

1st Anniversary Flashback; Cardinal Burke Still Causing Confusion

[\(New Era World News](#) – Follow Up Tomorrow)

This article was written earlier in the year but serves as a flashback on this First Anniversary of the attempt to force Pope Francis to answer to his detractors. Newera is looking forward to releasing a provocative, demonstrative and current update on the issue tomorrow.

CARDINAL BURKE SEEMS TO HAVE TROUBLE letting go of an issue that has already been settled. Earlier this year [Cardinal Mueller](#), Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) stated that “There’s no problem with doctrine in ‘*Amoris Laetitia*’ (AL). The Cardinal also stated that:

“The document is “very clear” on doctrine, and that making the discussion public is harmful to the Church.”

Nonetheless, on the eve of March 24, 2017 Cardinal Raymond Burke, after several previous public cannonades, was still at it. If the pope is not good enough for him why should the highest doctrinal authority in the Church, beside the pope himself, mean anything to him either? Thus, on that Friday evening, Cardinal Burke presented a talk at [Saint Raymond of Peñafort](#) parish in Springfield, Virginia, during which he stated that “correction” by the Four Cardinals would be forthcoming if Pope Francis fails respond to the *dubia* presented to him by what might *in jest* be a dubious group of cardinals.

The pastor of the parish, Fr. John De Celles, asked about the

dubia:

Fr. De Celles: *There are a lot of rumors circulating about the dubia, which you and four other esteemed cardinals sent to the Holy Father about divorce, marriage, and communion and the like. Do you know if there will be a response to the dubia from our Holy Father or from the CDF?*

Cardinal Burke: *I sincerely hope that there will be because these are fundamental questions that are honestly raised by the text of the apostolic...the post-synodal apostolic exhortation Amoris Laetitia. And until these questions are answered, there continues to spread a very harmful confusion in the Church and one of the fundamental questions is in regards to the truth that there are some kinds that are always and everywhere wrong – what we call intrinsically evil acts – and so, we cardinals are, will continue to insist that we hear a response to these honest questions.”*

Fr. De Celles: *If there is no response, will, what will your response be, the Four Cardinals?*

Cardinal Burke: *Then we simply will have to correct the situation, again, in a respectful way, that simply can say that, to draw the response to the questions from the constant teachings of the Church and to make that known for the good of souls.*

“In summary, [the five dubia suggest that “Amoris Laetitia” may](#)

have altered traditional Catholic teaching on the following matters:"

- the indissolubility of the sacramental marriage bond;
- the existence of absolute moral norms prohibiting intrinsically evil acts;
- that one can find oneself in an objective situation of grave habitual sin by living in contradiction to a commandment of God's law;
- that circumstances or intentions can never transform an intrinsically evil act into a subjectively good one or into a defensible choice;
- that there can be no "creative" role for conscience to authorize legitimate exceptions to absolute moral norms.

According to the [Jesuit Review](#),

*"The dubia are not really expressions of doubt or questions but rather **assertions that "Amoris Laetitia" appears to have abandoned or altered key teachings of Catholic tradition, especially as they have been expressed most recently by St. John Paul II in his encyclical letter "Veritatis Splendor" (1993).***

This does appear to be the case. The key word is "appears". After reading the document, we begin to wonder if the Cardinal has ever read the document; certain that he has, Newera analysts are left awestruck, did we read the same document? We are left awestruck because after reading the document, nothing "appeared" contrary to the teachings of Catholic tradition. In fact, **Pope Francis strains to make it clear in numerous places throughout the document and esp. in the so-called "troublesome" Chapter Eight that nothing stated in AL about the discernment process that is integral to pastoral theology should be interpreted in such a way that contradicts the long held teaching of the Church on marriage nor may it be interpreted in such a way that prescind from the Gospel (para**

297, 300, 307, 308, 311). Did the Cardinals miss these statements?

To elucidate the point about Francis' clarity, a chronological list of clarifying statements contained in the original document (Chapter Eight) is provided. To begin, according to the AL,

*"The Synod Fathers stated that, although the Church realizes that **any breach of the marriage bond "is against the will of God"** she is also "conscious of the frailty of many of her children" (para 291).*

Pope Francis begins the so-called difficult chapter by reaffirming the perennial truths of the faith pertaining to the marriage bond and hints at the pastoral dimension that must be taken into account **while upholding the perennial truths, because, according to the pope "any breach of the marriage bond "is against the will of God."** Moreover, the Church

"... constantly holds up the call to perfection and asks for a fuller response to God, "the Church must accompany with attention and care the weakest of her children to enlighten those who have lost their way or who are in the midst of a storm" (para 291).

Again, he clearly states that the Church in addition to protecting the marriage bond from any breach, is also leading all of her children to "*perfection*". Since all men and women are at a different place along the path that leads to God, the Church must meet them where they are at. As witnessed by St. Paul, she must "become all things to all men with the view of winning them to Christ" ([1 Cor 9:22](#)). If the Church and her ministers fail to do this, they will *not* bring anyone to Christ, which is their evangelical mission. She must be especially vigilant about those who have "lost their way";

Like her beloved spouse, Jesus Christ, His bride must leave the secure to seek out the lost but not in anyway that negates the truth about marriage as already clearly stated at the outset of the chapter.

“What man of you that hath an hundred sheep: and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders, rejoicing: And coming home, call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance” ([Luke 15:4-7](#)).

Perhaps this pastoral approach taught by the Lord Himself, is too difficult for some who would rather wear medals and debate theological issues while drinking wine and smoking cigars or for another group, the so-called, “self righteous”. While debating theology and enjoying a good cigar are wholesome activities, they are deficient if *not* followed by the difficult task of pastoral work, of seeking out, reassuring, and accompanying the lost while gently guiding them *after* touching their hearts with mercy and compassion rather than cold correction and instant rebuke, which, *more often than not*, turns them away. NO! This is not the way of Jesus Christ, nor is it the way of Pope Francis; anyone who thinks otherwise will have difficulty understanding *Amoris Laetitia*.

Francis continues:

“The Fathers also considered the specific situation of a merely civil marriage or, with due distinction, even simple cohabitation, noting that “when such unions attain a particular stability, legally recognized, are characterized by deep affection and responsibility for their offspring, and

*demonstrate an ability to overcome trials, they can provide occasions for **pastoral care** with a view to the **eventual celebration of the sacrament of marriage**" (para 293).*

Notice that Francis indicates that when civilly married people or even those in "simple cohabitation" have a relationship that is "stable" and are characterized by "deep affection" and "responsibility for their offspring" they can provide an "occasion for pastoral care", not for the sacraments *but* for pastoral care (that might lead to the sacraments). In other words, divorced-remarried couples who are acting maturely and give signs that they might want to mature in the faith should be approached; they should be approached however, not to introduce them to the Sacraments, but with a view of giving them pastoral care that might lead to "*eventual celebration of marriage*". In other words, these people are to be met and encountered, **not to condone their sin, but to bring them to a deeper relationship with Christ and eventually to Christian marriage**. This seems very clear, and it sets the tone for the remainder of the so-called difficult chapter.

To provide further clarity Francis remarks:

"In this pastoral discernment, there is a need "to identify elements that can foster evangelization and human and spiritual growth".

In other words, the pastor is *not* to make excuses and look past sins or worse, to condone them; rather, he is to identify elements that can foster evangelization; that is look for positive behaviors that he can build upon while gently correcting them and leading them to deeper communion with Christ and with each other. Clearly, if they need "spiritual growth," they must be doing something wrong!

It is the pope's desire to lead such people from a sinful to a sanctified relationship:

"We know that there is "a continual increase in the number of those who, after having lived together for a long period, request the celebration of marriage in Church."

A pastor will meet a broad variety of cases; however, according to Pope Francis,

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

Did Cardinal Burke miss this? Whatever the case, these relationships "require" "transformation." They are "opportunities" that can lead to marriage in "CONFORMITY WITH THE GOSPEL". This is the second time the pope has mentioned the need to conform to the Gospel. He is concerned that the Church reinstate sinners in some way possible, in some way that will lead to fuller participation and *eventual* reception of the sacraments. He does *not* want to cast sinners away like the New England Puritans did, but to embrace them and win them over as Christ did. He wants to do this **not be excusing their sins but by acknowledging their sins and also acknowledging anything good in their relationship and building upon it.**

He makes this point about excusing sin clear (para 297):

*"Naturally, **if someone flaunts an objective sin as if it were part of the Christian ideal (radical homosexual who argues God made him this way), or wants to impose something other than what the Church teaches (for example civil-remarriage), he or she can in no way presume to teach or preach to others; this is a case of something which separates from the community"** (cf. Mt 18:17).*

Again, clearly, anyone who teaches that objective sins are

licit cannot be a teacher or a preacher; **this is a case of “something which separates from the community”**. Can it get any clearer than this? Although good pastors will look for ways to accompany their parishioners, esp. sinful ones always with an eye to something to build upon as mentioned above, *no one can excuse objective sin and the flaunting of it*. **This is NOT acceptable and Francis is straightforward about the matter.**

He then points out at the end of para 297 that **people who have contracted civil marriage**, who are divorced and remarried or simply living together **are living wrongly**, are NOT living up to God’s expectations. Therefore he says that they need help to “*understand the divine pedagogy of grace*’ and the need “*assistance so that they can reach the fullness of God’s plan for them*” because obviously **their living arrangement is not up to God’s plan!**

In para 298 he reiterates:

“It must remain clear that this is not the ideal which the Gospel proposes for marriage and the family.”

Nonetheless,

“Such persons need to feel not as excommunicated members of the Church, but instead as living members, able to live and grow in the Church and experience her as a mother who welcomes them always, who takes care of them with affection and encourages them along the path of life and the Gospel.”

Obviously, if they need to be encouraged along the path of the Gospel, they are failing; nonetheless, they should be incorporated into the community, somehow, and encouraged to grow like the rest of the sinners who occupy the pews.

Pope Francis does NOT indicate that priests should accept divorced and remarried people into the community and then

forget their sinful state.

“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).

These couple must be “accompanied” so that they can be “helped”, helped to understand why **their relationship precludes them for receiving Holy Communion “according to the teaching of the Church.”** The pope does *not* say they may be excused by some aberrant pastoral excuse, but he does say they must be developed according to the TEACHING of the CHURCH. For those who want to argue that the additional clause and “guidelines of the bishops” permits admission to Holy Communion; it is simply responded that those guidelines must also be consistent with the teaching of the Church as [Cardinal Muller, Prefect of the CDF is now making clear](#). Aberrant liberal bishops will have to be corrected if their guidelines run contrary to the teaching of the Church, that is the job of the CDF.

For Cardinal Burke to act as if confusion is something new, because some bishops are permitting civilly remarried people *etc.* to receive Holy Communion, is surprising. Aberrant bishops have caused confusion for 2,000 years. THIS IS NOTHING NEW. Catholics have seen this type of abuse even with an Ecumenical Council, why should supposed confusion of a Post-Synodal Exhortation cause any surprise? In fact, confusion is being exacerbated by prelates like Cardinal Burke who keep insisting there is massive confusion where there would be little to none if they would “zip it.” Liberal aberrant bishops will open the door to sin no matter what they are told; a key ingredient to their success is supposed “confusion”.

You are reading a review of Chapter Eight. Do you honestly

see any confusion so far? Cardinal Burke is helping manufacture confusion, perhaps due to a failure to synthesize dogmatic and pastoral theology. This happens to many people, esp. learned ones who spend too much time in their heads and have failed to integrate their minds with their hearts, wisdom with mercy and compassion. If the eminent cardinal had closed ranks behind the pope and interpreted the document as a pastoral exhortation that holds the objective truth about marriage in tact, as it does, aberrant bishops would have less room to operate; Cardinal Burke is opening the doors wide to deviance by continually advancing the theme of confusion.

After saying that divorced and remarried couples should be helped to understand their situation according to the teaching of the Church, the pope further drives home the divorced-remarried couple's error by calling them to an "examination of conscience" followed by "*repentance*" (para 300). **Why a call to penance if not a presumption that they are sinning?** Again, crystal clear!

Clearly, such people cannot be admitted to Holy Communion because according to (para 300), they need to form a "*correct judgement*" of their situation. Until they do so and repent, they are, according to the pope, "*hindered*" from "*the possibility of fuller participation in the life of the Church*". While guiding an aberrant couple to discern the state of their relationship before God, **no priest is licitly permitted to admit them to the sacraments.** To make the point abundantly clear, Pope Francis states (para 300):

"This discernment can NEVER PRESCIND FROM THE GOSPEL DEMANDS OF TRUTH and CHARITY AS PROPOSED BY THE CHURCH."

Did Cardinal Burke just happen to miss this too, perhaps one of the more powerful statements in AL?

Francis' loyalty to the Magisterium, to the Gospels and Tradition become even clearer as he limits the parameters

involved to even qualify a couple as candidates for the whole the process of discernment:

*“For this discernment to happen, **the following conditions must necessarily be present**: humility, discretion and love for the Church and her teaching, in a sincere search for God’s will and a desire to make a more perfect response to it” (para 300).*

In other words, the very possibility of beginning dialogue between pastor and parishioner, dialogue that is intended to place persons on the path of sanctification that *might* lead to the sacraments *if* they do things correctly; the very possibility of this dialogue is contingent upon persons being, “humble”, having “love for the Church” and “her teaching”; it is further contingent upon the couple’s having a “sincere search for God’s will” and a willingness to respond “more perfectly” to it. If these qualifying marks are missing, discernment leading to the sacraments cannot even begin; at least this is what the pope states; do you read something else? What did Cardinal Burke read?

Pope Francis drives this requirement home by stating that these attitudes are “*essential*” (para 300). They are essential to “avoid misunderstanding” and the “grave danger” that might lead a priest to think that he can grant “exceptions” (para 300). Thus, any priest thinking that pastoral theology dispenses him from the constant teaching of the Church in these matters is not only “misunderstanding” what the pope is teaching and what the Church teaches, he is also involving himself and his parishioners in “grave danger”.

Some how Cardinal Burke seems to think that Pope Francis is excusing sin due to ignorance or any number of particular and contingent circumstances. This is patently false. ***Nowhere does Pope Francis say ignorance outright excuses***; what he does say is that ***ignorance “mitigates”***. In fact, this is the title

of the next section of the Exhortation:

“Mitigating Factors in Pastoral Discernment”

Pope Francis begins this section by making the simple moral point, simple for anyone educated in moral theology, that even sinners can experience grace, at least *prevenient grace* that leads them to the sacraments. He even states that “More is involved than mere ignorance” (para 301).

When reading this section, the reader must *not* do as some Protestant Divines do, that is cherry-pick or fail to read the document as a systematic whole, fail to remember everything that was clearly stated previously. At this point, the document moves from *dogmatic* or *speculative theology* into the the more difficult realm of *moral casuistry* or *practical-pastoral theology*, the point where the rubber meets the road so to speak, the point where theory must be applied to practice. Thus, **at this point it necessarily becomes more obtuse**. The obtuseness of the exercise should be expected by anyone with a background in either moral theology or moral philosophy, even a pagan like Aristotle understood the difference; he also taught that the second part, that is the practical part, is the more difficult of the two – this is the simple reason why the document grows more difficult at this point; however, it must not be forgotten that **Francis has already stated at least twice, that a valid interpretation of AL cannot prescind from the Gospel or teaching of the Church**.

Again, throughout this section, the pope speaks about **mitigating circumstances**; he does *not* excuse objective sin, but stresses subjective mitigating circumstances due to the nature of a faulty or malformed conscience, a malformed conscience that is supposed to be corrected in the process of “accompaniment” by the pastor explained in the previous section. As regards mitigating circumstances due to subjective

states, we find Jesus, Himself, clearly teaching this in the Gospels:

“And that servant who knew the will of his lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes” ([Luke 12:47-48](#)).

Jesus position is clearly that of His Vicar. Persons who are invincibly ignorant of the truth, or for any other valid reason fail to comprehend it, reasons such as socialization, psychological immaturity, psychological manipulation by association etc, such persons who commit sins despite their ignorance etc are still guilty of an objective wrong; however, the subjective moral culpability is lessened; how much it is lessened depends on the circumstances which only God alone is master of, a fact that led Francis to once say, “who am I to judge?” Only God and perhaps the person himself can judge such things; it is the job of the pastor to enter into a relationship to better grasp the subjective state of his parishioners.

Without this approach, without such a relationship, the whole process of discernment breaks down and all that is left is a black and white judgement based upon objective facts of dogmatic theology; this is what it means to be dogmatic, or closed minded, closed to deeper truths about the *acting person*, deeper truths that affect their relationship to their sin and his or her moral culpability. These are facts, necessary facts for the successful process of pastoring souls entrusted to a priest’s care. Cardinal Burke seems oblivious to such facts; he prefers to make everything black and white. In this, he is acting more like a judgemental pharisee than a “good shepherd serving his people in the image of Jesus Christ who gave his life for his sheep, a good shepeherd who knows them well enough to call them each by name ([John 10:3](#)).

Again, to make his point clear, Francis states that

“In order to avoid all misunderstanding, I would point out that in no way must the Church desist from proposing the full ideal of marriage.”

“A lukewarm attitude, any kind of relativism, or an undue reticence in proposing that ideal, would be a lack of fidelity to the Gospel and also of love on the part of the Church for young people themselves. To show understanding in the face of exceptional situations never implies dimming the light of the fuller ideal, or proposing less than what Jesus offers to the human being” (para 307).

It is hard to see how Cardinal Burke missed this along with the score of other similar clear pronouncements throughout the Chapter made by Pope Francis. The pope emphatically stresses the point that he wants to “avoid all misunderstanding”. To do so he *again* states that what he is teaching in no way desists from the “full idea of marriage.” Moreover, he anathematizes “relativism” and “undue reticence” to the “full ideal of marriage.” Again he states, that contingent circumstance, that pastoral understanding, compassion etc, “never imply dimming the light to the fuller ideal (to the fullness of truth) or proposing less” than Jesus taught.

The Church, he says is

*“...a Mother who, while clearly expressing her **objective teaching**, “always does what good she can, even if in the process, her shoes get soiled by the mud of the street” (that is in the pasture where her ministers must encounter the dirt of sinners lives) (para308).*

Again, he states, again and again, that the Church must hold to her “objective teaching”

Pope Francis closes the so-called difficult chapter by restating one more time the commitment to objective truth; however, he teaches that there is one thing greater than the truth, that is love, the summit of Christ's teaching and of His life; it was love that sent Him to the cross and love that redeemed the world ("[Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends](#)"). No one sent Jesus to the cross; He freely chose the path of salvific suffering, and He chose out of love for sinful humanity. This is the central point Francis wants to make and indeed does make. It is difficult to comprehend how Prelates like Cardinal Burke miss it?

*"Although it is quite true that concern must be shown for the integrity of the Church's moral teaching, special care should **always be shown to emphasize and encourage the highest and most central values of the Gospel**, particularly the primacy of charity as a response to the completely gratuitous offer of God's love.*

*" It is true, for example, that **mercy does not exclude justice and truth**, but first and foremost we have to say that **mercy is the fullness of justice and the most radiant manifestation of God's truth.**"*

In this Francis is seconded by the Sacred Scriptures:

'If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

*And now there remain faith (from which wisdom grows), hope, and charity, these three: but **the greatest of these is charity**" ([1 Cor. 13:1-13](#)).*

Equally impressive is the story of Jesus' dialogue with the rich young man ([Matt 19:16-22](#)). Jesus does *not* simply announce the truth and leave the young man to accept it or reject it. Rather, Jesus engages in a process to bring the young man forward. "Jesus, as a good shepherd, personally leads the young man step by step to the truth

Francis, like Jesus, insists upon two unique but integral aspects of evangelization: First is the proclamation of truth and then the gradual formation of people to internalize and live it. Thus, when the *Pharisees* (dogmatic theologians – men without mercy- [Matt 9:13](#)) questioned Jesus about divorce ([Matt 19:3-9](#)), He communicated the objective facts; He proclaimed the truth: Marriage is indissoluble and exclusive. However, when he interacted with the *Samaritan woman*, He placed less emphasis on the truth and *more* on her personal life journey, a journey that involved her with six men. After engaging her, He told her,

"Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered, and said: I have no husband. Jesus said to her: Thou hast said well, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast, is not thy husband. This thou hast said truly" ([John 4: 16-18](#)).

Jesus does not break the conversation, but engages her until she (and then many others) finally accepts Him as the Messiah ([John 4:38-42](#)):

"Now of that city many of the Samaritans believed in him, for the word of the woman giving testimony: He told me all things whatsoever I have done? So when the Samaritans were come to him, they desired that he would tarry there. And he

abode there two days. And many more believed in him because of his own word. And they said to the woman: We now believe, not for thy saying: for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

See what truth in the context of a little encounter and dialogue can do? Pope Francis is exemplifying these two aspects of evangelization, the need to hold to the truth that never "prescinds from the Gospel" and the more difficult process of discernment and engagement whereby alienated people are gradually led , step by step, to communion so that they can eventually be one with Him who is the Way and the Truth and the Life.

FOLLOWUP ARTICLE TO FOLLOW TOMORROW

Vatican Being Vetted Part III: Pope Francis and the Role of Trinitarian Theology

[New Era World News](#)

Pope Francis and Trinitarian Theology

[Continued from Part Two](#)

POPE FRANCIS IS ADROITLY applying Trinitarian Theology in the modern context; he is demonstrating that **wisdom** (the truths of dogmatic theology) **by itself though a good**, among the highest and greatest goods, **is a deficient good. Wisdom reaches its perfection in love; wisdom is consummate in love.**

Without love wisdom cannot reach its telos or end, which is communion with other human beings as the Body of Christ and union with God as sons in the Son.

God the Father in knowing Himself from eternity begot the Eternal Word born out of His infinite and eternal self-knowledge. The Holy Trinity however is *not* consummate in the begetting of the Word, Divine Wisdom; **the Holy Trinity is consummate in the union of Father and Son by the Love they have for each other, a love from which the Holy Spirit is spirated perfecting the Trinity and making them One. It is not wisdom ALONE, BUT WISDOM CONSUMMATE IN LOVE that is the bond of Trinitarian and therefore perfect Substantial Unity – The Holy Trinity.** The Father first knows the Son, the Son knows the Father and in reciprocal knowing, They are impelled to love each other with the fullness of Divine Love and Divine Life that we call the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Divine Love spirated from the infinite and eternal Love shared between Father and Son.

POINT: Wisdom is consummate in loving. That is, **wisdom without love is not and cannot be fecund, wisdom without love is incomplete-imperfect.** Divine wisdom, the self-knowledge of God brings forth the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from, and is the “fruit” of, Divine Love the perfection of the Holy Trinity, who is Love. All-Knowing Wisdom and Life-Giving love constitute one integral Divine being – Wisdom and Love belong together; one without the other is deficient. Wisdom is consummate in love; wisdom precedes love in the “order of operation”:

“For the procession of love occurs in due order as regards the procession of the Word (wisdom); since nothing can be loved by the will unless it is (first) conceived in the intellect” ([Aquinas Q 27, A 3](#)).

In **human terms**, this means that there must be a unity and

profound cooperation between wisdom and love and among the sentient powers and operations of the human soul, passions, intellect and will. This is why the masters of mystical theology have articulated three stages on the road to spiritual perfection: the *purgative* (having to do with the sentient passions), the *illuminative*, (having to do with the acquisition of wisdom) and the *unitive* (having to do with growth in love by which a person is united to God.) Notice the order of perfection: purgative-illuminative-unitive. **The unitive, which depends on love, is last, the final end, the consummation of discipline of body and enlightening of intellect that ascends to union with God by way of love.**

Wisdom is not the telos. Love of God that brings about union with God, the divinization of man as the Body of Christ is the telos, the end of human powers and operations assisted by Divine Grace.

Love, not wisdom, is the highest attainment of the human mind. It is an attainment of the human mind because love proceeds from the **will**, which as Aquinas tells us is an **“INTELLECTUAL appetite.”** **This is the key to understanding Pope Francis’ insistence on pastoral theology.** Wisdom, one might say, **represents an attainment of dogmatic theology;** it is an intellectual virtue that remains incomplete unless consummated in unitive love, the love of **God AND neighbor** – the love that is **the work of “pastoral theology.”**

Those who do not like to hear that God is Love must answer to the sacred scriptures wherein Saint John clearly and explicitly informs the universal body, that **“God is Love.”** Moreover those who do not know love, those who do not live love, those who over-emphasize wisdom and dogma to the detriment of love, do not know God because **“God is love.”**

*“Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. **Whoever***

is without love does not know God, for God is love.” ([1 John 4: 7-8](#)).

Why does Francis want his pastors to “get dirty” to mix with their sheep so they can “smell” like their flock? Why, because he wants them to discern openings for possible fuller admission into the ministries of the laity and eventual invitation to the sacraments, why because pastoral theology is the work of love:

*“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. It **bears all things**, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” ([1 Corinthians 13:4-8](#)).*

Love moreover, unlike justice, love is not interested in claiming its rights, in counting wrongs done. Love seeks to *pardon* and *excuse*, while the devil looks to *condemn* and *accuse* ([Rev. 12:10](#)). Unfortunately, he is sometimes imitated by some members of the Body of Christ whom the pope is addressing when he often times belittles condemnation and judgmentalism.

*“Love (however) **never fails**.” ([1 Cor 13:8](#)).*

It is by love, not dogma, that priests leave the comfort of their studies, of their offices and rectories, to encounter the world and become “fishers of men.”

“‘This is what I am asking you’,” [Pope Francis emphasized](#) while looking up from his prepared text, “be shepherds with the smell of sheep,” so that people can sense the priest is not just concerned with his own congregation, but is also a fisher of men.’

This is rudimentary; it is therefore also **surprising that so many miss this primordial dictum of the faith, so many in the Church who cry for justice, demand condemnation of sinners,** look forward to and predict global cataclysms and chastisements, while Jesus Christ, is Himself calling for Mercy and asking His Church to proclaim mercy – mercy before justice. However there are those in the Church (those whom Francis is prodding to become pastors) who are content with expressing the faith by straining at the gnat of dogmatic truths and swallowing the camel of mercy and therefore erroneously cry for justice – justice – justice.

*“Many publicans and sinners came, and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. And the Pharisees seeing it, said to his disciples: **Why doth your master eat with publicans and sinners?** But Jesus hearing it, said: They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill. **Go then and learn what this meaneth, I will have MERCY and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the just, but sinners.**”*

HAVE WE FORGOTTEN THIS? THE STUDY OF DOGMA AND REFLECTION ON
DIVINE LAW LEAD TO
WISDOM THAT MUST BE ACTUALIZED IN LOVE AND MERCY BECAUSE THE
DIVINE LAW IS LOVE – AGAPE

As was said in a previous column, those calling for justice and predicting calamities should watch what they are pleading for, they might receive it themselves. Was it justice or mercy that characterized the attitudes of Moses, of Peter, of Paul or of Christ Himself, when He and they interceded for members of their flock? What did the Lord say to James and John when they bellowed for the thunder of justice to be rained down upon sinners?

“And he sent messengers before his face; and going, they entered into a city of the Samaritans, to prepare for him. And they received him not, because his face was of one going

to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John had seen this, they said: Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? And turning, he rebuked them, saying: You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save" ([Luke 9: 52-56](#)).

No, until the "Parousia" it **belongs to the state, not the Church, to administer justice and punish sinners:**

"Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation. For princes are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good: and thou shalt have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to thee, for good. But if thou do that which is evil, fear: for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is God's minister: an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil"([Romans 13:1-4](#)).

It belongs to the Church to tame severity, to put away the sword of vindictive justice and to suffer for the unjust as Christ did ([Matt 26:52](#)). This is what Our Lady at Fatima asked for: reparation prayer, prayer fructified by suffering for the sins of others borne out of charity and love for lost souls.

"I Paul am made a minister. [Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you](#), and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for his body, which is [the church](#)."

God did not come to condemn the world, but to save the world ([John 3:17](#)).

A priest intercedes for his people; he implores mercy and like

Christ the High Priest whom he images (persona Christi), he offers himself as a victim in their place. This is a far cry from judgmentalism, from what Pope Francis refers to as Phariseeism, a Phariseeism that has infected some of his pastors and turned them into dogmatic theologians. A leader intercedes for his people:

*“But Moses besought the Lord his God, saying: **Why, O Lord, is thy indignation kindled against thy people**, whom thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? Let not the Egyptians say, I beseech thee: He craftily brought them out, that he might kill them in the mountains, and destroy them from the earth: **let thy anger cease**, and be appeased upon the wickedness of thy people. **Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou sworest by thy own self**, saying: I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven: and this whole land that I have spoken of, I will give to you seed, and you shall possess it for ever. **And the Lord was appeased from doing the evil which he had spoken against his people**” ([Exodus 32: 11-14](#)).*

God was “appeased” due to the intercession of Moses who chose to plead for, rather than condemn, the sinners in his flock. In this, he prefigured the ultimate and infinite intercession of Jesus Christ the High Priest who offered Himself on the cross for sinners. Applying this lesson and example of intercessory and reparative love to modern-day lay leaders, it might be stressed that Jesus did *not* come to introduce a fashion show and to have medallions hung on His chest as Francis has pointed out to the Knights of Malta when reminding them of their charism of service to the poor. They and all members of the Body of Christ are to serve in humility and simplicity, to save souls by offering themselves in Christ for them. This is love and reparation. Reparation is not something intended solely for the priests. Is not this what Our Lady requested at Fatima – “Communions of Reparation”. Did we somehow forget about reparation, of sacrificial self-giving

for love of poor sinners who have no one to pray for them???.

Traditionalists who are big on Fatima should be stressing mercy for poor sinners and laying down their lives to win the grace of conversion for them. But, what we constantly here is an unending refrain about supposed dogmatic abuses and supposed erring formulas of papal consecration for the conversion of Russia, which is essentially none of the laity's business anyway. Our Lady asked the pope to conduct the consecration; it is up to the pope to decide how it should be carried out. If Fatima connotes a battle over the consecration of Russia in your mind, you can be sure that you missed the Message of Fatima: Penance-Penance-Penance in an attitude of reparative love offered to God in union with His Passion in the Sacrifice of the Mass for the conversion of poor sinners and the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary!

What does penance and reparation mean but mercy and love – the mercy and love from which they flow manifest in pastoral care for straying and lost sheep?

Yet, often instead of pastoral care, instead of mercy, love and compassion bringing life to those in blighted outcast ghettos, on roaring sensual highways, and forgotten lonesome byways, etc, instead of love and mercy manifest in the daily toil of evangelization by means of pastoral care binding up the wounds of the lost and forgotten, instead of this we often find bloated men and women who want to wear military regalia, don titles of nobility and desirous of preferred seats, men and women who spend great swathes of time talking about trying to make things like they used to be in some romantic and unrealistic nostalgic past, while the wolves pulverize the sheep economically, morally and spiritually and the best bloated nobles can do is offer "philanthropy". Pope Francis might be stinging a few consciences, but he is not wrong!

Philanthropy is NOT charity. Philanthropy condescends, philanthropy is a show; it gives far too little while holding the bulk for itself. Charity, on the other hand, gets out of its royal seat on a daily basis; it embraces both poverty and the poor – it is empathetic and compassionate, not condescending and stooping; charity is humble, it gives in secret ([Matt 6:6](#)) and it gives fully of its assets saddened that it cannot give more; charity expects nothing not even an acknowledgement from men:

“A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, “Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood” ([Mark 12: 42-44](#)).

Charity embraces those who are being served, it lives among them, eats with them, sleeps with them – charity, in short, begins to look and “smell” like the sheep it serves.

This is exactly what Francis is trying to promote. To bring it about, easy-living, worldliness, grandiosity, and vain-glory must be purged. But the enemy of Christ and of His Church is the King of Pride and Vain-glory. He surrounds himself, his followers and numerous others whom he lulls to spiritual sleep, he surrounds them with luxuries and the trappings that come with material abundance, an abundance that feeds pride and kills the soul.

*“And calling the multitude together with his disciples, he said to them: **If any man will follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel, shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer***

the loss of his soul? ([Mark 8: 34-36](#)).

The “Way of the Cross” is antithetical to the “Way of Perdition” most manifest in the spirit of materialism that has deeply infected the Church.

*“For the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and **those who enter through it are many** ([Matt 7:13](#)).*

Interestingly, in the following line of Matthew’s Gospel, *immediately* following the one just quoted, Jesus warns His Church that those who are on the Road to Perdition are often deceivers who hide behind a veil of good deeds:

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves.”

Then He further reveals that their spirit can be discerned by their conduct:

*“By **their fruits you shall know them**. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit.”*

That is, the spirit is *not* discerned by the works they do, but by **how they go about doing their works**. Fruits are *not* works *per-se*, but how works are done, for the fruits are:

*“Charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, Mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. Against such there is no law. And **they that are Christ’s, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences.** ([Galatians 5: 22-24](#)).*

All the fruits grow out of Charity, which makes souls joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, long-suffering, chaste etc. That is why even small gifts, such as a few coins from a poor woman, can surpass large donations given by a rich man. One is given in love, the other out of necessity, justice, vanity or some associated reason. **God regards the heart more than the gift.** Francis, like Christ, is *not* impressed by regalia, by insignia, or material abundance and worldliness, which are often a cover for corrupt spirits. The Holy Spirit is manifest in love, joy and mercy, in those who have “crucified their flesh”.

But there are those in the Church who identify holiness with “Titles of Nobility”, with medallions and regalia that, although not bad in themselves, easily infect the soul, easily corrupt virtue by the allurements of riches leading to vain-glory and the pride of life that result in dullness and ease that flatten virility and make men useless ([Matt 5:13](#)). Francis wants humble and virile men, men full of mercy, compassion love, which is the life of the soul and the light of the world. He therefore wants worldliness and materialism out of Malta, out of the Vatican, out of diocesan chanceries, institutes of religious life, out of deaneries and parishes; in short, he wants worldliness out of the Church.

He has asked the Knights of Malta to focus less on the outer regalia, less on worldly traditions associated with royalty; he wants them to become truly chivalrous by noble deeds of service out of love for Christ’s wounded Body on earth. To be militant, spiritually militant, requires much more than the donning of *beau monde* regalia and sword followed by salutes, hand shakes, and *mondaine* banquets. To be militant, truly militant, requires disinterested love of neighbor, to be ready to die to self out of love for the salvation of souls and the temporal needs of others esp. those of poor sinners. This is radical, the radical stuff of authentic Christian militancy.

Apparently the Island of Malta has been under severe material

attack and has subcomb in many ways to the materialism that is infecting its prelates and noble men. The fact that it is not just lay leaders but also [the Maltese bishops who are also having a bout with the Vatican](#) is further indication of the serious problems festering on the stalwart island.

[The Maltese bishops' "Criteria for the Application of Chapter of Amoris Laetitia" has been referred to as "disastrous".](#)

They indicate, **against the express critique of Cardinal Mueller** (who will now have to work on correcting the egregious error promulgated by the Maltese Bishops), that it might prove to be "humanly impossible" for some civilly remarried couples to live chastely; nonetheless, a Catholic couple living in an objectively sinful situation may receive Holy Communion if they "are at peace with God."

It appears that some of the English Knights of Malta are bordering on elitist traditionalism and judgmentalism, what Francis refers to a Pharisee-ism, while the bishops have seemingly abdicated their prophetic responsibility and are not judging at all – bedlam on both ends of the theological spectrum. This is the problem, a problem that foments subjectivism in the name of a false pastoral theology that leads to excessive tolerance and false charity on one hand (liberalism on the part of the episcopate) and rigorous objectivism in the name of dogmatic theology and traditionalism leading to judgmentalism (ultra-conservatism on the part of some knights) on the other. There is an apparent and egregious struggle raging on the Island of Malta, a struggle between liberal and conservative knights and between conservative knights and liberal bishops of the State – the perfect dialectical recipe long used by secret societies to hatch discontent, division, and then subversion of both Church and State thereby compromising the works of love carried out by the authentic sons of the Church.

Focusing on the Knights, Francis is concerned that they engage in charitable work, charity the gives up its comforts to

assist the uncomfortable, charity that *“comforts the afflicted but afflicts the comforted”*.

Thus according to [Austen Ivereigh](#) writing for [CRUX](#)

“The president of the order’s German Association, Erich Lobkowitz, has [described](#) the struggle as “a battle between all that Pope Francis stands for and a tiny clique of ultraconservative frilly old diehards in the Church – diehards that have missed the train in every conceivable respect.”

“The reformers want to focus on the Order’s humanitarian work among the poor, downplay the ceremonial pomp, and align the order more with Francis’s vision of an evangelizing, missionary Church.”

This is how we are to understand the stance Pope Francis has taken with the Knights of Malta. The Church is not a Puritan society of the elect; **the Church is the suffering Body of Christ full of sinners until the eschatological harvest** ([Matt 13:36-43](#)).

Without love no one can enter the Kingdom of God, yet there are a whole host of Catholics who continue to insist that it is wisdom that is the *summa bonum* (the greatest good). This is an error innocently advanced by Aristotle, the pagan philosopher who with the *unaided*-intellect examined the human soul and concluded that wisdom is the greatest human good. Near the end of his “Ethics” he moved close to the mystery of unitive love that he called “friendship”. Nonetheless, not having the benefit of sanctifying grace and the mystery of the Cross to contemplate, he referred to wisdom as the *summum bonum*, the highest intellectual attainment possible for mortal men. As we know, in the light of the Cross, Aristotle was partially correct (an astounding accomplishment for a pagan

philosopher): **Wisdom participates in the greatest good, but by itself is is not the *summum bonum***, Wisdom consummate in love that unites mankind to God and to each other is the *summum bonum*, the highest attainment of the rational spiritual soul aided by supernatural grace- it is love that unites man to God as one body, the Body of Christ – a body composed of sinners whom Christ came to save.

*“The two, **intellect and will, work together as an integral unity**. It is the nature of the mind to know and will to love or to unite that which is known to that by which it is known. The more the known is like the knower, the more the known can be loved because “likeness is the principle of loving” (Aquinas, Q 27, A 4). Like attracts like (Father and Son – Christ and members of His Body – man and wife) and **their union is consummated by way of love**, which is the “impulse” and “movement” that unites the one who loves to the one who is loved” ([Trinitarian Humanism, p 292](#)).*

In the end there are faith (theological virtue of wisdom), hope and love, but the greatest of these is love:

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” ([Matthew 25:34–39](#)).

Traditionalists for Vetting the Vatican Being Vetted Part II

[New Era World News](#)

Renewal of the Church

[Continued from Part One](#)

Pope Francis has been, and continues to be, adamant about renewal in the Catholic Church. Like his namesake, **St Francis of Assisi**, the Holy Father is leading a movement for restoration of holiness, of Gospel simplicity, an outpouring of love, mercy, compassion and simplicity. Realizing that **the world** is afloat in a sea of materialism, ensconced under a veil of darkness, **imprisoned behind a nearly impregnable wall of cunning artifice**, realizing that **generations have been *psychologically and culturally conditioned* against logic (Logos) toward aversion for the good, true and beautiful**, realizing these things, the Vicar of Christ, moved by the Holy Spirit, is fully aware that this generation cannot be reached by sophisticated and lengthy appeals to reason – the “old evangelization.”

Consequently, there is another Francis that Pope Francis could just as well emphasize, the Counter Reformation Bishop, and Doctor of the Church, **St. Francis de Sales** (1567-1622). The walls of Geneva, the capitol of Reform Protestantism, the Protestantism that spread to the United Kingdom and to America, these walls were thought to be impregnable, but the saint persisted – not with reasoned arguments, denunciations and calls for divine justice, but with love..

“Francis became bishop of Geneva, where his patience and mildness became proverbial. He often dared to walk the streets of the city where Calvin had his headquarters 50 years earlier. In fact he dialogued with the reformed leader and scholar Theodore Beza. Though ...plagued by doubts, his philosophy was “Love will shake the walls of Geneva; by love we must invade it.””

In his own words,

*“It is our fault if the name of the Lord is blasphemed among the nations, and of this, God through his prophets bitterly complains. Such are the waters of contradiction, which in my opinion, renews the ardor of heretics. ... I beg of you, fellow combatants, to check the flow of this water; let each one of us watch his own source and prevent it reaching the enemy; let the flow of our sinful actions surge back to their origin, and there evaporate in the heat of our Eternal Sun to deprive our enemy, as well as our people, of the spectacle of our scandals. ... Breach the walls of Geneva with our ardent prayers and storm the city with mutual charity. **Our front lines must wield the weapons of Love**” ([Oeuvres VII:100,107-110](#)).*

Elsewhere in a similar vein he uttered the simple but profound proverbial wisdom:

“More bees attracted by a (small) teaspoon of honey than by an (entire) barrel of vinegar.”

Saint Francis One venture Francis de Sales joined Saint Jane Frances de Chantal, to found the Visitation Sisters of Holy Mary.

The Visitation Sisters sole aim was:

“...the life of charity exemplified in the Virgin Mary’s visit

to her cousin Elizabeth. This new order was uniquely conceived. It was established **not** on the traditional vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, **but always and everywhere on charity**: “**We have no bond but the bond of love,**” Francis wrote in the first Book of Profession. And, rather than focusing on stringent practices of mortification behind the walls of the monastery, as was common in religious orders of the time, **these sisters would actually go out into the city, to visit and care for the sick.**”

Like Francis de Sales, St. Jane de Chantal and St. Paul, Pope Francis keenly realizes that to be successful ambassadors of Christ modern evangelists must often take one, two, three even many steps backward with the view of winning souls to Christ, they must encounter the world with the “weapon of love” becoming all things to all men and women to win them to Christ.

*“For 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, (whereas I was not without the law of God, but was in the law of Christ,) 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. And I do all things for the gospel’s sake: that I may be made partaker thereof” ([1 Corinthians 9: 19-22](#)).*

In today’s context Paul might have stated to the gay oriented I became **as if** gay oriented, to the liberal, **as if** liberal, to the oppressed **as if** oppressed. I became **all** things to **all** men, that I might save all. And I do all things for the gospel’s sake: that I may be made partaker thereof”

This is not condescension but love, not an attitude of judgement, but one of mercy and compassion, the type of thing needed for successful evangelization in a very difficult situation, a situation unlike any ever seen before, a situation where the intellect has been progressively dimmed until banished and replaced by systematic conditioning via an intrusive and unprecedented communications media in conjunction with psychological manipulation hinted at by Vladimir Lenin when he told Ivan Pavlov, the Father of Classical Conditioning, that he had "[saved the revolution.](#)" What Pavlov discovered about the conditioning of animals could be applied to human beings and to entire societies in the name of the "Revolution" – this is one of the primary reasons Lenin was so interested in the "*Rural Electrification Campaign*" – to bring mass media into the homes of Christian peasants.

Thus, according to Lenin:

*"Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country...Electrification which will provide a link between town and country, will put an end to the division between town and country, will make it possible to **raise the level of culture** in the countryside and to **overcome**, even in the most remote corners of land, **backwardness, ignorance, poverty, disease, and barbarism**" (Lenin "Collected Works", vol. 30, page 335).*

If the human intellect could be reduced to mere memory and imagination, sentient *not* rational powers of the human soul, and if freedom and toleration could open the doors to what was once forbidden until it became common place, if knowledge of alpha and beta brain tempos, of sleep states, dream patterns and hypnotic rhythms induced with light and sound waves, if images and ideas could be subtly conveyed with motion pictures paired with the proper light and sound patterns, associations could be placed in the recesses of the human mind, it could be turned away from truth and toward error until light is seen as

darkness and darkness as light. If all this could be done, the mind and emotions could be manipulated, reason dimmed and intellectual appeals made virtually meaningless in a culture turned against man, [something John Paul II identified as the fundamental problem of the modern world:](#)

“The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed in a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person... To this disintegration planned at times by atheistic ideologies we must oppose, rather than sterile polemics, a kind of “recapitulation” of the inviolable mystery of the person.”

The attack on the inviolable mystery on the human person is an attack on the Trinitarian mystery of man made in the image of God. Man has a mind capable of acquiring wisdom by rational acts on the intellect followed by a unique ability to love – to know and to love. **Wisdom and love the mystery of the Trinitarian dimensions of human existence rooted in the rational soul** is being decimated, “pulverized” not only by false ideologies but a systematic attack on the human mind. There has been nothing like this in the annals of recorded history, not even Rome in all its decadence was home to anything like this.

Understanding the unique cultural *milieu* in which the Church must do its work of evangelization in the modern world helps make sense of the pastoral approach conveyed by Vatican Council II. It helps to recall how the Church handled evangelization in the dark days of the Roman Empire. In those days, **it was quiet witness**, the living of good lives characterized by moral and theological virtue, mercy, long-suffering, obedience to lawful authority and patience with sin which was enculturated and widely accepted as normal. For evidence, of the Church’s *modus operandi* in this environment it is a simple matter of turning to the Epistles and the Books of Acts.

In Acts we find the the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem discussing how best to deal with evangelization in the context of pagan culture *vis a vis* the more advanced Judaic culture in which the Apostles had been raised. Though raised in strictly religious environment, they had the percipience to recognize what the were dealing with, and the prudence to relax their rigor in order to win souls to Christ:

*“So that the rest of humanity may seek out the Lord, **even all the Gentiles on whom my name is invoked.** Thus says the Lord who accomplishes these things, known from of old.’ It is my judgment, therefore, that we ought to stop troubling the Gentiles who turn to God, but tell them by letter to avoid pollution from idols, unlawful marriage, the meat of strangled animals, and blood ([Acts 15: 17-20](#)).*

Of all the [613 Mitzvah of the Traditional Jewish Law](#) only four were applied. Only four were applied because of the effete nature of Roman culture at this time. Saint John Bosco understood the concept well:

“The perfect is often times enemy of the good.”

To much too soon, too heavy of a load on weak shoulders can easily break them down and then they will loose heart, rebel and perhaps walk away. As Pope Francis states, in such a situation small steps, what he refers to as **“gradualism”** must be taken. In a society infected with tolerance and excessive false ideas about freedom it takes time to desensitize, time to earn trust and to build a relationship on which truths of the faith can be built one by one slowly. The idea is so far diffused that it is found even in proverbial folk wisdom:

“It was the straw that broke the camel’s back.”

What some traditionalists are crying for, the rigor they want to impose upon themselves to attain spiritual perfection is

one thing, a very good thing, but to impose it on others who are not where ready is another thing, a very foolish and dangerous thing. That is why Church discipline has become "minimalist" in the modern context. It is not minimalist for everyone, anyone can walk the road of perfection and embrace the evangelical councils of poverty, chastity and obedience.

These are NOT COMMANDS or MITZVAHS, **necessary for everyone**, like the precepts or MITZVAHS imposed upon the pagan converts to Christianity, poverty, chastity and obedience are COUNCILS, which means they are voluntary. **We are not living in a Christian culture; we are living in a pagan culture acerbated by advanced technology that is being used, willy nilly, to condition people** – it is a very difficult state, one that requires patience and mercy. Too much rigor will break the camel's back; we must learn to be satisfied with the good before we can expect the perfect – gradualism!

Again, this idea surfaces in the Rule of Saint Augustine, it surfaces among men who had decided to seek perfection – even there the idea is still valid: *some are not ready to embrace the rigors* of the human ascent to Golgatha. In Augustine's memoirs we find an account of some monks complaining that others were eating and sleeping too much, lax at work, etc.

The august saint handled this challenge by counseling these brothers to thank God for their strength and ability to embrace a more prayerful and rigorous lifestyle; he counseled them to be merciful toward the others who were still weak, to pray for them and encourage them along the way rather than condemn and scorn them – a very timely lesson indeed! **This is a lesson brought to Fatima by the Mother of God** who conveyed Her desire for **reparation prayer and sacrifice**, that is **prayer and sacrifice made out of love for others who are too weak or lost to do it for themselves. Denying oneself out of love for others is antithetical to condemnation and justice.**

No, reparation is born out of love and mercy, which is the

very message Pope Francis is trying to get through our hardened hearts and obdurate cerebra.

Pope Francis knows very well what a sin is. [In a flight press conference from Azerbaijan to Rome he stated](#) response to questions about *Amoris Laetitia* he stated:

"Sin is sin."

*"Tendencies or hormonal imbalances create many problems and we have to take care **not** to say: **"It doesn't make any difference, let's live it up" No, not at all."***

"But for every case welcome it, accompany it, look into it, discern and integrate it. This is what Jesus would do today."

In other words, sin must be encountered with discernment, of how best to handle the situation each unique context.

The Pope Continues:

"Please, do NOT say: "The Pope blesses transsexuals!" Please! Because I can already see the newspaper headlines... No, no. Are there any doubts about what I said? I WANT TO BE CLEAR. IT IS A MORAL PROBLEM. It is a problem."

What Pope Francis wants is not the excusing of sin but encounter with sinners, openness, dialogue, in short a merciful relationship that opens a person to receive "*prevenient grace*" that step by step leads to healing and eventually, if possible, to the sacraments. A too quick judgment, a simple yes or no is not relational and will not do much for healing. Pastors have to go out of their way to

encounter their sheep, esp the wayward ones:

“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” ([Matt 18:12](#)).

Pope Francis, like Francis de Sales, John Bosco and St. Paul understood the context in which they were preaching the good news, understood the people they were shepherding because they took time to know them rather than simply condemning them. In a cultural context in which a propaganda campaign has become institutionalized, it is clear, people acculturated to this reality cannot be encountered by mere intellect alone – more is needed. Much more is needed in the 21st century than the 16th. In the 21st the propaganda campaign is in the very air that has become a global pestilence daily disseminated by the global media, the near-monopoly of public schools and universities where the infection has become so great as to constitute an unprecedented cultural, moral and spiritual epidemic. Professors who preach tolerance, acceptance, and anti-bigotry are excused by unthinking students who are unable to see past the hypocrisy coming forth from the mouth and manifest in the actions of a new generation of sociology and liberal arts professors who teach tolerance but do not practice it. They are like the Pharisees excoriated by Jesus

“All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not; for they say, and do not...Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves...Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful,

but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly indeed appear to men just; but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” ([Matt 23:3-28](#)).

https://youtu.be/fb0x_aSgjj0

“I am a Professor: “Fuck YOU” “Fuck that shit” “You should kick the ass of Neonazis.”

End of Part Two – Go to Part Three (available 2/8/2017)

Traditionalists for Vetting the Vatican Getting Their Wish – They are Being Vetted

[New Era World News](#)

HIDDEN IN THE AFTERMATH OF A TUMULTUOUS THEOLOGICAL TREMOR, a tremor intended to shake the pontificate of the Pope Francis, hidden in this aftermath can be found [unsubstantiated volatile rumblings such as the following](#) that give an indication what it is all about:

“On April 8th, Amoris Laetitia was published; a document wherein it would appear that the pope had declared that fornication and adultery are not necessarily mortal sins, and what’s more, Almighty God Himself occasionally asks us to persist in committing them! The point apparently being, to

open the door to Holy Communion for the civilly divorced and remarried, cohabitators, and perhaps even those who persist in homo-deviant acts.”

Apparently, there are more than a few who have fallen into the cracks caused by this global convulsion. Either they are sincere members of the Body of Christ being confused by sincere but liberal bishops and equally sincere traditionalist cardinals or there is, as [Pope Francis himself has noted, a cabal at work in the Church](#), a cabal that he is in the process of sweeping away. A cabal that Francis has identified as the “most serious problem he faces:

“The problem is not having this [homosexual] orientation. No, we must be brothers and sisters. The problem is lobbying for this orientation, or lobbies of greed, political lobbies, Masonic lobbies, so many lobbies. This is the most serious problem for me” ([CNS News](#)).

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

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

In the Holy Father’s own words:

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

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

refuge in traditions, appearances, formalities, in the familiar, or else in a desire to make everything personal, failing to distinguish between the act, the actor and the action

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

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

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

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

Strangely, this could apply to “ministers” on the left and the right who have entered into an highly unusual alliance. Usually the two, left and right, are at each others throats, now in a strange set of circumstances they are either consciously or unconsciously working together to unseat the pope before he unseats them. Churchmen of the right are claiming that *Amoris Laettia* is unclear while those on the left are confirming their allegations by implementing specious diocesan guidelines that permit liturgical and sacramental

abuses in the name of *Amoris Laetitia*.

These obfuscating claims and divisive schema have prompted Cardinal Mueller to suggest that it is the bishops, not the pope, that are causing the confusion. Recently, to the chagrin of both the right and the left, Cardinal Mueller defended the [doctrinal integrity of Amoris Laetitia](#). Those on the left (those who think the Magisterium has somehow opened the door for Holy Communion to unrepentant adulterers based on a private judgement of their own unformed conscience) are obviously in error – Cardinal Mueller has begun the process of addressing their error. But it is the Churchmen on the right who are unexpectedly sensing the heat. Following closely on the heels of this doctrinal pronouncement, intended to bring clarity, the Prefect for the CDF took measured aim at the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX). Mueller is in the process of revealing that it is not just liberals on the left that are causing confusion – those on the right are equally culpable. To do so he is using the issue of religious freedom.

According to Cardinal Mueller:

“Religious freedom as a fundamental human right and freedom to protect religion regarding the supernatural revelation in Jesus Christ are recognized by every Catholic without reservation.”

In response to this verity, some of the “faithful” composing the radical and schismatic far-right are acting like liberal protesters who have taken to the streets to vilify President Trump. Like them, they are engaged in a smear campaign involving false reporting, blatant disrespect, and sacrilege. [Expletives such as the following are rolling off of their tongues:](#)

*“Müller not only made it clear that he is in no way to be taken seriously, **he revealed his Catholic IQ**; placing himself squarely in the category of **functional idiot**.*

Is this how one should speak to the Prefect for the Sacred Congregation of Faith, the highest doctrinal authority in the Catholic Church? If not, this is a manifest instance of pride revealing what is hidden in the hearts of those who are impelled to speak this way:

*“Do you not understand, that whatsoever entereth into the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the privy? But **the things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart**, and those things defile a man. For **from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies**. These are the things that defile a man” [\(Matt 15: 17-20\)](#).*

A wise and well developed man does not revile his enemies – he opposes, but also respects. If the opposition happens to be with superiors, he prays for his superiors knowing that they will receive a stricter judgement and is careful not to offend in word esp. with words delivered to ears that have no business in the matter; that is, those who are not in a position to ameliorate:

*“Be ye not many masters, my brethren, knowing that you receive the greater judgment. For in many things we all offend. **If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man**. He is able also with a bridle to lead about the whole body...Even so the tongue is indeed a little member, and boasteth great things. **Behold how small a fire kindleth a great wood**. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.*

So how do we know that wisdom or words presented as wisdom are from the Holy Spirit, are from above? First, those who speak them are not in the business of daily reviling their superiors to an audience incapable of doing anything about it. Such men and women engage in controversies and apparent controversies like the Virgin Mary and like the just man, Joseph: Quietly and Privately; when they do so Loudly and Publicly, we begin

to grow suspicious of their motives. When sarcasm and belittling are added to the mix, our initial suspicions are emboldened because love is *not* sarcastic. The Spirit of God is revealed in “good conversation”, “meekness of wisdom”, it avoid “contentions”, it is “chaste” and “peaceable” and “full of mercy.”

“Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew, by a good conversation, his work in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter zeal, and there be contentions in your hearts; glory not, and be not liars against the truth. For this is not wisdom, descending from above: but earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and contention is, there is inconstancy, and every evil work. But the wisdom, that is from above, first indeed is chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, FULL OF MERCY and good fruits (patience, kindness long suffering etc), without judging, without dissimulation. And the fruit of justice is sown in peace, to them that make peace.

Some members of extreme right groups such as the the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX) wonder why they are having difficulties with the Vatican. When they speak in the following manner, as some of them do, it should not be too hard to figure out. According to some members of SSPX, both Pope Francis and Cardinal Mueller are “[functional idiots](#)” whose ideas are “laughable” because they are “clowns” and “fools”.

“Which brings me to Müller’s laughable suggestion that recognition of the Second Vatican Council is “not an unreasonably high hurdle” to overcome with respect to the regularization of the SSPX. Presumably, by “recognition” he means to say that the Council represents “an integral part of the tradition of the Church;” the prerequisite established by Benedict the Abdicator.”

“Remember, this Müller is the same German clown that just a few moments earlier said that it’s not acceptable to take one “key statement” of faith and reject others – as if the text of Vatican II doesn’t do exactly that on any number of points; most notably as it concerns the very matters he chose to highlight, religious freedom and ecumenism.”

By bringing up the issue of religious freedom, which he wants members of the SSPX to “unreservedly recognize” as a “human right”, and “an obligation to ecumenism”, Cardinal Mueller has placed them in an imbroglio. In an attempt to demonstrate their intellectual superiority, some radical members of the SSPX begin to sound like emotionally distraught liberals who believe their ideas to be so extremely sacrosanct that they can impose them on everyone; those who disagree with them in the hierarchy are accused of vile intent, a disorientation that must be combated:

“Rome has long been Satan’s playground, and only a fool ever imagined that Cardinal Müller may have somehow been spared the diabolical disorientation that has infected the overwhelming majority of those in the sacred hierarchy.”

As Jesus warned, a man’s worst enemies are from his own household ([Matt 10:36](#)). These are enemies detected by their sarcasm, contentiousness, reviling and sacrilegious audacity; like the Pharisees before them, who accused Jesus Christ of being possessed by demons, they are not afraid to fulfill scripture by saying the same about His apostolic successors:

“Do not we (Pharisees) say well that thou (Jesus) art a Samaritan, and hast a devil” ([John 8:48](#))?

Addressing the issue further Jesus hinted that others would follow in the Pharisee footsteps and renounce the leaders of

His Church the same way:

*“It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, for the slave that he become like his master. **If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household!** ([Matt 10:25](#)).”*

Like their forefathers they will bring division into the Kingdom of God, which will be their undoing.

*“This man drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons.” But he knew what they were thinking and said to them, **“Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste, and no town or house divided against itself will stand”** ([Matt 12:24-25](#)).*

Since the Gates of Hell cannot prevail against the Church, apparently, it is time to drive this divisive force out of the Kingdom of God- something these brash opponents fear more than anything else. Like nation's around the world who have begun to see the pernicious errors of liberalism and have begun to set it aside – [some like Poland have gone as far as declare Jesus Christ to be their King](#) – Francis too has begun the long overdo and arduous chore of papal house cleaning.

[On the issue of religious freedom](#), one adamant accuser who believes he is superior to the Prefect of the CDF speaks with sarcasm containing all the marks indicated above. Addressing Cardinal Mueller's declaration of religious freedom as detailed in [Dignitatis Humane](#) he states:

“I say, there is no human right to freedom of religion when that religion is false.”

It is questionable if this critic of Vatican II ever read the document and if he did that he properly understood it. He is already engaging a straw man.

“So Mr Muller, do you believe these religions are as equally true as the Catholic faith founded by God in the flesh of Jesus Christ? If so, then you must at least tacitly support the above named practices no?”

“It seems to me, (and I do not have a degree in philosophy or theology, thank God,) that Catholicism and all the other mentioned “religions” cannot both be true. And, if you believe Catholicism is true, how can you then lend support the above named practices? especially when I really do not see Jesus as approving the above practices anywhere in Scripture.”

“I am seeing a conflict here buddy, because you say you are Catholic, but you seem to support the right of anybody to do anything in the name of “freedom of religion”

An outlandish presumption based on obnoxious ignorance, followed by disrespect, calling the Cardinal “buddy” and a silly deduction based on his own straw man argument. The fact is, he does not know what the cardinal thinks; if he does know, his sin is compounded because the cardinal does not believe anything remotely close to his distorted suppositions and conclusions.

Projecting his guilt and hiding behind a shield of feigned piety and sarcasm he then accuses cardinal Mueller of “Satanism” – enough is enough.

“Actually, your belief in “freedom of religion” sounds exactly like Satanism to me... do whatever you want whenever you want with no restrictions...but again I’m just an ignorant lay Catholic person...not a prince of the Catholic Church.”

Speaking of his reform of the Vatican Curia, Francis told the curates that his reforms, reforms he has just begun, would require more than surface ironing out; no he intends his reforms to be so deeply penetrating that they will remove ingrained stains, those that are most difficult to get out:

“Dear brothers, it’s not the wrinkles in the church that you should fear, but the stains!”

In his annual address to the Vatican Curia, he implied some of those engaged in “malicious resistance” to the reform are inspired by the devil. Resistance, he said is sometimes “open” and sometimes “hidden”, both of which can be constructive if conducted with proper intentions. However, he warned that

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

“This last kind of resistance hides behind words of self-justification and often accusation...It takes refuge in traditions, appearances, formalities, in the familiar, or else in a desire to make everything personal, failing to distinguish between the act, the actor and the action.”

Pope Francis means business and they know it. St. Peter *ora pro nobis*.

[Continue to Part Two](#)

Continued Attacks on Pope Francis – Radical Traditionalists Defaming Pope over Malta

[New Era World News](#)

CHARACTER ATTACKS ON POPE FRANCIS from a hand full of far right traditionalists have become common place. A few months ago it was *Amoris Laetitia*, this week it is about scandals and abuses revolving around the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. Interestingly, both cases involve the traditionalist, Cardinal Raymond Burke who in each instance is the man behind the frontal assault on the pope. It is becoming increasingly clear who the real villain is or might be.

What follows will be confusing, if the two major players and their titles are not clearly delineated and distinguished before proceeding.

Major Players:

1. GRAND MASTER – Fra Matthew Festing (British)
2. GRAND CHANCELLOR- Albrecht von Boeselager (German)

Pope Francis is being accused of tyrannical abuse of office, of being a man who cries for mercy yet knows how to play political hardball when it comes to his opponents. Even if true, so what? Is not this exactly what is expected of a virtuous and competent leader, a man rich in mercy yet courageous enough to act with full authority when the situation calls for it? Is not this the model for leadership that the traditionalists opposing Francis have yearned for and have placed before us in the image of Christ the King who will come in power and glory to judge the living and the dead? Some

Traditionalist never tire of stressing God's justice: "He is not just love, he judges us too." As stated many times by New Era, although what the traditionalists are stating might be true, we are living in an Hour of Mercy! Instead of justice, men and women in tune with God's Spirit should be pleading for mercy and performing acts of reparation out of love for poor sinners to spare them from God's justice. As was stated in a previous article, they had better watch what they are asking for because it might soon be falling on their own heads.

Apparently, Cardinal Burke did not learn from the *Amoris Laetitia* imbroglio, which lost steam after Cardinal Mueller, the Prefect for the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, announced that "[there is no problem with its doctrine.](#)" So instead of *Amoris*, the issue is now the handling of a few traditionalists in the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Background

In November of 2015 Cardinal Burke and Grand Master Festing attempted to have Grand Chancellor von Boeselager removed from office using the charge of disobedience after the latter refused to step down at Fester's command. Then according to CRUX, in order to secure his removal, Fester and Burke cooperated with the Lepanto Institute (a traditionalist Institute that does not shrink from acting as critic and guardian of the Church's internal affairs) to further investigate charges that von Boeselager had "signed off" on a program to distribute condoms as part of a Malta medical mission program that he headed. Boeselager had, however, been previously exonerated of those charges. **The Order of Malta had already investigated the issue and had cleared the Grand Chancellor of any wrong doing.** According to [CRUX](#),

"The Vatican had also been informed at the time."

Since this is the case, the issue becomes broader in scope. If already cleared, why were Cardinal Burke and Grand Master Fester intent on reopening the case? Cardinal Burke did not let up; after gathering additional evidence on von Boeselager, he continued to press the issue. Because Boeselager has the support of several high ranking Vatican dignitaries and prominent German Bishops, Burke needed the support of the pope. He apparently succeeded because after meeting with the pope, Francis wrote him a letter in which he specified that:

“Catholic moral precepts must be followed but that the differences should be resolved through DIALOGUE RATHER THAN EXPULSIONS.”

This point is key and the fulcrum on which the whole story turns: Cardinal Burke subsequently exceeded the authority given to him in the pope’s directive. Instead of solving the issue through “dialogue” as instructed, he proceeded to maneuver to have Boeselager removed from office. In true Burkeian style, he accused the Grand Chancellor of being a “liberal”. As such, he should resign; both Burke and Festing insisted. When Boeselager refused, they charged him with disobedience and removed him from office.

Interesting, as CRUX points out, the only person that was actually disobedient was Cardinal Burke himself, disobedient to the pope’s clear directive. Not only had the pope told him to handle the situation through dialogue, the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Parolin,

“...wrote twice to the American cardinal to make clear that the pope had approved no such action. He also made clear Boeselager should be reinstated, and any differences between them resolved through dialogue.”

It was at this point that Pope Francis intervened and asked a commission to investigate, but Grand Master Festing refused to

cooperate citing the fact that the Order is a sovereign entity and that the issue was an internal affair they would handle themselves.

What is Going On?

As a sovereign entity the Order argued that it did not have to submit to a papal inquiry. Further since the Vatican Yearbook lists the Order among “States with embassies accredited to the Holy See” and not among its religious orders, even though they are a lay religious order, it did not have to comply with any requests from the pope. Lawyers for the Order contend that Order’s Constitution clearly specifies that “religious members”...are only subject to their appropriate Superiors in the Order.” Therefore, it is argued that the pope, in order to pierce this legal bubble, would have to abrogate their rights and laws, which he has not done.

Since the pope has apparently disregarded these stipulations, he is being accused by writers such as [Phil Lawler](#) of “unprecedented papal intervention” into the affairs of that venerable body.” Lawler insists that this action of Pope Francis

“...fits into a pattern that should, at this point, worry all faithful Catholics. Under Pope Francis, the Vatican is systematically silencing, eliminating, and replacing critics of the Pope’s views.”

For the record, the Order of Malta does have international juridical identity, but

[“...it is also a lay religious institute whose members profess loyalty to the pope, and as such is subject – as are all recognized Catholic organizations – to the jurisdiction of the Holy See in religious matters.”](#)

As CRUX further point out, the argument about sovereignty “beggared belief”. Cardinal Burke had attempted to use the pope’s authority to get Boeselager to resign then turned around and insisted that the pope has no authority in the matter.

” Given that Burke’s attempt to use the pope to justify Festing’s sacking of Von Boeselager (Burke) had (himself) dragged the papacy into its internal affairs.”

Festing, apparently urged on by Cardinal Burke continued the fruckus, and Pope Francis continued **investigating through a committee headed by Archbishop Sivano Tomasi**. According to [Catholic World Report](#) (CWR), the “situation is now a full-blown crisis.” Why is it being presented as a crisis? Because some traditionalists are trying to mar the pope.

As of last Tuesday, January 24, the papal committee completed its investigation and Festing was called to the Vatican to meet with Pope Francis. In the Catholic version of “fake news”, The CWR correctly states that after Pope Francis met with Grand Master Festing a second time, he showed him the Papal Commission Report containing documented information about organizational dysfunction relative to his leadership and indicating the need for extensive reform of the Order beginning with its ruling clique consisting of fifty to a hundred knights drawn from Europe’s traditional nobility.

The investigation must have been thorough and convincing: **At the end of the meeting Festing tendered his resignation in writing**. Then Francis took further steps: He declared all actions taken by the Order since the dismissing of von Boeselager (December 6, 2016) as “null and void” including his elected replacement. Festing acquiesced unlike Burke, who has refused to stop fighting:

“Even after Festing had agreed to the pope’s request to resign, Burke tried to persuade him to retract, in effect

telling him to keep fighting Francis, [according to sources in both the Vatican and the order.](#)

So How did the Order Respond?

The stage was set for a battle between the Vatican and the Knights of Malta; however when the information reached Malta and was digested by its Sovereign Council; they, like Festing, also acquiesced to Francis' requests. They accepted Festing's resignation and reinstated von Boeselager as Grand Chancellor.

On January 25, Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin wrote on Pope Francis' behalf to members of the Order's Governing Board. He stated that, the Grand Commander, **Ludwig Hoffmann von Rumerstein, is now in charge of the Order** and that

"...in the renewal process which is seen as necessary," Pope Francis would "appoint his personal Delegate with powers that he will define in the act of appointing him."

Cardinal Burke, it appears, will find himself further demoted; that is, his use of "soft-power" as papal liaison is being eroded. First he was removed from the Apostolic Penitentiary to become the Vatican's liaison with the Order of Malta, which responsibility is now being redefined and down-graded to a mere "titular role". Francis' legate, not Cardinal Burke, is now the pope's "official spokesman during his mandate" pertaining to formal relations between the Order and the Holy See.

Be that as it may, the main thrust of these moves, as noted by CRUX "is not to silence Cardinal Burke, but to reform the Order's constitution and governance so that it better serves the purpose (mission) for which it exists, something that Burke failed to do: seeing that the knights better serve their

ancient charism to **defend the faith** and **assist the poor**. The latter was a mission area stressed by Boeselager, while the **camp supported by Festing and Cardinal Burke favored a more traditional agenda to bolster their financial portfolio and**

” ...build up the elite quasi-monastic arm of the knights (stressing the military aspects, trappings of nobility, and social-cultural-theological traditionalism, rather than placing the main thrust of their efforts on pastoral and charitable works consistent with the pastoral spirit of Vatican II and the modern papacy). Although those stressing the former number “only around 50 of the 14,000 members of the order, they are the ones who hold the leadership positions of the world-wide knights, and elect its leader.”

A small clique that many members have grown weary of. Consequently according to [Catholic World Report](#):

“Boeselager and his allies in the Vatican “have triumphed.

However, the Catholic World Report could not help displaying its loyalties by asserting that

“These allies have carried out a sordid campaign of leaked letters from Cardinal Parolin’s department, which served the sad and obvious end of framing a public narrative in which Fra’ Festing supposedly ‘defied’ the explicit wishes of the Pope.”

But, according to [CRUX](#)

“The reaction from traditionalists and critics of the pope has been apopleptic, seeking to portray Francis as an autocrat imposing his vision of the Church on a hapless conservative order. In reality, he is doing no more than what popes have always done with Catholic organizations that suffer from abusive or dysfunctional leadership which

undermines their witness.”

“Francis has done the same with other religious orders or societies, such as the Peru-based Sodalitium. Benedict XVI did the same with the Legion of Christ, among others.”

“Why should Francis’s critics believe this one is any different? Sadly, some have become so invested in Burke’s campaign against Francis over Amoris Laetitia that they have failed to spot what this is about.”

Clearly, there are two conflicting interpretations of events, one favoring Cardinal Burke and a small camp of traditionalists, the other favoring von Boeselager and those who want to engage in pastoral and charitable works per the instructions of Pope Francis. Since there is division in the Order exacerbated by confusion in the press, it appears that some other agent having an agenda contrary to the Holy Spirit’s unifying charity are at work.

Is Anything Else Going On?

Changes being experienced around the world relative to the growing global rising against liberalism are being echoed in **the Church as it has finally begun to take decisive steps to deal with the infiltration of Masonry and Masonic influences into its various dicasteries, departments, orders etc.** Like the nations of the world reacting to the rising tide of liberalism, the Vatican is reacting to the rising tide of Masonry, which like liberalism has become an unbearable cause of dysfunction, division, and confusion that needs to be thrown off.

Thus, according to the CWR:

*“There is much more” going on. Edward Pentin of the National Catholic Register [reported on January 7th](#) that Cardinal Burke had been asked by Pope Francis to expose problems within the Order: “Hopes that the contraceptive scandal would be addressed came on Nov. 10, when Cardinal Burke was received in private audience by Pope Francis. During that meeting, the Register has learned, the Pope was ‘deeply disturbed’ by what the cardinal told him about the contraceptive distribution. **The Pope also made it clear to Cardinal Burke that he wanted Freemasonry ‘cleaned out’ from the order, and he demanded appropriate action.**”*

According to Robert Monihan writing for [Inside the Vatican](#):

“During the past several months, quietly and privately on most occasions, but sometimes publicly, a word has been whispered and spoken aloud in Rome in a way unlike any other time in the 33 years that I have been writing about Vatican affairs. That word is freemasonry.”

Apparently, Pope Francis equated the condom scandal and other reports of activities in the Knights of Malta along with division within its ranks and dysfunction as indicators of Masonic infiltration, which he wants out of the order and out of the Church.

Monihan echoed what was reported by the CWR:

“Published reports have stated something that few have noted, but which must be studied and explained: that Pope Francis, in a meeting in November with Cardinal Raymond Burke, gave Burke a very unusual instruction. The Pope, it is reported, during their November 10 meeting, asked Burke, the American cardinal who is the ecclesial Patron of the Knights of Malta, to carry out an important and delicate task: to ferret out

and remove from the Knights of Malta all members who are... freemasons."

The pope followed-up was with a letter to Cardinal Burke, in which he "underlined the cardinal's constitutional duty to promote the spiritual interests of the order and **remove any affiliation with groups or practices that run contrary to the moral law**. Here, repeated, is the critical phrase":

"The Pope also made it clear to Cardinal Burke that he wanted Freemasonry 'cleaned out' from the order..."

Monihan correctly identifies Cardinal Burke as "one of the leaders of the 'traditional' faction in the Church and in the College of Cardinals because of his raising questions about the "progressive" teaching of Pope Francis, especially in *Amoris Laetitia*. Although the issue of condoms and leadership are being or have been rectified, the vetting of Masonry and Masonic influence in the order will be an ongoing saga as Pope Francis attempts to do in the Church what leaders around the world are doing in the State: ridding their countries of liberalism and the disorganizing influence of Masonry.

Masonry is a fraternity of Satan, the Father of Liars. As such, it has long been characterized by Gnosticism, Esotericism, and double meaning; **it advances error by crafting antithetical ideologies which it sets in apparent opposition** in order to ravish the truth and lull unsuspecting victims into its deceptive web. Its symptoms include, confusion, dysfunction, and division. In dealing with this diabolical sect, Pope Leo XIII invoked the Blessed Virgin Mary:

"Let us take our helper and intercessor the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, so that she, who from the moment of her conception overcame Satan may show her power over these evil sects, in which is revived the contumacious spirit of the

demon, together with his unsubdued perfidy and deceit”
([Humanum Genus](#)).

Pope Pius IX was equally clear:

*“WE strongly exhort them to beware of the perfidious discourses of sectarians who, under a disguise of honesty, are inflamed by an ardent hatred of the Religion of Christ and of all legitimate authority: they have but one thought with the sole aim of exterminating, all Divine and human rights. Let them all be fully conscious of the fact that the affiliates of such sects are as the wolves who, as Our Lord predicted, **come disguised with sheeps hide to devour the whole flock.**”* ([Multiplices inter](#)).

Those who advance error can be easily detected. They cover themselves by pointing their fingers at deviating others at the opposite end of the spectrum. Realizing that most traditionalists are true sons of the Church appalled with abuse and desirous of high sanctity, we hope that the conflict between traditionalists and liberals within the hallowed Order of Malta is *not* a manifestation of a Masonic dialectic and that traditionalists controlling the inner circle at Malta and pointing the finger at supposed liberals are not part of the cabal that Pope Francis is vetting and wants “cleaned out” of the Order. How traditionalists members of the Order fare in this process will be interesting to see. Those who cry loudest against an abuse are often the perpetrators of abuse themselves.