

The Pope Cannot Overrule God

If you have followed my writing and speaking over the decades, you will know that Catholicism has not been a focus of my ministry, either praising it or criticizing it. At the same time, I recognize the important role of the Catholic Church in standing for the sanctity of life and the meaning of marriage. That's what makes the recent pronouncement of Pope Francis, allowing priests to "bless" same-sex couples, especially distressing. What act of apostasy will be next?

My Catholic colleague John Zmirak wrote on Tuesday, "Today I got one of those emails nobody wants to receive. You know, the ones where a journalist informs you that the leader of your church has authoritatively endorsed grave, unrepented sin; mocked not just timeless and current church teaching but the natural law itself; and opened up faithful clergy to persecution by the State. And by the way, would you like to comment?" (Later in his article, Zmirak references "Pope Francis' poisonous reign of error.")

Specifically, quoting from "The Washington Times":

Pope Francis on Monday approved letting priests bless same-sex couples, sparking criticism from conservative Catholics and praise from the LGBTQ community.

Such blessings would not rise to the level of church-sanctioned same-sex marriages, the Vatican cautioned, but would offer gay Catholics the opportunity to seek God's mercy without being subjected to "an exhaustive moral analysis."

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith issued the declaration, "Fiducia supplicans," with the pope's approval but not his signature less than three months after a papal letter said such blessings were possible so long as they "do not transmit a wrong conception of marriage."

This is not just a step in the wrong direction. It is theological double-talk, spiritual drivel and a mockery of the Word of God. Surely, faithful Catholics around the world will reject this apostate message. It has no support in Scripture, in divine morality or in historic church tradition, whether Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant.

And so, rather than try to parse the theological nuances of the pope's statement, which in the end helps no one and harms many, let me be straightforward.

No priest or pope or pastor or spiritual leader can bless something that God Himself does not bless. Their words are empty and void of divine power or authority. They are human utterances and nothing more.

As much as a gay couple may be in love, as much as they may revere the traditions of their church (at least, some of the traditions), and as much as they may be models of kindness and loyalty, the fact is that male plus male or female plus female represents a fundamental violation of the meaning of marriage, not to mention a fundamental violation of the nature and purpose of humanity.

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How then, can a priest bless a couple whose very relationship goes against the order and plan of God? And, speaking in particular of two gay men, how can a priest, representing the Lord, bless them when the Lord Himself deems their sexual relationship to be something detestable in His sight (Lev. 18:22) and when Paul says that those who practice such things will be excluded from the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

You might say, "You fundamentalists are always attacking homosexuality. What about adultery? What about other kinds of sexual immorality? What about all you Bible-thumping

Christians who are addicted to porn?"

But that's the whole point.

If a Christian leader said, "We are now blessing couples living in adultery," there would be outrage.

If that leader said, "We are now offering special blessings for all the couples living together out of wedlock," there would be pushback.

If a church had a weekly porn night where after worship and prayer, the congregants would watch porn, it would set the internet ablaze.

But that is not happening, except perhaps in the case of divorces without biblical justification, followed by illegitimate marriages that are sometimes "blessed" by compromised clergy.

Otherwise, no major church leaders are sanctioning adultery or fornication or pornography. But some *are* sanctioning same-sex unions (or, in more compromised settings, same-sex "marriages"). That is why we respond as we do.

It's the same thing with LGBTQ activism in general.

That activism is affecting children in our nursery schools and young adults on our college campuses. It is everywhere in our society, from social media to the world of sports, and from TV and Hollywood to the business world.

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We cannot avoid confronting LGBTQ activism and ideology wherever we turn, so we either push back with our own values or we cave in and capitulate.

It's the same with the pope's ridiculous pronouncement. There must be a reply.

The fact that, “Such blessings would not rise to the level of church-sanctioned same-sex marriages” is meaningless.

The “blessings” would sanction something God does not sanction and give false assurances to the couples involved. And is there a gay Catholic on the planet who would not see this as another step in the direction of the ultimate goal, namely, the full acceptance of gay relationships by the Catholic Church?

As for the notion that these blessings were possible as long as they “do not transmit a wrong conception of marriage,” my response is short and sweet: Are you kidding me?

Really now, is the pope telling us a gay couple can live together, can be emotionally and physically intimate, and can commit to lifelong faithfulness *without* transmitting a wrong conception of marriage? What is the big difference between the two—other than the obvious fact that two men or two women cannot marry in God’s sight?

In August, I addressed the Church of England’s decision to allow Anglican clergy to “bless” same-sex couples, yet another apostate step made by this rapidly declining faith group.

What will now happen with the Catholic Church?

That is for Catholics to answer, but without question, this could lead to a major rift of sorts, as the strong conservative elements of the church will reject this pronouncement outright, whatever the cost. The effects could be seismic. (As I noted in that August article, it is “progressive” Christianity that is dying; the real gospel is thriving.)

As for the gay Catholic couples who see this as a beacon of hope and a sign of the humanity and compassion of the church, I don’t pretend to see the world through their eyes, and I don’t claim to understand the pain and the struggle they have

endured.

I will just say this, with brokenness, not with triumphalism: I don't doubt your love for each other. I don't doubt that part of you really wants to honor the Lord. But I can only tell you the truth. God has a better way, and He never intended you to unite with someone of the same sex.

If you will lay your life before Him, surrendering fully to Jesus as Lord, He will forgive all your sins and give you a fresh new start. Cry out to Him today!

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