

## CONSORTIUM NEWSLETTER (November 24, 2017)

**Note:** With this newsletter, we return to its normal format.

### **POPE FRANCIS** (Continued)

From what has been said so far, I think it is fair to ask the question: Is there a schism in the Catholic Church? Some have answered “yes” to this question: see Father Dwight Longenecker at <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/standingonmyhead/> March 5, 2017, and <http://www.cnsnews.com> February 2017.

Father Dwight Longenecker, a theologian, begins his article with the mention of the second source listed above that came out at the end of February 2017; this source dealt with a group of cardinals who believe Pope Francis should resign in order to avoid a catastrophic schism in the Church. Then Father Longenecker simply states that there is a schism in today’s Church – “the modern Catholic Church is already in schism, but it is an internal schism, hidden to most people” (Longenecker).

“The divide is very clear and yet virtually unspoken. Nobody dares to really speak of it. The divide runs between cardinals. It runs between bishops and archbishops. It runs between theologians. It runs between parish priests. It runs between liturgists and catechists, Church workers, musicians, teachers, journalists and writers. It is not really a divide between conservative and liberal, between traditionalists and progressive. It is the divide between those who believe that Jesus Christ is the Virgin born Son of God and that as the second person of the holy and undivided Trinity established his church on earth supernaturally filled with the Holy Spirit which would stand firm until the end of time, and those who believe otherwise.” (Longenecker)

Those who believe anything else are modernists who see the Church as a human construct, which is a historic accident that happened two thousand years ago and has the history afterwards that we know today. “Because they believe the church is a human construct from a particular time and place, the church can and MUST adapt and change for every age and culture in which she finds herself”. (*ibid.*) And “this is the great divide. This is the schism which already exists.” (*ibid.*)

So “this is the divide within the church today and every conflict about everything – from music, to architecture, to art, to Catholic education, from liturgy, to literature, from devotions to disciplines and doctrines – everything comes back to this basic divide.” (*ibid.*)

Longenecker holds the first description above and everything else – “from saving the environment to feeding the hungry, from equal rights for workers to opening a soup kitchen, from educating the young to achieving peace and justice – are secondary and reliant on this first and eternal priority.” (*ibid.*)

Thus, “the schism already exists. All that is required is for individual Catholics to decide on which side of the chasm they reside.” (*ibid.*)

At this point, I do not completely agree with Father Longenecker and I need more time and prayer to decide where I stand in regard to his thesis. I find the following material more congenial but I hope the following material with its suggestions and

guidance is not what is going to happen to deal with “the schism in the Church.” The following material has been written by Deacon Nick Donnelly at EWTN News: Deacon Nick Donnelly, “Pro Pope Francis cardinals want him to resign to avoid schism, reports the Times of London,” Catholicism Pure & Simple, March 2, 2017.

The London Times newspaper reported that a group of cardinals who had supported Francis now want his resignation because they are afraid his reforms will cause a schism “more disastrous” than the Protestant Reformation! The source of the Times’ material is the Vatican expert Antonio Socci.

“Antonio Socci reports that it is the crucial faction of the Holy See that backed the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio out of ‘impatience with the rule of his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI’ that now wants Pope Francis to resign out of fear of an impending schism. The Times reports: A large part of the cardinals who voted for him is very worried and the curia ... that organized his election and has accompanied him thus far, without ever disassociating itself from him, is cultivating the idea of a moral suasion to convince him to retire.” (Donnelly)

These are the ones who want the Pope to resign and be replaced by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who is the Vatican Secretary of State. Socci believes that this group numbers around a dozen but their importance is more than their small number. “Four years after Benedict XVI’s renunciation and Bergoglio’s arrival on the scene, the situation of the Catholic Church has become explosive, perhaps really on the edge of a schism, which could be even more disastrous than Luther’s (who is today being rehabilitated by the Bergoglio church)” (ibid.)

These cardinals worry that there are many indirect ways in which the pressure might be exerted and they worry the Church could be shattered as an institution.

“A good number of the majority that voted for Bergoglio in 2013 have come to regret their decision, but I do not think it is plausible that members of the hierarchy will pressure the Pope to resign. Those who know him know it would be useless. (He) has a very authoritarian streak. He won’t resign until he has completed his revolutionary reforms, which are causing enormous harm. Antonio Socci reports that the significance of this development is that the group who want Pope Francis to resign are not the ‘conservative’ cardinals who have opposed the Holy Father’s innovations. ‘What was significant, he said, is that the doubters were not the conservative cardinals who had been in open opposition to the Pope since early in his reign.’” (ibid.)

At the end of this internet article, there was attached a prayer to Saint Joseph, the Protector of the Church. I pass this on to you and ask you to add it to the lists of prayers that you say often; also please pray for our Holy Father. Thank you.

*“Father [-Mother], You entrusted our Saviour to the care of Saint Joseph. By the help of his prayers, may Your Church continue to serve its Lord, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.”* (ibid.)

TO BE CONTINUED

## **OUR SEPARATED/DIVORCED/REMARIED WITHOUT AN ANNULMENT SISTERS AND BROTHERS**

**Note:** Here we now return to the material titled DIVORCE (see the last and first issues where we covered this DIVORCE – see the Consortium Newsletter, Start of November, 2017, and the Consortium Newsletter, End of October, 2017). Please recall that in this material and these reflections we are looking at the grief work and healing journey that is needed after the breakup of a marriage. Thank you.

In this section, we will consider what to do and what not to do in regards to the physical elements of our well-being and recovery.

- Make sure you get your sleep (7-9 hours).
  - Eat healthily and avoid white sugar.
  - Do you need supplements, e.g., vitamins and minerals? See your doctor.
  - Do not use food or alcohol or drugs or sex or ... to make you feel better.
  - Never take herbals, supplements, over-the-counter stuff, etc. unless your doctor or pharmacist or health-care worker has talked to you. Do not believe half the stuff you see and hear on ads. Take no suggestions from the Internet if there is no qualified author as source.
  - Exercise. At least get some, e.g., walking.
  - Take time-off to do things you like doing. Workaholism is not a healthy escape!
  - Breathe properly. From time to time, check to see if you are breathing properly: this has been mentioned a number of times in Consortium material and so it won't be repeated here. When you check your breathing, if it is shallow, that is a sign you are being stressed!
  - Get enough exposure to Nature and avoid Nature Deficit Disorder (a lack of interaction).
  - Laugh and develop a sense of humour – good for your health!
  - Choose optimism over pessimism – you will live longer!
  - Take periods off during the day to do nothing. Also, get enough time for silence (where you slow down your pace of life).
  - Take an IT (Information Technology) Sabbath – from Friday night to Monday morning. This is so healthy that many workers from Silicon Valley do it!
  - Get rid of any smoking habit (or at least, reduce it).
  - Have some concern for your posture: keep a good posture as much as you can.
- 
- Here we will consider what to do in regards to the religious and spiritual elements of our well-being and recovery.
  - Religion and Spirituality help us find purpose in life, which we all need to be fully human.
  - Trusting God gives us more courage and strength. The universe becomes a friendly place if we believe in God; it is easier and less difficult to live in it.
  - Religion and spirituality show life is not a random thing; we feel more secure and hopeful in life
  - Go back to church where we have community and are uplifted and share certain healthy views of life.

- Prayer works. Science and research show it is healthy and worthwhile.
- Accept all the good things that true Faith tells you about yourself. The Book of Psalms in the Bible is very calming and gives us peace.
- The Sacraments are holy actions of Christ where Christ operates but they are also passage rituals (situations where we move from one “space” to a better space). The healing powers of Reconciliation (Confession) are well known.
- Have your fight with God regarding what has happened to you and then move on in life.
- Retreats are good times away from things, including hurtful things.
- Ask people to pray for you. This will give you more confidence for your life journey.
- You need to learn how to forgive so that you can loosen yourself from the shackles of the past and enjoy the freedom of a new future.

Below you will find some other very powerful strategies that will help you do your grief work for a broken marriage and to heal from it.

- Read professional stuff by qualified people.
- Go to workshops, seminars, talks, etc. (but **not** to any New Age stuff).
- Give it your very best. You will be able to do it! You will make it! You will succeed! Yes!
- **GET PROFESSIONAL HELP IF YOU NEED IT!** This is a very wise thing to do!

And now for some concluding remarks!

- The above suggests that there is a lot to learn here but be aware we are only scratching the surface here. However, there is more than enough here for you to succeed in your grief work. Please get started as soon as you can, i.e., **immediately**. Thank you!
- If you make any mistakes, that is okay – just start again or do it again! Learn from any mistakes but never never give up! The ideal is to work together with other people, e.g., support groups, professionals, programs, gatherings, presentations, etc.
- Results do not come over night but take time, work, and effort; so please make the commitment that this demands and everything will turn out okay. Invest in yourself and you will start to see good things happening. The only failure in these areas is to get discouraged and quit. PLEASE DO NOT DO SO! Keep plugging away!
- Here ends the material titled DIVORCE.

God bless and help you in this grief work. Amen.

### **MISCELLANY**

There are two things we are going to look at here that really belong more to the first section of this letter – POPE FRANCIS (Continued) – because they clearly deal with where the Pope is at this point. However, because of their content, they would interfere with the flow of the material there; therefore, I chose to put them here. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

The first matter is the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). It is no secret that, under Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, there was a general acceptance of the material of this Council but with some reservations. In fact, both of the above-mentioned popes tried to undo some points that Vatican II had made.

However, with Pope Francis, there was and is none of this. Francis accepted the Council in its entirety and uses this for the basis of his renewal/reform of today's Church – Vatican II is the cornerstone of what Francis is trying to do. In imitation of the pope, and especially as those of us in the Consortium who are committed to helping him bring about the new Church, Vatican II needs to play the same role in our lives. Furthermore, for us to better understand Francis, we need to understand Vatican II better and to use it throughout our Catholic lives better. Below is a prayer we can use to help us do this better in the Spirit: it is the prayer that was used before every session of the Second Vatican Council. Let us all use this beautiful prayer. Thank you.

*We stand before you, Holy Spirit,  
conscious of our sinfulness, but aware  
that we gather in your name.  
Come to us, remain with us, and  
enlighten our hearts.  
Give us light and strength to know your  
will, to make it our own, and to live it in  
our lives.  
Guide us by your wisdom, support us by  
your power, for you are God, sharing the  
glory of Father/Mother and Son.  
You desire justice for all: enable us to  
uphold the rights of others; do not allow  
us to be misled by ignorance or  
corrupted by fear or favor.  
Unite us to yourself in the bond of love  
and keep us faithful to all that is true.  
As we gather in your name may we  
temper justice with love, so that all our  
decisions may be pleasing to you, and  
earn the reward promised to good and  
faithful servants.  
You live and reign with the Father/Mother and  
the Son, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.*

The second topic/matter has to do with the Rohingya refugees who have recently made the news.

“in the past two months alone 600,000 Muslim Rohingyas have fled their homes in Rakhine state [in Myanmar = the former Burma], carrying tales of barbarity into squalid camps across the border in Bangladesh: plumes of smoke mark the villages from which they were chased. Detail is hard to come by since the security forces

prevent all but a few outsiders from visiting the ravaged areas. But this is certainly one of the biggest refugee crises and cases of ethnic cleansing since the Second World War ... The soldiers, the police and the Buddhist chauvinists in Rakhine ... have been responsible for the rapes, killings, and evictions.” (Banyan, “Getting Myanmar wrong,” The Economist, October 28, 2017) The Rohingyas are seen as a Muslim threat to the country even though Muslims make up a very small part of the country. They make up about 4%.

At about the same time in the Canadian Press it was reported that a Canadian human rights professor denied the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya (Richard Warnica, “Human rights prof denies ethnic cleansing of Rohingya,” National Post, October 26, 2017).

“Merle Jacobs teaches in the equity studies department at York University. Her research covers topics including social justice, human rights and vicarious trauma. She is also a public and prominent denier of what Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other organizations have deemed to be the brutal ethnic cleansing of Myanmar’s Rohingya Muslims ... They were forced from their homes and pushed into Bangladesh following a systematic campaign of often savage government, according to multiple independent reports [including one from the United Nations].” (Warnica) The United Nations stated the Rohingya displacement was the fastest displacement of people since the Rwanda genocide.

Jacobs left Myanmar when she was 18 and often has publicly denied that what is going on is ethnic cleansing. “Yes the army is ruthless, just like the United States in Iraq. Westerners are hypocrites.” (Jacobs) “Jacob’s denials run counter to virtually every credible, independent account of the situation in Myanmar. Alex Neve, the secretary general of Amnesty International Canada, said there can be no doubt about what is actually going on. “We never came forward with the sorts of statements we have made lightly and without extensive evidentiary basis” (Warnaco).

“In a bulletin released last week, Amnesty International presented evidence, based on scores of on-the-ground interviews, that the Myanmar military had murdered ‘at least’ hundreds of civilians, raped untold numbers of women and girls and systematically burned Rohingya villages. The scale of the violence has been shocking, even to seasoned human rights workers ... ‘We have never documented atrocities committed with such brutal and sadistic fury as this ethnic-cleansing campaign,’ said John Sifton, the Asia Advocacy Director for Human Rights Watch ... But Jacobs has cast doubt on those claims as well.” (Warnica)

“Roman Lee, a former Australian politician turned human rights researcher in Myanmar, stated Jacobs’ comments are especially galling” (Warnica). In an interview with National Post, Jacobs admitted that some sexual violence probably had happened but she questioned the extent of the attacks. “As for ethnic cleansing, Jacobs said it is a question of terminology and evidence ... But to Neve, there is no ambiguity in the situation at all ... Neve would not comment directly on Jacobs’ tweets. But he did say that anyone denying that mass human rights abuses have occurred ‘should be very actively challenged and disputed in a university context.’

“Jacobs’ public comments on the Rohingya crisis [regarding which her employer said her tweets represent her view] are not necessarily out of step with mainstream opinion among much of Myanmar’s population and in large chunks of the expat

community. Many believe the Rohingya were never entitled to be in Myanmar in the first place.” (Warnica) Buddhists in the state of Rakhine in western Myanmar feel the Rohingyas stole their land, food, and water. And many call the Rohingyas “Bengali” because when the Rohingyas leave Myanmar, they most often go to Bangladesh.

In this situation I side with the other experts against Professor Jacobs. But what has this information on Myanmar and the Rohingyas got to do with our concerns? Pope Francis, among so many other things, has real affection for refugees and a real desire to help eliminate religious tensions between Faith communities. If you look closely at the trips he has made abroad and to which countries he has gone, he often goes to areas that are having problems today because he believes that Christ’s Gospel has something very powerful to say to these difficulties. And this is the case here with his forthcoming visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh. Let us say a word about this visit.

The following material comes from Cindy Wooden of Catholic News Service, “Longing for peace: Pope to preach dialogue in Bangladesh, Myanmar,” CRUX, November 15, 2017.

“Both Myanmar and Bangladesh have experienced tensions between religious communities and have mourned the loss of lives slaughtered in terrorist attacks. In both countries, the Catholic community has been a force for dialogue. Pope Francis is scheduled to arrive in Myanmar November 27 and stay until the afternoon of November 30 when he flies to Bangladesh. He returns to Rome late December 2.” (Wooden)

Furthermore, “while the ongoing crisis of Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar for Bangladesh will draw much attention during Pope Francis’s visit to the two countries in late November, the pope also is expected to focus on interreligious dialogue, poverty and climate change ... Both Myanmar and Bangladesh have experienced tensions between religious communities and have mourned the loss of lives slaughtered in terrorist attacks. The Muslim faith of the Rohingya is cited as one of the reasons they often are seen as ‘foreigners’ by Buddhists nationalists in Myanmar. Bangladesh, too, has had experience of hardline nationalists, this time Muslims, attacking members of its Hindu minority.” (ibid.)

The Pope will also insist on economic justice and environmental justice because they promote peace and harmony in the region. The two countries are trying to establish a democracy that respects the rights of minorities; “differences are exacerbated by poverty and the difficulty of accessing very limited resources; the situation is further worsened by climate change, which is evident in the droughts, floodings and increased power and frequency of cyclones that move in from the Bay of Bengal” (ibid.). Both countries are ranked in the top 10 on the “Long-Term Climate Risk Index” published annually by the Germanwatch think tank.

The Catholic communities in both nations are growing but make up only 1% of the population. The vast majority in Myanmar are Buddhist while Bangladesh is mostly Muslim. “Both countries have been plagued by politics and ethnic tensions that have found religion to be an easy difference to exploit for political gain” (ibid.). In both countries, the Catholic community has been a force for religious dialogue.

The theme of the visit to Myanmar is “Love and Peace” whereas that of Bangladesh is “Harmony and Peace.” “The core of Francis’s message is likely to be similar to the heart of his message in Sri Lanka in January 2015: ‘The inability to

reconcile differences and disagreements, whether old or new, has given rise to ethnic and religious tensions, frequently accompanied by outbreaks of violence.' Religions have a key role to play, Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon, Myanmar insisted. But that means 'all members of society must work together; all must have a voice. All must be free to express their concerns, their needs, their aspirations and their fears. Most importantly, they must be prepared to accept one another, to respect legitimate diversities and learn to live as one family.'" (Wooden)

Please pray for the success of the Pope's upcoming trip and try to catch some news items on it on public media. Thank you.

- In the United States today, about 65% of marriages arise from dating sites, organizations, clubs, social media, etc. I do not think the figures are as high in Canada but they still are high. It does not take a genius to see what the consequences of this are going to be for our culture and for our churches. Please pray for today's marriages. Thank you!
- Today a great amount of research is being done on the brain and on Alzheimer's Disease. Here are some of the latest findings.
  - a) There is a strong connection between brain health and the health of gut-bacteria; furthermore, the health of the latter affects the health of the former. In addition, if you have a healthy brain and healthy gut-bacteria, this combination will put off having Alzheimer's. So, see your doctor about using probiotics for your gut-bacteria.
  - b) Exercise if started early enough can delay onset of the Disease. Half an hour three times a week is a good suggestion here. When you are walking somewhere, walk an extra block. Dance at home to music you like. When going up floors in buildings, according to one expert, do not use the elevators but walk up the steps.
  - c) Lowering or eliminating stress in your life also delays the onset of Alzheimer's.
  - d) Certain diets, e.g., those heavy in certain vegetables, help delay the onset too. You can find the particulars for this on the website of Doctor Oz of television fame. This website also contains certain tests you can use and check with your family doctor that will help you determine where you are with Alzheimer's disease and its onset with you.
  - e) "Omega-3 fatty acids have long been considered good for the heart, but new research confirms eating plenty of oily fish containing the essential nutrients protects against Alzheimer's disease" (Globe, June 26, 2017). The study was done by Doctor Daniel Amen of Amen (Medical) Clinics and Professor William Harris of South Dakota University and was published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease. Omega-3 boosts the flow of blood in the regions of the brain controlling memory and learning-areas hit hard by the dementia-inducing disorder; the fatty acids also better help us understand new information and give us stronger mental and emotional health.
  - f) Basically, all of the above tells us clearly that if we cultivate good health for ourselves, we can put off the onset of Alzheimer's. This clearly shows the



importance of the materials/comments found in Consortium material (and elsewhere) that deal with well-being.

Lastly, here is an important thought for our families. “Eat dinner as a family. A University of Minnesota study found that the more a family shares meals, the less likely the children will abuse tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana. Their rates of depression and suicide decline, too, and their grade point averages are higher. Aim for four or five family meals a week – that is the point at which the benefits kick in.” Kyle Western, editor, “On the Minds of Men: Family Affairs; Families That Eat Together Live Longer,” Men’s Health magazine, November 2007)

May the Risen One grant you and your loved ones and all those you are privileged to serve for Christ a really good, holy, and grace-full Advent Season. Amen!

Father Fred Scinto, C.R.,  
Resurrection Ministries,  
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.  
([fscinto@rogers.com](mailto:fscinto@rogers.com))  
(519-885-4370)