

## Cardinal Müller: "Pope Francis should make Benedict XVI. adviser instead of the atheist Scalfari



*Cardinal Müller:*

*"The celibate way of life of Jesus Christ corresponds most intimately to the sacramental priesthood".*

*Cardinal Gerhard Müller, the former Prefect of the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, today published a magisterial lecture to defend priestly celibacy and the sacramental priesthood. In it he describes celibacy as the “bastion of the transcendent” that is to be destroyed and verbal charges against “external and internal forces” who strive for a man-made world religious unity without God. The wording of the Lectio, published today by Cardinal Müller at La Nuova Bussola Quotidiana.*

## **Celibacy, the last transcendent bastion to be torn down**

Gerhard Cardinal Müller \*



The media attempt to create confusion, because of the participation of Benedict XVI in Cardinal Sarah's book "From the Depths of our Hearts" is nothing more than a sign of the paranoia that is spreading in public about the alleged coexistence of two popes. Apparently, since there can only be one Pope in the Catholic Church because "the Bishop of Rome, as Peter's successor, is the everlasting, visible principle and foundation for the unity of the multitude of bishops and believers" (Lumen Gentium , 23).

In Benedict XVI's contribution in Cardinal Sarah's book there is new confirmation of the perception of this disturbance between the two opposing principles of unity. It is also obvious that Pope Francis and his predecessor Benedict XVI. are not the originators of this pathological polarization, but rather the victims of an ideological projection.

## **"Benedict XVI. is not a pensioner"**

The latter poses a threat to the unity of the Church and at the same time undermines the primacy of the Roman Church. All these facts only show that the psychological trauma that was triggered by the resignation of Pope Benedict in early 2013 has not yet healed in the “sense of faith of the people of God” (LG 12; 35). However, believers have the right to a clear theological judgment about the coexistence of a ruling pope and his predecessor, who has now emerged. This extraordinary event, that the Pope, head of the college of bishops and the visible Church, whose invisible head is Christ himself, the Cathedra Petri before his death who has been given him for life can never be understood according to secular criteria, such as an age-related right to retirement or the popular desire to change the person of one's own boss. Although it is true that canon law provides this possibility in an abstract way (Can. 332 §2 CIC), there are still no detailed provisions or concrete experiences to describe the status of this figure and even more, how this in practice will be realized for the good of the Church.

**In the world of politics, antagonists are common in the power struggle. Once the enemy is overcome,**

things continue as if nothing had happened. But it should not be like this among the disciples of Christ, because all are brothers in the Church of God. God alone is our father. And only His Son Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate (Jn 1: 14-18), is the master of all people (Mt 23:10). Bishops and priests are ministers of the Church because of the sacramental ordination chosen by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). They lead the Church of God in the name and authority of Christ, and He speaks through their mouths as Divine Teachers of the Annunciation (1 Thess. 2.13). He sanctifies the faithful through them in the Sacraments. And finally Christ is the “guardian and shepherd of your souls” (1 Petr 2,25), He cares for the salvation of people by calling priests (bishops or presbyters) to His church so that they can be their shepherds (1 Peter 5: 2f; Acts 20:28). The Bishop of Rome holds the office of Saint Peter, who was called by Jesus, Lord of the Church, to be the universal shepherd (Jn 21:15–17). But the bishops are also brothers to one another, although as members of the college of bishops they are united with and under the authority of the Pope (LG, 23).

A still living "ex" pope is fraternally connected with all bishops and is subject to the teaching

authority and the jurisdiction of the ruling pope. This in no way excludes that his word still has great weight in the Church due to his theological and spiritual competence as well as due to his experience in government both as a bishop and as a pope.

The relationship of each retired bishop to his successor must be marked by a spirit of fraternity. A desire for worldly prestige and political power games is a poison in the body of the Church, the body of Christ. This applies a fortiori even more so to the even more delicate relationship of the incumbent Pope to his predecessor, who has given up the office of Peter and all privileges of the papal primacy, which is why he is no longer the Pope.

## **"The Common Front of the Church's Inner and Outer Enemies"**

What is particularly surprising is that those enemies of the Church, who come from the ranks of the Old Liberals and Marxist Neoheathens, make common cause with inner-Church secularists, who are driven by the desire to transform the Church of God into a globally active, humanitarian organization.

The militant atheist Eugenio Scalfari prides himself on being Pope Francis' friend. United through the common idea of a single, planetary religion of

human origin (without trinity and without incarnation) he offers him his cooperation. The idea of a popular front of believers and non-believers is propagated against those who identify Scalfari as an enemy and opponent in the ranks of the cardinals and bishops and the Catholics ("right-wing conservatives"). In it he finds like-minded spirits who belong to the circle of those who describe themselves as part of a "Bergoglian Guard." This network of left-wing populists, driven by the mere desire for power, they pervert the Pope's *potestas plena* into a *potestas illimitata et absoluta*. This reflects obvious voluntarism: From their point of view, everything is good and true because the Pope wants it and not because the Pope says or does something. They contradict the Second Vatican Council, which the Magisterium recognizes in the service of revelation "by teaching nothing but what has been handed down, because it hears the word of God with the divine commission and interprets it with awe with the help of the Holy Spirit, holy preservation and faithfulness" ( *Dei Verbum* , 19). They therefore turn to be demonic opponents of the papacy, as it is dogmatically defined in the teachings of the First and Second Vatican Councils. If the principle of service

and the standard of friendship (Jn 15:15) applied between Jesus and His disciples, how can the relationship between the Pope and his brothers in the episcopate be shaped by a submissive opportunism and a blind and irrational obedience that is outside the unity of belief and reason inherent in Catholic theology? According to the liberal Marxist view, a pope would be "up to date" to the extent that he would finish the ruthless agenda of the extreme left and promote a spirit of unity devoid of any transcendence, without God and without historical salvation through Christ, the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2: 5).

The masters who manipulate public opinion and the ideologues of this world (the Civitas terrena ) abuse their power if they fail to observe the natural law of morality and the commandments of God. They repeatedly usurp God's place and turn into demons in human disguise. But where God is recognized as the only Lord, there is grace and life, freedom and love. In the Kingdom of God, the words of Jesus are basic guidance:

"But it shouldn't be like this with you, but whoever wants to be great with you should be your servant (...) Because the Son of Man didn't come to be

served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10.43–45).

The sacramental ordination (to the bishop, priest and deacon) remains valid and effective and with it also the responsibility for the teaching of the Church and its pastoral mission. The old opponents of Joseph Ratzinger (as Prefect of Faith as well as pope) have no right against him to impose a *damnatio memoriae*, all the less since the majority of them differ from their qualities as Church teachers by a startling theological and philosophical dilettantism. Benedict XVI's contribution Cardinal Sarah's book can only be discredited as an act of opposition to Pope Francis by those who mistake the Church of God for an ideological-political organization. They do not want to understand that the secrets of faith can only be grasped with the "spirit of God", but not with the "spirit of the world".

"But the earthly minded man does not accept what comes from the Spirit of God" (1 Cor 2:14).

In the beginning, not even the apostles wanted to understand that there are people who are willing to renounce marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said to them:



It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick (Mt 19:12).

And then explained to them:

"Anyone who has left home or wife, brothers, parents or children for the sake of God's Kingdom will receive many times over in present time and eternal life in the world to come" (Luke 18: 29-30; cf. Mt 19 , 29).

The claim that Benedict was the secret opponent of the ruling Pope and that the defense of the sacramental priesthood and celibacy were part of an obstruction policy against the expected post-synodal writing on the Amazon Synod can only thrive in the fertile ground of theological ignorance. Nobody refutes this fixed idea more brilliantly than Pope Francis himself.

In the foreword to the anthology on ordination, on the occasion of Joseph Ratzinger's 65th anniversary in 2016, Pope Francis wrote:

“Every time I see the works of Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI., it becomes clear to me that he practiced theology on his knees and still does it on his knees, because you can see that he is not just an outstanding theologian and teacher of faith, but a man who really believes, who really prays. You can see

that he is a man who embodies holiness, a man of peace, a man of God.”

After rejecting the caricature of the Catholic priest as an official and expert in a Church that is like an NGO, Pope Francis once again underlines the exceptional status of Joseph Ratzinger as a theologian on *Cathedra Petri* in the following words:

"Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller has confirmed that the theological work of Joseph Ratzinger first and Benedict XVI. then enlisted him among the great theologians in the Petrine chair, such as Pope Leo the Great, saint, and Church Father. (...)

With this in mind and with due regard to the Prefect of Faith, I would add that perhaps today, as Pope Emeritus, he is obviously giving us one of his greatest lessons in 'theology on his knees'.”

**"The priest associated with Christ is not an official."**

Benedict XVI's contribution on Cardinal Sarah's book offers a hermeneutic, Christological-pneumatological deepening of the unity of the Old and New Testaments, a unity based on the divine revelation of himself in history. He thus offers help to overcome the theological and spiritual crisis of the priesthood, which “has an increasingly important task

(...) in the area of the renewal of the Church of Christ” ( Presbyterorum Ordinis, 1). **The priest is not a company official who offers socio-religious services.** He is also not a representative of an autonomous community that could exercise its own rights before God, instead of receiving "every good gift and every perfect gift (...) from above, from the Father of the stars" (James 1:17). **Rather, through holy consecration, he is made equal to Jesus Christ, the high priest and mediator of the New Covenant, the divine master and good shepherd, who gives his own life for the sheep of the flock of God** (LG, 29; PO, 2).

For this *conformitas cum Christo* also follows the fact that Christ's celibate way of life closely corresponds to the sacramental priesthood. Jesus himself spoke of the disciples who live abstinely and freely choose to dispense with marriage and their own family than those who bear witness to the coming kingdom and work for the salvation of men (Mt 19:12; 1 Cor 7:32). Celibacy is not categorically required by the nature of the priesthood, but it corresponds most intimately to the nature of this sacrament, since it represents Christ, the head of the Church, with the authority that comes from the mandate and the way of life dedicated to God ( see PO, 16). For this reason,

the dispensaries of the Celibacy Act, as they have developed in different ways in the Eastern and Western Churches, are exceptions and not the rule of priestly celibacy. The Church must fundamentally aim at a celibate priesthood. Based on the biblical origins and as a result of the obligation to abstain in marriage for the married clerics, the practice took shape to consecrate bishops, priests and deacons only from among those who promise from the beginning to live as celibates.

In the Eastern Church, a break with the tradition of the early church -and certainly not based on its model- led to the marriage of priests and deacons by the Second Trullan Synod (691/692), which took place, characteristically, in the Imperial Palace and not in a Church respectively. In the Latin Church, on the other hand, only celibate men who had previously promised to lead a celibate life were consecrated. In the Eastern Churches, married clerics, but not the bishops, were allowed to remain married provided that they abstain from the marriage act and cease it for a period prior to the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and not marry again should their wife die. This provision also applies to those Catholic clerics who have received a dispensation from the obligation to

celibacy (LG, 29). The Catholic Church accepts this practice in the Uniate Eastern Church in the name of the greater good of unity and has been granted since Pius XII, and as for the Anglicans, since Benedict XVI, those clergymen who return from other denominations to full unity with the Church and are already married, are exempt from celibacy if they are ordained priests.

### **“Attack on the Sacramental Priesthood”**

In short, abolishing priestly celibacy along the lines of the 16th century Protestant and Anglican communities would be an attack on the nature of the priesthood and an act of contempt for the entire Catholic tradition. Who wants to take responsibility before God and His Holy Church for the catastrophic consequences for spirituality and theology of the Catholic priesthood? Millions of priests since the founding of the Church would feel deeply hurt by claiming that their existential sacrifice to the Kingdom of God and the Church was based only on an external, legal discipline that had nothing to do with the priesthood and celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. **The shortage of priests (in number and quality) in western countries, is not a shortage to be blamed on God, but on our own shortcomings in**

living the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and savior of the world.

We are not only experiencing a discussion, but a fierce battle against celibacy and also against the sacramental priesthood. The Protestant reformers of the 16th century considered the Church office only a religious function within the Christian community, and so they denied its Sacramental character. If ordination no longer corresponds to an inner alignment with Christ, the Divine Master, the Good Shepherd and high priest of the New Covenant, then the understanding of the intimate connection with celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, which is rooted in the Gospel, is also lost ( Mt 19:12; 1 Cor 7:32).

In the wake of the polemics of the Protestant Reformation and due to an immanentist view of man that is his own, the French Enlightenment saw priestly celibacy and religious vows only as a form of the repression of the sexual instinct that could lead to neuroses and perversions similar to those later theses, which were represented by depth psychology, considering sexuality as a mechanical satisfaction of instincts, which, if "suppressed", would cause neuroses and perversions.

In the current dictatorship of relativism, the emphasis on sacramental authority, which stems from a higher divine authority, is perceived as a clerical hunger for power, and the celibacy model of life as a public accusation against a viewpoint that reduces sexuality to selfish pleasure. Priestly celibacy appears as a final bastion of a radically transcendent orientation of man and hope for a future world in the hereafter, which according to the atheistic principles is a dangerous illusion. The Catholic Church is bitterly hostile because it represents an ideological alternative to the radical immanentism of the power and economic elite, which strives for absolute control over the mind and body of the starving masses of mankind .

You disguise yourself in a therapeutic gesture as philanthropists who would do nothing but do a favor to the poor priests and religious by freeing them from the cage of oppressed sexuality. In their triumphant ignorance, however, these benefactors of humanity do not notice how much they insult the dignity of all Christians, who take the indissolubility of marriage seriously in their God-oriented conscience or faithfully adhere to celibacy with the help of grace. Exactly where these believing Christians make the most important decisions in the depths of their

conscience before God, those who deny a supernatural vocation of man want to convince them to enter the limited horizon of a doomed existence, as if the living God did not exist ( Gaudium et spes , 21).

“Since the creation of the world, its invisible reality has been perceived in the works of creation with reason, its eternal power and deity. Therefore, they are inexcusable. Because they recognized God, but did not honor him as God and did not thank him.

(...) They claimed to be wise and became fools. They exchanged the glory of the imperishable God with images depicting a transient human being and flying, four-footed and crawling animals” (Romans 1: 20-23).

The vile indictment claims that those sinister reactionaries in the Church who promote sacramental celibacy, a worldly sexual morality -as it appears in the prosecutor's eyes- and defend misanthropic celibacy in order to modernize the Catholic Church and adapt it to the modern, would delay or even hinder the world. At best, they tolerate a Church without God, without the cross of Christ, and without the hope of eternal life. **This "Church of dogmatic indifferentism and moral relativism," which could include atheists and non-believers alike, can talk about**



the climate change, overpopulation and migrants; but it has to remain silent about abortion, self-mutilation, which is called a sex change, euthanasia and the blameworthy character of a sexual intercourse outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. One is called to absolutely accept the sexual revolution, since it is an act of liberation from the rejection of the body by Catholic sexual morality. In this way this would send a sign of remorse for the traditional rejection of the body that comes from the Manichean legacy of St. Augustine.

### **"An Advisor to the Pope"**

In spite of all this flattery, faithful Catholics hold the well-founded conviction that instead of the atheist Scalfari, who neither believes in God nor is able to understand the "mystery of the Holy Church" (LG, 5), Benedict XVI. (Joseph Ratzinger) would be an infinitely more competent advisor for the representative of Christ, successor of Peter and head shepherd of the world Church. This applies both to his theological qualities and his spiritual intuition in the mystery of God's love, as well as to his experience as a pope, alone before God, for the world Church, a responsibility that Benedict is the only one among all still living people on earth, shares with Pope Francis.

What Pope Francis wrote in the foreword to the book on the priesthood of his predecessor should be read by all "the knowledgeable and powerful of the world" (1 Cor. 2.6) before they share their paranoid fantasies about opponents of the pope, cardinals at war, and impending schisms trumpet in all four directions:

“[Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI.] Embodies that constant relationship with the Lord Jesus without which nothing is true, everything becomes routine, the priests almost full-time employees, the bishops bureaucrats and the Church no longer the Church of Christ, but our product, an ultimately superfluous NGO. ”

Francis continues by addressing the cardinals, bishops and priests gathered for the book presentation in the Sala Celementina on July 28, 2016, not as to subordinates to be commanded but how to speak to friends:

"Dear Brothers! I dare to say that if any of you ever have doubts about the center of your ministry, its meaning, its usefulness, if you ever have doubts about what people really expect from us, meditate thoroughly on these pages you are offered to us: because they expect us above all from what you find

described and testified in this book: that we bring them Jesus Christ and lead them to him, to the fresh and living water that they want more than anything else that only he can give and that no substitute can ever replace; that we lead them to full and true bliss; when nothing satisfies them anymore, that we can make them realize their innermost dream, which no power can promise and fulfill! "

\* The text is a translation of the Italian text published today by Cardinal Müller in the Catholic Internet newspaper La Nuova Bussola Quotidiana.