Jungle Boogie: Dancing with the Devil

The Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian region was a spectacle that reeked of the Vatican's revolting new love affair with the pagan religions of jungle tribes, some of which still practice infanticide. "The life of Amazonian communities not yet affected by the influence of Western civilization is reflected in the beliefs and rituals about the actions of the spirits of divinity, named in innumerable ways, with and in the territory, with and in relationship with nature," declared the assembled prelates in their ludicrous final document.

The Catholic Church, said they, must engage with "indigenous religions and religions of Afro-descendants" whose "traditions deserve to be known, understood in their own expressions and in their relationship with the forest and mother earth. Together with them, Christians, based on their faith in the Word of God, engage in dialogue, sharing their lives, their worries, their struggles, their experiences of God, to deepen each other's faith and act together in defense of the 'common home'" (Amazon Synod Final Document, n. 25).

Note well: *deepen each other's faith*, Christians and pagans alike, there being no question of seeking urgently to convert the practitioners of "indigenous religions" to Christ in order to free them from their bondage to idolatry, superstition, and sin, including the murder of innocent children. No, they must be left to worship the "spirits" that have not been dispelled by "the influence of Western civilization" – meaning the Gospel of Christ, Baptism, and incorporation into the Mystical Body which is His Church.

Along with the bishops assembled for this farce came Pachamama to the Vatican Gardens, Saint Peter's Basilica, the Via della Conciliazione (in procession toward Saint Peter's), and the Church of Santa Maria in Transpontina. Pachamama became a veritable icon of the Synod, with the Pope himself blessing a wooden statue depicting the pagan deity as a naked, pregnant woman with pouting breasts, face paint, and a savage mien. Replicas of the disgusting idol proliferated during the event.

Now, for a good long while it seemed the Neo-Catholic Excuse Factory had finally ground to a halt as Pope Bergoglio's wrecking ball battered the edifice of Catholic teaching on faith and morals again and again. After more than 50 years of defending the indefensible, only a few oddballs, whose names are not important, are still determined to wage polemical warfare against "radical traditionalist" or "reactionary" critics of the post-conciliar debacle, who by now have been revealed as masters of the obvious. The last desperate holdouts of a dwindling neo-Catholic, anti-traditionalist constituency remind one of Hiroo Onoda, the Japanese soldier who refused to surrender in 1945 and continued to engage in sporadic hostilities on the Philippine island of Lubang until 1974, by which time the sounds of war had been replaced by "Classic Rock" and the sexual revolution was destroying public and

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private morality throughout the victorious West.

But then a group of Catholic clergy and laity (including this writer) published a "Protest against Pope Francis's sacrilegious acts" in the form of a document calling upon the bishops to demand that the Pope repudiate the sacrileges he had condoned and presided over, including the veneration of Pachamama. With a horrible screeching and grinding sound, the Excuse Factory lurched into operation again.

Return of the Neo-Catholic Excuse Factory

For example, a certain lawyer from Tallahassee, who scoured the Internet for a depiction of Mother Earth as a crowned female figure in a medieval fresco from 1295, located in the world-renowned Orthodox Church of St. Clement of Ochrid in Skopjke, North Macedonia—what, you've never heard of the Church of St. Clement of Ochrid in North Macedonia?—huffed that of course there is absolutely nothing pagan about Mother Earth. After all, the lawyer noted (evidently convinced he had found the knockdown argument) no less than St. Francis of Assisi referred to "our Sister, Mother Earth" in his famous Canticle. But here our lawyer proved too much, as lawyers like to say about the arguments of other lawyers, for the same Canticle also praises "Sister Death." Perhaps Tallahassee Lawyer does not comprehend the distinction between the trope employed by St. Francis in his poetic paean to the true God versus the literal personification of a mere creature involved in pagan earth-worship.

From the premise that there is nothing pagan about figurative references to Mother Earth in a Catholic context, Tallahassee Lawyer leaps to the conclusion that there was certainly nothing wrong with bowing before, carrying in procession, and displaying prominently in Catholic sanctuaries, including Saint Peter's Basilica, the obscene graven image of a pagan deity that is still actively, indeed pervasively, worshipped in the Andean mountains as "a creative and protective *deity* that shelters men, makes life possible and supports fertility."

Confronted with such salient facts, Tallahassee Lawyer at first denied that the idol in question represented Pachamama at all: "there is literally no evidence that this image represents a pagan deity, let alone the notorious 'Pachamama' of right-wing Catholic imagination." But he had to deal with a key fact to the contrary: that Pope Bergoglio himself had identified the idol as Pachamama when apologizing for the removal of several replicas from the Church of the Transpontina by a young Catholic man who tossed them into the Tiber. Quoth Bergoglio (as reported by Vatican News):

> "*Pope Francis' words*:

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> Good afternoon. I want to say a word about *the statues of the pachamama* that were taken from the church of the Transpontina – which were there without idolatrous intentions – and were thrown into the Tiber.
>
> First of all, this happened in Rome, and, as Bishop of the Diocese, I ask pardon of the persons who were offended by this act.
>
> Then, I want to communicate to you that the statues which created such attention in the media, were retrieved from the Tiber. The statues were not damaged."

The Pope did not explain how the prominent placement of Pachamama statues in a Catholic sanctuary was devoid of "idolatrous intention" despite the objective appearance of idolatry. At any rate, here Tallahassee Lawyer had a major evidentiary problem: he was insisting that there was no evidence that the statues were Pachamama statues, even though the Pope clearly believed they were. From whence did Bergoglio derive this belief? Certainly not from the complaints of the "radical traditionalists" and "reactionaries" he has spent the past six years publicly calumniating. Bergoglio's source could hardly have been what Tallahassee Lawyer dismisses as "right-wing Catholic imagination." Clearly, those associated with the Synod had so informed the Pope.

When All Else Fails, *Ad Hominem*

What to do, what to do. To save his case, Tallahassee Lawyer had no choice but to do what desperate lawyers always do: launch an *ad hominem* attack on the witness in order to distract from the truth of his testimony. Which means, incredibly enough, *mock the Pope* for admitting the truth of the "radical traditionalist" charge:

> "Earlier today, *the indefatigably ignorant Pope Francis* — who is something of a left-wing counterpart to the 'Catholic' neo-traditionalists — put his foot in his mouth yet again when, in the course of an apology for the recent vandalism, he referred to the stolen and desecrated images as 'pachamamas,' while simultaneously affirming that the statues had been displayed in Santa Maria in Transpontina 'without any idolatrous intention.' Pope Francis is simply wrong."

The quoted passage reveals a rather astonishing sociological development within our troubled ecclesial commonwealth: Now that we have a Pope who is so maniacal in his

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pursuit of novelty that he can no longer plausibly be cited in defense of the neo-Catholic's endless "nothing to see here" narrative, the Pope himself must be sacrificed for the sake of the narrative.

So, Tallahassee Lawyer declared that *both* the Pope *and* the traditionalists are ignoramuses and that only the sensible neo-Catholic middle is in the know. Here we see that the neo-Catholic narrative in defense of indefensible changes in the Church has never, after all, been a defense of the papacy but ultimately the neo-Catholic polemical turf, which is paramount. If the Pope no longer serves the narrative, then the Pope must be thrown under the bus—believe it or not—as a "left-wing counterpart to the 'Catholic' neo-traditionalists." Which, quite handily, leaves only Tallahassee Lawyer and those who think like him as custodians of a reliable *sensus catholicus.*

But Tallahassee Lawyer evidently recognized that he could not dismiss with a wave of his hand the Pope's public declaration that the Pachamama statues were in fact Pachamama statues. He thus presented additional "evidence" in the form of an article by a medical doctor from Portugal, who argued that the Pachamama statues are really just icons of the Virgin Mary because the woman who presented one of them to the Pope for his blessing during the ceremonies in the Vatican Gardens muttered something about "Our Lady of the Amazon" shortly before the "indigenous" entourage bowed down in its presence.

Like Tallahassee Lawyer, Portuguese Doctor offered no credible explanation for the Vatican's denial that the obscene object was any such thing. As Catholic News Agency reported: "Fr. Giacomo Costa, a communications official for the Amazon synod, said Wednesday a wooden figure of a nude pregnant woman, which has been present at events related to the synod, is not the Virgin Mary, but is instead a female figure representing life. "*It is not the Virgin Mary*, who said it is the Virgin Mary?…" Indeed, the Vatican could hardly pass off an obscene statue of a nude woman with a swollen belly, face paint, and a snarl on her face as an image of the Virgin Most Pure.

Evidently aware of the problem, Tallahassee Lawyer adopted what lawyers call a fallback argument: assuming *arguendo* (as lawyers like to say) that the statues do represent Pachamama, there is no evidence that Pachamama is an *Amazonian* deity as opposed to an *Andean* deity—as if that makes a material difference in the idolatry involved. Consider the following particulars of the present-day commonplace worship of Pachamama in the Andes, whose eastern slopes are part of the Amazon:

> "The offering ceremonies, *commonly known* to the Andean people as, 'payments to land or payments to Pachamama' are rituals of the ancestors. The offerings are

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> part of a system of reciprocity between the material world and the spiritual world.
>
> The purpose of the ritual is to give back to Mother Earth what she has given you, to express your deepest desires, what you want to achieve in our life, and what you want for your loved ones. *These rituals continue throughout the entire month of August.*
>
> *There are two types of ceremonies practiced by the Andean people*. There are private offerings, and community offerings. During the community offerings, the Andean priests perform the ancestral ceremonies. *These ceremonies are meant to satisfy the hunger of Pachamama and to grant the blessings*. The offerings to Mother Earth are related to the origin story of the relationship between the Andean man, specifically the peasant, and Mother Earth or 'Pachamama'."

Further, as *LifeSiteNews* reported, the Italian bishops published a prayer to Pachamama at page 17 of "an official booklet of the *Fondazione Missio* (Mission Foundation) of the Italian bishops' conference" issued in connection with the Amazon Synod:

> "Pachamama of these places,
> drink and eat as much as you like of these offerings,
> so that this land may be fruitful.
> Pachamama, good Mother
> Be propitious! Be propitious!
> Let the oxen walk well,
> and let them not get tired.
> Make the seed taste good,
> that nothing bad happen to it,
> that frost may not disrupt it,
> that it produce good food.
> We ask you:
> give us everything.
> Be propitious! Be propitious!"

Even Fr. Pacwa Has Had Enough!

On this score we also have the testimony of EWTN's Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J. who, unlike

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Tallahassee Lawyer or Portuguese Doctor, actually lived in Peru in the 1970s and witnessed the idolatrous worship of Pachamama:

> "… I would like to address this situation of the Pachamama statues. I was blessed back in 1975 to go work in Peru. And especially in the mountains—not so much in Lima or on the coast but in the mountains—Pachamama was still adored and worshipped. She was part of a hierarchy of deities. The gods of the mountains were the chief deities. Pachamama or Mother Earth was under them. Below Pachamama were Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, and then the rest of us. So, they had integrated Pachamama *into a pseudo-Catholic view of the world*, putting the mountains first, Pachamama, the Earth second, and then below them Jesus, Mary and the Saints.
>
> And then there was one trip I made [when] I was in [an earthquake in Peru]… The only thing to survive was a statue of Jesus Christ in the local cemetery… At the base of that large statue of Christ was—it says—by the survivors: "Such is the fate of those who worship Pachamama instead of the true Christ."

Fr. Pacwa went on to address the Vatican's contention, echoed by Tallahassee Lawyer and Portuguese Doctor, that the Pachamama statues were just "a symbol of fertility and motherhood." His reply was appropriately contemptuous: "*Knock it off. We're not stupid, we're not*. This is an idol. And here's the fruit—now we're talking about wolves in sheep's clothing and bad fruit. The Bishops Conference of Italy has a Mission Office, and they published in there a prayer to Mother Earth of the Inca people, to Pachamama [quoted above] …"

Moreover, quibbling about the Amazonian versus Andean origin of Pachamama aside, as one of the signatories to the aforementioned letter of protest has observed: "The origin is in the Andes, but it is now coming to be, not only in the Andes and Amazon, but all over the Continent and gradually also in the other continents, a sort of symbol of the new pantheistic-ecologistic-animalistic (= one that equates in dignity human beings to all other living beings) religion. Although in Latin America it includes also the more specifically socialist hints of Liberation Theology, in its basic metaphysical tenets this 'new religion' is spreading all over the West."

The argument that the Pachamama statues were not idols but merely depictions of "life" or "fertility" is the last ditch of the neo-Catholic defense of this travesty of a Synod and its blatant tributes to pagan superstition. Pachamama does a two-step, hiding her deific claims

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behind a veil of New Age ambiguity. But the argument fools no one who is not willing to be fooled. Thus, as Bishop Athanasius Schneider, for example, declared: "In front of the eyes of the entire world, and in the presence of the Pope, there were conducted clear acts of religious adoration of symbols and statues of the pagan, indigenous, South-American religions, the so-called 'Pachamama.'"

Joining this hierarchical protest are the other cardinals and bishops who condemned the repeated insertion of Pachamama statues into the synodal proceedings, including Cardinal Gerhard Müller, who told EWTN's Raymond Arroyo that the "great mistake was to bring the idols into the Church, not to put them out, because according to the Law of God Himself – the First Commandment – idolism [idolatry] is a grave sin and not to mix them with the Christian liturgy." But according to Tallahassee Lawyer, "A man as well-educated as the eminent Cardinal Müller really ought to know better…" But Tallahassee Lawyer knows better, having acquired his superior knowledge during those times when he was not "carousing at the local comedy club."

Finally, all else having failed, here as elsewhere the neo-Catholic defense of the indefensible must devolve into an *ad hominem* attack. Accordingly, anyone who objected to *l'affaire* Pachamama must be smeared without exception: cardinal, archbishop, bishop, priest, scholar, and pew Catholic alike. That includes every signatory of the aforementioned protest. To that end, Tallahassee Lawyer and Portuguese Doctor were joined by a certain self-styled "Catholic apologist" with a strange penchant for cowboy hats and six-shooters whose bloated blog posts reflect the sense of what remains of the neo-Catholic polemical forces.

One Last Heckler

Cowboy Hat has published a piece that names and provides capsule calumniations of many of the signers of the Letter (including this writer), all of whom are denounced as "radical Catholic reactionaries" who "hold to extreme and quasi-schismatic ecclesiological positions: dangerously close to a belief in the defectiblity of Holy Mother Church." Cowboy Hat attempts to create the impression of mass lunacy with wild, insult-laden mischaracterizations of their writings and positions. For example, respecting my book *The Great Façade*, Cowboy Hat alleges that it contains "[a] thousand ludicrous, slanderous, self-evidently false citations" of which he cites not a single one, but only a few unexceptionable statements of the obvious with which he disagrees—a denial of the obvious being the fundament of the neo-Catholic polemic this blowhard typifies.

Cowboy Hat ends by making sure to inform his public that "money trees do not exist" and that "[m]y book royalties… have been decreasing, as has my overall income, making it

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increasingly difficult to make ends meet." Perhaps Cowboy Hat's financial decline is a reflection of the decline of the influence of the neo-Catholic constituency as a whole. Fewer and fewer Catholics are buying their "nothing to see here" narrative these days.

Unlike Tallahassee Lawyer, Portuguese Doctor, and Cowboy Hat, an ever-growing number of the faithful, awakened by the astounding debacle of this pontificate, are no longer willing to deny the obvious about the ecclesial revolution inaugurated by the Second Vatican Council, now in its final Jacobinic death throes.

Editor's Note (11/25/19): *This article has been corrected to reflect that the precise argument by "Tallahassee Lawyer" is that Pachamama is not an Amazonian deity but rather an Andean deity. The article has also been updated to reflect the widespread adoption of Pachamama as both an Amazonian and global symbol of an emerging "ecological" and neo-pagan religion.*

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