

Fr. Perozich comments —

Catholics who either practice or promote homosexuality have gained ascendancy in the church. This seems to be a coordinated effort for them in order that they feel good about themselves and find companions of their fate to dispel moral aloneness.

Honoré Balzac from *The Inventor's Suffering*:

*But learn one thing, impress it upon your mind which is still so malleable: man has a horror for aloneness. And of all kinds of aloneness, moral aloneness is the most terrible. The first hermits lived with God, they inhabited the world which is most populated, the world of spirits. **The first thought of man, be he a leper or a prisoner, a sinner or an invalid is: to have a companion of his fate. In order to satisfy this drive which is life itself, he applies all his strength, all his power, the energy of his whole life. Would Satan have found companions without this overpowering craving?** On this theme one could write a whole epic, which would be the prologue to Paradise Lost because Paradise Lost is nothing but the apology of rebellion.*

Thus today we find what appears to be a coordinated approach to defy God, to eliminate the virtue of chastity, to redefine conscience without God in order to justify sin, all so that men and women with same sex attraction might feel good about strong urges against the divine revelation of God on how man is to live in order to attain to eternal life.

Among the major players in the effort is **priest James Martin** who is part of the Vatican communications board. After he meets with the pope he uses the encounter as approval for his mission, Martin's job is to desensitize the faithful by defying scripture and tradition, and offering his own opinions over revelation which he does constantly and everywhere with impunity.

**Pope Francis** himself, while maintaining homosexual acts are sinful, has the job of confronting the political realm to say that laws condemning homosexuality should be abolished. Certainly harsh

penalties of some parts of the world need to be removed, but once something becomes law, most people accept it as accepted or required behavior.

In 1986 comedian Bob Hope was to have said, *“In California they just made homosexuality legal. I’m getting out before they make it mandatory.”*

This tongue in cheek statement shows how human moral development stops for many people once something is enshrined into civil law.

Now **Robert McElroy, bishop of San Diego and member of the college of cardinals**, shows his role in the coordinated effort to promote homosexuality by ignoring scripture and tradition and using his position in the church and the degrees granted to him to propose his own teachings with word play and peculiar logic.

This **combined effort** leads people away from God who has spoken through His Son, Jesus, throughout the holy Bible and through Sacred Tradition, teaching us how to live with Him here on earth and finally to be received into heaven.

The effort **demeans people with same sex attraction** and others who are tempted to lust as inferior morally, incapable of self control.

**It robs God** of His power to save through grace.

I am overwhelmed with non Catholics challenging me on these leaders and their new teachings. I cannot defend them.

While those confronting me do not have the Eucharist to sustain them, at least have pastors faithful to God to lead them by the Word to eternal life, and maybe a better chance at salvation for living a biblically moral life in following conscience with God rather than do some Eucharistic Christians who consult their consciences without God and His law.

I will follow Jesus in His teaching, confess my sins, repent to change my life, and repair all the damage that anything which I have thought, have spoken, or have done before others that might have scandalized them in their relationship with God.

How did we get here? The article below outlines one of the ways. The article below that reflects on the aggression of homosexuality from those highly placed in the church.

# **The Grave Consequences of the Church's Great "Emphasis Shift"**

January-February 2023



## **Deadly Indifference: How the Church Lost Her Mission, and How We Can Reclaim It**

By Eric Sammons

**Publisher:** Crisis Publications

**Pages:** 304

**Price:** \$18.95

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*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus. "Outside of the Church there is no salvation." The vast majority of ordinary Catholics today have never heard this and, if they were to, they would likely reject it and the idea behind it. Yet this phrase, first attributed to St. Cyprian of Carthage, a third-*

century Church Father, has been a governing principle of the Church from the very beginning. Many Church Fathers and theologians have taught the idea over the centuries, and it has been enshrined in Church councils (***“There is indeed one universal church of the faithful, outside of which nobody at all is saved,” Lateran IV, 1215***), papal teachings (“It is a perfectly well known Catholic dogma that no one can be saved outside the Catholic Church,” Pope Pius IX, *Quanto Conficiamur Moerore*, 1863), and Church statements (“Among those things which the Church has always preached and will never cease to preach is contained also in that infallible statement by which we are taught that there is no salvation outside the Church,” Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, *Suprema Haec Sacra*, 1949). How did we get from clarity and certainty on this central point to the muddledness that prevails today, and what are the consequences of this change?

The answer is found in the very title of Eric Sammons’s Deadly Indifference. Following in the footsteps of earlier works on the subject, from Ralph Martin’s *Will Many Be Saved?* (2012) to Bishop Athanasius Schneider’s Christus Vincet (2019), Sammons offers an excellent examination of the consequences of the Church’s recent teaching about salvation. In short: It has led to widespread religious indifference among the faithful, the notion that all religions are equally capable of leading people to Heaven.

**While many bishops and priests talk about how “vibrant” and “dynamic” their dioceses and**

**parishes are, no one who is reading this can seriously believe them.** Sammons, editor-in-chief of CrisisMagazine.com, opens his book with statistic after statistic, all of which point to decline rather than growth. When the second-largest religious group in America is “former Catholics,” it should be obvious that things are bad and getting worse. What happened to put us here? There are many reasons, but for Sammons, one of the major ones is the way the Church has chosen to downplay the doctrine of extra ecclesiam nulla salus from the era of the Second Vatican Council to the present. In this timeframe, **a sense of religious pluralism has arisen within the Church, leading Catholics to think there is no one true Church, that many or all religions are equally valid, and that there are numerous paths to attaining eternal salvation. The result is a widespread sense of religious indifference. If all religions are the same, why be Catholic? Indeed, why be anything at all?**

**The problem with the religious indifference spawned by religious toleration is that it is both non-scriptural and ahistorical.** Sammons reminds readers that a main theme of the Old Testament is the Jews’ failure to adhere to the First Commandment. When things go wrong for the Jews in the Bible, it is due to their failure to worship Yahweh alone. Similarly, a main theme of the New Testament is Jesus’ message that He is the only way to salvation. Religious pluralism is most emphatically not endorsed by either the Old or New Testament, nor was it endorsed by the Church through the ages.

**True, the Church has taught that there are other ways to salvation besides sacramental Baptism; there is also baptism of blood and baptism of desire.** The Church rightly condemned the mid-20th-century followers of Fr. Leonard Feeney, who insisted that anyone who was not formally baptized in the Church could not be saved. And from the days of St. Thomas Aquinas onward, the Church has insisted that those who suffer “invincible ignorance” of the faith can still be saved, as long as they obey the precepts of the natural law, follow God, and lead virtuous lives. However, Sammons notes that the Church has also always taught that “although it is possible for a non-Catholic to be saved, Catholics are discouraged from believing it is probable that non-Catholics will be saved. Living a virtuous and dutiful life and keeping the precepts of the natural law is incredibly difficult for a Catholic who has access to the sacraments; how much more so for the pagan who does not!”

So, what happened? Sammons uses the term “**Emphasis Shift**” to describe it. **The Church hasn’t actually changed her teaching, but she has changed its emphasis.** For Sammons, the chief culprit was Vatican II, or rather, the way in which the ideas of certain theologians like Karl Rahner, who advanced the notion of the “anonymous Christian” (i.e., a person who could obtain the grace of God and attain salvation outside formal Christianity), were introduced into the Council documents. The result was a concerted program of de-emphasizing the uniqueness and catholicity of the Church,

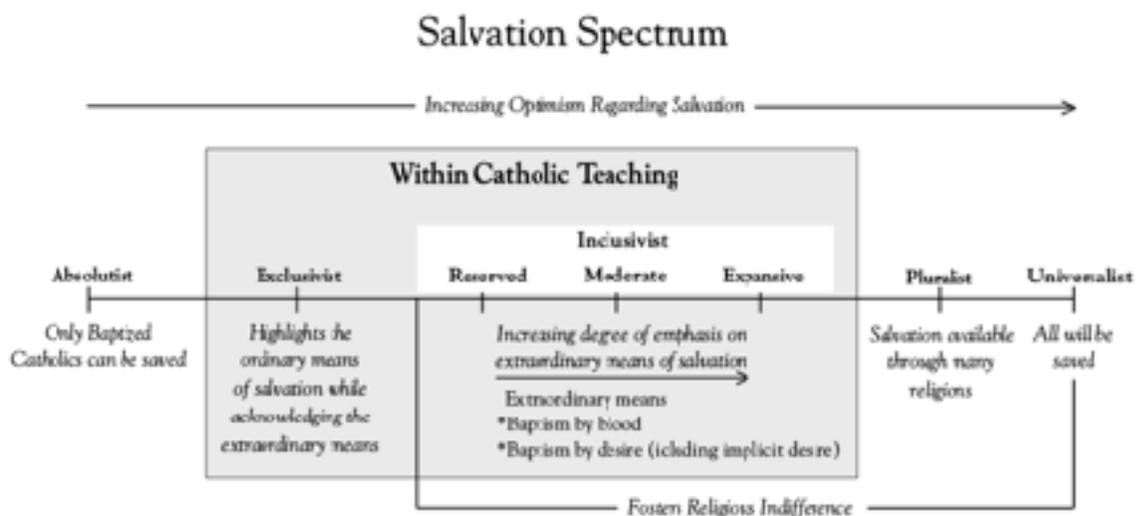
in hopes of making her more appealing to non-Catholics. **Whereas the Church once engaged in proclaiming Christ and His message, now she engages in “dialogue.”** From stressing her uniqueness, she now acts as if she were just one of many other churches. **And she has gone from warning against errors in other religions to promoting her commonalities with them.** Whereas the Church used to condemn ecumenism as error, after Vatican II she created formal offices devoted to it.

Unfortunately for all concerned, this great Emphasis Shift had other unintended consequences: the collapse of mission work, **the widespread exodus of members from the Church, apathy among those who remain, and the triumph of what Sammons calls “the Church of Beige,”** a bland, lowest-common-denominator Catholicism that strives to be attractive by not being distinctive or controversial. The motivating factor for the past few popes to lead us down this road was laudable enough: the experience of the destructive wars of the 20th century and a concomitant desire for world peace. But the consequences have been to stress peace over everything else, which means that the Church has become obsessively focused on a this-worldly goal (peace), rather than an otherworldly goal (salvation). The Church has thus lost sight of her primary mission and become too worldly — and too beige.

As a way of understanding all this, Sammons has created a handy chart he calls the “Salvation Spectrum,” which shows the range of beliefs on salvation. It goes from

**Absolutist (believes only baptized Catholics can be saved) to Exclusivist (admits to extraordinary means of salvation but only focuses on ordinary ones) to Inclusivist (increasingly focuses on extraordinary means of salvation) to Pluralist (believes salvation is possible through many religions) and, finally, to Universalist (believes all human beings are saved). Of these, only the Exclusivist and Inclusivist are actually Catholic; the other three are not.**

**Of the two that are Catholic, the Exclusivist view prevailed in the Church until Vatican II, with the Inclusivist position prevailing ever since.** Sammons notes that there are gradations within the Inclusivist view, which he attempts to clarify. For example, he categorizes Pope Benedict XVI as a **Reserved Inclusivist**; Pope St. John Paul II, with his strong praise of other religions and the Assisi World Day of Prayer, as a **Moderate Inclusivist**; and Pope Francis, with his effusive praise of other religions and signing of the Abu Dhabi declaration in 2019, as an **Expansive Inclusivist**.



The problem with Inclusivism is that it shades imperceptibly into Pluralism and even Universalism, no matter what its adherents intend. As a result, while our most recent popes are not actually Pluralists, a misunderstanding of their teachings has caused countless Catholics to deviate into **Pluralism. And Pluralism, as we have seen, leads to indifference.**

Even the much-touted New Evangelization of John Paul II is a product, not a repudiation, of the great Emphasis Shift, stressing as it does a non-confrontational approach, focusing on fallen-away Catholics rather than other Christians (let alone non-Christians), and **downplaying eternal consequences like salvation and damnation. The New Evangelization has, frankly, been mostly a failure.** Although appreciating his efforts, Sammons is not sparing in his critique of Bishop Robert Barron, perhaps the most visible American face of the New Evangelization. Sammons cites a couple videos in which Barron seems to go out of his way not to encourage a Protestant and a Jew to become Catholic! When the doyen of the New Evangelization can't provide reasons for people to convert to Catholicism, we have a real problem.

What is to be done? In Sammons's estimation, **we should admit that what we have been doing isn't working and go back to what does work. That means doing three things.**

**First, we need to recover the proper Catholic teaching on the nature of salvation, abandon Inclusivism, and return to the traditional position**

**of Exclusivism.** One of the most important ways of doing this is to focus not on possibilities but on realities. We shouldn't focus on what God might or might not do to save nonbelievers, but instead focus on the basics of what God has commanded us believers to do. Sammons's words on the matter are worth reproducing here in full:

So the important question is not, "Can God save non-Catholics?" The important question is, "What has God asked us to do to be saved?" He has commanded us to be baptized by water and be members of His Church in order to be saved. Therefore, we need to obey His command and leave the extraordinary means to His divine mercy and judgment. **Let's shift the emphasis back to the ordinary means and stop treating the extraordinary means as ordinary.**

In other words, **we need another Emphasis Shift back to what the Church traditionally believed.** Those who feel queasy about such a prospect, with visions of the Spanish Inquisition dancing in their heads, must remember that returning to Exclusivism does not mean being religiously intolerant. Religious toleration has long been a part of Catholic teaching. But all religions are not equal and should not be treated as such, and toleration does not equate to promotion. The ultimate goal is not toleration but evangelization and conversion.

**Second, we need to acknowledge that the New Evangelization has failed and we need to return to the Old Evangelization.** (Not coincidentally, Sammons, who has a long background and extensive experience in parish and diocesan evangelization, wrote an earlier book

on this very subject.) **We need to proclaim the Gospel and abandon the fruitless practice of incessant, endless dialogue.** What have decades of dialogue achieved, anyway? What is the goal of all this dialogue? There doesn't seem to be one.

When it comes to ecumenical efforts, the ultimate goal of the Catholic Church is a shared life in the sacraments. Sadly, the only non-Catholic group with whom we share that goal is Orthodoxy, so dialogue with the Orthodox is possible. But there is no way there can be a meaningful union of Catholicism and, say, Methodism. It is far better for the Church to abandon vain hopes of union with Methodism and instead focus on converting individual Methodists. This does not mean abandoning contact with other Christian groups or other religions. But it is instructive to consider that far more substantive results have come from Christians working together in something like the pro-life movement than from any official Church-sponsored ecumenical effort. Indeed, it was Sammons's experiences as a Protestant working in the pro-life movement that brought him into contact with committed, zealous Catholics and led to his conversion.

**Third, we need a renewal of parish life.** Parishes do a lot of different things these days — in Sammons's estimation, perhaps too much. If a parish-sponsored softball league leads to parents skipping Mass on Sundays to get their kids to the games, that's a problem. As with the Church as a whole, each parish needs to consider its primary mission: the salvation of souls. Parish resources are finite, and **every parish needs to**

**evaluate its activities and ask itself, “Does this contribute to the salvation of souls?” If the answer is “no,” the parish should quit doing it. Along with this approach goes the idea of not soft-pedaling the hard teachings of the Church, like the existence of Hell and the possibility of eternal damnation. Moreover, the very “vibe” of parishes needs to change, to get us away from the Church of Beige and back to being the Catholic Church.** Having priests celebrate Mass ad orientem would be a good start, as would abandoning the glut of wretched music that is not even Christian, let alone Catholic. Also, there ought to be more occasions for silence during worship.

Sammons’s proposals would no doubt be welcomed by most readers of this magazine. All the same, putting his proposals into practice would mean opposing aspects of the Second Vatican Council, as well as some of the teachings of John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Francis, and Bishop Barron. Good luck with that.

A number of perceptive people have concluded that the Church is in the middle of one of the epochal crises she faces every 500 years or so, a mess as bad as the one at the time of the Protestant Reformation. It is worth noting that the primary impetus for reform back then was not the hierarchy but the laity, with popes and bishops among the last to realize a serious problem was afoot. That situation does not seem all that different from the one we are in today.

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# **Cardinal McElroy's Attack on Church Teachings on Sexuality Is a Pastoral Disaster**

COMMENTARY: Jettisoning the distinction between 'orientation and activity' means the end of chastity as a virtue to be strived for — or implies that 'the LBGT community' is not capable of chastity and should therefore be preached a lesser gospel.



Cardinal Robert McElroy gestures as he attends a courtesy visit of relatives following a consistory for the creation of 20 new cardinals by Pope Francis Aug. 27 at the Vatican.  
(photo: Alberto Pizzoli / AFP vis Getty Images)

## [Father Raymond J. de Souza](#)

January 26, 2023

That a cardinal wishes to change the Church's teaching on the morality of same-sex sexual acts is not new. But there is a new one advocating just that, and one of the newest in the college at that.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, created a cardinal by Pope Francis in 2019 and appointed relator general of the synodal process on synodality for a synodal Church, has been advocating for such a change because the

“sociological-scientific foundation of this teaching is no longer correct.”

Now Cardinal Robert McElroy, bishop of San Diego and created a cardinal by Pope Francis just last August, has joined Cardinal Hollerich with a wide-ranging essay in *America* magazine this week. Cardinal McElroy argues that the synodal process on synodality for a synodal Church is an opportune time to revisit — and revise — some doctrines of the Church. Among those are the question of priestly ordination for women, but his main focus was on “radical inclusion of L.G.B.T. people.”

There has been much reaction and more will certainly follow. Here I would just draw attention to one aspect of Cardinal McElroy’s pastoral approach: the abolition of chastity.

Cardinal McElroy, in his discussion of Holy Communion, objects to traditional Catholic teaching that “all sexual actions outside of marriage are so gravely evil that they constitute objectively an action that can sever a believer’s relationship with God” — mortal sin, in usual parlance.

“This objection should be faced head on,” he writes, and so he does:

The distinction between orientation and activity cannot be the principal focus for such a pastoral embrace because it inevitably suggests dividing the L.G.B.T. community into those who refrain from sexual activity and those who do not. Rather, **the dignity of every person as a child of God struggling in this world, and the loving outreach of God, must be the heart, soul,**

**face and substance of the church's stance and pastoral action.**

**In traditional pastoral practice the two ought to go together, affirming the dignity of every person while also advising that sinful acts be avoided.**

Cardinal McElroy's argument, that "the distinction between orientation and activity" cannot be a "principal focus" undermines a great deal more than he allows. Indeed, as a confessor he would know how crucial the distinction is. A penitent who mentions an involuntary desire for adulterous relations but resists the temptation is not only not guilty of a sin, but is practicing virtue. A penitent who entertains such desires but does not act upon them is guilty of a sin, though likely not a grave one. And the penitent who engages in adultery is guilty of a mortal sin.

That distinction may not be the "principal focus" — the principal focus is always God's love and mercy — but the distinction is pastorally essential.

There are any number of sexual sins — pornography, masturbation and fornication being the most common — where the distinction between an orientation, a disposition, a desire, a habit and a particular act, is absolutely fundamental.

I don't know how pre-Cana classes are run in San Diego, but presumably cohabitation and fornication are addressed. The "distinction between orientation and activity" does not apply only to homosexuality.

Heterosexual engaged couples are certainly oriented toward conjugal union, but actual conjugal union is sinful before marriage. I would concur that this ought not be the “principal focus” of marriage preparation, but it can hardly be set aside for fear of “dividing” the pre-Cana classes into those who are striving for chastity and those who are not.

Jettisoning the distinction between “orientation and activity” in sexual matters means the end of chastity as a virtue to be strived for. Or, at the very least, implies a view that “the L.B.G.T. community” is not capable of chastity and should therefore be preached a lesser gospel.

A final note about Cardinal McElroy himself. His creation as a cardinal last August was noteworthy. Archbishop José Gómez of Los Angeles — head of the largest diocese in the United States, then president of the USCCB, an immigrant from Mexico himself who is a champion of immigrants — was passed over in favor of the bishop of San Diego.

For a pope whose favored phrase is the *santo pueblo fiel de Dios* — the holy, faithful people of God — passing over a Latino prelate for a McElroy was curious. On the very day that Cardinal McElroy’s essay was published, the Holy Father gave an interview in which he [denounced the German “synodal path” as “elitist.”](#)

It would seem that something similar could be said about Cardinal McElroy’s desire to use the synodal process on synodality for a synodal Church to abolish chastity. And there is no American prelate more elite than Cardinal McElroy — degrees from Harvard, Stanford, Berkeley and the Gregorian, the Jesuit university in Rome.

When McElroy was created a cardinal in San Diego, some wondered if it might be a repeat of what Pope Francis did when he created Joseph Tobin a cardinal while still archbishop of Indianapolis. Soon after Cardinal Tobin was transferred to Newark. Might the new cardinal in San Diego soon be on his way to Washington or back to Harvard, as archbishop of Boston?

It may be that Cardinal McElroy has his sights set beyond that. Was the essay on “radical inclusion” an application to be transferred to Germany instead?

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