

New Age Globalists in Guise of Geopolitical Analysts Trying to Hijack Era of Peace

[New Era World News](#)

ANY IMPARTIAL OBSERVER OF GLOBAL EVENT can discern the Hand of God at work in the world as [Russia is being converted](#) and the nations of the world are one by one in the process of rejecting global liberalism while many are reasserting their Christian patrimonies ([Western Europe](#), [Eastern Europe](#), [Africa](#), [Poland](#), [France](#), [Asia](#), [Argentina](#), [Middle East](#)).

While New Era has been reporting on these changes since its inception, secular and liberal pundits have also begun to observe the many changes occurring world-wide. They are, however, **misinterpreting, and thus misrepresenting, them as a *political movements***, movements referred to as [“Populist”](#), when in fact these are primarily moral, cultural, spiritual and religious movements. However, there is at least one commentator, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, a much more sophisticated player, who realizes that the fast-paced global movement underway is *not* a typical populist cry for economic justice, but a deeper more rotund-paradigmatic movement having cultural, moral and spiritual dimensions as well. One of the few think-tank/institutes that recognizes the unique and broad scope of the current global movement is the [Schiller Institute](#). The Schiller Institute bills itself as the “Forum for a New Paradigm” and a “New Era of Civilization.” LaRouche recently stated at Schiller Institute Seminar (Jan. 11, 2017):

“What we see right now is a completely new paradigm

emerging... Obviously the idea for what was the axiomatic basis of the globalization system since 1991 to insist on a unipolar world, is failing, or has failed already."

Summarizing her presentation in which she called for a new international economic order and the revival of a classical Renaissance in culture, the [LaRouche PAC](#) stated:

"Sublime, is the only fitting word to describe Helga Zepp-LaRouche's deep and beautiful presentation and the atmosphere she created... at the Schiller Institute/EIR seminar held in Stockholm on January 11th, under the title "Donald Trump and the New International Paradigm." Her speech moved the audience to address the fundamental epistemological, deeper meaning... of mankind in the universe. This deeper meaning even touched the diplomats present... In all, there were seventeen diplomats among them seven ambassadors. Four European countries were represented, nine from Asia, and four from Africa... Among the other participants there were contacts from different Swedish associations working for friendship with Russia, Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, the Baltic Sea area, and another group working to leave the EU, as well as three businessmen contacts and longtime activists of the Swedish LaRouche Movement.

A few days later, after the Trump inauguration, Helga percipiently stated:

"The next days will witness many revolutionary developments, qualitatively new, resembling nothing ever seen previously in all of human history. But there is one thing which is known now, and already is inevitable and unavoidable. Their system (neocon-liberalism) is finished. It is over, and it can never come back. Yes, they can raise a ruckus, as they are doing. They can make a bloody mess if they are allowed to—but they will never be able to bring that system back from the grave. Thank God, now we are done with it forever.

Almost immediately following the results of the Presidential election, Lyndon LaRouche announced that ["it was not \(only\) the United States that had rejected Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and everything they stood for—it was the world that had rejected them. It was a global phenomenon."](#)

LaRouche is correct about a "completely new paradigm emerging". However, **she misrepresents it as a Schiller Institute initiative** aimed at rectifying the many errors of a rapidly eroding neo-liberal world that has characterized modernity.

In discussing LaRouche's ideas in an online intelligence report, members of the Schiller Institute reveal the ideological potency of the founder's ideas and initiatives:

*"He (LaRouche) went on to point to the success of the (his) Manhattan Project—of organizing the American people around the necessity, and possibility, of choral beauty—despite all of its difficulties (see [EIR, Jan. 8, 2016](#)). **That Manhattan Project is now the key to history**; if LaRouche had not launched it as he did in October 2014, now all would be lost.*

Who are the LaRouche's, what is the Schiller Institute, and exactly how does an institute whose analysis of the situation is so astute offer solutions that run contrary to the vision for an *Era of Peace* expressed by the Mother of God at Fatima?

What Does LaRouche Say that Sounds So Sublime and Convincing?

LaRouche hopes to gain her listener's confidence by being an astute observer of the the global liberal demise and by presenting herself as an opponent of effete liberalism and of decadent liberal culture. According to the [Schiller Institute](#)

"The clock of mankind has advanced to a point where the old lackluster ways will no longer work. According to all

established criteria, mankind has gambled away all its chances for survival. Too many catastrophes are crowding in upon us, the entropic process has proceeded too far and the rift between the U.S.A. and Western Europe is all but accomplished."

Demonstrating her astute observation skills, the collapse of liberalism, and subsequent opportunities for an *Era of Peace* she states:

*"We are indeed in very, very fascinating times. And I think there is much reason to be hopeful....There are accumulations of strategic realignments which have shaped up over the last three years, but especially in the last year, where one can actually see that the potential for a completely new kind of relation among nations is on the horizon, and that **we may actually have the chance to bring a peaceful world.**"*

Adding to the sublimity of her message, Ms. LaRouche states:

*"**What we see right now is a completely new paradigm emerging,** a system which is based on the development of all, a "win-win" potential to cooperate among nations, and obviously the idea for what was the axiomatic basis of the globalization system since 1991 to insist on a unipolar world, is failing, or has failed already. And with that, a system which tried to maintain this unipolar world with the policy of regime change, of color revolution, or humanitarian intervention, or so-called humanitarian intervention to defend democracy and human rights, obviously has led the world to a terrible condition, but this is now coming to an end."*

Then, in language reminiscent of recent New Age Reports, she traces the movement's etiology:

["It started in a visible form with the vote of the British population in June last year for the Brexit, which was the](#)

first real upset; everybody was taken totally unawares, except a few insiders. This anti-globalization revolt was obviously continued with the election of President Donald Trump in the United States; it was continued with the ["no" to the Italian referendum](#) organized by Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, to change the Constitution.

LaRouche is avante-garde, progressive and intellectually confident, enough to be an advocate of cooperation between the United States and Russia because such cooperation can usher in an *Era of Peace*. In her own words:

*"So the fact that Hillary did not win the election was **extremely important for the maintenance of world peace**. And I think that of all the promises that Trump made so far, the fact that he said that he will normalize the relationship between the United States and Russia, is, in my view the most important step. Because if the relationship between the United States and Russia is decent, and is based on trust and cooperation, I think there is a basis to solve all other problems in the world."*

LaRouche even gets the roles of the United States and Russia in Syria and the Middle East correct – a very astute observer indeed:

*"Ash Carter, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, just gave a press conference where he said that **it was only the United States which has fought ISIS in Syria**. Now, it takes some nerve to say that, because **everybody in the whole world knows** that without President Putin's decision to militarily intervene in Syria starting in September 2015, and the tremendous support of the Russian Aerospace Forces for the fighting of the Syrian troops, the present military situation in Syria would have never developed. And it was to the contrary, the very dubious behavior of the United States supporting various kinds of terrorist groups which prolonged this process and*

slowed it down.”

Evaluating the Trump effect, LaRouche correctly ties it to a global phenomenon (because the *Era of Peace* is a global phenomenon):

“Donald Trump is actually part of a global process which is underway; and which is not going to stop until the reasons for this process – which you can actually call a global revolution – until the causes are removed.”

“This period of history, which I would say started with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and which led to what we call “globalization,” is coming to an end. Or, has come to an end already. Now obviously, that process, which really started immediately with the broken promises of the United States and others not to expand NATO to the Russian border; which subsequently was broken many times. The recent deployment of U.S. and NATO troops and military equipment to the Russian borders is just the latest example of that.”

Yes, the United States has broken promises related to NATO expansion along the Russian border and yes the period of liberal global hegemony is coming to a close.

As attestation to this fact, LaRouche points out the “depraved” and “degenerate” culture spawned by liberalism that must be modified if the world is to advance into a new and prosperous era:

“We have to reject the popular culture associated with modern globalization, because it is depraved and degenerate. And that we had to go back to the revival, a Renaissance, of the best traditions of every culture, and have a dialogue among them.”

LaRouche is clearly a coruscating observer and social-cultural critic; however she misses, and therefore fails to represent, the Mariological dimensions of the global movement underway. Moreover, the solutions she offers run contrary to authentic Christian renewal of the type associated with Fatima and the *Era of Peace* promised by the Mother of God.

Who is LaRouche and What is the Schiller Institute?

When they founded the Schiller Institute [Mr and Mrs Schiller insisted](#):

*“We are founding the Schiller Institute. We do so not only because there is a vacuum we need to fill with institutions willing **to revive the spirit of the American Revolution and the German classical period**. We are founding the Schiller Institute because Schiller’s special method of approaching world-historical problems is the **only one** which can still bring about a solution today. The kernel of this method can be defined in Schiller’s own words: Man is greater than his fate. Even if the objective situation looks almost hopeless and desperate, we, like Schiller, are sure that a courageous spirit and human reason will always be able to find the higher level where the problems are solvable..*

In its own words:

“The Schiller Institute is working around the world to defend the rights of all humanity to progress –material, moral and intellectual. It is named after [Friedrich Schiller](#), the great 18th-century German poet and playwright, whose works have inspired republican opposition to oligarchic tyranny worldwide.”

“In America, the Institute, a non-profit corporation

headquartered in Washington, D.C., was founded in May 1984. The Schiller Institute is also established in Australia, Canada, Russia, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and has a growing influence in Asia, Africa and the Middle East."

LaRouche – Schiller Initiatives

Education:

"The whole education system must be changed. You have to throw out algorithms, you have to throw out mathematics, you have to go back to basic scientific discovery. You have to go to a Classical culture. And I think that that is so absolutely important why the Schiller Institute must really be a guiding force in this process, because you know, the popular culture in the United States is so detrimental to the idea of creativity, that I think we have to really intervene in this situation in a very, very powerful way."

Culture:

Because modern culture is so bereft of artistic, philosophic and humanistic ideas it is easy to criticize. In the context of post-modern culture anything "classic" sounds good. Thus, LaRouche is able to slip in a significant negative cultural element in the name of a good *vis a vis* modernity:

"The future of civilization will be a dialogue between Plato, Schiller, Confucius, Tagore, and many other great poets and scientists of the past."

The nations of the Western World have their roots in Christendom, but LaRouche envisions a return to paganism.

According to the [First Things](#),

*“Schiller prefigures the Whig interpretation of history, in which enlightened Protestantism gradually triumphs over the medieval obscurantism of the Catholic Church. Schiller’s interest, to be sure, is not religious but political; **his neo-Hellenic “Classicism” was explicitly non-Christian.***

Schiller was avowedly anti-Christian (at least as far as institutional Christianity is concerned-against the institution but not the religion *per-se*), even accused of being a Free Mason:

“His two book-length histories are unabashed Protestant polemics. The first is a sympathetic portrayal of the Netherlands’ revolt against Catholic Spain.... The second is a history of the Thirty Years War, which makes the astonishing claim that “Europe came out of this frightful war unoppressed and free” because it destroyed forever the principle of Catholic universal empire.”

As far as being a Mason, it has not been conclusively demonstrated, but many have made the allegation linking LaRouche, the Schiller Institute, and Masonr:

*“Lyndon LaRouche, the one-time U.S. Trotskyist who embraced conspiracy theories as he lurched to the extreme right through the 1970s. LaRouche includes Masons and Gnostics in his overcrowded pantheon of evildoers, which is slightly odd given that **he was once happy to see himself and his followers as part of a “neo-Platonic humanist” conspiracy against oligarchical enemies.** He also venerates the eighteenth-century German Romantic Friedrich von Schiller, who was not only a Mason but also, according to J.M. Roberts, a member of the Illuminati.(One of the many LaRouche front groups is called the Schiller Institute.)*

Others, like author [Carol White](#), are not so credulous:

“Larouche is a Grand Orient Freemason and so not to be trusted completely. This Larouche is an agent of the Hegelian Dialectic, setting up two false opposing movements which are both controlled by the same sect usually freemasonry to have an appearance of a “natural” synthesis (old age of liberalism versus new paradigm). However if you have two glasses of hot water BUT you NAME one cold water even if you mix them you will still only have hot water regardless of names.”

Masonic or not, the LaRouche model looks and sounds suspicious and even more so since his mentor, Friedrich Schiller, was a Christian in name only:

“Schiller’s support of the Protestant cause was nominal rather than heartfelt; [he was no Christian, but man of the enlightenment](#), a self-styled “citizen of the world.”

This is precisely the problem with Schiller and with LaRouche: self-proclaimed citizens of the world *not* proclaimed citizens of the Kingdom of God, men of the Enlightenment, a period in which a New World Order, *Novos Ordo Seclorum*, was introduced by like minded men, many of them Freemasons, which helps give credence to the supposition the Schiller was himself a member of the lodge.

The Mother of God or LaRouche – How Do LaRouche-Schiller Initiatives Run Contrary to Fatima?

According to LaRouche human beings are an evolving species. Speaking [like an agnostic socio-biologist she states](#):

“If you look at the evolution over a longer period of time, life developed from the oceans with the help of photosynthesis; then you had the development of ever higher

species, species with a higher metabolism, higher energy-flux density in their metabolism."

In a document entitled "The Next Stage of Human Evolution", the [LaRouche PAC](#) states:

"That next stage of evolution is a whole interlinked complex—moral, material, psychological, and scientific—all of these aspects closely intertwined, as they always have been in Lyndon LaRouche's thinking. One word for this next stage of our species' evolution is the "New Paradigm." The New Paradigm, as Helga Zepp-LaRouche has memorably said, "where we become truly human."

Thus, according to LaRouche, human beings progressively solve their problems by advances in technology and intellectual attainment *etc.* Although there is much truth to ponder in these assertions, there is no mention of God, prayer, charity imitation of Christ, the Church or the sacraments *et al.*

LaRouche is *not* seeking a new vision of economics rooted in the precept of charity, "*Solidarnosc*". LaRouche proposes turning the pages back to earlier chapters in liberal history, to the times of Roosevelt, Hamilton, and Glass Stegall, (a 1930 act that limited securities, activities, and affiliations within commercial banks and securities firms) as if permitting commercial banks to engage in security activities caused the current economic crisis, a crisis that has been brewing for decades and even centuries as attested to by the acceptance of business cycles as a natural phenomenon associated with capitalism. The global system needs much more than a return to financial regulation of the Glass Stegall brand. Obviously financial regulation is needed – the whole question must be revisited . However, the type of change needed is far more extensive than that proffered by LaRouche. According to the Schiller Institute:

“The only solution, at this point of deep breakdown, is to implement [LaRouche’s four laws recovery program](#) on an emergency basis”:

- 1.[Reinstate FDR’s Glass-Steagall banking separation](#)*
- 2.[Return to a Hamiltonian System of national banking](#)*
- 3.[Invest federal credit for productive employment](#)*
- 4.[Launch a crash program for fusion power](#)*

According to the [LaRouche PAC](#):

“LaRouche’s Four Laws provides the only basis for the United States to save itself from collapse and join in collaboration with China, Russia, India, and other nations participating in the global economic renaissance centered around China’s New Silk Road program.”

There is muster in this latter point as well, partial and specious truth (to be discussed in the future).

The main reason LaRouche is able to make such a brilliant analysis of the current global situation and then provide such a weak reform platform is due to a commitment to the Enlightenment and a refusal to let go of the deist dream for a better world without the Holy Trinity – god yes, perhaps the deist God of Nature, but not the Holy Trinity.

LaRouche is a strong advocate of Classical culture, which she associates with the Enlightenment. One of Schiller’s mission as stated above is **“to revive the spirit of the American Revolution and the German classical period.”** In other words, the Schiller Institute, like the Schiller’s themselves, is anti-Catholic, perhaps anti-Christian all around.

Quixotically, The Enlightenment was itself the bedrock and purveyor and source of modern liberalism. The Schiller Institute thus proposes going forward by first going backward,

backward to the founding principles of the Enlightenment and then forward again. Perhaps they think they can do it better if they get a second try.

In true Enlightenment and New Age style, LaRouche seeks a universal syncretism:

'From the beginning, we said that such a new world economic order can only function if it's combined with a Classical Renaissance...That we had to go back to the revival, a Renaissance, of the best traditions of every culture, and have a dialogue among them. For example, in Germany, obviously you would emphasize the German Classical culture of Schiller, Beethoven, and all of Classical music; in China, you would emphasize Confucius; in India you would emphasize the Vedic writings, Tagore (a Pirali Brahmin), and so forth.

Of course there is no mention of Christianity. No it is part of a "xenophobia" that must be healed:

"People get completely excited, because they discover that there are beautiful things to discover in other cultures! And once you study and know these other cultures, xenophobia and racism disappear!

New Era is perplexed: What does a Chinese citizen and devotee of Confucianism or a Hindu Brahmin do when he or she comes into contact with a French or Polish devotee of Jesus Christ and His blessed Mother? Does the Oriental person get healed of their cultural xenophobia or only the Christian? Does the Hindu Ashram give way to the Greek Academy or are they all acceptable because they share common principles found in all religions and cultures as LaRouche seems to think:

"Because you realize that it's beautiful that there are many cultures, because there are universal principles to be discovered in music. One musician will immediately understand

another musician because it's a universal language."

It is beautiful that there are many cultures, and beautiful that there is a Christian culture too, a culture that LaRouche fails to mention, but one she implicitly demeans as a purveyor of "xenophobia". If she believes there is such a disease as xenophobia, but that purveyors of Classical culture along with Confucius in China and the Hind Vedic culture as well as that of Plato and Tagore are exempt, if she believes all of these are grand and precious cultural attainments, which culture then is xenophobic except her own, the one she fails to mention, i.e., Christian culture?

It seems that LaRouche desires Americans and Europeans to be healed of their cultural ailments but those from a Hindu or Oriental background are OK. Presumably Christianity is also OK, if it gives up its evangelical component and accepts all religions as equal AS LONG AS THEY CONTAIN AND REFLECT THE "UNIVERSAL" DIMENSIONS, dimensions that LaRouche, along with Theosophists, Gnostics and Masons believe and teach are present in all religions – a grand religious synthesis in which Jesus Christ who suffered and died for all humanity is no longer the savior of all humanity, but is equivalent to a Pirali Brahim, a being who himself honors higher more evolved gods and "ascended masters", gods and masters who say wonderful things but none who took the form of a slave and died for anyone. The story of the Incarnation, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ is unparalleled in the annals of comparative religion.

[At one point LaRouche endeavored to cooperate with the Catholic Church,](#)

"At one point, LaRouche decided he wanted to work with the Roman Catholic Church – he was hoping to get in with the Church. So, suddenly, he was pro-Catholic. At that point, many members converted to Catholicism. But when he discovered

that the Catholic Church wanted no part of him, in 2000, LaRouche launched a vicious attack on the Catholic members of the organization, including commissioning items for the daily internal briefing memos attacking members for going to church. In a savage campaign, he drove most of the Catholics out of the organization.

After driving out Catholics from his organization, LaRouche, like Masons and Thesophists, [further manifested his anti-Catholicism.](#)

“Take the Papacy in a certain earlier period. You had a great leader who built all the water systems in Europe [Charlemagne]. He did it; and as soon as he died, Hell broke loose. And the Catholic Church became a piece of sodomy, immediately at that point. You have to know what happened when Charlemagne died; after his death, the Satanic movement took over the Catholic Church.”

In short, LaRouche and the Schiller Institute are just another front for liberalism, a very sophisticated front – one that offers one of the most progressive Christian geopolitical analyses imaginable. For example, LaRouche’s “Producerism” and anti-imperialism makes him appear to be an opponent of capitalism, when in actuality he is an advocate:

“Producerism, with its problematic distinction between productive industrial capital and parasitic finance capital, was central to LaRouchite economics, as [it enabled LaRouche to be procapitalist and “anti-imperialist” at the same time](#)

LaRouche’s ideas might be complex and sophisticated, but in the end – because such ideas neglect the Incarnation and subsequent Christian prophetic content – no matter how resounding, they work against authentic human and social development.

Nothing really new here except a brilliant expose of the changing times that can be interpreted as a **Masonic** bailout in the guise of helping humanity progress to its next stage of evolutionary development. LaRouche's analysis and solutions are similar to the "Reform Liberalism" unfurled by FDR, a reform that rescued capitalism from the throes of socialism by engaging in Keynesian economics and deficit spending.

Neither LaRouche nor Schiller represent a forward march toward human dignity and Christian social renewal. They represent an adroit and very clever manipulation of events in the guise of progressive change, an attempt to hold onto a financial and cultural empire by appeal for change that simply returns the world to a previous chapter in a how-to-book that brought the world to the place where it stands now. In other words, the only thing sublime about LaRouche and Schiller are the slippery words and concepts they employ. Correctly seeing the world groping for change, they hope to continue profiting by representing themselves as enlightened avante-garde agents of an merging paradigmatic shift while refusing to let go of the liberal agenda that brought about the collapse we are now experiencing. [Perhaps this is why Lyndon LaRouche was sentenced to a fifteen year prison term](#) for conspiracy to commit mail fraud involving more than \$30 million in defaulted loans, and 11 counts of actual mail fraud involving \$294,000 in defaulted loans.

Mr. LaRouche maintained that he was

"...the victim of a Government campaign to keep him from alerting the nation to a wide variety of threats and from otherwise expressing his unorthodox political views".

It seems as though the LaRouche phenomenon is still operative – trying to alert the nation, and the world, this time to a wide variety of new possibilities that are nothing but a Masonic sham attempt to keep people from seeing

the possibility for *authentic* integral social, cultural spiritual, economic and political renewal-renewal rooted in the Holy Trinity. Real change, real peace, prosperity and progress will be achieved when the world returns to its God, to the Holy Trinity, Someone LaRouche fails to mention.

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

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

PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND CHRIST-LIKE AUTHORITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

“...psychology of princes: ‘We are the masters, the princes, and we teach you. Not service: we command, you obey.’ And Jesus never passed Himself off like a prince: He was always the servant of all, and this is what gave Him authority.”

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

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

The Pharisees, however, assumed a position of superiority. A

Pharisees eshews “the poor people, the ignorant,” they liked to parade about the piazzas, in soutains and genteel garb.

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

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

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

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

*“**But, do what they tell you, but not what they do’: they said one thing and did another. Incoherence.** They were incoherent. And the attitude Jesus uses of them so often is hypocritical. And it is understood that **one who considers himself a prince, who has a clericalist attitude, who is a hypocrite, doesn’t have (true) authority!** He speaks the truth, but without authority. Jesus, on the other hand, who is humble, who is at the service of others, who is close, who does not despise the people, and who is coherent, has authority. And this is the authority that the people of God senses.”*

A priest with authority is a servant that is close to his

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

THE PASTORAL DIMENSION OF AMORIS LAETITIA

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

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

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

Clearly, the issue at hand is a pastoral one, viz., how to uphold the teachings of the Church in the modern world, a world void of a sense of the sacred, a world in which divorce and remarriage are common place, a world in which the sons and daughters of the Church have been inculturated without their awareness of its effects. Since the whole process is about salvation and pastoral accompaniment during an Hour of Mercy, pastors are being nudged into being more pastorally minded. This is clear to the Archbishop of Dublin, to the Prefect for the Sacred Congregation of the Faith, and to many other cardinals and bishops who stand with the pope in opposition to Cardinal Burke and the misinformed lay men who have lined

up to bat for him against the pope.

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

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

"It is a misreading" of the Pope's exhortation to say it has been the cause of polemics."

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

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

There is confusion because men like Mr. Arroyo, and ultra-traditionalist or liberal bishops are manufacturing confusion. In a response to *New Era's* third article on the issue ([Attack on Pope Francis: Supposed Loyal Catholics Distort Information Defame Pope](#)), Dr. Marzak pointed out that there is always confusion where there is disobedience and pride, when people pursue their own path rather than submit to legitimate magisterial authority in humble obedience. He pointed out that

it is liberal bishops and schismatic *seda vacantists* who are causing the confusion; they are often supplemented by well meaning but over-zealous laymen who misunderstand pastoral theology and the relationship between the practical and speculative intellect as examined in [Article One](#). In response to a comment pertaining to [Article Three](#) in the series on *Amoris Laetitia*, Dr. Marzak stated.

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

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

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

In this regard, Cardinal Mueller has spoken out, and spoken out clearly. In a January 8, interview with tgcom24, Cardinal Mueller objected to Cardinal Burke and those “Princes of the Church” who publicly challenged the pope by questioning the doctrinal accuracy of *Amoris Laetitia*. According to Cardinal Mueller, the Church’s highest ranking doctrinal official, the prefect for the Sacred Congregation of the Faith, according to

Cardinal Mueller: ***Amoris Laetitia*** is “very clear”. This has been *New Era’s* position from the beginning of the controversy, so much so that the staff here has been in a continual quandary over Cardinal Burke and Raymond Arroyo’s failure to “get it” speculating that the problem might be either a clerical error having to do with authority or a failure to appreciate the fine differences between the intellectual work of pastoral theology *vis a vis* dogmatic theology. Now that Cardinal Mueller has vociferously supported the clarity of the document, the staff here is relieved.

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

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

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

*“In the papal document, he said, “I do not see any opposition: On one side we have the **clear doctrine on matrimony** (dogmatic), and on the other **the obligation of the church to care for these people in difficulty** (pastoral).”*

Cardinal Mueller evidently understands ***Amoris Laetitia* is a “call for the pastoral accompaniment of people who are divorced and civilly remarried or who are living together without marriage.**

Concerning the doctrinal clarity of the document, Mueller told

the Italian television network:

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

“Amoris Laetitia is very clear in its doctrine and we can interpret (in it) Jesus’ entire doctrine on marriage, the entire doctrine of the Church in 2000 years of history.”

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

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

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

Cardinal Mueller is not confused, nor are score of other bishops, nor is the staff at *New Era*. As Dr. Marzak has previously pointed out, the confusion is being caused, on the one hand, by disobedient liberal bishops such as the one in San Diego and, on the other hand, by far right leaning bishops and churchman nearing schism or already in schism. Confusion emanating from diverse poles of the theological spectra helps generate more confusion among the larger body of sheep and lambs. The confusion is *not* coming from either Pope Francis or *Amoris Laetitia*; the confusion is rooted in clericalism, intellectual arrogance, liberal moral weakness (concupiscence and irascibility) that blinds and, above all else, it is rooted in disobedience and pride.

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

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

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

It is too easy to play the judge; it costs nothing but an easy arm-chair accompanied by good cuisine and an ever watchful eye always ready to catch a sinner and even a pope in error. In this they feel self-satisfied and accomplished. **This might be dogmatic theology, but without love and authentic authority it fails even at that and it is certainly not pastoral theology,** the theology of the Good Shepherd” who lays down his life for his sheep. This is the type of shepherd Francis is endeavoring to be, the type of shepherds he is calling the priests of the Catholic Church to become.

Archbishop Martin & Cardinal Muller with Pope – EWTN's Arroyo Behind Dissent

THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN, IRELAND, Diarmuid Martin, and Cardinal Gerhard Muller, the Prefect for the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (The Holy Office) have weighed in on the theological dimensions of Pope Francis' Post Synodal Exhortation, [*Amoris Laetitia*](#). The issue as reported earlier by [*New Era*](#) is the integral relationship between Dogmatic and Pastoral Theology.

Archbishop Martin subtly referenced the papal exhortation in a recent homily given to marriage counselors working for the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. The Archbishop began his homily with these words that foreshadowed his concern about spiritual renewal manifest in compassionate but authentic pastoral theology:

"The Gospel of this afternoon's Mass recalls once again that great figure John the Baptist. John's task was to announce the coming of Jesus. He was called to reawaken a sense of expectation among a people that had grown tired and distant from God. He was called to bring renewal to institutional expressions of religion which, at the time, had often become fossilised into mere formulae or external ritual."

The archbishop is concerned, as is the pope, about fossilized, legalistic, and judgmental Catholicism, a Catholicism that

lacks vibrancy and compassion, a Catholicism out of tune with human misery, of the fact that “the harvest is plenty but laborers are few” ([Matt 9:37](#)). Before our Lord spoke these poignant words, He looked on the crowd and had COMPASSION because the vast flock was lost in sin and confusion, because they were suffering:

“And seeing the multitudes, he had compassion on them: because they were distressed, and lying like sheep that have no shepherd.

Suffering, lost and wounded souls need compassion and love, not criticism, rejection, head wagging, and cold or severe judgement. Love is the universal balm, the spiritual ointment that makes the wounded whole. God is wise, God will judge and so must we ([1 Cor 2:15](#)), but before all else, GOD IS LOVE and those who deny this do not know Him.

“And every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is charity. ([1 John 4:7-8](#)).

Saving souls is a labor of love; it is too easy to sit in an armchair and condemn; it takes work, great work, to get off of your butt and get dirty in the work of patiently ministering to wounded humanity lost in sin like sheep without a shepherd ([Matt 9:36](#))..

Since the Lord has appointed the present time to be an **“Hour of Mercy”** before His final coming as “Just Judge” the Church should be showing a merciful and compassionate face, a face most associated with its pastoral dimension.

*“Speak to the world about My mercy ... It is a sign for the end times. **After it will come the Day of Justice.** While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fountain of My mercy. (Diary 848)*

Jesus revealed to Saint Faustina that the present hour is *not* a time of retribution but a time of compassion, healing and mercy for all:

“I sent prophets wielding thunderbolts to My people. Today I am sending you with My mercy to the people of the whole world. I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to My Merciful Heart.”[*\(Diary, 1588\)*](#).

He further revealed to Faustina that those who have the most right to His mercy are the most grievous sinners:

“Let the greatest sinners place their trust in My mercy. They have the right before others to trust in the abyss of My mercy. ... Souls that make an appeal to My mercy delight Me. To such souls I grant even more graces than they ask” [*\(Diary of Saint Faustina Para 1146\)*](#).

Jesus has a

“...[special compassion for the worst sinners](#), because they are most in need of His mercy.”

The Hour of Mercy is a time to pronounce, to pronounce the good news, *not* to renounce.

“For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world”
[*\(John 12:47, John 3:17\)*](#).

The archbishop of Dublin apparently had all this in mind when he opened his homily on marriage and family life. Although he did not specifically mention the doubts (*dubia* – perhaps complaints might be better) registered by opposing Cardinals Joachim Meisner, Raymond Burke, Carlo Caffarra and Walter Brandmüller, he did speak about “grey areas” in family life and the inability of clergy to embrace pastoral

challenges with love and compassion rather than “black and white” dogmatic pronouncements.

In his homily Archbishop Martin attempted to pull diocesan marriage counselors into the mystery of romance associated with love and marriage and the uniqueness of each couple by reference to “The Jeweler’s Shop”, a literary work of Pope John Paul II:

“As a young bishop, Pope John Paul II wrote a play called “The Jeweler’s Shop”. It was a simple play in which the principal character was a jeweller who looked out as young couples would stop by his shop window examining the wedding rings on display.”

“As he watched them, he began imagining who these different couples, with whom he had never spoken, actually were. He began to see that each was different and that for each of them their love for each other, their hopes for a future together were unique.”

*“Like the Jeweler in Pope John Paul’s play, you realise that **each couple is different, that no couple is perfect**, that there are many who face real challenges as they try to hold on to what remains of an initial dream which seems destined to be on the way to failure.”*

From here the archbishop proceeds to Pope Francis and *Amoris Laetitia*:

*“Pope Francis has given the Church that remarkable document **his document Amoris Laetitia** which is the fruit of the reflections of the world’s Bishops at two Synods as well as the contribution of married couples and experts from every corner of the world. Pope Francis presents a wonderful*

kaleidoscope of the teaching of Jesus and the scriptures on the beauty and the joy of marital love. He stresses the role of the Church to learn to teach that message in a language which will be understandable to the men and women of today. He stresses the role of the Church in accompanying men and women on the journey of married and family life, even when the initial dreams begin to fade or indeed fail."

What is important is understanding the men and women **"of today"**. Most people today have been inculturated, misled, propagandized and cerebrally maligned without there even knowing it. Many are lost and bewildered and do not know why. Some are well to do and affluent but lost in materialism and its attendant economic, political or moral liberalism. Human beings must be encountered where they are at or they will not be encountered at all. This is why St. Paul, perhaps the greatest evangelist, reminds all evangelists to become **"all things to all men with the view of winning them to Christ:**

*"Whereas I was free as to all, I made myself the servant of all, that I might gain the more. And I became to the Jews, a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: To them that are under the law, as if I were under the law, (whereas myself was not under the law,) that I might gain them that were under the law. **To them that were without the law, as if I were without the law, ... that I might gain them that were without the law.** To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak. I became all things to all men, that I might save all."*

To the sinner, I became a sinner (**thou not in deed but in acceptance not of their sin, but of them**).

For some Pharisaical Catholics the question might be asked: "Are you (plural) trying to win souls to Christ or to win an argument?" If you would endeavor to first befriend repugnant, heretical, schismatic sinners by loving them, withholding judgement, and refraining from didactic instruction, you might

then find that the pope is correct; you might find that after laboring as accompanying-compassionate-empathetic pastors that souls become more trusting, pliable and then more teachable.

Following this line of thought, the archbishop becomes very specific:

*“No marriage is lived just in clear and abstract **black and white realities**. The Church has to understand the grey areas of success and failures, of joys and of disappointments. Repeating doctrinal formulations alone is not the way to accompany people on a difficult journey. Jesus’ method was that of accompanying. His method was to show that mercy is more effective than condemnation in changing people’s lives.”*

This is the heart of *Amoris Laetitia*. It does **not** excuse sin nor does it deny dogma. Rather, it affirms dogma, is always cognizant of its co-primacy, ever ready to share it, while temporarily putting its subordinate principles on hold giving way to the ultimate dogma of LOVE from which all the others flow as do the fruits and the beatitudes. Love is the primordial and eternal motive behind all of creation and the Divine impetus for the Incarnation itself ([John 3:16](#)); it is the motive behind the life, death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ ([John 15:13](#)). Love is first; it is at the beginning and it is at the end ([1 Corinthians 13: 1-13](#)).

“But in all these things we overcome, because of him that hath loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” ([Romans 8:37-39](#)).

As such, a pastor must first see with his heart, putting the dogmatic intellect on ever-ready hold while forming a

relationship rooted in mercy and compassion so that the truths of the faith may be planted on fertile soil at an opportune future time, a time recognized by the integral eyes of love and wisdom. “Accompaniment” is before all else pastoral. However, if the path of accompaniment *never* reaches out to the higher truths, if it never gently (but firmly) corrects sin, if it never gives sage direction, it is a false love, a false accompaniment. Nonetheless, accompaniment begins with love. Like the Divine Logos who lowered Himself to become man in order to lift all men up, all His pastors must descend to the level of those whom they serve in order to then carry them upwards in the ascent towards the Holy Trinity, to “become all things to all men”, patiently enduring their insults in order to save them.”

After establishing this central idea, Archbishop Martin proceeds to examine men who, like Cardinal Burke and reporters like Raymond Arroyo, men who “do not seem to get it.”

*“There are some in the Church (the archbishop says) who are unsettled by the ability of the Pope to place himself in the midst of the uncertainties of people’s lives. Some, even senior Church figures, seem to feel that the affirmation of certainties in an abstract and undoubting way (here he is referring to the clear truths of dogmatic theology) **is the only way** (to evangelize or bring souls to Christ).”*

Nonetheless, this does not mean that the archbishop wants to throw abstract dogmatic certainties out the window. The archbishop and the pope are both aware that *accompaniment* (pastoral theology) does **not** mean that the truths of the faith (dogma) are discarded as Cardinal Burke and company want to insist that they do:

*“Accompanying is of course **not** saying that anything goes. It is being alongside those who are troubled pointing towards –*

and indeed representing – Jesus who gently leads us beyond the often paralysing doubts that beset us, gently leads us beyond our own limitations and the imperfections of our love.”

Many pastors are comfortable being philosophers and theologians, of sitting in the professor’s seat and teaching college students and seminarians. This is a wonderful ministry, but most priests are called to be pastors, not professors. By the way, even the best professors develop a pastoral dimension to enhance their pedagogy, a dimension that enables them to engage their students outside the classroom, in smokers, at pubs, dinner engagements at their homes, social gatherings, back-packing and various other outings, which further enhance the teacher student bond and the impact their teaching – how much more a “pastor”?

The bottom-line:

*“Faith is not about empty formulae or external ritual. **It is about authentically entering into the very life of Jesus Christ himself and witnessing to that life in our daily lives.**”*

Cardinal Burke and company try to excuse themselves from the above critique by emphasizing that they want to save souls and protect people from sinful actions that harm individuals and families:

“We hope that no one will choose to interpret the matter according to a “progressive/conservative” paradigm. That would be completely off the mark. We are deeply concerned about the true good of souls, the supreme law of the Church, and not about promoting any form of politics in the Church.”

Most devout Catholics would say that they are concerned about the salvation of souls. This, however, is *not* the question.

The question is how are they going to go about the task of salvation, how are they going to go about the task of saving souls: (1) by telling poor sinners the truth and how wrong they are or (2) by embracing them in their error with love and compassion while patiently (and with great difficulty) bearing with them while slowly leading them onward until such time that they begin to ask questions or they are ready to receive some elements of the faith?

The pastoral approach is not for cowards. No, it is for the strongest, for the prudent, those selfless who deny themselves and make reparation for the sinners they are serving (until they mature enough to embrace the salvific way of purgation leading to illumination-union), those who are aware that **modern** men and women, boys and girls, have been heinously, sometimes blindly, conditioned against truth, against the Christian faith; they have been conditioned to plasticity and artificial relationships, to individualism and narcissism, everyone being out for themselves all hidden behind a veneer of niceness. In this type of environment, it is *not* cheap words, but genuine love and self-giving that speak volumes.

Modern men and women mistrust melodious words; they are tired of con-games – they have heard it all before, been there – done that; **what they rarely witness is authentic love in action**. This is something they have not seen, somewhere they have not been. **In a pagan environment** it is quiet consistent acts of love that bear witness to the faith greater than any theological treatise or display of philosophical brilliance.

“But we entreat you, brethren, that you abound more: And that you use your endeavour to be quiet, and that you do your own business, and work with your own hands, as we commanded you: and that you walk honestly towards them that are without” ([1 Thessalonians 4:11-12](#)).

Empty words or too many true words are simply lip service, lip

service that is associated with those who teach doctrines from their heads rather than love from their hearts – their hearts are far from God, which is another way of saying that they are far from Love, because God is Love. This type of lip service is rejected by the Lord Himself:

*“This people honoureth me with their lips: but **their heart is far from me**. And in vain do they worship me, **teaching doctrines** and commandments of men” ([1 Matt 15:8-9](#)).*

In short, great as wisdom is, love is primary:

“Wisdom which is a gift, has its cause in the will, which cause is charity, but it has its essence in the intellect, whose act is to judge aright, as stated above ([Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Second Part of Second Part, Q 45, Article 2](#)).

“Hence the wisdom of which we are speaking presupposes charity” ([Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, Second Part of Second Part, Q 45, Article 1](#)).

WHAT DOES CARDINAL MULLER THE PREFECT FOR THE SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH HAVE TO SAY?

Given such a stinging renunciation of dogmatic theology severed from pastoral theology (a strong mind from a pure heart) or of dogmatic theology that claims to be pastoral but is not (see note below), we would expect some conformation from the highest doctrinal authority in the Church.

According to Cardinal Gerhard Muller, Prefect for the Sacred Congregation of the Faith, **the ultimate aim of knowledge about God is salvation:**

“Knowledge of God” is ordered to “the ultimate end of man, for man’s salvation.”

Since the end of knowledge is salvation, salvation takes precedence over knowledge; salvation is the *telos* of knowledge, the end by which the means, (knowledge) is to be judged. If knowledge is *not* resulting in salvation, knowledge is not doing its job. As such, at times, (speculative-dogmatic) knowledge might be reduced in the name of prudence (practical knowledge – the realm of pastoral theology), love, and compassion for the sake of salvation. For example, The First Council of Jerusalem dealing with pagans from an anti-Christian culture, reduced the role of knowledge and limited it to a few specifics:

*“For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to **lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things:** That you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which things keeping yourselves, you shall do well” ([Acts 15:28-29](#)).*

Many would argue, and have argued, that contemporary society is neo-pagan, a culture just as removed from God as that of the Roman Empire; in such a case, similar rules apply.

Nonetheless, pagan culture or not, Cardinal Muller has clearly indicated that *Amoris Laetitia* does *not* permit civilly remarried divorcees to receive Holy Communion and must be interpreted in light of the magisterium:

*“The magisterium of the Church still applies to those passages in *Amoris Laetitia* on pastoral care for remarried divorcees.*

Pope Francis himself pointed out the same in his exhortation:

“Priests have the duty to accompany [the divorced and remarried] in helping them to understand their situation according to the teaching of the Church” ([para 300](#)).

Further on, he states once again:

*“What we are speaking of is a process of **accompaniment** and **discernment** which “guides the faithful to an awareness of their situation before God... This **discernment can never prescind from the Gospel demands of truth and charity, as proposed by the Church**” ([para 300](#)).*

In May of 2016 the cardinal, talking about *Amoris Laetitia*, was quoted by the German paper [Die Tagespost](#), as saying that John Paul II’s teaching contained in *Familiaris Consortio*, and Benedict XVI’s exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, remain “unchanged.”

According to the [National Catholic Register](#),

*“Cardinal Müller argued that if *Amoris Laetitia* really wanted to “rescind such a deeply rooted and such a weighty discipline, then it would have clearly expressed and stated its reasons.” But he pointed out that the document has “no statement to that effect.”*

“At no point has the Pope called the arguments of his predecessors into question,” he said. Those arguments, he added, “are not based on the subjective guilt of these brothers and sisters, but on the visible, objective way of life, which is opposite to the words of Christ.”

Since *Amoris Laetitia* must be interpreted in light of the constant teaching of the Church, clearly the issue at hand is a pastoral one, viz., how to uphold the teachings in the

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE

Dogmatic theology does not become pastoral theology when it equates pastoral

theology with telling people their sins, or by trying to save them with a simple dogmatic fix by way of simple words that might be interpreted as lip service if there is no sincere follow-up a follow-up that costs the speaker some strenuous and *unadvertised* effort.

“TAKE heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth. That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee” (Matt 6:1-4).

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).***

There 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.

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 there 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 necessarily 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 reality)... 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?

Pope Francis and the Ultra Conservatives – Francis is Right – “They Don’t Get It”

RECENTLY FOUR CARDINALS (Carlo Caffarra, Raymond Burke, Walter Brandmüller, Joachim Meisner) presented Pope Francis and Cardinal Gerhard Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, with a series of five questions or “*dubia*” (or *doubts*) requesting that he clarify certain sections of his recent Apostolic Exhortation, [*Amoris Laetitia*](#) (The Joy of Love) which, they claim has caused “*grave disorientation and great confusion*” in the Church.

The central issue revolves around the admissibility of divorced and remarried couples to Holy Communion. The four cardinals assert that *Amoris Laetitia* seems to contradict earlier papal teachings, specifically *Familiaris Consortio* given by Pope John Paul II. Specifically, they point out concern with Chapter Eight paragraphs 300-305, which they claim are being used by some bishops to permit divorced and remarried couples to receive the sacraments in violation of perennial Church teaching.

Pope Francis is accused of being fuzzy, unclear and dogmatically in error. The real problem really is that people who are making such allegations, for the most part, “don’t get it”.

The Church just passed through a “Year of Mercy”. Presently, the entire universe is resounding with the echo of Divine Logos: “Mercy-Mercy-Mercy” and of His Mother who is asking for reparation from her children for the sins of others, asking penance from those who love God for those who are steeped in sin. Our Lord and Our Lady are asking for love, mercy, compassion, and sacrifice for sinners while Catholic ultra-conservatives are calling for their heads, calling for punishment, divine retribution, alienation and chastisement. The pope is correct, they “don’t get it”. But neither do the ultra-liberals who make excuses for sins, condone them, militantly embrace their own sin and that of others and refuse to ask for forgiveness – they don’t get it either.

The Holy Father is the Vicar of Christ – His representative on earth. As such, he is expected to mirror the wishes, will, and desires of his King. And it is the King’s will, at this special moment of human history, that mercy be the theme of His Church, that mercy be showered over all the earth from the rising of the sun until its setting in every clime and place. Jesus, Himself, revealed to Saint Faustina that this gift of mercy is His last gift to the Church before He returns in glory as the world’s judge.

Until that time, between now and then, He desires Mercy, especially mercy for the greatest sinners. Thus, He further revealed to Saint Faustina that those who have the most right to His mercy are the most grievous sinners:

“Let the greatest sinners place their trust in My mercy. They have the right before others to trust in the abyss of My mercy. ... Souls that make an appeal to My mercy delight Me. To

such souls I grant even more graces than they ask" [\(Diary of Saint Faustina Para 1146\)](#).

Jesus has a

"...[special compassion for the worst sinners](#), because they are most in need of His mercy."

Pope Francis is keenly aware of God's mercy and of His desire to extend it everywhere, especially toward hardened sinners. He is acting accordingly as the Vicar of Christ; he expects Catholic clergy and laity to do the same. God wants forgiveness, mercy and compassion, not judgment, severity and legalism.

The Hour of Mercy is a time to pronounce, to pronounce the good news, *not* to renounce.

"For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" ([John 12:47](#), [John 3:17](#)).

With this Message of Mercy ingrained in mind, it is easy to unravel the confusion. We are living in an Hour of Mercy. Mercy is the universal theme of the Church being announced and lived by its universal shepherd. The pope is *not* in error; he has *not* forgotten or rejected earlier church teaching about the sanctity of marriage and the sinfulness of illicit union.

However, **he is teaching as a pastor**, as a "Good Shepherd", the good shepherd who has "come to save that which was lost", the good shepherd who leaves ninety-nine righteous people and goes in search of the one that is lost because **it is the will of the Father than none of his sheep be lost:**

"What think you? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them should go astray: doth he not leave the ninety-nine in

the mountains, and go to seek that which is gone astray? And if it so be that he find it: Amen I say to you, he rejoiceth more for that, than for the ninety-nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish” ([Matthew 18: 12-14](#))

Now, if no one goes after them, the stray and sinning sheep, but instead reject, criticize, judge and in their self-righteousness ostracize them, how are they to be saved? The pope unlike the self-righteous Pharisees who murmur, saying: [“This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them”](#), is willing to embrace a sinner with mercy and compassion; mercy and compassion are slow to judge but quick to love.

If the first thing a person does *vis a vis* a hardened sinner is judge, the relationship is over. **The quickest way to the mind is through the heart – it does not work the other way for most people**, especially people who have been conditioned by a culture of sin, by a constant barrage of propaganda and manipulation, psychological warfare by means of association etc. In such a world as this, there are many sheep gone astray and they need a shepherd. If clergy and lay evangelists act with a judgmental attitude, few will be evangelized.

Modern men and women are like sheep in desperate need of a wise and loving friend to shepherd them; however, they often remain without a shepherd because the shepherds on the extreme left are often too blinded by concupiscence and irascibility to properly lead anyone, while those on the ultra-conservative right are often too busy satisfying themselves intellectually and too judgmental to have compassion.

What is the attitude of Jesus the Good Shepherd? When He looked upon the vast throng of lost humanity, He had **COMPASSION ON THEM**” because they were lost and in agony –

being lost in deep sin is not fun!

“And seeing the multitudes, he had compassion on them: because they were distressed” ([Matthew 9:36](#)).

It was then that He said to His apostles, “[The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few](#)”.

Francis is acting like a good laborer in the Hour of Mercy. He is acting like St. John Bosco, a saint who did get it, a saint who reached out to the street boys, the gang-bangers, of Northern Italy and beyond when no one else, including many clergy, wanted anything to do with them – too upsetting to a comfortable life-style, too filthy to bring home – too risky to deal with – too impure to mingle with their cultural refinement. St. John Bosco had many adages, a man full of folk-wisdom. One of his many: **“The time is long, but the cure is sure”**. Dealing with sin requires time and patience, patience that grows out of love and mercy. With love, with mercy, over time healing can occur; it does not occur (in most people) by a quick intellectual fix following some sage advice from a counselor – this is for relatively advanced people, which a sinner – lost in sin – is not.

At this time in human history, a time of MERCY, the Church must do its evangelical work pastorally. To fail pastorally is to fail as a shepherd. Shepherds *pastor* sheep, they do not discuss philosophical and theological treatises with them. Clergy formation involves much detailed philosophical and theological formation and deep intellectual growth. *The proper place for this type of discussion is the seminary*. It is hoped that before a man leaves a seminary that he makes a connection between his intellectual formation and the pastoral care he must give to his sheep. Intellectual learning is intended to facilitate his work as a pastor. A college professor is *not* a pastor. Many clergy and laity, usually among the ultra-conservative, the crowd accusing Pope

Francis of heresy etc., have failed to make the transition. They act as if they were still in the seminary; instead of love, mercy and compassion for sinners they are deeply dissatisfied with the state of things and want to lecture people about their faults and especially about the faults, short-comings and theological errors of the pope and bishops; indeed they want to lecture the pope himself. Instead of seeing a soul to be saved, they see a sinner to be disciplined and a pope to be castigated for not being more severe.

Correction and discipline should and must be forthcoming, but they work better after a relationship has been established on the basis of mercy and love. In the last analysis, [love is greater than knowledge, love alone endures for eternity.](#)

Saint Francis de Sales understood this well: **“More bees are attracted by a spoonful of honey than by a barrel of vinegar.”**

Some people, for whatever reason, just do not get this – do not get the intersection of learning and knowledge with love and mercy, the intersection of dogmatic and pastoral theology, the intersection of heart and mind.

Then, infected by this inability, they proceed to read papal teachings such as *Amoris Laetitia*. Because they “don’t get it”, they approach the document as if it were an *intellectual exercise*, when in fact, it is a *pastoral exhortation*.

They just cannot put the whole thing together. Like some Protestants who cherry-pick scriptures picking passages that support their point and neglecting or ignoring others that do not support their position, they act like the others do not exist.

Practical and Speculative Intellect- Have the Clergy forgotten Their Philosophical Education?

Every priest and many lay men and women have studied

philosophy, but afterward many forget what they learned or fail to apply it to their service of others. Every priest and student of classical and scholastic philosophy has learned (or should have learned) the difference between the “speculative intellect” (SI) and the “practical intellect” (PI). In short, the SI begins its work by grasping first principles and reasoning from them to reach logical conclusions that must be accepted if the principles are true and the logic is correct (logical deduction from premise to conclusion: A-B therefore C). The PI operates differently; it is not involved in deductive logic, a purely intellectual exercise. Rather, the PI involves the intellect in its *application mode*, that is when the intellect applies truths grasped by the SI to everyday practice. The SI operates in the intellectual realm of acquired wisdom, the realm of dogmatic truths that are discovered by the intellect BEFORE they are afterward applied outside the mind to practical everyday reality, where theory must meet practice if it is to be successful. The SI operates interiorly, the PI must operate in the real exterior world. The mind and the world are two very different places.

The PI does *not* begin with logical first principles, it begins with the end or the conclusion reached by the SI as a result of reasoning to conclusions from principles, discursive logic. A logical conclusion or end is the last thing discovered by the SI, but it is the first principle of the PI, which must make prudential judgments about which means are to be chosen to reach a desired end. The human mind *necessarily ascends* to a logical conclusion derived by way of the SI, but the means derived by the PI to achieve a derived end are only probable. No one necessarily ascends to them because many other means may be discovered, some better than others, some faulty some not – no one knows for sure if the means they choose will actually result in the acquisition of the end – they are only probably sure. Thus, for the SI the end is last in the order of acquisition (the end or fruit of as long train of thought), but for the PI, the end is first in the order of operation

because without the end no one would know where they were going or how to derive means to get there.

Thus, the work of the practical intellect begins with the end and is calculative and probable while that of the SI begins with first principles to discover an end and it is rational and certain of its conclusions. That is, the SI necessarily ascends to its conclusions in order to avoid a logical contradiction. The SI begins with first principles to reach certain conclusions, but the PI begins with ends to reach probable conclusions.

For example, if after an exhaustive study of the human soul, the SI determines that human beings should pursue happiness as an end then it is up to the PI to determine just how the end of happiness should be achieved. To achieve happiness, the PI must first know what happiness is and then figure out how among a world of constant change and flux that happiness can actually be attained. Because **circumstances are always changing, what works in one time or place might *not* work in another. Even if the SI discovers necessary truths, no progress can be made toward their attainment if the PI is deficient.** Knowing that happiness is an end to be achieved is a “black and white” issue – it is clear. But knowing how to achieve happiness in a given place or time among an endless array of possibilities and constantly shifting contingencies is a very difficult exercise. It is this later that Pope Francis is concerned about; nothing is black and white in the practical realm of constantly shifting contingencies i.e., the pastoral realm. Even if a priest, or lay evangelist, is certain of the highest truths, this certainty is practically useless unless the PI is capable of making prudential judgments about how best to achieve these truths in diverse environments and among diverse people and cultures.

Clearly knowing the truth, knowing black and white dogma is necessary but insufficient for the work of evangelization, which is the major work of the Church!

Pastoral theology depends upon the PI as much as it depends on the SI, perhaps moreso. Pastors must deal with constantly changing realities and shifting situations that effect how they might or might not succeed given a set of unique circumstances. Moreover, before a practical or prudential judgement can be made, facts must be gathered, the greater the quantity and quality of the information the better. Clearly, it is a mortal sin to divorce, remarry, and receive the Eucharist. This much is black and white. However, there are subjective and mitigating circumstances that might alter the judgement if they were known.

In the case of human moral decision making, the acquisition of facts presupposes proper relationships, making prudential or practical judgments requires information and knowledge of unique circumstances. Pope Francis is coming from this perspective, the pastoral perspective of the PI, while those who are confused are coming at the question dogmatically from the black and white understanding of the SI.

The latter *only* works in the classroom, in the university or seminary where truths are being ascertained and acquired. **The real world, however, is not a place of truth acquisition, it is a place of truth implementation,** implementation of truths previously acquired in the classroom. A parish is not a seminary; it is a place of practical reality where souls must be served and saved among a constantly shifting array of unique circumstances. If a pastor fails to acquire this information because he fails at relationships, his parish will most likely fail and his sheep, will be poorly served. He cannot treat them as a pedagogue teaching theology lessons; first the heart must be reached. This requires *mercy* and *compassion*, especially in a time as far gone as the present.

Practical decisions – pastoral decisions are *not* black and white. Priests must realize that they are no longer in the seminary. Moral casuistry (application of speculative or dogmatic truths to everyday contingencies) is always probable.

While theological truths are unchanging and universal, their application is ever-changing and relative. Thou shall not kill is a black and white clear moral precept. However, what about self-defense, what about soldiers defending their country, what about the mitigating circumstances of killing in the heat of passion versus pre-meditated murder etc. Things become quite complex when the move is made from speculative black and white principles to the grey area of their application – the realm of pastoral theology.

“Some priestly formation programs run the risk of educating in the light of overly clear and distinct ideas, and therefore to act within limits and criteria that are rigidly defined ... and that set aside concrete situations.”

In short, people complaining that they are confused want everything to be black and white as Pope Francis asserts.

“In life, not everything is black over white or white over black. No! The shades of gray prevail in life. We must teach them (seminarians) to discern in this gray area” ([National Federation of Priests Councils](#)).

No one can make a practical moral judgement without first acquiring the facts of a case (the gray area). But no one can adequately acquire the facts from a person living in sin if he or she does not first dismiss and overlook many faults and repulsive behaviors, which enable him to withhold judgement and enter into a relationship necessary for the acquisition of information and to make correct assessment of the state of a soul. If instead, a priest makes snap judgments based on black and white dogmatic truths pertaining to right and wrong behavior, relationships will be strained and end prematurely, or fail to develop at all, in which case there is no hope of conversion, the very purpose of evangelization.

Many rigid ultra-conservatives are looking at Francis’

teachings through the lens of dogmatic theology rather than through the lens of mercy and compassion, pastoral theology, which is often very confusing. Unfortunately, practical pastoral decisions are rarely black and white. Dealing with divorced and remarried couples is a pastoral issue. It certainly involves the application of black and white speculative or dogmatic principles, but no case is the same; shifting circumstances require prudential insight because sometimes circumstances that appear objectively sinful might be morally licit, such as the case of divorced-remarried couples living together chastely as brother and sister. If a Christian fails to acquire practical knowledge of the facts, in this case, a chaste living arrangement, but quickly jumps to a black and white conclusion thereby condemning an innocent couple, he or she sins not only against justice, but also against charity. It is necessary to see both with the eyes of the intellect and with the eyes of the heart. One **without** the other is always deficient. **Speculative wisdom must be united to and enlightened by emotive love** because:

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices **with** the truth” ([1 Corinthians 13: 4-6](#)).*

Priestly learning does not involve education alone – it involves education and formation. EDUCATION in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, and FORMATION in self mastery, mercy and love. Without the later, priests and laity alike are “confused” and tend to see everything in “black and white.” The remedy is growth in mercy and love as Pope Francis continually stresses!

END OF PART ONE – TO BE CONTINUED

PART TWO WILL EXAMINE THE ALLEGED DIFFICULTIES WITHIN “AMORIS
LAETITIA” IN LIGHT OF WHAT WAS PRESENTED IN PART ONE