

What has this little altar boy learned from the Supreme “Pastor”? That he should be ashamed to fold his hands in prayer? That one of the most basic expressions of Catholic piety is fodder for jest? And in a public ceremony? In front of the world’s press and video cameras? Is this really a manifestation of the Gift of Piety? And won’t that little altar boy be a bit confused after this encounter? Are the altar boys there to be simply props for Francis’ attempts as the grand entertainer?

Too many post-Conciliar prelates, including the man at the top, appear to be practically devoid of the true Catholic piety of the centuries. Some may dismiss this as harmless light-heartedness, and I am all for creating a jovial atmosphere in the right circumstances. But to me, this little jest smacks of that mocking of Catholic tradition so prevalent in the 60s and 70s, and Bergoglio is very much a man of the 70s. It strikes me as neither *pastoral* nor admirable. Oremus!

– John Vennari