

Correctio filialis de haeresibus propagatis

July 16th, 2017

Feast of our Lady of Mt Carmel

Most Holy Father,

With profound grief, but moved by fidelity to our Lord Jesus Christ, by love for the Church and for the papacy, and by filial devotion toward yourself, we are compelled to address a correction to Your Holiness on account of the propagation of heresies effected by the apostolic exhortation *Amoris laetitia* and by other words, deeds and omissions of Your Holiness.

We are permitted to issue this correction by natural law, by the law of Christ, and by the law of the Church, which three things Your Holiness has been appointed by divine providence to guard. By natural law: for as subjects have by nature a duty to obey their superiors in all lawful things, so they have a right to be governed according to law, and therefore to insist, where need be, that their superiors so govern. By the law of Christ: for His Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to rebuke Peter in public when the latter did not act according to the truth of the gospel (Gal. 2). St Thomas Aquinas notes that this public rebuke from a subject to a superior was licit on account of the imminent danger of scandal concerning the faith (*Summa Theologiae* 2a 2ae, 33, 4 ad 2), and ‘the gloss of St Augustine’ adds that on this occasion, “Peter gave an example to superiors, that if at any time they should happen to stray from the straight path, they should not disdain to be reprovved by their subjects” (ibid.). The law of the Church also constrains us, since it states that “Christ’s faithful . . . have the right, indeed at times the duty, in keeping with their knowledge, competence, and position, to manifest to the sacred pastors their views on matters which concern the good of the Church” (*Code of Canon Law* 212:2-3; *Code of Canons of Oriental Churches* 15:3).

Scandal concerning faith and morals has been given to the Church and to the world by the publication of *Amoris laetitia* and by other acts through which Your Holiness has sufficiently made clear the scope and purpose of this document. Heresies and other errors have in consequence spread through the Church; for while some bishops and cardinals have continued to defend the divinely revealed truths about marriage, the moral law, and the reception of the sacraments, others have denied these truths, and have received from Your Holiness not rebuke but favour. Those cardinals, by contrast, who have submitted *dubia* to Your Holiness, in order that by this time-honoured method the truth of the gospel might be easily affirmed, have received no answer but silence.

Most Holy Father, the Petrine ministry has not been entrusted to you that you might impose strange doctrines on the faithful, but so that you may, as a faithful steward, guard the deposit against the day of the Lord’s return (Lk. 12; 1 Tim. 6:20). We adhere wholeheartedly to the doctrine of papal infallibility as defined by the First Vatican Council, and therefore we adhere to the

explanation which that same council gave of this charism, which includes this declaration: “The Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter 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” (*Pastor aeternus*, cap. 4). For this reason, Your Predecessor, Blessed Pius IX, praised the collective declaration of the German bishops, who noted that “the opinion according to which the pope is ‘an absolute sovereign because of his infallibility’ is based on a completely false understanding of the dogma of papal infallibility.”¹ Likewise, at the 2nd Vatican Council, the Theological Commission which oversaw the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, noted that the powers of the Roman pontiff are limited in many ways.²

Those Catholics, however, who do not clearly grasp the limits of papal infallibility are liable to be led by the words and actions of Your Holiness into one of two disastrous errors: either they will come to embrace the heresies which are now being propagated, or, aware that these doctrines are contrary to the word of God, they will doubt or deny the prerogatives of the popes. Others again of the faithful are led to put in doubt the validity of the renunciation of the papacy by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. Thus, the Petrine office, bestowed upon the Church by our Lord Jesus Christ for the sake of unity and faith, is so used that a way is opened for heresy and for schism. Further, noting that practices now encouraged by Your Holiness’s words and actions are contrary not only to the perennial faith and discipline of the Church but also to the magisterial statements of Your predecessors, the faithful reflect that Your Holiness’s own statements can enjoy no greater authority than that of former popes; and thus the authentic papal magisterium suffers a wound of which it may not soon be healed.

We, however, believe that Your Holiness possesses the charism of infallibility, and the right of universal jurisdiction over Christ’s faithful, in the sense defined by the Church. In our protest against *Amoris laetitia* and against other deeds, words and omissions related to it, we do not deny the existence of this papal charism or Your Holiness’s possession of it, since neither *Amoris laetitia* nor any of the statements which have served to propagate the heresies which this exhortation insinuates are protected by that divine guarantee of truth. Our correction is indeed required by fidelity to infallible papal teachings which are incompatible with certain of Your Holiness’s statements.

As subjects, we do not have the right to issue to Your Holiness that form of correction by which a superior coerces those subject to him with the threat or administration of punishment (cf. *Summa Theologiae* 2a 2ae, 33, 4). We issue this correction, rather, to protect our fellow Catholics - and those outside the Church, from whom the key of knowledge must not be taken away (cf. Lk. 11:52) - hoping to prevent the further spread of doctrines which tend of themselves to the profaning of all the sacraments and the subversion of the Law of God.

We wish now to show how several passages of *Amoris laetitia*, in conjunction with acts, words, and omissions of Your Holiness, serve to propagate seven heretical propositions.³

The passages of *Amoris laetitia* to which we refer are the following:

AL 295: ‘Saint John Paul II proposed the so-called “law of gradualness” in the knowledge that the human being “knows, loves and accomplishes moral good by different stages of growth”. This is not a “gradualness of law” but rather a gradualness in the prudential exercise of free acts on the part of subjects who are not in a position to understand, appreciate, or fully carry out the objective demands of the law.’

AL 296: “There are two ways of thinking which recur throughout the Church’s history: casting off and reinstating. The Church’s way, from the time of the Council of Jerusalem, has always been the way of Jesus, the way of mercy and reinstatement. The way of the Church is not to condemn anyone for ever.”

AL 297: ‘No one can be condemned for ever, because that is not the logic of the Gospel!’

AL 298: ‘The divorced who have entered a new union, for example, can find themselves in a variety of situations, which should not be pigeonholed or fit into overly rigid classifications leaving no room for a suitable personal and pastoral discernment. One thing is a second union consolidated over time, with new children, proven fidelity, generous self-giving, Christian commitment, a consciousness of its irregularity and of the great difficulty of going back without feeling in conscience that one would fall into new sins. 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: 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”.] There are also the cases of those who made every effort to save their first marriage and were unjustly abandoned, or of “those who have entered into a second union for the sake of the children’s upbringing, and are sometimes subjectively certain in conscience that their previous and irreparably broken marriage had never been valid”. Another thing is a new union arising from a recent divorce, with all the suffering and confusion which this entails for children and entire families, or the case of someone who has consistently failed in his obligations to the family. It must remain clear that this is not the ideal which the Gospel proposes for marriage and the family. The Synod Fathers stated that the discernment of pastors must always take place “by adequately distinguishing”, with an approach which “carefully discerns situations”. We know that no “easy recipes” exist.’

AL 299: ‘I am in agreement with the many Synod Fathers who observed that “the baptized who are divorced and civilly remarried need to be more fully integrated into Christian communities in the variety of ways possible, while avoiding any occasion of

scandal. The logic of integration is the key to their pastoral care, a care which would 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. ... 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.”

AL 300: ‘Since “the degree of responsibility is not equal in all cases”, the consequences or effects of a rule need not necessarily always be the same. [footnote 336] This is also the case with regard to sacramental discipline, since discernment can recognize that in a particular situation no grave fault exists.’

AL 301: ‘It is [sic] 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.”’

AL 303: ‘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.’

AL 304: ‘I earnestly ask that we always recall a teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas and learn to incorporate it in our pastoral discernment: “Although there is necessity in the general principles, the more we descend to matters of detail, the more frequently we encounter defects... In matters of action, truth or practical rectitude is not the same for all, as to matters of detail, but only as to the general principles; and where there is the same rectitude in matters of detail, it is not equally known to all... The principle will be found to fail, according as we descend further into detail”. It is true that general rules set forth a good which can never be disregarded or neglected, but in their formulation they cannot provide absolutely for all particular situations.’

AL 305: ‘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. I would also point out that the Eucharist “is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.”]’

AL 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, a Mother who, while clearly expressing her objective teaching, “always does what good she can, even if in the process, her shoes get soiled by the mud of the street”.’

AL 311: ‘The teaching of moral theology should not fail to incorporate these considerations.’

The words, deeds and omissions of Your Holiness to which we wish to refer, and which in conjunction with these passages of *Amoris laetitia* are serving to propagate heresies within the Church, are the following:

- Your Holiness has refused to give a positive answer to the *dubia* submitted to you by Cardinals Burke, Caffarra, Brandmüller, and Meisner, in which you were respectfully requested to confirm that the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia* does not abolish five teachings of the Catholic faith.

- Your Holiness intervened in the composition of the *Relatio post disceptationem* for the Extraordinary Synod on the Family. The *Relatio* proposed allowing Communion for divorced-and-remarried Catholics on a “case-by-case basis”, and said pastors should emphasize the “positive aspects” of lifestyles the Church considers gravely sinful, including civil remarriage after divorce and premarital cohabitation. These proposals were included in the *Relatio* at your personal insistence, despite the fact that they did not receive the two-thirds majority required by the Synod rules for a proposal to be included in the *Relatio*.

- In an interview in April 2016, a journalist asked Your Holiness if there are any concrete possibilities for the divorced and remarried that did not exist before the publication of *Amoris laetitia*. You replied ‘Io posso dire, sì. Punto’; that is, ‘I can say yes. Period.’ Your Holiness then stated that the reporter’s question was answered by the presentation given by Cardinal Schönborn on *Amoris laetitia*. In this presentation Cardinal Schönborn stated:

My great joy as a result of this document resides in the fact that it coherently overcomes that artificial, superficial, clear division between “regular” and “irregular”, and subjects *everyone* to the common call of the Gospel, according to the words of St. Paul: “For God has consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all” (Rom. 11, 32). ... 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”.⁴

Your Holiness amplified this statement by asserting that *Amoris laetitia* endorses the approach to the divorced and remarried that is practised in Cardinal Schönborn’s diocese, where they are permitted to receive communion.

- On Sept. 5th 2016 the bishops of the Buenos Aires region issued a statement on the application of *Amoris laetitia*. In it they stated:

6) En otras circunstancias más complejas, y cuando no se pudo obtener una declaración de nulidad, la opción mencionada puede no ser de hecho factible. No obstante, igualmente es posible un camino de discernimiento. Si se llega a reconocer que, en un caso concreto, hay limitaciones que atenúan la responsabilidad y la culpabilidad (cf. 301-302), particularmente cuando una persona considere que caería en una ulterior falta dañando a los hijos de la nueva unión, *Amoris laetitia* abre la posibilidad del acceso a los sacramentos de la Reconciliación y la Eucaristía (cf. notas 336 y 351). Estos a su vez disponen a la persona a seguir madurando y creciendo con la fuerza de la gracia. ...

9) Puede ser conveniente que un eventual acceso a los sacramentos se realice de manera reservada, sobre todo cuando se prevean situaciones conflictivas. Pero al mismo tiempo no hay que dejar de acompañar a la comunidad para que crezca en un espíritu de comprensión y de acogida, sin que ello implique crear confusiones en la enseñanza de la Iglesia acerca del matrimonio indisoluble. La comunidad es instrumento de la misericordia que es «inmerecida, incondicional y gratuita» (297).

10) El discernimiento no se cierra, porque «es dinámico y debe permanecer siempre abierto a nuevas etapas de crecimiento y a nuevas decisiones que permitan realizar el ideal de manera más plena» (303), según la «ley de gradualidad» (295) y confiando en la ayuda de la gracia.

...

[6] In other, more complex cases, and when a declaration of nullity has not been obtained, the above mentioned option may not, in fact, be feasible. Nonetheless, a path of discernment is still possible. If it comes to be recognized that, in a specific case, there are limitations that mitigate responsibility and culpability (cf. 301-302), especially when a person believes they would incur a subsequent wrong by harming the children of the new union, *Amoris laetitia* offers the possibility of access to the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist (cf. footnotes 336 and 351). These sacraments, in turn, dispose the person to continue maturing and growing with the power of grace. ...

9) It may be right for eventual access to sacraments to take place privately, especially

where situations of conflict might arise. But at the same time, we have to accompany our communities in their growing understanding and welcome, without this implying creating confusion about the teaching of the Church on the indissoluble marriage. The community is an instrument of mercy, which is “unmerited, unconditional and gratuitous” (297).

10) Discernment is not closed, because it “is dynamic; it must remain ever open to new stages of growth and to new decisions which can enable the ideal to be more fully realized” (303), according to the “law of gradualness” (295) and with confidence in the help of grace.]

This asserts that according to *Amoris laetitia* confusion is not to be created about the teaching of the Church on the indissolubility of marriage, that the divorced and remarried can receive the sacraments, and that persisting in this state is compatible with receiving the help of grace. Your Holiness wrote an official letter dated the same day to Bishop Sergio Alfredo Fenoy of San Miguel, a delegate of the Argentina bishops’ Buenos Aires Region, stating that the bishops of the Buenos Aires region had given the only possible interpretation of *Amoris laetitia*:

Querido hermano:

Recibí el escrito de la Región Pastoral Buenos Aires «Criterios básicos para la aplicación del capítulo VIII de *Amoris laetitia*». Muchas gracias por habérmelo enviado; y los felicito por el trabajo que se han tomado: un verdadero ejemplo de acompañamiento a los sacerdotes... y todos sabemos cuánto es necesaria esta cercanía del obispo con su clero y del clero con el obispo. El prójimo «más prójimo» del obispo es el sacerdote, y el mandamiento de amar al prójimo como a sí mismo comienza para nosotros obispos precisamente con nuestros curas.

El escrito es muy bueno y explícita cabalmente el sentido del capítulo VIII de *Amoris Laetitia*. No hay otras interpretaciones.

[Beloved brother,

I received the document from the Buenos Aires Pastoral Region, “Basic Criteria for the Application of Chapter Eight of *Amoris laetitia*.” Thank you very much for sending it to me. I thank you for the work they have done on this: a true example of accompaniment for the priests ... and we all know how necessary is this closeness of the bishop with his clergy and the clergy with the bishop. The neighbor ‘closest’ to the bishop is the priest, and the commandment to love one’s neighbor as one’s self begins for us, the bishops, precisely with our priests. The document is very good and completely explains the meaning of chapter VIII of *Amoris laetitia*. There are no other interpretations.]⁵

- Your Holiness appointed Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia as president of the Pontifical Academy

for Life and grand chancellor of the Pontifical Pope John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. As head of the Pontifical Council for the Family, Archbishop Paglia was responsible for the publication of a book, *Famiglia e Chiesa, un legame indissolubile* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), that contains the lectures given at three seminars promoted by that dicastery on the topics of ‘Marriage: Faith, Sacrament, Discipline’; ‘Family, Conjugal Love and Generation’; and ‘The Wounded Family and Irregular Unions: What Pastoral Attitude’. This book and the seminars it described were intended to put forward proposals for the Synod on the Family, and promoted the granting of communion to divorced and remarried Catholics.

- Guidelines for the diocese of Rome were issued under Your Holiness’s authority permitting the reception of the Eucharist under certain circumstances by civilly divorced and remarried Catholics living *more uxorio* with their civil partner.

- Your Holiness appointed Bishop Kevin Farrell as prefect of the newly established Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, and promoted him to the rank of cardinal. Cardinal Farrell has expressed support for Cardinal Schönborn’s proposal that the divorced and remarried should receive communion. He has stated that the reception of communion by the divorced and remarried is a ‘process of discernment and of conscience.’⁶

- On January 17th, 2017, the *Osservatore Romano*, the official journal of the Holy See, published the guidelines issued by the archbishop of Malta and the bishop of Gozo for the reception of the Eucharist by persons living in an adulterous relationship. These guidelines permitted the sacrilegious reception of the Eucharist by some persons in this situation, and stated that in some cases it is impossible for such persons to practise chastity and harmful for them to attempt to practise chastity. No criticism of these guidelines was made by the *Osservatore Romano*, which presented them as legitimate exercises of episcopal teaching and authority. This publication was an official act of the Holy See that went uncorrected by yourself.

Correctio

His verbis, actis, et omissionibus, et in iis sententiis libri *Amoris laetitia* quas supra diximus, Sanctitas Vestra sustentavit recte aut oblique, et in Ecclesia (quali quantaque intelligentia nescimus nec iudicare audeamus) propositiones has sequentes, cum munere publico tum actu privato, propagavit, falsas profecto et haereticas:

- (1) “Homo iustificatus iis caret viribus quibus, Dei gratia adiutus, mandata obiectiva legis divinae impleat; quasi quidvis ex Dei mandatis sit iustificatus impossibile; seu quasi Dei gratia, cum in homine iustificationem efficit, non semper et sua natura conversionem efficiat ab omni peccato gravi; seu quasi non sit sufficiens ut hominem ab omni peccato gravi convertat.”
- (2) Christifidelis qui, divortium civile a sponsa legitima consecutus, matrimonium civile (sponsa vivente) cum alia contraxit; quique cum ea more uxorio vivit; quique cum plena intelligentia naturae actus sui et voluntatis propriae pleno ad actum consensu eligit in hoc rerum statu manere: non necessarie mortaliter peccare dicendus est, et gratiam sanctificantem accipere et

in caritate crescere potest.”

- (3) “Christifidelis qui alicuius mandati divini plenam scientiam possidet et deliberata voluntate in re gravi id violare eligit, non semper per talem actum graviter peccat.”
- (4) “Homo potest, dum divinae prohibitioni obtemperat, contra Deum ea ipsa obtemperazione peccare.”
- (5) “Conscientia recte ac vere iudicare potest actus venereos aliquando probos et honestos esse aut licite rogari posse aut etiam a Deo mandari, inter eos qui matrimonium civile contraxerunt quamquam sponsus cum alia in matrimonio sacramentali iam coniunctus est.”
- (6) “Principia moralia et veritas moralis quae in divina revelatione et in lege naturali continentur non comprehendunt prohibitiones qualibus genera quaedam actionis absolute vetantur utpote quae propter obiectum suum semper graviter illicita sint.”
- (7) “Haec est voluntas Domini nostri Iesu Christi, ut Ecclesia disciplinam suam perantiquam abiciat negandi Eucharistiam et Absolutionem iis qui, divortium civile consecuti et matrimonium civile ingressi, contritionem et propositum firmum sese emendandi ab ea in qua vivunt vitae conditione noluerunt patefacere.”⁷

These propositions all contradict truths that are divinely revealed, and that Catholics must believe with the assent of divine faith. They were identified as heresies in the petition concerning *Amoris laetitia* that was addressed by 45 Catholic scholars to the cardinals and Eastern patriarchs of the Church.⁸ It is necessary for the good of souls that they be once more condemned by the authority of the Church. In listing these seven propositions we do not intend to give an exhaustive list of all the heresies and errors which an unbiased reader, attempting to read *Amoris laetitia* in its natural and obvious sense, would plausibly take to be affirmed, suggested or favoured by this document: a letter sent to all the cardinals of the Church and to the Eastern Catholic patriarchs lists 19 such propositions. Rather, we seek to list the propositions which Your Holiness's words, deeds and omissions, as already described, have in effect upheld and propagated, to the great and imminent danger of souls.

At this critical hour, therefore, we turn to the *cathedra veritatis*, the Roman Church, which has by divine law pre-eminence over all the churches, and of which we are and intend always to remain loyal children, and we respectfully insist that Your Holiness publicly reject these propositions, thus accomplishing the mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ given to St Peter and through him to all his successors until the end of the world: “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren.”

We respectfully ask for Your Holiness’s apostolic blessing, with the assurance of our filial devotion in our Lord and of our prayer for the welfare of the Church.

Elucidation

In order to elucidate our *Correctio*, and to put forward a firmer defence against the spread of errors, we wish to draw attention to two general sources of error which appear to us to be fostering the heresies that we have listed. We speak, firstly, of that false understanding of divine revelation which generally receives the name of Modernism, and secondly, of the teachings of Martin Luther.

A. The problem of Modernism

The Catholic understanding of divine revelation is frequently denied by contemporary theologians, and this denial has led to widespread confusion among Catholics on the nature of divine revelation and faith. In order to prevent any misunderstanding that might arise from this confusion, and to justify our claim about the current propagation of heresies within the Church, we will describe the Catholic understanding of divine revelation and faith, which is presumed in this document.

This description is also necessary in order to respond to the passages in *Amoris laetitia* where it is asserted that the teachings of Christ and of the magisterium of the Church should be followed. These passages include the following: “Unity of teaching and practice is certainly necessary in the Church” (AL 3). “Faithful to Christ’s teaching we look to the reality of the family today in all its complexity” (AL 32). “The teaching of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* and the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* ought to be taken up anew” (AL 222). “The teaching of the Master (cf. Mt 22:30) and Saint Paul (cf. 1 Cor 7:29-31) on marriage is set – and not by chance – in the context of the ultimate and definitive dimension of our human existence. We urgently need to rediscover the richness of this teaching” (AL 325). These passages might be seen as ensuring that nothing in *Amoris laetitia* serves to propagate errors contrary to Catholic teaching. A description of the true nature of adherence to Catholic teaching will clarify our assertion that *Amoris laetitia* does indeed serve to propagate such errors.

We therefore ask Your Holiness to permit us to recall the following truths, which are taught by Holy Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the universal consensus of the Fathers, and the magisterium of the Church, and which summarise Catholic teaching on faith, divine revelation, infallible magisterial teaching, and heresy:

1. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, whose historical character the Church unhesitatingly asserts, faithfully hand on what Jesus Christ, while living among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation until the day He was taken up into heaven.⁹
2. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. In consequence, all his teachings are the teachings of God Himself.¹⁰
3. All the propositions that are contained in the Catholic faith are truths communicated

by God.¹¹

4. In believing these truths with an assent that is an act of the theological virtue of faith, we are believing the testimony of a speaker. The act of divine faith is a particular form of the general intellectual activity of believing a proposition because a speaker asserts it, and because the speaker is held to be honest and knowledgeable with respect to the assertion he is making. In an act of divine faith, God is believed when he says something, and he is believed because he is God and hence is knowledgeable and truthful.¹²
5. Belief in divine testimony differs from belief in the testimony of human beings who are not divine, because God is all-knowing and perfectly good. In consequence, he can neither lie nor be deceived. It is thus impossible for divine testimony to be mistaken. Because the truths of the Catholic faith are communicated to us by God, the assent of faith that is given to them is most certain. A Catholic believer cannot have rational grounds for doubting or disbelieving any of these truths.¹³
6. Human reason by itself can establish the truth of the Catholic faith based on the publicly available evidence for the divine origin of the Catholic Church, but such reasoning cannot produce an act of faith. The theological virtue of faith and the act of faith can only be produced by divine grace. A person who has this virtue but then freely and knowingly chooses to disbelieve a truth of the Catholic faith sins mortally and loses eternal life.¹⁴
7. The truth of a proposition consists in its saying of what is, that it is; scholastically expressed, it consists in *adaequatio rei et intellectus*. Every truth is as such true, no matter by whom or when or in what circumstances it is considered. No truth can contradict any other truth.¹⁵
8. The Catholic faith does not exhaust all the truth about God, because only the divine intellect can fully comprehend the divine being. Nonetheless every truth of the Catholic faith is entirely and completely true, in that the features of reality that such a truth describes are exactly as these truths present them to be. There is no difference between the content of the teachings of the faith and how things are.¹⁶
9. The divine speech that communicates the truths of the Catholic faith is expressed in human languages. The inspired Hebrew and Greek text of the Holy Scriptures is itself uttered by God in all of its parts. It is not a purely human report or interpretation of divine revelation, and no part of its meaning is due solely to human causes. In believing the teaching of the Holy Scriptures we are believing God directly. We are not believing the statements made by God on the basis of believing the testimony of some other, non-divine person or persons.¹⁷
10. When the Catholic Church infallibly teaches that a proposition is a divinely revealed part of the Catholic faith and is to be believed with the assent of faith, Catholics who assent to this teaching are believing what God has communicated, and are believing it on account of His having said it.¹⁸
11. The languages in which divine revelation is expressed, and the cultures and histories that shaped these languages, do not constrain, distort, or add to the divine revelation

that is expressed in them. No part or aspect of the Holy Scriptures or of the infallible teaching of the Church concerning the content of divine revelation is produced only by the languages and historical conditions in which they are expressed, but not by God's action in communicating truths. Hence, no part of the content of the teaching of the Church can be revised or rejected on the grounds that it is produced by historical circumstances rather than by divine revelation.¹⁹

12. The magisterial teaching of the Church after the death of the last apostle must be understood and believed as a single whole. It is not divided into a past magisterium and a contemporary or living magisterium that can ignore earlier magisterial teaching or revise it at will.²⁰
13. The Pope, who has the supreme authority in the Church, is not himself exempt from the authority of the Church, in accordance with divine and ecclesiastical law. He is bound to accept and uphold the definitive teaching of his predecessors in the papal office.²¹
14. A heretical proposition is a proposition that contradicts a divinely revealed truth that is included in the Catholic faith.²²
15. The sin of heresy is committed by a person who possesses the theological virtue of faith, but then freely and knowingly chooses to disbelieve or doubt a truth of the Catholic faith. Such a person sins mortally and loses eternal life. The judgement of the Church upon the personal sin of heresy is exercised only by a priest in the sacrament of penance.²³
16. The canonical crime of heresy is committed when a Catholic a) publicly doubts or denies one or more truths of the Catholic faith, or publicly refuses to give assent to one or more truths of the Catholic faith, but does not doubt or deny all these truths or deny the existence of Christian revelation, and b) is pertinacious in this denial. Pertinacity consists in the person in question continuing to publicly doubt or deny one or more truths of the Catholic faith after having been warned by competent ecclesiastical authority that his doubt or denial is a rejection of a truth of the faith, and that this doubt or denial must be renounced and the truth in question must be publicly affirmed as divinely revealed by the person being warned.²⁴

(The above descriptions of the personal sin of heresy and of the canonical crime of heresy are given solely in order to be able to exclude them from the subject of our protest. We are only concerned with heretical propositions propagated by the words, deeds and omissions of Your Holiness. We do not have the competence or the intention to address the canonical issue of heresy.)

B. The influence of Martin Luther

In the second place, we feel compelled by conscience to advert to Your Holiness's unprecedented sympathy for Martin Luther, and to the affinity between Luther's ideas on law, justification, and marriage, and those taught or favoured by Your Holiness in *Amoris laetitia* and elsewhere.²⁵ This is

necessary in order that our protest against the seven heretical propositions listed in this document may be complete; we wish to show, albeit in summary form, that these are not unrelated errors, but rather form part of a heretical system. Catholics need to be warned not only against these seven errors, but also against this heretical system as such, not least by reason of Your Holiness's praise of the man who originated it.

Thus, in a press conference on June 26th, 2016, Your Holiness stated:

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 [sic]. 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.²⁶

In a homily in the Lutheran Cathedral in Lund, Sweden, on Oct 31st, 2016, Your Holiness stated:

As Catholics and Lutherans, we have undertaken a common journey of reconciliation. Now, in the context of the commemoration of the Reformation of 1517, we have a new opportunity to accept a common path, one that has taken shape over the past fifty years in the ecumenical dialogue between the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church. Nor can we be resigned to the division and distance that our separation has created between us. We have the opportunity to mend a critical moment of our history by moving beyond the controversies and disagreements that have often prevented us from understanding one another.

Jesus tells us that the Father is the *"vinedresser"* (cf. v. 1) who tends and prunes the vine in order to make it bear more fruit (cf. v. 2). The Father is constantly concerned for our relationship with Jesus, to see if we are truly one with him (cf. v. 4). He watches over us, and his gaze of love inspires us to purify our past and to work in the present to bring about the future of unity that he so greatly desires.

We too must look with love and honesty at our past, recognizing error and seeking forgiveness, for God alone is our judge. We ought to recognize with the same honesty and love that our division distanced us from the primordial intuition of God's people, who naturally yearn to be one, and that it was perpetuated historically by the powerful of this world rather than the faithful people, which always and everywhere needs to be guided surely and lovingly by its Good Shepherd. Certainly, there was a sincere will on the part of both sides to profess and uphold the true

faith, but at the same time we realize that we closed in on ourselves out of fear or bias with regard to the faith which others profess with a different accent and language.

[...]

The spiritual experience of Martin Luther challenges us to remember that apart from God we can do nothing. “How can I get a propitious God?” This is the question that haunted Luther. In effect, the question of a just relationship with God is the decisive question for our lives. As we know, Luther encountered that propitious God in the Good News of Jesus, incarnate, dead and risen. With the concept “*by grace alone*”, he reminds us that God always takes the initiative, prior to any human response, even as he seeks to awaken that response. The doctrine of justification thus expresses the essence of human existence before God.²⁷

In addition to stating that Martin Luther was correct about justification, and in close accordance with this view, Your Holiness has declared more than once that our sins are the place where we encounter Christ (as in your homilies of September 4th, and September 18th, 2014), justifying this view with St Paul, who in fact glories in his own “infirmities” (“*astheneïais*”, cf. 2 Cor. 12:5, 9) and not in his sins, so that the power of Christ may dwell in him.²⁸ In an address to members of *Communion and Liberation* on March 7th, 2015 Your Holiness said:

The privileged place of encounter is the caress of Jesus’ mercy regarding my sin. This is why you may have heard me say, several times, that the place for this, the privileged place of the encounter with Jesus Christ is my sin.²⁹

Furthermore, in addition to other propositions of *Amoris laetitia* which have been listed in the letter sent to all the cardinals and Eastern Catholic patriarchs, and which have been therein qualified as heretical, erroneous, or ambiguous, we read also this:

We should not however confuse different levels: there is no need to lay upon two limited persons the tremendous burden of having to reproduce perfectly the union existing between Christ and his Church, for marriage as a sign entails ‘a dynamic process..., one which advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God’ (AL 122).

While it is true that the sacramental sign of matrimony entails a dynamic process toward holiness, it is beyond doubt that by the sacramental sign the union of Christ with his Church is perfectly reproduced by grace in the married couple. It is not a question of imposing a tremendous burden on two limited persons, but rather of acknowledging the work of the sacrament and of grace (*res et sacramentum*).

Surprisingly we notice here, as in several other parts of this Apostolic Exhortation, a close

relationship with Luther's disparagement of marriage. For the German revolutionary, the Catholic conception of a sacrament as effective *ex opere operato*, in an allegedly 'mechanical' way, is unacceptable. Although he maintains the distinction of *signum et res*, after 1520, with *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, he no longer applies it to marriage. Luther denies that marriage has any reference to sacramentality, on the grounds that we nowhere read in the Bible that the man who marries a woman receives a grace of God, and that neither do we read anywhere that marriage was instituted by God to be a sign of anything. He claimed that marriage is a mere symbol, adding that although it can represent the union of Christ with the Church, such figures and allegories are not sacraments in the sense we use the term (cf. *Luther's Works* {LW} 36:92). For this reason, marriage - whose fundamental aim is to conceive children and to raise them up in the ways of God (cf. LW 44:11-12) - according to Luther belongs to the order of creation and not to that of salvation (cf. LW 45:18); it is given only in order to quench the fire of concupiscence, and as a bulwark against sin (cf. LW 3, Gen. 16:4).

Moreover, beginning with his personal vision about how human nature is corrupted by sin, Luther is conscious that man is not always anxious to respect God's law. Therefore, he is convinced that there is a double manner by which God rules over mankind, to which corresponds a double moral vision about marriage and divorce. Thus divorce is generally admitted by Luther in the case of adultery, but only for non-spiritual people.

His reasoning is that there are two forms of divine government in this world: the spiritual and the temporal. By his spiritual government, the Holy Spirit leads Christians and righteous people under the Gospel of Christ; by his temporal government, God restrains non-Christians and the wicked in order to maintain an outward peace (cf. LW 45:91). Two also are the laws regulating moral life: one is spiritual, for those living under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the other is temporal or worldly, for those who cannot comply with the spiritual one (cf. LW 45:88-93). This double moral vision is applied by Luther to adultery in reference to Mt 5:32: hence, Christians must not divorce even in the case of adultery (the spiritual law); but divorce exists and was granted by Moses because of sin (the worldly law). The permission to divorce is thus seen as a limit put by God upon carnal people to restrain their misbehaviour and prevent them from doing worse on account of their wickedness (cf. LW 45:31).

How can we not see here a close similarity with what has been suggested by Your Holiness in *Amoris laetitia*? On the one hand marriage is supposedly safeguarded as a sacrament, while on the other hand divorce and remarriage are regarded 'mercifully' as a *status quo* to be – although only 'pastorally' – integrated into the life of the Church, thus openly contradicting the word of our Lord. Luther was led to an acceptance of re-marriage by his identification of concupiscence with sin; for he recognized marriage as a remedy for concupiscence. In reality, concupiscence is not as such sinful, just as re-marriage when one has a living spouse is not a *status*, but a privation of truth.

However, Luther's self-contradiction, generated by his two-fold view of marriage - itself seen as something that pertains properly to the Law and not to the Gospel – is then supposedly overcome

by the precedence of faith: a “cordial trust” in order to adhere subjectively to God. He claims that faith justifies man insofar as the punishing justice withdraws into mercy and is changed permanently into forgiving love. This is made possible out of a “joyful bargain” (*fröhlicher Wechseln*) by which the sinner can say to Christ: “You are my righteousness just as I am your sin” (LW 48:12; cf. also 31:351; 25:188). By this “happy exchange”, Christ becomes the only sinner and we are justified through the acceptance of the Word in faith.

In Your pilgrimage to Fatima for the beginning of this providential centenary, Your Holiness clearly alluded to this Lutheran view about faith and justification, stating on May 12th, 2017:

Great injustice is done to God’s grace whenever we say that sins are punished by his judgment, without first saying – as the Gospel clearly does – that they are forgiven by his mercy! Mercy has to be put before judgment and, in any case, God’s judgment will always be rendered in the light of his mercy. Obviously, God’s mercy does not deny justice, for Jesus took upon himself the consequences of our sin, together with its due punishment. He did not deny sin, but redeemed it on the cross. Hence, in the faith that unites us to the cross of Christ, we are freed of our sins; we put aside all fear and dread, as unbecoming those who are loved (cf. 1 Jn. 4:18).³⁰

The gospel does not teach that all sins will in fact be forgiven, nor that Christ alone experienced the ‘judgement’ or justice of God, leaving only mercy for the rest of mankind. While there is a ‘vicarious suffering’ of our Lord in order to expiate our sins, there is not a ‘vicarious punishment’, for Christ was made “sin for us” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21) and not a *sinner*. Out of divine love, and not as the object of God’s wrath, Christ offered the supreme sacrifice of salvation to reconcile us with God, taking upon himself only the consequences of our sins (cf. Gal. 3:13). Hence, so that we may be justified and saved, it is not sufficient to have faith that our sins have been removed by a supposed vicarious punishment; our justification lies in a conformity to our Saviour achieved by that faith which works through charity (cf. Gal. 5:6).

Most Holy Father, permit us also to express our wonderment and sorrow at two events occurring in the heart of the Church, which likewise suggest the favour in which the German heresiarch is held under Your pontificate. On January 15th, 2016, a group of Finnish Lutherans were granted Holy Communion in the course of a celebration of Holy Mass that took place at St Peter’s basilica. On 13th October, 2016, Your Holiness presided over a meeting of Catholics and Lutherans in the Vatican, addressing them from a stage on which a statue of Martin Luther was erected.

¹ Denzinger-Hünemann {DH} 3117, Apostolic letter *Mirabilis illa constantia*, March 4th, 1875.

² *Relatio* of the Theological Commission on n. 22 of *Lumen gentium*, in *Acta Synodalia*, III/I, p. 247.

³ This section therefore contains the *Correctio* properly speaking, and is that to which the signatories intend principally and directly to subscribe.

⁴ <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/04/08/160408a.html>

⁵ http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/09/12/pope_endorses_argentine_bishops_document_on_amoris_laetitia/1257635

⁶ <https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/new-cardinal-farrell-amoris-laetitia-holy-spirit-speaking>

⁷ By these words, deeds, and omissions, and by the above-mentioned passages of the document *Amoris laetitia*, Your Holiness has upheld, directly or indirectly, and, with what degree of awareness we do not seek to judge, both by public office and by private act propagated in the Church the following false and heretical propositions:

1). 'A justified person has not the strength with God's grace to carry out the objective demands of the divine law, as though any of the commandments of God are impossible for the justified; or as meaning that God's grace, when it produces justification in an individual, does not invariably and of its nature produce conversion from all serious sin, or is not sufficient for conversion from all serious sin.'

2). 'Christians who have obtained a civil divorce from the spouse to whom they are validly married and have contracted a civil marriage with some other person during the lifetime of their spouse, who live *more uxorio* with their civil partner, and who choose to remain in this state with full knowledge of the nature of their act and full consent of the will to that act, are not necessarily in a state of mortal sin, and can receive sanctifying grace and grow in charity.'

3). 'A Christian believer can have full knowledge of a divine law and voluntarily choose to break it in a serious matter, but not be in a state of mortal sin as a result of this action.'

4). 'A person is able, while he obeys a divine prohibition, to sin against God by that very act of obedience.'

5). 'Conscience can truly and rightly judge that sexual acts between persons who have contracted a civil marriage with each other, although one or both of them is sacramentally married to another person, can sometimes be morally right or requested or even commanded by God.'

6). 'Moral principles and moral truths contained in divine revelation and in the natural law do not include negative prohibitions that absolutely forbid particular kinds of action, inasmuch as these are always gravely unlawful on account of their object.'

7). 'Our Lord Jesus Christ wills that the Church abandon her perennial discipline of refusing the Eucharist to the divorced and remarried and of refusing absolution to the divorced and remarried who do not express contrition for their state of life and a firm purpose of amendment with regard to it.'

⁸ Here are, for these seven propositions, the references that were included in the letter to the cardinals and patriarchs:

1. Council of Trent, session 6, canon 18: “If anyone says that the commandments of God are impossible to observe even for a man who is justified and established in grace, let him be anathema” (DH 1568).

See also: Gen. 4:7; Deut. 30:11-19; Ecclesiasticus 15: 11-22; Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26; Heb. 10:26-29; 1 Jn. 5:17; Zosimus, 15th (or 16th) Synod of Carthage, canon 3 on grace, DH 225; Felix III, 2nd Synod of Orange, DH 397; Council of Trent, Session 5, canon 5; Session 6, canons 18-20, 22, 27 and 29; Pius V, Bull *Ex omnibus afflictionibus*, On the errors of Michael du Bay, 54, DH 1954; Innocent X, Constitution *Cum occasione*, On the errors of Cornelius Jansen, 1, DH 2001; Clement XI, Constitution *Unigenitus*, On the errors of Pasquier Quesnel, 71, DH 2471; John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia* 17: AAS 77 (1985): 222; *Veritatis splendor* 65-70: AAS 85 (1993): 1185-89, DH 4964-67.

2. Mk. 10:11-12: “Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery”.

See also: Ex. 20:14; Mt. 5:32, 19:9; Lk. 16:18; 1 Cor. 7: 10-11; Heb. 10:26-29; Council of Trent, Session 6, canons 19-21, 27, DH 1569-71, 1577; Session 24, canons 5 and 7, DH 1805, 1807; Innocent XI, Condemned propositions of the ‘Laxists’, 62-63, DH 2162-63; Alexander VIII, Decree of the Holy Office on ‘Philosophical Sin’, DH 2291; John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, 65-70: AAS 85 (1993): 1185-89 (DH 4964-67).

3. Council of Trent, session 6, canon 20: “If anyone says that a justified man, however perfect he may be, is not bound to observe the commandments of God and of the Church but is bound only to believe, as if the Gospel were merely an absolute promise of eternal life without the condition that the commandments be observed, let him be anathema” (DH 1570).

See also: Mk. 8:38; Lk. 9:26; Heb. 10:26-29; 1 Jn. 5:17; Council of Trent, session 6, canons 19 and 27; Clement XI, Constitution *Unigenitus*, On the errors of Pasquier Quesnel, 71, DH 2471; John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Reconciliatio et paenitentia* 17: AAS 77 (1985): 222; *Veritatis splendor*, 65-70: AAS 85 (1993): 1185-89, DH 4964-67.

4. Ps. 18:8: “The law of the Lord is unspotted, converting souls.”

See also: Ecclesiasticus 15:21; Council of Trent, session 6, canon 20; Clement XI, Constitution *Unigenitus*, On the errors of Pasquier Quesnel, 71, DH 2471; Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum*, ASS 20 (1887-88): 598 (DH 3248); John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, 40: AAS 85 (1993): 1165 (DH 4953).

5. Council of Trent, session 6, canon 21: “If anyone says that Jesus Christ was given by God to men as a redeemer in whom they are to trust but not also as a lawgiver whom they are bound to obey, let him be anathema”, DH 1571.

Council of Trent, session 24, canon 2: “If anyone says that it is lawful for Christians to have several wives at the same time, and that this is not forbidden by any divine law, let him be anathema”, DH 1802.

Council of Trent, session 24, canon 5: “If anyone says that the marriage bond can be dissolved because of heresy or difficulties in cohabitation or because of the wilful absence of one of the spouses, let him be anathema”, DH 1805.

Council of Trent, session 24, canon 7: “If anyone says that the Church is in error for having taught and for still teaching that in accordance with the evangelical and apostolic doctrine, the marriage bond cannot be dissolved because of adultery on the part of one of the spouses and that neither of the two, not even the innocent one who has given no cause for infidelity, can contract another marriage during the lifetime of the other, and that the husband who dismisses an adulterous wife and marries again and the wife who dismisses an adulterous husband and marries again are both guilty of adultery, let him be anathema”, DH

1807.

See also: Ps. 5:5; Ps. 18:8-9; Ecclesiasticus 15:21; Heb. 10:26-29; Jas. 1:13; 1 Jn. 3:7; Innocent XI, *Condemned propositions of the 'Laxists'*, 62-63, DH 2162-63; Clement XI, Constitution *Unigenitus*, On the errors of Pasquier Quesnel, 71, DH 2471; Leo XIII, encyclical letter *Libertas praestantissimum*, ASS 20 (1887-88): 598, DH 3248; Pius XII, *Decree of the Holy Office on situation ethics*, DH 3918; 2nd Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, 16; John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, 54: AAS 85 (1993): 1177; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1786-87.

6. John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor* 115: "Each of us knows how important is the teaching which represents the central theme of this Encyclical and which is today being restated with the authority of the Successor of Peter. Each of us can see the seriousness of what is involved, not only for individuals but also for the whole of society, with the reaffirmation of the universality and immutability of the moral commandments, particularly those which prohibit always and without exception intrinsically evil acts", DH 4971.

See also: Rom. 3:8; 1 Cor. 6: 9-10; Gal. 5: 19-21; Apoc. 22:15; 4th Lateran Council, chapter 22, DH 815; Council of Constance, Bull *Inter cunctas*, 14, DH 1254; Paul VI, *Humanae vitae*, 14: AAS 60 (1968) 490-91; John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, 83: AAS 85 (1993): 1199, DH 4970.

7. 1 Cor. 11:27: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord."

Familiaris consortio, 84: "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'."

2nd Lateran Council, canon 20, DH 717: "Because 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 certain 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".

See also: Mt. 7:6; Mt. 22: 11-13; 1 Cor. 11:28-30; Heb. 13:8; Council of Trent, session 14, *Decree on Penance*, cap. 4; Council of Trent, session 13, *Decree on the most holy Eucharist*, DH 1646-47; Innocent XI, *Condemned propositions of the 'Laxists'*, 60-63, DH 2160-63; John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1385, 1451, 1490

⁹ Clement VI, *Super quibusdam*, to the Catholicos of the Armenians, question 14, DH 1065: "We ask whether you have believed and do believe that the New and Old Testament, in all their books, which the authority of the Roman Church has handed down to us, contain undoubted truth in all things."

2nd Vatican Council, *Dei verbum* 18-19: "What the Apostles preached in fulfilment of the commission of Christ, afterwards they themselves and apostolic men, under the inspiration of the divine Spirit, handed on to us in writing: the foundation of faith, namely, the fourfold Gospel, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Holy Mother Church has firmly and with absolute constancy held, and continues to hold, that the four Gospels just named, whose historical character the Church unhesitatingly asserts, faithfully hand on what Jesus Christ, while living among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation until the day He was taken up into heaven."

See also: Lk. 1:1-4; Jn. 19:35; 2 Pet. 1:16; Pius IX, *Syllabus*, 7; Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, ASS 26 (1893-94): 276-77; Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 13-17; *Praestantia scripturae*, ASS 40 (1907): 724ff.

¹⁰ 1 Jn. 5:10: “He that believeth in the Son of God has the testimony of God in himself. He that believeth not the Son, maketh him a liar.”

Council of Chalcedon, *Definition*, DH 301: “Following the holy fathers, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity.”

2nd Vatican Council, *Dei verbum* 4: “After speaking in many and varied ways through the prophets, ‘now at last in these days God has spoken to us in His Son’. For He sent His Son, the eternal Word, who enlightens all men, so that He might dwell among men and tell them of the innermost being of God. Jesus Christ, therefore, the Word made flesh, was sent as ‘a man to men’. He ‘speaks the words of God’.”

See also: Mt. 7:29; Matt. 11:25-27; Mk. 1:22; Luke 4:32; John 1:1-14; Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 27.

¹¹ 1st Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*, cap. 3: “Faith, which is the beginning of human salvation, the Catholic Church professes to be a supernatural virtue, by means of which, with the grace of God inspiring and assisting us, we believe to be true what He has revealed.”

Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 22 (condemned proposition): “The dogmas that the Church holds out as revealed are not truths which have fallen from heaven.”

See also: 1 Thess. 2:13; Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 23-26; *Pascendi dominici gregis*, ASS 40 (1907): 611; Paul VI, Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, DH 4538.

¹² Jn. 3:11: “Amen, Amen, I say to thee, that we speak what we know and we testify what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony.”

Jn. 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life”

1 Jn. 5:9-10: “If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God, which is greater, because he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth in the Son of God has the testimony of God in himself. He that believeth not the Son, maketh him a liar.”

1st Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*, cap. 3, can. 2: “If anyone says that divine faith is not distinct from the natural knowledge of God and of moral truths; that, therefore, for divine faith it is not necessary that the revealed truth be believed on the authority of God who reveals it, let him be anathema.”

Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 26 (condemned proposition): “The dogmas of the faith are to be held only according to their practical sense; that is to say, as preceptive norms of conduct and not as norms of believing.”

Pius X, *Oath against the errors of Modernism*, DH 3542: “I hold with certainty and I sincerely confess that faith is not a blind inclination of religion welling up from the depth of the subconscious under the impulse of the heart and the inclination of a morally conditioned will, but is the genuine assent of the intellect to a truth that is received from outside by hearing. In this assent, given on the authority of the all-truthful God, we hold to be true what has been said, attested to, and revealed, by the personal God, our creator and Lord.”

See also: Jn. 8:46, 10:16; Rom. 11:33; Heb. 3:7, 5:12; Pius IX, *Qui pluribus*, Acta (Rome, 1854) 1/1, 6-13; *Syllabus*, 4-5; Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 20; *Pascendi dominici gregis*, ASS 40 (1907): 604ff; John Paul II, Declaration *Dominus Iesus* on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church, 7.

¹³ Num. 23:19: “God is not a man that he should lie.”

Pius IX, *Qui pluribus*, DH 2778: “Who is or can be ignorant that all faith is to be given to God who speaks

and that nothing is more suitable to reason itself than to acquiesce and firmly adhere to what it has determined to be revealed by God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived?”

1st Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*, cap. 3: “Faith, which is the beginning of human salvation, the Catholic Church professes to be a supernatural virtue, by means of which, with the grace of God inspiring and assisting us, we believe to be true what He has revealed, not because we perceive its intrinsic truth by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God himself, who makes the revelation and can neither deceive nor be deceived.”

1st Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*, cap. 3, can. 6: “If anyone says that the condition of the faithful and those who have not yet attained to the only true faith is alike, so that Catholics may have a just cause for calling in doubt, by suspending their assent, the faith which they have already received from the teaching of the Church, until they have completed a scientific demonstration of the credibility and truth of their faith: let him be anathema.”

2nd Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, 12: “The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief.”

Paul VI, Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, DH 4538: “All dogmas, since they are divinely revealed, must be believed with the same divine faith.”

See also: Ap. 3:14; Innocent XI, *Condemned propositions of the “Laxists”*, 20-21, DH 2120-21; Pius IX, *Syllabus*, 15-18; Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 25.

¹⁴ Mk. 16:20: “They going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.”

2 Cor. 3: 5: “Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God.”

1 Pet. 3:15: “Sanctify the Lord, Christ, in your hearts, being ready always to satisfy everyone that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you.”

Tit. 3:10-11: “A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid: knowing that he, that is such an one, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned by his own judgement.”

Apoc. 22:19: “If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city.”

1st Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*, cap. 3: “In order that the submission of our faith should be in harmony with reason, it was God's will that there should be linked to the internal assistance of the Holy Spirit external indications of his revelation, that is to say divine acts, and first and foremost miracles and prophecies, which clearly demonstrating as they do the omnipotence and infinite knowledge of God, are most certain signs of revelation and are suited to the understanding of all people. Hence Moses and the prophets, and especially Christ our Lord himself, worked many manifest miracles and delivered prophecies [...] So that we could fulfil our duty of embracing the true faith and of persevering unwaveringly in it, God, through his only begotten Son, founded the Church, and endowed her with clear notes of his institution to the end that she might be recognised by all as the guardian and teacher of the revealed word. To the Catholic Church alone belong all those things, so many and so marvellous, which have been divinely ordained to make for the manifest credibility of the Christian faith.”

1st Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*, cap. 3: “Although the assent of faith is by no means a blind movement of the mind, yet no one can accept the gospel preaching in the way that is necessary for achieving salvation without the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit, who gives to all facility in accepting and believing the truth. And so faith in itself, even if it does not work through charity, is a gift of God, and its operation is a work belonging to the order of salvation.”

See also: 2nd Council of Orange, can. 7; Innocent XI, *Condemned propositions of the “Laxists”* 20-21; Gregory

XVI, Theses subscribed to by Louis-Eugène Bautain, 6, DH 2756; Pius IX, *Syllabus*, 15-18; Pius X, *Pascendi dominici gregis*, ASS 40 (1907): 596-97; *Oath against the errors of Modernism*, DH 3539; Pius XII, *Humani generis*, AAS 42 (1950): 571.

¹⁵ 2nd Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, 15: “Man judges rightly that by his intellect he surpasses the material universe, for he shares in the light of the divine mind. [. . .] His intelligence is not confined to observable data alone, but can with genuine certitude attain to reality itself as knowable.”

John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 27: “Every truth, if it is authentic, presents itself as universal and absolute, even if it is not the whole truth. If something is true, then it must be true for all people and at all times.”

John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 82: “This prompts a second requirement: that philosophy verify the human capacity to *know the truth*, to come to a knowledge which can reach objective truth by means of that *adaequatio rei et intellectus* to which the Scholastic doctors referred.”

See also: Pius XII, *Humani generis*, AAS 42 (1950): 562-63, 571-72, 574-75; John XXIII, *Ad Petri cathedram*, AAS 1959 (51): 501-2; John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 4-10, 12-14, 49, 54, 83-85, 95-98.

¹⁶ 1 Cor. 2:9-10: “As it is written: ‘That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.’ But to us God hath revealed them, by his Spirit.”

1 Cor. 2:12-13: “We have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God: which things also we speak.”

Pius XII, *Humani generis*, DH 3882-83: “Some hold that the mysteries of faith are never expressed by truly adequate concepts but only by approximate and ever changeable notions, in which the truth is to some extent expressed, but is necessarily distorted. Wherefore they do not consider it absurd, but altogether necessary, that theology should substitute new concepts in place of the old ones in keeping with the various philosophies which in the course of time it uses as its instruments, so that it should give human expression to divine truths in various ways which are even somewhat opposed, but still equivalent, as they say. [...] It is evident from what We have already said, that such efforts not only lead to what they call dogmatic relativism, but that they actually contain it.”

Paul VI, Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 5, DH 4540: “As for the meaning of dogmatic formulas, this remains ever true and constant in the Church, even when it comes to be expressed with greater clarity and to be more fully understood. The faithful therefore must shun the opinion, first, that dogmatic formulations, or some category of them, cannot signify the truth in a determinate way, but can only offer changeable approximations to it, which to a certain extent distort or alter it; and secondly, that these formulations only express the truth in an indeterminate way, and that one must continue to seek this truth by further approximations of this kind.”

See also: Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 4.

¹⁷ 1 Thess. 2:13 “We give thanks to God without ceasing: because, that when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed), the word of God.”

1 Tim. 3:16: “All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach.”

2 Pet. 1:20-21: “No prophecy of scripture is made by private interpretation. For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time; but the holy men spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost.”

Pius XII, *Divino afflante Spiritu* AAS 35 (1943): 299-300: “It is absolutely wrong and forbidden ‘either to narrow inspiration to certain passages of Holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred,’ since divine inspiration ‘not only is essentially incompatible with error but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God Himself, the supreme Truth, can utter that which is not true.

This is the ancient and constant faith of the Church.’ This teaching, which Our Predecessor Leo XIII set forth with such solemnity, We also proclaim with Our authority.”

2nd Vatican Council, *Dei verbum*, 11: “Holy mother Church, relying on the belief of the Apostles, holds that the books of both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself. In composing the sacred books, God chose men, and while employed by Him they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with Him acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing all and only those things which He wanted.”

See also: Jn. 10:16, 35; Heb. 3:7, 5:12; Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, DH 3291-92; Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 9-11; *Pascendi dominici gregis*, ASS 40 (1907): 612-13; Benedict XV, *Spiritus Paraclitus*, AAS 12 (1920), 393; Pius XII, *Humani generis*, DH 3887.

¹⁸ 1 Thess. 2:13 “We give thanks to God without ceasing: because, that when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed), the word of God.”

1st Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*, cap. 3: “Faith, which is the beginning of human salvation, the Catholic Church professes to be a supernatural virtue, by means of which, with the grace of God inspiring and assisting us, we believe to be true what He has revealed, not because we perceive its intrinsic truth by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God himself, who makes the revelation and can neither deceive nor be deceived. [...] Further, by divine and Catholic faith all those things are to be believed which are contained in the word of God as found in scripture and tradition, and which are proposed by the Church as to be believed as divinely revealed, whether by her solemn judgment or in her ordinary and universal magisterium.

See also: Jn. 10:16; Heb. 3:7, 5:12; Pius XII, *Mystici corporis Christi*, AAS 35 (1943): 216.

¹⁹ Pius XII, *Humani generis*, DH 3883: “The Church cannot be tied to any and every passing philosophical system. Nevertheless, those notions and terms which have been developed through common effort by Catholic teachers over the course of the centuries to bring about some understanding of dogma are certainly not based on any such weak foundation. They are based on principles and notions deduced from a true knowledge of created things. In the process of deduction, this knowledge, like a star, gave enlightenment to the human mind through the Church. Hence it is not surprising that some of these notions have not only been employed by the Ecumenical Councils, but even sanctioned by them, so that it is wicked to depart from them.”

Paul VI, Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 5, DH 4540: “As for the meaning of dogmatic formulas, this remains ever true and constant in the Church, even when it comes to be expressed with greater clarity and to be more fully understood. The faithful therefore must shun the opinion, first, that dogmatic formulations, or some category of them, cannot signify the truth in a determinate way, but can only offer changeable approximations to it, which to a certain extent distort or alter it; and secondly, that these formulations only express the truth in an indeterminate way, and that one must continue to seek this truth by further approximations of this kind.”

John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 87: “One must remember that even if the statement of a truth is limited to some extent by times and by forms of culture, the truth or the error with which it deals can nevertheless be recognised and evaluated as such, however great the distance of space or time.”

John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 95: “The word of God is not addressed to any one people or to any one period of history. Similarly, dogmatic statements, while reflecting at times the culture of the period in which they were defined, formulate an unchanging and ultimate truth.”

John Paul II, Declaration *Dominus Iesus* on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the

Church, 6: “The truth about God is not abolished or reduced because it is spoken in human language; rather, it is unique, full, and complete, because he who speaks and acts is the Incarnate Son of God.”

See also: Jn. 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Apoc. 22:18-19; Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, DH 3288; Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 4; John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 84.

²⁰ Gal. 1:9: “If anyone preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema.”

1st Vatican Council, *Dei Filius*, cap. 4, can. 3: “If anyone says that it is possible that at some time, with the progress of knowledge, a sense should be assigned to the dogmas propounded by the Church which is different from that which the Church has understood and does understand: let him be anathema.”

Pius X, *Oath against the errors of Modernism*, DH 3541: “I sincerely hold that the doctrine of faith was handed down to us from the apostles through the orthodox Fathers with the same sense and always with the same meaning. Therefore, I entirely reject the heretical fiction that dogmas evolve and change from one meaning to another, different from the meaning which the Church held previously. I also condemn every error that substitutes for the divine deposit which has been given to the spouse of Christ to be carefully guarded by her, some philosophical invention or product of human reflection, gradually formed by human effort and due to be perfected in the future by unlimited progress.”

See also: 1 Tim. 6: 20; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; Heb. 13:7-9; Jude 3; Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, DH 2802; Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 21, 54, 50, 60, 62; *Pascendi dominici gregis*, ASS 40 (1907): 616ff.; Pius XII, *Humani generis*, DH 3886; Paul VI, Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, DH 4540.

²¹ 1st Vatican Council, *Pastor aeternus*, cap. 4: “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. [...] This gift of truth and never-failing faith was therefore divinely conferred on Peter and his successors in this see so that they might discharge their exalted office for the salvation of all, and so that the whole flock of Christ might be kept away by them from the poisonous food of error and be nourished with the sustenance of heavenly doctrine.”

2nd Vatican Council, *Dei verbum*, 10: “The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living magisterium of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This magisterium is not above the word of God, but serves it. It teaches only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit. It draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.”

See also: Matt. 16:23; Gratian, *Decretum*, Part 1, Distinction 40, Chapter 6; Innocent III, 2nd sermon ‘On the consecration of the supreme pontiff’, ML, 656; 4th sermon ‘On the consecration of the supreme pontiff’, ML 670; Pius IX, letter *Mirabilis illa constantia* to the bishops of Germany, DH 3117 (cf. DH 3114).

²² Cf. John Paul II, 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, 751; *Code of Canons of Oriental Churches*, 1436.

²³ Cf. Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:18; Jn. 20:23; Rom. 14:4; Gal. 1:9; 1 Tim. 1:18-20; Jude 3-6; Council of Florence, *Cantate Domino*, DH 1351; Council of Trent, Session 14, can. 9.

²⁴ Cf. Matt. 18:17; Tit. 3:10-11; Pius X, *Lamentabili sane*, 7; John Paul II, *Code of Canon Law*, 751, 1364; *Code of Canons of Oriental Churches*, 1436.

²⁵ The signatories do not intend in this section principally to describe the thought of Martin Luther, a subject concerning which all of them do not have the same expertise, but rather to describe certain false notions of marriage, justification and law which appear to them to have inspired *Amoris laetitia*.

²⁶ <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/full-text-pope-francis-inflight-press-conference-from-armenia-45222/>

²⁷http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161031_omelia-svezia-lund.pdf

²⁸http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/09/04/pope_recognize_your_sins_and_be_transformed_by_christ/1105890;

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/09/18/pope_at_santa_marta_the_courage_to_admit_we_are_sinners/1106766

²⁹ <http://www.news.va/en/news/the-pope-on-the-sixtieth-anniversary-of-communion>

³⁰ <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-in-fatima-greetings-at-chapel-of-appa>