

Fr. Perozich comments —

He who controls the language controls the argument.

Dogma is bad. Deeper Understanding is good.

Conversion is bad. Radical inclusion is good.

And on it goes.

*“Radical inclusion is simply the **abuse of two words** by the Left in order to reconfigure the boundaries of exclusion. What becomes excluded is Judeo - Christianity and what becomes included is perversity and transgression.” — Gavin Ashendon*

This language is the language of the synod designed to impose a new gospel other than the one preached by Jesus, a gospel that tickles the ears of those who compose it and teach it in order to justify their personal opinions and life experiences on which they create their new faith rather than in the Truth of Jesus in the Bible and Sacred Tradition.

Reclaiming the light of dogma in the face of supposed “deeper understanding”

The shallow and arrogant blathering coming from Luxembourg, Manhattan, and even the Vatican is best countered with a steadfast embrace of the deposit of faith, entrusted to the Church by Jesus Christ.

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Print



Pope Francis meets with leaders of the Synod of Bishops' general secretariat in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Oct. 14, 2022. Pictured with the pontiff are XaviÈre Missionary Sister Nathalie Becquart, undersecretary; Bishop Luis MarÌn de San MartÌn, undersecretary; Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg, relator general; Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general and Jesuit Father Giacomo Costa, consultant. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

The holy men and woman of the Old Covenant suffered torture, imprisonment, mocking, scourging, and death by horrific means because of their faith in God (cf Heb 11:32-40). Many early Christians, of course, suffered death by fire, lions, sword, and other means. And the Church is persecuted today, with Christians being martyred in parts of Asia and Africa on a regular basis.

But what can compare to the pain endured by Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, S.J.?

The brave archbishop of Luxembourg has **reportedly endured difficult conversations** with young people who feel excluded from the Church because the Church continues, for now, to teach that sex is meant for husband and wife in marriage, that “homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered,” and that the homosexual “inclination ... is objectively disordered” (CCC, 2357-2358). Hollerich, in a recent interview with Vatican News, shared the observation that “for young people today, the highest value is nondiscrimination” and that he sees many young people “stop

considering the Gospel, if they have the impression that we are discriminating...”

The solution, he boldly asserts, is to change Church doctrine. In **an interview earlier this year**, Hollerich flatly professed: “I believe that the sociological-scientific foundation of this teaching”—that homosexuality is disordered and immoral—“is no longer correct,” He also said it was “time for a fundamental revision” and, referring to how Pope Francis has spoken of homosexuality, believes there could eventually be a change in doctrine:

What was condemned in the past was sodomy. At that time, it was thought that the whole child was contained in the sperm of the man, and that was simply transferred to homosexual men. But there is no homosexuality in the New Testament. There is only the mention of homosexual acts, which were partly pagan ritual acts. That was, of course, forbidden. I think it is time for a fundamental revision of the doctrine.

While Hollerich’s remarks caused a stir, they are hardly unusual. Fr. James Martin, S.J., has taken a similar approach in directly questioning clear Church teaching about homosexuality. Two recent examples are instructive. On September 4th, **Martin tweeted** about an essay by Walter Bruggemann, in which the liberal Protestant biblical scholar glibly dismissed traditional teachings about homosexuality and made light of the authority of Scripture. Then, eight days later, **Martin tweeted** about an essay by Jewish scholar Amy-Jill Levine that essentially said biblical passages against homosexuality are outdated and must be understood as products of their time.

It’s easy enough, in response, to point to the Catechism, as I have already. But I’ve not seen anyone point out how **the Catechism, in its brief section, connects its clear statements to divine revelation:** “*Basing itself on Sacred Scripture*, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, *tradition has always declared* that ‘homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered’” (emphasis added).

This is not accidental, but is a deliberate highlighting of what both Vatican I and Vatican II declared about divine revelation and doctrine. First, keep in mind that while all dogma (a specific sort of authoritative teaching) is doctrine (teaching), not all doctrine is dogma. Secondly, dogma is, to quote from Fr. Gerald O’Collins’ *Concise Dictionary of Theology*, a “divinely revealed truth, proclaimed as such by the infallible teaching authority [magisterium] of the Church, and hence binding now and forever on all the faithful” (Paulist Press, 1991).

Here is a key passage from *Dei Filius* (1870), from the First Vatican Council:

[A]ll those things must be believed which are contained in the written word of God and in tradition, and those which are proposed by the Church, either in a solemn pronouncement or in her ordinary and universal teaching power, to be believed as divinely revealed.” (par 3; 1870)

And from *Dei Verbum* (1965), from the Second Vatican Council:

The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord ... She has always maintained them, and continues to do so, together with sacred tradition, as the supreme rule of faith, since, as inspired by God and committed once and for all to writing, they impart the word of God Himself without change, and make the voice of the Holy Spirit resound in the words of the prophets and Apostles. (par, 21)

The point here is not complex, nor should it be controversial. The Catechism, in directly pointing to Scripture and Tradition, is emphasizing the dogmatic nature of the Church’s teaching about homosexuality. It is rooted in what the Church teaches about anthropology, marriage, and sexuality (cf. CCC 2331ff). Hollerich and Martin are, in short, thumbing their noses at dogmatic teaching, and thus are openly spurning the deposit of faith entrusted to the Church by Jesus Christ (see CCC, 84).

Dogma and doctrine, of course, are disliked or even hated by most people, and far too many Catholic follow suit. This is hardly new; the history of the Church is filled with heresies and falsehoods. Vatican I, which took place over 150 years ago, was attentive to attacks on the doctrine of faith, saying at the conclusion of *Dei Filius* that such doctrine “has been entrusted as a divine deposit to the Spouse of Christ, to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted. Hence, also, that understanding of its sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained, which Holy Mother Church has once declared; *and there must never be recession from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding*” (emphasis added).

Alas, we live in an age of “deeper understanding,” conjoined with endless emotionalism and fixation on experience over revealed truth. So, for example, the **recent synodal synthesis document** from the USCCB informs us (to no one’s surprise) that many participants “voiced their opinion that some areas of Church doctrine and regulations are out of sync with modern times, especially regarding divorce,

annulment, birth control and conception, IVF, LGBTQ issues and the ordination of women as deacons and priests.”

Who could have seen that coming? It further shares: “Others believe that Church doctrine should be changed. ... Many suggested, that the catechism should be updated to reflect changes in doctrine and regulations that no longer apply in today’s world.” No surprise there.

One might think, reading comments by Hollerich—who just happens to be relator general of the Synod of Bishops—and many others, that the main job of cardinals and bishops is to be a sort of guidance counsellor, constantly affirming the emotions and desires of those venting (dialoguing?) from the ecclesial couch. However, Vatican II emphasized that the key work of bishops in union with the Pope—that is, the Magisterium—is to serve, guard, and profess the Word of God. The Magisterium, the Council explained, “is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it.” The Magisterium listens to the Word of God “devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith.” (CCC 85-86; DV 10)

The deposit of faith—alas, the basics cannot be assumed—cannot be changed, even by or for the archbishop of Luxembourg. It is set fast, precisely because, again, it was given by Jesus Christ to His Church. So, “when either the Roman Pontiff or the Body of Bishops together with him defines a judgment [regarding doctrine], they pronounce it in accordance with Revelation itself...” (*Lumen gentium*, 25).

Those of a certain age or a certain interest, recognize that Hollerich, Martin, and Co. are not only trying to bypass divine revelation, the deposit of faith, and the Magisterium, they are stuck in the progressive mud of the late 1960s and early 1970s. And their pet projects were called on the papal carpet back decades ago, as when, in 1988, St. Pope John Paul II **reflected in a letter to then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger on how some continually appeal “to the Council” while pursuing a form of “progress” that “breaks with the past, without taking into account the function of Tradition, which is fundamental to the Church’s mission in order that she may continue in the Truth which was transmitted to her by Christ the Lord and by the Apostles and which is diligently safeguarded by the magisterium.”**

Hollerich’s push for the “blessing” of “same-sex unions” is certainly one break with the past, Tradition, and the Magisterium. “Pope Francis often recalls the need for theology to be able to originate and develop from

human experience,” he says, “and not remain the fruit of academic elaboration alone.” **The rhetoric cleverness bypasses the essential nature of theology, which is prayerful contemplation of divine and natural truths. “Because there is no theology without faith,” wrote Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “there can be no theology without conversion.”** Not faith in sociology and scientism, or in fads and passions, but in God’s Word. Dogma is **not only the drama**, it is a divine gift meant for our salvation, verbal icons that reveal the Word Incarnate.

The Pontifical Academy for Life, however, apparently prefers dialogue with pro-abortionists over dialogue with truth. The Academy **tweeted** a month ago that “Morality should not be dogmatized...” How clueless and absurdly negative can one be about dogma? Where are the adults? The Catechism has a completely different perspective:

There is an organic connection between our spiritual life and the dogmas. Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illuminate it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright, our intellect and heart will be open to welcome the light shed by the dogmas of faith. (CCC 89)

“Religion cannot but be dogmatic,” wrote a noted theologian seventy years ago, “it ever has been. All religions have doctrines; all have professed to carry with them benefits which could be enjoyed only on condition of believing the word of a supernatural informant, that is, of embracing some doctrines or other.”

That same theologian further wrote: **“As far as Jesus Christ is concerned, it is plain that He had nothing whatever to do with modern subjectivism. He was not concerned with ‘edification’ but with truth ...His purpose was not to arouse feeling or to awaken religious inwardness, but to proclaim the Gospel of the Lord...”**

That theologian was Romano Guardini (1885-1968), and the book is titled *The Faith and Modern Man*. Guardini is widely touted as one of Pope Francis’s essential intellectual mentors. My guess is that Guardini would be disappointed and dumbfounded by the shallow and arrogant blathering coming from Luxembourg, Manhattan, and even the Vatican. But Guardini, I suspect, would also be unshaken. Dogma, he **wrote elsewhere**, “surmounts the march of time because it is rooted in eternity, and we can surmise that the character and conduct of coming Christian life will reveal itself especially through its old dogmatic roots. ... **The absolute experiencing of dogma will, I believe, make men feel more sharply the direction of life and the meaning of existence itself.”**

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