

Transdnistria and Moldova Affirm Russian Preference Alarm Globalists

GLOBAL LIBERALISM CONTINUES TO UNRAVEL as nation after nation questions its moral, economic and or political agenda and resets formal relations with Russia. This week it is Transdnistria, the eastern neighbor of Moldova, which also recently elected an anti-liberal and pro-Russian President, Igor Dodon, on November 13, 2016. Since pro-Russian Dodon defeated pro-World Bank and pro-European Union Maia Sanduhis, the election heralded a significant shift toward Russia and away from the European Union (EU).

“Speaking to Russian television after the vote, President Dodan said [Moldovans had voted for “friendship with Russia, for neutrality, for our orthodoxy, for the country’s union.”](#)”

Dodan is aware that “a very serious combat is ahead”, a combat between EU liberal globalists leaning westward and Moldovan patriots leaning to the east. However, he said, “we are ready for this combat.”

To aid him in this battle, eastern neighboring Transdnistria has also elected a pro-Russian president, Vadim Krasnoselski, who garnered 62% of the vote in the December 11, 2016 presidential election. Since 1991 Transdnistria has sought independence from Moldova, which had affiliated itself with its western neighbor, Romania, a member of the United Nations and the European Union, while Transdnistria, which has a large Russian and Slavic population remained committed to Russia, a move that helped it attain and retain its autonomy from Moldova in 1992. During this period Russian troops were stationed in the breakaway region of Transdnistria against the wishes of the Moldovan government, which insisted that they leave “completely and

unconditionally.”

To this day, Russia continues to support Transdniestria, which permits it to retain a small but significant military presence on its soil as an eastern buffer zone bordering the Black Sea. As Moldova moved further into the ambit of the EU and threatened to pull Transdniestria with it, diplomatic relations between Moldova and Russia became so strained that Russia imposed economic sanctions (primarily agricultural) on Moldova. With pro-Russian presidents elected by clear majorities in both countries, it now appears that Moldova and Transdniestria may resume cooperative efforts beneficial to each other and to Russia, which has a strong geopolitical and cultural interest in the region.

Moldovan President Dodon has already indicated his willingness to pursue improved relations with Transdniestria. Since Krasnoselski campaign included reaching a negotiated settlement with Moldova, the process, facilitated by Russia as peacemaker, should proceed steadily. However, since such a development is another blow to EU globalists, they can be expected to step up their game, promote internal dissent and rev up a furious propaganda campaign; these events are most certain in the short run.

The globalists, however, are facing too many challenges around the globe and will have to soon become more selective, there are not enough resources to fight them all simultaneously. France, England and Poland are prime allies, whom the EU must keep in its ambit if it is to survive. A tremendous outlay of resources will be heading towards Eastern Europe as the Slavic nations one after another unhinge from EU influence: Those already in separation mode include Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Moldova, Belarus, Transdniestria and Estonia. [The key is Poland, which has recently proclaimed Jesus Christ as its King.](#) If Poland unhinges, it can be expected that all the Slavic nations, including Ukraine, will join in tandem to form an “*Intermarium*” consisting of East European nations geographically spread from the Baltic Sea in the northwest to the Black Sea in the southeast.

Therefore, Moldova is a global hot spot; the EU globalists cannot afford to let the dominoes keep falling, they must stop here!

WHAT CARDS CAN THE EU BE EXPECTED TO PLAY?

Moldova is already a member of NATO and aspires to join the EU. The strongest card the EU has in Moldova is the large number of people still in favor of EU integration including foreign embassies, think tanks, NGOs, media outlets, political beneficiaries and common men and women who have benefited from EU subsidies and economic advantages. Perhaps the globalist's greatest advantage is the continued existence of the EU-leaning Prime Minister and Parliament. Moldova, moreover is a member of the World Trade Organization, which hand in hand with the EU could cripple or promote its financial sector and economic well being.

Interestingly, Moldova also has several Russian media outlets and news agencies, has a strong Russian cultural influence, 93% of its citizens are members of the Orthodox Church with many having strong ties to the Russian Orthodoxy, nearly 20% of the population declares Russian as their native tongue, Moldova imports over 90% of its energy from Russia; and 54% of its population is of Ukrainian and Russian Slavic descent. Moldova was also once part of the Soviet Union and is also a member of the Russian led [Commonwealth of Independent States](#) and thus in the Russian ambit as well.

To the extent that Russia can continue to promote Christian and family values while it slashes away at the amoral cultural tentacles of liberalism and simultaneously provide economic benefits and trade stimulus to Moldova while propping up its infrastructure through investments from Russian-Chinese sponsored financial institutions, it might be able to counterbalance the effect of western liberal propaganda, especially at a time when EU institutions are experiencing unprecedented and severe cultural and political pressures that are wrenching them apart along with the significant financial burden of supporting Mediterranean

nations states relying on the European Central Bank in Germany to sustain their failing economies.

Despite EU tribulations, they cannot afford to lose this region to the Russians. Either way, with two pro-Russian presidents and large segments of their populations favorable to increased relationships with Russia along with aid from the EU, economic and trade relations between Transdniestria and Moldova can be expected to improve. The two countries can also be expected to increase cultural ties as globalists continue attempts to acculturate Transdniestria and Transdniestria to influence Moldova. Most importantly, a rapprochement with Russia and Moldova can be expected. This time it is voluntary and, assisted by cooperative efforts between President Dodan and President Krasnoselski, it should proceed further than before.

As the United States moves to disengage itself from over-extension in foreign affairs thereby leaving a failing to fend for itself militarily at a time when its economies are reeling and social -cultural dissatisfaction is at an all time high, less essential Eastern European nations will receive less economic help. Since it is unrealistic to expect the larger Eastern European nations, such as Poland, will assume responsibility for the economic challenges and manage the economic needs of their poorer neighbors, further anti-liberal Russian influence can be expected.

Attack on Pope Francis:

Supposed Loyal Catholics Distort Information Defame Pope

WE WERE NOT PLANNING A THIRD ARTICLE on Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, but just when it was presumed that enough had been said, we were presented with a letter from Pope Francis to the Argentine bishops, which has been accosted by EWTN host Raymond Arroyo and his guests Robert Royal, editor-in-chief of *The Catholic Thing*, and Fr. Gerard Murray, a canon lawyer for the Archdiocese of New York.

Pope Francis recently replied to the bishops of Buenos Aires, Argentina, after they had drafted a series of ten guidelines to assist local clergy implementing *Amoris Laetitia*. The pope indicated in the document that bishops should draft guidelines to assist their clergy making pastoral decisions involving divorced and civilly remarried Catholics and the possibility of admitting them to Holy Communion as discussed in his Apostolic Exhortation. Francis applauded their guidelines and indicated that they had understood the pastoral dimensions of *Amoris Laetitia* as well as the integral intersection of pastoral and dogmatic theology. Francis assured the bishops that their document was not only "very good", but also that it "throughout specifies the meaning of Chapter Eight of *Amoris Laetitia*."

The same cannot be said for Mr. Arroyo who is clearly uncomfortable with both the pope and the Argentine episcopate. He decided to embrace his guests warmly while employing innuendo to demean the Holy Father. He referred to his two guests as the "Papal Posse" as if the pope were some type of fugitive being hunted for bounty. Together, they

concocted a distorted and twisted case against the pope and the bishops, resorting to worn-out misinterpretation, partial information, and faulty cross references.

The three present the pope as a man deviating from traditional Catholic teaching about marriage, divorce and civil unions by comparing his work with that of Pope John Paul II, especially [*Familiaris Consortio*](#), which they claim, Francis has deviated from.

Arroyo initiates the conversation with his guests by quoting the bishops' guidelines (the entire text of the Bishops ten guidelines can be [cross referenced here](#)). He excludes, however, vital and critical information necessary to properly interpret and assess the document, ***information that would throw his own distorted interpretation into jeopardy***. He does not start at the beginning but half way into the document, after ignoring guidelines one to four he begins with partial quotes taken from guidelines five and six.

Before looking at the bishop's guidelines, it will help to point out that the disputed paragraphs 300-308 of *Amoris Laetitia* begin with the following words that demonstrate the pope intends to remain within the bounds of traditional Catholic teaching on the matter:

*"Priests have the duty to "accompany [the divorced and remarried] in helping them to **understand their situation according to the teaching of the Church and the guidelines of the bishop**" (para 300).*

Clearly, the whole issue of divorce and remarriage must conform to the "teaching of the Church. Further, in paragraph 304 Pope Francis states:

*"**This discernment** (to live together under the conditions just stated and perhaps others) **can NEVER prescind from the Gospel demands of truth and charity, as proposed by the Church...***

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” (para 300)

In other words, whatever follows must adhere to the constant teaching of the Church and this adherence is essential for *“avoiding the grave danger of misunderstanding”*. No priest can *“grant an exception”* to the dogmatic truths of the faith.

Amoris Laetitia cannot be understood properly if we prescind from the above statements; they help the reader realize that any pastoral discussion that follows in the text must adhere to Church teaching; of this the pope is fully cognizant.

Without its introductory orientation, the document cannot be read properly; it sets the tone for what follows. The same caveat applies to the Argentine Bishop’s Guidelines. For example, before jumping into the Articles, it is necessary to know what prompted the bishops to draft them, what is their purpose and their end? According to the bishops themselves, they drafted the guidelines to:

“...encourage the growth of love between spouses and to motivate the youth to opt for marriage and a family.”

In other words, the primary purpose is promoting the sanctity of marriage; it is less about divorced and remarried as it is about the beauty and sanctity of marriage and the choice to marry. Then the bishops proceed to open the door to Divine Mercy calling to mind the very special time of mercy the Jesus has granted to His Church.

“Francis has opened several doors in pastoral care for families and we are invited to leverage this time of mercy with a view to endorsing, as a pilgrim Church, the richness

offered by the different chapters of this Apostolic Exhortation."

Strangely, Arroyo ignores this invitation to mercy. Ironically, [EWTN is a leading promoter of Divine Mercy](#), at least it use to be.

The Argentine bishops proceed to explain that *Amoris Laetitia* is intended to help priests in their difficult work of "pastoral care for families." Clearly the guidelines are intended to aid pastoral discernment. Although they flow from objective universal principles, they are not not dogmatic pronouncements.

Contrary to what we will hear from Arroyo, the bishops inform their clergy up front, that receiving the sacraments is not a matter of gaining permission; it is a matter of penitent couples discerning their walk with Christ accompanied by their pastor who is expected to guide them as a good shepherd by taking time to know them and to provide them with ongoing spiritual direction.

"Firstly, we should remember that it is not advisable to speak of "permissions" to have access to sacraments, but of a discernment process in the company of a pastor. It is a "personal and pastoral discernment" (para 300).

It is difficult to appreciate and understand the document and guidelines without this information, yet Arroyo seems to consciously ignore it. His report blatantly discards the intent of the guidelines: to bring parishioners into a closer relationship with their Lord, Jesus Christ, and each other (especially in the Eucharist) – this is the primary role of a pastor, a role that is often neglected for more mundane business and temporal affairs.

"In this path, the pastor should emphasize the fundamental proclamation, the kerygma, so as to foster or renew a personal encounter with the living Christ."

The idea is not to simply grant permission to receive the sacraments or to deny them. Positive or negative, the whole purpose of the whole process is to bring people into union with Christ, and each other, no matter where they are or might be; sinners are called to repentance and this involves a relationship not a simple “yes you may” or “no you may not”.

Perhaps if Arroyo had meditated on guideline three rather than ignoring it, he might have been able to correctly interpret the rest of the document, but Arroyo ignores guideline three as he ignored one and two and then four.

Guideline Three

*“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 practice charity (cf. 306).**”*

These is essential information that cannot be ignored “*without avoiding the grave danger of misunderstanding*”. This type of pertinent information is ignored by ideologues so as to create misinformation and spread confusion. A couple must be willing to devote their entire lives to the light of the Gospel; **no where does the document say that adulterous people may be permitted to the sacraments, as the “Posse” claims it does.**

What *Amoris Laetitia* explicitly states is that couples must *sincerely* repent and seek spiritual growth, just like the rest of the members of the Body of Christ.

The Eucharist is as much Bread for the sick as it is Food for the righteous. As with any sinner, and the Church is full of them, the divorced-remarried couple might fall, but they then must get up and move ever closer to the Lord becoming ever stronger by reception of the sacraments, which strengthen them in God’s mercy and love to be able to live their resolve.

Because divorce and remarriage is generally accepted as “normal” as with other types of sin, such as homosexuality, it is easy to understand how such couples might justify their own behavior and why pastoral care is necessary. **Pastoral care is not meant to condone sin; it is meant to mercifully convince sinners of their sin so that they can embrace the Gospel life and eventually receive communion.**

BEFORE ANY ONE CAN BE ADMITTED TO THE EUCHARIST HE OR SHE MUST REPENT AND SINCERELY RESOLVE TO “DEVOTE HIS/HER WHOLE LIFE TO THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.”

The “Posse” has twisted the hell out of this thing. Perhaps they were too busy looking for faults to be merciful. Like blind guides, they strain at a gnat (people trying to avoid sin and live a continent life in difficult circumstances), and swallow a camel (failure to see with a heart of mercy).

Finally, the bishops point out that divorced-remarried people can and will be denied the sacraments. But if they are denied, it is good pastoral practice to include them elsewhere in the ministries of the parish (if they are trying to grow and not simply rebellious).

“This path does not necessarily finish in the sacraments; it may also lead to other ways of achieving further integration into the life of the Church: greater presence in the community, participation in prayer or reflection groups, engagement in ecclesial services, etc. (cf. 299).”

Clearly, the pope and bishops are conveying to their priests that this is not a *carte blanche* ticket to the sacraments, that they will have to often say no, but even then, they should act as good and wise pastors.

Arroyo and the “Papal Posse” left all of these guidelines out of their supposedly scholarly and objective scrutiny.

WHAT DID THEY SAY AND HOW DID THEY MISREPRESENT HIM?

Arroyos begins his presentation by *partially* quoting Articles Five and Six:

“When the concrete circumstances of a couple make it feasible, especially when both are Christians with a journey of faith, it is possible to propose that they make the effort of living in continence.”

He then omits the following text:

*“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 and offers the possibility of having access to the sacrament of Reconciliation if the partners fail in this purpose” (cf. footnote 364, Recalling the Letter that Saint John Paul II sent to Cardinal W. Baum, dated 22 March, 1996).*

A proposal to live in continence is to be made “depending on the particular circumstances”, especially when both partners are Christians (that is, not always). *Amoris Laetitia*, recognizes that this proposal will be attended by many difficulties (falls), which the pastor must be willing to lead the couple through. Moreover, they must avail themselves of the sacrament of Reconciliation, as the Church has always taught (nothing new here, but neglected by Arroyo). The “Posse” also neglects the footnote from the letter composed by Saint John Paul II to Cardinal Baum cited above. In that letter, which the Argentine bishops include in their guidelines approved and applauded by Pope Francis, Pope John Paul II states:

“It is also self-evident that the accusation of sins must include the serious intention not to commit them again in the future. If this disposition of soul is lacking, there really is no repentance: this is in fact a question of moral evil as such, and so not taking a stance opposed to a possible moral evil would mean not detesting evil, not repenting. But as this must stem above all from sorrow for having offended God, so the intention of not sinning must be based on divine grace, which the Lord never fails to give anyone who does what he can to act honestly” (From a Letter that Pope John Paul II sent to Cardinal W. Baum, March, 22, 1996).

Clearly, Pope Francis and the bishops understand that there must be true repentance along with the intention of not sinning, which are necessary for the outpouring of divine grace. In other words, God is a healer who wants to administer the balm of grace, but will not do so unless there is true honesty accompanied by true repentance and firm resolve to defeat sin. These are necessary conditions for all divorced and remarried couples to receive the Eucharist; nothing new here, but misrepresented by Arroyo. Nothing new here except the pastoral dimension and outreach to all divorced-remarried couples not just those with an annulment. Annulment or not, all such couples must meet these basic guidelines, guidelines that Arroyo happened to somehow miss in his haste to vilify the pope.

By the time we arrive at Article Six, would the reader be surprised to learn that Arroyo fails to mention vital information. According to him, Article Six states:

“If one arrives at the recognition that in their particular case, there are limitations that diminish responsibility and culpability particularly to the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. “

Article Six does state this, but it also states more that

Arroyo failed to mention; it states that:

*“If it is acknowledged that, in a concrete case, there are limitations that mitigate responsibility and culpability 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.**”*

The bishops demonstrate that there are cases that mitigate the responsibility of not separating, when for example, the divorced-remarried couple have children of their own. Separating could be a sin against their own children. In such a case, if they sincerely repent, resolve to devote themselves to Christ and live in continence, they might be admitted to the Eucharist after receiving spiritual direction and first going to confession.

Of course, Arroyo might have difficulty making his case that Pope Francis is allowing adulterous couples to receive Holy Communion if he included this information. Quite simply, a couple living together in continence having sincerely given themselves to spiritual growth and union with Christ are not an *“adulterous couple”* anymore; they are simply a couple living together because of the mitigating circumstances of their children, which almost demands that they live together.

They are not *“adulterous”* just because some people in the community might think so. It is necessary to avoid this scandal by their own witness, or some unique way in which the information is communicated.

At this point, as can be seen in the video below, Arroyo asks Mr. Royal what he makes of the partial quote given him by Arroyo. Royal states that he does not know what to make of it. Perhaps if he were given the entire statement he could figure it out.

Worst of all, Royal has the effrontery to claim that:

“In one way we finally do have an explicit statement on the part of the Holy Father that there are – maybe very few – but there are some cases where people are divorced and remarried involving active sexual lives – what use to be called ‘living in adulterous relationship – that they can receive communion” (2:20 in video).

This is an absolutely ridiculous and false statement; no where in the document do the bishops or the pope say anything remotely close to this nefarious nonsense. Pope Francis and the Argentine bishops have made it abundantly clear: There are a few cases where divorced and remarried couples can licitly live together, such as the case to care for their children and see to their proper upbringing. However, they must also be invited to spiritual growth by their pastor, accept the invitation, repent, sincerely resolve to live in continence and go to confession before being admitted to Eucharist. This is in fact what the bishops and pope wrote, what they teach and what they profess, to say anything else is a gross distortion.

POPE FRANCIS’ RESPONSE

In his letter of reply to the Argentine Bishops Pope Francis states:

“May the Lord reward this effort of pastoral charity. And it is precisely pastoral charity that drives us to go out to meet the strayed, and, once they are found, to initiate a path of acceptance, discernment and reinstatement in the ecclesial community.

“We know this is tiring, it is “hand-to-hand” pastoral care which cannot be fully addressed with programmatic, organizational or legal measures, even if these are also

necessary. It simply entails accepting, accompanying, discerning, reinstating."

The pope realizes the authentic pastoral work is an extremely difficult task requiring the ability to discern each unique situation, to make prudential judgments, to be patient, to pray, sacrifice and give oneself as a good shepherd for the flock. This is what Francis desires of Christ's priests, more than anything else.

Before the interview ends, Arroyo has to set up Father Murray. Responding to Arroyo's ridiculous questions: How do we know anything is settled when we don't even know what was said?, "What does that mean?, Father Murray responds:

*"The Pope has made it absolutely clear that in his opinion and his way of looking at things, that **there are circumstances that people might find themselves in in which they can continue to live in an adulterous relationship and at the same time receive communion**" (3:50 in video).*

"So we are basically at a loggerheads here. One pope says you have to live continence if you are in an invalid marriage, if you want to receive the sacraments, and now Pope Francis is saying in some circumstances that is not necessary" (4:28).

Given what the document clearly states, it is difficult to comprehend how Father Murray can come to such a conclusion. **Divorced-remarried couples who follow the above guidelines can continue to live in a relationship, but it can no longer be an adulterous relationship.**

[Please read the Argentine document yourself](#) after finishing this article and see if you agree with the Posse. The two popes are not at "loggerheads", they agree! Pope Francis is simply extending the universal call by the King of Mercy for an Hour of Mercy into the pastoral work of the clergy as presented in more detail, in "[Pope Francis and the Ultra Conservatives.](#)"

At the conclusion of the video below, Arroyo makes the silly

claim that the pope is forcing all local priests to become “little popes.” This is another ridiculous claim. The pope is the universal shepherd responsible for universal dogma and principles of the faith; it is *not* his job to make local prudential judgements and pastoral discernments; it is impossible do so. Local clergy in union with their bishops must be equipped and responsible for local decision making, for local guidance of the flocks entrusted to their care. Only they are close enough to them, close enough to enter into significant and merciful pastoral relationships necessary to lead their people into holiness.

Thus, Pope Francis reminds the bishops that seminary education must include formation for pastoral work of the apostolate; it is equally important to dogmatic education. Clergymen must learn to be better shepherds, must learn to discern so that they can apply universal norms to particular cases, sometimes in particular ways that appear to be *illicit*, but under further investigation are in fact *licit* due to the unique pastoral circumstances known to local clergy alone.

Theopolitics: Theology and Politics Needed to Understand World News TODAY

THEOPOLITICS IS A BROAD ATTEMPT to understand and extrapolate political action through the multidimensional lens of geopolitics^[1] and theology. Theopolitics, *like* geopolitics, includes analysis of geographical, historical, and cultural characteristics that influence

political behavior. Theopolitics, *unlike* geopolitics, extrapolates political action based on further philosophical and theological premises that God exists and acts in human history.

Geopolitical intelligence services increasingly provide inaccurate projections due to (1) the lack of a theological perspective or (2) a sociological tendency to subordinate religious ideas to political ideas. This interpretive tendency is accelerated by ongoing secularization of the public-political forum, which over the long run reduces the impact of religion and tends to subordinate religion to the long-recognized sociological function of cultural legitimization.

Secularization of the sacred has occurred to such an extent in the modern world that the values expressed in the secular temporal sphere have so influenced the spiritual sphere that over-time the two have become less diverse and increasingly difficult to distinguish. That is, religious beliefs have become less and less distinguishable from political beliefs. Religion has been so gradually secularized that the modern acceptance of *political-economic-cultural liberalism* first advanced in the public domain has, overtime, become normative in the religious domain[2].

This diffusion of the secular into the sacred and the subsequent sacralizing of the secular[3] (whereby religious institutions morph into, or become congruent with, economic-political institutions) results in aggressive forms of *nationalism* justified by belief in a sacred or "Manifest Destiny" for one's own nation leading to the conviction that it is endowed with a sacred mission among nations. In the historic process, secular economic interests and political values are transformed into sacred spiritual ideals that serve as the foundation for a crusading foreign policy. When this happens, it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish religious perspectives from political perspectives. For example, the confusing neoconservative tendency to view America as "God's Country", the "City set on a hilltop", or the equally confusing tendency to present secular American cultural-economic-political values (liberal left or conservative right) as Christian initiatives (human dignity, liberty, tolerance, rights, peace) and the subsequent promotion of American

foreign policy as the light to the nations and the means of their liberty.

As a result of this confusion of church and nation, secularist ideology has both eroded authentic religion (which rightly transcends culture) and become as pervasive (wide-spread) as any religion. Consequently, secularism, or secular values are often presented as sacred values and accepted as religious ideas that represent the “will of God”. This transformation and deification of secular cultural values, ideas, sentiments and beliefs into religious values, sentiments, ideas and beliefs has advanced to such an extent that the United States Supreme Court is able to refer to “secular humanism” as a “religion”:

“Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism and others”
[*\(note 11, Torcaso v Watkins, 1961\)*](#).

The sacralizing of secular values gives rise to what sociologists refer to as “Civic Religion” – the spiritualization and subsequent reification of prevailing cultural-political beliefs and ideas (by means of regular public praise and avowal through such things as statues, commemoratives, memorials, monuments, national documents, songs and holiday celebrations etc.) until they become so pervasive and commonly shared that they are accepted on face-value as sacred and deserving of religious respect until they morph with religion itself, a religion commonly referred to as secularism or “secular humanism”. Secular humanism is a humanism crafted without God but accepted as if coming from God and therefore used to justify wrongheaded foreign and domestic policy decisions because purely secular beliefs, values, traditions, political institutions etc. have been made to appear sacred. President Abraham Lincoln provides an exhilarating example of America’s “Civic religion”.

“Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to

violate in the least particular, the laws of the country; and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and Laws, let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor;—let every man remember that to violate the law, is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the character of his own, and his children's liberty.”

“Let reverence for the laws, be breathed by every American mother, to the lisping babe, that prattles on her lap—let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in Primers, spelling books, and in Almanacs;—let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay, of all sexes and tongues, and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars”.[\[4\]](#)

The sacralizing of secular political-economic-social beliefs occurs on both the right and the left; it is the sacred political and cultural patrimony of the nation. Vestiges of the national ethos are evident in both the zealous liberal political commitment to liberty, which is opposed by many conservatives, and by the equally zealous conservative political commitment to free-market capitalism opposed by liberals – although they differ, each carries its own version of and commitment to the secular-religious agenda of the nation known as liberalism, which has become a “civic religion” with its various sects and denominations. Although they differ one from the other, all are committed to political and cultural ecumenism that revolves around the basic tenets of liberalism or secular humanism. Although they are at odds with each other over cultural, political, economic and religious ideas, they are in agreement about such things as rule by the people, popular sovereignty, separation of church and state, secular constitutional law, liberty, the separation of powers, and American exceptionalism *et al.*

Therefore, both believe in and promote an active foreign policy that advances the exportation of American ideas abroad as if the secular values of the United States are some type of sacred patrimony necessary for the emancipation and development of mankind. Some are unable to realize that the United States is not an arm of the Church; its secular values are not the sacred patrimony of mankind nor are they the standard by which they are to judge the social dogma of Christianity or any dogma at all. The Secretary of State is not mandated by God to spread liberal ideas (cultural, political, and or economic) throughout the world, nor is America endowed with a God given destiny to replace His Church as the “city set on a hilltop” to be the “light of the nations” ([Matt 5:14](#)). These words were addressed to the Apostles and to their successors not to the Founding Fathers or the leaders of the Democratic, Republican or Libertarian parties whose ideas are subject to the scrutiny of the City that is the light of the world; it does not work correctly in converse.

It is the Church that is the teacher of the United States and of all states, especially of those peoples who profess to be “Christian”; it is not the state who is the teacher of the Church. The Holy Trinity did not commission the State Department to teach the nations, but They did commission the Church to do so:

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them....Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” ([Matt 28: 16-20](#))

The Necessity of Theopolitics for Accurate Global Analysis

Because the United States and Great Britain have been undeterred global leaders for nearly three centuries, the liberal values shared by these sister-nations have increasingly dominated

international discourse and the outcome of political events for nearly three hundred years. As such foreign policy initiatives, geopolitical global analysis, and intelligence projections have been able to count on the dominance and consistency of Western liberal ideas and values when crafting insightful intelligence reports and successfully projecting future trends. This long-term dominance of Western liberal ideas and economic interests can no longer be counted upon. In fact, because Western intelligence agencies continue to count upon this fading historical dominance, they have entered into a new phase of confusion, which is becoming increasingly evident. Because of their high accuracy in the past, they have continued to depend on what has always worked before. They, and most other political-economic actors in the West, continue to act from an increasingly outdated mindset seemingly unaware of the signs that we are living at the dawn of a new era, a new time period of authentic Christian renewal. Consequently, they have entered a new phase of mistaken analysis and faulty projections, which, in part, helps explain the ongoing confusion of American foreign policy.

We are living at a pivotal moment of modern human history in which the backward relationship between the secular and sacred, discussed above, is being slowly reversed. That is, the spirit of nationalism (that reifies secular values, imbues them with a sacred identity, and thereby diminishes the voice of the Spirit) is being corrected by an authentic outpouring of the Spirit. In the process, the temporal public square, rather than being increasingly secularized, as it has been for two hundred years, is being increasingly sacralized, but few people are aware of this ongoing reality due to the secular and anti-Christian commitment of media outlets committed to an opposition agenda.

Nonetheless, unreported world events indicate that a significant change is underway.

For example, have you heard of this?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hakb6S0IpgY>

The above video is only one of a vast array of accounts that are occurring around the globe and that are regularly reported in our Daily World News and detailed in our Weekly Intelligence Reports. As promised at Fatima, an Era of Peace is underway; Russia is being converted and a moment of Christian renewal is occurring around the globe as previously secular, liberal, and anti-Christian propaganda is being called into question and openly challenged by men and women who are beginning to realize that something is seriously wrong and that it is time to do something about it. The Catholic Church has elevated devotion to God's Divine Mercy granting this devotion its highest approbation by placing it on the universal liturgical calendar to be celebrated as "Divine Mercy Sunday", the first Sunday after Easter and by canonizing Sister Faustina, the nun to whom Jesus entrusted the message of His mercy for the Modern World. Jesus confided His fondness for Poland to Saint Faustina and the special role Poland will play in preparing the world for His coming:

"I bear a special love for Poland, and if she will be obedient to My will, I will exalt her in might and holiness. From her will come forth the spark that will prepare the world for My final coming" (Diary, 1732).

The red and white of polish flag is an icon of the water and blood, the red and white rays that flow as a font of mercy for mankind from the heart of Jesus opened on Mt. Calvary. Out of Poland will come the spark that will prepare the world for his "final coming" The fire has already been lit by this Divine Spark. Failure of the previously reliable Intelligence Community to understand or to seriously account for this spiritual and political verity (occurring daily before all eyes that are able to objectively discern world events) is the cause of their increasing inability to correctly forecast political events with much accuracy. American foreign policy is in a state of confusion. Around the world, people are expressing discontent with the liberal agenda of the American State Department, which is having a difficult time accepting the fact that many people do not share

America's values or its "good guy" vision of itself. America is not the judge and jury of sovereign nations. Many people do not appreciate the political and economic agenda of liberalism or its idea of freedom, nor do they appreciate interference and political manipulation of their countries sovereign affairs by the manipulative infusion of foreign aid that in the name of freedom works against freedom by enslaving unsuspecting people in debt and the bondage of cultural perversion contrary to their own national, cultural and spiritual patrimony.

Liberalism has been unceasingly at work for two hundred years gradually reaching a crescendo that is resounding throughout the world. Because liberalism has reached the crescendo stage, its take on political, economic, and moral ideas such as free enterprise, rule by secular law and irresponsible freedom are manifesting the fruit by which they are known. What once sounded good and appeared innocent to many people no longer sounds so good to so many. Not only in third world countries but also in the newly emerging democracies of Eastern Europe and in major countries of Western Europe, Christian men and women and those with a sense of morality, Christian and non-Christian are waking up to the alarming reality that they have been asleep too long and are beginning to rise in opposition. Before this can happen to any great extent, it is predictable that liberal forces will first work to oppose the unexpected turn of events and to keep them out of the news. When this is no longer feasible, it will attempt a race to the finish line to complete its agenda before the opportunity slips away.

Just as the forces of anti-Christian, anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish liberalism were planning their victory maneuvers in the name of "Liberty", just when a liberal victory seemed at hand, Russia removed itself from the Western camp and began to reassert its Christian patrimony. It is the first country to recognize and understand the damage being done in the false name of freedom, mammon and God; they are incompatible ([Luke 16:13](#)). Fully aware of the political game and knowing how to manipulate it, Russia has become the vanguard of resistance to the liberal revolution.

The Russian turn-around was unexpected by everyone except the intelligence community of the Catholic Church. These men and women who understand scripture; who are well versed in philosophy and theology, social science and culture; who are in tune with the Fatima Message and to the hand of God working in history expected a Russian turn around, expected that Russia would be converted. That moment has arrived and it is changing everything.

Intelligence forecasters, if they are to be of any value, must adopt a valid, that is an empirically verifiable theological perspective and accept the consequences of factoring this perspective into their reports or they will continue their downward trend until they fail miserably. They can either discern and tell the truth or, like the prophets of Baal, remain committed to the power and economic benefit that makes them political sycophants of their overlords. Political correctness, and the intelligence community that supports it, work well when the Hand of Providence permits the implementation of their agenda and concurrently, when there are no men and women like Elijah to challenge them with the truth. Elijah saw the hand of God at work, a hand that the prophets of Baal failed to discern because they were not serving God and were providing intelligence to men interested in such things only to the extent that it served as a front to advance their own agenda. Intelligence forecasters such as these when unchallenged by the Spirit of Elijah are usually correct in their analysis, not because they possess any extra-special insight, but because the combination of Divine permissiveness, military power, economic might, and media control make forecasting a somewhat easy business.

This is a situation that is rapidly changing. The divine hand of the Trinity appears to be providing a prophesied moment of grace, what some call a "New Evangelization, others an "Hour of Mercy", and what the Mother of God at Fatima referred to as an "Era of Peace". The Orthodox Church in Russia, various Protestant denominations in America and the Catholic Church throughout the world are in spiritual and social motion. There is a discernible spiritual energy in the air. Throughout the world societies are being affected by religious

renewal, but, not as previously, by churches and religions that have become secularized, nor by a form of secular humanism that has become sacralized, but by authentic Trinitarian Christian renewal.[\[5\]](#) Although imperceptible in the West, this trend is increasingly evident in the East and is becoming more evident in Europe and throughout the globe.

Failure to take this ever increasing religious factor into account is the “Achilles Heel” of the contemporary intelligence community. Theological analysis, which factors in ongoing spiritual renewal **coupled with traditional geopolitical analysis** is needed. Theopolitical Intelligence (*Theopolitics*) is the intelligence of the future, the only intelligence that can be trusted for accuracy because it endeavors to discern the Hand of God at work in political, economic, social, and cosmological current events, the “signs of the times”.

END NOTES

[\[1\]](#) Geopolitics studies the interaction of states based on geography (including topography and climate), which shape culture and impact political decision making. Because geography is stable, it is presumed that political reactions are predictable recurring events. These presumptions help the observer to understand political actions and to predict conflict and probable response patterns between and among nations.

[\[2\]](#) For example, the Protestant tendency to equate capitalism with Christianity (conservatism) or of various denominations which at one time defended life in the womb but increasingly support a right to abortion: Quakers (American Friends Service Committee); Lutheran Church in America; Presbyterian Church; Reorganized LDS; Unitarian Universalist; United Church of Christ; United Methodist Church; the Episcopal Church; the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Moravian Church in America. SOURCE: Protestant Churches and Abortion,

<http://www.life.org.nz/abortion/abortionreligiouskeyissues/christian-religions/>

The same could be said about feminism and female clerics, sexual orientation, and, in extreme cases, American Foreign Policy, and the quasi-religious myth of American exceptionalism (i.e. the City on a Hill motif).

[3] By sacralizing the secular, we mean that secular values becomes pervasive and increasingly sacrosanct, the standard by which even religious matters are judged.

According to Grondelski, December 2015, "*The Danger of Theocratic Majoritarianism*":

"In the end, the decision to embrace secularism is as much a faith choice as is embracing a particular religion. Secularism after all, makes certain assumptions about the person, society, and the world out of which flows a certain axiology, a certain set of value judgments". In short, overtime, the secular becomes sacred.

[4] Abraham Lincoln, July 27, (1838) *The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions*: Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois.
<http://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/lyceum.htm>

[5] For example, according to Patriarch Kirill Primate of Moscow and All Russia:

"It is very important that all healthy forces of the society today unite for the true revival of Russia. The Church, science, art, culture, education, sport – all these things should work for strengthening spiritual foundations of our person."

"The things which define the true revival are connected with the person's spiritual life."

Likewise, according to the President Putin, “First and foremost we should be governed by common sense. But common sense should be based on moral principles first. And it is not possible today to have morality separated from religious values.”

(http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/article/0,28804,1690753_1690757_1695787-3,00.html)

“We stand against legalization and legal justification of homosexual ‘marriages’ and other outrages in the sphere of ethics” (Interfax, Dec. 9).

Syria and Russia Clearly Gaining Upper Hand against Terrorists while Globalists Look On

TERRORISTS OCCUPYING EASTERN ALEPPO are surrounded by the Syrian army aided by local militia, militia who have gained courage to fight back against terrorists who have occupied their city for years. The Russians and Syrians have established safe exit corridors for civilians but the rebels have refused to let them leave. Consequently, the fighting has continued with thousands of civilians trapped in the city. As expected, the complete liberation of Aleppo by the Syrian Army backed by the Russian Airforce is days away.

According to Canadian diplomat Pat Armstrong, Western leaders are facing a situation they are unaccustomed to, the rebel troops they are supporting are being beaten and about to lose the city of Aleppo. On top of this looming defeat, public opinion in Syria and throughout the world is increasingly turning against imperial liberal overreach into the affairs of sovereign nations. Facing a situation that is getting out of their control, the globalists are not sure what to do to contain it.

The UN and United States have called for another cease fire, but the Syrians are not cooperating. They see it as a ploy that works to their disadvantage. All prior cease fires requested by the UN have been unsuccessful – fighting always erupts after the rebels have been resupplied, regrouped and regained strength; they have never been expelled from the city.

Consequently, the United States and its coalition partners have little alternative but to call for a new round of sanctions to be imposed on the allies of Syria: Russia and Iran who are helping them to defeat ISIL, al Nusra and Daeash. Thus, to garner support for new sanctions and to turn public opinion against Russia, which is winning the war, [according to the President Obama's White House Press Secretary](#) the Russians are bombing civilians and inhibiting humanitarian supplies from reaching Aleppo:

“A humanitarian disaster is taking place before our very eyes. Some 200,000 civilians, including many children, in eastern Aleppo are cut off from food and medicine supplies. Aleppo is being subjected to daily bombings and artillery attacks by the Syrian regime, supported by Russia and Iran.”

“We are ready to consider additional restrictive measures against individuals and entities that act for or on behalf

of the Syrian regime”

This announcement comes in the wake of the December 3-4 fall of terrorist forces in E Aleppo. Over the weekend the Syrian Army offered the terrorists a peace treaty in return for their leaving the city, but the terrorists refused the offer to vacate and also refused to let civilians exit by safety corridors established by the Russians and Syrians for this purpose.

Why the Syrian army would want to withhold humanitarian aid to Syrian citizens whom its soldiers are risking their lives to rescue and defend is unclear. It is also unclear why the citizens of Aleppo are cheering the Syrian army and carrying pictures of Assad. According to the [Syrian Free Press](#):

“Residents of the Eastern parts of Aleppo city took to the streets holding up pictures of Syrian President Bashar Assad and requesting militants to leave Aleppo immediately...A video footage released on Thursday showed picture of President Assad put on the entrance gate of a mosque, several Arabic-language media outlets reported. The video showed Bashar Assad’s picture on the gate of Abu Bakr al-Sadiq mosque in Sakhor district.

“According to reports on Thursday, militants that control the Eastern part of Aleppo are trying to suppress mass protests of local residents against their rule. Meanwhile, Al Manar TV channel reported that dozens of people gathered in the Bustan al-Qasr district where one of the humanitarian corridors has been established by the army for civilians to leave the city.”



Image of President Bashar Assad Portrayed in eastern Aleppo Being Freed by Syrian Army

Apparently, the Syrians backed by Russia and Iran have the clear advantage and are not about to let go of it. Nor are they overcome with worries about threatened sanctions and wartime propaganda. In-coming President Donald Trump has indicated that he will put a halt to US nation building and interference in the internal affairs of sovereign nations as well as his willingness to work with the Russian against the terrorist rather than with the terrorists against the Russians and the democratically elected leader of a sovereign nation.

"I do think it's a different world today, and [I don't think we should be nation-building anymore](#)," Trump said. "I think it's proven not to work, and we have a different country than we did then. We have \$19 trillion in debt. We're sitting, probably, on a bubble. And it's a bubble that if it breaks, it's going to be very nasty. I just think we have to rebuild our country."

Trump is also "harshly critical" of John F. Kerry the current Secretary of State and has "questioned the United States' continued involvement in NATO." Along these lines, Mr. Trump has indicated that he seeks to remain neutral in

relations with Israel. He also [told the Washington Post editorial board that he would reduce expenditures on NATO](#), consider closing American bases abroad and adopt an “unabashedly non-interventionist approach to world affairs.”

According to the Post:

In spite of unrest abroad, Trump advocates a light footprint in the world, especially in the Middle East. Trump said the [United States must look inward and steer its resources toward rebuilding domestic infrastructure.](#)”

Currently, the world is raising up against global liberalism and Syria is at the center of the resistance at a time that American hegemony and nation building is being challenged around the globe; it looks as if it is about to be curtailed.

Recently (July 2016), a survey of respondents from 18 European countries was conducted by IFOP, the oldest public polling outlet in France. [According to poll results](#) with a margin of error per country of +/- 3.1% and a confidence level of 95%:

“The majority of people in Germany (69%), France (55%) and Italy (51%) believe that the United States did a poor job as the only superpower and global leader after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.”

“When asked if the United States had succeeded as a global leader after the collapse of the Soviet Union, only 24% of Germans, 35% of French people and 42% of Italians gave a positive response.”

It appears as if the uni-polar world dominated by global-liberalism (the neo-con and neo-liberal dream for a Pax

Americana) is eroding. First the collapse of communism and now we are witnessing the collapse of global liberalism as the world moves relentlessly toward a “New Era” of human development, an Era of Peace. With Trump poised to take office, we may soon see a more cooperative international effort consisting of the United States, Europe and Russia.

Currently, the relationship is more and more strained. The EU is still reeling from Under Secretary of State Barbara Nuland’s feverish renunciation telling them to F**K OFF because they were seeking a peaceful resolution to the Ukrainian crisis rather than the interventionist, violent coup scenario preferred by the Americans:

According to BBC diplomatic correspondent Jonathan Marcus describing events that led to the Nuland profanity:

“The EU is divided and to some extent hesitant about picking a fight with Moscow. It certainly cannot win a short-term battle for Ukraine’s affections with Moscow – it just does not have the cash inducements available. The EU has sought to play a longer game; banking on its attraction over time. But the US clearly is determined to take a much more activist role.” So [“F**k the EU”](#)

With this type of attitude it not difficult to see why US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Ministry Sergei Lavrov have continually failed to reach an agreement over Syria. The United States wants President Bashar Assad out and they are willing to use terrorists to get the job done while simultaneously claiming to be fighting the terrorists.

The Russians, confident that the Syrian people will re-elect Assad want to hold a democratic election to let the Syrian people decide who there next president will be. They also insist that the terrorists must be defeated; Trump apparently agrees with them. Because the Russians are opposing the terrorists and the US supporting them, the US and Russia are at odds. The Russians want the terrorists out and the

Americans need them to fight the Syrian Army. Consequently, the loss of the primary terrorist stronghold in the central city of Aleppo is quite a blow to American strategy in Syria and the greater Middle East.

Today, as the Syrian Army is preparing the final liberation of Aleppo the United Nations (UN) adopted a draft-resolution on Syria (submitted last year-adopted today). By a vote of 122 in favor and 13 opposed, the resolution acknowledges that the future of Syria should be determined by “an inclusive and Syrian-led political process.” To reach this goal it requests the establishment of “an inclusive transitional governing body with full executive powers.”

[According to a UN Press Release:](#)

*“The Security Council today endorsed a road map for a peace process in Syria, setting out an early-January timetable for United Nations-facilitated talks between the Government and opposition members, **as well as the outlines of a nationwide ceasefire** to begin as soon as the parties concerned had taken initial steps towards a political transition*

This is *not* a peace making move. Not only does the resolution call for a cease-fire (something neither the Russians nor the Syrians are likely to accept), it also stipulates that Assad must go. According to the Working Paper, [“Syria’s Transition Governance and Constitutional Options”](#) prepared by the Carter Center:

“[The United Nations Security Council Resolution](#) (UNSCR or SCR) 2254 (2015) calls for a new constitution for Syria to be approved within 18 months and for internationally supervised elections to be held under the new constitution. It also calls for an “inclusive transitional governing body with full executive powers, which shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent while ensuring continuity of government institutions” (Preamble Para. 5).”

*“However, the resolution is silent on the constitutional arrangements required for the 18-month transition period during which a transitional governing body will be exercising executive powers. The Syrian opposition and its international supporters interpret Para. 5 to mean **President Assad must relinquish executive powers from the outset of, or early during, the transition.**”*

Newera does not believe that the Russians or Syrians so close to victory will accept the terms of this resolution.

Moreover, the Russians are adamantly opposed to the American interpretation of events related to Syria and are determined to keep Assad in power until a free election can take place, an election that includes Assad. The Russians and Americans continue to have different versions of the war effort in Syria.

According to the Russians the United States along with its allies Saudi Arabia and Turkey are responsible for the unrest in Syria and for the creation and support of ISIS, and other related terrorist organizations. The unrest in Syria is interpreted as another covert operation to topple a legitimate government because it is opposed to the foreign policy initiatives of Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the United States and to their liberal anti-Christian agenda. Syria is seen as another in a series of “spring revolutions” promoted by covert intelligence units such as the CIA and Mossad *et al.* President Obama *has even admitted to some of this:*

<https://youtu.be/toIPvS9Pwgg>

President-elect Trump has even accused Obama of being the founder of ISIS:

“In many respects, you know, they honor President Obama,” Mr. Trump told a raucous and rowdy crowd in Florida on Wednesday night. “He’s the founder of ISIS. He’s the founder of ISIS. He’s the founder. He founded ISIS.”

The US State Department under President Obama has claimed there is a civil war in Syria to overthrow the butcher Assad. It is difficult to accept the veracity of this statement when in fact the Syrian Army has been, and is, extremely loyal to Assad as are the people of Syria. Given Trump’s adamant statement about ISIS and Obama’s tacit approval as well as the facts on the ground and others unmentioned for sake of brevity, it is simply difficult to accept the veracity of this statement.

If there was a civil war in Syria, a civil war supported and backed by the United States and a coalition of over fifty nations including the citizens and dissatisfied elements of the Syrian armed forces in addition to an overwhelmingly large cadre of rebels imported from throughout the Middle East, all against Assad, Assad should have been overthrown a long time ago. Yet, after five years he is still president and growing stronger. Given more than ample opportunity and plenty of time, the Syrian people have not risen up in revolt against their president. Instead, they are being held captive by terrorists supported by the United States, and Assad is increasingly seen by the Syrian people as their champion; he is the one who is freeing them from the stranglehold of the terrorists in such places as Aleppo. Consequently, against all odds and predictions, Assad has the growing support of the Syrian Army, which, with Russian air support, is ridding the country of foreign sponsored terrorism.

The United States should be fighting with Assad against the

terrorists, not arming terrorists to fight against Assad. This whole scenario seems unreasonable; it is a scenario that because it is unreasonable, Trump, being a reasonable man, does not grasp; he is looking to work with the Russia to defeat the terrorists, to defend the rights of a sovereign nation and the will of its people. The incoming Trump administration is likely to focus on defeating ISIS and Daesh. In light of this, it is highly probable that the US and Russia will do the reasonable thing and cooperate. This scenario is anathema to the globalists who prosper by engineering division and unrest necessary to advance their global liberal agenda and to protect their multinational financial and economic interests to the detriment of many people. But as Newera continues to forecast, this is all coming to an end. The fall of Aleppo, taken in concert with the surging crescendo of rising nations, is another clear sign of the impending debacle of liberalism.

Pope Francis and The Ultra Conservatives Continued

AS PRESENTED IN PART ONE, Pope Francis is doing his theology from an integral heart-mind unity, that is, integral dogmatic and pastoral theology. Because pastoral decision making is often “fuzzy” because it deals with “grey” matters that are not black and white, a document such as [*Amoris Laetitia*](#) , is also somewhat obtuse. Nonetheless, at every point there is an ambiguity there is also a clarification close by or previously stated in the document. Often times the ambiguity is on the part of the reader who misses what the pope is actually

saying. His method is not to write this exhortation in black or white but to leave it somewhat grey because pastoral theology is itself somewhat grey. However, for those who can see in grey, it is not overly difficult to discern what the pope is communicating.

Thus, it is necessary to put on a grey lens before proceeding to review the document.

Having done so, it should be possible to read the so-called problematic paragraphs and interpret them pastorally in order to show that they are indeed clear enough. Pope Francis' writing style is, in fact, rather ingenious; it could be argued that it is an illustrative exercise birthing pastoral thinking. That is, it is intended to induce pastoral thought in the mind of the reader, if he or she is capable and willing to engage in that type of thought rather than the simple black and white thought of dogmatic theology that many have grown accustomed to.

Most Catholics are aware of, or have heard that, the Church's approach to scripture is "Systematic". Systematic theology is uniquely Catholic theology. It means that every scripture must be interpreted in the light of all the other scriptures because scripture forms one unified whole, one body of infallible truth. No scripture should be interpreted in isolation from other scriptures. Most certainly scripture cannot be interpreted correctly if other passages are ignored or treated as if they did not exist.

This is the case with *Amoris Laetitia*. The document must be read and interpreted in its entirety not in parts, "cherry picking" difficult passages and interpreting them in isolation from the rest of the document, from points that have been made elsewhere that clarify the issue.

For example, Pope Francis specifically states:

"This discernment (to live together under the conditions just stated and perhaps others) can never prescind from the Gospel demands of truth and charity, as proposed by the Church... 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” (para 300).

Clearly, exceptions are infrequent and not easily given! Moreover, according to Pope Francis

“It must be said that, precisely for that reason, what is part of a practical discernment in particular circumstances cannot be elevated to the level of a rule. That would not only lead to an intolerable casuistry, but would endanger the very values which must be preserved with special care” (para 304).

As will be illustrated below, Pope Francis upholds traditional church teaching on marriage; his intent is to uphold the “very values which must be preserved with special care”. Although his pastoral theology might at first glance appear to be leading in another direction, a close and systematic read will clearly show that it does not; as he states; “it may never prescind from the Gospel demands of truth and charity, as proposed by the Church. *Amoris Laetitia* does not prescind from the Gospel. The difficult paragraphs must adhere to the perennial truths upheld by the Church according to the pope’s own statements within the document (para 300 and 304).

THE SO-CALLED DIFFICULT PARAGRAPHS (300-305)

Para 300

“Priests have the duty to “accompany [the divorced and remarried] in helping them to understand their situation according to the teaching of the Church and the guidelines of the bishop... What we are speaking of is a process of accompaniment (the couple is not alone) and discernment which

*“guides the faithful to an awareness of their situation before God. **Conversation with the priest, in the internal forum, contributes to the formation of a correct judgment on what hinders the possibility of a fuller participation in the life of the Church and on what steps can foster it and make it grow”***

1. “Given that gradualness is not in the law itself (cf. Familiaris Consortio, 34), this discernment can never prescind from the Gospel demands of truth and charity, as proposed by the Church.... 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.”

Actually, the entire dilemma is solved right here. Francis clearly states that in helping divorced and remarried understand their situation, priests must do so **“according to the teaching of the Church”**. He is concerned about the establishment of a relationship so that there can actually be a **“process of accompaniment and discernment”** necessary to **“guide the faithful”** to the truth of their situation as they stand before God. It is due to such a close bond between priest and couple that it becomes possible to eventually form a **“correct judgement”**, a correct judgement that is highly unlikely unless a relationship exists in which a priest pastor is guiding a couple to the truth about their relationship before God, how to improve it, and what steps can be taken to obtain fuller participation in the life of the Church – a judgmental attitude practically makes all of this impossible.

Para 301

“For an adequate understanding of the possibility and need of special discernment in certain “irregular” situations, one

thing must always be taken into account, lest anyone think that the demands of the Gospel are in any way being compromised. The Church possesses a solid body of reflection concerning mitigating factors and situations. Hence it is can no longer simply (automatically) be said that all those in any "irregular" situation" are living in a state of mortal sin and are deprived of sanctifying grace. More is involved here than mere ignorance of the rule (which is as mitigating circumstance-but there are other more detailed and better ones). A subject may know full well the rule, yet have great difficulty in understanding "its inherent values" or be in a concrete situation which does not allow him or her to act differently and decide otherwise without further sin (for example not being able to live singly and afford taking care of the children thus sending them to public school because the Catholic school is not affordable or because a father figure is needed due to family alienation coupled with living in a crime ridden neighborhood.)

Because it is clear that their are mitigating circumstances such as fear, duress, ignorance etc. there is room for mitigation in the case of the divorced and remarried.

"That servant who knew his master's will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely; and the servant who was ignorant of his master's will but acted in a way deserving of a severe beating shall be beaten only lightly. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more" ([Luke 12:47-48](#)).

An irregular situation is not necessary a sinful situation. In fact, Saint Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary lived in a highly "irregular situation"; could they receive Holy Communion?

An unmarried couple or a couple married civilly might be

living in continence or earnestly striving to overcome their physical attraction – it does happen. Francis' point, I believe, is that continence is more likely to be achieved to the extent that the couple shares a close relationship with a priest and participates in the life of the Church as long as they are committed to improving and striving to do so including regular confession, prayer and penance.

Para 302

*“The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly mentions these factors: “imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by **ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors**” (that inhibit a free decision necessary for a “human act” versus “an act of man” – a human act requires both knowledge and willful consent, an act of man is an act done by a human but under compulsion without a free will or with a free will but in ignorance). In another paragraph, the Catechism refers once again to circumstances which mitigate moral responsibility, and mentions at length “**affective immaturity, force of acquired habit, conditions of anxiety** or other psychological or social factors that lessen or even extenuate moral culpability. Under certain circumstances people find it very difficult to act differently. Therefore, while upholding a general rule, it is necessary to recognize that responsibility with respect to certain actions or decisions is not the same in all cases.”*

Francis is merely pointing out the more common mitigating factors, but he is not excusing anyone; they are still “responsible” for their actions and decisions; however, before any black and white judgments are made, mitigating factors should be considered and if applicable, applied.

Para 303

“Naturally, every effort should be made to encourage the development of an enlightened conscience, formed and guided by the responsible and serious discernment of one’s pastor, and to encourage an ever greater trust in God’s grace. Yet conscience can do more than recognize that a given situation does not correspond objectively to the overall demands of the Gospel. It can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for now is the most generous response which can be given to God, and come to see with a certain moral security that it is what God himself is asking amid the concrete complexity of one’s limits, while yet not fully the objective ideal. In any event, let us recall that this discernment is dynamic; it must remain ever open to new stages of growth and to new decisions which can enable the ideal to be more fully realized.”

An “enlightened conscience” must be sought and its chance of occurring is greatly increased when a priest is present and able to act as a spiritual guide. The pastor can help a couple recognize and cooperate with God’s grace to become consistently better. It is not enough to tell a couple that they do not correspond objectively to the overall demands of the Gospel and then leave them – that is a black and white dogmatic judgment, not a loving pastoral one. Pastoral care begins when a priest discerns the situation and if after discerning it he does make such a judgement, he is in a position to now help educate and form the consciences of the couple before him. It is too easy to merely say you are sinning and cannot receive the sacraments – this is not love!

Para 304

“I earnestly ask that we always recall a teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas and learn to incorporate it in our pastoral discernment: “Although there is necessity in the general principles, the more we descend to matters of detail, the more frequently we encounter defects (in the head it is

*all perfect but not in realty)... In matters of action, truth or practical rectitude is not the same for all, as to matters of detail, but only as to the general principles; and where there is the same rectitude in matters of detail, it is not equally known to all... The principle will be found to fail, according as we descend further into detail. **It is true that general rules set forth a good which can never be disregarded or neglected, but in their formulation they cannot provide absolutely for all** (Summa Theologiae, I-II, q. 94, art. 4.236) particular situations.”*

Now, appealing to Saint Thomas Aquinas, Pope Francis is appealing to perhaps the all time favorite of the ultra-conservative crowd (one of my own too). The pope is simply making the point that was iterated in Part One about pastoral and dogmatic theology, speculative and practical thought and the necessity of fusing heart and mind in decision making. It is clear that Pope Francis knows what he is talking about, he is the Vicar of Christ after-all. Quoting Aquinas, he clearly states that “ **general rule, principle or truth can “never be disregarded.”**

HOW MUCH CLEARER CAN IT GET?

However, in their particular “*formulation*” or application, general rules are no longer universal. This is not the pope’s opinion; it is the constant teaching of Aristotelian Philosophy and Scholastic Theology. Aquinas’ “[Treatise on Man](#)” (the human soul) and “Aristotle’s [De Anima](#)” are tough reading, perhaps this helps explain why some ultra-conservatives do not get it. Nonetheless, the issue is clear and the pope has firm grasp of metaphysics and the essence, powers and operations of the human soul a highly abstract and difficult intellectual attainment; few come away having mastered it like the pope has.

PARA 304 Continued

“At the same time, it must be said that, precisely for that reason, what is part of a practical discernment in particular circumstances cannot be elevated to the level of a rule. That would not only lead to an intolerable casuistry, but would endanger the very values which must be preserved with special care.”

Again, Pope Francis is simply correct, a particular practical discernment cannot be elevated to the level of a general rule, to the level of an absolute truth or an ontological judgement. This again is proof enough that he does *not* condone illicit relationships. No matter how great a particular mitigating circumstance might be, it can never replace the general truth given by Christ to man in both the natural and divine laws. **If a licit mitigating circumstance cannot rise to the level of a general truth then certainly the licit but potentially illicit behavior that it makes acceptable can never rise to the level of a general truth – that would “endanger the very values which must be preserved with special care.”** The pope is saying so much clearly right here – why all the confusion? Pope Francis is in absolute support of the truth and demonstrates it to wise and loving eyes that can look and see. In fact, he even states that the very truths and “values” that we hold dear *“must be preserved with special care.”* He is not excusing sin; he is mercifully and pastorally guiding souls to the best of his ability within the objective parameters of the law, stretching it to its horizontal bounds as Christ spread His arms on the cross.

Para 305

“For this reason, a pastor cannot feel that it is enough simply to apply moral laws to those living in “irregular” situations, as if they were stones to throw at people’s lives. This would bespeak the closed heart of one used to hiding behind the Church’s teachings, “sitting on the chair of Moses and judging at times with superiority and

superficiality difficult cases and wounded families". Let us remember that "a small step (like having the couple sleep in separate rooms) (making a house rule and vowing to stick to it) (vowing that they will always be fully dressed in front of each other; agreeing to have separate rooms etc.) in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order, but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties" (that is, a life where everything is in order and abundantly provided for. One might be a life fully screwed up, dysfunctional family, unformed conscience, the whole thing, the other hardly a care). The practical pastoral care of ministers and of communities must not fail to embrace this reality."

FOOTNOTE THAT GOES WITH PARA 305:

"In certain cases, this can include the help of the sacraments. Hence, "I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber, but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy" (Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium [24 November 2013], 44: AAS 105 [2013], 1038). I would also point out that the Eucharist "is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak" (ibid., 47: 1039)."

Christ is merciful, so merciful that he wants to excuse sinners. He did not come to condemn them but to forgive them. To the extent that a couple feels love and compassion coming at them from the Church community, they are all the more likely to open up and cooperate with their pastor. Of course, the pope is presuming that "small steps" in difficult situations are being made, that confession is taking place, and people are making a real effort to improve – like a penitent homosexual trying to refrain from illicit relationships and going to confession, he or she might

backslide, in fact, falls are expected. But to the extent that they are sincere, penitent and really trying, to that extent the mercy of God is showered over them, communion is denied to no one who has confessed and is sincerely trying to live a proper life.

Thus, Cardinal Ratzinger taught

*“If the divorced are remarried civilly, they find themselves in a situation that **objectively contravenes God’s law**. Consequently, they cannot receive Holy Communion as long as this situation persists. ... The faithful who persist in such a situation **may receive Holy Communion only after obtaining sacramental absolution** ... when for serious reasons, for example, for the children’s upbringing, a man and a woman cannot satisfy the obligation to separate, **they take on themselves the duty to live in complete continence**, that is, by abstinence from the acts proper to married couples.”*

Pope John Paul II stated the same:

*“Reconciliation in the sacrament of Penance which would open the way to the Eucharist, can only be granted to those who, repenting of having broken the sign of the Covenant and of fidelity to Christ, are **sincerely ready to undertake a way of life that is no longer in contradiction to the indissolubility of marriage**. This means, in practice, that when, for serious reasons, such as for example the children’s upbringing, a man and a woman cannot satisfy the obligation to separate, they **“take on themselves the duty to live in complete continence**, that is, by abstinence from the acts proper to married couples” ([Familiaris Consortio, 84](#)).*

Pope Francis, Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI all agree; civilly remarried divorcees must go to confession and strive to be chaste (in mind and body) and have a valid and compelling reason for living together that precludes sexual

encounter.

A priest leading people this way is exercising real pastoral care. **Sins are not being excused; sinners are being healed.**

Penitents are being chastised, but they are being chastised by wisdom in mercy and love.

These situations present real pastoral moments that should be cherished, moments that bring people closer to Christ and to His Church while at the same time gently putting discipline into the lives of penitent sinners in the context of mercy and love. If they fall, as expected they will, they are to be corrected, forgiven, and encouraged to take up the cross again. According to tradition, even Jesus fell three times and He told us to forgive [seventy seven times](#). He knows we all will fall, so why are we upset when a divorced and re-married couple fail at chastity when they are sincerely trying to attain it? More specifically, why is anyone upset when a divorced-remarried couple for the sake of the children vow to live with each other in chastity, frequent confession, regularly pray and sacrifice under the direction of a pastor who is leading them to spiritual perfection because they love and trust him who first showed mercy and compassion to them while gently guiding them and progressively leading them to the fullness of truth and communion?