Don Alfredo M. Morselli, an Italian theologian and parish priest, has kindly sent to *Catholic Family News* a spoof (or piece of satire) he has written, imaging how the infernal Serpent would argue with Eve in the Garden of Eden if he were to use the specious arguments found in *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis' 2016 post-synodal apostolic exhortation "On Love in the Family" – for example the denial of the existence of absolute truths and intrinsically evil acts. Morselli even goes so far as to let the Serpent argue that hell does not exist and that all moral acts are relative.

Don Morselli has been a prominent critic of Pope Francis and especially of *Amoris Laetitia*, the document which has become the basis for the now-widespread praxis of giving Holy Communion to unrepentant adulterers who live, after a civil divorce, in a second civil "marriage."

For example, in July of 2016 – not long after the release of *Amoris Laetitia* in early April – Morselli was one of the signatories to the theological critique of the aforementioned document. Don Morselli is also a signatory of the letter of protest against the Pachamama worship which took place under the guidance of Pope Francis at the Vatican during the October 2019 Amazon Synod.

The priest from Bologna also has recently published his own statement concerning the discussion on the problems of the Second Vatican Council as presented by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò. While agreeing in large parts with the Italian archbishop concerning the Council, Morselli argued that there were problems in the Church that predated the Council. "The thermometer of a good part of the clergy and Catholic intelligentsia indicated moral corruption, tepidity, fear, pride, careerism, a desire to break away from the Cross and come to terms with the world. The pot uncovered by Viganò had been boiling for a long time," the wrote in July.

As readers will see, Don Morselli shows in this new piece of satire a good sense of the Catholic Faith and its undeniable truths combined with a good sense of humor. Satire sometimes helps us to see truths clearer!

Please see below for the full text as written by Don Alfredo Morselli:

Original Sin after *Amoris Laetitia*

By Don Alfredo M. Morselli

How did the events unfold on the occasion of original sin? As Fr. Arturo Sosa Abascal, the

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Superior General of the Society of Jesus, would say, there was no tape recorder, and the Eternal Father did not need surveillance cameras. And then the era in which the historical fact was sought in the Bible is over; only our encounter with the word counts. We no longer have to ask ourselves what original sin is, but rather what it means for us.

So, with the blessing of modern exegesis, let's go and find out how the facts unfolded; whether it's true or not, what does it matter? It matters only what the story tells us today and the religious experience that flows from it.

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Eve was knitting under the tree of the knowledge of good and evil when the "old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan" (Apoc. 12:9), approached her:

Satan: Good morning, Eva. Can we have a chat?

Eve: Gladly, even if in reality you do not really exist (the leader of the Jesuits said that you exist only as a symbolic reality). Even if you pass yourself off as "more subtle than any of the beasts of the earth" (Gen. 3:1), I'm basically talking to myself.

Then the devil, regretting that the work of leading souls to hell sometimes requires him to look like a fool (although pleased to have so many Jesuits collaborating with him), began the speech that had been carefully prepared right after his expulsion from Heaven:

Satan: Is it true that God said "you should not eat of every tree of paradise?" (Gen. 3:1).

Eve: No, what did you understand?! God said only "of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of paradise…we should not eat" (Gen. 3:3).

Satan: But are you sure it holds true in all cases? Do you think it's a *moral absolute*?

Eve: An *absolute* what?

Satan: A *moral absolute*, that is, an action which, if carried out with full knowledge and deliberate consent, is always a sin.

Eve: Why, isn't that so?

Satan: Absolutely not! "It is reductive simply to consider whether or not an individual's actions correspond to a general law or rule, because that is not enough to discern and ensure full fidelity to God in the concrete life of a human being."[1]

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Eve: Devil of a symbolic reality! Explain, I'm interested! Because that fruit is really "good for food" and "a delight to the eyes" (Gen. 3:6).

Satan: You see, there may be particular situations in which to obey God's law "may not, in fact, be feasible"[2]; you have to see case by case. It is true that what the Good Lord has commanded you is "a good which can never be disregarded or neglected, but in [its] formulation [it] cannot provide absolutely for all particular situations."[3]

Eve: This speech stinks of sulfur. The Eternal Father said that you cannot—

Satan: But no. "By thinking that everything is black and white, we sometimes close off the way of grace…."[4]

Eve: But the Good Lord told us that if we eat that fruit, we will die.

Satan: Eeeehhhhh, just like the story of hell (everyone knows it's empty), He said so just to scare you. Some in the past thought that sin had death as its wages (cf. Rom. 6:23), and that all died not from illness or accidents but (imagine!) from sin. In reality, a sin every now and then could strengthen emotional bonds and help to be faithful to each other. Otherwise, "it often happens that faithfulness is endangered and the good of the children suffers".[5] Cain, for example, could become violent, and Abel an autistic shepherd.

Eve: But if the Good Lord catches us in the act, I don't think He will take it very well.

Satan: No problem! There are "mitigating factors"[6] which prevent deliberate consent and thus decrease (if not eliminate) culpability. If we mix the cards up a bit, if we add a little situation ethics and a pinch of utilitarianism, we will not struggle to convince Him that the acts are not good or bad in themselves, but we must look at the result. And how will He tell you anything if you tell Him you did it *for love*? *Ah, l'amour!*

Eve: But then, sin becomes like *Arabian Phoenix*: everyone says that there is, but nobody knows who does it.[7]

Satan: Exactly! Brava, you understand.

Eve: Well, as a symbolic reality you are not too bad. Even still, wouldn't the sin of disobedience lead to terrible consequences: death, wars, hunger, earthquakes, etc.?

Satan: Oh, no! Haven't you heard Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa's sermon for Good Friday 2020? I couldn't have written it better myself.

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Eve: Devil of a symbolic reality! I didn't know you attended church.

Satan: And here you are wrong. Today, many churchmen are the ones who listen to me the most.

Eve: Well, then tell me, what did Fr. Cantalamessa say?

Satan: He said that God "has given nature a kind of freedom as well, qualitatively different of course than that of human beings, but still a form of freedom—freedom to evolve according to its own laws of development."

Eve: Then death, wars, earthquakes, etc., if they ever come, would not be a consequence of sin, but rather the result of the freedom that God has given to nature?

Satan: Brava, exactly! It is no longer time to say that a leaf does not move that God does not want. To think that some have written that creation groans as if it were giving birth, by the will of God who subjected it to transience, and that it too would await a sort of redemption (cf. Rom. 8:19-22)!

Eve: But suppose that a small group of Cardinals raise doubts? Won't that pose a problem?

Satan: Oh, don't worry. It will be enough not to receive them, not to respond, and let them die one after the other. Moreover, the new paradigm of mercy must crush "stone throwers",[8] "Pharisees", "Pelagians",[9] and all the worshipers of dogmas,[10] like worms. "There are no further interpretations"[11] other than those I have given myself.

Eve: One last thing: Why did God tell us that we will die?

Satan: Because He is jealous of you and does not want you to be transferred to a much better earthly paradise.

Eve: And where is that?

Satan: In the Amazon, dear Eva: an earthly paradise with an Amazonian face,[12] full of theological *loci* (sources).[13] And there is also my cousin, Pachamama, who is not an idol but only a tourist entertainer. Do you want to compare reefers of shamans with sermons on migrants? Eva, Eva, listen to me: there is good stuff in the Amazon!

Eve: But will there be bans there, too?

Satan: Well, you can't have everything. If, by chance, you throw a banana peel in the plastic

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bin instead of in the organic, they make you take a course on ecological conversion.[14]

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Of course, we know from Scripture how this all ends up:

> "And the Lord God said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth: upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (Gen. 3:14-15)

In the end, the Immaculate Heart of the Woman will triumph and dispel all errors, and there will be holy shepherds who will no longer be "dumb dogs" (Isa. 56:10) but "shall feed you with knowledge and doctrine" (Jer. 3:15).

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[1] Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (19 Mar. 2016), § 304.

[2] "*…puede no ser de hecho factible*"; Bishops of Buenos Aires Pastoral Region, *Basic criteria for the implementation of chapter VIII of Amoris laetitia*, 5 Sept. 2016. Original Spanish here; English translation here.

[3] *Amoris Laetitia*, § 304.

[4] *Ibid.*, § 305.

[5] Second Vatican Council, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the Modern World (7 Dec. 1965), § 51; (mis)quoted in *Amoris Laetitia*, § 298, note 329.

[6] *Amoris Laetitia*, § 305.

[7] Cf. Metastasio, *Demetrio* (1731), II.3: "we may compare, to that Arabian Phoenix rare, said to exist, tho' none knows where".

[8] *Amoris Laetitia*, § 49.

[9] Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate* (19 Mar. 2018), §§ 57-59.

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[10] Cf. Pope Francis, General Audience (9 Oct. 2019): "Do I adore God or do I adore dogmatic formulations?"

[11] "*No hay otras interpretaciones*"; cf. *Carta del Papa Francisco en respaldo a los criterios de aplicación del capítulo VIII de «Amoris laetitia»*, Vatícano, 5 de septiembre de 2016. Original Spanish here; English translation here.

[12] Pan-Amazon Synod (6-27 Oct. 2019), *Instrumentum Laboris* (released 17 June 2019), §§ 107, 109-111, 116.

[13] *Ibid*., § 19: "Thus territory is a theological place where faith is lived, and also a particular source [Latin, *locus*] of God's revelation…"

[14] Pan-Amazon Synod (6-27 Oct. 2019), Final Document, §§ 60-61, 65, 73.

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