

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.