

ARTICLE 87

Legio Sanctae Familiae – The Legion of the Holy Family

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Lack of Catechesis = Confusion

Lack of Ability to Think Rationally

In this article I want to cover a couple of different strands of thought which have come up on account of some recent events in my life and which I want to relate to my most recent articles covering lack of catechesis, the failure of the Irish 'catholic' education system to pass on the faith to the children that are taught in those schools, and the surrendering of what I called 'catholic territory' to the secular world. I have noticed a tendency in our modern culture, which is not new and this is the tendency whereby many people seem to lack the ability to think rationally on different subjects. There is also a tendency to simply look at who said something, and in this modern personality culture in which we live, to try to see what type of a person is speaking without much regard for what they are saying.

The Relevant Question is 'Is It True' not 'Who Wrote It'

An example of this was presented to me recently when a friend of mine told me that she had shown one of my articles on modesty to a young woman and asked her what did she think. The young woman in question responded by saying that she thought that I was probably a married man with children and she then put forward a reason as to why a married man might write an article dealing with immodest dress in women. Whether or not this young woman is correct in her assumptions is irrelevant, the point I am making is that her comments have nothing whatsoever to do with whether or not what I wrote is true or not. If what I wrote is false then surely it can be discarded. If what I wrote is true then it needs to be digested and acted upon. The comments that were relayed to me, and I don't know if I got the whole conversation, ignored the only important question, which has to do with the truth or falsehood of what I wrote on that occasion, in favour of an analysis of my life situation which in a way seems to be avoiding the issue at hand.

The young woman also mentioned that the particular article did not mention modesty with regard to men. However in order to get a better picture of what I have been saying one would need to read all of the articles that I have written on modesty to see that I do indeed speak about modesty with regards to men and that modesty is not just about clothing.

Is He Loyal to the Pope?

Another example that emphasizes this point comes from the recent conferences that myself, Anthony Murphy and others have been giving around the country. Recently we were very blessed to be joined by Mr Jose Antonio Ureta who gave us a very interesting presentation on the confusion that is being caused by the Papal Exhortation 'Amoris Laetitia'. In these times of confusion and of a general seeming lack of the ability to reason well, such a presentation can lead people to wonder about the question of loyalty to the Pope and whether or not those who make such a presentation are themselves loyal to the Pope.

It is a difficult topic to discuss in a rational way as many people either jump to the wrong conclusion or have an erroneous notion of what exactly the Papacy entails.

Some Questions & Answers

I received a copy of an e-mail from a lady who attended one of our conferences which included some questions and answers regarding anyone who says that the Pope is a heretic. I think it would be beneficial for readers of this paper to look at the first question and the answer given and then to

see how I responded. The question and answer went as follows.

Q: If Pope Francis is accused of heresy, how do we know that the accusation is false?

Answer: Pope Francis is a liberal but orthodox Roman Pontiff. He is the valid Pope and so he has the authority of Christ over doctrine and discipline. The prevenient grace of God prevents him from teaching or adhering to any heresy. Therefore, if anyone accuses him of heresy, they are the ones who are in error. As for matters of discipline, an imprudent discipline is not a doctrinal error, for all disciplines eventually pass away, but the truth remains forever. These points are proven by the previous chapters of this book.

My Response is as follows:

The answer given to this question is incorrect for a number of reasons.

Firstly: If Pope Francis is accused of heresy, the way we know that the accusation is false is by comparing what Pope Francis says with the constant teaching of the Catholic Church. If what Pope Francis says agrees with the constant teaching of the Catholic Church, then we know that he is not teaching heresy. If what Pope Francis says *seems* to contradict the constant teaching of the Catholic Church then it is possible, although not definite, that he is teaching heresy. If this particular case were to arise, a clarification would need to be sought from the Pope. Such clarifications are usually done by way of submitting a 'dubium' to the Pope. A 'dubium' is a question that requires a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer.

Secondly: It is a misunderstanding of the nature of the Papacy to state that "The Pope is prevented from teaching or adhering to any heresy by a prevenient grace." This is not what the Catholic Church teaches. That this is so is clearly demonstrated by the case of Pope Honorius who was anathematized by the Third Council of Constantinople which specifically mentions Pope Honorius as a heretic and which was confirmed by Pope Leo II.

What the first Vatican Council actually teaches is this.

"Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the christian faith, to the glory of God our saviour, for the exaltation of the catholic religion and for the salvation of the christian people, with the approval of the sacred council, we teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman pontiff speaks EX CATHEDRA, that is, when, (1).in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, (2).in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, (3).he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. Therefore, such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the church, irreformable."

Popes who Taught Heresy

The heresy which Pope Honorius did not refute, and seemed to support, was not done by an 'ex-cathedra' statement therefore papal infallibility is not affected by the case of Pope Honorius.

Another example of a Pope who taught heresy is that of Pope John XXII. In his sermons, Pope John XXII taught that the souls of the blessed departed do not see God until after the Last Judgment. Once again, these were not ex cathedra teachings. Where was the prevenient grace that is claimed in the answer above in this case? Thankfully, Pope John XXII clarified the matter and formally rejected the teaching of his earlier sermons after being petitioned by theologians from the University of Paris. This is what is currently happening in the case of the dubia that have been submitted to Pope Francis by some cardinals.

Thirdly: In the specific case of the confusion caused by Amoris Laetitia we are not dealing simply

with matters of discipline, but with matters of doctrine as well. Pope St John Paul II, in his exhortation *'Familiaris Consortio'* No 84 states the following.

"Daily experience unfortunately shows that people who have obtained a divorce usually intend to enter into a new union, obviously not with a Catholic religious ceremony. Since this is an evil that, like the others, is affecting more and more Catholics as well, the problem must be faced with resolution and without delay."

Note here that he calls entering into a new union after a divorce an 'evil'. Pope St John Paul II further states, still in No 84.

Divorced and Civilly Re-Married Cannot Receive Holy Communion

"However, the Church reaffirms her practice, which is based upon Sacred Scripture, of not admitting to Eucharistic Communion divorced persons who have remarried. They are unable to be admitted thereto from the fact that their state and condition of life objectively contradict that union of love between Christ and the Church which is signified and effected by the Eucharist. Besides this, there is another special pastoral reason: if these people were admitted to the Eucharist, the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church's teaching about the indissolubility of marriage."

Again, please note that the practice of not admitting the divorced and remarried to Holy Communion is based on Sacred Scripture. It has nothing to do with whether or not the parties are in a state of actual mortal sin, it has to do with their 'objective' situation. It is also based on the need to avoid scandal so that the doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage will not be diminished in the eyes of the faithful.

Pope St John Paul II's Words were Prophetic

Pope St John Paul II's words can be seen to be prophetic in light of *Amoris Laetitia*, because now some bishops have said that they will allow certain divorced and remarried persons to receive Holy Communion without amending their state of life, whilst other bishops have said that they will not admit any divorced and civilly re-married persons to Holy Communion. People are being led into error and confusion regarding Church teaching on marriage precisely as Pope St John Paul II said they would, if the divorced and remarried were admitted to Holy Communion.

This confusion needs to be stopped, and it is Pope Francis who has the power to stop the confusion by re-affirming the constant teachings of the Church that were recently submitted to him by way of the five dubia. To say that those cardinals who submitted the dubia are somehow being disloyal to the Pope, is simply not true and constitutes the sin of defamation.

Some Catholics Are Dis-Respectful of the Pope

It is undoubtedly true that there are some Catholics who are being disrespectful to Pope Francis in how they respond to the current confusion but let us not tar all with the same brush. As Cardinal Caffarra recently said of the confusion and anxiety in the Church caused by *Amoris Laetitia* "only a blind man" could miss it.

This is also true of the problem of immodesty. Only a blind man could think that there is no problem. This problem was once again brought home to me when I was invited to attend a graduation ceremony followed by a meal in a hotel. The young men were dressed in formal suits but, perhaps on account of the recent spell of warm weather, the way a large percentage of the women were dressed can only be described as scandalous.

Musings of a Benedictine Monk in the Holy Land

I recently read the diary of a Benedictine Monk who has just returned from preaching a retreat in the Holy Land. Writing about their day on 29th April this year he said.

“Then in the afternoon, our final stop today was at Kursi, which is better known to us as the land of the Gerasenes, where in Mark 5 Our Lord cast out the demons from a possessed man who lived naked in the graveyards. It was the opportunity to remind people of the demonic and of the ways of protecting ourselves from evil. Chesterton’s comments on the significance of the delivered man being found “clothed and in his right mind” afforded me the opportunity to insist upon modesty in dress, the lack of which is always the sign of the corruption and degradation of the human mind and soul.”

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