

“A Decisive Act Now Is Urgent and Necessary”: Precisely Why We Need the Formal Correction

Early this week, in view of the Vatican abuse crisis summit (Feb. 21-24), Cardinals Raymond Burke and Walter Brandmüller published a brief open letter to the presidents of the bishops' conferences currently gathered in Rome from around the world for the summit. In short, it was a charitable but firm challenge to their brother bishops not to remain silent about the real cause of the crisis, namely, clerical sodomy and pederasty.

As their Eminences state in their letter (full text available [here](#) and [here](#)),

“The plague of the homosexual agenda has been spread within the Church, promoted by organized networks and protected by a climate of complicity and a conspiracy of silence. The roots of this phenomenon are clearly found in that atmosphere of materialism, of relativism and of hedonism, in which the existence of an absolute moral law, that is without exceptions, is openly called into question.

Sexual abuse is blamed on clericalism. But the first and primary fault of the clergy does not rest in the abuse of power but in having gone away from the truth of the Gospel. The even public denial, by words and by acts, of the divine and natural law, is at the root of the evil that corrupts certain circles in the Church.”

The cardinals go on to mention that they are “among those who in 2016 presented to the Holy Father certain questions, ‘dubia,’ which ... have not only not had any response but are part of a more general crisis of the Faith.” And in closing, they emphasize, “A decisive act now is urgent and necessary.”

While I am grateful to Cardinals Burke and Brandmüller for their efforts to raise awareness about “the homosexual agenda ... within the Church,” and I am likewise sensitive to their profoundly difficult position, nevertheless I believe the question must be respectfully asked: *Your Eminences, have you forgotten about the formal correction of Pope Francis?*

I have addressed this subject in previous articles (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)), so I will not rehash all the details here, but suffice it to say I agree with the cardinals that “[a] decisive act now is urgent and necessary.” And that decisive act, as Cardinal Burke himself has [explained](#), is “a formal act of correction of a serious error,” that is, a “correction of the Roman Pontiff” – not only for *Amoris Laetitia*, or [denying](#) the legitimacy of capital punishment, or his [heterodox document](#) “On Human Fraternity”, but also for his aiding and abetting of the “[homoheresy](#)”. Nothing short of a formal correction – namely, a public warning (cf. Tit. 3:10-11) before the whole Church (cf. Matt. 18:15-17) to determine

pertinacity (obstinate heresy) - will suffice.

Ecclesial Drama of Biblical Proportions

The intense situation in which Cardinals Burke and Brandmüller find themselves reminds me of the story of Esther, the simple Jewish maiden who was raised up by Providence to a high position in order to save God’s people from destruction during their exile.

After being chosen as the new queen by Assuerus (also known as Xerxes), king of Persia, Esther faced a most dire dilemma. She learned from her elder cousin, Mardochai, that Aman, “the enemy of the Jews” (Esth. 3:10) who had gained the favor of Assuerus, had deceptively obtained permission from the king “to kill and destroy all the Jews, both young and old, little children, and women, in one day” (Esth. 3:13). When Mardochai told Esther that she must approach the king and intercede for their people, she replied:

“All the king’s servants, and all the provinces that are under his dominion, know that whosoever, whether man or woman, cometh into the king’s inner court, who is not called for, is immediately to be put to death without any delay: except the king shall hold out the golden scepter to him, in token of clemency, that so he may live. How then can I go in to the king, who for these thirty days now have not been called unto him?” (Esth. 4:11)

Despite the imminent and even mortal danger Esther faced, the noble Mardochai challenged his younger cousin:

“Think not that thou mayst save thy life only, because thou art in the king’s house, more than all the Jews. For if thou wilt now hold thy peace, the Jews shall be delivered by some other occasion: and thou, and thy father’s house, shall perish. And who knoweth whether thou art not therefore come to the kingdom, that thou mightest be ready in such a time as this?” (Esth. 4:13-14)

Placing her trust in God and supported by the prayers and fasting of her people (cf. Esth. 4:15-17), Esther agreed to face the danger and go before the king unbidden, which eventually led to the exposure of Aman as a villain and his swift execution, as well as to the deliverance of the Jews.

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Like Esther, Cardinals Burke and Brandmüller have been raised by God to a very high position in His Kingdom on earth. They are princes of the Church whose duty it is to “help the Roman Pontiff through the various offices they perform, especially in the daily care of the universal Church” (Code of Canon Law, [can. 349](#)). They will no doubt face persecution and perhaps even physical danger for daring to correct Francis, but let them consider, as Esther did, that: (1) their silence will not guarantee their safety; and (2) the Church will eventually be delivered by God, but they will go before Him at their particular judgment knowing they should have corrected the erring Pope but did not.

I urge them, therefore, in a spirit of filial piety and reverence, to meditate on Our Lord’s admonition that “unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required: and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more” (Luke 12:48); and likewise, that “he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:20).

For our part, we the faithful must support Cardinals Burke and Brandmüller through our prayers and fasting, that they may obtain the courage they need to do what they must.