

Pastor's Note Regarding a comment by Pope Francis

I have a method of approaching the “bombshells” that we read in media of all sorts. It involves waiting, mostly. But then reading official responses, and authoritative and faithful teachers in the Church as they wrestle with this or that thing. The bruhaha over the Pachamama, the divorced and communion, the “who am I to judge fiasco, and more have for the most part become reflections of the agenda-driven media which doesn't have the best for the Church in mind. They want money sensationalism, and anything that will boost readership and vain prestige for the moment. Unfortunately, for the press, all seems to be vanity, rather than the pursuit of truth, and fame, rather than cool-headed reason. After a week or so, things tend to shake out and we say to ourselves, “Why did we get so worked up?”

The Social Media and Mainstream News Media have blown up over a comment made by Pope Francis regarding Homosexual Civil Unions. I think that in general the media and those with a certain bent would like the comment to be of more importance than this is. Still, the Pope's personal opinion is at odds with established papal and scriptural teaching on homosexual unions and quasi-state sanctioned family structures. Let us be clear: Holy Matrimony for Catholics is the joining of a baptized man and a baptized woman in a covenant sacramental and life-long relationship, the purpose for which is the procreation and education of children and the good of the spouses. There is no way that this definition can be fulfilled except by a man and a woman.

So, what happened? Pope Francis agreed to do an interview with a documentary film maker on his pontificate and his personal life. In that interview, the Holy Father, in his own inimitable way said with typical off-the-cuff imprecision,

“Homosexuals have a right to be a part of the family. They're children of God and have a right to a family. Nobody should be thrown out or be made miserable because of it...” ~Pope Francis.

Pope Francis is strongly wedded to his idea of accompaniment, which means that we should never disregard sinner because they sin, or even are in a state of grave sin. After all, we wouldn't do that to a family member, would we? The Pope thinks that in some way, we should accompany them on their road to conversion, helping the soul to learn the truth about what God has revealed to and through the Church to humankind. As the sinner seeks to please God more and more, and to put selfish ways behind, the faithful Christian aids by charity and example the ways and means of bringing the soul's life in conformity with the ways of Truth. Love conquers all.

Still, the Holy Father's use of as untrustworthy a means (the media) to get out such a sensitive message was yet another error in judgment, after which the Faithful of the Church have to pick up the pieces and put it back together. Let's wait to see what will come from the Holy See before we light our hair on fire and run around screaming (either in joy or panic).

Some reading for you: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20030731_homosexual-unions_en.html