

Bishop Schneider: Martin Luther is not a witness to the Gospel (on Vatican document)

CFN Intro: On February 16 [Rorate Caeli](#) and *Adelante la Fe* posted a comprehensive video interview with the well-known conservative Bishop Athanasius Schneider of Kazakhstan that runs about 48 minutes. The interview covered a myriad of topics, but CFN is spotlighting Bishop Schneider's magnificent response regarding a recent Vatican document that names the heresiarch Martin Luther as a witness to the Gospel. We know you will benefit from Bishop Schneider's forthright commentary (JV).

Question: A controversial document from the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity equates Saint Ignatius of Loyola and Saint Francis of Borgia with Martin Luther, calling him a witness to the Gospel. We as Catholics are aware of the serious damage Luther caused to the Church, what should be our position if our ecclesiastical authorities invite us to consider Luther as a witness to the Gospel?

Bishop Schneider: Well, this document is issued by the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, this Council has no doctrinal authority. We have no need to take seriously this document, which is objectively wrong. It is against the evidence. We cannot put on the same level Luther and Saint Ignatius. This is a contradiction. Luther cannot be a witness to the Gospel, and the Church will not ask us to accept this because it is only a statement from the pontifical Council so it need not be taken seriously.

When we examine in sincerity and honesty Luther and his work, he caused immense damage to the entire Christianity. He divided Christianity. He is not a witness of the Gospel. He denied almost the entire previous tradition from 1500 years. This cannot be a witness to the Gospel who puts himself as the authority to interpret the Word of God. This is against the Faith which Christ gave us and which the apostles transmitted to us in a basic manner - to reject the Holy Tradition as really a fount of revelation and the entire thinking of the Church which the Holy Ghost guided in the dogmatic and doctrinal issues, and this is the case. Luther did not reject [merely] the disciplinary tradition, the pastoral tradition, but he rejected the fundamental doctrinal tradition of the Church. And the doctrinal tradition of the Church is the Gospel. This is Gospel. And when I reject the substance of the entire Apostolic and immutable constant tradition of the Church (in the case of Luther, 1500 years) I am rejecting the Gospel.

For example, in Kazakhstan where I am living there was a holy martyr priest who was beatified, Blessed Oleksa Zarytsky whom my parents had known personally, he blessed me when I was a child. This priest was from the Byzantine Rite, but Catholic. And the Communist asked them not to deny Christ, not to deny the sacraments, but only to deny one point of the Gospel: the primacy of Peter, the papacy (which is in the Gospel). Blessed Oleksa told the tribunal, "If I would deny this point on the primacy of Peter, I will deny entire Gospel. I will be the anti-witness of the entire Gospel." This is in our time, he died in

1963.

So, in the case of Luther, he rejected the heart of the Church, which is the Eucharist. He rejected the sacrificial essence and substance of the Eucharistic celebration, and this is the heart of the Church - the Eucharist. This is just one example. So how could one be a witness to the Gospel when he rejects the heart of the Church, the sacrificial nature of the Mass itself?

Luther called the Mass an invention of the devil, a blasphemy. He called the papacy an invention of satan. How can we name this person as a witness? When we do this, we don't believe in the sacrificial character of the Mass, or we don't believe in the primacy of Peter, or we don't believe in the Catholic manner of the unchangeable doctrinal tradition of the Church, or we are committing a lie and playing only a game of political correctness. This is very dishonest. Or we have an intellectual position of relativism, that truth and untruth are the same. And so in this case when this document from the Pontifical Council states that Luther is more or less the same level as St. Ignatius, they are putting truth and error at the same level. This is the position of philosophical and theological relativism. And this is very dangerous.

So I think we need not take this document seriously, because it has no doctrinal authority. It is in itself contradictory and completely wrong. This document will not last for many years. Because the Church is more powerful, the unchangeable truth is more powerful than this weak and very wrong document. It will pass away with time.

See the entire video below:

See also: [Should a Catholic Celebrate Martin Luther?](#)