



The late Cardinal Martini, recognized as one of the most liberal prelates of our period, said the Church is “200 years behind the times,” that our Church rituals and vestments are “pompous,” that the Church should consider opening the reception of the Eucharist to divorced and remarried Catholics, that “you can’t make God a Catholic God,” and that we need to move toward a synodal and collegial method of Church governance. Pope Francis recently praised Cardinal Martini as “a father for the whole Church”.

“Italy Hails Liberal Cardinal Martini, who wanted Catholic Church to Change.” That was the headline from the *Boston Globe*, September 4, 2012, on the death of Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini. The world’s press was of one voice eulogizing the former Archbishop of Milan, once seen as Papal contender. As is usually the case, the press loved Martini not for his attachment to the Catholic Faith of all time, but for his zest to challenge it. The media praised Martini as an “open-minded thinker,” one who “struck an original note in Church affairs.”[1]

What were some of Martini’s radical ideas?

In his last interview, which Martini asked to be published after his death, Martini said the Catholic Church is “200 years behind the times”.

Martini further said, “Our culture has grown old, our churches and our religious houses are big and empty, the bureaucratic apparatus of the Church grows, *our rites and our dress are*

pompous."

Martini encouraged opening up reception of the Eucharist for the divorced and "remarried" Catholics, counseling against what he called "discrimination." [2]

In the book *Night Conversation with Cardinal Martini* published in 2010, Martini insisted, "You can't make God a Catholic God. God is beyond all the barriers and borders we create." [3]

In the same book, speaking of dialogue with non-Catholics, Cardinal Martini said that once you talk frankly with members of various other religions, "You will even be glad that the other person is a Protestant or Muslim". [4]

Martini acknowledged the German and Austrian Bishops' dissent from *Humanae Vitae*, as "pointing to a direction that we could promote today." [5]

Martini called for a more collegial and synodal approach to Church governance. [6]

In 2007, "when the 16th Century Tridentine Mass was introduced as an option for Roman Catholic churches, Martini said he would refuse to celebrate it." [7]

Yet Pope Francis, on the first anniversary of the Cardinal's death, publicly praised Martini as "a father for the whole Church".

Francis went on to call Martini a "prophetic" figure, and "a man of discernment and peace" [8]

Likewise in his infamous interview with *La Repubblica's* atheist Editor Eugenio Scalfari, Francis spoke of Cardinal Martini as "someone who is very dear to me and also to you." [9]

Optimistic commentators claim we must "read Francis through Benedict". That may be true in part. It seems more accurate, however, to "*read Francis through Martini*," since Francis seems to be following the progressive program outlined by the radical Italian Cardinal.

Sandro Magister's *Chiesa* identified Francis as the "Martini Pope," and a "Dream Come Through" for the progressive wing in the post-Conciliar Church. [10]

Along the same lines, Hans Küng had nothing but grand applause for Pope Francis' latest document saying, "In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis ... speaks out clearly in favor of church reform 'at all levels'. He specifically advocates structural reforms - namely, decentralization towards local dioceses and communities, reform of the

papal office, upgrading the laity and against excessive clericalism, in favor of a more effective presence of women in the Church, above all in the decision-making bodies. And he comes out equally clearly in favor of ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue, especially with Judaism and Islam.”[11]

All of these radical causes, and more, were championed by Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini.

When we regard a number of Pope Francis’ words and actions, we cannot help but notice him following the trajectory of Cardinal Martini. It is no small matter that in the 2005 Conclave that elected Ratzinger to the papacy, Cardinal Bergoglio was not only the leading contender, but “the votes of Martini’s supporters, along with others, converged at the time precisely on Bergoglio. Eight years later, in March of 2013, it was again the ‘martiniani’ who backed the election of Bergoglio as pope. This time with success”.[12]

Bergoglio has long been regarded as the “Martini candidate”, who would become the “Martini Pope”. Thus *National Catholic Reporter* Editor Thomas C. Fox published the celebratory headline, “Cardinal Martini’s Dream: the Church of Francis”.[13]

Martini-Bergoglio Convergence

Three initial areas where Pope Francis seems to echo Martini are his treatment of homosexuality, his claim that God should not be considered a “Catholic God,” and the present discussion to possibly permit divorced and “remarried” Catholics to receive the Eucharist.

There are more points of convergence that will be discussed next month; along with another similarity between Bergoglio and Martini. Both of them now and then utter statements with which a traditional Catholic would not disagree.

For now, however, we will spotlight the three points mentioned earlier.

Homosexuality

In *Night Conversations*, Cardinal Martini says, “I know there are homosexual couples, people who are highly regarded and public-minded. *I have never been asked, and it would never occur to me, to judge them.*”[14]

Similarly, Pope Francis said to reporters on the flight back to Rome from Rio de Janeiro, “If someone is gay and he searches for the Lord and has good will, *who am I to judge?*”[15]

Any competent Catholic moralist will immediately note that the question is answered backwards. “My” personal judgment on a person’s subjective disposition does not come first in the discussion, but rather the objective morality of the act. Both Bergoglio and Martini give the wrong impression of Catholic moral teaching by starting with the subjective, rather than the objective.

Neither of our two churchmen begin by stating that homosexual acts are intrinsically evil; that there are no set of circumstances that could ever justify homosexual acts; that the same-sex act is a grave sin against nature, grave sin against God, a mortal sin that sends the soul to hell for eternity if not repented, and is one of the four sins that cry to Heaven for vengeance.

Once the objective order is established, then and only then can we move to the subjective. What about the soul who suffers this temptations and tries to overcome it? In such a case, anyone fighting temptation to grave sin has a right to our prayers and our support in helping him to overcome an immoral inclination. The question of homosexuality can be explained without inserting “myself” into it: “It would never occur to *me* to judge them”; “who am *I* to judge?”

Furthermore, these “who am I to judge?” statements play into the hand of the Church’s enemies who constantly claim that Catholicism is inordinately “judgmental” against homosexuals.

For Bergoglio, the most charitable observation we can make is that he is a man of sloppy statements, a fact now universally recognized by any clear-thinking person (even non-Catholics see it).

For Martini, however, it appears that his “it would never occur to me to judge them” is a subtle entry into an attempt to undermine Catholic doctrine against homosexuality.

This is obvious when we read Martini’s comments on homosexuality contained in *Night Conversations*, which we will quote in full.

After saying, “It would never occur to me to judge them,” Martini further says, “The Bible judges homosexuality with strong words. The background to this problematic practice in the ancient world, when men would have boys and male lovers alongside their families. Alexander the Great is a famous example. The Bible wants to protect the family, the wife, and the children’s space.”

Note what Martini did. He never speaks of the objective sinfulness of the act, but claims the

Bible only spoke against homosexuality as a kind of injustice to the wife and children of a man who would engage in homosexual acts. Once again, morality is moved from the God-centered plane to the realm of the human. And what about homosexuals who are not married? Is homosexuality permissible for them, since they invade no one's "space"?

Martini continues, "In the Orthodox Church it is considered an abomination. In the Protestant Church it is treated more liberally; there are even homosexual couples in the ministry; they are allowed to minister, providing they don't promote homosexuality. We are aware of the crucial tests in this matter within the Anglican Church. In Judaism, the Orthodox strongly forbid homosexuality; in the Reform Judaism again there are particular synagogues for homosexuality."

Once more, Martini shifts the emphasis from the objective nature of the act to a survey of what non-Catholic religions have to say about it, which is of no value to the discussion. Martini stresses more of an ecumenical and collegial approach rather than one that relies on objective truth and traditional Catholic morality.

Martini goes on, "*We are seeking our way through this diversity.* The deepest concerns of the Holy Scriptures, however, is the protection of the family and a healthy space for children – *something now seen in homosexual couples.*"

What has Martini done? He misplaces the primary emphasis from the homosexual's soul in relation to God to the homosexual's relation to his wife and family, something important but secondary. He also slips in the alleged positive claim that homosexual couples provide a "healthy space for children".

He also implies, by the way he structures the argument, that the Catholic Church should take the various attitudes of false religions into account when constructing its own teaching on this matter, to "seek our way through this diversity," implying that all of these "diverse" viewpoints have value.

Martini goes on, "As a result, I am already leaning toward a hierarchy of value in these matters and basically not towards equality. *I have now said more than I should have said.* Let us proceed together respectfully along different paths, but we must not come to blows because of those different paths. I have already mentioned the boundaries drawn by the Bible." [16]

Yet the "Biblical" boundaries, according to Martini's framing, only seem to bar homosexuality from men who are husbands and fathers.

This appears to be a standard tactic of Martini. He does not say that a given Catholic teaching is *wrong*, but he also does not say it is *correct*. He then he bleeds the issue to death in a pile of verbiage, which orients the reader toward a liberal position.

Cardinal Martini goes on to speak of the compassion the priest should have for anyone who is struggling with this “sexual orientation”. So far so good. He then speaks of a young man he knew whose homosexuality was “a burden” that made the young man “feel ashamed”.

Oddly enough, Martini does not speak of the young man’s struggle in terms of a sin that should be overcome, but merely that we should “help him”. And like the psychologist the young man finally confided in, we should give him “a listening ear and encouragement.”[17] Martini never makes clear if this young man was trying to rid himself of homosexual practice, or simply learning to accept his orientation. He leaves it open. He never refers to homosexual acts as sinful.

This is not the only instance when the former Archbishop of Milan advanced troublesome ideas regarding homosexuality.

In his 2012 book, *Credere e conoscere (Faith and Understanding)*, Cardinal Martini stakes out his own course regarding homosexual civil unions. “I disagree with the positions of those in the Church, that take issue with civil unions,” says Martini. “It is not bad, instead of casual sex between men, that two people have a certain stability” and that the “state could recognize them.”

Writing at the time of the book’s release, John Henry Westen warned, “Cardinal Martini says that he can even understand (but not necessarily approve) ‘gay’ pride parades. He says he agrees with the Catholic Church’s promotion of traditional marriage for the stability of the human species, however he adds, it is ‘not right to express any discrimination on other types of unions’.”[18]

With such statements coming from a man highly revered by modern Jesuits as a Biblical scholar and heroic leader, is it any wonder that today’s Jesuits are plagued by homosexuality in the priesthood? That today’s Jesuit colleges and universities are homosexual friendly? That the name now given to Jesuit college presidents is the “Gallery Owners,” a nickname for homosexuals?[19]

And the biggest question of all: Why would any right-thinking Catholic publicly praise Cardinal Martini as a “prophetic figure” and a “Father for the whole Church”?

God is “Not Catholic”?

Another disturbing point of intersection between Martini and Bergoglio is their claim that God is not Catholic.

As quoted earlier, Martini asserts in *Night Conversations*, “**You can’t make God a Catholic God**. God is beyond all the barriers and borders we create.”[20]

Likewise Pope Francis said in his *La Repubblica* interview, “**I believe in God, not in a Catholic God**, there is no Catholic God, there is God and I believe in Jesus Christ, his incarnation. Jesus is my teacher and my pastor, but God, the Father, Abba, is the light and the Creator.”[21]

“You can’t make a Catholic God”?

In saner days of the Church, an eight-year-old would fail his First Communion exam on that statement alone.

It is difficult to fathom what the prelates mean by such declarations, but we can take an educated guess in light of the present ecumenical orientation. Modernist-leaning prelates such as Martini and Bergoglio would claim that it is triumphalist to claim that the Catholic Church is the one true Church. Perhaps they’ve now evolved to the point where they regard it as triumphalist to hold that God is a Catholic God, or to put it better, that the one true God *IS* the God of Catholicism?

The Martini/Bergoglio claim destroys the unity of Divine Revelation. Ultimately, Divine Revelation is one coherent truth, not disjointed fragments pieced together. Contrary to Martini’s assertion, it is not we who impose “barriers and borders” on God, but it is the full revelation God teaches about Himself.

For what is the true God but He who is “omnipotent, eternal, immense, incomprehensible, infinite in intellect and will, and in every perfection”, Who is “singular, altogether simple and unchangeable spiritual substance,” along with all the other Divine attributes defined in Vatican I.[22]

And Who is this God but the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost?

And Who is Jesus Christ but the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity who became incarnate, died on the Cross for our Redemption, and founded an *ecclesia* to teach, govern, sanctify, and offer worship to the Father in His Name?

And what is this *ecclesia* but the one social unit established by Christ for salvation, the Mystical Body of Christ?

And what is the name of this one and only social unit established by Christ, outside of which there is no salvation? The Catholic Church.

Thus the one true God is the God of Catholicism; or, to use their term, a “Catholic God”.

Why are Cardinal Martini and Pope Francis so anxious to tell journalists, “There is no Catholic God”? This is worrisome, since only those with a non-Catholic mindset regard God as anything other than the God of Catholicism: “*One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*” (*Eph. 4*). Only non-Catholics pray to a non-Catholic god. And if Martini and Bergoglio do not wish to be confusing or misunderstood, why do they insist on making reckless statements to the world’s press?

Is God some sort of free-form spirit – a nebulous ‘force’ – on whom we can impose whatever form we want? Is this not a kind of Kantian approach to God that does not start with the objective reality of Who and what God is, but rather with our own subjective view of Him? Do Protestants have their own Christ who did not found a Church? Do Jews, Muslims and Hindus have their own God who is not Trinity, and in whom Jesus Christ has no place? Is this non-Catholic god a kind of Masonic deity who is allegedly above all religions?

We cannot sever Christ from the Church, as do Protestants. We cannot sever Christ from the Godhead, as do Jews, Muslim, Hindus and pagan religions. We cannot sever Christ from the full unity of Divine Revelation, which is only found in His one true *ecclesia*.

Thus to claim God is not a “Catholic God”, to give the impression that God may be anything other than the God of Christ’s one true Church, is to sever Christ from the fullness of Divine Revelation. This is no small crime, since Saint John warns, “Every spirit that severs Jesus is not of God but is of Antichrist.” (*I John 4:3*).

Indeed the diabolic disorientation of the upper hierarchy, warned of by Sister Lucia of Fatima, never looked so diabolic.

Communion for Divorced and “Remarried”

Cardinal Martini favored a new approach that would open the reception of the Eucharist to divorced and “remarried” Catholics.

While repeating that the “Church upholds the indissolubility of marriage,” Martini then

presents an emotional story to plead for a new policy: “A woman, for instance is abandoned by her husband and finds a new companion, who takes care of her and her three children. This second love succeeds. If this family is discriminated against, not only is the mother cut out [from the Church] but also her children. If the parents feel like they’re outside the church, and don’t feel its support, the Church will lose the future generation.”[23]

First of all, someone needed to remind Martini of the fundamental moral principle that we may not do evil (administer sacrilegious Communion) to achieve good.

While we sympathize with anyone in difficult circumstances, a discussion of Catholic doctrine and morals must always start with what is objectively true, and not with hard cases. We need to restate the facts about the indissolubility of marriage, the impossibility of any human authority to tear asunder what God has joined together, and the truth, as stated by Our Lord Himself, that those whom God joined together in a valid sacramental marriage may not divorce and marry again.[24] Whoever does so “commits adultery,” (*Luke 16:18*) which is a mortal sin that precludes the individual from receiving the Eucharist without Confession and amendment of life.

It is impossible for Cardinal Martini, or any other Churchman of whatever rank, to change the truth on these points.

Yet under Pope Francis, a self-professed Martini enthusiast, there is suddenly talk of a yet-unspecified “new approach” that may allow divorced and “remarried” to receive the Eucharist.

The bishops of Germany are presently considering guidelines to allow this new practice. They claim Pope Francis opened the possibility in his August interview with journalists aboard the plane from Rio de Janeiro. The bishops also claim the authority to enact these new guidelines from Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium*, which, as they interpret it, indicate these matters can be decided locally by national bishops’ conferences.[25]

Already Vatican Cardinal Walter Kasper told the weekly magazine *Die Zeit* that divorced and “remarried” Catholics will soon be allowed to receive the Sacraments (the Eucharist).[26]

Likewise, the upcoming Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in October will question whether divorced and “remarried” Catholics might be able to receive Communion. Archbishop Lorenzo Baldisseri, the newly-appointed Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, said the subject will be discussed “without taboos”. Baldisseri also hinted that the Synod may find a solution by looking to the practice of the Orthodox Church which allows remarriage under certain circumstances.[27]

The tug of war has already started, as Archbishop Gerhard Müller, Prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, reaffirmed Church teaching that prohibits Catholics from the sacraments without an annulment. Muller said in an Oct. 22 *L'Osservatore Romano* article that "the entire sacramental economy" could not be swept aside by "an appeal to mercy." Yet the announcement about the topic being discussed at the October Synod "without taboos" appeared a month *after* Müller's statement.[28]

The entire episode recalls to mind the Birth Control Commission set up during Vatican II, which raised false hopes that something unchangeable, the Church's prohibition of contraception, would somehow be changed. As a result, Catholics began acting as if the teaching was already altered, which led them into spiritual ruin. A similar expectation is set here, predictably with similar results.[29]

How this issue will play itself out remains to be seen. Under Pope Francis, and this is a fact not in his favor, it appears anything may be possible.

For what are we to think when Pope Francis hails the renegade Cardinal Martini as a "Father for the whole Church," and a "prophetic figure"?[30]

In the future, we hope to cover other disturbing aspects of Cardinal Martini, including his ecumenism, his unsettling statements on euthanasia and abortion, his call for Catholics to attend non-Catholic religious services, and other "opened minded" remarks that make him a "prophetic figure" for nothing but massive apostasy.

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Notes:

[1] "The Man Who Never Got to be Pope Bows Out," Irish Times, Sept. 11, 2002.

[2] "Translated Final Interview with Martini," National Catholic Reporter, Sept. 4, 2012. [emphasis added]. NCR's John Allen explains that Martini gave the interview on August 8, 2012, to his fellow Jesuit Father George Sporschill, with whom he collaborated on Night Conversations, and an Italian friend named Federica Radice Fosssati Confalonieri. Radice told Italian media outlets that Martini read and approved the text of the interviewing, intending it a a sort of "spiritual testament" to be published after his death. It was originally published in the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera.

[3] Night Conversations with Cardinal Martini, The Relevance of the Church of Tomorrow, Interview of Cardinal Martini with Father George Sporschill [Mahwah: Paulist Press,

English Translation 2012; original Italian published in 2010], p. 15.

[4] Ibid., p. 29.

[5] Ibid., p. 93.

[6] "Martini Calls for a New Council... Almost," National Catholic Reporter, October 11, 1999. See also, "The Pope's Debt to Martini," Marco Garzonio, English translation on Chiesa.espressonline.it, October 15, 2013. Originally published in Corriere della Sera, October 11, 2013.

[7] Quote from "Cardinal Carolo Mario Martini; Obituaries, Archbishop of Milan who advocated Church reform and was once seen as a potential Pope," Daily Telegraph, Sept. 5, 2012.

[8] "Pope Francis Hails Cardinal Martini as 'a Father for the whole Church'," Catholic Herald, September 2, 2013

[9] "The Pope, How the Church Will Change," La Repubblica, Oct. 1, 2013.

[10] "Martini Pope: The Dream Come True," Chiesa, Oct. 15, 2013.

[11] "Pope Francis' text is a call for church reform at all levels," Hans Küng, The Tablet, November 29, 2013.

[12] "Cardinal Martini's Dream, the church of Francis," Thomas C. Fox, National Catholic Reporter, Oct. 23, 2013.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Night Conversations, p. 98.

[15] "On Gay Priests, Pope Francis Asks, 'Who Am I to Judge?'," New York Times, July 29, 2013.

[16] Night Conversations, p. 98. [emphasis added].

[17] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[18] "Cardinal Martini and the False Theology Promoting Homosexuality," John Henry Westen, Lifesite News, March 27, 2012.

[19] Jesuit Father Paul Shaughnessy bluntly states the problem of homosexual-friendly campuses can be traced to Jesuit leadership itself. He notes that some of the most prestigious posts at universities, such as university administrators and presidents, are generally filled by Jesuit priests unofficially known as the "Gallery Owners". These Jesuits, skilled at fund-raising, are described by Father Shaughnessy as "discreet, well-spoken, well-dressed gay priests in their fifties and early sixties." In his article "Are the Jesuits Catholic?", Father Shaughnessy goes on to explain: "Where the older Jesuits are notable for the heat of their anti-papal passions, the Gallery Owners display a nearly complete apathy toward religion in all its forms. Conventionally liberal, they support condoms and women priests less as a matter of fact than a fashion statement - rather like wearing a baseball hat backwards ... The teachings of the Church, being largely an irrelevance, has minimal importance in shaping the opinion of the Gallery Owners, who tend to regard orthodox Catholicism - like boxing or heterosexuality - as one of the coarse amusements of the

working class.” – “Are Jesuits Catholic?”, Paul Shaughnessy, *The Weekly Standard*, June 3, 2002. Quoted in *Status Envy: The Politics of Catholic Higher Education*, Anne Hendershott, [New Brunswick: Transaction Publications, 2009], p. 83.

[20] *Night Conversations*, p. 15.

[21] “The Pope, How the Church Will Change,” *La Repubblica*, Oct. 1, 2013.

[22] Vatican I, 1870, Dogmatic Constitution, *Dei Filius*, Chapter 1.

[23] Translated Final Interview with Martini, *National Catholic Reporter*, Sept. 4, 2012..

[24] Catholic Moral theology allows for separation for grave reasons, but not divorce and remarriage.

[25] “German bishops eye guidelines for divorced Catholics to take Communion,” *National Catholic Reporter*, Nov. 27, 2013.

[26] “Divorced People Soon to Receive Sacraments, says Cardinal,” *Agencia Giornalistica Italia*, Dec. 12, 2013.

[27] “Church should take new approach towards question of Communion for Remarried Catholics,” *Vatican Insider*, Nov. 28, 2013.

[28] Regretfully, in the print edition of the January issue, there was a quirk that accidentally eliminated some text. The print edition reads, “...appeared a month after Muller’s episode recalls to mind...”; whereas it should read as above: “...appeared a month after Muller’s statement. The entire episode recalls to mind...” Apologies for any confusion this may have caused.

[29] I will note here that I believe Francis in the end will not change this practice of barring divorce and remarriage from the Eucharist. Yet a tremendous amount of sacrilege and unnecessary confusion will result in the foolish notion now perpetrated that this prohibition could possibly be relaxed. I tend to think that, no matter which way Pope Francis wishes to go on this point, there will still be enough cardinals and bishops advising the pope who will convince him that this is something that cannot be changed. Even Archbishop Müller, who could not be accused of being a conservative, recognizes that admission of divorced and “remarried” to the Eucharist cannot be permitted.

[30] When writing a piece this brutally honest about the sad state of today’s Church, I am compelled to remind the reader that none of this is a veiled attempt to present a sedevacantist position, a theory I do not hold.