

Denzinger Timeline of the Controversy over Communion for the Divorced and Civilly 'Remarried' in Adultery in Church History and the Pontificate of Pope Francis

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The Creation of Man in the Book of Genesis

So God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it...

Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."... So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. ([Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18; 21-24](#))

c. 1440 BC – God gives Moses the 10 Commandments, including the sixth commandment:

And the Lord spoke all these words: ... Thou shalt not commit adultery ([Exodus 20:1; 14](#))

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Say further to the people of Israel: If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death." ([Leviticus 20:1; 10](#))

c. 1250 BC - Moses tolerates divorce in some cases:

Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; she then leaves his house and goes off to become another man's wife. Then suppose the second man dislikes her, writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house (or the second man who married her dies); her first husband, who sent her away, is not permitted to take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that would be abhorrent to the Lord, and you shall not bring guilt on the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession. ([Deuteronomy 24:1-4](#))

c. 939 BC - King David's Psalm 140:

Incline not my heart to evil words; to make excuses in sins. ([Psalm 140:4](#))

c. 430 BC - Prophet Malachi writes against divorce:

And this you do as well: You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at your hand. You ask, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was a witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did not one God make her? Both flesh and spirit are his. And what does the one God desire? Godly offspring. So look to yourselves, and do not let anyone be faithless to the wife of his youth. For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God

of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless. ([Malachi 2:13-16](#))

c. 31 AD - Jesus Christ speaks with the woman at the well:

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. ([John 4:16-19](#))

c. 32 AD - St. John the Baptist beheaded:

For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had been telling him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." Though Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." The king was grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he commanded it to be given; he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother. His disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus. ([Matthew 14:3-12](#))

c. 33 AD - Adulteress brought before Jesus:

The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again." ([John 8:3-11](#))

c. 32 AD - Jesus Christ answers the Pharisees regarding divorce:

Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." ([Mk 10:2-12](#))

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one'? So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to

give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" He said to them, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity,[c] and marries another, commits adultery; and he who marries a divorced woman, commits adultery." ([Matthew 19:3-9](#))

Every one who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery. ([Luke 16:18](#))

c. 56 AD - St. Paul's Letter to the Romans:

Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress. ([Romans 7:2-3](#))

c. 57 AD - St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians:

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons— not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? God will judge those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you." ([1 Corinthians 5:9-13](#))

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. ([1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#))

To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord—that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. ([1 Corinthians 7:10-11](#))

A wife is bound as long as her husband lives. But if the husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. ([1 Corinthians 7:39](#))

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#))

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. ([1 Corinthians 11:27-29](#))

c. 63 AD - St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews

For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ([Hebrews 10:26-27](#))

c. 150 AD - The First Apology of St. Justin Martyr:

Chapter 15. What Christ himself taught

Concerning chastity, He [Jesus] uttered such sentiments as these: "Whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart before God." And, "If your right eye offend you, cut it out; for it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into everlasting fire." And, "Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced from another husband, commits adultery." And, "There are some who have been made eunuchs of men, and some who were born eunuchs, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; but all cannot receive this saying." (Matthew 19:12) So that all who, by human law, are twice married, are in the eye of our Master sinners, and those who look upon a woman to lust after her. For not only he who in act commits adultery is rejected by Him, but also he who desires to commit adultery: since not only our works, but also our thoughts, are open before God.

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0126.htm>

c. 160 - The Pastor of Hermas:

...And I said to him, "Sir, if any one has a wife who trusts in the Lord, and if he detect her in adultery, does the man sin if he continue to live with her? "

And he said to me, "As long as he remains ignorant of her sin, the husband commits no transgression in living with her. But if the husband know that his wife has gone astray, and if the woman does not repent, but persists in her fornication, and yet the husband continues to live with her, he also is guilty of her crime, and a sharer in her adultery."

And I said to him, "What then, sir, is the husband to do, if his wife continue in her vicious practices?

And he said, "The husband should put her away, and remain by himself. But if he put his wife away and marry another, he also commits adultery."

And I said to him, "What if the woman put away should repent, and wish to return to her husband: shall she not be taken back by her husband? "

And he said to me, "Assuredly. If the husband do not take her back, he sins, and brings a great sin upon himself; for he ought to take back the sinner who has repented. But not frequently. For there is but one repentance to the servants of God. In case, therefore, that the divorced wife may repent, the husband ought not to marry another, when his wife has been put away. In this matter man and woman are to be treated exactly in the same way."

<http://www.tertullian.org/fathers2/ANF-02/anf02-14.htm>

c. 202 AD - St. Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*:

Now that the Scripture counsels marriage, and allows no release from the union, is expressly contained in the law, "You shall not put away your wife, except for the cause of fornication"; and it regards as fornication, the marriage of those separated while the other is alive. ... He that takes a woman that has been put away, it is said, commits adultery; and if one puts away his wife, he makes her an adulteress, that is, compels her to commit adultery. And not only is he who puts her away guilty of this, but he who takes her, by giving to the woman the opportunity of sinning; for did he not take her, she would return to her husband... She who has committed fornication lives in sin, and is dead to the commandments; but she who has repented, being as it were born again by the change in her life, has a regeneration of life; the old harlot being dead, and she who has been regenerated by repentance having come back again to life. (Book II, chapter 23)

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02102.htm>

c. 212 AD - Tertullian's *De Monagamia*:

They [the pagan Romans] enter into adulterous unions even when they do not put away their wives, we [Christians] are not allowed to marry even when we put our wives away...

A divorced woman cannot even marry legitimately; and if she commit any such act without the name of marriage, does it not fall under the category of adultery, in that adultery is crime in the way of marriage? Such is God's verdict, within straighter limits than men's, that universally, whether through marriage or promiscuously, the admission of a second man (to intercourse) is pronounced adultery by Him.

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0406.htm>

It is unreasonable, therefore, for you to argue that whereas God does not wish a divorced woman to marry a second time if her husband is living, He consents to it if her husband is dead, since if she is not bound to a husband who is dead, no more is she bound to one who is living. You ask: When either divorce or death severs the marriage bond, a wife is free from all obligations, since the bond, the reason for the obligation, is no longer present; to whom, then would she be under obligation? In the eyes of God there is no difference between a marriage contracted by her after divorce and one contracted after the death of her husband. In neither case does she sin against him, but against herself. Every sin that a man doth is without the body, but he that committeth adultery sinneth against his own body

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=7>

c. 248 - St. Cyprian's *Testimonia Adversus Judaeos*:

... a wife must not depart from her husband; or if she depart, she must remain unmarried....

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=8>

c. 305 - Council of Elvira:

Canon 8: Also women who, without cause, leave their husbands and marry again, are not to be received into communion even at the last.

Canon 9: Also a baptized woman who leaves a baptized husband on the ground of his adultery and marries again, is to be prohibited from marrying; if she marry, she is not to be received into communion until the husband whom she has left be departed out of this life, unless perchance extremity of sickness demand it be given her.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=36>

c. 314 AD - Council of Arles:

We decree that, in so far as it is possible, a man who has dismissed his wife be forbidden as something unlawful to marry another woman while his first wife is still alive. But whoever should do this shall be cut off from Catholic communion.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=37>

c. 380 AD - Ambrose's Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke:

...You put away your wife as though you had a right to do so, and were open to no guilt. You think that you are free to do this because human law does not forbid it, but the divine law forbids it. You obey human rulers, but stand in fear of God. Heed the law of God to whom those who make the laws themselves owe obedience: "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." But here not

only is the divine command broken, but God's handiwork is wrecked.... Suppose the wife whom you have put away does not marry. This would irk you as a man, since she would be remaining faithful to you an adulterer. Suppose she marries. It is you who would be guilty of the crime of her necessity; and what you consider to be a marriage, is really adultery. It makes no difference whether you commit that crime openly confessing it, or you do it as an adulterer disguised under the appearance of a husband.... he who puts away his wife, cuts his own flesh in two, he divides his own body.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=9>

c. 395 - St. Jerome's Letter to Amandus:

As long as her husband lives, though he be an adulterer, though he be guilty of sodomy, though he have committed all kinds of vices and because of these crimes he be abandoned by his wife, he is still considered her husband and she is forbidden to take another husband. Nor does the Apostle say this of his own authority, but he follows the words of Christ who said in the Gospel: He who dismisses his wife except for adultery, makes her commit adultery. And he who takes a woman dismissed, is an adulterer; whether she has put away her husband or been put away by him, he is an adulterer who takes her.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=12>

c. 395 - St. John Chrysostom's Homily 63 on the Gospel according to St. John:

Indeed, just as when a woman who is married to one man has intercourse with another she commits adultery in consequence, so if a man who is married to one woman takes another wife, he has committed adultery. Therefore, such a man will not be an heir to the kingdom, but will fall into hell. . . . If it is not permitted for a man who has divorced his own wife and separated from her to have relations with another woman—for this is adultery—how great a wrong does the man commit who brings in another woman while his wife is still living with him? . . . For Scripture says: . . . "If anyone puts away his wife, save on account of immorality, he causes her to commit adultery." . . . Do you not know that those who, after the death of their wife, marry another, are censured by many for this, even though the procedure does not merit punishment? Yet you take another wife while yours is still living. What lust does this not betoken? Learn what is said of such men as these. "Their worm dieth not," Scripture says, "and the fire is not quenched."

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=26>

c. 397 - St. John Chrysostom's Homily on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

I too raise my voice, I beseech, beg and implore that no one draw near to this sacred table with a sullied and corrupt conscience. Such an act, in fact, can never be called "communion," not even were we to touch the Lord's body a thousand times over, but "condemnation," "torment" and "increase of punishment".

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CANONLAW/burkcompol.htm>

c. 400 AD - Constitutions of the Holy Apostles:

Canon 48. If any layman put away his wife and marry another, or one who has been divorced by another man, let him be excommunicated.

<http://www.voskrese.info/spl/aposcanon.html>

404 AD - Pope Innocent I's Letter to St. Vitricius, Bishop of Rouen:

For if this rule is universally observed, that whosoever during the lifetime of her husband shall have married another is accounted an adulteress, and permission to do penance is not accorded to her, unless one or other of them (the husbands) be dead : how much more ought it to be observed of her, who had in former time united herself to an Immortal Spouse, and has since passed over to human nuptials."

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=28>

405 AD - Pope Innocent I's Letter to Exsuperius, Bishop of Toulouse:

You wish to know why men who are communicants do not remain with their adulterous wives, while wives, on the other hand, seem to retain cohabitation with their adulterous husbands. On this matter the Christian religion condemns adultery equally in both sexes. It is difficult for wives to accuse their husbands of adultery and they have no recourse against hidden sins. Men, however, are accustomed to bring charges against their wives with greater frequency and because of this, communion is denied to the wives once their crime is exposed. But since the commission of the crime by the husbands is hidden, it would not be expedient to keep them away from communion on mere suspicion. I grant that if their crime were detected, they would certainly be punished. Though the causes be the same, while proof is lacking, the penalty for the crime cannot be carried out....

You have inquired also about those who, after obtaining a divorce, have married again. It is clearly evident that both parties are adulterers. Those men who, while the wife is still living, hasten to another union, though their marriage seem to have been dissolved, evidently cannot be other than adulterers. This is so true that those women to whom the men in question have united themselves have also committed adultery according to that which we read in the gospels: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another, commits adultery and likewise he that marries her when she is put away, commits adultery." All such persons, therefore, are to be kept out of the communion of the faithful.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=29>

407 AD - 11th Council of Carthage:

Ses. 9, Canon 8. (listed as canon 102 of Code of Canons of the African Church)

We decree that, according to evangelical and apostolical discipline, neither the husband dismissed by his wife nor the wife dismissed by her husband may marry another, but each must either remain single or be reconciled to the other. If they disobey this law, then they must do penance. Application must be made for the promulgation of an imperial law on this matter.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=38>

453 AD - Council of Angers:

Canon 6. They also who under the name of marriage abuse other men's wives while the husbands are still living are to be considered excluded from communion.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=38>

456 AD - First Synod of St. Patrick:

Canon 19. A Christian woman, having accepted a man in honorable marriage and afterwards departed from her first husband and joined herself in adultery, for having done so must be excommunicated.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=38>

458 AD - Pope St. Leo the Great's Letter to Nicetas, Bishop of Aquileia:

Since we know that it is written that "a woman is joined to her husband by God," and since we also acknowledge the command that "What God has joined together let no man put asunder," it is

necessary to hold that the bonds of legitimate marriage be re-integrated, and that, having removed the evils caused by the hostilities, to each be restored what he legitimately had and for each it be effectively carried out that he receive what is his own . . .

Therefore, if the men who have returned after a long captivity still retain the love for their wives and desire their wives to return to them in cohabitation, then that union which necessity caused must be terminated and judged inculpable, and restored must be the one which fidelity demands. But if some of the wives have been so captivated by the love of their second husbands that they prefer to remain with the latter rather than to go back to the legitimate union, then they are justly to be condemned, even to the point that they be excommunicated. They have chosen to contaminate with a crime a matter held excusable, thereby manifesting their predilection.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=31>

465 AD - Council of Vannes:

Canon 2. Those also who have abandoned their wives, except for the cause of fornication, as the Gospel says, without proof of adultery, and have married others, we decree are to be excommunicated, lest the sins overlooked through our indulgence entice others to the license of error.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=40>

533 AD - Second Council of Orleans:

Contracted marriages are not to be dissolved because of a subsequent infirmity, notwithstanding any will to the contrary. If anyone shall do this, let them know that they are deprived of communion.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=41>

602 AD - Pope St. Gregory the Great's Letter to Theoktist:

For if they say that marriage can be dissolved on the grounds of religion, let it be known that while the human law has conceded this, the divine law forbids it. For Truth says: "What God has joined together, let man not separate." It also said: "It is not lawful to dismiss a wife except for fornication." Who then is to contradict this heavenly legislator? We know that is written: "They will be two in one flesh." If, therefore, the husband and wife are one flesh, and on the grounds of religion a man dismisses his wife, or a wife dismisses her husband while he remains in the world or even goes over to matters immoral, of what value is that conversion in which part of one and the same flesh passes on to a life of chastity while the other part remains in a life of pollution.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=32>

658 - Council of Nantes:

Canon 12. If a man's wife shall have committed adultery and this has been discovered and made public by the man, let him dismiss his wife, if he wants to, because of the fornication. The wife, however, is to do public penance for seven years. But the husband cannot in any way marry another while his wife is alive. But he has permission to be reconciled with his adulterous wife if he so chooses. In this case, however, he must do penance with her and after penance has been completed, after seven years both may go to communion. The same procedure is to be followed by the wife if her husband committed adultery against her.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=46>

681 AD - 12th Council of Toledo:

It is the command of the Lord that a wife must not be dismissed by her husband except for the cause of fornication. Therefore whoever goes beyond the guilt of the crime mentioned above and

leaves his wife for any reason whatsoever . . . is to be deprived of ecclesiastical communion and excluded from the community of Christians until such time that he returns to the society of his abandoned wife.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=41>

747 AD - Pope Zachary's Letter to Pepin, the Mayor of the Palace, the Bishops, Abbots, and other notables of the Franks:

Canon 7. Concerning a layman ejecting his wife, taken from the canon of the holy apostles, chapter 48: If any layman ejecting his own wife, marry another woman or one dismissed by another husband, he is to be deprived of communion.

Canon 12. Concerning those who dismiss their wives or husbands that they remain single, taken from the above-mentioned African Council, in chapter 69: We decree that, according to the evangelical and apostolic discipline, neither the husband dismissed by his wife, nor the wife dismissed by her husband, may marry another; but they are to remain single or be reconciled to each other. If they disobey this law, they are to do penance.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=35>

791 - Council of Friuli:

Canon 10. Likewise it is decreed that, even though the bond of marriage be dissolved because of fornication, it is not permitted to the husband to take another wife as long as his adulterous wife still lives, despite the fact that she is an adulteress. But the adulteress, who must undergo the severest penalties and the pain of penance, cannot take another husband, whether her husband, whom she was not ashamed of betraying, be living or dead. . . . Hence it is clearly understood that as long as the adulterous wife lives, the husband cannot lawfully or without impunity contract a second marriage.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=44>

863 - Pope St. Nicholas I's Letter to the Bishops of the Synod At Metz, refusing to grant annulment or divorce to the King Lothaire II of Lorraine from his legitimate wife, Teutberga: Blessed Gregory, writing to Theoktist the Patrician, among other things said: 'For if they say that for the cause of religion marriages ought to be dissolved, let it be known that, although this is granted by human law the divine law forbids it.'

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=35>

864 - Pope St. Nicholas I's response to Lothaire's petition for annulment despite living in an invalid union:

Similarly Lotharius precludes himself altogether from communion, thus likewise to this extent, if Lotharius, likewise neglecting our warnings, should choose to remain in a union with Waldrada, or if he should presume, against our decree, to receive communion or to have favor towards anyone of resisting, of those damnable ones who spoke before me [on the matter of the annulment].

<https://books.google.com/books?id=FS-kaB37VisC&pg=PA84&lpg=PA84&dq=#v=onepage&q&f=false>

February 864 - Holy Roman Emperor Louis II invades Rome to force the pope to grant his brother Lothaire's annulment. Yet despite this threat on his life, Nicholas refused to recant his position or to give in to the demands of Louis and Lothair. Pope St. Nicholas I holds firm, and the invasion is called off.

<http://catholicexchange.com/the-legacy-of-pope-st-nicholas-the-great>

867 - Pope St. Nicholas I's Letter ordering Lothaire to return to his lawful wife:

Since we may ascertain better what is just, and likewise we may better understand what is equitable, that even were Teutberga dead, you may by no power be able to or be permitted to take Waldrada as your wife. Whether, therefore, Waldrada was your legitimate spouse at some point, the Church of God needs no proof. Moreover, we prohibit you [and Teutberga] to become mutually separated : since we read in the scripture: "The two will be one flesh." Therefore, O most glorious king, be content with your proper wife, and besides, lest you ever seek the company of that one, or another.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=FS-kaB37VisC&pg=PA84&lpg=PA84&dq=#v=onepage&q&f=false>

869 - Pope Adrian II and Lothaire meet at Monte Casino. Hadrian is reported to have given Lothaire communion with an admonition of compliance with the orders of Nicholas:

Receive this communion if thou art innocent of the adultery condemned by Nicholas. If, on the contrary, thy conscience accuse thee of guilt, or if thou art minded to fall back into sin, refrain; otherwise by this Sacrament thou shalt be judged and condemned.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=NrBmAAAAAAJ&pg=PA44&lpg=PA44&dq=#v=onepage&q&f=false>

877 - Pope John VIII's Letter to Ethelred, Archbishop of Canterbury:

To those men who, as you say, abandon their wives contrary to the precept of the Lord, we command that a husband shall not leave his wife or a wife leave her husband except for fornication. If either one has left for this reason, each shall remain single or be reconciled to each other, for the Lord says: "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

Therefore, as a husband cannot abandon his first wife with whom he was united in legitimate marriage, so also he is not permitted for any reason whatsoever to take another wife while his first wife is still living. If he should do this and does not amend his ways, then he is to be excluded from the community of the Church.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=36>

1061 - Council of Tours:

Canon 9. That any man who dismisses his wife without the judgment of the bishop and has married another or will marry another, let him realize that, until he has given himself over to penance effectively, he is to be excluded and withdrawn from the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus and from the precincts of the Church and to be regarded by all as a putrid member cut off from the sound body by the sword of the spirit.

<http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/viewFile/2633/2281#page=39>

1139 – Second Lateran Council:

22. ...there is one thing that conspicuously causes great disturbance to holy church, namely, false penance, we warn our brothers in the episcopate and priests not to allow the souls of the laity to be deceived or dragged off to hell by false penances. It is agreed that a penance is false when many sins are disregarded and a penance is performed for one only, or when it is done for one sin in such a way that the penitent does not renounce another. Thus it is written: Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point, has become guilty of all of it; this evidently pertains to eternal life.

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/LATERAN2.HTM>

June 28, 1529 - Bishop of Rochester, St. John Fisher's speech as summarized by Campeggio's secretary, promulgates book against Henry VIII contracting a second marriage:

Therefore, both in order not to procure the damnation of [my] soul, and in order not to be unfaithful to the king, or to fail in doing the duty that [I] owe to the truth, in a matter of such great importance, [I] present [myself] before [your] reverend lordships to declare, to affirm, and with forcible reasons to demonstrate to [you] that this marriage of the king and queen can be dissolved by no power, human or Divine, and for this opinion [I] would even lay down [my] life. The Baptist in olden times regarded it as impossible for [one] to die more gloriously than in the cause of marriage; and as it was not so holy at that time as it has now become by the shedding of Christ's Blood, [I] could encourage [myself] more ardently, more effectually, and with greater confidence to dare any great or extreme peril whatever.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=0Uyu0qi1vs8C&pg=PA2539&lpg=PA2539&dq=#v=onepage&q&f=false>

January 5, 1531 - Pope Clement VII's Bull refusing to grant annulment to King Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon, forbidding him to remarry:

...Pope Clement VII... doth pronounce, define, and declare—in the cause and cause, between his dear daughter Katherine queen of England, appealing to the Apostolic See, and his beloved son Henry the Eighth, king of England,' concerning the validity and invalidity of the matrimony heretofore contracted between them, and yet depending in the consistory court of the said Pope Clement—that the said matrimony always hath stood, and still doth stand, firm and canonical;' and that the issue proceeding, or which shall proceed, of the same, standeth, and shall stand, lawful and legitimate; and that the aforesaid Henry king of England is and shall be bound and obstruct to the matrimonial society and cohabitation with the said lady Katherine his lawful wife and queen, to bold end maintain her with such love and princely honour, as becometh a loving husband, and his kingly honour, to do.

<http://www.thereformation.info/Bull%201534.htm>

May 7, 1535 - St Thomas More's trial prior to his execution for refusing to recognize King Henry VIII's second 'marriage' and ecclesiastical supremacy:

St: Thomas More: "As to the first Crime objected against me, that I have been an Enemy out of stubbornness of Mind to the King's second Marriage; I confess, I always told his Majesty my Opinion of it, according to the Dictates of my Conscience, which I neither ever would, nor ought to have concealed: for which I am so far from thinking myself guilty of High-Treason, that on the contrary, being re-quired to give my Opinion by so great a Prince in an Affair of so much importance, upon which the Peace of the Kingdom depended; I should have basely flatter'd him, and my own Conscience, had not I spoke the Truth as I thought: Then indeed I might justly have been esteemed a most wicked Subject, and a perfidious Traitor to God. If I have offended the King herein; if it can be an Offence to tell one's Mind freely, when his Sovereign puts the Question to him; I suppose I have been sufficiently punish'd already for the Fault, by the great Afflictions I have en-dured, by the loss of my Estate, and my tedious Imprisonment, which has continued already near fifteen Months...

...For as much as, my Lords, this Indictment is grounded upon an Act of Parliament, directly repugnant to the Laws of God and his Holy Church, the Supreme Government of which, or of any part thereof, no Temporal Person may by any Law presume to take upon him, being what right belongs to the See of Rome, which by special Prerogative was granted by the Mouth of our Savior Christ himself to St. Peter, and the Bishops of Rome his Successors only, whilst he lived, and was personally present here on Earth: it is therefore, amongst Catholic Christians, insufficient in Law, to charge any Christian to obey it..."

This was the Judgment against St. Thomas More: "That he should be carried back to the Tower of London, by the Help of William Kingston, Sheriff, and from thence drawn on a Hurdle through the City of London to Tyburn, there to be hanged till he should be half dead; that then he should be cut down alive, his Privy Parts cut off, his Belly ripped, his Bowels burnt, his four Quarters sit up over four Gates of the City: and his Head upon London-Bridge." King Henry VIII later commuted the sentence to beheading.

Upon receiving his sentence Thomas More said: "I have by the grace of God been always a Catholic, never out of the communion of the Roman Pontiff, but I had heard it said at times that the authority of the Roman Pontiff was certainly lawful and to be respected, but still an authority derived from human law, and not standing on a Divine prescription. When when I observed that public affairs were so ordered that the sources of the power of the Roman Pontiff would necessarily be examined, I gave myself up to a most diligent examination of that question for the space of seven years, and found that the authority of the Roman Pontiff, which you rashly - I will not use stronger language - have set aside, is not only lawful, to be respected, and necessary, but also grounded on the Divine law and prescription. That is my opinion; that is the belief in which by the grace of God I shall die."

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/more/moretrialreport.html>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=TJMNAQAAIAAJ&pg=PA562&lpg=PA562&dq=#v=onepage&q&f=false>

June 17, 1535 - St. John Fisher's speech at his trial for refusing to recognize King Henry VIII's second 'marriage' and ecclesiastical supremacy:

My lords, I am here condemned before you of high treason for denial of the King's supremacy over the Church of England, but by what order of justice I leave to God, Who is the searcher both of the king his Majesty's conscience and yours; nevertheless, being found guilty, as it is termed, I am and must be contented with all that God shall send, to whose will I wholly refer and submit myself. And now to tell you plainly my mind, touching this matter of the king's supremacy, I think indeed, and always have thought, and do now lastly affirm, that His Grace cannot justly claim any such supremacy over the Church of God as he now taketh upon him; neither hath (it) been seen or heard of that any temporal prince before his days hath presumed to that dignity; wherefore, if the king will now adventure himself in proceeding in this strange and unwonted case, so no doubt but he shall deeply incur the grievous displeasure of the Almighty, to the great damage of his own soul, and of many others, and to the utter ruin of this realm committed to his charge, wherefore, I pray God his Grace may remember himself in good time, and harken to good counsel for the preservation of himself and his realm and the quietness of all Christendom.

<http://www.catholictradition.org/Saints/john-fisher20.htm>

June 22, 1535 - St. John Fisher beheaded:

As soon as he came in sight of the place where he was to be martyred, St. John Fisher threw his staff away, saying, "Now my feet must do their duty, for I have but a little way to go."

<https://books.google.com/books?id=X30LAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA494&lpg=PA494&dq=T#v=onepage&q=T&f=false>

Christian people, I am come hither to die for the faith of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, and I thank God hitherto my stomach hath served me very well thereunto, so that yet I have not feared death. Wherefore I do desire you all to help and assist me with your prayers, that at the very point and instant of death's stroke, I may in that very moment stand steadfast without fainting in any one point of the Catholic faith free from any fear; and I beseech Almighty God of His infinite goodness to

save the king and this Realm, and that it may please Him to hold His holy hand over it, and send the king good Counsel.

He then knelt, said the Te Deum, In te domine speravi [You God, in you O Lord have I hoped], and submitted to the axe.

<https://adoremus.org/2002/06/15/St-John-Fisher/>

July 6, 1535 - St. Thomas More beheaded:

Upon learning of the beheading of St. John Fisher, St. Thomas More began to pray, saying, "I confess to Thee, O Lord, that I am not worthy of so great a crown, for I am not just and holy as is Thy servant the bishop of Rochester, whom Thou hast chosen for Thyself out of the whole kingdom, a man after Thine own heart; nevertheless, O Lord, if it be Thy will, give me a share in Thy chalice."

<http://www.catholictradition.org/Saints/thomas-more.htm>

Prior to his beheading, Thomas told the crowd, "I die the King's good servant, and God's first."

<http://www.catholictradition.org/Saints/thomas-more.htm>

December 17, 1538 - Pope Paul III finalizes the excommunication of King Henry VIII

November 11, 1563 – Council of Trent:

Session 6, Chapter 11: But no one, however much justified, should consider himself exempt from the observance of the commandments; no one should use that rash statement, once forbidden by the Fathers under anathema, that the observance of the commandments of God is impossible for one that is justified. For God does not command impossibilities, but by commanding admonishes thee to do what thou canst and to pray for what thou canst not, and aids thee that thou mayest be able. His commandments are not heavy, and his yoke is sweet and burden light. For they who are the sons of God love Christ, but they who love Him, keep His commandments, as He Himself testifies; which, indeed, with the divine help they can do.

Session 6, Chapter 15: Against the subtle wits of some also, who by pleasing speeches and good words seduce the hearts of the innocent, it must be maintained that the grace of justification once received is lost not only by infidelity, whereby also faith itself is lost, but also by every other mortal sin, though in this case faith is not lost; thus defending the teaching of the divine law which excludes from the kingdom of God not only unbelievers, but also the faithful [who are] fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, liars with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, railers, extortioners,[92] and all others who commit deadly sins, from which with the help of divine grace they can refrain, and on account of which they are cut off from the grace of Christ.

Session 6, Canon 18. If anyone says that the commandments of God are, even for one that is justified and constituted in grace, impossible to observe, let him be anathema.

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/trent6.htm>

Session 13, Canon 11 If anyone says that faith alone is a sufficient preparation for receiving the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist, let him be anathema. And lest so great a sacrament be received unworthily and hence unto death and condemnation, this holy council ordains and declares that sacramental confession, when a confessor can be had, must necessarily be made beforehand by those whose conscience is burdened with mortal sin, however contrite they may consider themselves. Moreover, if anyone shall presume to teach, preach or obstinately assert, or in public disputation defend the contrary, he shall be *eo ipso* excommunicated.

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/trent13.htm>

Session 24, Canon 2. If any one says, that it is lawful for Christians to have several wives at the same time, and that this is not prohibited by any divine law; let him be anathema.

Session 24, Canon 5. If anyone says that the bond of matrimony can be dissolved on account of heresy,[11] or irksome cohabitation, or by reason of the voluntary absence of one of the parties, let him be anathema.

Session 24, Canon 7. If anyone says that the Church errs in that she taught and teaches that in accordance with evangelical and apostolic doctrine the bond of matrimony cannot be dissolved by reason of adultery on the part of one of the parties, and that both, or even the innocent party who gave no occasion for adultery, cannot contract another marriage during the lifetime of the other, and that he is guilty of adultery who, having put away the adulteress, shall marry another, and she also who, having put away the adulterer, shall marry another,[13] let him be anathema. ...

Session 24, Canon 12. If anyone says that matrimonial causes do not belong to ecclesiastical judges, let him be anathema."

Affirming the validity, but not their licity of clandestine marriages, the Council of Trent condemns in Session 24, Chapter 1 "the sins of those who continue in the state of damnation, when having left the first wife with whom they contracted secretly, they publicly marry another and live with her in continual adultery."

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/trent24.htm>

June 17, 1614 - Pope Paul V promulgates the *Rituale Romanum*:

All the faithful are to be admitted to Holy Communion, except those who are prohibited for a just reason. [namely] The publicly unworthy, which are the excommunicated, those under interdict, and the manifestly infamous, such as prostitutes, those cohabiting, usurers, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, blasphemers and other sinners of the public kind, are, however, to be prevented, unless their penitence and amendment has been established and they will have repaired the public scandal.

In the section, "On the Communion of the Sick," the *Rituale* instructs that "care is to be taken above all lest it be brought to the unworthy--whereby others could be scandalized--unless they first have confessed and have made the necessary reparation for scandal publicly given." The following groups are listed as unworthy for receiving communion: "public usurers; the cohabiting; the notoriously criminal, namely, the excommunicated or the denounced, unless beforehand they will have purified themselves by holy Confession, and will have repaired, as according to the law, the public offense."

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CANONLAW/burkcompol.htm>

March 4, 1679 - Pope Innocent XI's Holy Office Condemns erroneous propositions of the 'Laxists' on Moral Subjects:

50. Intercourse with a married woman, with the consent of her husband, is not adultery, and so it is enough to say in confession that one had committed fornication.

62. The proximate occasion for sinning is not to be shunned when some useful and honorable cause for not shunning it occurs.

63. It is permitted to seek directly the proximate occasion for sinning for a spiritual or temporal good of our own or of a neighbor.

<http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/dxe.htm#cgw>

August 24, 1690 – Pope Alexander VIII’s Holy Office Condemns Erroneous Propositions Concerning the Goodness of an Act and Philosophic Sin:

2. Philosophic or moral sin is a human act not in conformity with rational nature and right reason; but theological and mortal sin is a free transgression of the divine law. A philosophic sin, however grave, in a man who either is ignorant of God or does not think about God during the act, is a grave sin, but is not an offense against God, neither a mortal sin dissolving the friendship of God, nor one worthy of eternal punishment.

* Declared and condemned as scandalous, rash, an offense to pious ears, and erroneous.

<http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/dxf.htm#clb>

September 8, 1713 - Pope Clement XI’s Constitution *Unigenitus*, condemning the errors of Pasquier Quesnel, including:

71. For the preservation of himself man can dispense himself from that law which God established for his use.

95. Truths have descended to this, that they are, as it were, a foreign tongue to most Christians, and the manner of preaching them is, as it were, an unknown idiom, so remote is the manner of preaching from the simplicity of the apostles, and so much above the common grasp of the faithful; nor is there sufficient advertence to the fact that this defect is one of the greatest visible signs of the weakening of the Church and of the wrath of God on His sons.

<http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/dxg.htm#cnb>

October 16, 1756 – Pope Benedict XIV Encyclical *Ex omnibus*:

536. ...inasmuch as they are publicly and notoriously obstinate before the just mentioned Constitution, it is to be denied to them; assuredly from the general rule which forbids that a public and notorious sinner be admitted to participation of Eucharistic Communion, whether he publicly or privately requests it.

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CANONLAW/burkcompol.htm>

April 29, 1784 - the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith issues an instruction to the Apostolic Vicariate of Soochow:

....[Holy Communion may not be given to] drunks, usurers, the impure, the sacrilegious, the disturbers of the peace, the inconstant in faith, hypocrites, those who hand over their daughters for marriage to the unbaptized, the scandalous, and others who are contaminated by the more serious shameful acts... But, if pitiable and completely defiled men of this type have truly and soundly repented of their sins; if they will have carried out those remedies, given to them by confessors, for the conversion of life, the restitution of stolen goods and the repair of scandal, according to the above-given rules, and moreover will have shown the worthy fruits of penitence, by which they also hope for forgiveness from God, and nothing prohibits the request of the absolution of their crimes by the priest penitentiary, why would they not be admitted to Eucharistic Communion?

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CANONLAW/burkcompol.htm>

August 28, 1794 - Pope Pius VII’s Bull *Auctorem Fidei*, condemning the synod of Pistoia introducing ambiguous and dangerous pastoral novelties that contradict Church teaching:

For in fact, when a leader of God’s holy Church, under the name of Priest, turns the very people of Christ away from the path of truth toward the peril of an erroneous belief... then clearly the distress

is multiplied, and a greater anxiety is in order... [Scipione de' Ricci, bishop of Pistoia and Prato] embarked on confusing, destroying, and utterly overturning it by introducing troublesome novelties under the guise of a sham reform...

Truly, after the Synod of Pistoia emerged... the seeds of the vicious teachings they had scattered beforehand through numerous pamphlets; to revive errors not long since condemned; and to detract from the faith and authority of those apostolic decrees by which they stood condemned...

...[Prior popes, bishops, and general councils] knew the capacity of innovators in the art of deception. In order not to shock the ears of Catholics, the innovators sought to hide the subtleties of their tortuous maneuvers by the use of seemingly innocuous words such as would allow them to insinuate error into souls in the most gentle manner. Once the truth had been compromised, they could, by means of slight changes or additions in phraseology, distort the confession of the faith that is necessary for our salvation, and lead the faithful by subtle errors to their eternal damnation. This manner of dissimulating and lying is vicious, regardless of the circumstances under which it is used. For very good reasons it can never be tolerated in a synod of which the principal glory consists above all in teaching the truth with clarity and excluding all danger of error.

Moreover, if all this is sinful, it cannot be excused in the way that one sees it being done, under the erroneous pretext that the seemingly shocking affirmations in one place are further developed along orthodox lines in other places, and even in yet other places corrected; as if allowing for the possibility of either affirming or denying the statement, or of leaving it up to the personal inclinations of the individual — such has always been the fraudulent and daring method used by innovators to establish error. It allows for both the possibility of promoting error and of excusing it.

It is as if the innovators pretended that they always intended to present the alternative passages, especially to those of simple faith who eventually come to know only some part of the conclusions of such discussions, which are published in the common language for everyone's use. Or again, as if the same faithful had the ability on examining such documents to judge such matters for themselves without getting confused and avoiding all risk of error. It is a most reprehensible technique for the insinuation of doctrinal errors and one condemned long ago by our predecessor St. Celestine who found it used in the writings of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, and which he exposed in order to condemn it with the greatest possible severity. Once these texts were examined carefully, the impostor was exposed and confounded, for he expressed himself in a plethora of words, mixing true things with others that were obscure; mixing at times one with the other in such a way that he was also able to confess those things which were denied while at the same time possessing a basis for denying those very sentences which he confessed.

In order to expose such snares, something which becomes necessary with a certain frequency in every century, no other method is required than the following: Whenever it becomes necessary to expose statements that disguise some suspected error or danger under the veil of ambiguity, one must denounce the perverse meaning under which the error opposed to Catholic truth is camouflaged....

...It is not a matter of the danger of only one or another diocese: *Any novelty at all assails the Universal Church.* Now for a long time, from every side, the judgment of the supreme Apostolic See has not only been awaited but earnestly demanded by unremitting, repeated petitions. God forbid that the voice of Peter ever be silent in that See, where, living and presiding perpetually, he presents the truth of the faith to those in search of it. A lengthier forbearance in such matters is not safe, because it is almost just as much of a crime to close one's eyes in such cases, as it is to preach

such offenses to religion. Therefore, such a wound must be cut away, a wound by which not one member is hurt, but the entire body of the church is damaged. And with the aid of divine piety, We must take care that, with the dissensions removed, the Catholic faith be preserved inviolate, and that those whose faith has been proved may be fortified by our authority once those who defend perverse teachings have been recalled from error.

.... We have resolved to condemn and reprove several propositions, doctrines, and opinions of the acts and decrees of the aforementioned Synod, either those expressly taught or those conveyed through ambiguity, with their own appropriate notes and censures for each of them (as was said above), just as we condemn and reprove them in this our constitution, which will be valid in perpetuity. They are as follows:

1. The proposition, which asserts "that in these later times there has been spread a general obscuring of the more important truths pertaining to religion, which are the basis of faith and of the moral teachings of Jesus Christ,"—heretical.

4. The proposition affirming, "that it would be a misuse of the authority of the Church, when she transfers that authority beyond the limits of doctrine and of morals, and extends it to exterior matters, and demands by force that which depends on persuasion and love"; and then also, "that it pertains to it much less, to demand by force exterior obedience to its decrees"; in so far as by those undefined words, "extends to exterior matters," the proposition censures as an abuse of the authority of the Church the use of its power received from God, which the apostles themselves used in establishing and sanctioning exterior discipline—heretical.

5. In that part in which the proposition insinuates that the Church "does not have authority to demand obedience to its decrees otherwise than by means which depend on persuasion; in so far as it intends that the Church has not conferred on it by God the power, not only of directing by counsel and persuasion, but also of ordering by laws, and of constraining and forcing the inconstant and stubborn by exterior judgment and salutary punishments" leading toward a system condemned elsewhere as heretical.

6. The doctrine of the synod by which it professes that "it is convinced that a bishop has received from Christ all necessary rights for the good government of his diocese," just as if for the good government of each diocese higher ordinances dealing either with faith and morals, or with general discipline, are not necessary, the right of which belongs to the supreme Pontiffs and the General Councils for the universal Church,—schismatic, at least erroneous.

10. Likewise, the doctrine by which parish priests and other priests gathered in a synod are declared judges of faith together with the bishop, and at the same time it is intimated that they are qualified for judgment in matters of faith by their own right and have indeed received it by ordination,—false, rash, subversive of hierarchic order, detracting from the strength of dogmatic definitions or judgments of the Church, at least erroneous.

11. The opinion enunciating that by the long-standing practice of our ancestors, handed down even from apostolic times, preserved through the better ages of the Church, it has been accepted that "decrees, or definitions, or opinions even of the greater sees should not be accepted, until less they had been recognized and approved by the diocesan synod,"—false, rash, derogatory, in proportion to its generality, to the obedience due to the apostolic constitutions, and also to the opinions emanating from the legitimate, superior, hierarchic power, fostering schism and heresy.

19. Likewise, the doctrine which adds that under the Law man "became a prevaricator, since he was powerless to observe it, not indeed by the fault of the Law, which was most sacred, but by the guilt of man, who, under the Law, without grace, became more and more a prevaricator"; and it further adds, "that the Law, if it did not heal the heart of man, brought it about that he would recognize his evil, and, being convinced of his weakness, would desire the grace of a mediator"; in this part it generally intimates that man became a prevaricator through the nonobservance of the Law which he was powerless to observe, as if "He who is just could command something impossible, or He who is pious would be likely to condemn man for that which he could not avoid" (from St. Caesarius Serm. 73, in append., St. Augustine, Serm. 273, edit. Maurin; from St. August., De nat. et "rat., e. 43; De "rat. et lib. arb., e. 16, Enarr. in psalm. 56, n. 1), --false scandalous, impious, condemned in Baius (see n. 1504).

33. The proposition of the synod by which it shows itself eager to remove the cause through which, in part, there has been induced a forgetfulness of the principles relating to the order of the liturgy, "by recalling it (the liturgy) to a greater simplicity of rites, by expressing it in the vernacular language, by uttering it in a loud voice"; as if the present order of the liturgy, received and approved by the Church, had emanated in some part from the forgetfulness of the principles by which it should be regulated, --rash, offensive to pious ears, insulting to the Church, favorable to the charges of heretics against it.

36. The doctrine of the synod, in which, after it stated that "when there are unmistakable signs of the love of God dominating in the heart of a man, he can deservedly be considered worthy of being admitted to participation in the blood of Jesus Christ, which takes place in the sacraments," it further adds, "that false conversions, which take place through attrition (incomplete sorrow for sins), are not usually efficacious nor durable," consequently, "the shepherd of souls must insist on unmistakable signs of the dominating charity before he admits his penitents to the sacraments"; which signs, as it (the decree) then teaches (sec. 17), "a pastor can deduce from a firm cessation of sin and from fervor in good works"; and this "fervor of charity," moreover, it prescribes as the disposition which "should precede absolution"; so understood that not only imperfect contrition, which is sometimes called by the name of attrition, even that which is joined with the love with which a man begins to love God as the fountain of all justice [cf. n. 798], and not only contrition formed by charity, but also the fervor of a dominating charity, and that, indeed, proved by a long continued practice through fervor in good works, is generally and absolutely required in order that a man may be admitted to the sacraments, and penitents especially be admitted to the benefit of the absolution, --false, rash, disturbing to the peace of souls, contrary to the safe and approved practice of the Church, detracting from the efficacy of the sacrament and injurious to it.

38. Likewise, that teaching in which, after the synod professed that "it could not but admire that very venerable discipline of antiquity, which (as it says) did not admit to penance so easily, and perhaps never, that one who, after a first sin and a first reconciliation, had relapsed into guilt," it adds, that "through fear of perpetual exclusion from communion and from peace, even in the hour of death, a great restraint will be put on those who consider too little the evil of sin and fear it less," contrary to canon 13 of the first Council of Nicea, to the decretal of Innocent I to Exuperius Tolos, and then also to the decretal of Celestine I to the Bishops of Vienne, and of the Province of Narbon, redolent of the viciousness at which the Holy Pontiff is horrified in that decretal.
<http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/@magist/1791 Pius6/03 Auctorem Fidei condemn Synod Pistoia .htm>

October 8, 1803 - Pius VII, Brief, "Etsi fraternitatis", forbidding the German bishops and priests from in any way celebrating second marriages, even if required of them by civil law:

As long as the impediment [of a prior bond of marriage] endures, if a man is conjoined to a woman, it is adultery.

<http://www.nvjjournal.net/files/essays-front-page/recent-proposals-a-theological-assessment.pdf>

August 15, 1832 - Gregory XVI's Encyclical *Mirari Vos*:

12. Now the honorable marriage of Christians, which Paul calls "a great sacrament in Christ and the Church," demands our shared concern lest anything contrary to its sanctity and indissolubility is proposed.... However, troublesome efforts against this sacrament still continue to be made. The people therefore must be zealously taught that a marriage rightly entered upon cannot be dissolved; for those joined in matrimony God has ordained a perpetual companionship for life and a knot of necessity which cannot be loosed except by death. Recalling that matrimony is a sacrament and therefore subject to the Church, let them consider and observe the laws of the Church concerning it. Let them take care lest for any reason they permit that which is an obstruction to the teachings of the canons and the decrees of the councils. They should be aware that those marriages will have an unhappy end which are entered upon contrary to the discipline of the Church or without God's favor or because of concupiscence alone, with no thought of the sacrament and of the mysteries signified by it.

<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Greg16/g16mirar.htm#par12>

November 9, 1846 - Pope Bl. Pius IX's Encyclical *Qui Pluribus*:

7. ...other enemies of divine revelation, with reckless and sacrilegious effrontery, want to import the doctrine of human progress into the Catholic religion. They extol it [progress] with the highest praise, as if religion itself were not of God but the work of men, or a philosophical discovery which can be perfected by human means. ... Our holy religion was not invented by human reason, but was most mercifully revealed by God.... For who can possibly not know that all faith should be given to the words of God and that it is in the fullest agreement with reason itself to accept and strongly support doctrines which it has determined to have been revealed by God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived?

<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9quiplu.htm>

December 10, 1860 - The Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary's answers to pastoral questions:

20. Q. Whether the Most Blessed Eucharist may be given to those who are notoriously bound by censure, unless, as is fitting, they first will have been reconciled with the Church?

A. Negative

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/CANONLAW/burkcompol.htm>

December 8, 1864 - Pope Bl. Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors* censured certain propositions including:

5. Divine revelation is imperfect, and therefore subject to a continual and indefinite progress, corresponding with the advancement of human reason.

13. The method and principles by which the old scholastic doctors cultivated theology are no longer suitable to the demands of our times and to the progress of the sciences.

23. Roman pontiffs and ecumenical councils have wandered outside the limits of their powers, have usurped the rights of princes, and have even erred in defining matters of faith and morals.

67. By the law of nature, the marriage tie is not indissoluble, and in many cases divorce properly so called may be decreed by the civil authority.

74. Matrimonial causes and espousals belong by their nature to civil tribunals.

80. The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.

<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9syll.htm>

April 24, 1870 - First Vatican Council's Session 3, including the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Filius*:

13. For the doctrine of the faith which God has revealed is put forward not as some philosophical discovery capable of being perfected by human intelligence, but as a divine deposit committed to the spouse of Christ to be faithfully protected and infallibly promulgated.

14. Hence, too, that meaning of the sacred dogmas is ever to be maintained which has once been declared by Holy mother Church, and there must never be any abandonment of this sense under the pretext or in the name of a more profound understanding.

"May understanding, knowledge and wisdom increase as ages and centuries roll along, and greatly and vigorously flourish, in each and all, in the individual and the whole Church: but this only in its own proper kind, that is to say, in the same doctrine, the same sense, and the same understanding" [Vincent of Lerins, *Commonitorium*, 23, 3].

Canon 4.3 If anyone says that it is possible that at some time, given the advancement of knowledge, a sense may be assigned to the dogmas propounded by the Church which is different from that which the Church has understood and understands: let him be anathema.

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v1.htm#4>

July 18, 1870 - First Vatican Council's Session 4, including the Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*:

6. For the Holy Spirit was promised to the successors of Peter not so that they might, by his revelation, make known some new doctrine, but that, by his assistance, they might religiously guard and faithfully expound the revelation or deposit of faith transmitted by the apostles.

Indeed, their apostolic teaching was embraced by all the venerable fathers and revered and followed by all the holy orthodox doctors, for they knew very well that this See of St. Peter always remains unblemished by any error, in accordance with the divine promise of our Lord and Savior to the prince of his disciples: I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren

9. Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, to the glory of God our savior, for the exaltation of the Catholic religion and for the salvation of the Christian people, with the approval of the Sacred Council, we teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman Pontiff speaks EX CATHEDRA, that is, when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals. Therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not by the consent of the Church, irreformable.

So then, should anyone, which God forbid, have the temerity to reject this definition of ours: let him be anathema.

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v1.htm#6>

February 10, 1880 - Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Arcanum*:

29. Truly, it is hardly possible to describe how great are the evils that flow from divorce. Matrimonial contracts are by it made variable; mutual kindness is weakened; deplorable inducements to unfaithfulness are supplied; harm is done to the education and training of children; occasion is afforded for the breaking up of homes; the seeds of dissension are sown among families; the dignity of womanhood is lessened and brought low, and women run the risk of being deserted after having ministered to the pleasures of men. Since, then, nothing has such power to lay waste families and destroy the mainstay of kingdoms as the corruption of morals, it is easily seen that divorces are in the highest degree hostile to the prosperity of families and States, springing as they do from the depraved morals of the people, and, as experience shows us, opening out a way to every kind of evil-doing in public and in private life.

30. Further still, if the matter be duly pondered, we shall clearly see these evils to be the more especially dangerous, because, divorce once being tolerated, there will be no restraint powerful enough to keep it within the bounds marked out or presumed. Great indeed is the force of example, and even greater still the might of passion. With such incitements it must needs follow that the eagerness for divorce, daily spreading by devious ways, will seize upon the minds of many like a virulent contagious disease, or like a flood of water bursting through every barrier. These are truths that doubtlessly are all clear in themselves, but they will become clearer yet if we call to mind the teachings of experience. So soon as the road to divorce began to be made smooth by law, at once quarrels, jealousies, and judicial separations largely increased; and such shamelessness of life followed that men who had been in favor of these divorces repented of what they had done, and feared that, if they did not carefully seek a remedy by repealing the law, the State itself might come to ruin. The Romans of old are said to have shrunk with horror from the first example of divorce, but ere long all sense of decency was blunted in their soul; the meager restraint of passion died out, and the marriage vow was so often broken that what some writers have affirmed would seem to be true—namely, women used to reckon years not by the change of consuls, but of their husbands. In like manner, at the beginning, Protestants allowed legalized divorces in certain although but few cases, and yet from the affinity of circumstances of like kind, the number of divorces increased to such extent in Germany, America, and elsewhere that all wise thinkers deplored the boundless corruption of morals, and judged the recklessness of the laws to be simply intolerable.

34. As often, indeed, as the supreme pontiffs have resisted the most powerful among rulers, in their threatening demands that divorces carried out by them should be confirmed by the Church, so often must we account them to have been contending for the safety, not only of religion, but also of the human race. For this reason all generations of men will admire the proofs of unbending courage which are to be found in the decrees of Nicholas I against Lothair; of Urban II and Paschal II against Philip I of France; of Celestine III and Innocent III against Alphonsus of Leon and Philip II of France; of Clement VII and Paul III against Henry VIII; and, lastly, of Pius VII, that holy and courageous pontiff, against Napoleon I, when at the height of his prosperity and in the fullness of his power. This being so, all rulers and administrators of the State who are desirous of following the dictates of reason and wisdom, and anxious for the good of their people, ought to make up their minds to keep the holy laws of marriage intact, and to make use of the proffered aid of the Church for securing the safety of morals and the happiness of families, rather than suspect her of hostile intention and falsely and wickedly accuse her of violating the civil law.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_10021880_arcanum.html

July 27, 1892 - Pope Leo XIII's Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office's response to an inquiry regarding denying communion to Freemasons:

Q. Whether it is permitted to administer the sacraments of the dying to the faithful who certainly do not adhere to the Masonic sect and are not led by its principles, but, moved by other reasons, have ordered their bodies to be cremated after death, if they refuse to retract the order?

A. If, having been warned, they refuse, No. As to whether or not a warning should be given, the rules handed on by the proven authors are to be followed, taking into account, above all, the need to avoid scandal.

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CANONLAW/burkcompol.htm>

June 29, 1896 - Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Satis Cognitum*:

9. The Church... regarded as rebels and expelled from the ranks of her children all who held beliefs on any point of doctrine different from her own..."There can be nothing more dangerous than those heretics who admit nearly the whole cycle of doctrine, and yet by one word, as with a drop of poison, infect the real and simple faith taught by our Lord and handed down by Apostolic tradition" (Auctor Tract. de Fide Orthodoxa contra Arianos).

The practice of the Church has always been the same, as is shown by the unanimous teaching of the Fathers, who were wont to hold as outside Catholic communion, and alien to the Church, whoever would recede in the least degree from any point of doctrine proposed by her authoritative Magisterium. ..."No one who merely disbelieves in all (these heresies) can for that reason regard himself as a Catholic or call himself one. For there may be or may arise some other heresies, which are not set out in this work of ours, and, if any one holds to one single one of these he is not a Catholic" (S. Augustinus, De Haeresibus, n. 88).

... he who dissents even in one point from divinely revealed truth absolutely rejects all faith, since he thereby refuses to honour God as the supreme truth and the formal motive of faith. ... they, who take from Christian doctrine what they please, lean on their own judgments, not on faith; and not "bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x., 5), they more truly obey themselves than God. "You, who believe what you like, believe yourselves rather than the gospel" (S. Augustinus, lib. xvii., Contra Faustum Manichaeum, cap. 3). ...There must needs be also the fitting and devout worship of God, which is to be found chiefly in the divine Sacrifice and in the dispensation of the Sacraments, as well as salutary laws and discipline. All these must be found in the Church, since it continues the mission of the Saviour for ever.

10. But as this heavenly doctrine was never left to the arbitrary judgment of private individuals, but, in the beginning delivered by Jesus Christ, was afterwards committed by Him exclusively to the Magisterium already named, so the power of performing and administering the divine mysteries, together with the authority of ruling and governing, was not bestowed by God on all Christians indiscriminately, but on certain chosen persons.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_29061896_satis-cognitum.html

July 3, 1907 - Pope St. Pius X's Encyclical *Lamendabile Sane* condemning propositions of the modernist heretics, including:

21. Revelation, constituting the object of the Catholic faith, was not completed with the Apostles.

22. The dogmas the Church holds out as revealed are not truths which have fallen from heaven. They are an interpretation of religious facts which the human mind has acquired by laborious effort.

58. Truth is no more immutable than man himself, since it evolved with him, in him, and through him.

59. Christ did not teach a determined body of doctrine applicable to all times and all men, but rather inaugurated a religious movement adapted or to be adapted to different times and places.

63. The Church shows that she is incapable of effectively maintaining evangelical ethics since she obstinately clings to immutable doctrines which cannot be reconciled with modern progress.

65. Modern Catholicism can be reconciled with true science only if it is transformed into a non-dogmatic Christianity; that is to say, into a broad and liberal Protestantism.

<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10lamen.htm>

September 8, 1907 - Pope St. Pius X's Encyclical *Pascendi* against the Modernist heretics infiltrating the Church hierarchy:

2. ... the partisans of error are to be sought not only among the Church's open enemies; they lie hid, a thing to be deeply deplored and feared, in her very bosom and heart, and are the more mischievous, the less conspicuously they appear. ...[even] to the ranks of the priesthood itself, who, feigning a love for the Church...imbued with the poisonous doctrines taught by the enemies of the Church, and lost to all sense of modesty, vaunt themselves as reformers of the Church; and, forming more boldly into line of attack, assail all that is most sacred in the work of Christ...

4. Modernists (as they are commonly and rightly called) employ a very clever artifice, namely, to present their doctrines without order and systematic arrangement into one whole, scattered and disjointed one from another, so as to appear to be in doubt and uncertainty, while they are in reality firm and steadfast...

18. This becomes still clearer to anybody who studies the conduct of Modernists, which is in perfect harmony with their teachings. In the writings and addresses they seem not unfrequently to advocate now one doctrine now another so that one would be disposed to regard them as vague and doubtful. But there is a reason for this, and it is to be found in their ideas as to the mutual separation of science and faith. Hence in their books you find some things which might well be expressed by a Catholic, but in the next page you find other things which might have been dictated by a rationalist. When they write history they make no mention of the divinity of Christ, but when they are in the pulpit they profess it clearly; again, when they write history they pay no heed to the Fathers and the Councils, but when they catechise the people, they cite them respectfully. In the same way they draw their distinctions between theological and pastoral exegesis and scientific and historical exegesis. So, too, acting on the principle that science in no way depends upon faith, when they treat of philosophy, history, criticism, feeling no horror at treading in the footsteps of Luther, they are wont to display a certain contempt for Catholic doctrines, or the Holy Fathers, for the Ecumenical Councils, for the ecclesiastical magisterium; and should they be rebuked for this, they complain that they are being deprived of their liberty. Lastly, guided by the theory that faith must be subject to science, they continuously and openly criticise the Church because of her sheer obstinacy in refusing to submit and accommodate her dogmas to the opinions of philosophy; while

they, on their side, after having blotted out the old theology, endeavour to introduce a new theology which shall follow the vagaries of their philosophers.

25 ... This is their [the Modernists'] conception of the magisterium of the Church: No religious society, they say, can be a real unit unless the religious conscience of its members be one, and one also the formula which they adopt. But his double unity requires a kind of common mind whose office is to find and determine the formula that corresponds best with the common conscience, and it must have moreover an authority sufficient to enable it to impose on the community the formula which has been decided upon. From the combination and, as it were fusion of these two elements, the common mind which draws up the formula and the authority which imposes it, arises, according to the Modernists, the notion of the ecclesiastical magisterium. And as this magisterium springs, in its last analysis, from the individual consciences and possesses its mandate of public utility for their benefit, it follows that the ecclesiastical magisterium must be subordinate to them, and should therefore take democratic forms. To prevent individual consciences from revealing freely and openly the impulses they feel, to hinder criticism from impelling dogmas towards their necessary evolutions - this is not a legitimate use but an abuse of a power given for the public utility.... Their general directions for the Church may be put in this way: Since the end of the Church is entirely spiritual, the religious authority should strip itself of all that external pomp which adorns it in the eyes of the public. And here they forget that while religion is essentially for the soul, it is not exclusively for the soul, and that the honour paid to authority is reflected back on Jesus Christ who instituted it.

26. ...First of all they lay down the general principle that in a living religion everything is subject to change, and must change, and in this way they pass to what may be said to be, among the chief of their doctrines, that of Evolution. To the laws of evolution everything is subject - dogma, Church, worship, the Books we revere as sacred, even faith itself, and the penalty of disobedience is death. The enunciation of this principle will not astonish anybody who bears in mind what the Modernists have had to say about each of these subjects. Having laid down this law of evolution, the Modernists themselves teach us how it works out. And first with regard to faith. The primitive form of faith, they tell us, was rudimentary and common to all men alike, for it had its origin in human nature and human life. Vital evolution brought with it progress, not by the accretion of new and purely adventitious forms from without, but by an increasing penetration of the religious sentiment in the conscience. ...

27. ...studying more closely the ideas of the Modernists, evolution is described as resulting from the conflict of two forces, one of them tending towards progress, the other towards conservation. The conserving force in the Church is tradition, and tradition is represented by religious authority, and this both by right and in fact; for by right it is in the very nature of authority to protect tradition, and, in fact, for authority, raised as it is above the contingencies of life, feels hardly, or not at all, the spurs of progress. The progressive force, on the contrary, which responds to the inner needs lies in the individual consciences and ferments there - especially in such of them as are in most intimate contact with life. Note here, Venerable Brethren, the appearance already of that most pernicious doctrine which would make of the laity a factor of progress in the Church. Now it is by a species of compromise between the forces of conservation and of progress, that is to say between authority and individual consciences, that changes and advances take place. The individual consciences of some of them act on the collective conscience, which brings pressure to bear on the depositaries of authority, until the latter consent to a compromise, and, the pact being made, authority sees to its maintenance.

... And so they [the modernists] go their way, reprimands and condemnations notwithstanding, masking an incredible audacity under a mock semblance of humility. While they make a show of bowing their heads, their hands and minds are more intent than ever on carrying out their purposes. And this policy they follow willingly and wittingly, both because it is part of their system that authority is to be stimulated but not dethroned, and because it is necessary for them to remain within the ranks of the Church in order that they may gradually transform the collective conscience - thus unconsciously avowing that the common conscience is not with them, and that they have no right to claim to be its interpreters.

28. ...for the Modernists, both as authors and propagandists, there is to be nothing stable, nothing immutable in the Church.

38. ... [For modernists] reform of philosophy, especially in the seminaries: the scholastic philosophy is to be relegated to the history of philosophy among obsolete systems, and the young men are to be taught modern philosophy which alone is true and suited to the times in which we live. Reform of theology; rational theology is to have modern philosophy for its foundation, and positive theology is to be founded on the history of dogma....Dogmas and their evolution are to be harmonised with science and history. In the Catechism no dogmas are to be inserted except those that have been duly reformed and are within the capacity of the people. Regarding worship, the number of external devotions is to be reduced, or at least steps must be taken to prevent their further increase, though, indeed, some of the admirers of symbolism are disposed to be more indulgent on this head. Ecclesiastical government requires to be reformed in all its branches, but especially in its disciplinary and dogmatic parts. Its spirit with the public conscience, which is not wholly for democracy; a share in ecclesiastical government should therefore be given to the lower ranks of the clergy, and even to the laity, and authority should be decentralised. The Roman Congregations, and especially the index and the Holy Office, are to be reformed. The ecclesiastical authority must change its line of conduct in the social and political world; while keeping outside political and social organization, it must adapt itself to those which exist in order to penetrate them with its spirit. With regard to morals, they adopt the principle of the Americanists, that the active virtues are more important than the passive, both in the estimation in which they must be held and in the exercise of them. The clergy are asked to return to their ancient lowliness and poverty, and in their ideas and action to be guided by the principles of Modernism; and there are some who, echoing the teaching of their Protestant masters, would like the suppression of ecclesiastical celibacy. What is there left in the Church which is not to be reformed according to their principles?

39. And now, can anybody who takes a survey of the whole system [of modernism] be surprised that We should define it as the synthesis of all heresies?....

They [the modernists] recognise that the three chief difficulties for them are scholastic philosophy, the authority of the fathers and tradition, and the magisterium of the Church, and on these they wage unrelenting war. For scholastic philosophy and theology they have only ridicule and contempt. Whether it is ignorance or fear, or both, that inspires this conduct in them, certain it is that the passion for novelty is always united in them with hatred of scholasticism, and there is no surer sign that a man is on the way to Modernism than when he begins to show his dislike for this system...

49. Equal diligence and severity are to be used in examining and selecting candidates for Holy Orders. Far, far from the clergy be the love of novelty! God hates the proud and the obstinate. For the future the doctorate of theology and canon law must never be conferred on anybody who has not made the regular course of scholastic philosophy; if conferred it shall be held as null and void.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_19070908_pascendi-dominici-gregis.html

May 27, 1917 - Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law punishes divorce and remarriage with excommunication or interdict (prohibition from sacraments):

II. Interdict "Ferendae Sententiae"

Canon 2356. Bigamists, that is, those who, notwithstanding a conjugal bond, attempt to enter another marriage, even a civil one, as they say, are by that fact infamous; and if, spurning the admonition of the Ordinary, they stay in the illicit relationship, they are to be excommunicated according to the gravity of the deed or struck with personal interdict.

Canon 2357. ... §2 Whoever publicly commits the delict of adultery, or publicly lives in concubinage, or who has been legitimately convicted of another delict against the sixth precept of the Decalogue is excluded from legitimate ecclesiastical acts until he gives a sign of returning to his senses.

Canon 855 §1. The publicly unworthy, who are the excommunicated, the interdicted and the manifestly infamous, unless their penance and conversion have been established and they will have first made up for the public scandal, are to be excluded from the Eucharist.

§2. The minister is also to refuse occult sinners, if they request secretly and he will not have recognized them as converted; not, however, if they publicly request and he is not able to pass over them without scandal.

https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/inquiries/cornwall/en/hearings/exhibits/Frank_Morrisey/pdf/26_1917_Canon.pdf#page=11

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CANONLAW/burkcompol.htm>

December 31, 1930 - Pope Pius XI's Encyclical *Casti Connubii*:

54. But no reason, however grave, may be put forward by which anything intrinsically against nature may become conformable to nature and morally good. Since, therefore, the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power and purpose sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious.

85. The advocates of the neo-paganism of today have learned nothing from the sad state of affairs, but instead, day by day, more and more vehemently, they continue by legislation to attack the indissolubility of the marriage bond, proclaiming that the lawfulness of divorce must be recognized, and that the antiquated laws should give place to a new and more humane legislation. Many and varied are the grounds put forward for divorce, some arising from the wickedness and the guilt of the persons concerned, others arising from the circumstances of the case; the former they describe as subjective, the latter as objective; in a word, whatever might make married life hard or unpleasant. They strive to prove their contentions regarding these grounds for the divorce legislation they would bring about, by various arguments. Thus, in the first place, they maintain that it is for the good of either party that the one who is innocent should have the right to separate from the guilty, or that the guilty should be withdrawn from a union which is displeasing to him and against his will. In the second place, they argue, the good of the child demands this, for either it will be deprived of a proper education or the natural fruits of it, and will too easily be affected by the discords and shortcomings of the parents, and drawn from the path of virtue. And thirdly the common good of society requires that these marriages should be completely dissolved, which are now incapable of producing their natural results Each of these reasons is considered by them as

conclusive, so that all taken together offer a clear proof of the necessity of granting divorce in certain cases.

87. Opposed to all these reckless opinions, Venerable Brethren, stands the unalterable law of God, fully confirmed by Christ, a law that can never be deprived of its force by the decrees of men, the ideas of a people or the will of any legislator: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." ...

89. If therefore the Church has not erred and does not err in teaching this, and consequently it is certain that the bond of marriage cannot be loosed even on account of the sin of adultery, it is evident that all the other weaker excuses that can be, and are usually brought forward, are of no value whatsoever....

91. To conclude with the important words of Leo XIII, since the destruction of family life "and the loss of national wealth is brought about more by the corruption of morals than by anything else, it is easily seen that divorce, which is born of the perverted morals of a people, and leads, as experiment shows, to vicious habits in public and private life, is particularly opposed to the well-being of the family and of the State. The serious nature of these evils will be the more clearly recognized, when we remember that, once divorce has been allowed, there will be no sufficient means of keeping it in check within any definite bounds. Great is the force of example, greater still that of lust; and with such incitements it cannot but happen that divorce and its consequent setting loose of the passions should spread daily and attack the souls of many like a contagious disease or a river bursting its banks and flooding the land."

102. This conformity of wedlock and moral conduct with the divine laws respective of marriage, without which its effective restoration cannot be brought about, supposes, however, that all can discern readily, with real certainty, and without any accompanying error, what those laws are. But everyone can see to how many fallacies an avenue would be opened up and how many errors would become mixed with the truth, if it were left solely to the light of reason of each to find it out, or if it were to be discovered by the private interpretation of the truth which is revealed. And if this is applicable to many other truths of the moral order, we must all the more pay attention to those things, which appertain to marriage where the inordinate desire for pleasure can attack frail human nature and easily deceive it and lead it astray; this is all the more true of the observance of the divine law, which demands sometimes hard and repeated sacrifices, for which, as experience points out, a weak man can find so many excuses for avoiding the fulfillment of the divine law.

104. Wherefore, let the faithful also be on their guard against the overrated independence of private judgment and that false autonomy of human reason. For it is quite foreign to everyone bearing the name of a Christian to trust his own mental powers with such pride as to agree only with those things which he can examine from their inner nature, and to imagine that the Church, sent by God to teach and guide all nations, is not conversant with present affairs and circumstances; or even that they must obey only in those matters which she has decreed by solemn definition as though her other decisions might be presumed to be false or putting forward insufficient motive for truth and honesty. Quite to the contrary, a characteristic of all true followers of Christ, lettered or unlettered, is to suffer themselves to be guided and led in all things that touch upon faith or morals by the Holy Church of God through its Supreme Pastor the Roman Pontiff, who is himself guided by Jesus Christ Our Lord.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19301231_casti-connubii.html

1933 - Cardinal Pacelli, the future Pope Ven. Pius XII warns of subversive dangers from within the Church:

Suppose, dear friend, that Communism is the most visible among the organs of subversion against the Church and the tradition of Divine Revelation. Thus, we will witness the invasion of everything that is spiritual: philosophy, science, law, teaching, the arts, the media, literature, theater, and religion.

I am concerned about the confidences of the Virgin to the little Lucia of Fatima. The persistence of the Good Lady in face of the danger that threatens the Church is a divine warning against the suicide that the modification of the Faith, liturgy, theology, and soul of the Church would represent.

I hear around me partisans of novelties who want to demolish the Holy Sanctuary, destroy the universal flame of the Church, reject her adornments, and make her remorseful for her historical past. Well, my dear friend, I am convinced that the Church of Peter must affirm her past, or else she will dig her own tomb.

I will fight this battle with the greatest energy both inside and outside the Church, even if the forces of evil may one day take advantage of my person, actions, or writings, as they try today to deform the History of the Church.

http://www.traditioninaction.org/ProgressivistDoc/A_061_PiusXII_Fatima.htm

May 19, 1935 - Pope Pius XI's homily at the canonization of Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher:

You are well aware, Venerable Brethren and Beloved Sons, of the reason why John Fisher was called in judgment and obliged to undergo the supreme test of martyrdom. It was because of his courageous determination to defend the sacred bond of Christian marriage—a bond indissoluble for all, even for those who wear the royal diadem—and to vindicate the Primacy with which the Roman Pontiffs are invested by divine command...

...when he [Thomas More] saw that the doctrines of the Church were gravely endangered, he knew how to despise resolutely the flattery of human respect, how to resist, in accordance with his duty, the supreme head of the State when there was question of things commanded by God and the Church, and how to renounce with dignity the high office with which he was invested. It was for these motives that he too was imprisoned, nor could the tears of his wife and children make him swerve from the path of truth and virtue....

If all of us are not called to shed our blood for the defence of the holy laws of God, all none the less, according to the expression of St. Basil, with evangelical abnegation, with Christian mortification of their bodies, with energetic striving after virtue, "must be martyrs of desire, in order to share with the martyrs their celestial reward."...

http://www.thomasmorestudies.org/rep_canonization.html

July 1, 1949 - The Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office's decree on communism:

Q. Whether Christ's faithful, who have knowingly and freely performed the acts treated in nos. 1 [to join or support the Communist Party] and 2 [to edit, distribute or read books, periodicals, journals or manuscripts, which support the teaching or action of Communists], may be admitted to the Sacraments?

A. No, according to the ordinary principles of denying the Sacraments to those who are not disposed.

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CANONLAW/burkcompol.htm>

October 29, 1951 - Pope Ven. Pius XII's Allocution to Midwives:

It will be objected that such an abstention [from conjugal union] is impossible, that such a heroism is asking too much. You will hear this objection raised; you will read it everywhere. Even those who should be in a position to judge very differently, either by reason of their duties or qualifications, are ever ready to bring forward the following argument: "No one is obliged to do what is impossible, and it may be presumed that no reasonable legislator can will his law to oblige to the point of impossibility. But for husbands and wives long periods of abstention are impossible. Therefore they are not obliged to abstain; divine law cannot have this meaning." In such a manner, from partially true premises, one arrives at a false conclusion. To convince oneself of this it suffices to invert the terms of the argument: "God does not oblige anyone to do what is impossible. But God obliges husband and wife to abstinence if their union cannot be completed according to the laws of nature. Therefore in this case abstinence is possible." To confirm this argument, there can be brought forward the doctrine of the Council of Trent, which, in the chapter on the observance necessary and possible of referring to a passage of St. Augustine, teaches: "God does not command the impossible but while He commands, He warns you to do what you can and to ask for the grace for what you cannot do and He helps you so that you may be able"...

It would be a wrong towards men and women of our age to judge them incapable of continuous heroism. Nowadays, for many a reason,—perhaps constrained by dire necessity or even at times oppressed by injustice—heroism is exercised to a degree and to an extent that in the past would have been thought impossible. Why, then, if circumstances truly demand it, should this heroism stop at the limits prescribed by the passions and the inclinations of nature? It is clear: he who does not want to master himself is not able to do so, and he who wishes to master himself relying only upon his own powers, without sincerely and perseveringly seeking divine help, will be miserably deceived.

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P511029.HTM>

March 23, 1952 - Pope Ven. Pius XII's Radio message on the occasion of the celebration of 'Family Day':

Conscious, therefore, of the right and the obligation of the Holy Apostolic See to intervene, when it be necessary, authoritatively in moral questions, We in the address of October 29 last year, proposed to enlighten the consciences in that which refers to the problems of conjugal life. With the same authority we declare today to educators and to the youth: the divine commandment of the purity of soul and body is also necessary without diminishment for the youth of today. They in the same way, have the moral obligation – and with the help of grace – the possibility of keeping themselves pure. Therefore we reject as false the claim of those who consider inevitable falls in the years of puberty, which does not deserve so much attention that they face, as if they are not grossly negligent, because ordinarily, they add, passion takes away the freedom necessary in order for an act to be morally responsible.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/it/speeches/1952/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19520323_la-culla.html

<https://en.denzingerbergoglio.com/the-church-is-pharisaical-when-she-wants-to-take-charge-of-the-consciences-of-people/>

April 18, 1952, Pope Ven. Pius XII Speech to the "World Federation of Catholic Female Youth":

The distinguishing sign of this [new] morality is that it is not based on universal moral laws, such as the Ten Commandments, but on the real or concrete conditions or circumstances in which one has to act, and according to which the individual conscience has to judge and to choose. This state of

things is unique and is worth only once for all human action. That is why the decision of conscience, [according to] the proponents of this ethic, cannot be commanded by universal ideas, principles and laws...

The Christian moral law is in the law of the Creator, engraved in the heart of each one, and in Revelation. . . . The first step or rather the first attack against the structure of Christian moral norms would be to free them from the narrow and oppressive surveillance of the authority of the Church. This would be done in such wise that, once liberated from the sophistic subtleties of the casuistic method, the moral law might be brought back to its original form, leaving it simply to the intelligence and determination of each one's individual conscience...It is not difficult to recognize how the new moral system derives from Existentialism, which either prescind from God, or simply denies Him, and in any case, leaves man to himself...

From the essential relationships between man and God, between man and man, between husband and wife, between parents and children; from the essential community relationships found in the family, in the Church and in the State, it follows (among other things) that hatred of God, blasphemy, idolatry, abandoning the true faith, denial of the faith, perjury, murder, bearing false witness, calumny, adultery and fornication, the abuse of marriage, the solitary sin, stealing and robbery, taking away the necessities of life, depriving workers of their just wages, monopolizing vital foodstuffs and unjustifiably increasing prices, fraudulent bankruptcy, unjust maneuvering in speculation—all these are gravely forbidden by the divine Lawmaker. No examination is necessary. No matter what the situation of the individual may be, there is no other course open to him but to obey.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/fr/speeches/1952/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19520418_soyez-bienvenues.html

February 2, 1956 - Pope Ven. Pius XII's Holy Office's Decree on Situation Ethics and the "New Morality":

The new morality ... [has] insinuated itself even among Catholics, despite the fact that it is contrary to moral doctrines as taught and applied by the Catholic Church. Situation Ethics rests not upon principles of objective ethics rooted in being itself, but rather it claims to transcend the limitation of objectivity. Promoters of the system maintain that the ultimate and decisive norm of human activity is not some objective order of right, determined by the law of nature and certainly known in virtue of that law. Rather, they assert that the correct rules of moral action lie in some intimate light and judgment rooted in the mind of each individual person. This subjective intimation enables one who is placed in a particular concrete situation to determine for himself what he is morally obliged to do right now in each case. There is no dependence on any immutable rule of action external to man; there is no measure of truth and rectitude beyond oneself; man suffices for his own moral guide....

"Situation ethics" ..produces traces of modernism and relativism...[and] wanders far from the Catholic teaching handed down through the ages."

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/aas/documents/AAS-48-1956-ocr.pdf#page=144>

December 7, 1965 Pope Bl. Paul VI promulgates the constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, including the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*:

47. The well-being of the individual person and of human and Christian society is intimately linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family... Yet the excellence of this institution is not everywhere reflected with equal brilliance, since polygamy, the plague of divorce, so-called free love and other disfigurements have an obscuring effect.

50. ... marriage persists as a whole manner and communion of life, and maintains its value and indissolubility, even when despite the often intense desire of the couple, offspring are lacking.

51. This council realizes that certain modern conditions often keep couples from arranging their married lives harmoniously, and that they find themselves in circumstances where at least temporarily the size of their families should not be increased. As a result, the faithful exercise of love and the full intimacy of their lives is hard to maintain. But where the intimacy of married life is broken off, its faithfulness can sometimes be imperiled and its quality of fruitfulness ruined, for then the upbringing of the children and the courage to accept new ones are both endangered.

To these problems there are those who presume to offer dishonorable solutions indeed; they do not recoil even from the taking of life. But the Church issues the reminder that a true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to authentic conjugal love.

July 25, 1968 - Pope Bl. Paul VI's Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*:

9. Married love is also faithful and exclusive of all other, and this until death. This is how husband and wife understood it on the day on which, fully aware of what they were doing, they freely vowed themselves to one another in marriage. Though this fidelity of husband and wife sometimes presents difficulties, no one has the right to assert that it is impossible; it is, on the contrary, always honorable and meritorious. The example of countless married couples proves not only that fidelity is in accord with the nature of marriage, but also that it is the source of profound and enduring happiness.

14. ... Similarly excluded is any action which either before, at the moment of, or after sexual intercourse, is specifically intended to prevent procreation—whether as an end or as a means. Neither is it valid to argue, as a justification for sexual intercourse which is deliberately contraceptive, that a lesser evil is to be preferred to a greater one, or that such intercourse would merge with procreative acts of past and future to form a single entity, and so be qualified by exactly the same moral goodness as these. Though it is true that sometimes it is lawful to tolerate a lesser moral evil in order to avoid a greater evil or in order to promote a greater good," it is never lawful, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil that good may come of it (18)—in other words, to intend directly something which of its very nature contradicts the moral order, and which must therefore be judged unworthy of man, even though the intention is to protect or promote the welfare of an individual, of a family or of society in general. Consequently, it is a serious error to think that a whole married life of otherwise normal relations can justify sexual intercourse which is deliberately contraceptive and so intrinsically wrong.

18. It is to be anticipated that perhaps not everyone will easily accept this particular teaching. There is too much clamorous outcry against the voice of the Church, and this is intensified by modern means of communication. But it comes as no surprise to the Church that she, no less than her divine Founder, is destined to be a "sign of contradiction." (22) She does not, because of this, evade the duty imposed on her of proclaiming humbly but firmly the entire moral law, both natural and evangelical. Since the Church did not make either of these laws, she cannot be their arbiter—only their guardian and interpreter. It could never be right for her to declare lawful what is in fact unlawful, since that, by its very nature, is always opposed to the true good of man. In preserving intact the whole moral law of marriage, the Church is convinced that she is contributing to the creation of a truly human civilization. She urges man not to betray his personal responsibilities by putting all his faith in technical expedients.

19. ...The Church, in fact, cannot act differently toward men than did the Redeemer. She knows their weaknesses, she has compassion on the multitude, she welcomes sinners. But at the same time she cannot do otherwise than teach the law. For it is in fact the law of human life restored to its native truth and guided by the Spirit of God...

25. ...We have no wish at all to pass over in silence the difficulties, at times very great, which beset the lives of Christian married couples. For them, as indeed for every one of us, "the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life." Nevertheless it is precisely the hope of that life which, like a brightly burning torch, lights up their journey, as, strong in spirit, they strive to live "sober, upright and godly lives in this world," knowing for sure that "the form of this world is passing away."...For this reason husbands and wives should take up the burden appointed to them, willingly, in the strength of faith and of that hope which "does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Then let them implore the help of God...

28. ...[y]ou who are priests... it is your principal duty ... to spell out clearly and completely the Church's teaching on marriage. ...Nor will it escape you that if men's peace of soul and the unity of the Christian people are to be preserved, then it is of the utmost importance that in moral as well as in dogmatic theology all should obey the magisterium of the Church and should speak as with one voice....

29. ...[I]t is an outstanding manifestation of charity toward souls to omit nothing from the saving doctrine of Christ; but this must always be joined with tolerance and charity, as Christ Himself showed in His conversations and dealings with men. For when He came, not to judge, but to save the world, was He not bitterly severe toward sin, but patient and abounding in mercy toward sinners?... Let them never lose heart because of their weakness.

30. ...venerable brothers in the episcopate... We implore you, to give a lead to your priests who assist you in the sacred ministry, and to the faithful of your dioceses, and to devote yourselves with all zeal and without delay to safeguarding the holiness of marriage, in order to guide married life to its full human and Christian perfection....Consider this mission as one of your most urgent responsibilities at the present time.... And life together in human society will be enriched with fraternal charity and made more stable with true peace when God's design which He conceived for the world is faithfully followed.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html

December 1977 - The International Theological Commission's Christological Theses on the Sacrament of Marriage:

12. DIVORCE AND THE EUCHARIST

Without refusing to examine the attenuating circumstances and even sometimes the quality of a second civil marriage after divorce, the approach of the divorced and remarried to the Eucharist is plainly incompatible with the mystery of which the Church is the servant and witness. In receiving the divorced and remarried to the Eucharist, the Church would let such parties believe that they can, on the level of signs, communicate with him whose conjugal mystery they disavow on the level of reality. To do so would be, moreover, on the part of the Church to declare herself in accord with the baptized at the moment when they enter or remain in a clearly objective contradiction with the life, the thought, and the being itself of the Lord as Spouse of the Church. If the Church could give the sacrament of unity to those who have broken with her on an essential point of the mystery of Christ, she would no longer be the sign of the witness of Christ but rather a countersign and a

counterwitness. Nevertheless, this refusal does not in any way justify any procedure that inflicts infamy and that contradicts in its own way the mercy of Christ toward us sinners.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1977_sacramento-matrimonio_en.html

May 24, 1978 - Pope Bl. Paul VI's General Audience

Where is the Christian people, not only faithful to the observance of some precepts, but vigorous, alive, happy to believe, pray and profess strong love for Christ, and able to carry his cross with Him? We may not fail to proclaim the increased obligation of conjugal fidelity within the family; now that legal divorce has been granted the possibility of being carried out with impunity.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/es/audiences/1978/documents/hf_p-vi_aud_19780524.html

October 25, 1980 - Pope St. John Paul II's Closing Speech at the 1980 Synod on the Family:

7. So the Synod—when speaking of the pastoral care of those who after divorce have entered on a new union—rightly praised those couples who in spite of great difficulties witness in their life to the indissolubility of marriage. In their life the Synod recognizes that good news of faithfulness to love which has its power and its foundation in Christ.

Furthermore, the fathers of the Synod, again affirming the indissolubility of marriage and the Church's practice of not admitting to Eucharistic communion those who have been divorced and—against her rule—again attempted marriage, urge pastors and the whole Christian community to help such brothers and sisters. They do not regard them as separated from the Church, since by virtue of their baptism they can and must share in the life of the Church by praying, hearing the word, being present at the community's celebration of the Eucharist, and promoting charity and justice. Although it must not be denied that such people can in suitable circumstances be admitted to the sacrament of penance and then to Eucharistic communion, when with a sincere heart they open themselves to a way of life that is not in contradiction to the indissolubility of marriage—namely, when such a man and woman, who cannot fulfill the obligation of separation, take on the duty of living in total abstinence, that is, abstaining from acts that are proper only to married couples—and when there is no scandal. Nonetheless, the lack of sacramental reconciliation with God should not deter them from perseverance in prayer, in penance and in the exercise of charity, in order that they may eventually receive the grace of conversion and salvation. Meanwhile the Church, praying for them and strengthening them in faith and hope, must show herself a merciful mother towards them.

8. ... Thinking of those who have pastoral care of married couples and families, the synod fathers rejected any split or "dichotomy" between instruction (which is necessary for any progress in fulfilling the design of God) and doctrine (taught by the Church with all its consequences and which includes the command to live according to that doctrine). It is not a matter of keeping the law as a mere "ideal" to be obeyed in the future. It is a question of the command of Christ the Lord that difficulties should constantly be overcome. In fact, the "law of gradualness," as it is called, is not possible unless a person sincerely obeys the divine law and seeks those benefits that are protected and promoted by that law. For "the law of gradualness" (or gradual progress) cannot be the same as "gradualness of the law" as if there were various grades or forms of commandment for different men and circumstances in the divine law.

All couples are called to holiness in marriage according to the divine plan; and the dignity of this vocation becomes effective when a person is able so respond to the command of God with a serene mind, trusting in divine grace and his own will. So it is not enough for couples - if they are not both of the same religious persuasion - to accommodate themselves passively and easily to their

circumstances, but they should strive with patience and good will to come to a common intention to be faithful to the duties of Christian marriage.

<http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/content/download/27301/182336/file/pope-closing-homily.pdf>

November 22, 1981, Pope St. John Paul II *Familiaris Consortio*:

34. Married people... cannot however look on the law as merely an ideal to be achieved in the future: they must consider it as a command of Christ the Lord to overcome difficulties with constancy. And so what is known as 'the law of gradualness' or step-by-step advance cannot be identified with 'gradualness of the law,' as if there were different degrees or forms of precept in God's law for different individuals and situations. In God's plan, all husbands and wives are called in marriage to holiness, and this lofty vocation is fulfilled to the extent that the human person is able to respond to God's command with serene confidence in God's grace and in his or her own will.

e) Divorced Persons Who Have Remarried

84. Daily experience unfortunately shows that people who have obtained a divorce usually intend to enter into a new union, obviously not with a Catholic religious ceremony. Since this is an evil that, like the others, is affecting more and more Catholics as well, the problem must be faced with resolution and without delay. The Synod Fathers studied it expressly. The Church, which was set up to lead to salvation all people and especially the baptized, cannot abandon to their own devices those who have been previously bound by sacramental marriage and who have attempted a second marriage. The Church will therefore make untiring efforts to put at their disposal her means of salvation.

Pastors must know that, for the sake of truth, they are obliged to exercise careful discernment of situations. There is in fact a difference between those who have sincerely tried to save their first marriage and have been unjustly abandoned, and those who through their own grave fault have destroyed a canonically valid marriage. Finally, there are those who have entered into a second union for the sake of the children's upbringing, and who are sometimes subjectively certain in conscience that their previous and irreparably destroyed marriage had never been valid.

Together with the Synod, I earnestly call upon pastors and the whole community of the faithful to help the divorced, and with solicitous care to make sure that they do not consider themselves as separated from the Church, for as baptized persons they can, and indeed must, share in her life. They should be encouraged to listen to the word of God, to attend the Sacrifice of the Mass, to persevere in prayer, to contribute to works of charity and to community efforts in favor of justice, to bring up their children in the Christian faith, to cultivate the spirit and practice of penance and thus implore, day by day, God's grace. Let the Church pray for them, encourage them and show herself a merciful mother, and thus sustain them in faith and hope.

However, the Church reaffirms her practice, which is based upon Sacred Scripture, of not admitting to Eucharistic Communion divorced persons who have remarried. They are unable to be admitted thereto from the fact that their state and condition of life objectively contradict that union of love between Christ and the Church which is signified and effected by the Eucharist. Besides this, there is another special pastoral reason: if these people were admitted to the Eucharist, the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church's teaching about the indissolubility of marriage.

Reconciliation in the sacrament of Penance which would open the way to the Eucharist, can only be granted to those who, repenting of having broken the sign of the Covenant and of fidelity to Christ,

are sincerely ready to undertake a way of life that is no longer in contradiction to the indissolubility of marriage. This means, in practice, that when, for serious reasons, such as for example the children's upbringing, a man and a woman cannot satisfy the obligation to separate, they "take on themselves the duty to live in complete continence, that is, by abstinence from the acts proper to married couples."

Similarly, the respect due to the sacrament of Matrimony, to the couples themselves and their families, and also to the community of the faithful, forbids any pastor, for whatever reason or pretext even of a pastoral nature, to perform ceremonies of any kind for divorced people who remarry. Such ceremonies would give the impression of the celebration of a new sacramentally valid marriage, and would thus lead people into error concerning the indissolubility of a validly contracted marriage.

By acting in this way, the Church professes her own fidelity to Christ and to His truth. At the same time she shows motherly concern for these children of hers, especially those who, through no fault of their own, have been abandoned by their legitimate partner.

With firm confidence she believes that those who have rejected the Lord's command and are still living in this state will be able to obtain from God the grace of conversion and salvation, provided that they have persevered in prayer, penance and charity.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html

1981 - Schema and Discussions of the Revisions to the Code of Canon Law:

Proposed Version 1

Can. 855. They who have sinned grievously and manifestly remain in contumacy are not to be admitted to the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist or to Communion.

A few in observations ask that in this place text be rendered to provide the possibility of receiving Holy Communion for the faithful who are divorced and remarried.

All the consulters agree the Commission is not the one to decide concerning those things; there will be the Holy See to respond to the question.

<http://www.delegumtextibus.va/content/dam/testilegislativi/documenta/cic/demuneresanctificandi/deSacramentis-SeriesAlter-Sessio-7.pdf#page=8>

Proposed Version 2

Can 855. ...They who have grievously and publicly sinned, and manifestly remain in contumacy are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.

Cardinal Florit, regarding can. 855: The text is too general, especially if compared with the text of can. 1135 [of the 1917 Code]...

Cardinal Palazzini: Can. 855 is too much tempered from the old Code concerning the denial of the most holy Eucharist to unworthy and public sinners. In no way is scandal considered in what can. 855 § 2 says.

Response from the Secretariat of the Commission: The text suffices for it contains all of the requirements: namely, gravity of the act, the public nature of the act, and contumacy. Most certainly the text refers also to the divorced and remarried.

<http://www.delegumtextibus.va/content/dam/testilegislativi/documenta/cic/schemata-canonumcic/relatioAnimadversionumadNovissimumSchemaCIC.pdf#page=212>
<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CANONLAW/burkcompol.htm>

January 25, 1983 – Promulgation of the Johannine-Pauline Code of Canon Law:

Canon 915. The excommunicated and interdicted after the imposition or declaration of the penalty and others who remain obstinately in manifestly grievous sin are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P39.HTM

Canon 1093. The impediment of public propriety arises from an invalid marriage after the establishment of common life or from notorious or public concubinage. It nullifies marriage in the first degree of the direct line between the man and the blood relatives of the woman, and vice versa.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P3Y.HTM

December 2, 1984 – Pope St. John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia*:

17. Likewise, care will have to be taken not to reduce mortal sin to an act of "fundamental option"- as is commonly said today-against God, intending thereby an explicit and formal contempt for God or neighbor. For mortal sin exists also when a person knowingly and willingly, for whatever reason, chooses something gravely disordered. In fact, such a choice already includes contempt for the divine law, a rejection of God's love for humanity and the whole of creation; the person turns away from God and loses charity. Thus the fundamental orientation can be radically changed by individual acts. Clearly there can occur situations which are very complex and obscure from a psychological viewpoint and which have an influence on the sinner's subjective culpability. But from a consideration of the psychological sphere one cannot proceed to the construction of a theological category, which is what the "fundamental option" precisely is, understanding it in such a way that it objectively changes or casts doubt upon the traditional concept of mortal sin.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_02121984_reconciliatio-et-paenitentia.html

May 18, 1986 - Pope John Paul II's Encyclical *Dominum et vivificantem*

43. The Second Vatican Council mentioned the Catholic teaching on conscience when it spoke about man's vocation and in particular about the dignity of the human person. It is precisely the conscience in particular which determines this dignity. For the conscience is "the most secret core and sanctuary of a man, where he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths." It "can ...speak to his heart more specifically: do this, shun that." This capacity to command what is good and to forbid evil, placed in man by the Creator, is the main characteristic of the personal subject. But at the same time, "in the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience." The conscience therefore is not an independent and exclusive capacity to decide what is good and what is evil. Rather there is profoundly imprinted upon it a principle of obedience vis-a-vis the objective norm which establishes and conditions the correspondence of its decisions with the commands and prohibitions which are at the basis of human behavior, as from the passage of the Book of Genesis which we have already considered. Precisely in this sense the conscience is the "secret sanctuary" in which "God's voice echoes." The conscience is "the voice of God," even when man recognizes in it nothing more than the principle of the moral order which it is not humanly possible to doubt, even without any direct reference to the Creator. It is precisely in reference to this that the conscience always finds its foundation and justification.

...By calling by their proper name the sins that most dishonor man, and by showing that they are a moral evil that weighs negatively on any balance-sheet of human progress, the Council also describes all this as a stage in "a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness," which characterizes "all of human life, whether individual or collective."

October 11, 1992 - Pope St. John Paul II promulgates the Catechism of Catholic Church:

1650. Today there are numerous Catholics in many countries who have recourse to civil divorce and contract new civil unions. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ - "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" the Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. If the divorced are remarried civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God's law. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists. For the same reason, they cannot exercise certain ecclesial responsibilities. Reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance can be granted only to those who have repented for having violated the sign of the covenant and of fidelity to Christ, and who are committed to living in complete continence.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c3a7.htm

August 6, 1993 - Pope St. John Paul II's Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*:

56. In order to justify these positions, some authors have proposed a kind of double status of moral truth. Beyond the doctrinal and abstract level, one would have to acknowledge the priority of a certain more concrete existential consideration. The latter, by taking account of circumstances and the situation, could legitimately be the basis of certain exceptions to the general rule and thus permit one to do in practice and in good conscience what is qualified as intrinsically evil by the moral law. A separation, or even an opposition, is thus established in some cases between the teaching of the precept, which is valid in general, and the norm of the individual conscience, which would in fact make the final decision about what is good and what is evil. On this basis, an attempt is made to legitimize so-called "pastoral" solutions contrary to the teaching of the Magisterium, and to justify a "creative" hermeneutic according to which the moral conscience is in no way obliged, in every case, by a particular negative precept. No one can fail to realize that these approaches pose a challenge to the very identity of the moral conscience in relation to human freedom and God's law. Only the clarification made earlier with regard to the relationship, based on truth, between freedom and law makes possible a discernment concerning this "creative" understanding of conscience.

79. One must therefore reject the thesis, characteristic of teleological and proportionalist theories, which holds that it is impossible to qualify as morally evil according to its species — its "object" — the deliberate choice of certain kinds of behaviour or specific acts, apart from a consideration of the intention for which the choice is made or the totality of the foreseeable consequences of that act for all persons concerned. The primary and decisive element for moral judgment is the object of the human act, which establishes whether it is capable of being ordered to the good and to the ultimate end, which is God.

81. In teaching the existence of intrinsically evil acts, the Church accepts the teaching of Sacred Scripture. The Apostle Paul emphatically states: "Do not be deceived: neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9-10). If acts are intrinsically evil, a good intention or particular circumstances can diminish their evil, but they cannot remove it. They remain "irremediably" evil acts; per se and in themselves they are not capable of being ordered to God and to the good of the person. "As for acts which are themselves sins (cum iam opera ipsa peccata sunt), Saint Augustine writes, like theft, fornication, blasphemy, who would dare affirm that, by doing them for good motives (causis bonis), they would no longer be sins, or, what is even more absurd, that they would be sins that are justified?" Consequently, circumstances or intentions can never transform an act intrinsically evil by virtue of its object into an act "subjectively" good or defensible as a choice.

103. ...It would be a very serious error to conclude... that the Church's teaching is essentially only an "ideal" which must then be adapted, proportioned, graduated to the so-called concrete possibilities of man, according to a "balancing of the goods in question"... It is quite human for the sinner to acknowledge his weakness and to ask mercy for his failings; what is unacceptable is the attitude of one who makes his own weakness the criterion of the truth about the good, so that he can feel self-justified, without even the need to have recourse to God and his mercy. An attitude of this sort corrupts the morality of society as a whole, since it encourages doubt about the objectivity of the moral law in general and a rejection of the absoluteness of moral prohibitions regarding specific human acts, and it ends up by confusing all judgments about values.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html

September 14, 1994 - Pope St. John Paul II's CDF Prefect, Cardinal Ratzinger's "Letter to the Bishops of The Catholic Church Concerning the Reception of Holy Communion by the Divorced and Remarried Members of the Faithful":

3. Aware however that authentic understanding and genuine mercy are never separated from the truth, pastors have the duty to remind these faithful of the Church's doctrine concerning the celebration of the sacraments, in particular, the reception of the Holy Communion. In recent years, in various regions, different pastoral solutions in this area have been suggested according to which, to be sure, a general admission of divorced and remarried to Eucharistic communion would not be possible, but the divorced and remarried members of the faithful could approach Holy Communion in specific cases when they consider themselves authorized according to a judgement of conscience to do so. This would be the case, for example, when they had been abandoned completely unjustly, although they sincerely tried to save the previous marriage, or when they are convinced of the nullity of their previous marriage, although unable to demonstrate it in the external forum or when they have gone through a long period of reflection and penance, or also when for morally valid reasons they cannot satisfy the obligation to separate. In some places, it has also been proposed that in order objectively to examine their actual situation, the divorced and remarried would have to consult a prudent and expert priest. This priest, however, would have to respect their eventual decision to approach Holy Communion, without this implying an official authorization. In these and similar cases it would be a matter of a tolerant and benevolent pastoral solution in order to do justice to the different situations of the divorced and remarried.

4. Even if analogous pastoral solutions have been proposed by a few Fathers of the Church and in some measure were practiced, nevertheless these never attained the consensus of the Fathers and in no way came to constitute the common doctrine of the Church nor to determine her discipline. It falls to the universal Magisterium, in fidelity to Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to teach and to interpret authentically the depositum fidei.

With respect to the aforementioned new pastoral proposals, this Congregation deems itself obliged therefore to recall the doctrine and discipline of the Church in this matter. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ, the Church affirms that a new union cannot be recognized as valid if the preceding marriage was valid. If the divorced are remarried civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God's law. Consequently, they cannot receive Holy Communion as long as this situation persists.

This norm is not at all a punishment or a discrimination against the divorced and remarried, but rather expresses an objective situation that of itself renders impossible the reception of Holy Communion: "They are unable to be admitted thereto from the fact that their state and condition of life objectively contradict that union of love between Christ and his Church which is signified and

effected by the Eucharist. Besides this, there is another special pastoral reason: if these people were admitted to the Eucharist, the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church's teaching about the indissolubility of marriage".

The faithful who persist in such a situation may receive Holy Communion only after obtaining sacramental absolution, which may be given only "to those who, repenting of having broken the sign of the Covenant and of fidelity to Christ, are sincerely ready to undertake a way of life that is no longer in contradiction to the indissolubility of marriage. This means, in practice, that when for serious reasons, for example, for the children's upbringing, a man and a woman cannot satisfy the obligation to separate, they 'take on themselves the duty to live in complete continence, that is, by abstinence from the acts proper to married couples'. In such a case they may receive Holy Communion as long as they respect the obligation to avoid giving scandal.'

5. ...[Familiaris Consortio] confirms and indicates the reasons for the constant and universal practice, "founded on Sacred Scripture, of not admitting the divorced and remarried to Holy Communion"(9). The structure of the Exhortation and the tenor of its words give clearly to understand that this practice, which is presented as binding, cannot be modified because of different situations.

6. Members of the faithful who live together as husband and wife with persons other than their legitimate spouses may not receive Holy Communion. Should they judge it possible to do so, pastors and confessors, given the gravity of the matter and the spiritual good of these persons as well as the common good of the Church, have the serious duty to admonish them that such a judgment of conscience openly contradicts the Church's teaching. Pastors in their teaching must also remind the faithful entrusted to their care of this doctrine.

7. The mistaken conviction of a divorced and remarried person that he may receive Holy Communion normally presupposes that personal conscience is considered in the final analysis to be able, on the basis of one's own convictions, to come to a decision about the existence or absence of a previous marriage and the value of the new union. However, such a position is inadmissible. Marriage, in fact, because it is both the image of the spousal relationship between Christ and his Church as well as the fundamental core and an important factor in the life of civil society, is essentially a public reality.

8. It is certainly true that a judgment about one's own dispositions for the reception of Holy Communion must be made by a properly formed moral conscience. But it is equally true that the consent that is the foundation of marriage is not simply a private decision since it creates a specifically ecclesial and social situation for the spouses, both individually and as a couple. Thus the judgment of conscience of one's own marital situation does not regard only the immediate relationship between man and God, as if one could prescind from the Church's mediation, that also includes canonical laws binding in conscience. Not to recognise this essential aspect would mean in fact to deny that marriage is a reality of the Church, that is to say, a sacrament.

9. Receiving Eucharistic Communion contrary to ecclesial communion is therefore in itself a contradiction. Sacramental communion with Christ includes and presupposes the observance, even if at times difficult, of the order of ecclesial communion, and it cannot be right and fruitful if a member of the faithful, wishing to approach Christ directly, does not respect this order.
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_14091994_rec-holy-comm-by-divorced_en.html

February 10, 1995 - Pope St. John Paul II's Speech to the Roman Rota:

8. This brings us to a direct discussion of the other topic I referred to at the beginning: the relationship between true justice and the individual conscience.

In the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* I wrote: "The way in which one conceives the relationship between freedom and law is thus intimately bound up with one's understanding of the moral conscience" (John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 54).

If this is true with regard to the so-called "internal forum," doubtless a correlation also exists between canon law and the subject's conscience with regard to the "external forum." Here the relationship is established between the judgment of someone who authentically and legitimately interprets the law, even in an individual, concrete case, and the conscience of someone who has appealed to canonical authority: that is between the ecclesiastical judge and the parties to a case in the canonical process....

An action deviating from the objective norm or law is thus morally reprehensible and must be considered as such: while it is true that humans must act in conformity with the judgment of their own conscience, it is equally true that the judgment of conscience cannot claim to establish the law it can only recognize it and make it its own.

9. While maintaining the distinction between the magisterial and jurisdictional functions, certainly in ecclesial society the judicial power also emanates from the more general "potestas regiminis," which in fact belongs to the Church by divine institution" (CIC, c. 129, §1), and is divided into three, namely, the "legislative, executive and judicial" (CIC, c. 135, §1). Therefore, whenever doubts arise as to the conformity of an act—for example, in the specific case of a marriage—with the objective norm, and consequently, the lawfulness or even the validity itself of such an act is called into question, reference must be made to the judgment correctly emanating from legitimate authority (cf. CIC, c. 135, §3), and not to an alleged private judgment, and still less to the individual's arbitrary conviction. This principle, also formally safeguarded by canon law, establishes: "Even though the previous marriage is invalid or for any reason dissolved, it is not thereby lawful to contract another marriage before the nullity or the dissolution of the previous one has been established lawfully and with certainty" (CIC, c. 1085, §2).

Whoever would presume to transgress the legislative provisions concerning the declaration of marital nullity would thus put himself outside, and indeed in a position antithetical to the Church's authentic magisterium and to canonical legislation itself—a unifying and in some ways irreplaceable element for the unity of the Church. This principle applies to whatever involves not only substantive law, but also procedural legislation. This fact must be kept in mind in concrete cases and care should be taken to avoid answers and solutions "in foro interno," as it were, to situations that are perhaps difficult but which can be dealt with and resolved only by respecting the canonical norms in force. This must be kept in mind particularly by pastors who may be tempted to distance themselves in substance from the established and approved procedures of the Code. Everyone should be reminded of the principle that, although the diocesan bishop has been granted the faculty to dispense, under specific conditions, from disciplinary laws, he is not permitted however to dispense "from procedural laws" (CIC, c. 87, §1).

https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1995/february/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19950210_roman-rota.html

March 22, 1996 - Pope St. John Paul II Letter to Cardinal William W. Baum, Major Penitentiary:

5. Partly because of ... an arbitrary, reductive interpretation of the "freedom of the children of God", claimed as a private, confidential relationship prescinding from the Church's mediation, unfortunately many of the faithful today approach the sacrament of Penance without making a complete accusation of their mortal sins in the sense just mentioned by the Council of Trent. Sometimes they react to the priest confessor, who dutifully questions them about the necessary completeness, as if he were allowing himself an undue intrusion into the sanctuary of conscience. I hope and pray that these unenlightened faithful will be convinced, also by virtue of this present teaching, that the norm requiring completeness in kind and number, insofar as can be known from an honestly examined memory, is not a burden imposed on them arbitrarily, but a means of liberation and serenity.... It is also self-evident that the accusation of sins must include the serious intention not to commit them again in the future. If this disposition of soul is lacking, there really is no repentance: this is in fact a question of moral evil as such, and so not taking a stance opposed to a possible moral evil would mean not detesting evil, not repenting. But as this must stem above all from sorrow for having offended God, so the intention of not sinning must be based on divine grace, which the Lord never fails to give anyone who does what he can to act honestly.

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP960322.HTM>

January 24, 1997 - Pope St. John Paul II's Address to the Pontifical Council of the Family:

1. ... The Church, Mother and Teacher, seeks the welfare and happiness of the home and when it is broken for whatever reason, she suffers and seeks to provide a remedy, offering these persons pastoral guidance in complete fidelity to Christ's teachings...

2. ...pastoral help presupposes that the Church's doctrine be recognized as it is clearly expressed in the Catechism: "The Church does not have the power to contravene this disposition of divine wisdom" (n. 1640).

However, let these men and women know that the Church loves them, that she is not far from them and suffers because of their situation. The divorced and remarried are and remain her members, because they have received Baptism and retain their Christian faith. Of course, a new union after divorce is a moral disorder, which is opposed to precise requirements deriving from the faith, but this must not preclude a commitment to prayer and to the active witness of charity.

3. As I wrote in the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, the divorced and remarried cannot be admitted to Eucharistic Communion since "their state and condition of life objectively contradict that union of love between Christ and the Church which is signified and effected by the Eucharist" (n. 84). And this is by virtue of the very authority of the Lord, Shepherd of Shepherds, who always seeks his sheep. It is also true with regard to Penance, whose twofold yet single meaning of conversion and reconciliation is contradicted by the state of life of divorced and remarried couples who remain such.

However, there are many appropriate pastoral ways to help these people. The Church sees their suffering and the serious difficulties in which they live, and in her motherly love is concerned for them as well as for the children of their previous marriage: deprived of their birthright to the presence of both parents, they are the first victims of these painful events.

It is first of all urgently necessary to establish a pastoral plan of preparation and of timely support for couples at the moment of crisis. The proclamation of Christ's gift and commandment on marriage is in question. Pastors, especially parish priests, must with an open heart guide and support these men and women, making them understand that even when they have broken the marriage bond, they must not despair of the grace of God, who watches over their way. The Church

does not cease to “invite her children who find themselves in these painful situations to approach the divine mercy by other ways ... until such time as they have attained the required dispositions” (Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, n. 34). Pastors “are called to help them experience the charity of Christ and the maternal closeness of the Church, receiving them with love, exhorting them to trust in God’s mercy and suggesting, with prudence and respect, concrete ways of conversion and participation in the life of the community of the Church” (Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church concerning the Reception of Holy Communion by Divorced and Remarried Members of the Faithful, 14 September 1994, n. 2). The Lord, moved by mercy, reaches out to all the needy, with both the demand for truth and the oil of charity.

4. How is it possible not to be concerned about the situations of so many people, especially in economically developed nations, who are living in a state of abandonment because of separation, especially when they cannot be blamed for the failure of their marriage?

When a couple in an irregular situation returns to Christian practice, it is necessary to welcome them with charity and kindness, helping them to clarify their concrete status by means of enlightened and enlightening pastoral care. This apostolate of fraternal and evangelical welcome towards those who have lost contact with the Church is of great importance: it is the first step required to integrate them into Christian practice. It is necessary to introduce them to listening to the word of God and to prayer, to involve them in the charitable works of the Christian community for the poor and needy, and to awaken the spirit of repentance by acts of penance that prepare their hearts to accept God’s grace....

Dear brothers and sisters, my heartfelt recommendation today is to have confidence in all those who are living in such tragic and painful situations. We must not cease “to hope against all hope” (Rom 4:18) that even those who are living in a situation that does not conform to the Lord’s will may obtain salvation from God, if they are able to persevere in prayer, penance and true love...
http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1997/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19970124_plenaria-pc-family.html

February 12, 1997 – Pontifical Council for The Family’s Vademecum For Confessors Concerning Some Aspects Of The Morality Of Conjugal Life

5. The confessor is bound to admonish penitents regarding objectively grave transgressions of God’s law and to ensure that they truly desire absolution and God’s pardon with the resolution to re-examine and correct their behaviour. Frequent relapse into sins of contraception does not in itself constitute a motive for denying absolution; absolution cannot be imparted, however, in the absence of sufficient repentance or of the resolution not to fall again into sin.

7. On the part of the penitent, the sacrament of Reconciliation requires sincere sorrow, a formally complete accusation of mortal sins, and the resolution, with the help of God, not to fall into sin again. In general, it is not necessary for the confessor to investigate concerning sins committed in invincible ignorance of their evil, or due to an inculpable error of judgment. Although these sins are not imputable, they do not cease, however, to be an evil and a disorder. This also holds for the objective evil of contraception, which introduces a pernicious habit into the conjugal life of the couple. It is therefore necessary to strive in the most suitable way to free the moral conscience from those errors which contradict the nature of conjugal life as a total gift.

8. The principle according to which it is preferable to let penitents remain in good faith in cases of error due to subjectively invincible ignorance, is certainly to be considered always valid, even in matters of conjugal chastity. And this applies whenever it is foreseen that the penitent, although

oriented towards living within the bounds of a life of faith, would not be prepared to change his own conduct, but rather would begin formally to sin. Nonetheless, in these cases, the confessor must try to bring such penitents ever closer to accepting God's plan in their own lives, even in these demands, by means of prayer, admonition and exhorting them to form their consciences, and by the teaching of the Church.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/family/documents/rc_pc_family_doc_12021997_vademecum_en.htm

January 1, 1998 - Cardinal Ratzinger's CDF's Memorandum "Concerning Some Objections To The Church's Teaching on The Reception Of Holy Communion by Divorced And Remarried Members Of The Faithful"

3. a. The Church cannot sanction pastoral practices - for example, sacramental pastoral practices - which contradict the clear instruction of the Lord. In other words, if the prior marriage of two divorced and remarried members of the faithful was valid, under no circumstances can their new union be considered lawful and therefore reception of the sacraments is intrinsically impossible. The conscience of the individual is bound to this norm without exception.

b. Since marriage has a fundamental public ecclesial character and the axiom applies that *nemo iudex in propria causa* (no one is judge in his own case), marital cases must be resolved in the external forum. If divorced and remarried members of the faithful believe that their prior marriage was invalid, they are thereby obligated to appeal to the competent marriage tribunal so that the question will be examined objectively and under all available juridical possibilities.

5. A series of critical objections.. say that the Church, on the other hand, presents herself like a judge who excludes wounded people from the sacraments and from certain public responsibilities.... [The teaching of the Church] must not be watered down on allegedly pastoral grounds, because it communicates the revealed truth. Certainly, it is difficult to make the demands of the Gospel understandable to secularized people. But this pastoral difficulty must not lead to compromises with the truth. If at times in the past, love shone forth too little in the explanation of the truth, so today the danger is great that in the name of love, truth is either to be silenced or compromised. Assuredly, the word of truth can be painful and uncomfortable. But it is the way to holiness, to peace, and to inner freedom. A pastoral approach which truly wants to help the people concerned must always be grounded in the truth. In the end, only the truth can be pastoral. "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (Jn. 8:32).

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19980101_ratzinger-comm-divorced_en.html

June 24, 2000 – Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts "Concerning the Admission to Holy Communion of Faithful who are Divorced and Remarried":

1. The prohibition found in the cited canon [915], by its nature, is derived from divine law and transcends the domain of positive ecclesiastical laws: the latter cannot introduce legislative changes which would oppose the doctrine of the Church. The scriptural text on which the ecclesial tradition has always relied is that of St. Paul: "This means that whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily sins against the body and blood of the Lord. A man should examine himself first only then should he eat of the bread and drink of the cup. He who eats and drinks without recognizing the body eats and drinks a judgment on himself."

In effect, the reception of the Body of Christ when one is publicly unworthy constitutes an objective harm to the ecclesial communion: it is a behavior that affects the rights of the Church and of all the faithful to live in accord with the exigencies of that communion. In the concrete case of the

admission to Holy Communion of faithful who are divorced and remarried, the scandal, understood as an action that prompts others towards wrongdoing, affects at the same time both the sacrament of the Eucharist and the indissolubility of marriage. That scandal exists even if such behavior, unfortunately, no longer arouses surprise: in fact it is precisely with respect to the deformation of the conscience that it becomes more necessary for Pastors to act, with as much patience as firmness, as a protection to the sanctity of the Sacraments and a defense of Christian morality, and for the correct formation of the faithful. ...

2. Those faithful who are divorced and remarried would not be considered to be within the situation of serious habitual sin who would not be able, for serious motives - such as, for example, the upbringing of the children - "to satisfy the obligation of separation, assuming the task of living in full continence, that is, abstaining from the acts proper to spouses" (*Familiaris consortio*, n. 84), and who on the basis of that intention have received the sacrament of Penance. Given that the fact that these faithful are not living more uxorio is per se occult, while their condition as persons who are divorced and remarried is per se manifest, they will be able to receive Eucharistic Communion only remoto scandalo.

3. ... in those situations, however, in which these precautionary measures have not had their effect or in which they were not possible, the minister of Communion must refuse to distribute it to those who are publicly unworthy. They are to do this with extreme charity, and are to look for the opportune moment to explain the reasons that required the refusal. They must, however, do this with firmness, conscious of the value that such signs of strength have for the good of the Church and of souls.

4. Bearing in mind the nature of the above-cited norm (cfr. n. 1), no ecclesiastical authority may dispense the minister of Holy Communion from this obligation in any case, nor may he emanate directives that contradict it.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/intrptxt/documents/rc_pc_intrptxt_doc_2_0000706_declaration_en.html

April 17, 2003 - Pope St. John Paul II's Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*:

35. The celebration of the Eucharist, however, cannot be the starting-point for communion; it presupposes that communion already exists, a communion which it seeks to consolidate and bring to perfection. The sacrament is an expression of this bond of communion both in its *invisible* dimension, which, in Christ and through the working of the Holy Spirit, unites us to the Father and among ourselves, and in its *visible* dimension, which entails communion in the teaching of the Apostles, in the sacraments and in the Church's hierarchical order...

36. ... the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* rightly stipulates that "anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion".⁷⁴ I therefore desire to reaffirm that in the Church there remains in force, now and in the future, the rule by which the Council of Trent gave concrete expression to the Apostle Paul's stern warning when it affirmed that, in order to receive the Eucharist in a worthy manner, "one must first confess one's sins, when one is aware of mortal sin".

37. The two sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance are very closely connected. Because the Eucharist makes present the redeeming sacrifice of the Cross, perpetuating it sacramentally, it naturally gives rise to a continuous need for conversion, for a personal response to the appeal made by Saint Paul to the Christians of Corinth: "We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 *Cor* 5:20). If a Christian's conscience is burdened by serious sin, then the path of penance

through the sacrament of Reconciliation becomes necessary for full participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

The judgment of one's state of grace obviously belongs only to the person involved, since it is a question of examining one's conscience. However, in cases of outward conduct which is seriously, clearly and steadfastly contrary to the moral norm, the Church, in her pastoral concern for the good order of the community and out of respect for the sacrament, cannot fail to feel directly involved. The Code of Canon Law refers to this situation of a manifest lack of proper moral disposition when it states that those who "obstinately persist in manifest grave sin" are not to be admitted to Eucharistic communion.

61. The mystery of the Eucharist – sacrifice, presence, banquet – *does not allow for reduction or exploitation...* By giving the Eucharist the prominence it deserves, and by being careful not to diminish any of its dimensions or demands, we show that we are truly conscious of the greatness of this gift. We are urged to do so by an uninterrupted tradition, ...which from the first centuries on has found the Christian community ever vigilant in guarding this 'treasure.' Inspired by love, the Church is anxious to hand on to future generations of Christians, without loss, her faith and teaching with regard to the mystery of the Eucharist. There can be no danger of excess in our care for this mystery, for 'in this sacrament is recapitulated the whole mystery of our salvation.'
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html

**July 3, 2004 - CDF's Cardinal Ratzinger's Memorandum to Cardinal McCarrick Released:
"Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion: General Principles"**

1. Presenting oneself to receive Holy Communion should be a conscious decision, based on a reasoned judgment regarding one's worthiness to do so, according to the Church's objective criteria, asking such questions as: "Am I in full communion with the Catholic Church? Am I guilty of grave sin? Have I incurred a penalty (e.g. excommunication, interdict) that forbids me to receive Holy Communion? Have I prepared myself by fasting for at least an hour?" The practice of indiscriminately presenting oneself to receive Holy Communion, merely as a consequence of being present at Mass, is an abuse that must be corrected (cf. Instruction "Redemptionis Sacramentum," nos. 81, 83).

4. Apart from an individual's judgment about his worthiness to present himself to receive the Holy Eucharist, the minister of Holy Communion may find himself in the situation where he must refuse to distribute Holy Communion to someone, such as in cases of a declared excommunication, a declared interdict, or an obstinate persistence in manifest grave sin (cf. can. 915).

7. When "these precautionary measures have not had their effect or in which they were not possible," and the person in question, with obstinate persistence, still presents himself to receive the Holy Eucharist, "the minister of Holy Communion must refuse to distribute it" (cf. Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts Declaration "Holy Communion and Divorced, Civilly Remarried Catholics" [2002], nos. 3-4). This decision, properly speaking, is not a sanction or a penalty. Nor is the minister of Holy Communion passing judgment on the person's subjective guilt, but rather is reacting to the person's public unworthiness to receive Holy Communion due to an objective situation of sin.

<https://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/cdfworthycom.HTM>
<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/7055?eng=y>

May 7, 2005 - Pope Benedict XVI's Speech of Possession of the Chair of the Bishop of Rome

This power of teaching frightens many people in and outside the Church. They wonder whether freedom of conscience is threatened or whether it is a presumption opposed to freedom of thought. It is not like this. The power that Christ conferred upon Peter and his Successors is, in an absolute sense, a mandate to serve. The power of teaching in the Church involves a commitment to the service of obedience to the faith. The Pope is not an absolute monarch whose thoughts and desires are law. On the contrary: the Pope's ministry is a guarantee of obedience to Christ and to his Word. He must not proclaim his own ideas, but rather constantly bind himself and the Church to obedience to God's Word, in the face of every attempt to adapt it or water it down, and every form of opportunism....

The Pope knows that in his important decisions, he is bound to the great community of faith of all times, to the binding interpretations that have developed throughout the Church's pilgrimage. Thus, his power is not being above, but at the service of, the Word of God. It is incumbent upon him to ensure that this Word continues to be present in its greatness and to resound in its purity, so that it is not torn to pieces by continuous changes in usage.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050507_san-giovanni-laterano.html

July 25, 2005 - Pope Benedict XVI's Address to the Diocesan Clergy of Aosta

[Another priest raised the topic of Communion for the faithful who are divorced and remarried. The Holy Father answered him as follows:]

We all know that this is a particularly painful problem for people who live in situations in which they are excluded from Eucharistic Communion, and naturally for the priests who desire to help these people love the Church and love Christ. This is a problem.

None of us has a ready-made formula, also because situations always differ. I would say that those who were married in the Church for the sake of tradition but were not truly believers, and who later find themselves in a new and invalid marriage and subsequently convert, discover faith and feel excluded from the Sacrament, are in a particularly painful situation. This really is a cause of great suffering and when I was Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, I invited various Bishops' Conferences and experts to study this problem: a sacrament celebrated without faith. Whether, in fact, a moment of invalidity could be discovered here because the Sacrament was found to be lacking a fundamental dimension, I do not dare to say. I personally thought so, but from the discussions we had I realized that it is a highly-complex problem and ought to be studied further. But given these people's painful plight, it must be studied further.

I shall not attempt to give an answer now, but in any case two aspects are very important. The first: even if these people cannot go to sacramental Communion, they are not excluded from the love of the Church or from the love of Christ. A Eucharist without immediate sacramental Communion is not of course complete; it lacks an essential dimension. Nonetheless, it is also true that taking part in the Eucharist without Eucharistic Communion is not the same as nothing; it still means being involved in the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. It is still participating in the great Sacrament in its spiritual and pneumatic dimensions, and also in its ecclesial dimension, although this is not strictly sacramental.

And since it is the Sacrament of Christ's passion, the suffering Christ embraces these people in a special way and communicates with them in another way differently, so that they may feel embraced by the Crucified Lord who fell to the ground and died and suffered for them and with

them. Consequently, they must be made to understand that even if, unfortunately, a fundamental dimension is absent, they are not excluded from the great mystery of the Eucharist or from the love of Christ who is present in it. This seems to me important, just as it is important that the parish priest and the parish community make these people realize that on the one hand they must respect the indissolubility of the Sacrament, and on the other, that we love these people who are also suffering for us. Moreover, we must suffer with them, because they are bearing an important witness and because we know that the moment when one gives in "out of love", one wrongs the Sacrament itself and the indissolubility appears less and less true.

We know the problem, not only of the Protestant Communities but also of the Orthodox Churches, which are often presented as a model for the possibility of remarriage. But only the first marriage is sacramental: the Orthodox too recognize that the other marriages are not sacramental, they are reduced and redimensioned marriages and in a penitential situation; in a certain sense, the couple can go to Communion but in the awareness that this is a concession "by economy", as they say, through mercy which, nevertheless, does not remove the fact that their marriage is not a Sacrament. The other point is that in the Eastern Churches for these marriages they have conceded the possibility of divorce too lightly, and that the principle of indissolubility, the true sacramental character of the marriage, is therefore seriously injured.

On the one hand, therefore, is the good of the community and the good of the Sacrament that we must respect, and on the other, the suffering of the people we must alleviate.

...True joy is something different from pleasure; joy grows and continues to mature in suffering, in communion with the Cross of Christ. It is here alone that the true joy of faith is born, from which even they are not excluded if they learn to accept their suffering in communion with that of Christ.

February 22, 2007 – Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*:

29. If the Eucharist expresses the irrevocable nature of God's love in Christ for his Church, we can then understand why it implies, with regard to the sacrament of Matrimony, that indissolubility to which all true love necessarily aspires. There was good reason for the pastoral attention that the Synod gave to the painful situations experienced by some of the faithful who, having celebrated the sacrament of Matrimony, then divorced and remarried. This represents a complex and troubling pastoral problem, a real scourge for contemporary society, and one which increasingly affects the Catholic community as well. The Church's pastors, out of love for the truth, are obliged to discern different situations carefully, in order to be able to offer appropriate spiritual guidance to the faithful involved. The Synod of Bishops confirmed the Church's practice, based on Sacred Scripture (cf. *Mk* 10:2- 12), of not admitting the divorced and remarried to the sacraments, since their state and their condition of life objectively contradict the loving union of Christ and the Church signified and made present in the Eucharist. Yet the divorced and remarried continue to belong to the Church, which accompanies them with special concern and encourages them to live as fully as possible the Christian life through regular participation at Mass, albeit without receiving communion, listening to the word of God, eucharistic adoration, prayer, participation in the life of the community, honest dialogue with a priest or spiritual director, dedication to the life of charity, works of penance, and commitment to the education of their children.

When legitimate doubts exist about the validity of the prior sacramental marriage, the necessary investigation must be carried out to establish if these are well-founded. Consequently there is a need to ensure, in full respect for canon law, the presence of local ecclesiastical tribunals, their pastoral character, and their correct and prompt functioning. Each Diocese should have a sufficient number of persons with the necessary preparation, so that the ecclesiastical tribunals can operate

in an expeditious manner. I repeat that "it is a grave obligation to bring the Church's institutional activity in her tribunals ever closer to the faithful". At the same time, pastoral care must not be understood as if it were somehow in conflict with the law. Rather, one should begin by assuming that the fundamental point of encounter between the law and pastoral care is *love for the truth*: truth is never something purely abstract, but "a real part of the human and Christian journey of every member of the faithful". Finally, where the nullity of the marriage bond is not declared and objective circumstances make it impossible to cease cohabitation, the Church encourages these members of the faithful to commit themselves to living their relationship in fidelity to the demands of God's law, as friends, as brother and sister; in this way they will be able to return to the table of the Eucharist, taking care to observe the Church's established and approved practice in this regard. This path, if it is to be possible and fruitful, must be supported by pastors and by adequate ecclesial initiatives, nor can it ever involve the blessing of these relations, lest confusion arise among the faithful concerning the value of marriage.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis.html

July 24, 2007 - Pope Benedict's Meeting with Clergy of Belluno-Feltre and Treviso:

Q. I am Fr Samuele. ...We are seeing an enormous increase in situations of divorced people who remarry, live together and ask priests to help them with their spiritual life. These people often come to us with a heartfelt plea for access to the sacraments. These realities need to be faced and the sufferings they cause must be shared. Holy Father, may I ask you what are the human, spiritual and pastoral approaches with which one can combine compassion and truth? Thank you.

Pope Benedict XVI: Yes, this is indeed a painful problem and there is certainly no simple solution to resolve it. This problem makes us all suffer because we all have people close to us who are in this situation. We know it causes them sorrow and pain because they long to be in full communion with the Church. The previous bond of matrimony reduces their participation in the life of the Church. What can be done?... The first part of my answer provides for prevention, not only in the sense of preparation but also of guidance and for the presence of a network of families to assist in this contemporary situation where everything goes against faithfulness for life. It is necessary to help people find this faithfulness and learn it, even in the midst of suffering.

However, in the case of failure, in other words, when the spouses are incapable of adhering to their original intention, there is always the question of whether it was a real decision in the sense of the sacrament. As a result, one possibility is the process for the declaration of nullity. If their marriage were authentic, which would prevent them from remarrying, the Church's permanent presence would help these people to bear the additional suffering. In the first case, we have the suffering that goes with overcoming this crisis and learning a hard-fought for and mature fidelity. In the second case, we have the suffering of being in a new bond which is not sacramental, hence, does not permit full communion in the sacraments of the Church. Here it would be necessary to teach and to learn how to live with this suffering. We return to this point, to the first question of the other diocese. In our generation, in our culture, we have to rediscover the value of suffering in general, and we have to learn that suffering can be a very positive reality which helps us to mature, to become more ourselves, and to be closer to the Lord who suffered for us and suffers with us. Even in the latter situation, therefore, the presence of the priest, families, movements, personal and communitarian communion in these situations, the helpful love of one's neighbour, a very specific love, is of the greatest importance. And I think that only this love, felt by the Church and expressed in the solidarity of many, can help these people recognize that they are loved by Christ and are members of the Church despite their difficult situation. Thus, it can help them to live the faith.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/july/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070724_clero-cadore.html

June 2, 2012 - Pope Benedict XVI Speech at Seventh World Meeting of Families in Milan:

5. Q. Some of these remarried couples would like to be reconciled with the Church, but when they see that they are refused the sacraments they are greatly discouraged. They feel excluded, marked by a judgement against which no appeal is possible.... Holy Father we know that the Church cares deeply about these situations and these people [the divorced and civilly remarried]. What can we say to them and what signs of hope can we offer them?

Pope Benedict XVI: ...Indeed the problem of divorced and remarried persons is one of the great sufferings of today's Church... As regards these people - as you have said - the Church loves them, but it is important they should see and feel this love. I see here a great task for a parish, a Catholic community, to do whatever is possible to help them to feel loved and accepted, to feel that they are not "excluded" even though they cannot receive absolution or the Eucharist; they should see that, in this state too, they are fully a part of the Church. Perhaps, even if it is not possible to receive absolution in Confession, they can nevertheless have ongoing contact with a priest, with a spiritual guide. This is very important, so that they see that they are accompanied and guided. Then it is also very important that they truly realize they are participating in the Eucharist if they enter into a real communion with the Body of Christ. Even without "corporal" reception of the sacrament, they can be spiritually united to Christ in his Body. Bringing them to understand this is important: so that they find a way to live the life of faith based upon the Word of God and the communion of the Church, and that they come to see their suffering as a gift to the Church, because it helps others by defending the stability of love and marriage. They need to realize that this suffering is not just a physical or psychological pain, but something that is experienced within the Church community for the sake of the great values of our faith. I am convinced that their suffering, if truly accepted from within, is a gift to the Church. They need to know this, to realize that this is their way of serving the Church, that they are in the heart of the Church. Thank you for your commitment.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2012/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20120602_festa-testimonianze.html

February 28, 2013 – Pope Benedict XVI resigns the papacy.

March 13, 2013 – Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio elected pope, takes name "Francis."

March 17, 2013 - Pope Francis First Angelus Address, Praises Cardinal Kasper:

...the Gospel presents us with the story of the adulterous woman whom Jesus saves from being condemned to death. It captures Jesus' attitude: we do not hear words of contempt, we do not hear words of condemnation, but only words of love, of mercy, that invite us to conversion. 'Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more!'

In these days, I have been able to read a book by a cardinal—Cardinal Kasper, a talented theologian, a good theologian—on mercy. And it did me such good, that book, but don't think that I'm publicizing the books of my cardinals. That is not the case! But it did me such good, so much good... Cardinal Kasper said that hearing the word mercy changes everything. It is the best thing that we can hear: it changes the world. A bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just.

http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/2091/full_text_pope_francis_first_angelus_address.aspx

Report: After Francis publicly praised Kasper's work, an older cardinal in Rome came to the pope and insisted: "Holy Father, you should not recommend this book! There are many heresies in it!" The pope smiled as he told Kasper the story, and reassured him: "It goes in one ear and out the other."

<http://www.americamagazine.org/content/all-things/cardinal-kasper-popes-theologian-spotlight>

March 17, 2013 - Pope Francis' First Homily at Casa Santa Marta on Woman Caught in Adultery:

...There were others who did not hear anything, who could not hear anything; and there were those who brought along this woman: Listen, Master, this woman has done such and such ... we must do what Moses commanded us to do with women like this (cf. vv. 4-5).

I think we too are the people who, on the one hand want to listen to Jesus, but on the other hand, at times, like to find a stick to beat others with, to condemn others. And Jesus has this message for us: mercy. I think – and I say it with humility – that this is the Lord's most powerful message: mercy. It was he himself who said: "I did not come for the righteous". The righteous justify themselves. Go on, then, even if you can do it, I cannot! But they believe they can. "I came for sinners" (Mk 2:17).

Think of the gossip after the call of Matthew: he associates with sinners! (cf. Mk 2:16). He comes for us, when we recognize that we are sinners. But if we are like the Pharisee, before the altar, who said: I thank you Lord, that I am not like other men, and especially not like the one at the door, like that publican (cf. Lk 18:11-12), then we do not know the Lord's heart, and we will never have the joy of experiencing this mercy!...

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130317_omelia-santa-anna.html

April 12, 2013 - - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

...time is God's messenger... God saves us in time, not in the moment. Sometimes he performs miracles, but in ordinary life, he saves us in time... in history ... [and] in the personal story [of our lives]

...A great temptation [in the Christian life] is triumphalism... It is a temptation that even the Apostles had...Triumphalism is not of the Lord. The Lord came to Earth humbly; he lived his life for 30 years; he grew up like a normal child; he experienced the trial of work and the trial of the Cross. Then, in the end, he resurrected.... The Lord teaches that in life not everything is magical, that triumphalism is not Christian

This is the grace for which we must ask: perseverance... that the Lord may save us from fantasies of triumphalism. Triumphalism is not Christian, it is not of the Lord. The daily journey in the presence of God, this is the way of the Lord.

<http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-triumphalism-is-a-temptation-of-chris>

May 29, 2013 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

Today, we risk succumbing to the temptation of a Christianity without a cross. And there is another temptation: that of a Christianity with the cross but without Jesus...[This was the] temptation of triumphalism. We want triumph now, without going to the cross, a worldly triumph, a reasonable

triumph.... [a] "triumphalist Church is a halfway Church.... a Church content with being well organized and with... everything lovely and efficient...

<http://zenit.org/articles/pope-francis-triumphalism-in-the-church-halts-the-church>

June 15, 2013 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

What is reconciliation? Taking one from this side, taking another one for that side and uniting them: no, that's part of it but it's not it ... True reconciliation means that God in Christ took on our sins and He became the sinner for us. When we go to confession, for example, it isn't that we say our sin and God forgives us. No, not that! We look for Jesus Christ and say: 'This is your sin, and I will sin again'. And Jesus likes that, because it was his mission: to become the sinner for us, to liberate us.

<http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-the-christian-life-proclaims-the-road-to-reco>

June 27, 2013 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

...there are those who believe that the Christian life should be taken so seriously that they end up confusing solidity, firmness, with rigidity. They are rigid! This think that being Christian means being in perpetual mourning... And they not only have no joy, they have no freedom either. They are the slaves of superficiality, of this life widespread, and the slaves of rigidity, they are not free. The Holy Spirit has no place in their lives,. It is the Spirit who gives us the freedom!...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2013/06/27/pope_at_mass_resting_our_faith_on_the_rock_of_christ/en1-705319

June 29, 2013 - Pope Francis' Encyclical *Lumen Fidei*:

46. ...The Decalogue is not a set of negative commands, but concrete directions for emerging from the desert of the selfish and self-enclosed ego in order to enter into dialogue with God, to be embraced by his mercy and then to bring that mercy to others. Faith thus professes the love of God, origin and upholder of all things, and lets itself be guided by this love in order to journey towards the fullness of communion with God...

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html

July 31, 2013 – Pope Francis' press in-flight press conference from Rio:

Q. ... how does Your Holiness intend to confront the question of the gay lobby?

Pope Francis: ...If a person is gay and seeks the Lord and has good will, well who am I to judge them? The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains this in a very beautiful way, but says, wait a moment, how do you say... it says, [that] these persons must not be marginalized for this, they must be integrated into society."

The problem is not having this tendency, no, we must be brothers, because this is one, but there is another, another [problem]. The problem is forming a lobby of this tendency, a lobby of the greedy, a lobby of politicians, a lobby of Masons, so many lobbies. This is the gravest problem for me.

Q.: Holy Father, also on this trip you have spoken many times about mercy. About the access to the sacraments for those divorced and remarried, does the possibility exist that something might change in the discipline of the Church, that these sacraments are an occasion to bring these people closer rather than a barrier that separates them from other faithful?

Pope Francis: "Mercy is greater than that case that you pose. I believe that this is a time of mercy... About the problem of Communion to those persons in a second union, that the divorced might participate in Communion, there is no problem. When they are in a second union, they can't. I

believe that it is necessary to keep this within the entirety of pastoral care of marriage. And for this it is a problem. But also... a parenthesis, the Orthodox have a different praxis. They follow the theology of economy, as they called it, and they give a second chance, they allow it. But I believe that this problem, and I close the parenthesis, must be studied in the framework of marriage pastoral ministry. And for this, two things: first, one of the themes to be consulted with the eight of this council of cardinals, with whom we'll be meeting the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of October, is how to move ahead in the pastoral care of marriage, and this problem will come up there.... We are on the path for a more profound pastoral care of marriage. And, this is a problem for all, because there are so many, right? For instance, I'll tell you of just one, Cardinal Quarracino, my predecessor, said that for him half of all marriages are null. That's what he said. Why? Because they are married without maturity, they get married without realizing that it's for an entire lifetime, or they are married because socially they must get married. And in this also pastoral care of marriage is a factor. And also the judicial problem of the nullity of marriage, that must be revisited, because the ecclesiastical courts aren't enough for this.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-transcript-of-popes-in-flight-press-remarks-released/>

September 3, 2013 - Pope Francis' Letter to Eugenio Scalfari:

Above all, you ask if the God of Christians forgives those who do not believe and who do not seek faith. Given the premise, and this is fundamental, that the mercy of God is limitless for those who turn to him with a sincere and contrite heart, the issue for the unbeliever lies in obeying his or her conscience. There is sin, even for those who have no faith, when conscience is not followed. Listening to and obeying conscience means deciding in the face of what is understood to be good or evil. It is on the basis of this choice that the goodness or evil of our actions is determined.

Secondly, you ask me whether it is erroneous or a sin to follow the line of thought which holds that there is no absolute, and therefore no absolute truth, but only a series of relative and subjective truths. To begin with, I would not speak about "absolute" truths, even for believers, in the sense that absolute is that which is disconnected and bereft of all relationship. Truth, according to the Christian faith, is the love of God for us in Jesus Christ. Therefore, truth is a relationship. As such each one of us receives the truth and expresses it from within, that is to say, according to one's own circumstances, culture and situation in life, etc. This does not mean that truth is variable and subjective, quite the contrary. But it does signify that it comes to us always and only as a way and a life. Did not Jesus himself say: "I am the way, the truth, and the life?" In other words, truth, being completely one with love, demands humility and an openness to be sought, received and expressed. Therefore, we must have a correct understanding of the terms and, perhaps, in order to overcome being bogged down by conflicting absolute positions, we need to redefine the issues in depth. I believe this is absolutely necessary in order to initiate that peaceful and constructive dialogue which I proposed at the beginning of my letter.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130911_eugenio-scalfari.html

August 19, 2013 – Pope Francis' interview with Fr. Antonio Spadarro:

Fr. Spadarro: ...what [does] it mean exactly for him to "think with the church"?

Pope Francis: The people itself constitutes a subject. And the church is the people of God on the journey through history, with joys and sorrows. Thinking with the church, therefore, is my way of being a part of this people. And all the faithful, considered as a whole, are infallible in matters of belief, and the people display this *infallibilitas in credendo*, this infallibility in believing, through a supernatural sense of the faith of all the people walking together. This is what I understand today as the 'thinking with the church' of which St. Ignatius speaks. When the dialogue among the people

and the bishops and the pope goes down this road and is genuine, then it is assisted by the Holy Spirit. So this thinking with the church does not concern theologians only.... We should not even think, therefore, that 'thinking with the church' means only thinking with the hierarchy of the church... And, of course, we must be very careful not to think that this *infallibilitas* of all the faithful I am talking about in the light of Vatican II is a form of populism. No; it is the experience of 'holy mother the hierarchical church,' as St. Ignatius called it, the church as the people of God, pastors and people together. The church is the totality of God's people....

Fr. Spadarrow: What did the Second Vatican Council accomplish? What does it mean?

Pope Francis: Vatican II was a re-reading of the Gospel in light of contemporary culture. Vatican II produced a renewal movement that simply comes from the same Gospel. Its fruits are enormous. Just recall the liturgy. The work of liturgical reform has been a service to the people as a re-reading of the Gospel from a concrete historical situation. Yes, there are hermeneutics of continuity and discontinuity, but one thing is clear: the dynamic of reading the Gospel, actualizing its message for today—which was typical of Vatican II—is absolutely irreversible...

Pope Francis: The church sometimes has locked itself up in small things, in small-minded rules. The most important thing is the first proclamation: Jesus Christ has saved you. And the ministers of the church must be ministers of mercy above all. The confessor, for example, is always in danger of being either too much of a rigorist or too lax. Neither is merciful, because neither of them really takes responsibility for the person. The rigorist washes his hands so that he leaves it to the commandment. The loose minister washes his hands by simply saying, 'This is not a sin' or something like that. In pastoral ministry we must accompany people, and we must heal their wounds.

Fr. Spadarrow: there are Christians who live in situations that from the point of view of the church are irregular or somewhat complex, Christians that, in one way or another, live with open wounds. I mention the divorced and remarried, same-sex couples and other difficult situations. What kind of pastoral work can we do in these cases? What kinds of tools can we use?

Pope Francis: We need to proclaim the Gospel on every street corner, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing, even with our preaching, every kind of disease and wound. In Buenos Aires I used to receive letters from homosexual persons who are 'socially wounded' because they tell me that they feel like the church has always condemned them. But the church does not want to do this. During the return flight from Rio de Janeiro I said that if a homosexual person is of good will and is in search of God, I am no one to judge. By saying this, I said what the catechism says. Religion has the right to express its opinion in the service of the people, but God in creation has set us free: it is not possible to interfere spiritually in the life of a person.

A person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: 'Tell me: when God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?' We must always consider the person. Here we enter into the mystery of the human being. In life, God accompanies persons, and we must accompany them, starting from their situation. It is necessary to accompany them with mercy. When that happens, the Holy Spirit inspires the priest to say the right thing.

This is also the great benefit of confession as a sacrament: evaluating case by case and discerning what is the best thing to do for a person who seeks God and grace. The confessional is not a torture chamber, but the place in which the Lord's mercy motivates us to do better. I also consider the

situation of a woman with a failed marriage in her past and who also had an abortion. Then this woman remarries, and she is now happy and has five children. That abortion in her past weighs heavily on her conscience and she sincerely regrets it. She would like to move forward in her Christian life. What is the confessor to do?

We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods. This is not possible. I have not spoken much about these things, and I was reprimanded for that. But when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context. The teaching of the church, for that matter, is clear and I am a son of the church, but it is not necessary to talk about these issues all the time.

The dogmatic and moral teachings of the church are not all equivalent. The church's pastoral ministry cannot be obsessed with the transmission of a disjointed multitude of doctrines to be imposed insistently. Proclamation in a missionary style focuses on the essentials, on the necessary things: this is also what fascinates and attracts more, what makes the heart burn, as it did for the disciples at Emmaus. We have to find a new balance; otherwise even the moral edifice of the church is likely to fall like a house of cards, losing the freshness and fragrance of the Gospel. The proposal of the Gospel must be more simple, profound, radiant. It is from this proposition that the moral consequences then flow.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130921_intervista-spadaro.html

October 1, 2013 - Pope Francis' Interview with Scalfari

Pope Francis: The most serious evils currently afflicting the world are unemployment among the young and the solitude in which the elderly are left...

Scalfari: "Your Holiness, is there is a single vision of the Good? And who decides what it is?"

Pope Francis: "Each of us has a vision of good and of evil. We have to encourage people to move towards what they think is Good."

Scalfari: "Your Holiness, you wrote that in your letter to me. The conscience is autonomous, you said, and everyone must obey his conscience. I think that's one of the most courageous steps taken by a Pope."

Pope Francis: "And I repeat it here. Everyone has his own idea of good and evil and must choose to follow the good and fight evil as he conceives them. That would be enough to make the world a better place."...

Pope Francis: "But now let me ask you a question: you, a secular non-believer in God, what do you believe in? You are a writer and a man of thought. You believe in something, you must have a dominant value. Don't answer me with words like honesty, seeking, the vision of the common good, all important principles and values but that is not what I am asking. I am asking what you think is the essence of the world, indeed the universe. You must ask yourself, of course, like everyone else, who we are, where we come from, where we are going. Even children ask themselves these questions. And you?"

Scalfari: "I am grateful for this question. The answer is this: I believe in Being, that is in the tissue from which forms, bodies arise."

Pope Francis: "And I believe in God, not in a Catholic God, there is no Catholic God, there is God and I believe in Jesus Christ, his incarnation. Jesus is my teacher and my pastor, but God, the Father, Abba, is the light and the Creator. This is my Being. Do you think we are very far apart?"

http://www.vatican-stg.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco_20131002_intervista-scalfari.html

http://www.vatican.va/news_services/or/or_quo/225q01.pdf#page=4

http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2013/10/01/news/pope_s_conversation_with_scalfari_english-67643118/

NOTE: A few hours after it was published in "la Repubblica," the interview was reproduced in its entirety both in "L'Osservatore Romano" and on the official website of the Holy See, on a par with the other discourses and documents of the Pope. On November 15, it was removed from the Vatican website. Fr. Lombardi explained: "It was removed to clarify the nature of that text. There were some misunderstandings and disagreements about its value... One may consider the interview to be reliable in a general sense but not word for word. This is not an official text of the Holy Father." Lombardi added that if Francis felt his thought had been "gravely misrepresented," he would have said so.

On November 21, interviewed at the Roman headquarters of the foreign press, Scalfari nonetheless revealed more details of the matter. He said that the pope, at the end of the conversation, had consented that it should be made public. And to Scalfari's proposal that he send him the text beforehand, he had replied: "It seems like a waste of time to me, I trust you." In effect, the founder of "la Repubblica" sent the text to the pope, accompanied by a letter in which he wrote among other things: "Keep in mind that I did not include some of the things that you said to me. And that some of the things that I attribute to you you did not say. But I put them there so that the reader may understand who you are." Two days later - again according to what Scalfari claims - the pope's secretary, Alfred Xuereb, telephoned to give the go-ahead for publication. Which took place the following day. Scalfari commented: "I am perfectly willing to think that some of the things that I wrote and attributed to him are not shared by the pope, but I also believe that he maintains that, said by a nonbeliever, they are important for him and for the activity he is carrying out."

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1350668?eng=y>

On October 2, 2013, Fr. Lombardi said of the Scalfari interview, "It is not a magisterial document."

http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2013/10/02/fr_lombardi_sj_briefs_on_council_of_cardinals/en-1-733695

On July 16, 2014 the Scalfari interview of October 1, 2013 was posted again and taken down soon after:

<http://wdtprs.com/blog/2014/07/the-2013-scalfari-interview-now-back-on-the-vatican-website-why/>

Currently the interview is available in multiple languages for viewing on a 2014 archived Vatican website, with the preceding text "Disabled" over the English, but not the Italian version, and it continues to be publicly accessible on the Vatican's website as published in L'Osservatore Romano.

http://www.vatican-stg.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco_20131002_intervista-scalfari.html

http://www.vatican-stg.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2013/october/documents/papa-francesco_20131002_intervista-scalfari.html

http://www.vatican.va/news_services/or/or_quo/225q01.pdf#page=4

On October 6, 2014, the Vatican publishing house *Libreria Editrice Vaticana* has published the Scalfari interview of October 1, 2013 in its book, *Interviews and Conversations with Journalists* which “contains in chronological order the interviews addressed to Pope Francis and recognized as such and published on L'Osservatore Romano and other newspapers.”

<http://www.libreriaeditricevaticana.va/content/libreriaeditricevaticana/it/novita-editoriali/interviste-e-conversazioni-con-i-giornalisti.html>

October 8, 2013 – Pope Francis announces two-part Synod on Family starting in 2014:

<http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/pope-francis-calls-synod-on-the-family-evangelization>

Oct. 9, 2013 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

Christians are called to proclaim Jesus without fear , without shame and without triumphalism... [there is the group of Christians who] in their hearts do not believe in the Risen Lord and want to make theirs a more majestic resurrection than that of the real one . These are the ‘triumphalist’ Christians. They do not know the meaning of the word ‘triumph’ so they just say ‘triumphalism’, because they have such an inferiority complex and want to do this ... When we look at these Christians , with their many triumphalist attitudes , in their lives, in their speeches and in their pastoral theology, liturgy , so many things , it is because they do not believe deep down in the Risen One . He is the Winner, the Risen One. He won....This, the Holy Father added, is the message that Paul gives to us.

http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2013/09/10/pope_no_to_triumphalism_in_the_church%2C_proclaim_jesus_without_fear/en1-727225

October 18, 2013 - Vatican sends family survey to dioceses around the world ahead of synod:

4. Pastoral Care in Certain Difficult Marital Situations

- a) Is cohabitation ad experimentum a pastoral reality in your particular Church? Can you approximate a percentage?
- b) Do unions which are not recognized either religiously or civilly exist? Are reliable statistics available?
- c) Are separated couples and those divorced and remarried a pastoral reality in your particular Church? Can you approximate a percentage? How do you deal with this situation in appropriate pastoral programmes?
- d) In all the above cases, how do the baptized live in this irregular situation? Are they aware of it? Are they simply indifferent? Do they feel marginalized or suffer from the impossibility of receiving the sacraments?
- e) What questions do divorced and remarried people pose to the Church concerning the Sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation? Among those persons who find themselves in these situations, how many ask for these sacraments?
- f) Could a simplification of canonical practice in recognizing a declaration of nullity of the marriage bond provide a positive contribution to solving the problems of the persons involved? If yes, what form would it take?
- g) Does a ministry exist to attend to these cases? Describe this pastoral ministry? Do such programmes exist on the national and diocesan levels? How is God’s mercy proclaimed to separated couples and those divorced and remarried and how does the Church put into practice her support for them in their journey of faith?

5. On Unions of Persons of the Same Sex

- a) Is there a law in your country recognizing civil unions for people of the same-sex and equating it in some way to marriage?
- b) What is the attitude of the local and particular Churches towards both the State as the promoter of civil unions between persons of the same sex and the people involved in this type of union?
- c) What pastoral attention can be given to people who have chosen to live in these types of union?
- d) In the case of unions of persons of the same sex who have adopted children, what can be done pastorally in light of transmitting the faith?

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20131105_iii-assemblea-sinodo-vescovi_en.html

November 24, 2013 – Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*:

16. It is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory. In this sense, I am conscious of the need to promote a sound “decentralization”.

32. ...The papacy and the central structures of the universal Church also need to hear the call to pastoral conversion. The Second Vatican Council stated that, like the ancient patriarchal Churches, episcopal conferences are in a position “to contribute in many and fruitful ways to the concrete realization of the collegial spirit”. Yet this desire has not been fully realized, since a juridical status of episcopal conferences which would see them as subjects of specific attributions, including genuine doctrinal authority, has not yet been sufficiently elaborated. Excessive centralization, rather than proving helpful, complicates the Church’s life and her missionary outreach.

33. Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: “We have always done it this way”. I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities.

44. Moreover, pastors and the lay faithful who accompany their brothers and sisters in faith or on a journey of openness to God must always remember what the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches quite clearly: “Imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors.” Consequently, without detracting from the evangelical ideal, they need to accompany with mercy and patience the eventual stages of personal growth as these progressively occur. I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord’s mercy which spurs us on to do our best. A small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties...

47. There are other doors that should not be closed either. Everyone can share in some way in the life of the Church; everyone can be part of the community, nor should the doors of the sacraments be closed for simply any reason. This is especially true of the sacrament which is itself “the door”: baptism. The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak. (Footnote 51 - Cf. Saint Ambrose, *De Sacramentis*, IV, 6, 28: PL 16, 464: “I must receive it always, so that it may always forgive my sins. If I sin continually, I must always have a remedy”; ID., *op. cit.*, IV, 5, 24: PL 16, 463: “Those who ate manna died; those who eat this body will obtain the forgiveness of their sins”; Saint Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joh. Evang.*, IV, 2: PG 73, 584-585: “I examined myself and I found myself unworthy. To those who speak thus I say: when will you be worthy? When at last you present yourself before Christ? And if your sins prevent you from drawing nigh, and you never cease to fall – for, as the

Psalm says, ‘what man knows his faults?’ – will you remain without partaking of the sanctification that gives life for eternity?”) These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness. Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.

94. ...[Spiritual] worldliness can be fueled... [by] self-absorbed promethean neopelagianism of those who ultimately trust only in their own powers and feel superior to others because they observe certain rules or remain intransigently faithful to a particular Catholic style from the past. A supposed soundness of doctrine or discipline leads instead to a narcissistic and authoritarian elitism, whereby instead of evangelizing, one analyzes and classifies others, and instead of opening the door to grace, one exhausts his or her energies in inspecting and verifying. In neither case is one really concerned about Jesus Christ or others. These are manifestations of an anthropocentric immanentism.

169. ...The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life. https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

December 10, 2013 - Pope Francis' Interview with *La Stampa*:

Q. In the Apostolic Exhortation you called for prudent and bold pastoral choices regarding the sacraments. What were you referring to?

Pope Francis: When I speak of prudence I do not think of it in terms of an attitude that paralyses but as the virtue of a leader. Prudence is a virtue of government. So is boldness. One must govern with boldness and prudence. I spoke about baptism and communion as spiritual food that helps one to go on; it is to be considered a remedy not a prize. Some immediately thought about the sacraments for remarried divorcees, but I did not refer to any specific cases; I simply wanted to point out a principle. We must try to facilitate people's faith, rather than control it. Last year in Argentina I condemned the attitude of some priests who did not baptise the children of unmarried mothers. This is a sick mentality.

Q. And what about remarried divorcees?

Pope Francis: The exclusion of divorced people who contract a second marriage from communion is not a sanction. It is important to remember this. But I didn't talk about this in the Exhortation [Evangelii Gaudium].

Q. Will this issue be dealt with at the next Synod of Bishops?

Pope Francis: The synodality of the Church is important: we will discuss marriage as a whole at the Consistory meetings in February. The issues will also be addressed at the Extraordinary Synod in October 2014 and again at the Ordinary Synod the following year. Many elements will be examined in more detail and clarified during these sessions.

<http://www.lastampa.it/2013/12/14/esteri/vatican-insider/en/never-be-afraid-of-tenderness-5BqUfVs9r7W1CJIMuHqNeI/pagina.html>

December 24, 2013 - Cardinal Meiser, later one of cardinals to submit the dubia to the pope, speaks of his private meeting with Pope Francis on the subject of communion for 'remarried' divorcees:

At my last meeting with Pope Francis, I had the opportunity to talk very open to him about a lot of things. And I told him that some questions remain unanswered in his style of spreading the gospel through interviews and short speeches, questions which need some extended explanation for the uniformed. The pope looked at me "with big eyes" and asked me to give an example.

And my response was : "During the flight back from Rio you were asked about people who divorced and remarried. And the pope responded frankly: "People who are divorced can receive communion, people who are remarried cannot. In the orthodox church you can marry twice." And then he talked about mercy, which, according to my view, is seen in this country only as a substitute for all human faults. And the pope responded quite bluntly that he is a son of the church, and he doesn't proclaim anything else than the teachings of the church. And mercy has to be identical with truth – otherwise, it doesn't deserve that name. Furthermore, he expressly told me that when there are open theological questions, it is up to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to clarify and give detailed responses.

Also, you should know that before the [Second Vatican] Council, the Pope himself was the president of this congregation, and it is, in the curial order, still in the first place now the same as before. Nor can one speak of the the Prefect as if here were a private citizen, only because he previously was a member of the [German] Episcopal Conference.

http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/katholische-kirche-meisner-bestreitet-reformbedarf.694.de.html?dram:article_id=272951

February 20, 2014 – Cardinal Kasper's opening speech to the Extraordinary Consistory of Cardinals:

...A divorced and remarried person: 1. if he repents of his failure in the first marriage, 2. if he has clarified the obligations of the first marriage, if it is definitively ruled out that he could turn back, 3. if he cannot abandon without further harm the responsibilities taken on with the new civil marriage, 4. if however he is doing the best he can to live out the possibilities of the second marriage on the basis of the faith and to raise his children in the faith, 5. if he has a desire for the sacraments as a source of strength in his situation, should we or can we deny him, after a period of time in a new direction, of "metanoia," the sacrament of penance and then of communion?

This possible way would not be a general solution. It is not the wide road of the masses, but rather the narrow path of what is probably the smaller segment of the divorced and remarried, those sincerely interested in the sacraments. Should not the worst be avoided precisely here? In fact, when the children of the divorced and remarried do not see their parents approach the sacraments they too usually fail to find their way to confession and communion. Should we not take into account the fact that we will also lose the next generation and perhaps the one after it too? Our long-established practice, is it not showing itself to be counterproductive?

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1350729?eng=y>

February 21, 2014 – Pope Francis praises Kasper in his remarks at the Consistory:

Yesterday, before going to sleep - although I did not do this to put myself to sleep - I read or rather re-read the work of Cardinal Kasper, and I would like to thank him because I found profound theology, and even serene thinking in theology. It is pleasant to read serene theology. And I also found what Saint Ignatius told us about, that 'sensus Ecclesiae,' love for Mother Church. It did me

good and an idea came to me - excuse me, Eminence, if I embarrass you - but the idea is that this is called 'doing theology on one's knees.' Thank you. Thank you.

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1350729?eng=y>

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2014/february/documents/papa-francesco_20140221_concistoro-ora-terza.html

February 28, 2014 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

It is always the small case. And this is the trap, behind casuistry, behind casuistical thought, there is always a trap: against people, against us, and against God, always. 'But is it licit to do this? To divorce his wife?' And Jesus answered, asking them what the Law said, and explaining why Moses framed the Law as he did. But He doesn't stop there. From [the study of the particular case], He goes to the heart of the problem, and here He goes straight to the days of Creation...

When, however, this leaving one's father and mother, and joining oneself to a woman, and going forward... when this love fails - because many times it fails - we have to feel the pain of the failure, [we must] accompany those people who have had this failure in their love. Do not condemn. Walk with them - and don't practice casuistry on their situation....how close we must be to our brothers and sisters who in life have had the misfortune of a failure in love... May the Lord give all of us the grace to understand it and also the grace to never fall into these casuistical attitudes of the Pharisees, of the teachers of the law.

http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2014/02/28/pope_francis_accompany%2C_dont_condemn%2C_those_who_have_experience/en1-777372

April 7, 2014 - Pope Francis Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

...Their [the Pharisees'] only objective was to 'test Jesus, to lay a trap. They didn't care about the woman, they didn't care about adultery. On the contrary, maybe even some of them were themselves adulterers.' And so Jesus, who wanted 'to be alone with the woman and speak to her heart,' answered, 'Let the one among you without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And then, 'they went away one by one' after hearing those words. 'The Gospel, with a certain amount of irony, says that they went away, one by one, starting with the eldest: clearly they owed a lot of money to the heavenly bank!' Then came the moment of Jesus Confessor. He is left 'alone with the woman' who was placed in the midst...Then he stood up and looked at the woman who was full of shame and said to her: 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' We are alone, you and I. You are before God. With no accusations, no gossip: you and God. The woman did not claim to be a victim of false accusations; she did not defend herself by saying 'I didn't commit adultery.' No. she acknowledged her sin and answered Jesus by saying, 'No one condemned me Lord.' And so Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you.' Jesus forgives. But here is something more than forgiveness. Because as a confessor, Jesus goes beyond the law. The law stated that she must be punished. What's more, Jesus was pure and could have himself cast the first stone. But he goes further than that...mercy is something difficult to understand: it does not erase sins...but he defends the sinner from a just condemnation...this applies to all of us...God's mercy is like a great light of love and tenderness because God forgives not with a decree, but with a caress.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2014/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20140407_forgiveness-caress.html

<https://books.google.com/books?id=TTjZCgAAQBAJ&pg=PT9&lpg=PT9#v=onepage&q&f=false>

April 21, 2014 - Argentinian woman civilly married to a divorced man says Pope Francis called to give her permission to receive communion:

Jaqui Lisbona said in a radio interview with La Red Am91: "[The parish priest says] when I went home, I resumed a life of sin." She says Pope Francis told her: "A little bread and wine 'does no

harm,'...there are some priests who are more papist than the Pope... It is an issue we are discussing in the Vatican, because a divorcee who takes communion is not doing anything wrong." Lisbona said,"He said my letter was useful in helping him address this issue.... I told him I would write to him again when I take Communion again."

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2611292/A-little-bread-wine-does-no-harm-Pope-Francis-tells-divorced-woman-OK-communion.html>

<https://zenit.org/articles/vatican-spokesmen-urge-caution-over-pope-s-phone-call-reports/>

Julio Sabetta, her partner, also confirmed this account in an interview with Channel 3 Rosario: "He called and asked for Jacquie. I asked, 'may I ask who is calling?' And he said, 'Father Bergoglio'. Then I said, 'OK, I will call her,' I called her and Jacquie came almost in tears. She spoke with the pope and, he said she was absolved of all sins, and she could go and get the Holy Communion because she has not done anything wrong."

<http://abc7.com/archive/9515758/>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/the-pope/10782508/Pope-Francis-tells-sinner-she-should-be-allowed-Communion.html>

April 24, 2014 - Statement from the Director of the Holy See Press Office on the Phone Call:

Several telephone calls have taken place in the context of Pope Francis' personal pastoral relationships. Since they do not in any way form part of the Pope's public activities, no information or comments are to be expected from the Holy See Press Office. That which has been communicated in relation to this matter, outside the scope of personal relationships, and the consequent media amplification, cannot be confirmed as reliable, and is a source of misunderstanding and confusion. Therefore, consequences relating to the teaching of the Church are not to be inferred from these occurrences.

May 7, 2014 - Kasper says Pope says half of Catholic marriages are invalid:

I've spoken to the pope himself about this, and he said he believes that 50 percent of marriages are not valid. Marriage is a sacrament. A sacrament presupposes faith. And if the couple only want a bourgeois ceremony in a church because it's more beautiful, more romantic, than a civil ceremony, you have to ask whether there was faith, and whether they really accepted all the conditions of a valid sacramental marriage—that is, unity, exclusivity, and also indissolubility.

<https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/interview-cardinal-walter-kasper>

May 26, 2014 - Pope Francis' in-flight press conference from the Holy Land:

Q. You have become a spiritual leader, and also a political leader, and you are raising many expectations, both within the Church and in the international community. Within the Church, for example, what is going to happen with communion to the divorced and remarried, and in the international community, this mediation with which you surprised the world, for which this meeting will take place in the Vatican... My question is whether you are afraid of failure, after having raised so many expectations. Aren't you afraid of somehow failing? Thank you.

Pope Francis: ...thank you for your question about the divorced. The Synod will be on the family, the problem of the family, the treasures of the family, the present situation of the family. The preliminary talk which Cardinal Kasper gave had five chapters: four of them were on the family, the beauty of the family, its theological foundations, and problems facing families; while the fifth chapter dealt with the pastoral issue of separations, declarations of marriage nullity, divorced persons... Part of this issue is that of communion. I have not been happy that so many people – even church people, priests – have said: "Ah, the Synod will be about giving communion to the divorced", and went straight to that point. I felt as if everything was being reduced to casuistry. No the issue is bigger and wider. Today, as we all know, the family is in crisis, it is in crisis worldwide. Young

people don't want to get married, they don't get married or they live together. Marriage is in crisis, and so the family is in crisis. I don't want us to fall into this casuistry of "can we" or "can't we"? ... So I thank you so much for this question, because it gives me the opportunity to clarify this.

The pastoral problem of the family is complex, very complex. And it has to be looked at case by case. Something Pope Benedict had said on three different occasions about the divorced has been very helpful to me. First, in Valle d'Aosta, another time in Milan, and a the third time in the consistory, the last public consistory which he called for the creation of cardinals. [He said that there is a need] to study the annulment process; to examine the faith with which people enter marriage and to make clear that the divorced are not excommunicated, [even though] they are often treated as if they were. This is something serious: the casuistry of the problem.

The Synod will be on the family: both the rich reality of the family and the problems faced by families. Solutions, annulments, all of this. This problem too, but as part of a larger picture. Now I would like to tell you why the Synod will be on the family: this has been a very powerful spiritual experience for me. During my second year as Pope, Archbishop Eterović, then the Secretary [General] of the Synod, approached me with three themes that the Post-synodal Council had proposed for the forthcoming Synod. The first was very striking, very good: what Jesus Christ brings to contemporary men and women. That was the title, following up on the Synod on evangelization. I agreed, we spoke for bit about changes in the method of the Synod, and at the end, I said: "Let's add something else: what Jesus Christ brings to contemporary men and women and to the family". Good. Then, when I went to the first meeting of the Post-synodal Council, I saw that the title was there in full, but gradually people were saying: "Yes, yes, "what he brings to the family", "what Jesus Christ brings to the family", and so, without realizing it, the Post-synodal commission ended up speaking about the family. I am sure that it was the spirit of the Lord guiding us even to the choice of this title. I am sure of it, because today the family truly needs so many forms of pastoral assistance. Thank you.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140526_terra-santa-conferenza-stampa.html

June 5, 2014 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

...Uniformity, rigidity – these are hard. They do not have the freedom that the Holy Spirit gives. They confuse the Gospel that Jesus preached, with their doctrine of equality. Christ never wanted His Church to be so rigid – never – and such as these, because of their attitude, do not enter the Church. They call themselves Christians, Catholics, but their attitude drives them away from the Church...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/06/05/pope_francis_at_thursday_morning_mass_in_santa_marta/1101392

June 13, 2014 – Pope Francis' interview with La Vanguardia:

...The three religions, we have our fundamentalist groups, small in relation to all the rest.... A fundamentalist group, although it may not kill anyone, although it may not strike anyone, is violent. The mental structure of fundamentalists is violence in the name of God.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-interview-with-la-vanguardia---full-text-45430/>

July 13, 2014 - Pope Francis' Interview with Scalfari:

Scalfari: It may be the case, however, that some last-minute repentance in life is out of self-interest. It may be an unconscious act, interested in securing a place in a possible afterlife. In such cases, mercy may end up in a trap."

Pope Francis: We do not judge, but the Lord knows and judges. His mercy is infinite but will never fall into a trap. If repentance is not genuine, mercy cannot carry out its role of redemption.

Scalfari: Nonetheless, Holy Father, you have mentioned on several occasions that God has endowed us with free will. You know that if we choose evil, our religion does not exercise mercy towards us. But there is one point I feel compelled to emphasize: our conscience is free and autonomous. We can, in complete good faith, do evil, convinced, however, that good will come from this evil. In cases like this, which occur frequently, what is the attitude of Christians?

Pope Francis: Our conscience is free. If we choose evil because we are sure heavenly good will come from it, our intentions and their consequences will be taken into account. We cannot say anything more because we do not know anything more. It is the Lord who establishes his law and not his creatures. We only know this because it is Christ who told us that the Father knows the creatures that he has created and nothing is a mystery to him. Moreover, the Book of Job examines this topic in depth. Do you remember that we talked about it? We should examine in depth the wisdom books of the Bible as well as the Gospel when it speaks about Judas Iscariot. They are underlying themes of our theology.

Scalfari: As well as of modern culture, which you wish to fully understand and to which you wish to compare yourself.

Pope Francis: It's true that this is a major point of Vatican II, and we will have to deal with it as soon as possible.

http://www.repubblica.it/cultura/2014/07/13/news/il_papa_come_ges_user_il_bastone_contro_i_preti_pedofili-91416624/
<https://books.google.com/books?id=fHb8CwAAQBAJ&pg=PT112&dq=Our+conscience+is+free.+If+we+choose+evil+because&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwig-4TQrpHRAhWBSyYKHjYuDk8Q6AEIGjAA#v=onepage&q=Our%20conscience%20is%20free.%20If%20we%20choose%20evil%20because&f=false>

July 13, 2014 - Fr. Lombardi, the pope's spokesman, said of this Scalfari interview of July 13, 2014:

... as it occurred in a previous and similar circumstance, it is important to note that the words "in quotations" that Mr. Scalfari attributes to the pope come from the expert journalist Scalfari's own memory of what the pope said and are not an exact transcription of a recording nor a review of such a transcript by the pope himself to whom the words are attributed. We should not or must not, therefore, speak in any way, shape, or form of an interview in the normal use of the word, as if there had been a series of questions and answers that faithfully and exactly reflect the precise thoughts of the one being interviewed. It is safe to say, however, that the overall theme of the article captures the spirit of the conversation between the Holy Father and Mr. Scalfari, while, at the same time, strongly restating what was said about the previous "interview" that appeared in La Repubblica: the individual expressions that were used and the manner in which they have been reported cannot be safely attributed to the pope.

<http://www.lastampa.it/2014/07/13/vaticaninsider/eng/the-vatican/the-popes-conversation-with-scalfari-and-the-words-francis-never-pronounced-lHgw1pOrzUROo4wtkAROEL/pagina.html>

August 12, 2014 – Pope Francis' niece, Maria Ines Narvaja (Bergoglio), speaks of how the pope treated her divorce and remarried, in an interview:

Q. So could you not tell if your uncle was to the left or right?

A. ... he is theologically more conservative, but pastorally he is more progressive.

Q. Did he celebrate your marriage?

A. No; he is very sparing, very reserved on these occasions. Depending on the case, he decided with much freedom. I married my husband first civilly and only after 4 years, in the Church. Because he was handling submitting the annulment and the sentence did not come, so I had to wait those four years; all that time he was like a great father to me and I really appreciate it. There are two things my uncle has: first an impressive memory and the other is that he listens much, but does not judge, and never tells you what you have to do. I remember when I told him I could not wait for a marriage in the Church, which was already a great [wait], and that I was getting married civilly; he replied to me, "that is the best news you've given me."

Q. The issue of giving the Eucharist to divorced and remarried, is much discussed today in the Church. What do you think that the pope will decide?

A. I think he will obey the decision of the synod. In *Evangelii Gaudium* he states that the Eucharist is not a prize-- it is food for the pilgrim. I have spoken with him about it at length, given my personal situation. Those who receive communion are not receiving a certificate of good conduct. And perhaps you have to review a little the theme of individual responsibilities, but not only for the divorced, but also for those who judge others; all who receive communion are sinners, and there are some sins that involve harm to others and others are simply mistakes; perhaps a revision in this sense would have to be made.

<http://www.tierrasdeamerica.com/2014/08/12/mi-tio-jorge-y-yo-entrevista-maria-ines-narvaja-sobrina-del-papa-francisco-quiere-una-iglesia-mas-desarmada-pero-mas-aguerrida-desde-el-punto-de-vista-espiritual/>

October 5, 2014 - Extraordinary Synod on the Family opens.

October 6, 2014 - Pope Francis' Opening Synod Speech:

...One general and basic condition is this: speaking honestly. Let no one say: "I cannot say this, they will think this or this of me...". It is necessary to say with parrhesia all that one feels. After the [last Consistory](#) (February 2014), in which the family was discussed, a Cardinal wrote to me, saying: what a shame that several Cardinals did not have the courage to say certain things out of respect for the Pope, perhaps believing that the Pope might think something else. This is not good, this is not synodality, because it is necessary to say all that, in the Lord, one feels the need to say: without polite deference, without hesitation. And, at the same time, one must listen with humility and welcome, with an open heart, what your brothers say. Synodality is exercised with these two approaches. For this reason I ask of you, please, to employ these approaches as brothers in the Lord: speaking with parrhesia and listening with humility. And do so with great tranquility and peace, so that the Synod may always unfold cum Petro et sub Petro, and the presence of the Pope is a guarantee for all and a safeguard of the faith....

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco_20141006_padri-sinodali.html

October 6, 2014 - Synod Relator General, Cardinal Erdő's "Relatio ante disceptationem":

d) The Pastoral Care of Divorced and Remarried Persons

First of all, among the great number of pastoral challenges keenly felt today is that of divorced and civilly remarried persons (see *Familiaris consortio*, 84). Indeed, in some countries this problem is not present, due to the fact that civil marriages do not exist. In other countries, the percentage of divorced and remarried tends to decrease because of the unwillingness to contract a new marriage — even civil one — after the failure of the first marriage. The responses to the

questions show that this problem has different nuances in different regions of the world (cf. *Instrumentum laboris*, 98-100).

In light of what has already been said, the situation does not put in question Christ's words (cf. Mt 19:3-12) or the truth of the indissolubility of marriage (cf. Denzinger – Hünermann, 1327, 1797, 1807; *Gaudium et spes*, 49) or even maintain that these are no longer in force. Furthermore, it would be misleading to concentrate only on the question of the reception of the sacraments. The answer, then, can be sought in a more comprehensive pastoral care of the young and those in marriage preparation. An intensive pastoral care programme on marriage and the family is also needed, especially for those in crisis situations....

<https://zenit.org/articles/synod14-full-text-of-cardinal-erdo-s-report-prior-to-discussion/>

October 10, 2014 Cardinal Baldisierri reportedly intercepts copies of *Remaining in the Truth of Christ*

"*Remaining in the Truth of Christ*," a book by several cardinals and scholars reaffirming Catholic teaching on marriage and the family, was mailed to all the synod fathers in the Paul VI Hall, where the meeting was taking place. A furious Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisieri, reportedly ordered they be intercepted because they would "interfere with the synod."

According to revelations by Edward Pentin, Cardinal Baldisieri wanted the books confiscated altogether, but when he was advised that this would be illegal, he delayed the books' delivery, allowing them to be delivered to the mailboxes for at most two days at the end of the synod, thereby making the book's possible influence on the debates unlikely if not impossible. Some synod staff and others believe the copies never retrieved at the end were thrown away, probably as many as one hundred copies.

http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/4213/the_curious_case_of_the_intercepted_book.aspx

<http://www.newsmax.com/EdwardPentin/Pope-Francis-Cardinal-Walter-Kasper-Cardinal-Gerhard-Muller-Vatican/2015/02/25/id/626811/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2972176/Vatican-whodunit-What-happened-books-marriage.html>

October 13, 2014 – Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

Why were these Doctors of the Law unable to understand the signs of the times? Why did they demand an extraordinary sign (which Jesus later gave to them), why they did not understand? First of all, because they were closed. They were closed within their system, they had perfectly systemized the law, it was a masterpiece. Every Jew knew what they could do and what they could not do, how far they could go. It was all systemized. And they were safe there.

They did not understand that God is the God of surprises, that God is always new; He never denies himself, never says that what He said was wrong, never, but He always surprises us. They did not understand this and they closed themselves within that system that was created with the best of intentions and asked Jesus: 'But, give us a sign'. And they did not understand the many signs that Jesus did give them and which indicated that the time was ripe. Closure! Second, they had forgotten that they were a people on a journey. On a path! And when we set out on a journey, when we are on our path, we always encounter new things, things we did not know.

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/13/pope_at_santa_marta_holy_law_is_not_an_end_in_its_elf/1108446

October 13, 2014 – Extraordinary Synod Midterm "Relatio post disceptationem":

20. Realizing the need, therefore, for spiritual discernment with regard to cohabitation, civil marriages and divorced and remarried persons, it is the task of the Church to recognize those seeds

of the Word that have spread beyond its visible and sacramental boundaries. Following the expansive gaze of Christ, whose light illuminates every man (cf. Jn 1,9; cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 22), the Church turns respectfully to those who participate in her life in an incomplete and imperfect way, appreciating the positive values they contain rather than their limitations and shortcomings.

22. In this respect, a new dimension of today's family pastoral consists of accepting the reality of civil marriage and also cohabitation, taking into account the due differences. Indeed, when a union reaches a notable level of stability through a public bond, is characterized by deep affection, responsibility with regard to offspring, and capacity to withstand tests, it may be seen as a germ to be accompanied in development towards the sacrament of marriage.

36. A new element in today's pastoral activity is a sensitivity to the positive aspects of civilly celebrated marriages and, with obvious differences, cohabitation. While clearly presenting the ideal, the Church needs also to indicate the constructive elements in these situations which do not yet or no longer correspond to that ideal.

38. ...Simply to live together [cohabitation] is often a choice based on a overall attitude, opposed to anything institutional and definitive, but also in expectation of a more secure existence (a steady job and income)...Furthermore, such unions can display authentic family values or at least an inherent desire for them. Pastoral guidance should always start from these positive aspects.

40. ...the synod fathers felt the urgent need to embark on a new pastoral course based on the present reality of weaknesses within the family, recognizing that couples, more often than not, are more "enduring" situations than freely choosing them.

47. As to the possibility of partaking of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, some synod fathers argued in favour of the present regulations because of their theological foundation, while others were in favour of a broader outlook with well-defined conditions, when dealing with situations that cannot be resolved without creating new injustices and suffering. For some, access to the sacraments might take place if preceded by a penitential practice — determined by the diocesan bishop — and a clear commitment in favour of the children. This would not be a possibility applied to all, but the fruit of a discernment [...] on a case-by-case basis, according to the law of gradualness, which takes into consideration the distinction between a state of sin, the state of grace and [...] extenuating circumstances.

48. The suggestion of limiting these persons to the practice of "spiritual communion" was questioned by many synod fathers. If spiritual communion is possible, why not allow them to partake in the Sacrament? Consequently, greater theological study was requested, beginning with the links between the Sacrament of Marriage and the Eucharist in relation to [...] Church-Sacrament. Likewise, the moral aspect of the problem requires further consideration, listening to and illuminating the consciences of these persons.

50. Homosexuals have gifts and qualities to offer to the Christian community: are we capable of welcoming these people, guaranteeing to them a fraternal space in our communities? Often they wish to encounter a Church that offers them a welcoming home. Are our communities capable of providing that, accepting and valuing their sexual orientation, without compromising Catholic doctrine on the family and matrimony?

51. The question of homosexuality leads to a serious reflection on how to elaborate realistic paths of affective growth and human and evangelical maturity integrating the sexual dimension: it appears therefore as an important educative challenge.

52. Without denying the moral problems connected to homosexual unions it has to be noted that there are cases in which mutual aid to the point of sacrifice constitutes a precious support in the life of the partners. Furthermore, the Church pays special attention to the children who live with couples of the same sex, emphasizing that the needs and rights of the little ones must always be given priority.

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/13/synod_on_family_midterm_report_presented, 2015_synod_announ/1108442

<http://web.archive.org/web/20150101012219/http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2014/10/13/0751/03037.html>

October 18, 2014 – Pope Francis’ Closing Speech Synod:

And since it [the synod] is a journey of human beings, with the consolations there were also moments of desolation, of tensions and temptations, of which a few possibilities could be mentioned:

- One, a temptation to hostile inflexibility, that is, wanting to close oneself within the written word, (the letter) and not allowing oneself to be surprised by God, by the God of surprises, (the spirit); within the law, within the certitude of what we know and not of what we still need to learn and to achieve. From the time of Christ, it is the temptation of the zealous, of the scrupulous, of the solicitous and of the so-called – today – “traditionalists” and also of the intellectuals.

- The temptation to a destructive tendency to goodness [it. buonismo], that in the name of a deceptive mercy binds the wounds without first curing them and treating them; that treats the symptoms and not the causes and the roots. It is the temptation of the “do-gooders,” of the fearful, and also of the so-called “progressives and liberals.”

- The temptation to transform stones into bread to break the long, heavy, and painful fast (cf. Lk 4:1-4); and also to transform the bread into a stone and cast it against the sinners, the weak, and the sick (cf. Jn 8:7), that is, to transform it into unbearable burdens (Lk 11:46).

- The temptation to come down off the Cross, to please the people, and not stay there, in order to fulfil the will of the Father; to bow down to a worldly spirit instead of purifying it and bending it to the Spirit of God.

- The temptation to neglect the “*depositum fidei*” [the deposit of faith], not thinking of themselves as guardians but as owners or masters [of it]; or, on the other hand, the temptation to neglect reality, making use of meticulous language and a language of smoothing to say so many things and to say nothing! They call them “byzantinisms,” I think, these things...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/18/pope_francois_speech_at_the_conclusion_of_the_synod/1108944

October 23, 2014 – Extraordinary Synod Final Report sections published with simple majority despite failing to reach 2/3 majority required:

25. In considering a pastoral approach towards people who have contracted a civil marriage, who are divorced and remarried or simply living together, the Church has the responsibility of helping them understand the divine pedagogy of grace in their lives and offering them assistance so they can reach the fullness of the God’s plan for them.

41. While continuing to proclaim and foster Christian marriage, the Synod also encourages pastoral discernment of the situations of a great many who no longer live this reality. Entering into pastoral dialogue with these persons is needed to distinguish elements in their lives that can lead to a

greater openness to the Gospel of Marriage in its fullness. Pastors ought to identify elements that can foster evangelization and human and spiritual growth. A new element in today's pastoral activity is a sensitivity to the positive aspects of civilly celebrated marriages and, with obvious differences, cohabitation. While clearly presenting the Christian message, the Church also needs to indicate the constructive elements in these situations that do not yet or no longer correspond to it. [This paragraph reached the required $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Fathers (123 votes) by 2 votes, 125-54]

45. The necessity for courageous pastoral choices was particularly evident at the Synod. Strongly reconfirming their faithfulness to the Gospel of the Family and acknowledging that separation and divorce are always wounds that cause deep suffering to the married couple and to their children, the synod fathers felt the urgent need to embark on a new pastoral course based on the present reality of weaknesses within the family, knowing oftentimes that these are more "endured" with suffering than freely chosen. These situations vary because of personal, cultural and socio-economic factors. Therefore, solutions need to be considered in a variety of ways, as suggested by Pope St. John Paul II (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 84).

51. Likewise, those who are divorced and remarried require careful discernment and an accompaniment of great respect. Language or behavior that might make them feel an object of discrimination should be avoided, all the while encouraging them to participate in the life of the community...

52. The synod fathers also considered the possibility of giving the divorced and remarried access to the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Various synod fathers insisted on maintaining the present discipline, because of the constitutive relationship between participation in the Eucharist and communion with the Church as well as her teaching on the indissoluble character of marriage. Others proposed a more individualized approach, permitting access in certain situations and with certain well-defined conditions, primarily in irreversible situations and those involving moral obligations towards children who would have to endure unjust suffering. Access to the sacraments might take place if preceded by a penitential practice, determined by the diocesan bishop. The subject needs to be thoroughly examined, bearing in mind the distinction between an objective sinful situation and extenuating circumstances, given that "imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1735). [This paragraph did not reach the required $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Fathers: 104 in favor, 74 against]

53. Some synod fathers maintained that divorced and remarried persons or those living together can have fruitful recourse to a spiritual communion. Others raised the question as to why, then, they cannot have access to sacramental Communion. As a result, the synod fathers requested that further theological study in the matter with a view to making clear the distinctive features of the two forms and their connection with the theology of marriage. [This paragraph did not reach the required $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Fathers: 112 in favor, 64 against]

55. Some families have members who have a homosexual tendency. In this regard, the synod fathers asked themselves what pastoral attention might be appropriate for them in accordance with Church teaching: "There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family." Nevertheless, men and women with a homosexual tendency ought to be received with respect and sensitivity. "Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided" (*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between*

Homosexual Persons, 4). [This paragraph did not reach the required 2/3 of the Fathers: 118 in favor, 62 against]

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20141018_relatio-synodi-familia_en.html

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2014/10/18/0770/03044.html>

November 17, 2014 - Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI revises conclusion on communion for the divorced and civilly remarried of his 1972 Essay in the collection of his Opera Omnia following Cardinal Kasper's citation of the essay in his 2014 consistory address:

1972 Ratzinger Essay Original Conclusion:

Where a first marriage broke up a long time ago and in a mutually irreparable way, and where, conversely, a marriage consequently entered into has proven itself over a longer period as a moral reality and has been filled with the spirit of the faith, especially in the education of the children (so that the destruction of this second marriage would destroy a moral greatness and cause moral harm), the possibility should be granted, in a non-judicial way, based on the testimony of the pastor and church members, for the admission to Communion of those in live in such a second marriage... If in the second marriage moral obligations to the children, to the family, and so also to the woman have arisen, and no similar commitments from the first marriage exist, and if thus for moral reasons the abandonment of the second marriage is inadmissible, and on the other hand practically speaking abstinence presents no real possibility (magnum est, says Gregory II), the opening up of communion in Communion after a period of probation appears to be no less than just and to be fully in line with the Church's tradition: The granting of communio cannot here depend on an act that is either immoral or practically speaking impossible.

<http://www.pathsoflove.com/pdf/ratzinger-indissolubility-marriage.pdf>

2014 Revised Conclusion of the 1972 Ratzinger Essay

...Perhaps, however, it should be emphasized with greater clarity what the pastors and brethren in the faith can do so that they [the divorced and civilly remarried] may truly feel the love of the Church. I think that they should be granted the possibility of participating in ecclesial associations and even of becoming godfathers or godmothers, something that the law does not provide for as of now.

There is another point of view that imposes itself on me. The impossibility of receiving the holy Eucharist is perceived as so painful not last of all because, currently, almost all who participate in the Mass also approach the table of the Lord. In this way the persons affected also appear publicly disqualified as Christians.

I maintain that Saint Paul's warning about examining oneself and reflecting on the fact that what is at issue is the Body of the Lord should be taken seriously once again: "A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor 11:28 f.). A serious self-examination, which might even lead to forgoing communion, would also help us to feel in a new way the greatness of the gift of the Eucharist and would furthermore represent a form of solidarity with divorced and remarried persons.

I would like to add another practical suggestion. In many countries it has become customary for persons who are not able to receive communion (for example, the members of other confessions) to approach the altar with their hands folded over their chests, making it clear that they are not receiving the sacrament but are asking for a blessing, which is given to them as a sign of the love of

Christ and of the Church. This form could certainly be chosen also by persons who are living in a second marriage and therefore are not admitted to the Lord's table. The fact that this would make possible an intense spiritual communion with the Lord, with his whole Body, with the Church, could be a spiritual experience that would strengthen and help them.

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1350933?eng=y>

<http://www.herdershop24.de/Buecher/Theologische-Reihenwerke/Einfuehrung-in-das-Christentum.html?campaign=herder/titeldetail>

December 7, 2014 - Pope Francis' Interview with *La Nacion*:

Q. As a Pope you are different because you speak with utmost clarity, you are completely straightforward, you don't use euphemisms and don't beat about the bush, the course of your papacy is extremely clear. Why do you think some sectors are disoriented, why do they say "the ship is without a rudder", especially after the latest extraordinary synod of bishops on the challenges posed by the family?

Pope Francis: Those expressions strike me as odd. I am not aware of anybody using them. The media quote them. However, until I can ask the people involved "have you said this?" I will have brotherly doubts. In general people don't read about what is going on. Somebody did say to me once, "Of course, of course. Insight is so good for us but we need clearer things". And I answered, "Look, I wrote an encyclical, true enough, it was a big job, and an Apostolic Exhortation. I'm permanently making statements, giving homilies; that's teaching. That's what I think, not what the media say that I think. Check it out, it's very clear. *Evangelii Gaudium* is very clear".

Q. Some of the media have mentioned that the "honeymoon is over" on account of the divisions that surfaced during the synod...

Pope Francis: It wasn't a division against the Pope, that is, the Pope was no benchmark. Because the Pope tried to get the ball rolling and to listen to everybody. The fact that in the end my address was accepted with such enthusiasm by the synod fathers shows that the Pope is not the issue, but rather the different pastoral positions are.

Q. Whenever the statu quo changes, which is what happened when you were elected pope, it's normal to find resistance. Some 20 months later, the resistance seems to have become more evident.

Pope Francis: You said it. Resistance is now evident. And that is a good sign for me, getting the resistance out into the open, no stealthy mumbling when there is disagreement. It's healthy to get things out into the open, it's very healthy.

Q. Do you believe resistance is connected with your cleansing efforts, with the in-house restructuring of the Roman Curia?

Pope Francis: To me, resistance means different points of view, not something dirty. It is connected to some decisions I may occasionally take, I will concede that. Of course, some decisions are more of the economic type, and others are more pastoral.

Q. A conservative sector in the US thinks that you removed the North American cardinal Raymond Leo Burke from the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura because he was the leader of a group that resisted changes of any type in the synod of bishops.. Is it true?

Pope Francis: One day Cardinal Burke asked me what he would be doing as he had still not been confirmed in his position, in the legal sector, but rather had been confirmed "donec alitur provideatur". And I answered "Give me some time because we are thinking of a legal restructuring of the G9". I told him nothing had been done about it yet and that it was being considered. After that the issue of the Order of Malta cropped up and we needed a smart American who would know how to get around and I thought of him for that position. I suggested this to him long before the synod. I said to him

Pope Francis: This will take place after the synod because I want you to participate in the synod as Dicastery Head". As the chaplain of Malta he wouldn't have been able to be present. He thanked me in very good terms and accepted my offer, I even think he liked it. Because he is a man that gets around a lot, he does a lot of travelling and would surely be busy there. It is therefore not true that I removed him because of how he had behaved in the synod.

Q. The recent extraordinary synod of bishops on the family allowed two different visions of the Church to surface, one sector open to debate and the other one refusing to hear anything about it. Is this the case, what do you think?

Pope Francis: I wouldn't say that's quite so... True enough, if you wish to simplify in order to explain things, we might say that there were a few more on this side, or on the other side. What we benefitted from was the synodal process, which is no parliamentary process but rather a protected space where the Holy Spirit may endeavor. Two clear qualities are needed: courage to speak and humbleness to listen. And that worked very well. There are, indeed, positions more inclined this way or that way, but in the pursuit of truth. You could ask me "are there any that are completely stubborn and won't move from their positions?". Yes, there surely are. But that is not my concern. It's a question of praying for the Holy Spirit to convert them, if any. The prevailing feeling was a brotherly one, trying to find a way to tackle the family's pastoral issues. The family is so beaten up, young people don't get married. What's the problem? When they finally come to get married, having already moved in together, we think it's enough to offer them three talks to get them ready for marriage. But it's not enough because the great majority are unaware of the meaning of a lifetime commitment. Benedict said it twice in his last year, that we should take this into account in order to grant nullity, each person's faith at the time of getting married. Was it something general, though understanding perfectly well what marriage is about, understanding it enough to convey it to another person? That's something we need to look into in depth, to analyze how we can help...

A few days ago, a couple who are living together came to tell me that they were getting married. I said: "Good. Are you ready for it?" And their answer was: "Yes, now we are looking for a church which suits my dress best", the girl said. "Yes, right now we're in the middle of all the preparations - the invitations, souvenirs and all the rest", the boy echoed. "There's also the issue of the party, we cannot make up our minds because we don't want the reception to be hosted too far from the church. And then there's the other issue, our best man and maid of honour are divorced, same as my parents, so we can't have both of them together". All these issues are about the ceremony! Indeed, getting married should be celebrated, because you need courage to get married and that should be commended. However, neither of them made any comment at all on what this meant to them, the fact that it was a lifetime commitment. What do I mean? That for a great many people getting married is just a social event. The religious element doesn't surface in the least. So how can the church step in and help? If they are not ready, do we slam the door in their face? It is no minor issue.

Q. Conservative sectors, specially in the United States, fear that the traditional doctrine will collapse, they say the synod caused confusion because though it did mention the "positive nuances" of living together, and gay couples were mentioned in the draft, although the bishops then backed off..

Pope Francis: The synod was a process; the opinion of a synodal father was just that, the opinion of a synodal father; and a first draft was merely a first draft meant to record it all. Nobody mentioned homosexual marriage at the synod, it did not cross our minds. What we did talk about was of how a family with a homosexual child, whether a son or a daughter, goes about educating that child, how the family bears up, how to help that family to deal with that somewhat unusual situation. That is to say, the synod addressed the family and the homosexual persons in relation to their families, because we come across this reality all the time in the confessional: a father and a mother whose son or daughter is in that situation. This happened to me several times in Buenos Aires. We have to find a way to help that father or that mother to stand by their son or daughter. That's what the synod addressed. That's why someone mentioned positive factors in the first draft. But this was just a draft.

Q. Some people fear that the traditional doctrine shall collapse...

Pope Francis: You know, some people are always afraid because they don't read things properly, or they read some news in a newspaper, an article, and they don't read what the synod decided, what was published. What was worthwhile about the synod? The post synodal connection and the Pope's address. That is definitive, but it will eventually become relative and provisional, turning into a "guideline" for the next synod. I think some fathers made a mistake when they talked to the media. We decided that each one of us would grant as many interviews as he liked, with total freedom, no censorship was imposed. We chose transparency. Why did we choose briefings or not? For two reasons: in the first place because written presentations were handed over first and we might find something in them, or nothing at all, or they changed things and thus were not the real thing. In the second place, to protect that person. And this is what really matters to me. If this were a Parliament, we would have to account to our principal, i.e. the local church. But this is not a Parliament and this man must be free to speak up without having to keep anything to himself, though nobody needs to know that he said this or the other. Disclosing what was said is OK, that's why in the briefing we explained that we had said this, that or the other. Different bishops who had different approaches, but we will all move on together. We had to protect our work so that the Holy Spirit might move forward. I am not afraid.

Q. Afraid of what?

Pope Francis: Afraid of following this trail, the road of the synod. I am not afraid because it is the road that God has asked us to follow. More so, the Pope is the ultimate guarantor, the Pope is there to care for the process. We must move forward. In my last address I said something interesting, I pointed out that we had not addressed any part of the doctrine of the Church concerning marriage. In the case of divorcees who have remarried, we posed the question, what do we do with them? What door can we allow them to open? This was a pastoral concern: will we allow them to go to Communion? Communion alone is no solution. The solution is integration. They have not been excommunicated, true. But they cannot be godfathers to any child being baptized, mass readings are not for divorcees, they cannot give communion, they cannot teach Sunday school, there are about seven things that they cannot do, I have the list over there. Come on! If I disclose any of this it will seem that they have been excommunicated in fact! Thus, let us open the doors a bit more. Why can't they be godfathers and godmothers? "No, no, no, what testimony will they be giving their

godson?". The testimony of a man and a woman saying "my dear, I made a mistake, I was wrong here, but I believe our Lord loves me, I want to follow God, I was not defeated by sin, I want to move on". Anything more Christian than that? And what if one of the political crooks among us, corrupt people, are chosen to be somebody's godfather. If they are properly wedded by the Church, would we accept them? What kind of testimony will they give to their godson? A testimony of corruption? Things need to change, our standards need to change.

Q. What do you think about the solution put forward by the German cardinal Walter Kasper?

Pope Francis: Kasper's address to the cardinals last February included five chapters, four of them are a jewel, about the purpose of marriage, open, in depth. The fifth is the question of what do we do with divorcees who have remarried; they are part of our congregation after all. Kasper's hypothesis is not his own. Let's look into that. What happened? Some theologians feared such assumptions and that is keeping our heads down. Kasper urged us to seek hypothesis, i.e., he made the first move. And some panicked. And went as far as to say: Communion, never. Only spiritual Communion. And tell me, don't we need the grace of God to receive spiritual communion? That's why spiritual communion obtained the fewest votes in the relatio synodi, because nobody was in agreement. Those for it, because there's not much to it, voted against it; and those who are not for it and would rather go for the other one, because it's not worth it.

<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1750350-pope-francis-god-has-bestowed-on-me-a-healthy-dose-of-unawareness> (part 1)

<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1750351-the-synod-on-the-family-the-divorced-and-remarried-seem-excommunicated> (part 2)

December 9, 2014 - Vatican requests dioceses collect responses to another family survey ahead of the second synod

35. Is the Christian community in a position to undertake the care of all wounded families so that they can experience the Father's mercy?...

36. How can the identification of shared pastoral guidelines be fostered at the level of the particular Church? In this regard, how can a dialogue be developed among the various particular Churches cum Petro and sub Petro?

38. With regard to the divorced and remarried, pastoral practice concerning the sacraments needs to be further studied, including assessment of the Orthodox practice and taking into account "the distinction between an objective sinful situation and extenuating circumstances" (n. 52). What are the prospects in such a case? What is possible? What suggestions can be offered to resolve forms of undue or unnecessary impediments?

40. How can the Christian community give pastoral attention to families with persons with homosexual tendencies? What are the responses that, in light of cultural sensitivities, are considered to be most appropriate? While avoiding any unjust discrimination, how can such persons receive pastoral care in these situations in light of the Gospel? How can God's will be proposed to them in their situation?

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20141209_lineamenta-xiv-assembly_en.html

December 15, 2014 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

This is the drama of the hypocrisy of this people. And Jesus never negotiates His heart of the Son of the Father, but He was so open to the people, seeking paths to help them. 'But this can't be done; our discipline, our doctrine say this can't be done!' they say. 'Why do your disciples eat grain in the fields, when they travel, on the day of the Sabbath? It can't be done!' They were so rigid in their discipline: 'No, the discipline can't be touched, it's sacred....But some of you might remember...when Pius XII changed the discipline [on the hour of fasting before receiving communion]: 'Ah, heresy! No! He touched the discipline of the Church.' So many Pharisees were scandalized. So many. Because Pius XII had acted like Jesus: he saw the need of the people.... And these Pharisees [spoke about] 'our discipline' – rigid on the outside, but, as Jesus said of them, 'rotting in the heart,' weak, weak to the point of rottenness. Gloomy in the heart... Even our life can become like that, even our life. And sometimes, I confess something to you, when I have seen a Christian, a Christian of that kind, with a weak heart, not firm, not fixed on the rock—Jesus – and with such rigidness on the outside, I ask the Lord: 'But Lord, throw a banana peel in front of them, so that they will take a good fall, and feel shame that they are sinners, and so encounter You, [and realize] that You are the Saviour...' "But the simple people do not err, [despite the words of these doctors of the law], because the people know, they [the doctors of the law] have a certain 'flair' for the faith...Never to condemn, never to condemn. If you have wanted to condemn, you condemn yourself, who has some reason, eh?...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/12/15/pope_francis_rigidity_is_a_sign_of_a_weak_heart/1114830

January 29, 2015 - Cardinal Baldisierri comments on Pope Francis' role in the synod:

Cardinal Baldisierri: "The pope presided over all of the council meetings of the secretariat. He presides. I am the secretary. The documents were all seen and approved by the Pope, with the approval of his presence...Even the documents during the [Extraordinary] Synod, such as the Relatio ante disceptationem [the preliminary report], the Relatio post disceptationem [midterm report], and the Relatio synodi [final report] were seen by him before they were published....It was the Pope's decision to include the points that did not receive the two-thirds majority."

Baldisierri says that Pope Francis said: "These three points received an absolute majority. They were therefore not rejected with a 'no,' as they received more than 50 percent approval. They are therefore issues that still need to be developed.' We as a Church want a consensus. These texts can be modified, that's clear. Once there has been further reflection, they can be modified."

<http://aleteia.org/2015/01/29/top-official-of-synod-on-the-family-counters-conservatives-arguments/#sthash.f2uhmlx1.dpuf>

February 25, 2015 - Prefect of the Congregation of the Sacraments, Cardinal Sarah publishes *God or Nothing*:

Cardinal Sarah: Fathers of the church knew how to express themselves in a moving way and succeeded in converting whole populations to Christ. Through vivid expressions and beautiful images, they merely communicated their own spiritual experiences.

- One of the major difficulties at present is found in ambiguities or personal statements about important doctrinal points, which can lead to erroneous and dangerous opinions. These bad habits disorient many of the faithful. Sometimes contradictory answers to very serious questions are given by the clergy and the theologians. How can the people of God help but be disturbed by such behaviour? How can the baptized be certain of what is good or bad? Confusion about the right direction to take is the worst malady of our era.

- Contrary to the surrounding subjectivism, the church must know how to tell the truth, with humility, respect, and clarity.

- God did not ask us to create personal projects to transmit the faith. Men of God are conveyors, not interpreters; they are faithful messengers and stewards of the Christian mysteries. Much will be demanded of those who received much....

Many of the faithful rejoice to hear talk about divine mercy, and they hope that the radical demands of the gospel can be relaxed even for the benefit of those who by their lives have chosen to break away from the crucified love of Jesus.

- They think that because of the Lord's infinite goodness everything is possible, while at the same time deciding to change nothing in their lives. Many expect, as something normal, that God should pour out his mercy on them while they remain in sin...

Question: last December [2014] Reinhard Cardinal Marx, president of the German Bishops' conference said: "throughout the world, the search for a theologically responsible and pastorally appropriate way of assisting Catholics who are divorced or divorced and civilly remarried is one of the urgent challenges for pastoral ministry to families and married couples in the context of evangelization." What is your viewpoint on this subject, which figured among the questions at the last synod in October 2014?

Cardinal Sarah: ...this very general statement seems to me to be the expression of mere ideology that they want to impose hastily on the whole Church. In my experience, specifically after 23 years as Archbishop of Conakry, and nine years as secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the question of "Catholics who are divorced or divorced and civilly remarried" is not an urgent challenge for the Church of Africa or Asia. On the contrary, this is an obsession of some Western churches that want to impose so-called "theologically responsible and pastorally appropriate" solutions that radically contradict the teaching of Jesus and of the Church's Magisterium.

...it is not possible to imagine any conflict or tension whatsoever between magisterial teaching and pastoral practice. The idea of putting magisterial teaching in a beautiful display case while separating it from pastoral practice, which then could evolve along with circumstances, fashion, and passions, is a sort of heresy, a dangerous schizophrenic pathology.

- I therefore solemnly state that the Church in Africa is staunchly opposed to any rebellion against the teaching of Jesus and of the magisterium.

- How could a synod go back on the constant teaching that was unified and explained in greater depth by Blessed Paul VI, Saint John Paul II, and Benedict the XVI? I place my trust in the fidelity of Francis.

...We go so far as to exploit the mercy of God, stifling justice and truth, so as to "welcome" homosexual persons - as the Relatio post disceptationem from the last Synod on the family in October 2014 puts it - who "have gifts and qualities to offer to the Christian community". Moreover, this document goes on to say that "the question of homosexuality requires serious reflection on how to devise realistic approaches to affective growth, human development, and maturation in the gospel, while integrating the sexual aspect". In fact, the real scandal is not the existence of sinners, for mercy and forgiveness always exist precisely for them, but rather the confusion between good and evil caused by Catholic shepherds. If men who are consecrated to God are no longer capable of understanding the radical nature of the Gospel message and seek to anaesthetize it, we will be going the wrong way. For that is the real failure of mercy.

...Aline Lizotte, a renowned theologian and director of the Karol Wojtyla Institute, correctly argues..."For a baptized person, to say that a *de facto* union, concubinage, or merely civil marriage can objectively be positive elements leading toward Sacramental fullness is to try to rewrite the history of salvation backward!"

- Today there is a confrontation and a rebellion against God, a battle organized against Christ and his church. How is it comprehensible that Catholic pastors should put doctrine to a vote; the love of God and the Church's teaching on homosexuality, on divorce and remarriage, as though from now on the word of God and the Magisterium had to be sanctioned and approved by majority vote?

- Men who devise and elaborate strategies to kill God, to destroy the centuries-old doctrine and teaching of the Church, will themselves be swallowed up, carried off by their own earthly victory into the eternal fires of Gehenna.

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/blogs/excerpts-from-cardinal-robert-saraha-god-or-nothing-present-greatly-needed>

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/blogs/cardinal-sarah-idea-of-separating-magisterial-teaching-from-pastoral-practi>

March 15, 2015 - Pope Francis' Interview with Scalfari:

Scalfari: What happens to that lost soul? Will it be punished? And how?

Pope Francis: there is no punishment, but the annihilation of that soul. All the others will participate in the beatitude of living in the presence of the Father. The souls that are annihilated will not take part in that banquet; with the death of the body their journey is finished.

http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2015/03/15/news/quel_che_francesco_puo_dire_all_europa_dei_non_credenti-109542750/

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/blogs/about-that-pope-francis-interview-where-he-denied-the-existence-of-hell>

Regarding this Scalfari interview of March 15, 2015, Fr. Thomas Rosica, English-language assistant to the Holy See Press Office said: "All official, final texts of the Holy Father are found on the Vatican website," and since they were never published by the Holy See Press Office they "should not be considered official texts." They were "private discussions that took place and were never recorded by the journalist... Mr. Scalfari reconstructed the interviews from memory."

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/blogs/about-that-pope-francis-interview-where-he-denied-the-existence-of-hell>

March 13, 2015 – Pope Francis' Interview with Televisa:

Those of the second union, which are sometimes phenomenal ... whereas the first ones were failures. How are they to be reintegrated? Let them go to church. Then people simplify and say, 'Ah, they'll give communion to the divorced'. This does not solve anything. What the Church wants is for you to integrate them into the life of the Church. Yet, there are some who say, 'No, I just want to receive communion and that's all.' A rosette, an honor. No. You have to reintegrate them.

There are seven things, under the current legislation, that people in second marriages cannot do. I do not remember them all, but one is being a godfather. Why? Now, what kind of testimony will he give to his godson? That of saying: 'Look dear, in my life I made a mistake. Now, I'm in this situation. I'm a Catholic. These are the principles. I do this and I'll accompany you.' That's a true testimony. But if he belongs to the mafia, if he's a criminal, someone who has killed people, but is married in the Church, he can be a godfather. These are contradictions. It's necessary to integrate. If they are

believers, even if they live in a situation defined as irregular, and they recognize and accept that, and know what the Church thinks of this situation, there's no impediment.

<http://www.news.va/es/news/los-primeros-dos-anos-de-la-era-francisco-en-entre>
<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/pope-francis-appears-to-oppose-communion-for-divorced-and-remarried-catholi>

May 10, 2015 - Pope Francis' Ghostwriter, Archbishop Fernandez's Interview with *Corriere della Serra*:

Q. No doubt, and in a deep and clear way, especially at the beginning. And yet, more recently, there's a certain anxiety. Things are proceeding more slowly. The reform of the curia seems to be stalled.

Fernandez: The pope goes slow because he wants to be sure that the changes have a deep impact. The slow pace is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the changes. He knows there are those hoping that the next pope will turn everything back around. If you go slowly it's more difficult to turn things back. He makes this clear when he says 'time is greater than space.'"

Q. When Francis says he will have a short pontificate doesn't this help his adversaries?

Fernandez: The pope must have his reasons, because he knows very well what he's doing. He must have an objective that we don't understand yet. You have to realize that he is aiming at a reform that is irreversible. If one day he should intuit that he's running out of time and he doesn't have enough time to do what the Spirit is asking him, you can be sure he will speed up."

Q. Aren't you worried that his pontificate will quickly be tossed aside after he's no longer pope?

Fernandez: No, there's no turning back. If and when Francis is no longer pope, his legacy will remain strong. For example, the pope is convinced that the things he's already written or said cannot be condemned as an error. Therefore, in the future anyone can repeat those things without fear of being sanctioned. And then the majority of the People of God with their special sense will not easily accept turning back on certain things."

Q. Don't you see the risk of "two Churches"?

Fernandez: No. There's a schism when a group of important people share the same sensibilities that reflect those of a vast section of society. Luther and Protestantism came about that way. But now the overwhelming majority of the people are with Francis and they love him. His opponents are weaker than what you think. Not pleasing everyone does not mean provoking a schism.

Q. Do you think a conclave would re-elect Francis today?

Fernandez: I don't know, possibly not. But it happened, and everything one could imagine before or after the conclave is not important. The only thing that matters and that's important is that the voting is done in the conclave, with the special assistance of the Spirit. We believe the Holy Spirit guides the conclave and you cannot contradict the Holy Spirit. If some (cardinals) now have regrets it doesn't change anything.

<https://international.la-croix.com/news/no-turning-back/1220>

June 23, 2015 - Ordinary Synod "Instrumentum Laboris":

107. Almost everyone agrees that taking care of wounded families and allowing them to experience the infinite mercy of God is fundamental. People differ, however, on the approach to be used. On the one hand, some consider it necessary to encourage those who live in non-marital partnerships to

undertake a road of return, leading backward. On the other hand, others support inviting these people to look forward, to leave their prison of anger, disappointment, pain and loneliness and to continue on the road ahead. Of course, others say, the art of accompaniment requires a prudent and merciful discernment process, not to mention an ability to grasp the real diversity in individual situations.

108. Everyone needs to remember that the failure of a marriage is always a defeat for everyone. Consequently, after becoming aware of one's proper responsibility, each needs to regain trust and hope. Everyone has a need to give and receive mercy. In every case, justice is to be promoted for all parties involved in a failed marriage (spouses and children).

The Church has the duty to ask the spouses who are separated and divorced to conduct themselves with respect and mercy, especially for the good of the children, who should not have to endure further suffering. Some call for the Church to show a similar attitude towards those who have failed in marriage. "From the heart of the Trinity, from the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly. It is a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people draw from it. Every time someone is in need, he or she can approach it, because the mercy of God never ends" (MV, 25).

The Integration of Divorced and Civilly Remarried Persons in the Christian Community

120. (51) Likewise, those who are divorced and remarried require careful discernment and an accompaniment of great respect. Language or behaviour that might make them feel an object of discrimination should be avoided, all the while encouraging them to participate in the life of the community. The Christian community's care of such persons is not to be considered a weakening of its faith and testimony to the indissolubility of marriage, but, precisely in this way, the community is seen to express its charity.

121. Many parties request that the attention to and the accompaniment of persons who are divorced and civilly remarried take into account the diversity of situations and be geared towards a greater integration of them into the life of the Christian community. Without prejudice to the recommendations made in *Familiaris Consortio* 84, some suggest that the forms of exclusion currently followed in liturgical and pastoral practice be re-examined as well as those in education and charitable activity. Since these persons are still part of the Church, the aim is to reflect on the opportunity to eliminate these forms of exclusion. Furthermore, to promote a greater integration of these persons into the Christian community, specific attention needs to be given to the best interest of their children, given the irreplaceable role parents have in raising their children.

Before integrating persons who are divorced and civilly remarried into pastoral life, some recommend that: pastors duly discern the impossibility of abandoning their situation and the life of faith of the couple in the new relationship; the process be accompanied by raising the sensitivity of the Christian community to receive these persons; and this work be done according to the law of gradualness (cf. FC, 34), while respecting the maturation of consciences.

A Way of Penance

122. (52) The synod fathers also considered the possibility of giving the divorced and remarried access to the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Various synod fathers insisted on maintaining the present discipline, because of the constitutive relationship between participation in the Eucharist and communion with the Church as well as her teaching on the indissoluble character

of marriage. Others proposed a more individualized approach, permitting access in certain situations and with certain well-defined conditions, primarily in irreversible situations and those involving moral obligations towards children who would have to endure unjust suffering. Access to the sacraments might take place if preceded by a penitential practice, determined by the diocesan bishop. The subject needs to be thoroughly examined, bearing in mind the distinction between an objective sinful situation and extenuating circumstances, given that "imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors" (CCC, 1735).

123. Concerning the aforementioned subject, a great number agree that a journey of reconciliation or penance, under the auspices of the local bishop, might be undertaken by those who are divorced and civilly remarried, who find themselves in irreversible situations. In reference to *Familiaris Consortio*, 84, the suggestion was made to follow a process which includes: becoming aware of why the marriage failed and the wounds it caused; due repentance; verification of the possible nullity of the first marriage; a commitment to spiritual communion; and a decision to live in continence.

Others refer to a way of penance, meaning a process of clarifying matters after experiencing a failure and a reorientation which is to be accompanied by a priest who is appointed for this purpose. This process ought to lead the party concerned to an honest judgment of his/her situation. At the same time, the priest himself might come to a sufficient evaluation as to be able to suitably apply the power of binding and loosing to the situation.

In order to examine thoroughly the objective situation of sin and the moral culpability of the parties, some suggest considering *The Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church concerning the Reception of Holy Communion by the Divorced and Remarried Members of the Faithful of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* (4 September 1994) and *The Declaration concerning the Admission to Holy Communion of the Faithful who are Divorced and Remarried of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts* (24 June 2000).

Spiritual Participation in Church Communion

124. (53) Some synod fathers maintained that divorced and remarried persons or those living together can have fruitful recourse to a spiritual communion. Others raised the question as to why, then, they cannot have access to sacramental Communion. As a result, the synod fathers requested that further theological study in the matter with a view to making clear the distinctive features of the two forms and their connection with the theology of marriage.

125. The Church's work of incorporating her members in Christ, begun in Baptism — even in the case of those who are divorced and civilly remarried — takes place in stages through a continual conversion. In this process people are invited in different ways to conform their lives to the Lord Jesus, who, with his grace, sustains them in ecclesial communion. In reference again to *Familiaris Consortio*, 84, the recommended forms of participation are: listening to the Word of God, participation in the celebration of the Eucharist, perseverance in prayer, works of charity, initiatives in the community fostering justice, the formation of children in the faith and a spirit of penance, all of which are supported by the Church's prayer and kindhearted witness. The fruit of this participation is the communion of believers with the whole community, which is an expression of being incorporated into the Church as the Body of Christ. It is important to remember that spiritual communion, which presupposes conversion and the state of grace, is connected to sacramental communion.

137. In relation to the rich content of *Humanae Vitae* and the issues it treats, two principal points emerge which always need to be brought together. One element is the role of conscience as understood to be God's voice resounding in the human heart which is trained to listen. The other is an objective moral norm which does not permit considering the act of generation a reality to be decided arbitrarily, irrespective of the divine plan of human procreation. A person's over-emphasizing the subjective aspect runs the risk of easily making selfish choices. An over-emphasis on the other results in seeing the moral norm as an insupportable burden and unresponsive to a person's needs and resources. Combining the two, under the regular guidance of a competent spiritual guide, will help married people make choices which are humanly fulfilling and ones which conform to God's will.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20150623_instrumentum-xiv-assembly_en.html

June 24, 2015 - Pope Francis' General Audience:

Around us we find various families in so-called irregular situations — I don't really like this word — and it causes us to wonder. How do we help them? How do we accompany them? How do we accompany them so that the children aren't taken hostage by either dad or mom?

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150624_udienza-generale.html

August 5, 2015 - Pope Francis' General Audience:

After speaking the last time about families wounded due to misunderstandings between spouses, today I would like to focus our attention on another reality: how to take care of those who, after an irreversible failure of their matrimonial bond, have entered into a new union.

The Church is fully aware that such a situation is contrary to the Christian Sacrament. However, her gaze as a teacher always draws from a mother's heart; a heart which, enlivened by the Holy Spirit, always seeks the good and the salvation of the people. This is why she feels obliged, "for the sake of truth", to "exercise careful discernment of situations". This is how St John Paul II expressed it in the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (n. 84), giving as an example the difference between one subjected to separation compared to one who has caused it. This discernment has to be made....

For this reason it is important that the style of the community, its language, its attitudes, always be attentive to people, starting with the little ones. They are the ones who suffer the most in these situations. After all, how can we encourage these parents to do everything possible to raise their children in the Christian life, to give them an example of committed and exercised faith, if we keep them at arm's length from the life of the community, as if they are excommunicated? We must act in a way so as not to add even more to the burdens which the children in these situations already feel they have to bear! Unfortunately, the number of these children and youth is really large....

Thanks to the in-depth analysis performed by Pastors, led and guided by my Predecessors, the awareness has truly grown that it is necessary to have a fraternal and attentive welcome, in love and in truth, of the baptized who have established a new relationship of cohabitation after the failure of the marital sacrament; in fact, these persons are by no means excommunicated — they are not excommunicated! — and they should absolutely not be treated as such: they are still a part of the Church.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150805_udienza-generale.html

August 15, 2015 – Pope Francis releases “Mitis Iudex” to remove the second decree of nullity requirement, and create an expedited annulment process overseen by the local bishop:

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio_20150815_mitis-iudex-dominus-iesus.html

September 15, 2015 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

Our Mother Mary and our Mother Church know how to caress their children and show tenderness. To think of the Church without that motherly feeling is to think of a rigid association, an association without human warmth, an orphan...When this motherhood is lacking all that remains is rigidity, discipline and people do not know how to smile.

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/09/15/pope_franis_church_is_a_mother,_not_a_rigid_association/1171948

September 28, 2015 – Pope Francis' in-flight press conference from the USA

Q. You obviously cannot anticipate the debate of the synod fathers, but we would like to know if in your heart as a pastor, you really want a solution for the divorced and remarried. ...

Pope Francis: ...[the] Motu Proprio facilitates the process and the time it takes, but it's not a divorce because marriage is indissoluble when it is a sacrament, and this the church cannot change. It's doctrine, it's an indissoluble sacrament. The legal process is to prove that what seemed to be a sacrament was not [in fact] a sacrament...

As far as the question of second marriages is concerned—that is the divorcees who enter a new union, read what is in the Working Document [Instrumentum Laboris]. It seems a bit simplistic to me to say that in the synod the solution for these people is that they be able to go to communion. But that's not the only solution. The Working Document proposes a lot more. The problem of the new unions of divorcees isn't the only problem. In the Working Document there are many [issues], for example: young people don't get married, they don't want to get married... But I like that you asked the question about “Catholic divorce.” This doesn't exist. If it wasn't a marriage, then nullity [is granted], but if it was then it's indissoluble. This is clear.

<http://papalvisit.americamedia.org/2015/09/28/pope-francis-some-final-thoughts-on-the-flight-home/>

September 29, 2015 - Filial Appeal submitted to Pope Francis from nearly 800,000 Catholic faithful, including 201 cardinals, archbishops and bishops:

Your Holiness, in light of information published on the last Synod, we note with anguish that, for millions of faithful Catholics, the beacon seems to have dimmed in face of the onslaught of lifestyles spread by anti-Christian lobbies. In fact we see widespread confusion arising from the possibility that a breach has opened within the Church that would accept adultery—by permitting divorced and then civilly remarried Catholics to receive Holy Communion—and would virtually accept even homosexual unions when such practices are categorically condemned as being contrary to Divine and natural law. Truly, in these circumstances, a word from Your Holiness is the only way to clarify the growing confusion amongst the faithful.

<http://voiceofthefamily.com/nearly-800000-catholics-request-doctrinal-clarity-from-pope-francis/>

<https://www.tfpstudentaction.org/assets/imgs/inline/filialpetition-en.pdf>

October 5, 2015 - Pope Francis gives opening speech at synod:

...The Church that journeys together to read reality with the eyes of faith and with the heart of God; it is the Church that interrogates herself with regard to her fidelity to the deposit of faith, which does not represent for the Church a museum to view, nor even something merely to safeguard, but

is a living source from which the Church shall drink, to satisfy the thirst of, and illuminate, the deposit of life...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/10/05/pope_francis_full_text_of_remarks_at_synod_opening/1176908

October 5, 2015 - Cardinal Erdo's Synod Introductory Report:

...Regarding the divorced-and-civilly-remarried, a merciful, pastoral accompaniment is only right – an accompaniment, however, which leaves no doubt about the truth of the indissolubility of marriage taught by Jesus Christ himself. The mercy of God offers to sinners pardon, but demands conversion. The sin in this case does not lie first and foremost in whatever comportment which may have led to the breakup of the first marriage. With regard to that failure it is possible that both parties were equally culpable, although very often both are to some extent responsible. It is therefore not the failure of the first marriage, but cohabiting in the second relationship that impedes access to the Eucharist. “Many parties request that the attention to and the accompaniment of persons who are divorced and civilly remarried take into account the diversity of situations and be geared towards a greater integration of them into the life of the Christian community” (Instrumentum laboris 121). What impedes some aspects of full integration does not consist in an arbitrary prohibition; it is rather an intrinsic demand of varied situations and relationships, in the context of ecclesial witness. All this requires, however, a profound reflection.

With respect to a way of penance, this expression is used in diverse ways (cf Instrumentum laboris 122-123). These ways need to be deepened and specified. It can be understood in the sense of St. John Paul II's *Familiaris Consortio* (cf n. 84) and referred to those who are divorced-and-remarried, who because of the needs of their children cannot interrupt their common life, but who can practice continence by the strength of grace, living their relationship of mutual help and friendship. These faithful will also have access to the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, avoiding the provocation of scandal (cf Instrumentum laboris 119). This possibility is far from being physicalist and does not reduce marriage to the exercise of sexuality, but recognizing its nature and purpose, is applied coherently in the life of the human person.

“In order to deepen in the objective situation of sin and moral culpability, the Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on the reception of Eucharistic Communion on the part of divorced and remarried faithful by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Sept. 14, 1994) (should) be taken into consideration as well as the Declaration on the admissibility to Holy Communion of the divorced and remarried by the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts (June 24, 2000),” (IL 123), as also said in the Post-synodal Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* by Benedict XVI.

The integration of the divorced and remarried in the ecclesial community can be realized in various ways, apart from admission to the Eucharist, as already suggested in *Familiaris consortio* 84.

In the traditional practice of the Latin Church the penitential path could have signified for those who were not ready to change their living conditions, but who tried to communicate the desire for conversion, that confessors could hear their confession, giving them good advice and proposing penitential exercises, in order to direct them to conversion, but without giving them the absolution which was possible only for those who actually intended to change their lives (cf RI 5 in VI; F. A. Febeus, S. I., *De regulis iuris canonici Liber unicus*, Venetiis 1735, pp. 91-92).

True marriages among Christians of different confessions and those celebrated with the dispensation of the impediment from the disparity of worship, between a Catholic and a non-baptized individual, they are valid marriages, but present some pastoral challenges. “Consequently,

dealing constructively with differences regarding the faith would necessitate paying particular attention to people who are actually living in these marriages and not simply to couples during the period of preparation before the wedding” (Instrumentum Laboris 127).

For what regards the reference to the pastoral practices of the Orthodox Churches, this cannot be properly evaluated using only the conceptual apparatus developed in the West in the second Millennium. It should be kept in mind (that there are) great institutional differences regarding the tribunals of the Church, as well as the special respect for the legislation of the States, which at times can become critical, if the laws of the State are detached from the truth of marriage according to the design of the Creator.

On the search for pastoral solutions for the difficulty of certain divorced and civilly remarried, it must be kept in mind that fidelity to the indissolubility of marriage cannot be linked to the practical recognition of the goodness of concrete situations that are opposite and therefore irreconcilable. Between true and false, between good and evil, in fact, there is no graduality, even if some forms of cohabitation bring in themselves certain positive aspects, this does not imply that they can be presented as good. However, that the objective truth of the moral good and the subjective responsibility of single persons stand out. There may be a difference between the disorder, ie. the objective sin, and the concrete sin realized in particular conduct that also implies, but not only, the subjective element. “The imputability and responsibility of an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, duress, violence, fear, habits, inordinate attachments and by other psychological or even social factors” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1735). This means that in objective truth good and evil are not given gradually (gradualness of the law), while at the subjective level the law of graduality can take place, and therefore the education of conscience and in the same sense of responsibility. The human act, in fact, is good when it is in every aspect (ex integra causa).

Both in the last synodal assembly and during the preparation of the present general assembly the question of pastoral attention to persons with homosexual tendencies was treated. Even if the problem doesn't directly affect the reality of the family, situations arise when such behavior influences the life of the family. In every case the Church teaches that “There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family.”...

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-text-of-cardinal-erdos-introductory-report-for-the-synod-on-the-family-67404/>

October 5, 2015 Thirteen Cardinals Write to Pope Francis about Synod Dangers:

...Finally and perhaps most urgently, various fathers have expressed concern that a synod designed to address a vital pastoral matter – reinforcing the dignity of marriage and family – may become dominated by the theological/doctrinal issue of Communion for the divorced and civilly remarried. If so, this will inevitably raise even more fundamental issues about how the Church, going forward, should interpret and apply the Word of God, her doctrines and her disciplines to changes in culture. The collapse of liberal Protestant churches in the modern era, accelerated by their abandonment of key elements of Christian belief and practice in the name of pastoral adaptation, warrants great caution in our own synodal discussions.

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1351154?eng=y>

October 6, 2015 – Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

...Nineveh converts and, facing this conversion Jonah, this man who is not docile to the Spirit of God, becomes angry... it really was a miracle, because in this case he [Jonah] abandons his stubbornness,

his rigidity, to obey the will of God, and he did what the Lord commanded him... It is a heart with that hardness that does not allow the mercy of God to enter. My preaching is more important, my thoughts are more important, that whole list of commandments that I must observe are more important...

Jesus as well lived this drama with the Doctors of the Law, who did not understand why He did not let them stone the adulterous woman, why He went to dine with publicans and sinners: they did not understand. They did not understand mercy... Where his ministers are there is rigidity. The rigidity that defies mission, which challenges mercy...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/10/06/pope_francis_god_wants_his_ministers_to_be_merciful/1177174 https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2015/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20151006_mercy-first-and-foremost.html

October 6, 2015 – Pope Francis’ Unscheduled Intervention on Synod Floor:

Fr. Spadaro, editor of La Civiltà Cattolica, reported that Pope Francis told the synod fathers “not to succumb to ‘a hermeneutic of conspiracy’ that is sociologically weak and spiritually unhelpful.” The pope asked them instead to engage in “a profound discernment to seek to understand how the Lord wants his Church [to be].” He asked the synod fathers to use instead the lens of discernment, “which helps us avoid seeing the devil in what are merely our own fears and obsessions.” The hermeneutic of spiritual discernment, he added, was “the only one capable of truly grasping the dynamics of the synod.” Pope Francis warned against those who use the “defense of the faith” as an excuse to defend what are merely their own ideas.

Fr. Lombardi, the official papal spokesman, reported that Pope Francis said during his intervention: “Catholic doctrine on marriage has not been touched or put into question... We should not let ourselves be conditioned by or to reduce the horizons of our work as if the only problem were that of Communion for the divorced and remarried or not... one has to experience the Synod in continuity with last year’s extraordinary synod, and that the documents to be considered official are the two speeches by the pope, the one at the beginning and the one at the end, as well as the Relatio Synodi, studied by the Council of the Synod, to which the contributions sent between the two assemblies were added. This constitutes the Instrumentum laboris, approved as a document of the Synod which we are conducting at present...[from this] we can continue with the contribution of the Working Groups, which help the work towards the Final Report”.

<https://cvcomment.org/2015/10/08/from-the-synod-4-why-the-pope-warned-against-conspiracy-theorists/>

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Synod:-for-pope-doctrine-on-marriage-not-in-question,-communion-for-divorced-and-remarried-people-not-the-only-problem-35510.html>

<http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/news/2015/10/06/pope-francis-ministry-to-divorced-and-remarried-is-not-only-topic-for-synod/>

October 9, 2015 - Pope Francis’ Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

...There was another group that did not appreciate him and sought to interpret Jesus’ words and actions in a different way, against Jesus. Some, for envy, others for doctrinal rigidity, others because they were afraid that the Romans would come and massacre them; for many reasons they sought to distance Jesus’ authority from the people, even with slander as in this case....The Evil One is hidden, he comes with his very educated friends, knocks at the door, asks for permission, comes in, and lives with that person. Drop by drop, he gives him instructions [on how to] do things with relativism...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/10/09/pope_francis_discern_and_watch,_even_in_good_times/1177960

October 17, 2015 - Pope Francis' Address at Commemorative Ceremony for the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops:

...The *sensus fidei* prevents a rigid separation between an *Ecclesia docens* and an *Ecclesia discens*, since the flock likewise has an instinctive ability to discern the new ways that the Lord is revealing to the Church.... In a synodal Church, as I have said, "it is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory. In this sense, I am conscious of the need to promote a sound 'decentralization'"

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html

October 21, 2015 - Synod Circuli Minori (Small Circles) Reports:

French Circle A:

We are referring to a general debate that is re-emerging on a regular basis. As pastors we very often encounter situations of life of couples and families which do not correspond to the rule proposed and defended by the Church as the most appropriate way to follow the path of the sanctity of marriage and the family. These so-called irregular situations have, in a certain number of regions of the world, developed to such an extent that they also affect Christian families, and they are engaged in the Church. All of us see this, and even where it does not yet exist in a significant way from the point of view of sociology, we can see that this is starting to develop, because of the global normalization of behavior.

If we refer to these situations in our remarks, in our pastoral writings, in the synodal text, some of us fear that this opens the door to normalization, and implicitly authorizes acceptance of it. Others think that to ignore these situations is to give a sign to the people who live in this way that they will not be welcomed, and then it will be very difficult for us to offer them a path of conversion...

...On the other hand, we know that there are so many other families who often feel themselves distanced from this ideal, and others who do not even think that it is more or less made for them! Divided families, stepfamilies, single-parent families, families without even civil marriage: we can not keep them apart, we do not want to think that their path does not bring them closer to the God who loves and attracts all men to Him. We believe in them the Spirit of the Lord who inspires many of the behaviors of their lives; And this does not deprive the Christian families that we support of our encouragement!

Concerning No. 122 to 125, we consider it useful to make no change: the positions are well explained. But in the first place we want to reiterate the attachment of all to the doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage. We also welcome the mercy of God as the gospel revealed in Jesus Christ and the importance given to the formation of the personal conscience. We add that in situations considered irregular, we want to set out the paths by which those who live them are certain that a path, welcome, and accompaniment are open to them. Finally, [we consider] that the bishops, each in his own diocese and in the communion of the whole Church, are called to responsible discernment....

Another question concerning the language has emerged at a moment: it concerns the use of the term *Semina Verbi* [Seeds of the Word]. Some of us are afraid that this practice may not be very compatible with its theological origin, unless we accept that this is a fact connected with the development of the doctrine: they would prefer to be satisfied with the expression of "Gifts of God present" in the lives of people who do not yet know Christ; Others find, on the contrary, that in this properly theological expression, one can find the sign that a dialogue is really possible and

anticipated, with our contemporaries who are in search of the truth but do not have adequate concepts to account for their Spiritual experience. We do not draw conclusions on this subject, we leave the question open.

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/21/0803/01782.html#GALLA>

French Circle B:

Pastoral care of those who have contracted a civil marriage or are cohabitating - the terms for these situations are diverse and vary according to regions of the world - has sparked debate among members of the circle: some stressed the importance of discerning and highlighting the positive elements of situations which are not libertinism and which are the basis of a pastoral care that accompanies them toward sacramental union; the others, without denying the pastoral concern of advancing the persons concerned towards the moment of commitment in sacramental marriage, insisted that such situations are not in conformity with what the Church asks.

The situation of remarried divorcees led us to emphasize the possibilities of participation in the life of the Christian community as *Familiaris Consortio* mentions (84). Several also wished to be better known and to deepen these forms of participation in the life of the Christian community and questioned the need to maintain certain current limits (to be a lector, to participate in the pastoral council ...). In relation to their access to the sacraments, the Circulus has decided to maintain the current discipline.

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/21/0803/01782.html#GALLB>

French Circle C:

Yes, we are marked by great diversity of experiences and approaches, even by certain polarities that have occasionally surfaced, for example on the question of access to the sacraments of the divorced and remarried, or on the question of role of women in certain ministries of the Church.

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/21/0803/01782.html#GALLC>

English Circle A:

In all cases of pastoral accompaniment of families by the Church, it is essential that our efforts to walk with people witness with clarity to the teaching of the Church. Most important is a clarity and attractiveness of language, making the Church's teaching more comprehensible and accessible.

We reflected on the way in which the Church walks with those who struggle. In all cases, pastoral care must be marked by charity and patience, especially with those who do not live or are not yet prepared to live in full accord with the Church's teachings. They are to be welcomed with love and respect by the pastors of the Church, who should be generous in accompanying them and in fostering their desire to participate more fully into the life of the Church.

We also took up certain proposals for accompanying those who are divorced and civilly remarried. We supported the recent efforts to streamline the process of nullity to make it more accessible without changing the Church's teaching. The majority without full consensus affirmed the current teaching and practice of the Church regarding the participation in the Eucharist of those who are divorced and civilly remarried. We acknowledged that this pathway may be difficult, and pastors should accompany them with understanding, always ready to extend God's mercy to them

anew when they stand in need of it.

A majority without full consensus also affirmed that pastoral practice concerning reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist by those divorced and civilly remarried ought not to be left to individual episcopal conferences. To do so would risk harm to the unity of the Catholic Church, the understanding of her sacramental order, and the visible witness of the life of the faithful.

...We spoke of the importance of pastoral attention to persons with homosexual tendencies, with special attention to families in which a person with same sex attraction is a member....We call on the synod to affirm and propose anew the entirety of Church teaching on love and chastity. We encourage parents and family members to have confidence in it as they love and accompany one another in responding to the Gospel's call to chaste living.

...Finally, we addressed the procreation and upbringing of children, affirming the rich teaching of *Humanae Vitae*, especially its affirmation that the unitive and procreative dimensions of the marital act are inseparable. Authentic pastoral accompaniment of couples proclaims this truth and also helps couples see that a well-formed conscience embraces the moral law not as an external restraint but, in grace, as a way of freedom. A pastoral approach is required that seeks to help spouses accept the full truth about marital love in ways that are comprehensible and inviting.
<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/21/0803/01782.html#ANGA>

English Circle B:

On the pastoral care of the divorced and remarried, the group looked at what an appropriate pastoral accompaniment of such couples should be. Such accompaniment must examine the situation of their marital condition, and also explore what it means to say that they are not excluded from the life of the Church.

The group proposed a pathway of discernment or 'reverential listening', attentive to the story of those who seek understanding and support. The first purpose of this attentive accompaniment would be to foster deeper discipleship with Christ based on the enduring bond of baptism, rather than addressing the question of admission to the sacraments of penance and Holy Communion...

On the theme of spiritual communion, the group noted it is possible that persons, whose objective state of life – an irregular union – puts them in contradiction with the full meaning of the Eucharist, may not be subjectively culpable of any continuing state of sin. They may thereby rightly have a loving desire for Eucharistic union with Christ. While their objective state may prevent them from receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, they may properly develop the practice of Spiritual Communion, and thereby become more open to the saving grace of Jesus Christ and union in the Church.

On the subject of the admission of divorced and remarried to the sacraments, the group would request that the Holy Father, taking into account the rich material which has emerged during this synodal process, consider establishing during the Jubilee Year of Mercy a Special Commission to study in depth the ways in which the disciplines of the Church which flow from the indissolubility of marriage apply to the situation of people in irregular unions, including situations arising from the practice of polygamy.
<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/21/0803/01782.html#ANGB>

English Circle C:

On the question of responsible parenthood, the discussion focused on the need for a pastoral approach which both promotes the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* and deals with the reality of people's lives, providing ongoing formation of conscience which looks to a harmony between Church doctrine and personal decision...

We considered the special needs of families in irregular or difficult situations. We agreed that those cohabiting are in a quite different situation from those who are divorced and civilly remarried. We also agreed that cohabitation, though very widespread in many cultures now, could not be considered a good in itself. We were prepared to recognise that there may be good in the relationship of those cohabiting rather than in cohabitation in some quasi-institutional sense.

With regard to those divorced and civilly remarried, we agreed that relationships of many kinds come under this heading. There was general agreement that we needed to provide more effective pastoral accompaniment for these couples, and especially perhaps for their children who also have rights. There was, however, little enthusiasm for what the *Instrumentum Laboris* calls "a penitential path". On the question of whether there should be further study of the question to see if the Church could move in this direction, the vote was evenly divided. In the end we voted to replace paragraphs 122-125 with an affirmation of the Church's current discipline and recommended the forms of participation mentioned in *Familiaris Consortio*, 84.

The group was also divided on the question of support for families with homosexual members and for homosexual people themselves. Some wanted to delete any reference to homosexuality, but this won little support in the group. We opted for a briefer treatment, but also asked that the final document include at an appropriate point a clear statement of Church teaching that same-sex unions are in no way equivalent to marriage. We were clear, however, that in this Synod we were not addressing homosexuality in general but within the context of the family. We were equally insistent that we address this issue as pastors, seeking to understand the reality of people's lives rather than issues in some more abstract sense.

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/21/0803/01782.html#ANGC>

English Circle D:

The group had a long exchange on pastoral approaches to divorced people who had not remarried, and also divorced people who have married again without an annulment. Members voiced significant concern that whatever is done should not lead to greater confusion among our people. One bishop said that the issue of admitting divorced and remarried persons without an annulment to Communion was such a vital matter of doctrinal substance that it could only be handled at an ecumenical council and not at a synod.

One of the synod fathers stressed the importance of using appropriate language. Instead of referring to people in difficult situations as being "excluded" from the Eucharist, we should say that they "abstain" from the Eucharist. That word is more accurate and not as negative. One father mentioned that bishops cannot be more merciful than Jesus's words. The Lord is not bound by Church rules, but the Church is very much bound by the words of Jesus.

Some thought that the current text lacks an understanding of the Eucharistic foundation of Christian marriage, which says we cannot reduce marriage to a sexual relationship. Likewise, we can't reduce life in the Church to receiving Communion. In the history of the Church huge segments of the faithful did not receive Holy Communion and yet were clearly considered members of the

Church, beginning with the Catechumens. For those who are on a penitential path, they are not excluded from the Church even though they abstain from Communion. Other fathers thought that the number of people who are divorced or remarried without an annulment has grown in such a big way that we need to deal with this question in a new and different manner.

Members spent quite a bit of time talking about the beauty and comprehensiveness of No. 84 of *Familiaris Consortio*. Some suggested that FC 84 ought to be put directly into the text. One father spoke about the power of the keys and the Holy Father's ability to change things. He said that the Pope can, in effect, twist the hands of God. Others responded that the power of the keys does not give the Church the ability to change Revelation and the faith of the Church.

One member of the group felt that the Church has forgotten Jesus in all this discussion and that the bishops and many laypeople may be perceived as Pharisees. There was a call for a commission to study the issue of Communion for the divorced and remarried over a longer period of time with greater theological precision.

There was a suggestion that the Church ought to study the notion of spiritual communion more thoroughly. Just as Protestant communities participate in the reality of the Church, those who don't receive Holy Communion can take part in the reality of the Eucharist.

Members spent some time talking about mixed marriages and marriages of disparate cult. The practice of the Orthodox Church also featured in the discussion. Some saw this as a good pastoral path for the Roman Church. Others felt there was little clarity in the Orthodox approach because several different practices among the Orthodox actually exist.

The section on the pastoral care of persons with homosexual tendencies sparked much discussion. Some members thought that this issue should be removed from discussion in the Synod on the Family. They felt that it's important enough to have a specific synodal meeting on the topic itself. Some suggested that the wording of the Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 2357-2359 should be used. Others saw that option as possibly damaging the credibility of the Church in Western Europe and North America.

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/21/0803/01782.html#ANGD>

Italian Circle A:

...The need was stressed to avoid setting conscience against the moral law. From a lively confrontation in which several stresses emerged, a formulation was sought at the same time that would help to understand how a correctly formed conscience is able to recognize the good that the moral norm indicates and make responsible choices...

In regard to the situation of those who have experienced the failure of marriage, the members of the Circle were in agreement on the need to address them having particular care in distinguishing the variety of situations, promoting in any case itineraries of faith, of reconciliation and of integration in the Ecclesial Community. The importance was affirmed that these itineraries include a careful and prudent pastoral discernment under the final authority of the Bishop. The Episcopal Conferences are called to mature common criteria appropriate to the situation of the respective particular Churches.

<https://zenit.org/articles/synod15-report-from-small-circle-italian-a-2/>

Italian Circle B:

Among the many cases that reveal the necessity of a reflection, which points out the situation of cohabitation carried out also following a civil marriage, is that of a male catechumen and a female catechumen with a baptized and married person, then divorced civilly. At the canonical level, such a situation would be incurable, if at least the marriage of the baptized party cannot be recognized as being annulled...One can intuit the bitterness of persons that take up the invitation to enter the Church, but see themselves in fact precluded from access in the sacramental form.

The concern of the Pastor is to identify and find every valid doctrinal means to help those that have experienced [marital] failure to find the way again to the full embrace of the Church.

In regard to the discipline concerning remarried divorced persons, up to today, it is not possible to establish general criteria inclusive of all cases, sometimes very different among themselves. There are remarried divorced persons that apply themselves to walk according to the Gospel, offering significant testimonies of charity. At the same time, it cannot be denied that, in some circumstances, factors appear that limit the possibility to act differently. Consequently, the judgment on an objective situation cannot be assumed in the judgment on subjective "imputation." The limits and the conditionings then become an appeal to discernment, primarily of the Bishop, diligent and respectful of the complexity of such situations.

In that case, to plan itineraries of faith, of pastoral integration and of reconciliation of those that find themselves in situations of stable cohabitation outside of marriage calls for additional reflection. For this reason, the Holy Father is asked to evaluate the suitability of harmonizing and deepening the complex matter (Doctrine, discipline and law) regarding the Sacrament of Marriage, which also considers pastoral action in dealing with divorced remarried persons.

<https://zenit.org/articles/synod15-report-from-small-circle-italian-b-2/>

Italian Circle C:

2) 2. Remarried divorced persons. The Fathers agreed on four points: to remove some forms of liturgical, educational and pastoral exclusion still existing; to promote ways of human, family and spiritual integration on the part of priests, expert couples and Consultors, geared to participation in Communion, the present Doctrine remaining firm; to discern in internal forum under the guidance of the Bishops and of designated priests the individual situations with common criteria in keeping with the virtue of prudence, educating the Christian communities to hospitality; to entrust to the Holy Father further reflection on the relation between the communion and medicinal aspect of Eucharistic Communion, in reference to Christ and to the Church.

4. Families with homosexual persons . The Fathers recommend to direct pastoral attention to families with persons with homosexual tendencies, and to the preparation of competent workers. They invite to deeper anthropological reflection on the subject. They also point out the undue economic-legislative pressure to introduce laws that equate civil unions to matrimony.

<https://zenit.org/articles/synod15-report-from-small-circle-italian-c-2/>

Spanish Circle A

- God's mercy cannot be conditioned, it always goes ahead of us. In this regard, Saint Thomas says that, in God, mercy is the highest virtue and forgiveness is the highest manifestation of the divine power. The forgiveness that Jesus won for us on the cross had no condition.

- Accent must be put on the gradualness and procedure to understand how God communicates the grace of the Covenant, which educates — taking each person into account progressively, in community –, corrects, supports and forgives. As it is God's pedagogy, the process is also found in

the Tradition (Saint Augustine De catequizandis rudibus) and Aparecida (280, 281) also indicates it.

-There are expressions in which it seems that marriage and the family are absolutized, while Jesus relativizes them in the Kingdom of God....

- ...In the meeting with the “adulteress” he reminds us clearly: let whoever is without sin cast the first stone.” Jesus always opens doors.

-...God’s fidelity is showed in the Sacrament of Marriage, but in the human way: quidquid recipitur, ad modum recipientis recipitur.” [whatever is received, is received in the manner of the receiver] The fidelity, indissolubility is a mystery that includes fragility.

- Redemption takes place in man’s poverty, taking grace into account given that the Sacraments are not realized in the strength of men. However, the Sacrament of Marriage is the only one that exacts the actualization of the eschatological.

- We do not have a theology of the family but of Marriage and more linked to the moral. The Magisterium should present the Gospel of the Family in an organic and integrated way.

- The most important characteristic of the family is “totality,” while in the rest of life it is only about functional relations.

- Following the thesis of the “semina Verbi,” one cannot ignore that there are many positive values in other types of families.

- When there is talk of young people and Marriage, it is done from the perspective of fear, which is not sufficient; it is an anthropological question: they live from hand to mouth, the “forever” does not fit with their way of thinking, they do not think about it, it is another way of seeing life. Perhaps we could speak of informality: a paper does not make a marriage and perhaps we have surrounded it with so many formalities that they do not fit in young people’s mind, who very often identify formality with hypocrisy.

<https://zenit.org/articles/synod15-report-from-small-circle-spanish-a/>

Spanish Circle B

10. There is awareness of the complex and diverse reality existing in our countries, so that the illumination of this part must be ample to be able to have answers adjusted to the different scenarios.

<https://zenit.org/articles/synod15-report-from-small-circle-spanish-b/>

German Circle

We also pondered what consequences this interconnection [between God’s mercy and justice] has in our accompaniment of marriage and family. It rules out a one-sided deductive hermeneutic, which would subsume concrete situations until a common principle. In the thinking of Thomas Aquinas and also of the Council of Trent the use of first principles have to be applied gradually, with prudence and wisdom, to particular, often complex situations. For this reason it is not a matter of exceptions in which God’s word would not be valid, but a question of a just and proper application of the word of Jesus – about his word on the indissolubility of marriage – in prudence and wisdom. Thomas Aquinas has clearly stated the necessity of the concrete nature of such an application, when he observed: “not only does the reflection of reason belong to prudence, but also the application to the act, which is the aim of practical reason.” (Sth II-II-47,3)

... Just as the historical development of Church teaching required time, so also must a Church pastoral approach allow people on their way to a sacramental marriage time to mature and not operate according to an “all or nothing” principle. In this regard, the “idea of a step by step process” (FC 9) is to be developed at the present time, which John Paul II had already established in *Familiaris Consortio*: “The pastoral endeavour of the Church does not limit itself to Christian families who are near to us, but strives ever more intensely in so far as it widens the horizon

according to the standard of the heart of Jesus to all families in their totality, and above all those who find themselves in difficult or irregular situations.” (FC 65) The Church stands unavoidably in the area of tension between a necessary clarity in her teaching on marriage and family on the one hand, and on pastoral tasks on the other, to accompany and convince such people who in their way of life only partially agree with the basic tenets of the Church...

...As well as this, personally directed pastoral [care] is also necessary, which combines in equal measure the normative nature of the teaching and the human personality, keeps in view what his conscience is capable of accepting, and strengthens his responsibility....

Any impression is to be avoided which only uses Sacred Scripture as a quotation source for dogmatic, juridical or ethical persuasions. The law of the New Covenant is the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers (CCC n. 1965-1966). The written word must be integrated into the living word, which in the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of the faithful. This confers of Holy Scripture a wide-ranging spiritual power.

Lastly, we have had trouble with the concept of a natural marriage. In human history natural marriage is always culturally conditioned. A natural marriage concept can give the impression that there is a purely natural way of human life with cultural conditioning. We therefore propose the formulation: “Marriage rooted in creation”.

<http://www.lancasterdiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Synod-German.pdf>

October 24, 2015 - Ordinary Synod on the Family Final Report:

84. The baptized who are divorced and civilly remarried need to be more integrated into Christian communities in a variety of possible ways, while avoiding any chance of scandal. The logic of integration is the key to their pastoral care, a care which might allow them not only to realize that they belong to the Church as the Body of Christ, but also to know that they can have a joyful and fruitful experience in it. They are baptized; they are brothers and sisters; the Holy Spirit pours into their hearts gifts and talents for the good of all. Their participation can be expressed in different ecclesial services which necessarily requires discerning which of the various forms of exclusion, currently practiced in the liturgical, pastoral, educational and institutional framework, can be surpassed. Such persons need to feel not as excommunicated members of the Church, but instead as living members, able to live and grow in the Church and experience her as a mother, who welcomes them always, who takes care of them with affection and encourages them along the path of life and the Gospel. This integration is also needed in the care and Christian upbringing of their children, who ought to be considered most important. That the Christian community cares for these people is not a weakening of her faith and witness in the indissolubility of marriage: to the contrary, in this very way, the Church expresses her charity. [This paragraph reached the required $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Fathers (177 votes) by 10 votes, 187-72]

85. Pope Saint John Paul II offered a comprehensive policy, which remains the basis for the evaluation of these situations: “Pastors must know that, for the sake of truth, they are obliged to exercise careful discernment of situations. There is in fact a difference between those who have sincerely tried to save their first marriage and have been unjustly abandoned, and those who through their own grave fault have destroyed a canonically valid marriage” (FC, 84). It is therefore the duty of priests to accompany such people in helping them understand their situation according to the teaching of the Church and the guidelines of the Bishop. Useful in the process is an examination of conscience through moments of reflection and penance. The divorced and remarried should ask themselves: how they have acted towards their children, when the conjugal union entered into crisis; if they made attempts at reconciliation; what is the situation of the

abandoned party; what effect does the new relationship have on the rest of the family and the community of the faithful; and what example is being set for young people, who are preparing for marriage. A sincere reflection can strengthen trust in the mercy of God which is not denied anyone.

Moreover, one cannot deny that in some circumstances “imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified” (CCC, 1735) due to several constraints. Accordingly, the judgment of an objective situation should not lead to a judgment on “subjective imputability” (Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, Declaration of 24 June 2000, 2a). Under certain circumstances people find it very difficult to act differently. Therefore, while supporting a general rule, it is necessary to recognize that responsibility with respect to certain actions or decisions is not the same in all cases. Pastoral discernment, while taking into account a person’s properly formed conscience, must take responsibility for these situations. Even the consequences of actions taken are not necessarily the same in all cases. [This paragraph reached the required $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Fathers (177 votes) by 1 votes, 178-80]

86. The path of accompaniment and discernment guides the faithful to an awareness of their situation before God. Conversation with the priest, in the internal forum, contributes to the formation of a correct judgment on what hinders the possibility of a fuller participation in the life of Church and Church practice which can foster it and make it grow. Given that gradualness is not in the law itself (cf. FC 34), this discernment can never prescind from the Gospel demands of truth and charity as proposed by the Church. This occurs when the following conditions are present: humility, discretion and love for the Church and her teaching, in a sincere search for God’s will and a desire to make a more perfect response to it. [This paragraph reached the required $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Fathers (177 votes) by 13 votes, 190-64]

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20151026_relazione-finale-xiv-assemblea_en.html

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/24/0816/01825.html>

October 24, 2015 - Pope Francis Concluding Synod Address:

...It was about bearing witness to everyone that, for the Church, the Gospel continues to be a vital source of eternal newness, against all those who would “indoctrinate” it in dead stones to be hurled at others. It was also about laying bare the closed hearts which frequently hide even behind the Church’s teachings or good intentions, in order to sit in the chair of Moses and judge, sometimes with superiority and superficiality, difficult cases and wounded families.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151024_sinodo-conclusione-lavori.html

October 28, 2015 – Pope Francis’ Interview with Scalfari:

Pope Francis: What do you think of the conclusions of the Synod on the family?

Scalfari: The compromise that the Synod had reached did not seem to take into account the changes had had taken place in the family in the past fifty years, [and] therefore to try to recover the traditional family is an objective that is completely unthinkable. The open Church that you want finds herself before an equally open family, for better or for worse, and this is what the Church finds before her.

Pope Francis: It is true, it is a truth and for that matter the family that is the basis of any society changes continuously, as all things change around us. We must not think that the family does not exist any longer, it will always exist, because ours is a social species, and the family is the support beam of society, but it cannot be avoided that the real-world family, open as you say, contains some positive aspects, and some negative ones. And how are these differences manifested? The negative aspects are the dislike or even the hatred between the new spouses and those of the first [marriage], if there was a divorce; the limited sense of brotherhood especially among children of parents partially or totally different, a different kind of fatherhood swinging between mutual indifference or mutual friendship. The Church ought to work in a way so that the positive elements prevail over the negative ones. This is possible, and we will do this. The diverse opinion[s] of the bishops is part of this modernity of the Church and of the diverse societies in which she operates, but the goal is the same, and for that which regards the admission of the divorced to the Sacraments, [it] confirms that this principle has been accepted by the Synod. This is bottom line result, the de facto appraisals are entrusted to the confessors, but at the end of faster or slower paths, all the divorced who ask for it will be admitted."

http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2015/11/01/news/dalle_miserie_politiche_alle_alte_visioni_di_francesco-126366372/

<http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2015/11/bombshell-pope-to-his-favorite.html>

November 2, 2015 - Fr. Lombardi, papal spokesman, said regarding the Scalfari interview of October 28, 2015:

As has already occurred in the past, Scalfari refers in quotes what the Pope supposedly told him, but many times it does not correspond to reality, since he does not record nor transcribe the exact words of the Pope, as he himself has said many times. So it is clear that what is being reported by him in the latest article about the divorced and remarried is in no way reliable and cannot be considered as the Pope's thinking.

<http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/fr.-lombardi-latest-scalfari-article-on-pope-in-no-way-reliable>

November 10, 2015 - Pope Francis' Speech in Florence:

...Pelagianism leads us to trust in structures, in organizations, in planning that is perfect because it is abstract. Often it also leads us to assume a controlling, harsh and normative manner. Norms give Pelagianism the security of feeling superior, of having a precise bearing. This is where it finds its strength, not in the lightness of the Spirit's breath. Before the evils or problems of the Church it is useless to seek solutions in conservatism and fundamentalism, in the restoration of obsolete practices and forms that even culturally lack the capacity to be meaningful. Christian doctrine is not a closed system, incapable of raising questions, doubts, inquiries, but is living, is able to unsettle, is able to enliven. It has a face that is supple, a body that moves and develops, flesh that is tender: Christian doctrine is called Jesus Christ. The reform of the Church then — and the Church is 'semper reformanda' — is foreign to Pelagianism. She is not exhausted in the countless plans to change her structures. It instead means being implanted and rooted in Christ, allowing herself to be led by the Spirit. Thus everything will be possible with genius and creativity....

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/november/documents/papa-francesco_20151110_firenze-convegno-chiesa-italiana.html

November 15, 2015 - Pope Francis answers question from Lutheran woman during a visit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to Rome

Q. My name is Anke de Bernardinis and, like many women in our community, I am married to an Italian, who is a Roman Catholic Christian. We have lived happily together for many years, sharing

joys and sorrows. And so we greatly regret being divided in faith and not being able to participate together in the Lord's Supper. What can we do to achieve, finally, communion on this point?

Pope Francis: ...It is true that, in a certain sense, to share means there aren't differences between us, that we have the same doctrine—I underline that word, a word that's difficult to understand. But I ask myself: but don't we have the same baptism? And if we have the same baptism, shouldn't we be walking together? You are a witness to a profound journey, because it is a journey of marriage, a journey of the family and of human love and of a shared faith, no? We have the same baptism. ... When you teach your children who Jesus is, why Jesus came, what Jesus did for us, you are doing the same thing, whether in the Lutheran language or the Catholic one, but it's the same.... Eh, there are explanations, interpretations.' Life is bigger than explanations and interpretations. Always refer back to baptism. 'One faith, one baptism, one Lord.' This is what Paul tells us, and from there take the consequences.... "I would never dare to give permission for this, because it's not my jurisdiction. 'One baptism, one Lord, one faith.' Talk to the Lord and then go forward. I don't dare to say anything more."

<http://aleteia.org/2015/11/16/pope-francis-stirs-communion-controversy-at-lutheran-gathering-in-rome>

November 20, 2015 - Pope Francis' Address to the Participants in the Convention sponsored by the Congregation of the Clergy

..I tell you honestly, I'm afraid of rigidity, I am afraid. Rigid priests.... Stay away! They bite you! And I recall an expression of St Ambrose, from the fourth century: "Where there is mercy there is the spirit of the Lord, and where there is rigidity there are only his ministers". A minister without the Lord becomes rigid, and this is a danger to God's people. Be pastors, not officials... They enter young, they seem healthy but when they feel confident the illness begins to emerge.... When I realize that a young man is too rigid, too fundamentalist, I do not have confidence; in the background there is something that he himself does not know. But when they feel confident.... Ezekiel 16, I cannot remember the verse, but it is when the Lord tells his people all that he did for them: he found them when they were just born, and he clothed them, he espoused them.... "And then, when you felt secure, you prostituted yourself". It is a rule, a rule of life. Eyes open to the mission in seminaries. Eyes open.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/november/documents/papa-francesco_20151120_formazione-sacerdoti.html

November 30, 2015 - Pope Francis in-flight press conference from Africa:

Q. ...We know that condoms are not the only method of solving the epidemic, but it's an important part of the answer. Is it not time for the Church to change it's position on the matter? To allow the use of condoms to prevent more infections?

Pope Francis: The question seems too small to me, it also seems like a partial question. Yes, it's one of the methods. The moral of the Church on this point is found here faced with a perplexity: the fifth or sixth commandment? Defend life, or that sexual relations are open to life? But this isn't the problem. The problem is bigger...this question makes me think of one they once asked Jesus: "Tell me, teacher, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? Is it obligatory to heal?" This question, "is doing this lawful," ... but malnutrition, the development of the person, slave labor, the lack of drinking water, these are the problems. Let's not talk about if one can use this type of patch or that for a small wound, the serious wound is social injustice, environmental injustice, injustice that...I don't like to go down to reflections on such case studies when people die due to a lack of water, hunger, environment...when these problems are no longer there, I think we can ask the question "is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"... I would say not to think about whether it's lawful or not to heal on the

Sabbath, I would say to humanity: “make justice,” and when all are cured, when there is no more injustice, we can talk about the Sabbath.

Q. ... Today more than ever, we know that fundamentalism threatens the entire planet. We also saw this in Paris. Before this danger, do you think that religious leaders should intervene more in the political field? ...the religious “dignitaries,” bishops and imams?

Pope Francis: ...Fundamentalism is a sickness that exists in all religions. We Catholics have some, not just some, so many, who believe they have the absolute truth and they move forward with calumnies, with defamation and they hurt (people), they hurt. And, I say this because it’s my Church, also us, all of us. It must be combatted. Religious fundamentalism isn’t religious. Why? Because God is lacking. It’s idolatrous, as money is idolatrous. Making politics in the sense of convincing these people who have this tendency is a politics that we religious leaders must make, but fundamentalism that ends up always in tragedy or in crime, in a bad thing comes about in all religions a little bit.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-text-of-popes-in-flight-interview-from-africa-to-rome-48855/>

December 8, 2015 - Pope Francis Remarks for Opening of Holy Door at St. Peters:

...The Jubilee challenges us to this openness, and demands that we not neglect the spirit which emerged from Vatican II, the spirit of the Samaritan, as Blessed Paul VI expressed it at the conclusion of the Council...

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20151208_giubileo-omelia-apertura.html

December 14, 2015 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

...they have no horizons, they are men who are locked in their calculations, they are slaves to their rigidity...In this Year of Mercy – the Pope said - there are these two paths: one of those who hope in God’s mercy and know that God is the Father; and then there are those who take refuge in the slavery of rigidity and know nothing of God's mercy... the closed, legalistic slave of his own rigidity....

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/12/14/pope_franis_hope_in_gods_mercy_gives_us_freedom_/1194243

December 15, 2015 - Pope Francis' Remarks for Opening of Holy Door at St. John Lateran

...God does not love rigidity. He is Father; He is tender; everything (is) done with the tenderness of the Father...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/12/13/pope_opens_holy_door_in_john_lateran_basilica/1194083

January 9, 2016 - Pope Francis' book-length interview The Name of God is Mercy:

...we must avoid the attitude of someone who judges and condemns from the lofty heights of his own certainty, looking for the splinter in his brother’s eye while remaining unaware of the beam in his own. Let us always remember that God rejoices more when one sinner returns to the fold than when ninety-nine righteous people have no need of repentance. ...he [the one seeking repentance] needs to find an open door, not a closed one. He needs to find acceptance, not judgment, prejudice, or condemnation. He needs to be helped, not pushed away or cast out. Sometimes, when Christians think like scholars of the law, their hearts extinguish that which the Holy Spirit lights up in the heart of a sinner when he stands at the threshold, when he starts to feel nostalgia for God.

I would like to mention another conduct typical of the scholars of the law, and I will say that there is often a kind of hypocrisy in them, a formal adherence to the law that hides very deep wounds. Jesus uses tough words; he defines them as “whited sepulchers” who appear devout from the outside, but inside, on the inside... hypocrites. These are men who live attached to the letter of the law but who neglect love; men who only know how to close doors and draw boundaries. Chapter 23 of the Gospel of Matthew is very clear on this; we need to return there to understand what the Church is and what it should never be. He describes the attitudes of those who tie up heavy burdens and lay them on other men’s shoulders, but who are unwilling to move so much as a finger; they are those who love the place of honor and want to be called master. This conduct comes when a person loses the sense of awe for salvation that has been granted to him. When a person feels a little more secure, he begins to appropriate faculties which are not his own, but which are the Lord’s. The awe seems to fade, and this is the basis for clericalism or for the conduct of people who feel pure. What then prevails is a formal adherence to rules and to mental schemes.

When awe wears off, we think we can do everything alone, that we are the protagonists. And if that person is a minister of God, he ends up believing that he is separate from the people, that he owns the doctrine, that he owns power, and he closes himself off from God’s surprises. “The degradation of awe” is an expression that speaks to me. At times I have surprised myself by thinking that a few very rigid people would do well to slip a little, so that they could remember that they are sinners and thus meet Jesus. I think back to the words of God’s servant John Paul I, who during a Wednesday audience said, “The Lord loves humility so much that sometimes he permits serious sins. Why?”

<https://books.google.com/books?id=TTjZCgAAQBAJ&pg=PT48&lpg=PT48>

If the confessor cannot absolve a person, he needs to explain why, he needs to give them a blessing, even without the holy sacrament... The love of God exists even for those who are not disposed to receive it... The very fact that someone goes to the confessional indicates an initiation of repentance, even if it is not conscious.

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/pope-s-personal-encounters-mercy>

January 15, 2016 - Pope Francis’ Audience with Ecumenical Delegation of the Lutheran Church of Finland; Intercommunion occurs at St. Peters

Pope Francis: “...Your dialogue is making promising progress towards a shared understanding, on the sacramental level, of Church, Eucharist and Ministry. These steps forward, made together, lay a solid basis for a growing communion of life in faith and spirituality, as your relations develop in a spirit of serene discussion and fraternal sharing...”

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2016/01/18/0030/00060.html#ing>

Lutheran ‘Bishop’ Salmi on receiving communion in St. Peter’s Basilica after the papal meeting: “I myself accepted it [Holy Communion]... this was not a coincidence... At the root of this there is, without a doubt, the ecumenical attitude of a new Vatican... The pope was not here at the mass, but his strategic intention is to carry out a mission of love and unity. There are also theological adversaries in the Vatican, for which reason it is difficult to assess how much he can say, but he can permit practical gestures.”

<https://www.kotimaa24.fi/artikkeli/suomalaisdelegaatiolle-vatikaanissa-katolinen-ehtoollinen/?katselukoodi=d9497b551965eee7116d3d214ccf695be9e186844b51260dfc14eb6ece8bd1cb>

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/lutherans-receive-communion-at-vatican-after-meeting-with-pope-report>

The diocese of Helsinki later said in a statement on January 20, 2016 that the Lutheran intercommunion at St. Peter's Basilica was an "error that occurred in the distribution of communion,": "Only members of the Catholic Church in the state of grace may receive the Catholic sacrament of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion... The new mindset of Pope Francis that is mentioned in the article is not a sign that the Catholic Church is going to change its practice with regard to the distribution of the Holy Eucharist."

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/lifesite/Translation of Finnish Catholic Information Service statement.pdf>

February 9, 2016 - Pope Francis' Address to the Missionaries of Mercy

...If someone comes to you and feels something must be removed from him, but perhaps he is unable to say it, but you understand ... it's all right, he says it this way, with the gesture of coming. First condition. Second, he is repentant. If someone comes to you it is because he doesn't want to fall into these situations, but he doesn't dare say it, he is afraid to say it and then not be able to do it. But if he cannot do it, *ad impossibilia nemo tenetur*. And the Lord understands these things, the language of gestures. Have open arms, to understand what is inside that heart that cannot be said or said this way ... somewhat because of shame ... you understand me. You must receive everyone with the language with which they can speak...

<https://zenit.org/articles/popes-address-to-priests-named-missionaries-of-mercy/>

February 15, 2016 - Pope Francis' Meeting with Families in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Mexico:

Humberto and Claudia Gomez, a couple civilly married since Humberto was never married, while Claudia is divorced with three children, said to the pope: "Those that remarry can not access the Eucharist, but we can enter into communion through the brother in need... that is why we volunteer at hospitals. We visit the sick...."

Pope Francis: ... There is, on the other hand, what the witness of Humberto and Claudia made evident when they explained how they tried to convey to others the love of God that they experienced through service and generous giving. Laws and personal commitment make a good duo that can break the spiral of uncertainty. And you have the inspiration, you pray, and you are united to Jesus, and you are involved in the life of the Church. You used a beautiful expression: "Let us take communion with the brother who is weak, ill, needy, in prison". Thank you....

It is true that living in family is not always easy, and can often be painful and stressful but, as I have often said referring to the Church, I prefer a wounded family that makes daily efforts to put love into play, to a family and society that is sick from isolationism or a habitual fear of love...

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/february/documents/papa-francesco_20160215_messico-famiglie.html

<http://www.romereports.com/2016/02/16/pope-to-families-i-prefer-wounded-families-because-they-are-the-result-of-a-true-love>

February 18, 2016 - Pope Francis' in-flight press conference from Mexico:

Q. Holy Father, for several weeks there's been a lot of concern in many Latin American countries but also in Europe regarding the Zika virus. The greatest risk would be for pregnant women. There is anguish. Some authorities have proposed abortion, or else to avoiding pregnancy. As regards avoiding pregnancy, on this issue, can the Church take into consideration the concept of "the lesser of two evils?"

Pope Francis: Abortion is not the lesser of two evils. It is a crime. It is to throw someone out in order to save another. That's what the Mafia does. It is a crime, an absolute evil. On the 'lesser evil,' avoiding pregnancy, we are speaking in terms of the conflict between the fifth and sixth commandment. Paul VI, a great man, in a difficult situation in Africa, permitted nuns to use contraceptives in cases of rape. Don't confuse the evil of avoiding pregnancy by itself, with abortion. Abortion ...is an evil in and of itself, but it is not a religious evil in the beginning, no, it's a human evil. Then obviously, as with every human evil, each killing is condemned..... On the other hand, avoiding pregnancy is not an absolute evil. In certain cases, as in this one, or in the one I mentioned of Blessed Paul VI, it was clear. I would also urge doctors to do their utmost to find vaccines against these two mosquitoes that carry this disease. This needs to be worked on.

Q. Does that mean they [the divorced and remarried] can receive Communion?

Pope Francis: This is the last thing. Integrating in the Church doesn't mean receiving communion. I know married Catholics in a second union who go to church, who go to church once or twice a year and say I want communion, as if joining in Communion were an award. It's a work towards integration, all doors are open, but we cannot say, 'from here on they can have communion.' This would be an injury also to marriage, to the couple, because it wouldn't allow them to proceed on this path of integration. And those two were happy. They used a very beautiful expression: we don't receive Eucharistic communion, but we receive communion when we visit hospitals and in this and this and this. Their integration is that. If there is something more, the Lord will tell them, but it's a path, a road.

http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/4588/full_text_pope_francis_inflight_interview_from_mexico_to_rome.aspx

February 19, 2016 - Fr. Lombardi clarifies that Pope Francis did refer to condom usage:

Q. Regarding the strategies for combating the spread of Zika virus, advocated by WHO, Pope Francis reiterated that abortion is a crime, an absolute evil. The media talk today of an opening of the Pope to contraception. What can you tell us about that?

Fr. Lombardi: ... Now it is not that he says that this action [artificial contraception] is acceptable and may be used without any discernment, indeed, he made it clear that it can be considered in cases of special urgency. The example that Paul VI made and the authorization to use the pill for the religious who were at very serious risk, and ongoing violence by the rebels in the Congo, at the times of the Congo war tragedies, suggests that it is not that it was a normal situation in which this was taken into account. And also - remember for instance - the discussion followed a passage from the book of Benedict XVI interview "Light of the World", in which he spoke about the use of condoms in situations at risk of infection, for example, with AIDS. So, the contraceptive or condom, in particular cases of emergency or gravity, could be the object of serious discernment of conscience. This is what the pope said. Meanwhile, regarding abortion he did not give room for consideration... in any case, avoid recourse to abortion and, if there were any major emergencies, then a well-formed conscience can see whether there are any possibilities or need of recourse to non-abortifacients to prevent pregnancy.

http://it.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/02/19/p_lombardi_commenta_i_temi_del_papa_con_i_giornalisti/1209799

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/breaking-vatican-affirms-pope-was-speaking-about-contraceptives-for-zika>

March 19, 2016 - Pope Francis' post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*:

3. Since "time is greater than space", I would make it clear that not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues need to be settled by interventions of the magisterium... Each country or

region, moreover, can seek solutions better suited to its culture and sensitive to its traditions and local needs.

292. Christian marriage, as a reflection of the union between Christ and his Church, is fully realized in the union between a man and a woman who give themselves to each other in a free, faithful and exclusive love, who belong to each other until death and are open to the transmission of life, and are consecrated by the sacrament, which grants them the grace to become a domestic church and a leaven of new life for society. Some forms of union radically contradict this ideal, while others realize it in at least a partial and analogous way. The Synod Fathers stated that the Church does not disregard the constructive elements in those situations which do not yet or no longer correspond to her teaching on marriage.

297. ... 'No one can be condemned for ever, because that is not the logic of the Gospel!'

298. The Church acknowledges situations "where, for serious reasons, such as the children's upbringing, a man and woman cannot satisfy the obligation to separate" (Footnote 329) John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (22 November 1981), 84: AAS 74 (1982), 186. In such situations, many people, knowing and accepting the possibility of living "as brothers and sisters" which the Church offers them, point out that if certain expressions of intimacy are lacking, "it often happens that faithfulness is endangered and the good of the children suffers" (Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 51) [GS 51 relates the difficulties of periodic continence/NFP for married couples abstaining from sex]

299. ... Such [divorced and civilly remarried] persons need to feel not as excommunicated members of the Church, but instead as living members, able to live and grow in the Church and experience her as a mother who welcomes them always, who takes care of them with affection and encourages them along the path of life and the Gospel.

300. ... Priests have the duty to "accompany [the divorced and remarried] in helping them to understand their situation according to the teaching of the Church and the guidelines of the bishop....Useful in this process is an examination of conscience through moments of reflection and repentance. The divorced and remarried should ask themselves: how did they act towards their children when the conjugal union entered into crisis; whether or not they made attempts at reconciliation; what has become of the abandoned party; what consequences the new relationship has on the rest of the family and the community of the faithful; and what example is being set for young people who are preparing for marriage. A sincere reflection can strengthen trust in the mercy of God which is not denied anyone"...Given that gradualness is not in the law itself (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 34), this discernment can never prescind from the Gospel demands of truth and charity, as proposed by the Church....These attitudes are essential for avoiding the grave danger of misunderstandings, such as the notion that any priest can quickly grant "exceptions", or that some people can obtain sacramental privileges in exchange for favours.... there can be no risk that a specific discernment may lead people to think that the Church maintains a double standard.

301. ... Hence it is can no longer simply be said that all those in any "irregular" situation are living in a state of mortal sin and are deprived of sanctifying grace. More is involved here than mere ignorance of the rule. A subject may know full well the rule, yet have great difficulty in understanding "its inherent values", or be in a concrete situation which does not allow him or her to act differently and decide otherwise without further sin.

302. The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly mentions these factors: “imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors”. In another paragraph, the Catechism refers once again to circumstances which mitigate moral responsibility, and mentions at length “affective immaturity, force of acquired habit, conditions of anxiety or other psychological or social factors that lessen or even extenuate moral culpability”...

303. Recognizing the influence of such concrete factors, we can add that individual conscience needs to be better incorporated into the Church’s praxis in certain situations which do not objectively embody our understanding of marriage....Yet conscience can do more than recognize that a given situation does not correspond objectively to the overall demands of the Gospel. It can also recognize with sincerity and honesty what for now is the most generous response which can be given to God, and come to see with a certain moral security that it is what God himself is asking amid the concrete complexity of one’s limits, while yet not fully the objective ideal. ...

305. For this reason, a pastor cannot feel that it is enough simply to apply moral laws to those living in “irregular” situations, as if they were stones to throw at people’s lives. This would bespeak the closed heart of one used to hiding behind the Church’s teachings, “sitting on the chair of Moses and judging at times with superiority and superficiality difficult cases and wounded families”. Along these same lines, the International Theological Commission has noted that “natural law could not be presented as an already established set of rules that impose themselves a priori on the moral subject; rather, it is a source of objective inspiration for the deeply personal process of making decisions.” Because of forms of conditioning and mitigating factors, it is possible that in an objective situation of sin – which may not be subjectively culpable, or fully such – a person can be living in God’s grace, can love and can also grow in the life of grace and charity, while receiving the Church’s help to this end (Footnote 351) In certain cases, this can include the help of the sacraments. Hence, “I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber, but rather an encounter with the Lord’s mercy” (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* [24 November 2013], 44: AAS 105 [2013], 1038). I would also point out that the Eucharist “is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak” (ibid., 47: 1039)... By thinking that everything is black and white, we sometimes close off the way of grace and of growth, and discourage paths of sanctification which give glory to God.

308. ... I understand those who prefer a more rigorous pastoral care which leaves no room for confusion. But I sincerely believe that Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness. The Church’s pastors, in proposing to the faithful the full ideal of the Gospel and the Church’s teaching, must also help them to treat the weak with compassion, avoiding aggravation or unduly harsh or hasty judgements. The Gospel itself tells us not to judge or condemn.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

March 19, 2016 – Cardinal Schönborn’s Presentation of *Amoris Laetitia*:

...what does the Pope say in relation to access to the sacraments for people who live in “irregular” situations? Pope Benedict had already said that “easy recipes” do not exist (AL 298, note 333). Pope Francis reiterates the need to discern carefully the situation, in keeping with St. John Paul II’s *Familiaris consortio* (84) (AL 298). “Discernment must help to find possible ways of responding to God and growing in the midst of limits. By thinking that everything is black and white, we sometimes close off the way of grace and of growth, and discourage paths of sanctification which give glory to God” (AL 205). He also reminds us of an important phrase from *Evangelii gaudium*, 44:

"A small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties" (AL 304). In the sense of this "via caritatis" (AL 306), the Pope affirms, in a humble and simple manner, in a note (351) that the help of the sacraments may also be given "in certain cases". But for this purpose he does not offer us case studies or recipes, but instead simply reminds us of two of his famous phrases: "I want to remind priests that the confessional should not be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy" (EG 44), and the Eucharist "is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak" (EG 47).

Is it an excessive challenge for pastors, for spiritual guides and for communities if the "discernment of situations" is not regulated more precisely? Pope Francis acknowledges this concern: "I understand those who prefer a more rigorous pastoral care which leaves no room for confusion" (AL 308). However, he challenges this, remarking that "We put so many conditions on mercy that we empty it of its concrete meaning and real significance. That is the worst way of watering down the Gospel" (AL 311).

<https://zenit.org/articles/cardinal-schonborns-intervention-at-presentation-of-amoris-laetitia/>

Q. Why is the key point of "Amoris Laetitia" presented in a little footnote and not in the text?

Cardinal Schonborn: I don't know. I didn't write the text, the pope did. We can ask the Holy Father why he put it there. Everyone can give an interpretation of his own. For example, as I said, the pope once heard it said: it is a trap to focus everything on one point, because one forgets the question as a whole. And this is why I would suggest that after "Amoris Laetitia" there are many questions to discuss further, and one of the points is a renewal of our sacramental practice, in general, as a whole. Fifty years after Vatican II, it would also be good to think about what the sacramental life means, not only for a particular case, that of the divorced and remarried, but for all of us.

Q. You cited the 1984 "Familiaris Consortio," but in this document at no. 84 the pope writes that the Church reiterates its practice founded on scripture of not admitting the divorced and remarried to communion unless they take on the commitment of living in complete continence. So, in black and white, the question is: has something changed with respect to thirty-five years ago? Is there a possibility in the papal magisterium not foreseen by John Paul? And if so, in the continuity of the papal magisterium is there a reason why a subsequent pope could not again maintain that it is opportune and necessary to reiterate this practice?

Cardinal Schonborn: Briefly, in "Familiaris Consortio" at no. 84 Pope Saint John Paul II speaks of three different situations, the third of which is the case in which the remarried have the moral conviction that their first marriage is not valid. He did not draw the conclusion of this fact, but I think that there are situations, which we all know in pastoral practice, where it is not possible to find a canonical solution but where, in the moral certainty that this first marriage was not sacramental, even if the case cannot be settled canonically, with the pastor and the spouses convinced in their conscience, of which Pope John Paul speaks, that they are not married sacramentally, to admit them to the sacraments was already a longstanding practice, which neither John Paul II nor Pope Benedict explicitly brought into question. And the fact that he speaks of living together as brother and sister, it is already an exceptional case, because otherwise they live together maritally, marriage is not reduced to sexual union, it is the whole life that is shared, and therefore they live in a second union fully, except for sexual relations, they have a marital life. And Pope John Paul already said that in this case, if there is no scandal, they can receive the sacraments. So these nuances have always existed, and Pope Francis is not entering into casuistry but giving the essential indication, on which we too must continue to reflect.

Q. Why is it only in footnote 351 that reference is found to communion for the divorced and remarried?

Cardinal Schonborn: One fact that strikes me is that everyone reads this footnote. So putting [something] in a footnote surprises and draws interest. But I remain firm on this point: Pope Francis wants to present a vision of the whole, and not fixate on one particular point, which is important, but particular. And without comprehensive criteria of discernment, even discernment on "in certain cases this can include the help of the sacraments" would fall from the skies, without connection to the whole.

Q. Just to clarify, I think everyone wants to know, paragraph 84 of "Familiaris Consortio": has anything in the entirety of those paragraphs changed? Does everything in "Familiaris Consortio" number 84 still stand as-is?

Cardinal Schonborn: I do not see that there has been change, but certainly there is development, organic development, in how Pope John Paul II developed doctrine. I will give an example: never in the history of the Church's doctrine had man and woman as a couple been considered as such the image of God. Pope John Paul II made this the center of his teaching on marriage. But I dare all the theology experts to say when in tradition this had been done. So it is normal, it is true that there is development. John Henry Newman explained to us how this organic development of doctrine works. Of course, in this sense Pope Francis is developing things. The expression that you used was implicit in "Familiaris Consortio," implicit, I am prepared to prove it. For me the development is that Pope Francis is saying it clearly, explicitly. It is the classic case of the organic development of doctrine. There is innovation and continuity, For this read the famous talk of Pope Benedict on the hermeneutic of continuity. In this document, for me there true innovations but no ruptures, just as what John Paul did with the image of God applied to man and woman is not a rupture. It is not a rupture but a true development.

Q . As for point 301 on irregular couples that are not in mortal sin, and for the discussion of innovation in doctrine of which you were speaking, in what way is this compatible with "Veritatis Splendor" of John Paul II, where it speaks of "intrinsic evil"?

Cardinal Schonborn: "Veritatis Splendor" certainly speaks of the clarity of norms on the "intrinsic malum," but Pope Francis in the document here has a series of emphases on the question of imputability, very important, and cites the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The imputability that is one of the conditions for knowing if there is mortal sin or not. So it is necessary to read these passages on imputability, which are classics, most of these citations coming from the Catechism and from Saint Thomas.

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1351305?eng=y>

April 11, 2016 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

Their hearts, closed to God's truth, clutch only at the truth of the Law, taking it by 'the letter', and do not find outlets other than in lies, false witness and death...The heart is closed to God's Word, it is closed to truth, and it is closed to God's messenger who brings the prophecy so that God's people may go forward... It hurts when I read that small passage from the Gospel of Matthew, when Judas, who has repented, goes to the priests and says: 'I have sinned' and wants to give ... and gives them the coins. 'Who cares! - they say to him: it's none of our business!' They closed their hearts before this poor, repentant man, who did not know what to do. And he went and hanged himself. And what did they do when Judas hanged himself? They spoke amongst themselves and said: 'Is he a poor

man? No! These coins are the price of blood, they must not enter the temple... and they referred to this rule and to that... The doctors of the letter.... History tells us of many people who were judged and killed, although they were innocent: judged according to the Word of God, against the Word of God. Let's think of witch hunts or of St. Joan of Arc, and of many others who were burnt to death, condemned because according to the judges they were not in line with the Word of God...

<http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/04/11/pope-francis-warns-against-those-who-judge-with-closed-hea/1221870>

April 16, 2016 - Pope Francis press conference from Lesbos:

Q. ...Some sustain that nothing has changed with respect to the discipline that regulates access to the sacraments for the divorced and remarried, that the Law, the pastoral praxis and obviously the doctrine remain the same. Others sustain that much has changed and that there are new openings and possibilities. For a Catholic who wants to know: are there new, concrete possibilities that didn't exist before the publication of the exhortation or not?

Pope Francis: I can say yes, period. But it would be an answer that is too small. I recommend that you read the presentation of Cardinal Schonborn, who is a great theologian. He was the secretary for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, and he knows the doctrine of the faith well. In that presentation, your question will find an answer.

Q.: ...you wrote this famous 'Amoris Laetitia' on the problems of the divorced and remarried (footnote 351). Why put something so important in a little footnote? Did you foresee the opposition or did you mean to say that this point isn't that important?

Pope Francis: One of the recent popes, speaking of the Council, said that there were two councils: the Second Vatican Council in the Basilica of St. Peter, and the other, the council of the media. When I convoked the first synod, the great concern of the majority of the media was communion for the divorced and remarried, and, since I am not a saint, this bothered me, and then made me sad. Because, thinking of those media who said, this, this and that, do you not realize that that is not the important problem? Don't you realize that instead the family throughout the world is in crisis? Don't we realize that the falling birth rate in Europe is enough to make one cry? And the family is the basis of society. Do you not realize that the youth don't want to marry? Don't you realize that the fall of the birth rate in Europe is to cry about? Don't you realize that the lack of work or the little work (available) means that a mother has to get two jobs and the children grow up alone? These are the big problems. I don't remember the footnote, but for sure if it's something general in a footnote it's because I spoke about it, I think, in 'Evangelii Gaudium.'

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-text-of-pope-francis-in-flight-interview-from-lesbos-to-rome-97242/>

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/pope-says-schonborn-interpretation-on-communion-for-remarried-is-the-final>

April 23, 2016 - Pope Francis hears confessions of teenagers in St. Peter's Square

Anna Taibi said about her confession experience with Pope Francis: "I expected him to give me a penance... instead he absolved me and let me go."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/24/the-15-year-old-girl-guide-asked-to-confess-her-sins---to-the-po/>

May 2016 - Vatican's Cardinal Baldisseri asks national bishops conferences, included the U.S. Bishops Conference, to conduct and report back surveys of bishops and leaders of national

Catholic organizations in the United States of America in order to determine how our *Amoris Laetitia* is being received and implemented throughout the country.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/archbishop-chaput-clarifies-amoris-laetitia-committee-11714/>

May 3, 2016 - Abp Bruno Forte revealed a “behind the scenes” comment on made by Pope Francis during the Synod:

“If we speak explicitly about communion for the divorced and remarried you do not know what a terrible mess we will make. So we won’t speak plainly, do it in a way that the premises are there, then I will draw out the conclusions.”

<http://www.zonale.it/2016/05/03/-nessuno-si-deve-sentire-escluso-dalla-chiesa-/20471>

May 5, 2016 - Prefect of the CDF, Cardinal Muller speaks on *Amoris Laetitia* at Oveido

So the first key element for this journey of accompaniment is the harmony between the sacramental celebration and Christian life. This is the reason for the Eucharistic discipline that the Church has maintained from the beginning. Thanks to this, the church can be a community that accompanies, welcomes the sinner without thereby blessing the sin, and thus offers the foundation so that a path of discernment and integration may be possible. Saint John Paul II confirmed this discipline in “Familiaris Consortio” 84 and in “Reconciliatio et Poenitentia” 34; the congregation for the doctrine of the faith, in its turn, affirmed this in its document of 1994; Benedict XVI explored it in “Sacramentum Caritatis” 29. This is a matter of a consolidated magisterial teaching, supported by scripture and founded on a doctrinal reason: the salvific harmony of the sacrament, the heart of the “culture of the bond” that the Church lives.

Some have affirmed that “*Amoris Laetitia*” has eliminated this discipline and has permitted, at least in some cases, the divorced and remarried to receive the Eucharist without the need to change their way of life according to what is indicated in FC 84, which means abandoning the new union or living in it as brother and sister. To this it must be replied that if “*Amoris Laetitia*” had wanted to eliminate such a deeply rooted and significant discipline, it would have said so clearly and presented supporting reasons. There is however no affirmation in this sense; nor does the pope bring into question, at any time, the arguments presented by his predecessors, which are not based on the subjective culpability of our brothers, but rather on their visible, objective way of life, contrary to the words of Christ.

But isn’t this change of course found - some object - in a footnote that says that in some cases the Church could offer the help of the sacraments to those who are living in an objective situation of sin (no. 351)? Without entering into a detailed analysis, suffice it to say that this footnote refers to objective situations of sin in general, without citing the specific case of the divorced in new civil unions. The situation of these latter, effectively, has particular characteristics that distinguish it from other situations. These divorced persons are living in contrast with the sacrament of marriage, and therefore with the economy of the sacraments, the center of which is the Eucharist. This is, in fact, the reason recalled by the previous magisterium to justify the Eucharistic discipline of FC 84; an argument that is not present in the footnote or in its context. That which footnotes 351 affirms, therefore, does not touch the previous discipline: the norm of FC 84 and of SC 29 is still valid, and its application in every case.

The basic principle is that no one can truly desire a sacrament, that of the Eucharist, without also desiring to live in accord with the other sacraments, including that of marriage. One who lives in contrast with the marriage bond is opposed to the visible sign of the sacrament of marriage; in that which touches his bodily existence, even if he should be subjectively not culpable, he makes himself

an “anti-sign” of indissolubility. And precisely because his bodily life is contrary to the sign, he cannot be part, in receiving communion, of the supreme Eucharistic sign, where the incarnate love of Jesus is revealed. The Church, if she were to admit this, would fall into what Saint Thomas Aquinas called “falsity in sacramental signs.” And what we have before us is not an excessive doctrinal conclusion, but rather the very basis of the sacramental constitution of the Church, which we have compared to the architecture of Noah’s ark. It is an architecture that the Church cannot modify because it comes from Jesus himself; because she, the Church, comes from here, and supports herself here to navigate the waters of the flood. Changing the discipline on this concrete point, admitting a contradiction between the Eucharist and marriage, would necessarily mean changing the profession of faith of the Church, which teaches and realizes the harmony among all the sacraments, just as she has received it from Jesus. On this faith in indissoluble marriage, not as distant ideal but as concrete reality, the blood of martyrs has been shed.

Someone might insist: isn't Francis lacking in mercy if he does not take this step? Isn't it too much to ask these persons to move toward a life in keeping with the word of Jesus? What happens is instead the contrary. We would say, using the image of the ark, that Francis, sensitive to the flood situation of the contemporary world, has opened all possible windows of the boat and has invited all of us to throw ropes from the windows in order to pull the castaway onto the barque. But to permit, albeit in only some cases, that communion be given to those who visibly lead a way of life contrary to the sacrament of marriage would not be opening an extra window, but opening a leak in the bottom of the boat, allowing the sea to enter in and endangering the navigation of all and the service of the Church to society. Rather than a way of integration, it would be a way of the disintegration of the ecclesial ark, a way of water. In respecting this discipline, therefore, not only is no limit placed on the Church’s capacity to rescue families, but the stability of the boat is also guaranteed together with its capacity to bring us to a fair haven....

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1351295?eng=y>

May 15, 2016 - Pope Francis’ Regina Caeli Address on Pentecost Sunday:

...Jesus tells His disciples: ““If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you always.” (Jn 14: 15-16). These words remind us first of all that love for a person, and also for the Lord, one proves not with words, but with deeds; and also “keep the commandments” must be understood in an existential sense, so that all one’s life is involved. In fact, to be a Christian does not primarily mean to belong to a certain culture or adhere to a certain doctrine, but rather to join one’s own life, in all its aspects, to the person of Jesus and, through Him, to the Father.

<https://zenit.org/articles/pope-francis-regina-caeli-address-on-pentecost-sunday/>

May 19, 2016 – Pope Francis meets with Latin American bishops:

While the most difficult to read is chapter 8, some have let themselves get trapped by this chapter. The Holy Father is fully aware of the criticisms of some, including cardinals, who have been unable to understand the evangelical meaning of his statements... the best guide for understanding this chapter is the presentation of it made by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, O.P., archbishop of Vienna, Austria, a great theologian, member of the congregation for the doctrine of the faith, highly expert in the doctrine of the Church.

<http://www.celam.org/detalle.php?id=MTc0Mg>

June 2, 2016 – Pope Francis jubilee speech on woman in adultery as social sin:

I have always been struck by the passage of the Lord’s encounter with the woman caught in adultery, and how, by refusing to condemn her, he “fell short of” the Law. In response to the

question they asked to test him – “should she be stoned or not?” – Jesus did not rule, he did not apply the law. He played dumb – here too the Lord has something to teach us! – and turned to something else. He thus initiated a process in the heart of the woman who needed to hear those words: “Neither do I condemn you”. Sometimes I feel a little saddened and annoyed when people go straight to the last words Jesus speaks to her: “Go and sin no more”. They use these words to “defend” Jesus from bypassing the law..... In that woman, it was a social sin; people approached her either to sleep with her or to throw stones at her. There was no other way to approach her. That is why the Lord does not only clear the path before her, but sets her on her way, so that she can stop being the “object” of other people's gaze and instead take control of her life. Those words, “sin no more” refer not only to morality, but, I believe, to a kind of sin that keeps her from living her life.
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/june/documents/papa-francesco_20160602_giubileo-sacerdoti-terza-meditazione.html

June 10, 2016 – Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

And this attachment to the Law ignores the Holy Spirit. It does not grant that the redemption of Christ goes forward with the Holy Spirit. It ignores that: there is only the Law. It is true that there are the Commandments and we have to follow the Commandments....But don't reduce the Spirit and the Son to the Law. This was the problem of these people: they ignored the Holy Spirit, and they did not know to go forward. Closed, closed in precepts: we have to do this, we have to do that. At times, it can happen that we fall into this temptation....

Because ideologies bewitch; and so Paul begins here: ‘O stupid Galatians, who has bewitched you?’ Those who preach with ideologies: It's absolutely just! They bewitch: It's all clear. But look, the revelation is not clear, eh? The revelation of God is discovered more and more each day, it is always on a journey. Is it clear? Yes! It is crystal clear! It is Him, but we have to discover it along the way. And those who believe they have the whole truth in their hands are not [just] ignorant.
https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/june/documents/papa-francesco_20160602_giubileo-sacerdoti-terza-meditazione.html

June 16, 2016 - Pope Francis' Address at the Opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Rome:

2. The analyses we make are important, they are necessary and help us to have a healthy realism. But nothing can compare to Gospel realism, which does not stop at describing the various situations, the problems — much less the sins — but which always goes a step further and is able to see an opportunity, a possibility behind every face, every story, every situation. Gospel realism is total concern for the other, for others, and does not create an obstacle out of the ideal and the “ought to be”, in order to encounter others in whatever situation they may be. It is not a matter of proposing the Gospel ideal, no, it is not about this. On the contrary, it invites us to live it within history, with all that it entails. This does not mean not being clear about doctrine, but avoids falling into judgmental attitudes that do not consider the complexity of life. Gospel realism is practical because it knows that “grain and weeds” grow together, and the best grain — in this life — will always be mixed with a few weeds. “I understand those who prefer a more rigorous pastoral care which leaves no room for confusion”, I understand them. “But I sincerely believe that Jesus wants a Church that is attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness: a Mother who, while clearly expressing her objective teaching, “always does what good she can, even if she runs the risk of sullyng her shoes with the mud of the road”. A Church able “to treat the weak with compassion, avoiding aggravation or unduly harsh or hasty judgements. The Gospel too tells us not to judge or condemn (cf. Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37)” (AL, n. 308).

Q. In the Exhortation 'Evangelii Gaudium', you say that the big problem today is "complacent yet covetous individualism", and in 'Amoris Laetitia' you say that there is a need to create relationships among families. You use an expression that in Italian, has a rather bad ring to it: "the wider family"...

Pope Francis: And this individualism has many names, so many names rooted in selfishness: always searching for oneself, not looking at others, not looking at other families.... Sometimes it reaches the point of true pastoral cruelty. For example, I am speaking of an experience that I learned about when I was in Buenos Aires: in a nearby diocese, several priests did not want to baptize the children of teen mothers. As if they were animals! And this is individualism. "No, we are perfect, this is the way". It is an individualism that also seeks pleasure, it is hedonistic. I would say a word that is a bit harsh, but I say it between quotation marks: that "damned wellbeing" that has done us a great deal of harm.... And we are afraid. You are afraid: take a risk! In the moment that you are there, and you must decide, take a risk! If you make a mistake, there is the confessor, there is the bishop, but take a risk! It is like that Pharisee: the ministry of clean hands, everything clean, everything in its place, all fine. But outside of this environment, how much misery, how much pain, how much poverty, how much opportunity for development is lacking! It is a hedonistic individualism, it is an individualism that is afraid of freedom. It is an individualism — I don't know if Italian grammar allows it — I would say "confining". It cages you in, it does not allow you to fly free. Then, yes, the wider family...

Q. We know that as Christian communities we do not want to renounce the radical demands of the Gospel of the family. How do we prevent a double morality from arising in our communities, one demanding and one permissive, one rigorist and one lax?

Pope Francis: Both are not truth: neither rigorism nor laxity are truth. The Gospel chooses another way. For this, those four words — welcome, support, integrate, discern — without nosing into people's moral lives. For your tranquility, I must tell you that all that is written in the Exhortation — and I again take up the words of a great theologian who was the secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Schönborn, who presented it — everything is Thomist, from beginning to end. It is the doctrine that is certain. But we often want the certain doctrine to have that mathematical certainty that does not exist, neither with laxity, lenience, nor with rigidity. Let us think of Jesus: the history is the same, it repeats. When Jesus spoke to the people, the people said: "He speaks not as our doctors of the law, but as one who has authority" (cf. Mk 1:22). Those doctors knew the law, and for each case they had a specific law, reaching about 600 precepts in the end. Everything was regulated, everything. The Lord — God's anger is seen in Chapter 23 of Matthew, that Chapter is terrible — above all it made an impression on me when he speaks of the fourth Commandment and says: "You, who rather than give food to your elderly parents, tell them: 'No, I made this promise, better the altar than you', you are in contradiction" (cf. Mk 7:10-13).

Jesus was like that, and he was condemned out of hatred, they always set pitfalls before him: "Can this be done or not?". Let us consider the scene of the adulterous woman (cf. Jn 8:1-11). It is written: she must be stoned. It is the moral code. It is clear. Not rigid, this is not rigid, it is a clear moral code. She must be stoned. Why? For the sanctity of marriage, fidelity. Jesus is clear about this. The word is adultery. It is clear. And Jesus plays dumb, he lets some time pass, writes on the ground.... And then he says: "Begin: Let the first of you who is without sin throw the first stone". Jesus sidestepped the law in that case. They went away, beginning with the eldest. "Woman, has no one condemned you? Neither do I". What is the moral code? It was to stone her. But Jesus sidestepped, he sidestepped the moral code. This makes us think that one cannot speak of "rigidity", of "certainty", of being mathematical in morality, like the morality of the Gospel....

Q. Wherever we go, today we hear talk of a marriage crisis. And so I wanted to ask you: What can we focus on today in order to educate young people about love, in particular way about sacramental marriage, to overcome their resistance, skepticism, disillusion, the fear of the definitive?

Pope Francis: We are living in a provisional culture... and because of this the great majority of our sacramental marriages are null. Because they say 'yes, for the rest of my life!' but they don't know what they are saying. Because they have a different culture. They say it, they have good will, but they don't know... They don't know that it's indissoluble, they don't know that it's for your entire life. It's hard...

They prefer to cohabit, and this is a challenge, a task. Not to ask 'why don't you marry?' No, to accompany, to wait, and to help them to mature, help fidelity to mature. I've seen a lot of fidelity in these cohabitations, and I am sure that this is a real marriage, they have the grace of a real marriage because of their fidelity but there are local superstitions, etc...

Gospel realism is total concern for the other, for others, and does not create an obstacle out of the ideal and the "ought to be", in order to encounter others in whatever situation they may be. It is not a matter of proposing the Gospel ideal, no, it is not about this. On the contrary, it invites us to live it within history, with all that it entails. This does not mean not being clear about doctrine, but avoids falling into judgmental attitudes that do not consider the complexity of life. Gospel realism is practical because it knows that "grain and weeds" grow together, and the best grain — in this life — will always be mixed with a few weeds. "I understand those who prefer a more rigorous pastoral care which leaves no room for confusion", I understand them. "But I sincerely believe that Jesus wants a Church that is attentive to the goodness which the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness: a Mother who, while clearly expressing her objective teaching, "always does what good she can, even if she runs the risk of soiling her shoes with the mud of the road". A Church able "to treat the weak with compassion, avoiding aggravation or unduly harsh or hasty judgments. The Gospel too tells us not to judge or condemn.

[Note: In the official Vatican transcript that "great majority" remark is changed to "a part of our sacramental marriages are null.", and the "damned" remark was changed to "cursed"]

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/june/documents/papa-francesco_20160616_convegno-diocesi-roma.html

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/most-marriages-today-are-invalid-pope-francis-suggests-51752/>

<https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2016/06/16/pope-francis-says-clarity-doctrine-not-enough-family/>

June 26, 2016 - Pope Francis in-flight press conference from Armenia:

Q. Holiness, within the past few days Cardinal Marx, the German, speaking at a large conference in Dublin which is very important on the Church in the modern world, said that the Catholic Church must ask forgiveness to the gay community for having marginalized these people. In the days following the shooting in Orlando, many have said that the Christian community had something to do with this hate toward these people. What do you think?

Pope Francis: I will repeat what I said on my first trip. I repeat what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: that they must not be discriminated against, that they must be respected and accompanied pastorally. One can condemn, but not for theological reasons, but for reasons of political behavior...Certain manifestations are a bit too offensive for others, no? ... But these are things that have nothing to do with the problem. The problem is a person that has a condition, that has good will and who seeks God, who are we to judge? And we must accompany them well...this is

what the catechism says, a clear catechism. Then there are traditions in some countries, in some cultures that have a different mentality on this problem. I think that the Church must not only ask forgiveness – like that “Marxist Cardinal” said (laughs) – must not only ask forgiveness to the gay person who is offended. But she must ask forgiveness to the poor too, to women who are exploited, to children who are exploited for labor. She must ask forgiveness for having blessed so many weapons. The Church must ask forgiveness for not behaving many times – when I say the Church, I mean Christians! The Church is holy, we are sinners! – Christians must ask forgiveness for having not accompanied so many choices, so many families...

I remember from my childhood the culture in Buenos Aires, the closed Catholic culture. I go over there, eh! A divorced family couldn't enter the house, and I'm speaking of 80 years ago. The culture has changed, thanks be to God. Christians must ask forgiveness for many things, not just these. Forgiveness, not just apologies. Forgive, Lord. It's a word that many times we forget. Now I'm a pastor and I'm giving a sermon. No, this is true, many times. Many times ... but the priest who is a master and not a father, the priest who beats and not the priest who embraces, forgives and consoles. But there are many. ...

Q. [Is it possible] to recognize the gifts of the reformation[?] Perhaps also – this is a heretical question – perhaps to annul or withdraw the excommunication of Martin Luther or of some sort of rehabilitation[?]

Pope Francis: I think that the intentions of Martin Luther were not mistaken. He was a reformer. Perhaps some methods were not correct. But in that time, if we read the story of the Pastor, a German Lutheran who then converted when he saw reality – he became Catholic – in that time, the Church was not exactly a model to imitate. There was corruption in the Church, there was worldliness, attachment to money, to power...and this he protested. Then he was intelligent and took some steps forward justifying, and because he did this. And today Lutherans and Catholics, Protestants, all of us agree on the doctrine of justification. On this point, which is very important, he did not err. He made a medicine for the Church, but then this medicine consolidated into a state of things, into a state of a discipline, into a way of believing, into a way of doing, into a liturgical way and he wasn't alone; there was Zwingli, there was Calvin, each one of them different, and behind them were who? Principals! We must put ourselves in the story of that time....

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-text-pope-francis-inflight-press-conference-from-armenia-45222/>

July 3, 2016 - Pope Francis' Interview with La Nacion:

Q. How does one get along with arch-conservatives in the Church

Pope Francis: They do their work, I do mine. I want an open and understanding Church which accompanies wounded families. They say no to everything. I continue my way without looking to the side. Not by lopping off heads. I never liked to do that. I repeat it: I reject the conflict. [with a conspicuous smile] Nails are removed by applying pressure upwards, or they are placed to rest, to the side, when they reach retirement age."

<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1914940-francisco-no-tengo-ningun-problema-con-macri-es-una-persona-noble>

June 29, 2016 – Letter of the 45 Scholars to pope and cardinals on AL:

We request that the Cardinals and Patriarchs petition the Holy Father to condemn the errors listed in the document in a definitive and final manner, and to authoritatively state that *Amoris laetitia* does not require any of them to be believed or considered as possibly true.

<http://2n613ar7ekr056c3upq2s15c.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/cardinal-letter2.pdf>

<http://2n613ar7ekr056c3upq2s15c.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/45-theologians-censure-AL.pdf>

July 18, 2016 - Pope Francis' Interpreter, Cardinal Schonborn's Interview with Fr. Spadaro on the Magisterial Weight of Amoris Laetitia:

...Amoris Laetitia is an act of the magisterium that makes the teaching of the church present and relevant today. We have to read [previous] magisterial interventions on the family in the light of Amoris Laetitia's contribution; just like we read the Council of Nicaea in light of the Council of Constantinople and the First Vatican Council in light of Vatican II....

To a greater degree than in the past, the objective situation of a person does not tell us everything about that person in relation to God and in relation to the church. This evolution compels us urgently to rethink what we meant when we spoke of objective situations of sin. And this implicitly entails a homogeneous evolution in the understanding and in the expression of the doctrine.

Francis has taken an important step by obliging us to clarify something that had remained implicit in "Familiaris consortio" about the link between the objectivity of a situation of sin and the life of grace in relation to God and to his church, and -- as a logical consequence -- about the concrete imputability of sin. Cardinal Ratzinger had explained in the 1990s that we no longer speak automatically of a situation of mortal sin in the case of new marital unions. I remember asking Cardinal Ratzinger in 1994, when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had published its document about divorced and remarried persons: "Is it possible that the old praxis that was taken for granted, and that I knew before the [Second Vatican] Council, is still valid? This envisaged the possibility, in the internal forum with one's confessor, of receiving the sacraments, provided that no scandal was given." His reply was very clear, just like what Pope Francis affirms: There is no general norm that can cover all the particular cases. The general norm is very clear; and it is equally clear that it cannot cover all the cases exhaustively.

...In principle the doctrine of matrimony and sacraments is clear... With regards to discipline, the Pontiff takes into consideration the numerous varieties of concrete situations and has affirmed that one should not wait for a new general norm of canonical type that is applicable in all cases... When Pope Francis speaks only in a footnote about the help given by the sacraments "in some instances" of irregular situations, he does so despite the fact that the problem, which is a very important one, is formulated in the wrong way when it is hypostatized, and also despite the fact that some people want to deal with it by means of a general discourse rather than by means of the individual discernment of the body of Christ, to which each and every one of us is indebted.... It is necessary to enter into the concrete dimension of life in order to "discern the body," begging for mercy. It is possible that the one whose life is in accordance with the rules lacks discernment and, as St. Paul says, "eats and drinks judgment on himself."

...One cannot pass from the general rule to "some cases" merely by looking at formal situations. It is therefore possible that, in some cases, one who is in an objective situation of sin can receive the help of the sacraments.

<http://www.americamagazine.org/issue/richness-love>

July 27, 2016 - Archbishop Gadecki Reports on a Closed Door Meeting with the Pope and Polish Bishops

The Holy Father proceeds from the assumption that general laws are very hard to enforce in each country, and so he speaks about decentralization - that individual bishops' conferences might on their own initiative not only interpret papal encyclicals, but also looking at their own cultural situation, might approach some specific issues in an appropriate manner.

<http://episkopat.pl/en/abp-gadecki-papiez-franciszek-rozmawial-z-nami-jak-ojciec-z-dziecmi>
<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/pope-spoke-of-decentralizing-decisions-on-communion-for-divorced-remarried>

July 30, 2016 – Pope Francis' Speech to Polish Seminarians:

...The Church today needs to grow in the ability of spiritual discernment. Some priestly formation programs run the risk of educating in the light of overly clear and distinct ideas, and therefore to act within limits and criteria that are rigidly defined a priori, and that set aside concrete situations: «you must do this, you must not do this.». And then the seminarians, when they become priests, find themselves in difficulty in accompanying the life of so many young people and adults. Because many are asking: «can you do this or can you not?». That's all. And many people leave the confessional disappointed. Not because the priest is bad, but because the priest doesn't have the ability to discern situations, to accompany them in authentic discernment. They don't have the needed formation.

Today the Church needs to grow in discernment, in the ability to discern. And priests above all really need it for their ministry. This is why we need to teach it to seminarians and priests in formation: they are the ones usually entrusted with the confidences of the conscience of the faithful. Spiritual direction is not solely a priestly charism, but also lay, it is true. But, I repeat, you must teach this above all to priests, helping them in the light of the Exercises in the dynamic of pastoral discernment, which respects the law but knows how to go beyond...

We need to form future priests not to general and abstract ideas, which are clear and distinct, but to this keen discernment of spirits so that they can help people in their concrete life. We need to truly understand this: in life not all is black on white or white on black. No! The shades of grey prevail in life. We must then teach to discern in this grey area...

<http://www.cyberteologia.it/2016/09/today-the-church-needs-to-grow-in-discernment-a-private-encounter-of-pope-francis-with-some-polish-jesuits/>

July 31, 2016 - Pope Francis' in-flight press conference from Poland:

Q. ...why do you, when you speak of these violent events, always speak of terrorists, but never of Islam.?

Pope Francis: I don't like to speak of Islamic violence, because every day, when I browse the newspapers, I see violence, here in Italy... and these are baptized Catholics! There are violent Catholics! If I speak of Islamic violence, I must speak of Catholic violence... and no, not all Muslims are violent, not all Catholics are violent. It is like a fruit salad; there's everything. There are violent persons of this religion... this is true: I believe that in pretty much every religion there is always a small group of fundamentalists. Fundamentalists. We have them. When fundamentalism comes to kill, it can kill with the language -- the Apostle James says this, not me -- and even with a knife, no? I do not believe it is right to identify Islam with violence. This is not right or true.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-text-of-pope-francis-in-flight-presser-from-poland-70432/>

September 5, 2016 – Argentine Bishops Proposed Guidelines for Amoris Laetitia Released:

...we will address only chapter VIII [of Amoris Laetitia], given that it makes references to

“guidelines of the bishop” (300) for discernment regarding the possible access to the sacraments of some of those who are “divorced and in a new union.” ...

5) When the concrete circumstances of a couple make it feasible, especially when both are Christians with a journey of faith, it is possible to propose that they make the effort of living in continence. *Amoris Laetitia* does not ignore the difficulties of this option (cf. note 329) and leaves open the possibility of receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation when one fails in this intention (cf. note 364, according to the teaching of Saint John Paul II to Cardinal W. Baum, of 22/03/1996).

6) In other, more complex circumstances, and when it is not possible to obtain a declaration of nullity, the aforementioned option may not, in fact, be feasible. Nonetheless, it is equally possible to undertake a journey of discernment. If one arrives at the recognition that, in a particular case, there are limitations that diminish responsibility and culpability (cf. 301-302), particularly when a person judges that he would fall into a subsequent fault by damaging the children of the new union, *Amoris Laetitia* opens up the possibility of access to the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist (cf. notes 336 and 351). These in turn dispose the person to continue maturing and growing with the aid of grace....

9) It might be convenient that an eventual access to the sacraments be brought about in a reserved way, above all when conflictive situations are foreseen. But at the same time one must not cease to accompany the community, so that it might grow in a spirit of understanding and welcoming, without creating confusion regarding the teaching of the Church on the indissolubility of marriage. The community is an instrument of mercy that is “undeserved, unconditional, and free” (297).

<https://www.data.lifesitenews.com/images/pdfs/Basic Criteria for the Application of Chapter VI II of Amoris Laetitia September 5 2016.pdf>

September 5, 2016 – Pope Francis Fully Approves Argentine Bishop’s Proposed Guidelines:

...The document is very good and completely explains the meaning of chapter VIII of *Amoris Laetitia*. There are no other interpretations. And I am certain that it will do much good. May the Lord reward this effort of pastoral charity....

<https://www.data.lifesitenews.com/images/pdfs/Basic Criteria for the Application of Chapter VI II of Amoris Laetitia September 5 2016.pdf>

September 6, 2016 – Pope Francis’ Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

...It is not Catholic (to say) ‘either this or nothing.’ This is not Catholic, this is heretical. Jesus always knows how to accompany us, he gives us the ideal, he accompanies us towards the ideal, He frees us from the chains of the laws’ rigidity and tells us: ‘But do that up to the point that you are capable.’...Jesus is a great person! He frees us from all our miseries and also from that idealism which is not Catholic. Let us implore our Lord to teach us, first to escape from all rigidity but also to go out beyond ourselves..

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/06/09/pope_those_who_say_%E2%80%9Cthis_or_nothing_%E2%80%9D_are_heretics_/1235939

September 19, 2016 - Pope Francis’ Cardinal Vicar, Agostino Vallin, Releases Guidelines for the Diocese of Rome regarding Communion for the Divorced and Remarried:

...The text of the apostolic exhortation does not go further, but footnote 351 states: ‘In certain cases, this can include the help of the sacraments.’ The pope uses the conditional, so he is not saying that they must be admitted to the sacraments, although he does not exclude this in some cases and under some conditions. Pope Francis develops the previous magisterium in the line of the hermeneutic of continuity and of exploration, and not in discontinuity and rupture. He affirms that

we must travel the 'via caritatis' of welcoming penitents, listening to them attentively, showing them the maternal face of the Church, inviting them to follow the path of Jesus, helping them to mature the right intention of opening themselves to the Gospel, and we must do this while paying attention to the circumstances of individual persons, to their consciences, without compromising the truth and prudence that will help to find the right way.

...This is not necessarily a matter of arriving at the sacraments, but of orienting them to live forms of integration in ecclesial life. But when the concrete circumstances of a couple make it feasible, meaning when their journey of faith has been long, sincere, and progressive, it is proposed that they live in continence; if this decision is difficult to practice for the stability of the couple, 'Amoris Laetitia' does not rule out the possibility of accessing penance and the Eucharist. This means a certain openness, as in the case in which there is the moral certainty that the first marriage was null but there are not the proofs to demonstrate this in a judicial setting; but not however in the case in which, for example, their condition is shown off as if it were part of the Christian ideal, etc.

How are we to understand this openness? Certainly not in the sense of an indiscriminate access to the sacraments, as sometimes happens, but of a discernment that would distinguish adequately case by case. Who can decide? From the tenor of the text and from the 'mens' of its Author it does not seem to me that there could be any solution other than that of the internal forum. In fact, the internal forum is the favorable way for opening the heart to the most intimate confidences, and if a relationship of trust has been established over time with a confessor or with a spiritual guide, it is possible to begin and develop with him an itinerary of long, patient conversion, made of small steps and of progressive verifications.

So it can be none other than the confessor, at a certain point, in his conscience, after much reflection and prayer, who must assume the responsibility before God and the penitent and ask that the access take place in a discreet manner. In these cases there is no interruption of the journey of discernment (AL, 303; 'dynamic discernment') for the sake of reaching new stages toward the full Christian ideal.

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1351383?eng=y>

<http://www.romasette.it/wp-content/uploads/Relazione2016ConvegnoDiocesano.pdf>

September 19, 2016 – Cardinals Burke, Brandmuller, Caffarra, Meisner Submit 'Dubia' to Pope Francis and CDF, entitled 'Seeking Clarity: A Plea to Untie the Knots in Amoris Laetitia.'

1. It is asked whether, following the affirmations of Amoris Laetitia (300-305), it has now become possible to grant absolution in the sacrament of penance and thus to admit to holy Communion a person who, while bound by a valid marital bond, lives together with a different person more uxorio without fulfilling the conditions provided for by *Familiaris Consortio*, 84, and subsequently reaffirmed by *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 34, and *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 29. Can the expression "in certain cases" found in Note 351 (305) of the exhortation Amoris Laetitia be applied to divorced persons who are in a new union and who continue to live more uxorio?

2. After the publication of the post-synodal exhortation Amoris Laetitia (304), does one still need to regard as valid the teaching of St. John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, 79, based on sacred Scripture and on the Tradition of the Church, on the existence of absolute moral norms that prohibit intrinsically evil acts and that are binding without exceptions?

3. After Amoris Laetitia (301) is it still possible to affirm that a person who habitually lives in contradiction to a commandment of God's law, as for instance the one that prohibits adultery

(Matthew 19:3-9), finds him or herself in an objective situation of grave habitual sin (Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, "Declaration," June 24, 2000)?

4. After the affirmations of *Amoris Laetitia* (302) on "circumstances which mitigate moral responsibility," does one still need to regard as valid the teaching of St. John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, 81, based on sacred Scripture and on the Tradition of the Church, according to which "circumstances or intentions can never transform an act intrinsically evil by virtue of its object into an act 'subjectively' good or defensible as a choice"?

5. After *Amoris Laetitia* (303) does one still need to regard as valid the teaching of St. John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, 56, based on sacred Scripture and on the Tradition of the Church, that excludes a creative interpretation of the role of conscience and that emphasizes that conscience can never be authorized to legitimate exceptions to absolute moral norms that prohibit intrinsically evil acts by virtue of their object?

<http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/full-text-and-explanatory-notes-of-cardinals-questions-on-amoris-laetitia>

October 2, 2016 - Pope Francis' in-flight press conference from Azerbaijan:

Pope Francis: ... *Amoris laetitia* speaks of marriage, the foundation of marriage, as it is ... but then come the problems, how to educate their children ... and in Chapter Eight, when the problems come, how do you solve them? Solve it with four criteria: welcome wounded families, accompany, discern each case and integrate and do it again. This would work in a second, in this wonderful recreation that the Lord has made with redemption. And if you take just one side it does not go! *Amoris laetitia* -- I mean -- they all go to the eighth chapter. No, no ... you have to read from beginning to end. And where is the center? It depends on everyone. For me the center, the core of *Amoris laetitia* is Chapter IV...

Q. ...what would you say to someone who has struggled with their sexuality for years and feels that there is truly a problem of biology, that his aspect doesn't correspond to what he or she feels is their sexual identity. You, as a pastor and minister, how would you accompany these people?

Pope Francis: First of all: in my life as a priest and bishop, even as Pope, I have accompanied people with homosexual tendencies, I have also met homosexual persons, accompanied them, brought them closer to the Lord, as an apostle, and I have never abandoned them. ... What I said is that wickedness which today is done in the indoctrination of gender theory.... Last year I received a letter from a Spaniard who told me his story as a child, a young man, he was a girl, a girl who suffered so much because he felt he felt like a boy, but was physically a girl. He told his mother and the mom...(the girl) was around 22 years old said that she would like to do the surgical intervention and all of those things. And the mother said not to do it while she was still alive. She was elderly and she died soon after. She had the surgery and an employee of a ministry in the city of Spain went to the bishop, who accompanied (this person) a lot. Good bishop. I spent time accompanying this man. Then (the man) got married, he changed his civil identity, got married and wrote me a letter saying that for him it would be a consolation to come with his wife, he who was she, but him! I received them: they were happy and in the neighborhood where he lived there was an elderly priest in his 80s, an elderly pastor who left the parish and helped the sisters in the parish. And there was the new (priest). When the new one he would yell from the sidewalk: 'you'll go to hell!' When (the new priest) came across the old one, he would say: 'How long has it been since you confessed? Come, come, let's go so that I can confess you and you can receive communion.' Understood? Life is life and things must be taken as they come. Sin is sin. And tendencies or hormonal imbalances have many problems and we must be careful not to say that everything is the same. Let's go party. No, that no, but in every case I accept it, I accompany it, I study it, I discern it and I integrate it. This is what

Jesus would do today! Please don't say: 'the Pope sanctifies transgenders.' Please, eh! Because I see the covers of the papers. Is there any doubt as to what I said? I want to be clear! It's moral problem. It's a human problem and it must be resolved always can be with the mercy of God, with the truth like we spoke about in the case of marriage by reading all of *Amoris Laetitia*, but always with an open heart....

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-text-pope-francis-in-flight-press-conference-from-azerbaijan-24352/>

October 4, 2016 – Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

Jesus repeats often to the people who are rigid, because there is always something else behind the rigidity, always. [For this reason] Jesus says 'hypocrites!': behind the rigidity there is something hidden in a person's life...rigidity is not a gift from God; meekness, goodness, benevolence, forgiveness, yes; but rigidity, no!... Behind the rigidity there is always something hidden, in many cases a double life.... there is also something like a disease: those who are rigid suffer greatly when they are sincere, and they realize this, they suffer because they cannot have the freedom of the children of God; they do not know how to walk in the law of the Lord and are not blessed. And they suffer a great deal. [Therefore, even if] they look good, because they follow the law, there is something within that does not make them good: they are either bad, hypocritical or ill. [In any case,] "they suffer".

http://m.vatican.va/content/francescomobile/en/cotidie/2016/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20161024_never-slaves-of-the-law.html

October 24, 2016- Pope Francis Speech to Seminarians:

Q. In your speech you clearly proposed a morality that is based on discernment. How do you suggest that we proceed in the field of morality with regard to this dynamic of discernment of moral situations?

Pope Francis: It seems to me that it is not possible to stay with an interpretation of a subsumed application of the norm which is limited to seeing particular situations as cases of the general norm. Discernment is the key element: the capacity for discernment. I note the absence of discernment in the formation of priests. We run the risk of getting used to «white or black,» to that which is legal. We are rather closed, in general, to discernment. One thing is clear: today, in a certain number of seminaries, a rigidity that is far from a discernment of situations has been introduced. And that is dangerous, because it can lead us to a conception of morality that has a casuistic sense. It appears in different formulations, but it is always along the same line. I am very afraid of this. ... It was this decadent scholasticism that provoked the casuistic attitude. It is curious: the course on the «sacrament of penance,» in the faculty of theology, in general — not everywhere — was presented by teachers of sacramental morality. The whole moral sphere was restricted to «you can», «you cannot», «up to here yes but not there»...

It was a morality very foreign to discernment. At that time there was the «cuco» [boogeyman], the specter of situational morality... I think Bernard Häring was the first to start looking for a new way to help moral theology to flourish again. Obviously, in our day moral theology has made much progress in its reflections and in its maturity; it is no longer a «casuistry.» In the field of morality we must advance without falling into situationalism: but, rather, it is necessary to bring forward again the great wealth contained in the dimension of discernment; this is characteristic of the great scholasticism.

We should note something: St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure affirm that the general principle holds for all but — they say it explicitly — as one moves to the particular, the question becomes

diversified and many nuances arise without changing the principle. This scholastic method has its validity. It is the moral method used by the Catechism of the Catholic Church. And it is the method that was used in the last apostolic exhortation, *Amoris laetitia*, after the discernment made by the whole Church through the two Synods. The morality used in *Amoris laetitia* is Thomistic, but that of the great St. Thomas himself...

http://www.laciviltacattolica.it/articoli_download/extra/DIALOGOPAPA_ENG.pdf

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SgXq5giVxSGLIU9ezR1VjIqG4ieXLTRF2u-8JfOVu-4/edit?usp=sharing>

October 24, 2016 - Papal ally, Cardinal Kasper's Reflection on Amoris Laetitia:

..Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke consistently denied the magisterially binding character of "Amoris laetitia" and interpreted it as an expression of the personal opinion of the pope. This position contradicts both the formal character of an apostolic writing and its content...

...The interpretation of Cardinal Christoph Schönborn OP, which he presented at the official presentation of the document on April 8, 2016, on behalf of Pope Francis, and which was expressly approved by him, can be considered decisive.... His interpretation agrees fundamentally with the position of Rocco Buttiglione, who is regarded as the best expert in theology of John Paul II... Both are supported by the careful analysis of the letter by Antonio Spadaro SJ, a close collaborator of the Pope, in the semi-official journal "La Civiltà Cattolica".

The Pope has adhered strictly to the requirements of the final two-thirds majority vote of the Synod, and he has the faith of the great majority of the faithful on his side. By means of the official interpretations, the necessary clarity is provided for those who wish to hear it. The alleged confusion comes from a third party, which has alienated itself from the faith and the life of the people of God.

It [Amoris Laetitia] does not want to criticize and moralize, nor indoctrinate, but it engages in a realistic, open, and relaxed way of dealing with sexuality and eroticism. It expresses understanding and appreciation for the good which can also be found in situations which do not or do not fully correspond to church doctrine and rules...

...With a grain of salt, one can say that *Amoris Laetitia* distances itself from a primarily negative Augustinian view of sexuality and turns toward an affirming Thomistic view on creation...

Here it applies the law of the gradually (*lex gradualitatis*), which does not mean a gradually of law (*gradualitas legis*). The law always applies. It is not a remote ideal; It focuses every single step towards the target. Following the Aristotelian-scholastic doctrine, it is the final cause (*causa finalis*), which sets all the other causes to the factory, it directs and determines. Oftentimes people - and we all are such people - can not do the optimum [the best thing], but only can do the best thing in their situation; Oftentimes, we have to choose the lesser evil. In the living life there is no black and white but only different nuances and shadings...

One will understand *Amoris laetitia* only if one understands the paradigm shift that this writing undertakes... *Amoris Laetitia* does not change an iota of the teaching of the Church, yet it changes everything. The paradigm shift is that *Amoris laetitia* takes the step away from a legal morality to the virtue morality of Thomas Aquinas. This means that writing is in the best tradition.

For Thomas, virtue lies in the middle between the two extremes, between the extremes of rigorism and laxity..... In the German-speaking Synod Circle, this approach reached general approval and was

then incorporated into the eighth chapter of "Amoris laetitia"... In the practical field, the objective norms are always incomplete, since they can never take into account all concrete circumstances.... This has nothing to do with situation ethics...Prudence does not give foundation to the norm, it presupposes it...

... Today it is emphasized such [divorced and remarried] Christians are not excommunicated, but are rather invited to participate as living members of Church life (see Familiaris Consortio 84)...

Pope Benedict XVI, who had adhered to John Paul II's decision not to allow remarried couples to be admitted to communion; He did this by encouraging the divorced to live a celibate life. He thus began a process of maturation and spiritual growth. In this dynamic point of view, Pope Francis goes a step further, by putting the problem in a process of an embracing pastoral [approach] of gradual integration. Correspondingly, *Amoris Laetitia* envisages which forms of exclusion from ecclesiastical, liturgical, pastoral, educational, and institutional services can be overcome (see AL 297, 299).

Previously, John Paul II had already opened the door a bit... basically a concession... for abstinence belongs to the most intimate sphere and does not abolish the objective contradiction of the ongoing bond of marriage of the first sacramental marriage and the second civil marriage...it shows that in the concrete form of the practical pastoral consequences of the dogmatic principle, there is room for maneuver. This provision [to live in continence] obviously does not have the same weight than the general norm; anyhow it is not a final binding magisterial statement.

Francis, on the other hand, speaks of the rich experience and wisdom of the confessor, and emphasizes the subjective aspects without ignoring the objective elements (cf AL 297, 307).

It is probable that every pastor has once experienced that there are situations in which, even if one could speak with angelic tongues, one can not convince people of the objective norm, because they seem insurmountable to them as a world and reality... The conscience of many people is oftentimes blind and deaf to that which is presented to them as Divine Law. That is not a justification of their error, yet an understanding and mercifulness with the erroneous person. (cf. AL 307).

...the pastor can never replace the conscience (cf. AL 37). The reverence for personal conscience as the "most hidden center and sanctuary in man" (GS 16) is decisive for "Amoris laetitia".

Amoris Laetitia lays the groundwork for a changed pastoral praxis in a reasoned individual case. But the papal document does not draw clear practical conclusions from these premises. Pope Francis even expressly states that he can not present such norms (see AL 296, 300, cf. AL 2). It leaves open the concrete question of admission to absolution and communion. Thus the Pope followed the path of a proven tradition of the Magisterium, not to decide many disputed questions, but to leave them open for the unity of the Church. This does not mean, as some suppose, that the Magisterium abolishes itself; to leave a question unanswered, is in itself a magisterial decision of great consequence.

One does not need to focus on footnotes. Much more important is that the gradual integration, which is the key topic in question, is directed essentially towards admittance to the Eucharist as full-form of participation in the life of the Church. Pope Francis, on the return of Lesbos on April 16, 2016, expressed himself most clearly when he was asked the question by a journalist whether *Amoris laetitia*, under certain conditions, permitted the admission of remarried divorced persons to

the communion: "Yes. Period. " This is an answer that is not found in this clarity in *Amoris laetitia*, but corresponds to the general scheme of the writing.

This interpretation can easily be reconciled with the valid church law. The authoritative Canon 915 CIC / 1983 excludes from Absolution and Communion, those who persist "obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin". This provision is fully clear; it requires no change as far as the *quaestio iuris* [question of law] is concerned, but in the light of "Amoris laetitia" [it changes] only the interpretation regarding the *quaestio facti* [question of fact]. For the question of whether there is persistence in grave sin, or, in spite of all goodwill, a newfound human weakness does not arise from the norm itself. The same is true of the judgment of whether there is mortal sin (grave matter, consciousness of sinfulness, intention to oppose God's command, possibly mitigating circumstances), or whether signs of a life out of and in God's grace and genuine longing for the bread of life are not visible...

...There are also situations in which not the admission, but rather the denial of the sacraments, is perceived by many as a scandal. In such cases we are faced with a situation similar to that of Peter when he was called to Caesarea by Joppa. He recognized that Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit. How then could he deny the sacrament of baptism to those who have already received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10: 47)? Applied to our question: Is it possible that the Spirit of God proves to be effective, but does the Church, like Pilate, wash its hands in innocence and regrets not being able to do anything? Does it not also apply to the Church to be merciful in such situations, as our Father is merciful (cf. Luke 6:36)?

...The local Churches are now faced with the question of how they can go past the path which "Amoris laetitia" has opened up fundamentally.

http://www.stimmen-der-zeit.de/zeitschrift/ausgabe/details?k_beitrag=4752128&cnid=13&k_produkt=4754046
<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/cardinal-kasper-amoris-laetitia-changes-everything-on-communion-for-remarri>

October 25, 2016 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

What is the attitude that the Lord asks from us in order that the Kingdom of God can grow and be bread for everybody and is a house too for everybody?...The flour ceases to be flour and becomes bread because it is docile to the strength of the yeast and the yeast allows itself to be mixed in with the flour... I don't know, flour has no feelings but allowing itself to be mixed in one could think that there is some suffering here, right? But the Kingdom too, the Kingdom grows in this way and then in the end it is bread for everybody... A rigid person only has masters and no father. The Kingdom of God is like a mother that grows and is fertile, gives of herself so that her children have food and lodging, according to the example of the Lord. Today is a day to ask for the grace of docility to the Holy Spirit...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/10/25/pope_church_needs_docility_not_organization_characters/1267638

November 14, 2016 – The four cardinals make the dubia public, after being informed that the Pope will not respond to them.

November 17, 2016 – Pope Francis' interview with Avennire:

Q. So the Jubilee [of Mercy] was also the Jubilee of the [Second Vatican] Council, here and now, where do the time of its reception and the time of forgiveness coincide? ...

Pope Francis: ...With *Lumen Gentium*, the Church returned to the source of her nature -- the Gospel. This shifted the axis of Christian understanding from a kind of legalism, which can be ideological, to the person of God, who became mercy in the incarnation of the Son. Think about certain reactions to 'Amoris Laetitia' -- some continue to not understand, (seeing) either white or black, even if it is in the flow of life that one must discern. The Council has told us this, however, historians say that a Council needs a century to be absorbed well into the body of the Church. We are halfway.

Q. But some people think that in these ecumenical meetings, you want to "sell out" Catholic doctrine. One person has said you want to 'protestantize' the Church...

Pope Francis: I'm not losing sleep over it. I'll continue on the path of those who preceded me, and I follow the Council. As for opinions, we must always discern the spirit in which they are spoken. Where there's not a nasty spirit, they can help you on the path. Other times, you see quickly that criticisms taken here and there to justify pre-existing positions aren't honest, they're formed with a nasty spirit in order to sow division. One can see immediately that certain rigorisms are born from something missing, from trying to hide one's own sad dissatisfaction behind a kind of armor. If you watch the movie *Babette's Feast*, there is this rigid behavior.

<https://www.avvenire.it/papa/pagine/giubileo-ecumenismo-concilio-intervista-esclusiva-del-papa-ad-avvenire>

November 20, 2016 - Pope Francis' Interview with TV2000 and InBlue Radio:

The elder son was morally rigid: 'He spent all his money on a life of sin, he doesn't deserve to be welcomed'. Rigidity means always adopting the role of a judge. This rigidity is not typical of Jesus. Jesus reproaches the doctors of the church, he is very much against rigidity. There is an adjective that describes such people, which I would not like to have directed at me: hypocrites. Just read chapter 23 of Matthew's Gospel: "Hypocrite". These people theorise about mercy saying justice is important. In God - and in Christians since it is in God - justice is merciful and mercy is just. The two go hand in hand: they are one thing.

<http://www.lastampa.it/2016/11/20/vaticaninsider/eng/the-vatican/i-am-allergic-to-flatterers-i-deserve-detractors-54D7PRDPDOLUFbWysinJwM/pagina.html>

November 28, 2016 - Fr. Antonio Spadaro, close ally of Pope Francis, op-ed to CNN on the dubia:

I think that *Amoris Laetitia* has created an open and interesting debate within the Catholic Church thanks to Francis, a Pope who never blocks dialogue, if it is loyal and motivated by the good of the Church. The case, however, of those who use criticism for other purposes or ask questions in order to create difficulty and division, would be different, of course.

The interesting questions of the four cardinals, in reality, were already raised during the Synod, where the dialogue was deep, extensive and most of all, frank. *Amoris Laetitia* is only the mature fruit of Francis' reflection after listening to everyone and reading the Synod's final document. It is the result of a Synod and not just a personal idea of the Pontiff, as some might think.

During the Synod, all of the necessary responses were given and more than once. Since then, many other pastors, among them many bishops and cardinals, carried on and deepened the discussion, including recently. The Pope even indicated Cardinal Schönborn as a faithful interpreter of the document. Thus I believe that a doubtful conscience can easily find all of the answers it seeks, if it seeks them with sincerity.

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/28/opinions/pope-associate-controversial-questions-already-answered-spadaro/>

December 4, 2016 - Fr Antonio Spadaro, close ally of Pope Francis, interview on the dubia:

Q. Why hasn't the pope responded to the cardinals?

Fr. Spadaro: The pope doesn't give binary answers to abstract questions. But that doesn't mean he hasn't responded. His response is to approve and to encourage positive pastoral practices. A clear and obvious example was his response to the Buenos Aires area bishops, when he encouraged them and confirmed that their reading of *Amoris Laetitia* was correct. In other words, the pope responds by encouraging, and indeed loves to respond to the sincere questions put to him by pastors. The ones who really understand Catholic doctrine are the pastors, because doctrine does not exist for the purpose of debate but for the *salus animarum* ['the health of souls'] - for salvation rather than intellectual discussion.

Q. The cardinals want to know whether *Amoris Laetitia* ever makes possible absolution and Holy Communion for people who are still validly married but having sexual relations with another. They claim that hasn't been made clear.

Fr. Spadaro: I think that the answer to that has been given, and clearly. When the concrete circumstances of a divorced and remarried couple make feasible a pathway of faith, they can be asked to take on the challenge of living in continence. *Amoris Laetitia* does not ignore the difficulty of this option, and leaves open the possibility of admission to the Sacrament of Reconciliation when this option is lacking.

In other, more complex circumstances, and when it has not been possible to obtain a declaration of nullity, this option may not be practicable. But it still may be possible to undertake a path of discernment under the guidance of a pastor, which results in a recognition that, in a particular case, there are limitations which attenuate responsibility and guilt - particularly where a person believes they would fall into a worse error, and harm the children of the new union. In such cases *Amoris Laetitia* opens the possibility of access to Reconciliation and to the Eucharist, which in turn dispose a person to continuing to mature and grow, fortified by grace.

<https://cruxnow.com/interviews/2016/12/04/jesuit-close-pope-says-many-attacks-amoris-result-bad-spirit/>

December 6, 2016 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

Judas is the most perfect lost sheep in the Gospel: a man with a bitter heart, someone who always had something to criticize in others, he was always 'detached'. He did not know the sweetness that comes of living without second ends with others. He was an unsatisfied man! ... Poor fellow! This poor man is brother Judas as Don Mazzolari called him...I believe that the Lord will take that word [repentance] and will bring with it, I do not know, maybe, but that word makes us doubt.... But that word [repentance] means what? That up until the end, the love of God he was working in that [Judas'] soul, [even] until the moment of despair. [This is] the attitude of the Good Shepherd with the lost sheep.

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/12/06/pope_gods_tenderness_is_our_salvation/1277248

December 7, 2016 – Pope Francis' Interview with Tertio:

Q. To us, it seems that you are indicating Vatican Council II for our times. You are showing us ways of renewal in the Church. The Synodal Church. ... In the Synod you explained your vision of the Church of the future. Could you explain this for our readers?

Pope Francis: ...And so there is a post-Synodal exhortation, which is *Amoris Laetitia*, which is the result of two Synods, in which all the Church worked, and which the Pope made his own. It is expressed in a harmonious way. It is interesting that all that it [*Amoris Laetitia*] contains was approved in the Synod by more than two thirds of the fathers. And this is a guarantee. A synodal Church means that there is this movement from high to low, low to high. And the same in the dioceses. But there is a Latin phrase, that says that the Churches are always cum Petro et sub Petro. Peter is the guarantor of the unity of the Church. He is the guarantor. This is the meaning. And it is necessary to progress in synodality, which is one of the things that the Orthodox have conserved...

Q. You are concerned about the interreligious relationship. In our times we live with terrorism and with war. At times it can be seen that the roots of the current wars reside in the difference between religions. What can be said about this?

Pope Francis: we must be categorical about this, no religion proclaims war for the fact of religion. Religious distortions, yes. For example, all religions have fundamentalist groups. All of them, we do too. And they destroy, starting from their fundamentalism. But these are small religious groups that have distorted and have "sickened" their religion, and as a result they fight, they wage war, or they cause division in communities, which is a form of war. But these are the fundamentalist groups we have in all religions. There is always a small group ...

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/12/07/161207a.html>

December 9, 2016 - Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

But to make themselves important, intermediary priests must take the path of rigidity: often disconnected from the people, they do not know what human suffering is; they forget what they had learned at home, with dad's work, with mom's, grandfather's, grandmother's, his brothers' ... They lose these things. They are rigid, [they are] those rigid ones that load upon the faithful so many things that they do not carry [themselves], as Jesus said to the intermediaries of his time: rigidity. [They face] the people of God with a switch in their hand: 'This cannot be, this cannot be ...'. And so many people approaching, looking for a bit of consolation, a little understanding, are chased away with this rigidity...

About rigidity and worldliness, it was some time ago that an elderly monsignor of the curia came to me, who works, a normal man, a good man, in love with Jesus – and he told me that he had gone to buy a couple of shirts at Euroclero [the clerical clothing store] and saw a young fellow - he thinks he had not more than 25 years, or a young priest or about to become a priest - before the mirror, with a cape, large, wide, velvet, with a silver chain. He then took the Saturno [wide-brimmed clerical headgear], he put it on and looked himself over. A rigid and worldly one. And that priest – he is wise, that monsignor, very wise - was able to overcome the pain, with a line of healthy humor and added: 'And it is said that the Church does not allow women priests!'. Thus, does the work that the priest does when he becomes a functionary ends in the ridiculous, always.

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/12/09/pope_francis_rigidity_worldliness_a_disaster_for_priests/1277926

December 15, 2016 – Pope Francis' Homily at Casa Santa Marta:

...The great can afford to doubt, and this is beautiful. They are certain of their vocation but each time the Lord makes them see a new path of the journey, they enter into doubt. 'But this is not orthodox, this is heretical, this is not the Messiah I expected.' The devil does this work, and some friend also helps, no?...

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/12/15/pastors_should_speak_the_truth_welcome_peoples_first_steps/1279346

December 17, 2016 - Papal Ghostwriter of Amoris Laetitia, Archbishop Fernandez's Interview with La Stampa

Q. Some say that there is "confusion" among the people of God at this time, and especially after the publication of "Amoris laetitia". What do you think?

Fernandez: Faced with the absoluteness of God, faced with the enormous richness of the Gospel and by the complexity of actual human life, the task and the message of the Church inevitably present "confused" aspects. The Pope proposes that in the midst of these limitations of the Church itself never to neglect the heart of the Gospel. At the same time, that the Church does not pretend to be above all a cannon that launches secure doctrines but the instrument of Christ to open the hearts of his people to grace.

Q. Do you believe there is also a risk, on the other hand, to trivialize the words of the Pope by reducing them to slogans?

Fernandez: As much as the friends of the pope can reduce them to a slogan, also his [the pope's] "ultra-Catholic" adversaries [do so] when they do not try to convey the true depth of his message, when they quote him partially, when they use some of his phrases out of context to ridicule him when dealing only with chapter VIII of "Amoris laetitia" and little of the rest of it, etc.

Q. What do you think is the most important and urgent reforms that the Pope would like to accomplish?

Fernandez: The initiating of processes that, according to his personal conviction, are what the Spirit wants to lead his Church. As such, these processes will go beyond the years of the pontificate of Francis and, directed by the Spirit, will become irreversible. They shall be entered in the heart of God's people.

<http://www.lastampa.it/2016/12/17/vaticaninsider/ita/inchieste-e-interviste/il-papa-che-vuol-far-brillare-il-volto-di-una-chiesa-accogliente-vLyzzMNAfPnCONLPJgtzII/pagina.html>

Note: Fernandez's role as ghostwriter of Amoris Laetitia, is confirmed by Vaticanista Edward Pentin and Sandro Magister. Pentin reports: "Well informed sources have told the Register that the document, which observers believe will probably be released on March 19 — the feast of St. Joseph and the 3rd anniversary of the Pope's inauguration Mass — is in its third draft. They also say that the chief drafter is Archbishop Victor Manuel Fernández, rector of the the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina in Buenos Aires and one of Pope Francis' closest advisers.

<http://www.ncregister.com/blog/edward-pentin/archbishop-paglia-apostolic-exhortation-to-be-published-by-end-of-march>

Sandro Magister demonstrates that some key formulations of "Amoris Laetitia" also have an Argentine prehistory, based as they are on a pair of articles from 2005 and 2006 by Víctor Manuel Fernández, arguing for a revisionist reading of Pope St. John Paul II's Encyclical *Veritatis Spondor*.

<http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1351303?eng=y>

December 17, 2016 - Pope Francis' Interview with Scalfari:

Scalfari: Which are your favorite saints?

Pope Francis: The first is obviously Paul. He is the one who constructed our religion. The Community of Jerusalem led by Peter called itself Jewish-Christian, but Paul advised that there was

need [for the Church] to abandon Judaism and to dedicate itself to the spreading of Christianity among the Gentiles, that is, to the pagans. Peter followed him in this conception of his even though Paul had never seen Jesus. He was not an apostle, and yet he was considered such and Peter recognized it....

Pope Francis: It is obvious that there should be unity, but so far has not been the case. Each one has his own God and this feeds fundamentalism, wars, terrorism. Even Christians are differentiated, the Orthodox are different from the Lutherans, Protestants are divided into thousands of different faiths, the schisms have increased these divisions. The rest of us Catholics we were invaded by temporalism, beginning with the Crusades and the religious wars that have bloodied Europe, and North and South America. The phenomenon of slavery and the slave trade, selling them in auctions . This was the reality that has marred the history of the world.

Scalfari: Have you thought about convening a new council?

Pope Francis: A Council, no. Vatican II, which took place fifty years ago, left a teaching that largely has been applied by John Paul II, by Paul VI and Benedict XVI. But there is a point that it has not made strides forward and that is regarding the confrontation with modernity. It is up to me to fill this gap. The Church must modernize itself profoundly in its structures and also in its culture. "

Scalfari: Holiness, modernity does not believe in the Absolute. There is no absolute truth. You will therefore have to confront relativism.

Pope Francis: Indeed. For me, the Absolute exists, our faith leads us to believe in a transcendent God, creator of the Universe. However each of us has a personal relativism, duplicates do not exist. Each one of us has one's own vision of the Absolute; from this point of view, there is relativism and it ranks alongside our faith.

http://www.repubblica.it/vaticano/2016/12/17/news/francesco_che_cammina_sulle_tracce_di_agostino-154271077/

December 19, 2016 – Cardinal Burke suggests timeline for ‘formal correction’ of Pope Francis in 2017 if he continues to fail to respond:

Cardinal Burke's Interview with LifeSite News: Well the dubia have to have a response because they have to do with the very foundations of the moral life and of the Church's constant teaching with regard to good and evil, with regard to various sacred realities like marriage and Holy Communion and so forth. What format it would take is very simple; namely it would be direct, even as the dubia are, only in this case there would no longer be raising questions, but confronting the confusing statements in *Amoris Laetitia* with what has been the Church's constant teaching and practice, and thereby correcting *Amoris Laetitia*. It's an old institute in the Church, the correction of the pope. This has not happened in recent centuries, but there are examples and it's carried out with the absolute respect for the office of the Successor of Saint Peter, in fact, the correction of the pope is actually a way of safeguarding that office and its exercise. When will it take place? Now of course we are in the last days, days of strong grace, before the Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord, and then we have the Octave of the Solemnity and the celebrations at the beginning of the New Year - the whole mystery of Our Lord's Birth and His Epiphany - so it would probably take place sometime after that.

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/full-text-cardinal-burke-discusses-formal-correction-of-pope-how-to-respond>

Cardinal Burke's Interview with Catholic World Report: ...No, I am not saying that Pope Francis is in heresy. I have never said that. Neither have I stated that he is close to being in heresy... [but] if a Pope would formally profess heresy he would cease, by that act, to be the Pope. It's automatic. And so, that could happen... it would have to be members of the College of Cardinals [to make such a declaration of heresy]... There is already in place the discipline to be followed when the Pope ceases from his office, even as happened when Pope Benedict XVI abdicated his office....

http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/5292/cardinal_burke_no_i_am_not_saying_that_pope_francis_is_in_heresy.aspx

December 22, 2016 - Pope Francis calls in to Unamattina on live TV:

Host:... And so we have prepared a little surprise for you, Your Holiness. Here it is ...

Pope Francis: Let's see what the little surprise is ...

[A montage with highlights from the pontificate begins... narrated by the male host:...The centrality of the Gospel is the revolution, the final realization of the Council that took place more than 50 years ago; the engine is faith in the God of mercy. A Church without temporal power, going out to the peripheries, to the poor, to the discarded, that wants to be involved with Christian communities, with families, wounded couples, with the divorced and remarried who can begin a path to approach the Sacraments that was once forbidden from the start. A Church that accompanies, that condemns evil but does not judge persons. No one is excluded from his compelling humanity..."]..

Pope Francis: Yes, yes, thank you for the surprise.... I wish you a Christian Christmas, like the first one was, when God willed to overturn the values of the world, and to become little in a manger, with the little ones, with the poor, with the marginalized ... <http://aleteia.org/2016/12/22/an-extraordinary-surprise-pope-francis-calls-in-live-to-italys-tv-morning-show>
<http://www.raipaly.it/video/2016/12/Gli-auguri-di-Papa-Francesco-a-Unomattina--1fa1db95-15ee-4dc4-9629-6389ca0182cf.html>

December 22, 2016 – Pope Francis' Christmas address to the Roman curia:

The reform of the Curia is in no way implemented with a change of persons – something that certainly is happening and will continue to happen – but with a conversion in persons. Permanent formation is not enough; what we need also and above all is permanent conversion and purification. Without a change of mentality, efforts at practical improvement will be in vain...

In this process, it is normal, and indeed healthy, to encounter difficulties, which in the case of the reform, might present themselves as different types of resistance. There can be cases of open resistance, often born of goodwill and sincere dialogue, and cases of hidden resistance, born of fearful or hardened hearts content with the empty rhetoric of “spiritual window-dressing” typical of those who say they are ready for change, yet want everything to remain as it was before. There are also cases of malicious resistance, which spring up in misguided minds and come to the fore when the devil inspires ill intentions (often cloaked in sheep's clothing). This last kind of resistance hides behind words of self-justification and often accusation; it takes refuge in traditions, appearances, formalities, in the familiar, or else in a desire to make everything personal, failing to distinguish between the act, the actor, and the action...

All this is to say that the reform of the Curia is a delicate process that has to take place in ... unconditioned obedience, but above all by abandonment to the sure guidance of the Holy Spirit and trust in his necessary support.

12. ... Gradualism has to do with the necessary discernment entailed by historical processes, the passage of time and stages of development, assessment, correction, experimentation, and approvals ad experimentum. In these cases, it is not a matter of indecision, but of the flexibility needed to be able to achieve a true reform.

<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2016/12/22/0927/02060.html#ing>

December 23, 2016 - *Der Spiegel* reports words of Pope Francis and Cardinal Brandmüller:

Pope Francis: "It is not to be excluded that I will enter history as the one who split the Church." ...

Cardinal Brandmüller: "Whoever thinks that persistent adultery and the reception of Holy Communion are compatible is a heretic and promotes schism.....We are, according to the Apostle St. Paul, administrators of the mysteries of God, but not holders of the right of disposal... it [the Church teaching barring the divorced and civilly remarried from receiving communion] is about all or nothing", to speak in colloquial terms; that is to say, it is about the kernel of the whole, about the teaching of Doctrine."

<http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/gesellschaft/vatikan-kritik-an-papst-franziskus-nimmt-vor-weihnachten-zu-a-1127247.html>

<http://www.onepeterfive.com/pope-francis-reported-words-might-go-history-split-church/>

December 31, 2016 - Pope Francis' Homily for First Vespers on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God and Te Deum in Thanksgiving for the past year:

...The manger invites us to make this divine "logic" our own. It is not a logic centred on privilege, exemptions or favours but one of encounter and closeness. The manger invites us to break with the logic of exceptions for some and exclusion for others. God himself comes to shatter the chains of privilege that always cause exclusion, in order to introduce the caress of compassion that brings inclusion, that makes the dignity of each person shine forth, the dignity for which he or she was created. A child in swaddling clothes shows us the power of God who approaches us as a gift, an offering, a leaven and opportunity for creating a culture of encounter.

We cannot allow ourselves to be naïve. We know that we are tempted in various ways to adopt the logic of privilege that separates, excludes and closes us off, while separating, excluding and closing off the dreams and lives of so many of our brothers and sisters.

Today, before the little Child Jesus, we should acknowledge that we need the Lord to enlighten us, because all too often we end up being narrow-minded or prisoners of all-or-nothing attitude that would force others to conform to our own ideas. We need this light, which helps us learn from our mistakes and failed attempts in order to improve and surpass ourselves; this light born of the humble and courageous awareness of those who find the strength, time and time again, to rise up and start anew.

As another year draws to an end, let us pause before the manger and express our gratitude to God for all the signs of his generosity in our life and our history, seen in countless ways through the witness of those people who quietly took a risk. A gratitude that is no sterile nostalgia or empty recollection of an idealized and disembodied past, but a living memory, one that helps to generate personal and communal creativity because we know that God is with us. God is with us...Looking at the manger means recognizing that the times ahead call for bold and hope-filled initiatives, as well as the renunciation of vain self-promotion and endless concern with appearances...

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161231_te-deum.html