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Appeasing the Red Dragon

In recent weeks, a new Vatican scandal involving Pope Francis, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (i.e. Communist "church"), and the underground Church in China has been stewing, one which has the potential to cause as much damage and division (although in different ways and for different reasons) as the *Amoris Laetitia* debacle.

AsiaNews broke the story in late January: "The Vatican asks legitimate bishops to step aside in favour of illegitimate ones," read the headline, while the article itself explained:

> "The Holy See has asked Bishop Peter Zhuang Jianjian of Shantou in southern Guangdong province to retire in order to give way to an excommunicated bishop while another Vatican-appointed bishop was asked to downgrade himself as the assistant of an illicit bishop."

Since that time, a firestorm has erupted – and rightfully so – over the prospect of Rome capitulating to Beijing and thus betraying the clergy and faithful of the underground Church in China. Cardinal Joseph Zen, the 86-year-old bishop-emeritus of Hong Kong, has been one of the leading voices decrying these unconscionable developments. In a message entitled "Dear Friends in the Media" (posted on his personal blog), Cardinal Zen shared details about his impromptu trip to Rome in early January, taken on behalf of Bishop Zhuang (the elderly bishop who was asked to step aside), and his private audience with Pope Francis (Jan. 12) during which the cardinal was able to hand-deliver a letter from his Chinese confrere.

After revealing several details, which he felt "duty-bound to share," Cardinal Zen went on to offer eight additional "explanations" of the present situation. Numbers four through six read as follows:

> "4. *Some say that all the efforts to reach an agreement is to avoid the ecclesial schism. How ridiculous! The schism is there, in the Independent Church!* The Popes avoided using the word "schism" because they knew that many in the official Catholic community were there not by their own free will, but under heavy pressure. The proposed 'unification' would force everybody into that

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> community. The Vatican would be giving the blessing on the new strengthened schismatic Church, taking away the bad conscience from all those who are already willing renegades and those others who would readily join them.
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> 5. Is it not good to try to find mutual ground to bridge the decades-long divide between the Vatican and China? But can there be anything really 'mutual' with a totalitarian regime? Either you surrender or you accept persecution, but remaining [sic] faithful to yourself (can you imagine an agreement between St. Joseph and King Herod?).
>
> 6. *So, do I think that the Vatican is selling out the Catholic Church in China? Yes, definitely*, if they go in the direction which is obvious from all what [*sic*] they are doing in recent years and months." (Emphasis added)

Steven Mosher, longtime president of the Population Research Institute (PRI) and acclaimed expert on China, concurs wholeheartedly. In response to Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo (a friend of Pope Francis with globalist connections), who recently visited China for the first time and afterwards remarked, "Right now, those who are best implementing the social doctrine of the Church are the Chinese," Mosher wrote:

> "Perhaps Sorondo and others in the Vatican seem deluded. Communist Party negotiators convinced them that if the Vatican orders the Underground Church out of the catacombs and allows Beijing to choose its bishops, that the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] will reciprocate by allowing greater scope for religious freedom and practice. If so, nothing could be further from the truth. …
>
> And whether Sorondo understands it or not — and I would guess he doesn't have a clue — *there's only one reason why the Chinese Party-State wants an agreement with the Vatican at all. For control.* It wants to control the appointment of bishops so that it can create a breakaway national church. It wants to control and limit the contact of that church with the outside world, and to put it on a path to gradual extinction.
>
> *Most of all, it wants to force the Underground Church out into the open.* There its heroic bishops will give way to state lackeys. Its members more effectively watched. Its preaching stopped.
>
> *That the Vatican is contemplating cooperating with this scheme is mystifying.*

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> Why would any believing Catholic consent to hand over millions of believers in China to an officially atheistic Communist Party that is hostile to Catholicism, treats Catholics as second-class citizens, and will not even let them serve in the government or the military?" (Emphasis added)

Why, indeed.

China in Light of Fatima

To truly understand the answer to Mosher's rhetorical question, we must refer back to Our Lady of Fatima's warning concerning the "errors of Russia," about which She spoke on July 13, 1917 (part of the Secret): "If My requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated." As we know, Her requests have not been heeded – specifically, the Consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart – and, therefore, Russia has "spread her errors throughout the world," most notably, in China.

After the victory of Communist forces under Mao Zedong in 1949 (with the help of Soviet Russia), the ruthless dictator worked mercilessly to stamp out the Catholic Faith in China. After years of trying and failing, Chairman Mao introduced a new approach (while still terrorizing Catholics who refused to compromise). He founded the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association in 1957, under the auspices of the People's Religious Affairs Bureau, as a means of subverting and subordinating the Church to state control. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin did something similar during the Second World War, when in 1943 he "restored" (co-opted) the Russian Orthodox Church by resurrecting the Moscow Patriarchate as a department of state (as it remains to this day under Vladimir Putin).

Pope Pius XII responded to Mao's so-called "Catholic Patriotic Association" in mid-1958 by issuing an encyclical, *Ad Apostolorum Principis* (On Communism and the Church in China), addressed with paternal affection to the Chinese clergy and faithful. Therein, he reiterated the dogma of papal primacy and universal jurisdiction by divine right (as defined by Vatican I) and encouraged his "Venerable Brethren and Beloved Children" to persevere in their fidelity to Christ and His Church:

> "Be constant then and put your trust in Him according to the words: 'Cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.' [1 Pet. 5:7]

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> He sees clearly your anguish and your torments. He particularly finds acceptable the grief of soul and the tears which many of you, bishops and priests, religious and laymen, pour forth in secret when they behold the efforts of those who are striving to subvert the Christians among you. These tears, these bodily pains and tortures, the blood of the martyrs of past and present – all will bring it about that, through the powerful intervention of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, Queen of China, the Church in your native land will at long last regain its strength and in a calmer age, happier days will shine upon it." (*Ad Apostolorum Principis*, nn. 55-56)

What, then, has happened between 1958 and 2018 to bring about such a radical change of attitude on the part of the Vatican? The answer is *Ostpolitik*, a policy that is integrally related to Our Lady's Fatima Message and the Second Vatican Council.

Fatima vs. *Ostpolitik*

Readers may recall an article of mine from last fall, "Cardinal Parolin's Trip to Moscow: An Exercise in Ostpolitik," in which I recounted the Vatican Secretary of State's diplomatic visit to Russia (Aug. 20-24, 2017) on behalf of Pope Francis. I used the occasion to discuss the origins of the radically altered policy towards Communism since Vatican II, drawing from Christopher Ferrara's excellent book, *False Friends of Fatima*. Since I am not aware of a more thorough and concise description of the subject, allow me to quote Mr. Ferrara once again:

> "The new 'orientation' of the Church that emerged after the Council and has been carried out in its name is not limited to a doctrinal or liturgical 'updating' whose horrendous results are obvious. The new orientation extends as well to the Church's relation with the powers of the world according to the new 'spirit of dialogue.' … This 'opening to the world' would not bring about the penetration of the world by the Catholic spirit, as the Modernists had disingenuously promised, but rather precisely the opposite: the invasion of the Church by worldly thinking that Paul VI bemoaned but did little or nothing to repel.
>
> As part of the 'opening to the world,' just before the Council's commencement there would be an explicit betrayal of the mission Our Lady had launched with Her request for the Consecration and conversion of Russia—a request in keeping with the Church's staunch opposition to the errors of Communism, which at the time of the Council were indeed spreading throughout the world as She had

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> predicted at Fatima. In the spring of 1962, in Metz, France, Cardinal Eugene Tisserant had a meeting with none other than Metropolitan Nikodim of the Russian Orthodox Church—a KGB operative, as were the other Orthodox prelates.[1] At this meeting Tisserant and Nikodim negotiated what came to be known as *the Metz Pact, or more popularly, the Vatican-Moscow Agreement. …*
>
> In substance, the agreement was that Pope John [XXIII], according to his fond wish, would be 'favored' by the attendance of two Russian Orthodox observers at the Council. In return, the Catholic Church would agree that the Council would refrain from any condemnation of Soviet Communism or Soviet Russia. *In essence, the Council would compromise the moral liberty of the Church by pretending that the most systematized form of evil in human history did not exist*—even though, at the very moment the Council opened [Oct. 1962], the Soviets were persecuting, imprisoning, and murdering millions of Catholics, just as Our Lady of Fatima had warned in 1917."[2] (Emphasis added)

After outlining its origins and major architects in the Vatican Secretariat of State, Ferrara explains that *Ostpolitik* is "the policy by which the Church has ceased all condemnation and opposition to Communist regimes in favor of 'dialogue' and 'quiet diplomacy.'" He goes on to recognize the sad fact that this pernicious policy "continues to this day, as we see with the Vatican's studious avoidance of any condemnation of the vicious persecution of the 'underground' Church in Red China."[3]

Beijing, Rome, Moscow: New Communist Triangle?

How, you may be wondering, does the current regime in Moscow fit into this mess? Precisely one week before *AsiaNews* broke their story, *The Moscow Times* ran an article entitled, "Putin Compares Communism to Christianity," in which the Russian president is quoted as follows: "**Communist ideology is very similar to Christianity**, in fact, freedom, equality, brotherhood and justice — all of that is laid out in Scripture…Lenin was placed inside a mausoleum: How is that different from holy relics?" (Emphasis added)

Although quite disturbing (not to mention sacrilegious), Putin's comments should come as no surprise. After all, this is the same man who in 2005 called the "collapse" (more accurately, *controlled demolition*) of the Soviet Union "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century." He is also the man who signed a "Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation" with Communist China in 2001 – "with the hope," says the treaty, "of promoting and establishing a just and fair **new world order** based on universally recognized principles and norms of international laws…." (Emphasis added)

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Does Pope Francis realize with whom he is dealing? Perhaps he does, considering his own claim that, "if anything, it is the communists who think like Christians." (No wonder he and Archbishop Sorondo work so well together!)

Near the end of 2016, Dr. Maike Hickson poignantly asked the question via *OnePeterFive*, "Have the 'Errors of Russia' Now Infected Rome?" (an article well worth reading). At this late hour, the answer is tragically obvious.

(Image: Courtesy of Adrian Hau.)

[1] This fact is independently corroborated by Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin in their 600-plus page scholarly tome *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), pp. 487-492, 501.

[2] Christopher A. Ferrara, *False Friends of Fatima* (Pound Ridge: Good Counsel Publications, 2012), pp. 23-24.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 25.

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