

Our friend Dr. Thomas Stark interviews Raymond Cardinal Burke on *Amoris Laetitia*. Cardinal Burke defends his claim that *Amoris Laetitia* is not magisterial. Video directly below – John Vennari

Cardinal against Cardinal

Professor Stark confronts the Cardinal with the announcement of Pope Francis that *Amoris Laetitia* should be understood according to the explanation of Vienna's Cardinal Schönborn. When presenting *Amoris Laetitia* in the Vatican, Schönborn said among other that *Amoris Laetitia* overcomes an “artificial distinction” between “regular” and “irregular” marriages.

In his reply Cardinal Burke calls Schönborn's explanation “puzzling”. And: “The distinction between a regular and an irregular union is not artificial at all. It is a reality.”

Confusion in Amoris Laetitia 305

Professor Stark refers to *Amoris Laetitia* 305 which, in the context of persons living in adultery, speaks about “an objective situation of sin – which may not be subjectively culpable”.

Cardinal Burke explains this passage as “a confusion” that has its roots in a wrong understanding of the Catholic teaching on factors, which can diminish the culpability of an individual sinful act. The Cardinal gives examples of such factors such as passion, influence of drugs or undue pressure. But he adds, “That reasoning does not apply to living in public sin.”

Priests should refuse and face the consequences

Professor Stark predicts that, after Amoris Laetitia, priest will undergo added pressure to give Communion to public adulterers. He asks what a priest under such pressure, perhaps even from his superiors, should do.

Cardinal Burke responds that a priest has to be true to his conscience, “It is a grave injustice to place on priests the responsibility to do something which they cannot do.” If this happens, Cardinal Burke recommends that priests should “refuse and face the consequences”. The Cardinal explains that in this case, being unjustly punished by a superior, is part of confessing the faith.

What realistically will happen

Stark fears that Amoris Laetitia may empower certain people in the Church to undermine Catholic doctrine and at the same time allow Conservatives to live in the illusion that ‘nothing has changed’.

According to Cardinal Burke it is realistic to believe that this will happen, “When a text is so long and expends so many words in talking about things which are quite simple in their truth and beauty then one runs the risk of this kind of interpretation to permit exactly what the Church does not permit. At the same time it is not right to say, ‘Nothing has changed therefore nothing to be concerned about’. Of course one must be concerned.”

Burke expects the media to use Amoris Laetitia to claim that the Church has undergone a revolution and is abandoning her teaching.

“The impression that there are two Churches”

Cardinal Burke says that a mundane and political way of thinking has entered the Church, dividing people into various camps, “They say: ‘You are from the strict observance and I’m more lenient.’” According to the Cardinal such a development however cannot be an expression of the one Catholic Church: “We don’t have political parties.”

He concedes that the situation today “can give the impression that there are two Churches”. People whose faith is weak or who are not Catholic, are scandalized and see the Church as hypocritical: “She says for instance that marriage is indissoluble but now there is a marriage nullity process by which practically anyone who comes forward and asks to have a marriage declared null, will have it declared null. Or the Church says that the Holy Eucharist is the Body of Christ and one has to be properly disposed but at the same time she freely gives Holy Communion to whoever approaches without asking any questions.”

Do the German bishops export their decline?

Professor Stark states that the struggle during the Synod on the Family was largely won by the liberal German Church and its allies, who in their own countries are going through a disastrous decline, “They have shown for decades, that what they are doing is not very successful.”

Cardinal Burke answers by quoting an African Cardinal who said that the Western European Countries have empty Churches because of a rebellion against the teaching and practice of the Church: “They want to impose that now on us. Is the goal that our churches too be empty?”

Burke admits that the culture is secularized: “But the answer is not to accommodate ourselves to the culture.” The culture has to be addressed with the Gospel.

“Make sacrifices to uphold the truth”

Finally, Professor Stark notices a pattern. The Church resists attacks from the secular world against Catholic morals for a few decades and then gradually compromises. He fears that this could happen again with marriage and family.

Cardinal Burke agrees. He demands to speak the truth strongly: “We have to be ready to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to uphold the truth.”

He refers to Saint Pius X, the great opponent of Modernism, and notices that the Modernism condemned by Pius X “sounds like today”.