



# Boston Catholic Journal

Nihil autem nisi Jesu

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Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

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## Are you prepared to be “Surprised by God” — or Francis?

*is [note: not Catholics]who say “it’s always been done that way,” and stop there have hearts closed to the Holy Spirit. They are idolaters and rebels will never arrive at the fullness of the truth ... Obnoxious of idolatry: the Christian who is obstinate sins! The sin of idolatry.” (Pope Francis 18 Jan 2013)*

### Who, we are compelled to ask, is the *real* “idolater” and who the *real* “rebel”?

**In other words, the Church, then, has been obstinate and in darkness ... until the arrival of Francis ...**

What does this say of God? What does it say of the last 265 popes who preceded Francis? That they have all been *obstinate* and each of them *idolaters*? From what he says, Francis alone is the one, true, enlightened pope to whom God, after 2000 years, *finally* deigned to reveal what he himself describes as “the fullness of truth” about matters pastoral, theological,

and doctrinal — which had either *eluded* all his predecessors, or from whom God chose to *conceal* the real truth until the inauguration of Francis as the penultimate culmination of the papacy.

It is much like the arguments that Catholics have ever brought against Protestants since Martin Luther: would a supremely good and loving God conceal the “real” truth about authentic Christian doctrine and revelation (and all that is essential to salvation) for 1400 years until the arrival of Luther? For 1400 years the Christian world, then, had lived in ignorance, darkness, and idolatry. Is that our conception of a supremely good and loving God — that He deceived all those prior to Luther — and more to the present point, prior to Francis? These two (in many ways reciprocal personalities) consider themselves God’s unique emissaries to whom, for the first time since Saint Peter, God has *finally* revealed the *real* truth.

It is a variation of another contemporary and chilling mantra: “There is only one God, and Francis (after Luther) is His prophet.” All before him were either *deceived by God*, or are liars and idolaters. Given this apparently monumental ego we are forced to ask, *who is the real “idol” and who the “idolater”*? The answer to each appears to be the same: Francis. Francis as the idol, and Francis as the idolater adulating himself as God’s *chosen revealer* of the truth — which had been withheld from all saints and sinners ... until Francis came to Rome. His widely lauded (and widely publicized) “humility” appears to only be exceeded by his own grandiose self-assessment as the intrepid articulator of the *new* “**more compassionate**”, “**less judgmental**”, “**all-inclusive**” Church — in which the *only* sin is the “obstinate” adherence to what the Church has taught as *indefeasibly* true for 2000 years. After all, where there is no *judgment* there is no *sin* — which is to say, if *nothing* is evil, *everything* is good; if every “life-style” is understood as “contributing its own unique value” (however abhorrent) to the Church, then the “Church” becomes tautologous with the “World” and effectively indistinguishable from it. The *Corpus Christi* becomes the *Corpus Mundi* (the Body of Christ becomes the Body of the World”).

How, we ask, are we to reconcile this *nouveau* and ***all-inclusive Church*** envisioned by Francis, and which dangerously accords with the world — with what Christ tells us concerning our relationship to the world: “If you had been of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (St. John 15.19) How are we to understand this *all-inclusiveness* — that is the charter of the contemporary world — with a very clear admonishment to the contrary: “Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him.” (1 Saint John 2.15). Despite Francis’s effort to reconcile the two, they are ontologically distinct and diametrically opposed. The proof? Christ on the Cross.

## The “Old Wine Skin” and the “New” Church

It turns out that “old wineskin” — for 200 years understood to be Judaism — is the ***historic Catholic Church!*** (I deliberately refrain from calling it “traditional”, a concept which has been defamed and relegated to a nonsensical connotation of “old” and “outdated” in liberal circles both within the Church and outside of Her) That is to say, for Francis it is ***the Church itself prior to Francis*** that is the old wineskin. The old wineskin, the “old” Church, preceded him. The “new” is in the making of Francis’s image: the ***“being-surprised-by-God-Church”***.

It is a Church in which ***faithfulness*** to the teachings of Christ, Sacred Scripture, and the Church is now understood as ***“obstinacy”***. What is more, it is ***“idolatry”*** according to Francis’s homily on January 18, 2016 at the Casa Santa Marta:

“Christians who obstinately maintain ‘it’s always been done this way,’ this is the path, this is the street—they sin: the sin of divination. It’s as if they went about by guessing: ‘What has been said and what doesn’t change is what’s important; what I hear—from myself and my closed heart — more than the Word of the Lord.’ Obstinacy is also the sin of idolatry: the Christian

who is obstinate sins! The sin of idolatry. ‘And what is the way, Father?’ **“Open the heart to the Holy Spirit, discern what is the will of God.”**

Are we, then, clueless, and have we been so for two millennia? Do we not know the will of God already? **Did not Christ Himself reveal it to us?** Was this not the purpose of His Incarnation, together with His salvific suffering and death on the Cross? If He did not reveal to us His will which is one with the will of the Father, then Holy Scripture is fraudulent. Do we know the Commandments? The Sermon on the Mount? The entire New Testament? Even the Old?

Should we have to resort to “**discerning** the will of God” in situations **where His express will is already known** as it is revealed in the four Gospels and the Epistles? Do we really have to “discern” the will of God concerning adultery, homosexuality, the worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist — all of them presently issues **only** because Francis had made them so by his deliberate ambiguity where there is nothing ambiguous about them in Scripture or Church teaching?

## **Are you prepared to be “Surprised” by God”?**

**Or should we more realistically say, “Surprised by Francis”?** He has a very clear, progressive, and repressive liberal agenda that is at odds with millennia of Church teaching which he attempts to make irrelevant, outdated, and out-of-touch, to feed an apparently narcissistic hunger for adulation from men by attempting to accommodate Church teaching to the corrupt and scandalous demands of the world. Will he go so far as to abrogate some of it, perhaps even much of it (although, canonically, he cannot) in his effort to establish a détente with the world and other religions? We do not know, but the indicators are ominous for the Church as She has stood for 2000 years.

Perhaps Francis should make a greater effort to read Sacred Scripture, Patristics, and delve into *the Deposit of Faith* periodically ... *than trying to “discern” what is already clear*, and waiting to be “surprised by God” — only to be surprised to find that the Church has kept *faithful* (not “obstinate”) custody of what God has already revealed — perhaps to the displeasure of Francis and the liberal coterie of bishops who are attempting to dismantle what the blood of the Martyrs had kept intact, and held inviolable.

That Francis has so much as *entertained* and *encouraged* discussion about long-settled issues concerning homosexuality, adultery, divorce, and the Eucharist as the signal bond of unity in the Church; that he has planned to “commemorate” and “celebrate” the 500th anniversary of the “Reformation” in Sweden, together with the schismatic Martin Luther who shattered Christian unity and detested the Catholic Church, is a scandal of epic proportions to the faithful and cause of incalculable confusion in the Church. *Confusion* is a cloven print in the already scorched earth following the Second Vatican Council, and the ineluctable prelude to *division*, the second cloven print that desecrates the Sanctuary.

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