



# Boston Catholic Journal



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DEDICATED TO MARY MOTHER OF GOD

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**When**

SILENCE

becomes

SCANDAL

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**LESSONS NOT LEARNED**

**... AND THE 5 "DUBIA" IN PLAIN ENGLISH**

**It happened right *here*!** Remember? Boston 2002!

**Silence** on the part of the cardinal, the bishops, the seminary rectors, the Religious orders — followed by **Scandal**. Horrible scandal. Scandal of the most hateful, despicable, vicious perversion that swept away — but not too thoroughly — miters, defrocked priests, caused the closing of hundreds of parishes and the selling off of quite nearly everything Catholic to pay off the lawsuits against predatory priests and silent superiors. Millions upon millions to pay victims and their lawyers, and most sadly to psychologically treat and medicate its victims ... who are now adults. It continues to this day!

Most of what you put in the basket at church almost certainly goes to pay for the crimes of predatory homosexual priests who molested young boys — committed the most depraved sexual predation on the most trusting of youth ... our children.

Under the euphemism of “consolidating parishes” countless church buildings and facilities were sold off to become condominiums and even mosques.

\$35 million on counseling, psychiatric medications, and other services for survivors. Since 2003, it has paid about \$215 million to settle legal claims, church officials say. ([Boston Globe January 2017](#))

Here in Boston we are **STILL** paying for a disgraceful and unutterably shameful **SILENCE** that not simply “rocked” the Church, but literally caused much of it to be torn down to its foundations.

## The *Dubia*: Five Vital Questions that Encounter *Obstinate* Silence

The **following five questions** were respectfully submitted to Pope Francis following the ambiguity inherent in his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*:

1. “It is asked whether, following the affirmations of *Amoris Laetitia* (300-305), it has now become possible to grant absolution in the sacrament of penance and thus to admit to holy Communion a person who, ***while bound by a valid marital bond***, lives together with a ***different*** person *more uxorio* [as husband and wife] without fulfilling the conditions provided for by *Familiaris Consortio*, 84, and subsequently reaffirmed by *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 34, and *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 29. Can the expression “in certain cases” found in Note 351 (305) of the exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* be applied to divorced persons who are in a new union and who continue to live *more uxorio*?”

**SIMPLIFIED:** Can adulterers go to Confession and receive Holy Communion? Can a man or woman who are living together as though married to each other having been civilly divorced, but who nonetheless still remain married to their original spouses in the eyes of the Church and according to clear and unequivocal Holy Scripture, be considered as ***not*** living in adultery: that is to say, as not living with another man’s wife and another woman’s husband?”

2. “After the publication of the post-synodal exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (304), does one still need to regard as valid the teaching of St. John Paul II’s encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, 79, based on sacred Scripture and on the Tradition of the Church, on the **existence of absolute moral norms that prohibit intrinsically evil acts and that are binding without exceptions?”**

**SIMPLIFIED:** Are there acts so evil that under every possible condition or circumstance they must be, without exception, considered intrinsically evil?

3. “After *Amoris Laetitia* (301) is it still possible to affirm that **a person who habitually lives in contradiction to a commandment of God’s law**, as for instance the one that prohibits adultery (Matthew 19:3-9), finds him or herself **in an objective situation of grave habitual sin** (Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, “*Declaration*,” June 24, 2000)?”

**SIMPLIFIED:** In light of what is stated in *Amoris Laetitia*, is there any longer any objective situation of grave habitual sin?

4. “After the affirmations of *Amoris Laetitia* (302) on “**circumstances which mitigate moral responsibility,**” does one still need to regard as valid the teaching of St. John Paul II’s encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, 81, based on sacred Scripture and on the Tradition of the Church, according to which **“circumstances or intentions can never transform an act intrinsically evil** by virtue of its object into an act ‘subjectively’ good or defensible as a choice”?”

**SIMPLIFIED:** Given that "circumstances or intentions can never transform an act intrinsically evil into one that is subjectively good", how can it be affirmed, as it is in *Amoris Laetitia*, that there are "circumstances which mitigate moral responsibility"? Can, then, circumstances or intentions transform an act intrinsically [objectively] evil into one that is subjectively good?

5. "After *Amoris Laetitia* (303) does one still need to regard as valid the teaching of St. John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, 56, based on sacred Scripture and on the Tradition of the Church, that excludes a creative interpretation of the role of conscience and that emphasizes **that conscience can never be authorized to legitimate exceptions to absolute moral norms that prohibit intrinsically evil acts by virtue of their object?**"

**SIMPLIFIED:** Can the (subjective) conscience be appealed to abrogate or cancel intrinsically evil acts?

To date, Pope Francis has obstinately, if not arrogantly refused to deign to answer these vital questions necessary necessary to the *integrity* of our Holy Catholic Faith. This certainly does not accord with his widely publicized "humility" ... Indeed, in a recent interview, he went so far as to characterize those who so much as questioned his questionable theology as "*fanatici*" — fanatics.

## **Enigmatic?**

**So often silence is hiding**, concealing, refusing to disclose.

**If confusion arises, it calls for clarity — especially as it pertains to matters of the Faith**; if apparent equivocation threatens sound doctrine it *must* be clarified for the sake of the faithful. If answering five questions that involve both — equivocation and confusion — promotes unity through a clearly articulated understanding, why refuse? Why obstinate silence, which only underscores the likelihood of an inability to answer in conformity with sound Catholic doctrine and Sacred Scripture? In a word what is to be *gained* through silence? It is hardly a mark of humility to hold oneself above questioning. Should the word *enigmatic* even be predicated of a pope?

## **“The Silent Card” — AMORIS LAETITIA — a Case in Point**

Much like Cardinal Law and countless superiors in Boston, Pope Francis is playing the “Silent Card”. But it is a far more perilous gambling. Much as in the famous *Emperor's New Clothes*, the Church has, figuratively speaking, no vestments and is shockingly unaware that the crowds perceive this. Sanctimony proved too costly and where the ecclesiastical authorities had yawned, the doggedly vicious secular prosecutors and courts were not nearly so lenient or forgiving to just let these atrocities pass. Lives needed mending (some never) and yes, there was money to be made. Lots of it. Sanctimony, ecclesiastics came to realize, was not only meretricious but quite costly.

In a humiliating denouement, it took *Caesar* to correct what the Church refused to. We still sting from that justice, even as we finally savor it.

Once again, however, a gambit of a similar sort is being played by Francis as he tampers with not only the *Sacred Deposit of Faith* of 2000 years, but *Holy Scripture* itself!

**“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”** (Exodus 20:14, Saint Matthew 5:27-28)

**“Whoever unworthily partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ is guilty of it”** (1 Corinthians 11.27)

Pretty clear, yes? And for over 2000 years.

## **The Straw Man: “The Prize for the Perfect”**

**Not so for Francis** who casts more than a shadow of doubt upon it by approving sexually active cohabitation — adultery — and even holding it to be sacramental in a way equal to ... well, *sacramental* marriages — which of course brings up the question of why bother to marry sacramentally at all if the grace is given as it were, *a priori*? In the infamous “Footnote 351”, Francis magnanimously proclaims that:

“In certain cases, this can include the help of the sacraments. Hence, I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber, but rather an encounter with the Lord’s mercy ... I would also point out that the Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.”

Indeed, whoever approached Holy Communion with a sense of entitlement as receiving in all justice a “prize” for their perfection? Who ever experienced the Sacrament of Penance — Confession — as a “Torture Chamber” with a priest as a Grand Inquisitor? This is a Straw Man, and we know it. And what is more, Francis knows it, too. It is offensive to even suggest this. On the other hand it may be a rare insight into the thought processes of one who would utter this, especially to justify sacrilege. Does forgiveness precede sorrow, or is it *necessary to forgiveness* (in realms human and divine)? Is it *really* an act of “Mercy” to justify adultery and sacrilege? Indeed, are they then sins at all if they are to be repeated *ad mortem* under the aegis of “Mercy”? Indeed how is sorrow possible as long as the *intent* to continue in sin remains?

### **Francis:**

“I’ve seen a lot of fidelity in these cohabitations, and I am sure that this is a real marriage, they have the grace of a real marriage because of their fidelity ... It’s provisional, and because of this the great majority of our sacramental marriages are null ... Because they say “yes, for the rest of my life!” but they don’t know what they are saying. Because they have a different culture. They say it, they have good will, but they don’t know ... They prefer to cohabit, and this is a challenge, a task. Not to ask “why don’t you marry?” No, to accompany, to wait, and to help them to mature, help fidelity to mature.’ ”



## **The Catechism of the Catholic Church, on the other hand states:**

“Some today claim a “right to a trial marriage” where there is an intention of getting married later. However firm the purpose of those who engage in premature sexual relations may be, “the fact is that such liaisons can scarcely ensure mutual sincerity and fidelity in a relationship between a man and a woman, nor, especially, can they protect it from inconstancy of desires or whim.” Carnal union is morally legitimate only when a definitive community of life between a man and woman has been established. Human love does not tolerate “trial marriages.” It demands a total and definitive gift of persons to one another.” CCC 2391

### **Sacramental Adultery?**

Of course, if sacramental adultery is not a sacrilegious concept, then neither are other Sacraments protected from sacrilege.

Sacred Scripture, Tradition, and the Sacred Deposit of Faith — neither Pope Francis or any other pope has the authority to violate *any* of the three ... let alone abrogate them.

### **The *Dialogue* in place of the Decalogue: What of the other Commandments? What of the other 5 Sacraments?**

What is evident to all but the most myopic is the prospect that if, indeed, Francis can equivocate about long established and clearly articulated concepts of marriage,

adultery, cohabitation, the efficacy of grace, the notion of validity as it is predicated of each — what else, we ask, is up for grabs? What *else* has been misunderstood for 2000 years? What else has God *hidden* from the faithful until the accession of Francis to the Seat of Peter and subsequent to that accession subjected dogma and doctrine to *his* penetrating gaze that dispels all the myths of pre-enlightened (pre-Bergoglian, pre-Vatican II — you choose) Catholicism?

עֲשֵׂרֵת הַדְּבָרוֹת

## The Ten Commandments “Suggestions”

The proscription against adultery dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> century — BC. To preclude any misunderstanding, it was inscribed *in stone*! Little can be more definitive than that. In fact it is an adage: “*It is written in stone*”, that is to say, absolutely clear and unalterable. That was one- thousand-two-hundred years *before* Christ. But now — 3000 years later — we are suddenly unclear about what constitutes adultery?

*Of course* Pope Francis has an affinity for Luther to whom, after 1400 years of deceit and duplicity on the part of God in failing to reveal the “*real* truth” to the Church, *finally* revealed it to Luther in the fullness of time. It would appear that Francis has that singular privilege as well. Not only had God Himself had it wrong (or had misspoken), but the Apostles, the Church Fathers, the 21 Church Councils, the Saints, the Martyrs, and of course the “less educated” as well had it wrong. The Ten Commandments are not Commandments after all, or at least binding in any remotely coherent way. They are actually **The Ten Suggestions** that require

“accompaniment” by Team Bergoglio who will parse them *psycho-theologically* in order to reveal their “*real* meaning” to the unenlightened masses — so that sin will no longer be an impediment to union with God.

## The Last and Most Frightening “S”

SCHISM

If Francis persists in effectively amending Scripture to accord with his clearly progressive and dangerously liberal agenda, or in disregard of Tradition, and prescinding from the Sacred Deposit of the Faith, the only apparent logical sequitur is also an “S” word, for it would likely provoke a monumental schism within the Church: not a “breaking away *from*” by Catholics *faithful* to Holy Mother Church, but a “having *already* broken away from” Holy Mother Church by *disaffected* Catholics who put liberal ideology in place of theology, man before God, their ambitions before their obligations, and their temporal gains before their eternal losses. **But — we protest — *this must not happen!***

As Cardinal Raymond Burke emphatically noted:

**“There can be no place in our thinking or acting for schism which is always and everywhere wrong,”** he said. **“Schism is the fruit of a worldly way of thinking, of thinking that the Church is in our hands, instead of in the hands of Christ.** The Church in our time has great need of the purification of any kind of worldly thinking,” he added. The Cardinal warned Catholics in anguish over the current situation within the Church against even thinking about schism, that is, separating themselves from the Catholic Church headed by the Pope in the hope of creating a better Church.

### **Code of Canon Law Article 1 §3**

Of course, there are others issues at stake, especially pertaining to the office of the Petrine Ministry in the Code of Canon Law for which no such apparently facile remedy is immediately available, especially as it pertains to CCL Art 1 §3.

**“No appeal or recourse is permitted against a sentence or decree of the Roman Pontiff.”**

The clarity and concision of this law is deliberately rigorous and for good reason — especially in light of the past 50 years which have witnessed widespread and regular dissent and disobedience vis-à-vis the papacy on the part of cardinals, ordinaries, national “Catholic Conferences”, seminary rectors, priests, theologians, and Religious. Widespread as these have been, much-needed *correction* on the part of the pontiffs preceding Francis has been rare, tempered, and even rescinded. Francis’s shocking authoritarian and peremptory character has no precedent in modern times. The question confronting thoughtful Catholics is *why*? Why is

the *full* canonical weight of the papacy being exercised so vigorously by Pope Francis and “Team Bergoglio” — and if it is *divinely ordained* why are the consequences so deleterious to the Church and the faithful? Why such confusion and apparent subterfuge (St. Gallen Group)? Why such a pervasive atmosphere of fear permeating the Vatican as never before — and as is routinely reported?

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**“No appeal or recourse is permitted against a sentence or decree of the Roman Pontiff.”** According to the 1917 Code of Canon Law: **“Prima Sedes a nemine iudicatur” (Canon 1556) — “The First See [the pope] is judged by no one.”**

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fear permeating the Vatican as never before — and as is routinely reported?

## **No implied “judgment” in the *Dubia* or Questions requiring *Clarification***

Much more to the point, there is no implied “judgment” of Pope Francis in what is simply, correctly, and canonically termed “The *Dubia*”, or the questions placed before the pope *for clarification* are simply that: *questions* — not judgments of the pope. Issues are involved that stand in dire need of clarification and consensus. Indeed, far from presuming to judge the pope in any way, they are questions requiring *his* judgment since no universal interpretive consensus is agreed upon — for which reason the *dubia* were presented to him! **Bishops and priests in different countries are in diametric opposition to one another in their understanding of the questions involved.** This is a scandalous state of affairs. *Definitively* answering the questions — *which is the prerogative and responsibility of the pope alone* — is the only way to settle these divisions, misunderstandings, and misinterpretations not only among the clergy, but the faithful. What is permitted in Poland is not permitted in Canada. Even within one country — America — what is permitted in Los Angeles is not permitted in Philadelphia. **In a word, what is *sinful* in one place is *not sinful* in another.**

That — if nothing else — is the scandal. No casuistry will ever overcome **the Law of the Excluded Middle** (or the law of non-contradiction): **X** cannot, at one and the same time, both *be X* and *not-X*. It is inconsistent with reason and irreconcilable with logic. It is also a terrible chaos in a universe of immortal souls and Divine pronouncements.

## The Church is God's — to do with as He wills

These are real and ultimately vital questions. To simply reply with Canon Law that “**No appeal or recourse is permitted against a sentence or decree of the Roman Pontiff**” is sufficient ... ultimately is not.

We must remember — with a faith straitened as perhaps never before — that ultimately the Church is *God's* to do with as He wills. *He* chooses — *or permits* — Whom He will. Who are we to question God? In the end His ways are not our ways. And perhaps — just perhaps — **He has given or permitted us to have what and whom we will — if only to teach us that there is a better ... but only at a cost we have proven ourselves unwilling to pay.**

Editor

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