

Fr. Perozich comments —

I do not criticize the office of the papacy or the person of Francis, but feel it necessary to expose the inconsistencies expressed these days. I need clarity not ambiguity, that is applying a meaning one day and another meaning another day. That is chaos to me.

Some writers have tried to make distinctions of when the pope speaks as a man and when he speaks as the pope from scripture and tradition.

For me confusion reigns.



Above: Vatican City – October 28, 2015. Pope Francis meets with an interfaith audience. © L’Osservatore Romano.

THE PERSECUTION OF ORTHODOXY

Fratelli Non Tutti: Trads Not Included

Jennifer S. Bryson, Ph.D

In 1960, Ida Friederike Görres asked, “**Is not the secret crisis of so many fellow believers, often hardly conscious, that they can no longer think of the past and the future together in the Church?**”^[1] Today this crisis is no longer secret. This was the onset of a decade in which attempts to rip apart the past from the future became the dominant current of modern culture, not least of all inside the Church. Our current Pope seems to be trying to force all the vessels in the Church into this current of modernism, as if it were the only way forward that will be tolerated.

“*Indietrismo*” was the latest put down, which feels like ridicule, from Pope Francis against those who love the traditions of the Church and view them as part of, not in contradiction to, the future. He identified “*indietrismo*,” meaning “backwardness,” as a “reaction

against the modern.” He labeled the love of the whole Church across time, in effect—how I, among others, experience the riches of Catholic tradition—as “a nostalgic disease.” This stands in striking contrast to what he teaches in his Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship* from 2020. The name *Fratelli tutti* means “all brothers”; but the way Pope Francis treats tradition-loving Catholics makes clear that “tutti” is “non tutti”; not all are included. Alongside his actions such as “*Traditionis custodes*” **to try to force Traditions into the current of modernism, the statements of Pope Francis regarding the relationship of past to future contain curious contradictions and what he criticizes strangely describes his own behavior.**

In this encyclical, Pope Francis laments and warns against the dangers of “The end of historical consciousness” (¶ 13–14). In this regard, he quotes his own Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, “*Christus vivit*,” from 2019. He cautions:

If someone tells young people to ignore their history, to reject the experiences of their elders, to look down on the past and to look forward to a future that he himself holds out, doesn't it then become easy to draw them along so that they only do what he tells them? He needs the young to be

shallow, uprooted and distrustful, so that they can trust only in his promises and act according to his plans. That is how various ideologies operate: they destroy (or deconstruct) all differences so that they can reign unopposed. To do so, however, they need young people who have no use for history, who spurn the spiritual and human riches inherited from past generations, and are ignorant of everything that came before them.

In this talk to youth, Pope Francis emphasized, “Don’t allow yourselves to be uprooted.”

In *Fratelli tutti*, in exhorting against “new forms of cultural colonization,” Pope Francis quotes a homily from Chilean Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez in 1974. Cardinal Henríquez cautions that “peoples that abandon their tradition and, either from a craze to mimic others or to foment violence, or from unpardonable negligence or apathy, allow others to rob their very soul, end up losing not only their spiritual identity but also their moral consistency and, in the end, their intellectual, economic and political independence.” (§ 14) **For those who are fighting against the “cultural colonization” of attempts to freeze the spirit of the 1960s in time, this has**

deep resonance. All the while, the Pope who highlights this sermon in an encyclical is trying to force his generation's "cultural colonization" on us.

Pope Francis explains how this is done: **"One effective way to weaken historical consciousness, critical thinking ...is to empty great words of their meaning or to manipulate them" so that they "serve as tools for domination, meaningless tags that can be used to justify any action."** (§ 14) Apply this lesson from *Fratelli tutti* to three "great words" we hear often from Pope Francis: "tolerance," "listening," and "margins." It is Pope Francis himself who is making these "great words" become "empty... of their meaning." He is intolerant of tradition-loving Catholics and he and his supporters never apply his exhortations about "listening" to those on the "margins" to us. **By emptying these words of meaning, he has made them useful to "serve as tools for domination, meaningless tags that can be used to justify any action."**

Pope Francis presents himself to the world as the "tolerant" Pope. He showcases his support for interfaith dialogue, his multi-faith "house of worship" in Abu Dhabi, women in roles of bureaucratic power in the Church, idols of other cultures in the Vatican, and so on. **This virtue-signaling serves to increase his status and power and to make himself look good among the ruling elites and the dominant**

media. This gives him cover to practice intolerance because it distracts from his efforts to crush Catholic tradition.

Pope Francis places so much emphasis on “listening” and “margins” that Church leaders across the globe know that the way to show their support for Pope Francis is to take up these particular banners. For example, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops titled their guide to the current synodal process “[Three Ways to Listen on the Margins.](#)” Though American tradition-loving Catholics, **truly on the margins in the era of Pope Francis, know that we are not included in the “margins” deemed worthy of being “listened” to.**

Pope Francis is known for ridiculing tradition-friendly Catholics, for example referring to Catholics with many children, as one finds among traditionalists, as breeding “like rabbits.” I find the contrast between the mocking tone and language of Pope Francis and a passage in his own *Fratelli tutti* particularly astonishing. Pope Francis warns:

Employing a strategy of ridicule, suspicion and relentless criticism, in a variety of ways **one denies the right of others to exist or to have an opinion. Their share of the truth and their values are rejected and, as a result,**

the life of society is impoverished and subjected to the hubris of the powerful. (§ 15)

Pope Francis asks, **“where victory consists in eliminating one’s opponents, how is it possible to raise our sights to recognize our neighbors?”** (§ 16) So, where victory consists in eliminating those who value the traditions of the Church, how is it possible, one wonders, for the Pope “to raise” his “sights to recognize” his “neighbors”? Trads, are, after all, his neighbors. We are not nobodies.

Let us have a look at the opening sentence of the similarly titled “Document on Human Fraternity” from the trip of Pope Francis to the UAE in 2019: “Faith leads a believer to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved.” (Faith in *what* is unclear. But for the moment, let us set that question aside.) Thus the question arises: if that is what *faith* leads a *believer* to do, what is it that leads someone who is trying to crush Tradition in his own Church to undermine and marginalize Trads? After all, in *Fratelli tutti*, Pope Francis asserts, **“It is wrong when the only voices to be heard in public debate are those of the powerful and ‘experts.’ Room needs to be made for reflections born of religious traditions that are the repository of centuries of experience and wisdom.”** (§ 275)

While *Fratelli tutti* is not a document on the liturgy, in it, Pope Francis nevertheless describes his own approach to Catholic liturgy with remarkable

precision. Writing about what “is making headway in today’s culture,” he laments, “there is a growing loss of the sense of history, which leads to even further breakup. **A kind of ‘deconstructionism’, whereby human freedom claims to create everything starting from zero.**”

The Church has an utterly vast treasure chest of the past, expressed most prominently in the Traditional Roman Rite. Because of the roots of the Church in her own traditions, we do not need to “create everything starting from zero.” Yet, an approach of putting a padlock on the doors of churches where the faithful want to worship God supported by the treasures in this chest, and trying to seal shut the treasure chest itself would leave us only **stranded, alone, trapped at point zero, unable to “think of the past and the future together in the Church.”**

[1] Ida Friederike Görres, “Laie und Kirche,” *Der Christliche Sonntag*, June 19, 1960, 197. An English translation of this essay by Jennifer S. Bryson is forthcoming in a collection of essays on the Church by Görres.

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