

The leaders in the church today, who wish to deform it according to their own interests, attack those who hold to the truth of the Scripture and Tradition. I have been told that my statements are repugnant, reprehensible, that I am anti Muslim, anti gay. The scriptures tell us not to answer a fool according to his folly. These are trying times, but lift all those who are offensive to you up to Jesus. Follow the advice of Monsignor Pope and Cardinal Burke.

Fr. Richard Perozich



(Photo credit: Daniel Ibáñez/Catholic News Agency)

BLOGS | JUN. 24, 2016

One Priest's Concern About Recent Remarks by the Pope

[Msgr. Charles Pope](#)

I would like to make, as a parish priest in trenches, a few remarks concerning the Pope's recent statements [in Rome at a gathering](#) of priests and seminarians. Others have admirably remarked on his troubling remarks on marriage and cohabitation. I will not add to those. But I would like to focus on two other reported remarks the Pope made about priests to the effect that some of us are cruel, are putting our noses into people's moral life and possibly that he even called some of us animals.

And while most of these remarks, recorded and widely reported, were not included, or were "adjusted" in the Vatican transcript, they cannot simply be unsaid. And even the clarifications remain troubling.

I write these remarks simply as a parish priest. I am not a canonist and certainly not a reporter. I react simply as a priest to what has been reported all week, and write here the reaction of one man and priest—me.

First, it is reported that the Pope said pastors should not be "putting our noses into the moral life of other people."

Permit me to state my utter bewilderment at such a notion. As a priest, and especially as a confessor and spiritual director this is my duty! It is true that I am not to unnecessarily pry into the private lives of parishioners. But surely there is a requirement that as a confessor and a pastor I have some sense of the moral life of those to whom I minister.

Consider a medical analogy. Suppose a patient comes to a doctor with breathing difficulties and chest pains. Surely the doctor will inquire as to the person's lifestyle. Does he smoke? Did he ever smoke? What sort of food is being consumed? Does he exercise? What is his weight and what are his vital signs? Is a doctor putting his nose into the private life of the patient, or is he seeking necessary information? Of course the answer is clear, and he must have the info both to diagnose and set forth a proper medical plan of action.

It is no less the case with a priest who is exercising spiritual care. He has the duty to know and assist the faithful in their moral life. Thus if a baptism form indicates cohabitation, or single motherhood, he has a duty to

teach. If, in confession, he finds evidence of sinful drives, or moral irregularities he must address them and set forth a pastoral plan for a soul in need. If a couple comes to him cohabiting, he must discuss this with them, explain why it is wrong and should stop and set forth the truth that alone sets us free. To fail to do so is not kindness, it is malpractice! This is not “putting our nose into the moral life of others;” it is engaging in a moral and pastoral conversation with souls in need. This is pastoral care, not snooping. Surely a priest should not seek for impertinent details, but no diagnosis or plan can be helpful without the basic facts at hand.

The “[official transcript](#)” of the Vatican wisely removed these remarks, but still, they were widely reported and have given fodder both to critics of priests who seek to faithfully preach the moral vision of the faith and also, at the opposite spectrum, of the Pope.

Secondly as “widely reported” by [Crux](#) and others, during a question-and-answer session towards the end of the meeting, Francis spoke of a “pastoral cruelty,” such as priests who refuse to baptize the children of young single mothers. “They’re animals,” he said.

Here too the Vatican sought to “clarify” these remarks and the “official transcript” says that the Pope actually meant to say that priests treat single parents as animals, not that priests were animals. (More on the spun remarks in a moment.) But the recorded and reported remarks have the Pope calling priests whose prudential judgments do not match his, “cruel” and “animals”.

First, let me say that I know of very few priests who deny baptism to infants born to single mothers. Most priests I know are very generous in extending baptism to infants, realizing that they are not responsible for the sins or shortcomings of their parents. Those who do, at times, delay baptism do so for other reasons, such as little evidence for a well-founded hope that the child will be raised in the faith. There are some prudential judgments to be made and pastors are required to make them (see canon 868). Again, most priests are very gracious with baptism.

But it is beyond lamentable that the Pope, as initially reported, should have called priests (or any human being for that matter) “animals.” Such a word should never have come out of his mouth, and I would hope for an apology for this offensive characterization, not merely a Vatican “clarification.” I certainly have some differences with brother priests, I would call my differences with dissenting priests significant. But this does not

permit me to call them animals, and the Pope, who seems to have done so, has no business doing it either. Admittedly the recorded comments are hard to follow, but the cleansed Vatican transcript is more in the mode of “Let’s pretend this was never said as recorded” rather than a clear denial—“The Pope wants to say he not consider priest animals, even though he thinks some are too hard-lined on this matter.”

It will be admitted that Pope Gregory (in his Pastoral Rule) once said that silent priests who failed to rebuke sinners were like “dumb dogs that cannot bark.” But he was using a metaphor, and quoting Scripture. He did not univocally call them dogs, he said they were “like” or in the mode of dumb dogs that cannot warn of danger. But there is nothing in this recent Pope’s comments that suggests metaphor or simile. He just outright called priests whose prudential judgments he doubts “animals”. “They’re animals” he said.

I pray that never again will we hear reported such a rude and unnecessary remark from this pope or any pope. No human person should be called an animal by a pope or any anyone, for that matter. Metaphors and similes have their place in human discourse, but to univocally call a fellow human being and animal is out of line.

But let’s consider the post hoc assessment of the remark wherein some prefer to say he apparently intended to say that some priests treat children (or possibly their unwed mothers) as “animals.”

Well, count me as less than relieved by this explanation. Again let me note that delaying a baptism merely due to the parents being unwed is rare in my experience (and hence a strawman argument). But it remains highly disrespectful to say that priests who delay baptism (usually for a number of reasons) are treating others as animals and are cruel.

Thus even the “spun” remarks are unhelpful at best and divisive at worst.

Please, Holy Father: Enough of these ad hoc, off-the-cuff, impromptu sessions, whether at thirty thousand feet or at ground level. Much harm through confusion has been caused by these latest remarks on marriage, cohabitation, baptism, confession, and pastoral practice. Simply cleaning the record in the official transcript is not enough; this is an era of instant reportage and lots of recording devices, tweets, and Instagrams.

Just this priest’s perspective. But I can assure you, dear reader, that the impact hits priests hard, and I cannot deny a certain weariness and

discouragement at this point. I realize that such remarks of the Pope are not doctrinal, but just try and tell that to gleeful dissenters and the morally confused or misled in this world.

Let us pray for our Holy Father and for the universal Church.



Cardinal Burke addressing the Rome Life Forum in May this year. (Edward Pentin photo)
BLOGS | AUG. 8, 2017

Cardinal Burke's 10 Ways to Overcome Crisis of Confusion, Division in the Church

The U.S. cardinal says disorientation and error have entered into the Church “in a diabolical way,” but encourages Catholics to remain steadfast in the faith as well as courageous and serene, knowing Christ’s victory is “already written.”

Edward Pentin

In a wide-ranging and timely address, Cardinal Raymond Burke has sought to explain the essence of the deep spiritual crisis facing the Church and the world and offered pastoral suggestions and encouragement to the faithful on how to deal with it.

Speaking to a ‘Church Teaches Forum’ meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, July 22, the cardinal patron of the Order of Malta observed that given the “troubled times in the world and also in the Church,” the “solid teaching” of the Church has “never been needed more.”

The cardinal said the widespread attack on innocent and defenseless human life is leading to “unprecedented” violence in family life and society.

He also noted other current scourges: gender ideology, denial of religious freedom and conscientious objection, atheistic materialism, and relativism. All have resulted in a “legitimate fear of a global confrontation which can only mean destruction and death for many,” he said.

“Clearly, the present situation of the world cannot continue without leading to total annihilation,” he added.

Yet “in a diabolical way, the confusion and error” that has emanated from the ravages of secularization, especially in the West, “has also entered into the Church,” he said.

Cardinal Burke, one of the Church’s leading canon law experts, lamented that the Church is “drawing near to a culture” but “without seeming to know her own identity and mission” or having “the clarity and the courage to announce the Gospel of Life and Divine Love to the radically secularized culture.”

As an example, he cited recent remarks from the president of the German bishops’ conference, Cardinal Reinhard Marx, who said the legalization of same-sex “marriage” in Germany was not a major concern for the Church; more so was the intolerance shown to those suffering from same-sex attraction. Cardinal Burke reminded his audience that the correct approach is to distinguish between the love for the person and the hatred Catholics “must always have for sinful acts.”

He held up the life of another German prelate, the recently deceased Cardinal Joachim Meisner, who suffered from the “ever-increasing confusion” about the Church’s teaching within the Church, but who

nevertheless remained “serene” and determined “to continue to fight for Christ.”

Cardinal Burke noted how, “for whatever reason, many shepherds are silent” about the current crisis or “have abandoned the clarity” of the Church’s teaching, and instead embraced the “confusion and error which is wrongly thought to address more effectively the total collapse of Christian culture.”

Possibly apocalyptic

He recalled a young priest who recently asked him why, given the “possibly apocalyptic nature” of the present time in the Church and the world, and the need for teaching the truth of the faith, there is a “seeming lack of clarity and courage” coming from the hierarchy.

Cardinal Burke said it could be put down to the “materialist and relativist culture” pervading modern life which “encourages the confusion and division in the Church.” The cardinal also said he felt uneasy when the secular media is no longer attacking the Church as it used to, as it means the Church is “failing badly in her clear and courageous witness to the world for the salvation of the world.”

He also warned of “worldly” Church governance, where those who teach what the Church has always taught are viewed as “rigid fundamentalists” hindering the pastoral approach wanted by Pope Francis. And he observed the “sad situation” of members of the hierarchy “publicly accusing one another of a political and mundane agenda, as politicians attack one another to advance a political agenda.”

Although he didn’t refer to directly to them, the cardinal has born the brunt of such attacks, most recently from one of Pope Francis’ [closest advisers](#).

He sounded the alarm about a false perception of the papacy, that it should not be portrayed as having “absolute power” and that the office of St. Peter “has nothing to do with revolution” — as some of Francis’ more ardent supporters [say](#) — which is “primarily a political” and worldly term. Instead he reminded those present that the fullness of the Pope’s power and exercise of his office is “precisely to protect him from the kind of worldly and relativist thought which leads to confusion and division.”

Recalling that Catechism's words [which state](#) that the Pope's mission is to keep the faith "from every lapse and to strengthen his brothers in it," he said it is "absurd" to think Pope Francis can teach something different to his predecessors. And he stressed that not all Pope Francis' words are papal teaching or magisterium.

Expanding on this topic further, Cardinal Burke underlined how in the Middle Ages, the Church spoke of "two bodies of the Pope: the body of the man and body of the Vicar of Christ." When the Pope speaks colloquially, as Francis often does, for example on the papal plane or in his morning homilies, this is the "first body" of the man who is Pope, he said. Making such a distinction, he continued, is in "no way disrespectful of the Petrine Office" nor does it make one an enemy of Pope Francis. On the contrary, he said, without making the distinction we would "easily lose respect" for the papacy if we believed we had to agree with all his personal opinions. Such an approach constitutes an "idolatry of the papacy," he said.

He also recalled how previous popes have taken great care with their words. Bl. Pope Paul VI, he said, "would never permit the publication of one of his sermons without thoroughly studying the printed text" and once told a young prelate: "I am the Vicar of Christ on earth, and I have a most serious responsibility to make certain that no word of mine could be interpreted in a way contrary to Church teaching."

Papal declarations

Any declaration of the Pope, Cardinal Burke said, must be understood "within the context of the constant teaching and practice of the Church" lest it cause confusion and division that would do "great harm" to souls and evangelization. He recalled St. Paul's words (Gal. 1:6-10): that if "anyone preach a gospel to you other than that which you have received, let him be anathema!".

Citing recent "shocking" [words of the superior general of the Jesuits](#) who said we cannot know what Christ really said as his words weren't tape recorded, Cardinal Burke noted an uncorrected, "widespread apostasy" in the Church that Our Lady of Fatima warned about. The triumph of the Immaculate Heart teaches us the "right relationship with God and with others," he said, and recalled the full parable of the lost sheep: that the

shepherd “does not leave it in its lost condition but takes it upon his shoulders to bring it back to the fold.”

Cardinal Burke closed his speech by reflecting on what can be done in these “exceedingly difficult times” which “realistically seem to be apocalyptic.”

Stressing that Christ’s teachings do not change, he gave 10 ways to deal with the crisis:

- 1 Study the Catechism more attentively and be prepared to defend the Church’s teaching;
- 2 Recall the “many edifying signs” of fidelity to Christ among “many good and steadfast faithful, priests and bishops”;
- 3 Have recourse to the Blessed Virgin Mary, imitate the oneness of her heart with Jesus;
- 4 Invoke frequently, “throughout the day,” the [intercession of St. Michael the Archangel](#) as there is “definitely diabolical involvement in the ever spreading confusion, division and error within the Church”;
- 5 Pray to St. Joseph daily to protect the Church from “confusion and division which are always the work of Satan”;
- 6 Pray to the great pope saints who guided the Church in difficult times;
- 7 Pray for the cardinals of the Church to give them “particular clarity and courage”;
- 8 Be serene, knowing our confidence is in Christ, that the “gates of hell” will not prevail against the Church, and avoid a “worldly desperation” that is expressed in “aggressive and uncharitable ways.”
- 9 Be ready to “accept ridicule, misunderstanding, persecution, exile and even death” to remain one with Christ in the Church, following the example of St. Athanasius and other great saints.
- 10 Safeguard love for Pope Francis by praying fervently for him and seeking the intercession of St. Peter on his behalf.

Cardinal Burke warned that schism is a “worldly way of thinking” that is “always and everywhere wrong.”

He concluded his talk by saying that although we may be in the end times, “it is not for us to worry” about this but rather “to remain faithful, generous and courageous” in serving Christ, knowing that his victory is already written.

With the Blessed Virgin's help, he said, we are "to write, with Christ, the intervening chapters by our fidelity, courage and generosity as His true co-workers, as true soldiers of Christ.

"It remains for us," he said, "to be the good and faithful servants who await to open the door for the Master at His Coming."

[Full text of Cardinal Raymond Burke's speech: Developing Lives of Peace after the Heart of Mary:](#)

Cardinal Burke warns against ‘idolatry of the papacy’

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky, August 9, 2017 ([LifeSiteNews](#)) -- To treat every word uttered by the Pope as if it were official Church teaching would be to fall into an “idolatry of the papacy,” said Cardinal Raymond Burke in a recent address at a Catholic conference in Kentucky.

The Cardinal, who spoke at the July 22 “Church Teaches Forum” in Louisville, said that Catholics seeking to remain true to Christ and the Church he founded must learn to discern between the “words of the man who is Pope and the words of the Pope as Vicar of Christ on earth.”



Cardinal Raymond Burke preaches during opening Mass of the 27th annual 'Church Teaches Forum' on July 20, 2017.

Glenn Rutherford

“Pope Francis has chosen to speak often in his first body, the body of the man who is Pope. In fact, even in documents which, in the past, have represented more solemn teaching, he states clearly that he is not offering magisterial teaching but his own thinking,” the Cardinal said.

“But those who are accustomed to a different manner of Papal speaking want to make his every statement somehow part of the Magisterium. To do so is contrary to reason and to what the Church has always understood,” he continued.

“It is simply wrong and harmful to the Church to receive every declaration of the Holy Father as an expression of papal teaching or magisterium,” he added.

[READ: ‘Confusion and error’ from Catholic leaders may be sign of end times: Cardinal Burke](#)

The Catholic Church holds that a pope teaches infallibly when “in virtue of his office...he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals.” The Church also holds that when the pope in the “exercise of the ordinary Magisterium” proposes a teaching that “leads to better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals” the faithful “are to adhere to it with religious assent.” These teachings are found in the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#).

Burke has [previously called](#) the Pope’s controversial 2016 *Amoris Laetitia* “not an act of the magisterium” but a “personal reflection of the Pope.” The Apostolic Exhortation has been interpreted by various bishops and cardinals as allowing civilly-divorced-and-remarried Catholics living in adultery to receive Holy Communion. Such an interpretation contradicts previous Catholic teaching.

Burke called it “absurd” for anyone to think that Pope Francis as Vicar of Christ on earth could officially “teach something which is not in accord with what his predecessors, for example Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Saint John Paul II, have solemnly taught.”