

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 but 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 soul’s 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, Sujuma Theologiae, Second Part of Second Part, Q 45, Article 2](#)).

“Hence the wisdom of which we are speaking presupposes charity” ([Aquinas, Sujuma 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 rescind 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).