

Five “Dubia”

November 26, 2016

In a scandal of a gravity unprecedented even in Pope Francis’ scandal-ridden reign as Catholic Pope since 2013, when challenged by four honourable Cardinals on his seeming denial of the very basis of the Church’s teaching on morals, he has just given answers in public which virtually affirm the freedom of man from the moral law of Almighty God. With this papal affirmation of the Conciliar religion of man as opposed to the Catholic religion of God, a schism in the Universal Church draws that much closer. For half a century since Vatican II, the Conciliar Popes have managed to remain in a way the one head of two opposing religions, but that contradiction could not last indefinitely, and it must soon result in a split.

In 2014 and 2015 Francis held Synods in Rome to consult the world’s bishops on questions concerning the human family. On March 19 of this year he published his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation on “Love in the Family,” the eighth of whose nine chapters raised controversy from the very start. On September 15 four Cardinals in particular sent to the Pope a private and perfectly respectful letter in which they asked him as Supreme Pontiff to clear up five “dubia” or doubtful points of doctrine, left unclear in the Exhortation. Here is the essence of the five points:—

1 From the Exhortation’s #305, can a married person living like husband and wife with a person not their lawful spouse from now on be given sacramental Absolution and Communion while they continue to live in their quasi-married state?

2 From #304, need one still believe that there are absolute moral norms which prohibit intrinsically evil acts, and which are binding without exception?

3 From #301, can one still say that a person living in violation of one of God's commandments, e.g. in adultery, is in an objective state of grave habitual sin?

4 From #302, can one still say that the circumstances or intentions surrounding an act intrinsically evil by its object can never change it into being subjectively good, or acceptable as a choice?

5 From #303, must we still exclude any creative role of conscience, so that conscience may still never authorize exceptions to absolute moral norms which forbid acts intrinsically evil by their object?

To these five designedly yes-or-no questions the answer of the Catholic Church from Our Divine Lord onwards has always been clear, and has never changed: Communion may not be given to adulterers; there are absolute moral norms; there is such a thing as "grave habitual sin"; good intentions cannot make evil acts good; conscience cannot make evil acts lawful. In other words, to the five yes-or-no, black-or-white questions, the Church's answer has always been, 1 No, 2 Yes, 3 Yes, 4 Yes, 5 Yes.

On November 16, just ten days ago, the four Cardinals made their letter public (cf. Mt. XVIII, 15–17). On Nov. 18, in an interview given to the Italian newspaper *Avvenire*, Pope Francis gave the exact opposite yes-or-no answers: 1 Yes, 2 No, 3 No, 4 No, 5 No. (He did affirm each time that "Such things are not black-or-white, we are called to discern," but he was merely attempting thereby to confuse the unmoving questions of principle with moving questions of application of principle, which come after the questions of principle.)

All credit to the four Cardinals for obtaining light and truth for many confused sheep that wish to get to Heaven: Brandmüller, Burke, Caffarra and Meisner. They may be immersed in the *Novus Ordo*, but they have obviously not lost all

courage or sense of their duty. There can be no question of their having acted out of any but the best of motives in pressing the Pope to make himself clear. And where does that clarity leave the Church? It must be on the brink of schism.

Kyrie eleison.