvat, Pope John Paul II must be either an

“unacceptable” “socialist, liberal, radical or anarchist” because Saint John Paul was among those who not only opposed the war but counseled President Bush not to wage it.

In 1991, John Paul II opposed the Gulf War and publicly appealed to U.S. President George H. W. Bush *not* to wage it. In 2003, he again opposed the war in Iraq and appealed to President George W. Bush to refrain from engaging in it. According to the [New York Times](#), the pope

“...expressed his strongest opposition yet to a potential war in Iraq today, describing it as a “defeat for humanity” and urging world leaders to try to resolve disputes with Iraq through diplomatic means.”

“No to war!” the pope said during his annual address to scores of diplomatic emissaries to the Vatican, an exhortation that referred in part to Iraq, a country he mentioned twice.”

“War cannot be decided upon, even when it is a matter of ensuring the common good, except as the very last option, and in accordance with very strict conditions, without ignoring the consequences for the civilian population both during and after the military operations.”

The Pope continued to oppose the war even after it started in 2004. He composed a [formal address to President George W. Bush](#) in which he stated that

*“You are very familiar with the **unequivocal position of the Holy See in this regard**, expressed in numerous documents, through direct and indirect contacts, and in the many diplomatic efforts which have been made since you visited me, first at Castelgandolfo on 23 July 2001, and again in this Apostolic Palace on 28 May 2002.”*

- [Cardinal Ratzinger](#) also argued that **“reasons sufficient for unleashing a war against Iraq did *not* exist,”** in part because:

“Proportion between the possible positive consequences and the sure negative effect of the conflict was not guaranteed. On the contrary, it seems clear that the negative consequences will be greater than anything positive that might be obtained.”

Clearly, Pope John Paul II, then Cardinal Ratzinger and Mr. Horvat held differing views about just war. Mr. Horvat however, had no problem playing teacher to presidents while disagreeing with his own pope, the Universal Shepherd and Head of State equal to the president in diplomatic rank and exceeding him in spiritual authority, while Mr Horvat has neither diplomatic rank nor teaching authority in the Church. But that did not stop him. He even presented his teachings about Just War to the president thereby helping the president to justify his opposition to the Pope. **It sounds as if Mr. Horvat was more loyal to his Country than to his Church**, something TFP has been warned about by bishops in Latin America . According to the [Brazilian Bishop Castro de Meyer](#):

*“There is a visceral anticlericalism in TFP: everything that comes from the clergy is prejudicially received. Basically, it holds that all priests are ignorant, not very zealous or interesting, and have other such qualities. Well, then, keeping in mind the divine Constitution of the Church which was instituted by Jesus Christ, **TFP’s habitual anti-clericalism, latent, makes it an heretical sect**, and therefore, as I have said, is animated by a principle contrary to the dogma established by Jesus Christ in the constitution of His Church”*

“Individuals become incapable of seeing objective reality, of perceiving even fundamental errors, because of this inversion of following a lay person (referring to TFP founder Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira) instead of the legitimate Shepherds of the Holy Church.”

TFP not only had a problem with Pope John Paul II, it also has one with Pope Francis whom they also would like correct and to tutor. In regards to the recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, [TFP tellingly published this papal broadside](#):

*“In particular, **the pope has directly or indirectly countenanced the beliefs that obedience to God’s Law can be impossible or undesirable, and that the Church should sometimes accept adultery as compatible with being a practising Catholic.**”*

WAR IS MORE WITH CHURCH THAN WITH WORLD AND DEVIL

Since, TFP leaders have no problem lecturing popes on Just War Theory and moral theology, it should *not* be surprising that members of TFP have boldly professed to [“resist the pope to his face”](#) so much so that at times, it seems that they have decided that the war they’re waging is a war with the Church, rather than with a fallen world. Nor is it surprising that the name “Hovart” (Marian Hovart, the sister of John Hovart) appears on the list of literary architects behind the [resistance declaration](#), a declaration that is an invitation to engage the “heretic **Karol Wojtyla aka John Paul II** in dialogue on how he had deviated from what the perennial Magisterium of the Church taught.”

Although Marian Horvat, Ph.D formed a new group *“Tradition in Action”* that dissociated from the TFP, both Hovarts harbor an animus toward Vatican Council II and the modern papacy, an animus that they have learned to tone down so that they can better work from within inside the Church rather than as suspect laity compromised by association with priests that have been suspended *a divinis* (meaning that they are canonically prohibited from exercising ministries such as Holy Mass and the sacrament of confession).

According to Catholic tradition, the Church Militant is involved in a threefold war against the world, the flesh and the devil; the church is *not* a fourth candidate on the threefold list. The Church *cannot* go to war with itself because any kingdom divided against itself cannot

stand ([Mark 3:24](#)). That does not stop TFP however from waging war against the Church; worse, those waging the war with the Church are not even clerics or shepherds of the flock – **they are laymen** who have judged themselves important and competent enough to correct popes and bishops. At least that is what it seems when we read many of the documents coming forth from this camp. To those who asked Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira, founder of TFP, why contend with bishops and cardinals when there were so many evils in the world outside the Church, Plinio replied:

“If the enemy is storming the (church) walls, everyone must unite. But if it has penetrated the citadel (presumably the Vatican), then it is not enough to fight outside the walls, but also within the walls”. [\[1\]](#)

Because of actions flowing from this attitude, the bishops of Brazil took decisive action. At their 23rd [General Assembly](#) (April 10-19, 1985) [the Brazilian Bishops](#) drafted a formal notice regarding the TFP:

“The lack of communion of TFP (Society in Defence of Tradition, Family and Property) with the church of Brazil, with its hierarchy, and with the Holy Father is well known.”

“Its esoteric character, religious fanaticism, the cult given to the personality of its founder and head, the abusive use of the name of Most Holy Mary, according to circulated information, cannot in any way merit the approval of the Church.”

“We lament the difficulties flowing from a civil society which presents itself as a Catholic religious entity, without a tie to the legitimate pastors.”

“This being the case, the Bishops of Brazil exhort Catholics not to

enroll in the TFP, and not to collaborate with it."

*Signed by Dom Raymundo Damasceno Asas, the Secretary-General for the
National Bishops of Brazil*

Given these experiences of the Brazilian Bishops, it should not be surprising that TFP has been charged with all of the following:

1. Disobedience to bishops
2. Being a cult
3. Singing hymns of praise to their founder and his mother that belong to Christ and His Mother
4. The rejection of Vatican Council II, which they deem heretical
5. Sedevacantism *i.e.*, the belief that the popes since Vatican II are false popes – that is, the Seat of Peter has been vacant for a long time
6. Dismissing Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict and Pope Francis *et al* as heretics
7. Gnosticism or elitism manifest in a *preferential option for the rich* and those who fill their ranks

What Have Other Brazilian Bishops had to Say about TFP?

[Bishop Castro De Meyer](#) knew Dr. Plinio personally; below are excerpts from a letter penned by this Brazilian bishop. The letter appeared in *Le Sel de la Terre*, [no. 28, Spring 1999], in an article entitled "*Documents sur la T.F.P.*".

*"In this case (of TFP), I can only offer the sole advice: pray, pray much, above all the Rosary or at least the five decades of the Rosary, asking the Virgin Mother, Mediatrix of all graces, to enlighten your son and make him see that **TFP is an heretical sect** because, in fact, although they do not say or write it, TFP lives and behaves in accord with a principle which fundamentally undermines the truth of Christianity, that is, of the Catholic*

Church.”

“In fact, it is de fide that Jesus Christ founded His Church – destined to maintain on earth the true worship of God and to lead souls toward eternal salvation – as an unequal society, composed of two classes: one which governs, teaches and sanctifies, composed of members of the clergy, and the other – the faithful – who receive the teaching, are governed and sanctified. This is a de fide dogma.”

“It is a heretical subversion to habitually follow a lay person, therefore, not a member of the Hierarchy– as the spokesman of orthodoxy. Thus, they do not look to what the Church says, what the Bishops say, rather what this or that one says... Nor does it end there: this attitude – even if not openly avowed – actually positions the “leader” as the arbiter of orthodoxy, and is accompanied by a subtle but real mistrust of the hierarchy and of the clergy in general.”

“Well, then, keeping in mind the divine Constitution of the Church which was instituted by Jesus Christ, TFP’s habitual anti-clericalism, latent, makes it an heretical sect, and therefore, as I have said, is animated by a principle contrary to the dogma established by Jesus Christ in the constitution of His Church.”

*“Perhaps I (once) gave it support beyond a licit point. I retracted it only when it became clear to me that my warnings were not being taken into consideration. It is necessary to pray, because **charismatic fervor produces a certain fanaticism: individuals become incapable of seeing objective reality, of perceiving even fundamental errors, because of this inversion of following a lay person instead of the legitimate Shepherds of the***

Holy Church."

Associated with its problems with ecclesial authorities, TFP is part of the "Fatima Cabal". It is contributing to confusion in the Church by refusing to accept the Church's official interpretation of the Third Secret of Fatima and the Consecration of Russia to be explored in the following article.

To be Continued: Disguised Error about Papal Consecration of Russia

[1] Plínio CORRÊA DE OLIVEIRA, "[*Razões e contra-razões em torno de um tema efervescente*](#)", Catolicismo, no. 71, November 1956; ID., "[*Indulgentes para com o erro, severos para com a Igreja*](#)", Catolicismo, no. 72, December 1956; ID., "[*Não trabalha pela concórdia senão quem luta contra o erro*](#)", Catolicismo, no. 73, January 1957; Cunha Alvarenga (=José de Azevedo Santos), "Infiltrações comunistas em ambientes católicos", Catolicismo, no. 61, January 1956. Along the same lines are three articles on modernism, that appeared in numbers 81, 82, 83 (Sept.-Oct.-Nov. 1957) with the titles "[*O cinquentenário da Pascendi; Por orgulho repelem toda sujeição*](#)" and [*Revivem nos modernistas o espírito e os métodos do Jansenismo*](#)"