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## **“Spiritual Criminals and Murderers of Souls”**



### **Bishop Athanasius Schneider responds to Vatican-sanctioned “LGBTQ+” Jubilee Pilgrimage**

by Diane Montagna  
Sep 10, 2025

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The following article is taken *directly* from [Diane Montagna’s Substack](#) and was *not* written for the **Boston Catholic Journal** — *but* ... is of such significance to the Catholic world at large that it deserves every possible exposure, for it reveals an inexcusable state of dereliction in the papacy of Leo XIV and nothing less than criminal negligence in the episcopacy under him. It is an alarming revelation of the submission of indefeasible Catholic teaching to the clamor of a disordered and decadent world in which sexuality in its most perverse expressions is the axis of existence. It would appear that the Holy Door of the Jubilee Year has been slammed in the face of reason itself, to say nothing of the faithful. *Editor*

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[I have highlighted in **bold** what I consider to be extremely important statements in this discussion. Ed.]

**VATICAN CITY, September 10, 2025** — Bishop Athanasius Schneider has spoken out forcefully against **the recent Vatican-sanctioned international “LGBTQ+” Jubilee pilgrimage, denouncing it as a “desecration” of the Holy Door and a “mockery” of God.**

The pilgrimage, **listed on the Vatican’s Jubilee 2025 General Calendar**, was organized by Italy’s pro-LGBTQ+ association Tenda di Gionata [Jonathan’s Tent]; the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics, which had lobbied during the 2018 Vatican Youth Synod; and the U.S.-based Outreach, led by Fr. James Martin, SJ.



On Saturday afternoon, viral photographs showed two male participants **openly holding hands in St. Peter’s Basilica**, one carrying a backpack emblazoned with the words **“F\*\*\* the Rules.”** Another image depicted a young man in a rainbow shirt taking a selfie of his “clawed” hand with Bernini’s Baldacchino as the backdrop.

The two-day pilgrimage also featured a Friday evening vigil at which a lesbian couple recounted their “love story,” and a **Saturday morning Mass celebrated by the vice-president of the Italian Bishops’ Conference, who encouraged attendees to be patient until the Church recognizes the LGBTQ+ lifestyle.** Over a thousand people were in attendance.

In this exclusive interview with the auxiliary bishop of Astana, Kazakhstan, we discuss his reaction to these events, **Pope Leo XIV’s widely publicized audience with Fr. James Martin**, and the grave risks for the Catholic Church and the world should she forfeit her moral authority in such matters.

Bishop Schneider further implores Pope Leo XIV to follow the example of Pope John Paul II by publicly denouncing the LGBTQ+ incident in St. Peter’s Basilica, acknowledging the Vatican’s fault in permitting it, and performing acts of reparation in humility and truth.

He also denounces priests who affirm the LGBTQ+ lifestyle as “spiritual criminals” and “murderers of souls,” warning that God will hold them accountable, while urging the faithful to work zealously to rescue those deceived by sin.

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## Here is my interview with Bishop Athanasius Schneider

**Diane Montagna:** *A viral photo of two homosexual men brazenly holding hands in St Peter’s Basilica, one with a backpack saying “F\*\*\* the Rules”, and another image of a young man in a “rainbow” shirt taking a selfie of his clawed hand with Bernini’s Baldacchino as a backdrop, have gone around the world since September 6. The pilgrimage group also somehow entered the Basilica holding aloft a “rainbow” cross; it’s unknown how such an item got through security. The pilgrimage was approved by the Vatican, as part of the Jubilee year called by Pope Francis. Your Excellency, what was your first reaction when you saw these photos?*

**+Athanasius Schneider:** My reaction was a silent cry of horror, indignation, and sorrow. All true believers in the Church—both faithful and clergy—who still uphold the validity of God’s commandments and take Him seriously, should experience this provocation as a brazen slap in the face. I believe that many faithful Catholics and members of the clergy remain, in a sense, stunned by such a massive blow and require time to recover. An unprecedented act has taken place in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, one that may fittingly be described, in the words of Our Lord, as an “abomination of desolation standing in the holy place” (cf. Mt. 24:15).

*What is the significance of the Holy Door, and how does its meaning affect the reality of what happened on September 6th?*

(AS) One of essential meanings the Jubilee Year and the Holy Door consists in “leading man to conversion and penance,” as Pope John Paul II explained it in the Bull of Indiction of the Holy Year 2000. Another distinctive sign is the indulgence, which is one of the constitutive elements of the Jubilee. Hence, the Jubilee Year is a powerful means of God’s grace to help the faithful make real progress in holiness through a fruitful reception of the sacrament of penance and the gaining of the indulgence, which implies a conscious detachment of all serious sins and moral disorders. For “free and conscious surrender to grave sin ... separates the believer from the life of grace with God and therefore excludes the believer from the holiness to which he is called” (John Paul II, *Incarnationis Mysterium*, 9).

**The declared aim of the LGBTQ+ organizations that assembled adherents and activists for this Jubilee pilgrimage was that the Church recognize and legitimize so-called gay rights, including homosexual acts and other forms of extramarital sexual conduct.**

**There were no signs of repentance and renunciation of objectively grave homosexual sins and homosexual lifestyle on the part of the organizers and participants in this pilgrimage. To pass through the Holy Door and participate in the Jubilee without repentance, while promoting an ideology that openly rejects God’s Sixth Commandment, constitutes a kind of desecration of the Holy Door and a mockery of God and the gift of an indulgence.**

The groups involved in Saturday’s event (Jonathan’s Tent [Tenda di Gionata], the Global Network of Rainbow Catholics, and Outreach led by Fr James Martin, SJ) reject the idea of conversion from an LGBTQ+ lifestyle and believe instead that it’s time for the Catholic Church to recognize their lifestyle. What does it say about the current state of the Vatican that this event was allowed?

**In this, the responsible authorities of the Holy See collaborated de facto in undermining and calling into question the validity of God’s Sixth Commandment, particularly His explicit condemnation of homosexual activity. They stood by and allowed God to be mocked and His commandments to be scornfully cast aside.**

*Was this event worse than the Pachamama scandal in your view?*

From a theological and objective standpoint, the veneration of the Pachamama in St. Peter's Basilica was worse than the LGBTQ+ pilgrimage, for it constituted a direct transgression of the First Commandment of the Decalogue and was therefore more godless than even a heinous event that contradicts or ridicules the Sixth Commandment. The promotion of sodomy and other sexual immorality amounts to a form of indirect idolatry, whereas the Pachamama idol was accorded explicit acts of religious veneration—incense, lights, candles, and prostrations. Both events must be publicly repaired by the Pope himself. This is urgently needed, before it is too late, for God will not be mocked (cf. Gal. 6:7).

*Prior to the pilgrimage through the Holy Door, a Mass was celebrated by Bishop Francesco Savino, vice-president of the Italian Bishops Conference, at Rome's Jesuit-run Church of the Gesù. Everyone was welcome to receive Holy Communion. Isn't one's assent to all the Church's teaching (doctrine and morals) a precondition for receiving Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist?*

Yes, this is certainly a precondition as ordered by God in Holy Scripture through the teaching of St. Paul: "Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died" (1 Cor. 11:29-30). The Church kept this precept unchanged and universally for two thousand years and keeps it still in her official teaching. **The Catechism clearly states that: "Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive Communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance" (n. 1415). Furthermore, it notes, Sacred Scripture "presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, [and] tradition has always declared that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved" (n. 2357)."**

**By permitting such public Masses for LGBTQ+ organizations in Rome and granting them passage through the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, the authorities of the Holy See displayed before the entire world a striking**

**contradiction between the Church's official teaching and her practice. In so doing, these high-ranking authorities effectively repudiated the very doctrine they are bound to uphold. In light of these manifest facts, evident to all, one must ask: can the world still take the Church's official teaching seriously?**

*The organization "Courage International" is an apostolate that serves men and women who experience same-sex attraction, helping them to lead a life of holiness in accord with the fullness of the Catholic Faith. Had Saturday's pilgrimage been sponsored by Courage, there would have been no scandal. What is your message to the people who participated in Saturday's event, who are being misled by Fr James Martin and the LGBTQ+ movement?*

My message to them is first one of compassion. For when a person consciously rejects God's explicit commandment prohibiting any sexual activity outside a valid marriage, he places himself in the gravest danger—that of losing eternal life and being eternally condemned to Hell. We must show compassion toward those who advocate the legitimization of homosexual activity and persist in it unrepentant and even proudly. True love for such persons consists in calling them, gently yet persistently, to genuine conversion to God's revealed will. Such individuals are misled and deceived by the evil spirit, by Satan, the father of lies, and are ultimately unhappy, even if they have stifled the voice of conscience.

We must be filled with great zeal to save these souls, to free them from poisonous deceptions. **Those priests who confirm them in their homosexual activity or in a homosexual lifestyle are spiritual criminals, murderers of souls, and God will demand a strict account from them, according to His word: "Son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand" (Ez. 33:7-8).**

*This event was planned before Pope Leo XIV's election. Some have argued that it could have and would have been worse had Pope Francis still been alive. They point out that Pope Leo did not receive a delegation from the LGBTQ+ group at his*

*general Jubilee audience in St Peter's Square earlier on Saturday, nor did he send the group a message.*

These arguments are unconvincing. For the Pope to have received a pro-LGBTQ+ delegation would have been truly unprecedented and the height of scandal. The fact that **Pope Leo XIV** did not cause such scandal in no way justifies **his de facto consent to this event. Indeed, one cannot reasonably presume naivety on his part, for it was entirely foreseeable that a pro-LGBTQ+ organization, or at least some of its members, would exploit the Holy Door and St. Peter's Basilica as a platform to promote an ideology that openly scorns and rejects God's explicit will as expressed in His holy Commandment.**

*Fr. James Martin circulated photos of an audience he had with Pope Leo several days before the event. Did popes prior to Pope Francis meet with such figures in this way? What is your view of this and other recent audiences, such as that with the controversial Dominican Sister Lucia Caram, who reportedly supports "gay marriage"?*

**Before the pontificate of Pope Francis, the successors of Peter neither received officially nor posed for photographs with those who, by word or deed, openly rejected the doctrinal and moral teaching of the Church. Through these official meetings and photographs, Pope Leo de facto sent a message to the world that he does not distance himself from their heterodox and scandalous teaching and behavior**—particularly since the Holy See offered no clarification afterward and did not correct Fr. James Martin's triumphant messages circulated on social media. There is a common saying that goes: "Qui tacet consentire videtur"—"He who is silent is taken to agree."

*The Church has traditionally not only preached the truth but also actively combated error. As Islam continues to grow in the West and Europe becomes more de-Christianized, what is at risk if the Catholic Church cedes her moral authority to these lobbies and movements?*

St. Peter and his successors, the Roman Pontiffs, together with the Holy See, and thus the Catholic Church as such, received from Christ Himself the highest moral



authority in this world. This authority consists in teaching the entire world—people of all nations and religions—the commandments of God, that is, to observe all that Christ has commanded (cf. Mt. 28:20).

To the extent that the teaching office of the Church—in the Holy See and the Catholic episcopate—becomes weak, unclear, ambiguous, or even contradictory, the influence of anti-truth, in all its ideological derivations and religious forms, will inevitably increase.

Islam's strength may increasingly be attractive to some, but it does not and can never impart to the human soul the necessary spiritual power to be inwardly transformed into a new person through Christ's grace. **By permitting such outrageous events, the authorities of the Holy See are effectively silencing Christ's truth, Christ's voice. It is therefore imperative for our time that the words of the Pope and the authorities of the Holy See regarding the Church's teaching correspond faithfully with their deeds.** For there is no higher moral authority in this world than that of Jesus Christ, who entrusted His authority to the Magisterium of the Pope and the episcopate. What a tremendous responsibility! And what an immense future accountability before the judgment seat of Christ!

Although I wrote to Vatican spokesman Matteo Brunetti asking if the Vatican would be issuing an acknowledgement that this should not have been permitted and apologizing for the scandal caused, there's been no response. What do you believe this silence reveals?

The Holy See finds itself in a kind of impasse and is faced with two reactions.

On one side, **organizations advocating the legitimization of the LGBTQ+ lifestyle rejoiced. The inclusion of LGBTQ+ activists among the Holy Year pilgrim groups and their solemn entry into St. Peter's Basilica—the spiritual center of Catholicism—sent a message to the entire world that the Holy See recognizes the primary aim of these organizations: the approval of homosexual activity and other sexual conduct outside of marriage. The world applauds Pope Leo XIV and the Holy See for this.**

On the other side, there are all those—Catholics, of course, but also non-Catholics and adherents of other religions—who continue to uphold the validity of God’s commandments and take Him seriously, and who find themselves in a state of shock. **All faithful sons and daughters of the Holy Church feel deeply humiliated.** It is, as it were, a blush upon the faces of the children of the Church. We feel ashamed before God.

One perceives an embarrassed silence on the part of the Holy See, resembling the conscience-stricken silence of one who has done wrong.

*This event occurred on the First Saturday of the month, a day on which Our Lady of Fatima especially asked for reparation for offences committed against her Immaculate Heart. How can the faithful help to remedy what happened?*

**The situation that has ensued is nothing less than a public humiliation of our Holy Mother Church before the shameless jubilation of the enemies of God’s commandments. We should all make a collective act of reparation for the outrage committed against the sanctity of God’s house and the holiness of His commandments. We, the children of the Church — above all the Pope, and especially those clerics who permitted, supported, and even justified such an abomination — should make our own the words of the prophet Daniel:**

*“To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame... because of the treachery that they have committed against you. To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you.” (Dan. 9:7-8)*

During the Great Jubilee of 2000, Rome hosted the first ever World Pride (July 1–9, 2000). Pope John Paul II publicly denounced the event, saying:

“In the name of the Church of Rome I can only express my deep sadness at the affront to the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 and the offence to the Christian values of a city that is so dear to the hearts of Catholics throughout the world. The Church

cannot be silent about the truth, because she would fail in her fidelity to God the Creator and would not help to distinguish good from evil” (CCC, n. 2358) In this regard, I wish merely to read what is said in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which, after noting that homosexual acts are contrary to the natural law, then states: “The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfil God’s will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord’s Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition” (CCC, n. 2358) (Angelus, July 9, 2000).”

*Your Excellency, what message would you like to send to Pope Leo XIV?*

I would like to implore Pope Leo XIV to repeat, in substance, these words of Pope John Paul II, thereby manifesting before the entire world true humility in acknowledging the fault of the Holy See regarding the outrageous LGBTQ+ event in St. Peter’s Basilica. Humility is courage for truth. Should Pope Leo XIV make public acts of regret and even reparation, he will lose nothing; should he fail to do so, he will forfeit something before the eyes of God—and God alone matters. **From my heart I wish Pope Leo XIV the grace of God, that he may have the courage to repair this act of abomination which has sullied the holiness of the Jubilee Year, employing in all truth the words of St. Paul: “I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26-27).**

*Your Excellency, is there anything you would like to add?*

May Our Holy Father Pope Leo XIV take to heart the following words of Our Lord which He once spoke through St. Bridget of Sweden to one of his predecessors (Pope Gregory XI):

*“Uproot, pluck out and destroy all the vices of your court! Separate yourself from the counsel of carnal-minded and worldly friends and follow humbly the spiritual*

counsel of my friends. **Get up like a man** and clothe yourself confidently in strength! **Start to reform the Church that I purchased with my own blood** in order that it may be reformed and led back spiritually to its pristine state of holiness, **for nowadays more veneration is shown to a brothel than to my Holy Church.** My son, heed my counsel. If you obey me in what I told you, I will welcome you mercifully like a loving father. Bravely approach the way of justice and you shall prosper. Do not despise the one who loves you. If you obey, I will show you mercy and bless and dress you and adorn you with the precious pontifical regalia of a holy pope. I shall clothe you with myself in such a way that you will be in me and I in you, and you shall be glorified in eternity” (The Book of Revelations, Book IV, chap. 149).

[https://dianemontagna.substack.com/p/spiritual-criminals-and-murderers?isFreemail=true&post\\_id=173255495&publication\\_id=5470197&r=2bjjzr&triedRedirect=true&triggerShare=true](https://dianemontagna.substack.com/p/spiritual-criminals-and-murderers?isFreemail=true&post_id=173255495&publication_id=5470197&r=2bjjzr&triedRedirect=true&triggerShare=true)

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