

New York Times Responds to Pope Francis

Back on April 21st, Pope Francis created a firestorm by telling an Argentinian woman that she could receive Communion in the Catholic Church even though she was married to a divorced man and their marriage was a civil union. Of course, this not only goes against the rules of the Catholic Church but against the words of Jesus Himself, and Pope Francis has not yet at least disavowed his error. And this is very serious because as I have been saying, what Pope Francis did was to unleash the first Abomination of Desolation as prophesied by Jesus: he has taken the Daily Sacrifice away from the Prince as stated by the great Prophet, Daniel.

And now this past Sunday, the New York Times even commented on it. Now, I don't usually read the New York Times; I consider it a totally secular mouthpiece. However, they are considered the most prestigious newspaper in the United States and they do have an Op-ed columnist who I believe is a Catholic: his name is Ross Douthat and he gave a very interesting commentary which brought a lot of response, so much so, that he did a follow-up in yesterday's New York Times. So I thought I would read excerpts from both of these pieces and I will include the articles in a link below and you can read them all for yourself because they are very well written.

Ross Douthat writes: ***'This weekend in Rome, the Catholic Church is celebrating a double canonization that serves as a kind of capstone on Pope Francis's first year in office, and an illustration of his agenda for the church*** (and I'm reading this article because I basically agree with it) ***but there may be trouble ahead. The source of the potential trouble lies in a place where Francis has arguably been most effective- in the distinction he's drawn between the doctrinal and the pastoral, between how the church expounds its moral rules and how it approaches the human beings trying to live up to them. This distinction, always part of Catholicism's lived experience, has allowed the pope to finesse difficult issues like homosexuality and divorce, and reach out to people whose states of life have left them feeling alienated from their faith. Now, though, it's come up to a more specific case- an alleged papal phone call, reported on somewhat confusedly last week, to an Argentine woman who was seeking permission to take communion despite being married to a divorced man, a situation the church considers adultery unless the man's original marriage***

were annulled. According to the husband, who wrote about the phone call on Facebook, Pope Francis gave permission for the woman to do so. According to the Vatican, what Pope Francis said is nobody's business except for the woman herself. Such conversations, a Vatican spokesman said, 'do not in any way form part of the pope's public activities (well I hate to tell you, Vatican spokesman, but it's in the public now) and consequences relating to the teaching of the Church are not to be inferred.' (I would like to think that's correct) **This formulation may be technically correct, but it's also a bit absurd.** (And I agree with you Ross Douthat, it's totally absurd!) **Even in 'private' conversation, the pope is, well, the pope, and this pontiff in particular is no naif about either the media or human nature. Whatever was actually said, the idea that it never occurred to Francis that a pastoral call on such a fraught subject might get media attention seems... very unlikely.** (And now Mr. Douthat gives several possibilities and the third is the most interesting) **There is a third perilous scenario, even if my own assumptions about the nature of the church tend to rule it out. Francis could actually be considering a major shift on remarriage and communion, in which the annulment requirement is dispensed with and (perhaps) a temporary penance is substituted.** (Mr. Douthat, I believe that is exactly what Pope Francis is proposing) **Such a shift wouldn't just provoke conservative grumbling; it would threaten outright schism. The church has famous martyrs to the indissolubility of Christian marriage,** (for example, Saint Thomas More. He was beheaded by Henry VIII because he would not approve of Henry's plan to divorce and remarry without an annulment from the Catholic Church) **and its teaching on divorce and adultery is grounded not just in tradition or natural law, but in the explicit words of Jesus of Nazareth.** (Absolutely Mr. Douthat) **This means that admitting to communion people the church considers to be in permanently adulterous relationships wouldn't just look like a modest development in doctrine. It would look like a major about-face, a doctrinal self-contradiction.'**

Thank You Ross Douthat for telling it like it is. And now, here is a very brief excerpt from his follow follow-up article which he printed in the New York Times yesterday: **'However, what's being proposed and discussed and debated among some of the church's bishops and cardinals- with, it would seem, the blessing of the pope- is somewhat significantly different: An official mechanism whereby a divorced and remarried Catholic could, without having their**

previous marriage declared invalid, do penance for any sins involved in their divorce and then receive Communion without their new marriage being a moral impediment to reception of the host.'

In other words, if Pope Francis had been the pope when Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church, that would have been unnecessary. Pope Francis would have told Henry VIII that he did not need an annulment. He could receive Communion, in other words, he would not be excommunicated.

'In practice, this would move the church in the direction of Eastern Orthodoxy, which has traditionally allowed pastoral exceptions for second marriages. (I might add here for third marriages also, and all Protestant denominations allow unlimited divorce and remarriage) But it would do so in a more ambiguous way- effectively creating a kind of second tier of marital unions for Catholics, whose existence the church would decide to 'tolerate' (in the words of Cardinal Walter Kasper, the leading voice making the proposal) but not accept.' In other words, Cardinal Kasper would tell a woman caught in adultery we will tolerate your adultery but we will not accept it. And of course, that's not what Jesus said. Jesus told the woman to ***'go and sin no more.'***

So in conclusion, I am warning Catholics, and that would include me, that we may very well need to leave our even local churches. We need to check with our pastors. Are they going to support Pope Francis? Will they be giving Communion to divorced and remarried Catholics because if they do plan that, then their consecrations of the Eucharist will not be valid.