Article on the conservative faction: The Unexpected Conservative Cardinal-Electors – Catholic Family News

Editor's Note: The terms used here of "conservative", "liberal" and "moderate" are all relative to the post-Conciliar Church. Indeed, many of these cardinals, even those deemed conservative, would have been considered liberal by pre-conciliar standards. There is, however, a significant difference between the most liberal of the cardinals and the most conservative of them, which demands that there are different terms to differentiate them. For more on this, see the interview with Mr. Verweij on our YouTube channel. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8o1y19lYkwk&t

By Serre Verweij

While the firmly orthodox cardinal faction currently holds around 50 electors, the liberal faction is actually smaller. This might be surprising considering how many cardinals Pope Francis has appointed, but the fact that he made no German cardinal other than Müller, helps to explain this fact. However, the liberal faction suffers from another problem: clear infighting and disagreement between moderate and radical liberals.

This division was noted by the Pillar a few years back. Some of the key points of contention are the stance taken with regards to the heretical German Synodal Way, whether doctrine as opposed to some pastoral practices can be decentralized along the lines of Anglicanism, and last but not least the position with regard to homosexuality.

Mario Grech, the general secretary for the synod of bishops in Rome**,** is the clear radical liberal candidate, and openly so**.** He has outright spoken of supporting a 'rainbow church' where the German bishops departing from the faith can co-exist alongside orthodoxy. He has been very pro-LGBT, in favor of loosening priestly celibacy, and has criticized the bishops and cardinals who wrote the dubia regarding the German Synodal Way.

Pietro Parolin is the leading moderate liberal candidate and often touted as a papabile, although his important role in the China deal and the fact that his right-hand man, Becciu, got convicted for corruption weigh heavily against him. While a supporter of *Amoris Laetitia* and open to allowing married priests in the early Francis years, he has recently taken a strong stance against the German bishops, doctrinal decentralization, the normalization of homosexuality and the ordination of women.

Matteo Zuppi, the archbishop of Bologna and president of the bishops' conference in Italy, is somewhere between the two and fluctuates between being more radical and more moderate. He has even stated that he is not a chameleon (nor a crook either, I presume). He

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reacted inconsistently to *Fiducia Supplicans* but had in fact allowed the blessing of a gay union back in 2022 (and then lied about it). He has supported James Martin's pro-LGBT book and has taken a soft stance on legal abortion and surrogacy. At the same time, he hosted a pro-*Humanae Vitae* conference in his archdiocese (without attending it himself) and has been friendly to the Tridentine Mass.

It will likely either be a three-way contest between them for the liberal candidacy, or possibly a two-way struggle between Parolin and Zuppi, if Grech is viewed as too radical to have a shot.

The Radicals

Grech has the support of the liberal Jesuit cardinal **Jean-Claude Hollerich** from Luxembourg, who served as relator general during the Synod on Synodality. But in fact, most of the liberal cardinals are radical liberals, including **Leonardo Ulrich Steiner** from the Amazon in Brazil and **Michael Czerny,** a Czechoslovakian-born Canadian Jesuit and also **McElroy, Cupich, Tobin, De Kesel, Gambetti, Chow, Vesco, Repole, Radcliffe, Castillo Mattasoglio, Marto, Retes** and **Semeraro.** as well as the few pre-Francis liberal electors who remain such as **Marx** and possibly **Tagle.**

They either reject Church doctrine on homosexuality, women's ordination, or both. They also supported allowing married priests, reject Christ's teaching on divorce and follow the progressive line of thinking on most other issues. Most of them are Westerners, but not all. Some are defenders of the deal with China, too, following the path of Cardinal McCarrick. Their views are largely what is often attributed to the so-called 'spirit of the Second Vatican Council' which openly calls for a rupture with the traditional faith and is hostile even to the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Their extreme and Western-centric views mean they have little in common with most of the many third-world cardinals named by Francis, whether conservative or moderate. The only possible issues of common ground are concerns regarding poverty and ecology, but on these issues many orthodox cardinals lean more left too.

Moderate liberals

Moderate liberals are a relatively small, yet influential, faction with most of their key figures in Rome. Parolin is obviously the most important one, but there are a few others. Most curial prefects appointed by Francis have either been moderate (You Heung-Sik, Robert Francis Prevost) or moderate liberals. There are two clear exceptions, however; **Victor Manuel Fernandez**, prefect for the Dicastery of the Doctrine of Faith, and **José Tolentino de Mendonça** from the Dicastery for Culture and Education, but they are a minority within

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the curia that as a whole is far closer to Parolin than to Grech or Zuppi.

Kevin Farrell may very well fall into this moderate/establishment liberal category, too. As an American-made cardinal by Pope Francis, it was a given he'd not be too far removed from the likes of Cupich, McElroy, and Tobin. As such, it should come as no surprise that Farrell has also been supportive of James Martin and his pro-LGBT book '*Building a Bridge*', shortly after Martin started his activism. He also openly disapproved of Archbishop Chaput's conservative interpretation of *Amoris Laetitia* which upheld the requirement that the divorced and remarried live as brother and sister in order to be able to participate in the sacraments. He argued for a situational ethics approach instead. He also said his dicastery was working on a document in 2022 and 2023 that would regulate 'pastoral care' for the divorced and remarried, which many feared would confirm that they'd be allowed to receive communion, although this document never materialized.

Yet, in spite of making these progressive gestures in 2016 and 2017, he followed this up by making somewhat more conservative moves, too. At the world meeting of the families in Ireland in 2018 he allegedly prohibited certain pro-LGBT and pro-women's ordination groups from partcipating. He also (weakly) defended the 2021 *Responsum* from the then Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith, which prohibited the blessing of same-sex unions. Finally, in 2023 he also released a document that reaffirmed the Church's ban on both artificial contraception or artificial insemination.

Arthur Roche might strangely end up in this category, as well. While Roche is viewed as the bane of traditionalists, because of his vicious enforcement of *Traditionis Custodes* since he became prefect in May 2021, he has kept his distance from radicals such as Grech. He apparently wasn't exactly happy that Fernandez kept him out of the loop regarding *Fiducia Supplicans*, similar to Parolin. He's also not exactly supportive of the German Synodal Way, specifically their proposal for lay preaching. Furthermore, he has been rumored to have Farrell's support in his ambitions to become the next Pope.

Some other moderate liberal cardinals include Omella from Barcelona, Manuel from Lisbon and possibly Gregory from Washington. Their stance on sexual ethics tends to not be truly heretical, instead, they simply overemphasize being pastoral.

Possible moderate liberals

Finally, there are some cardinals who may well be part of the liberal bloc but may well be moderates, too. **Vincent Nichols** from the UK serves as the perfect example since he can be classified as either a moderate or a moderate liberal. Cardinal **De Aviz** from Brazil, the former prefect for the Congregation of Consecrated Life, **Osoro** the former Archbishop of

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Madrid and **Poli** from Argentina, who replaced Pope Francis as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, also fit into this category.

Even if the moderate/establishment and radical liberals form a group that is joined by all possible liberals who may in fact just be merely moderates, they'd still fall short of the one-third-plus-one minority needed to veto a conservative cardinal from being elected. They'd need to ensure pro-migration or environmentalist moderates align with them against any candidate if they want to be able to stop them. This could prove surprisingly hard as most conservative candidates aren't Westerners or linked to Western right-wing opposition to migration or skepticism regarding manmade climate change.

Conclusion: A house divided...

All the well-known liberal candidates have at least some controversies that hinder their chances. They are extremely divided regarding the legacy of Pope Francis. It's even possible Parolin will support a moderate conservative cardinal, such as Hungarian Peter Erdö, over a rival like Zuppi. Liberals and modernists have little to unite their conflicting factions when there is no traditional leader to overthrow. The chances of the liberals scoring another victory are in doubt.

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"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24)

Understanding the Crusades
Part One – The Islamic Aggression

By Phillip Campbell

The Crusades are a topic of perennial debate. Despite ending more than 750 years ago, they still provoke passionate discussion among Catholics and non-Catholics alike. For some, the Crusades are a sign of the vibrancy and strength of medieval Catholicism at the pinnacle of its influence. For others, the Crusades are reprehensible acts of religious violence – a blot on the Church's legacy that Catholics should be ashamed of.

As with other historical controversies, the truth about the Crusades tends to be overshadowed by partisan bickering; people get so invested in what they think the Crusades symbolize that the actual history becomes obscured. They are less interested in learning history and more interested in using the Crusades as a club to bludgeon home a point. Today we will begin to rectify this with a series of articles on the Crusades, beginning with the backstory of the Crusading movement, which will give important historical context to the events that unfolded during the crusading era.

Too many histories of the Crusades begin with 1095, when the First Crusade was summoned at the Council of Clermont by Pope Urban II. This is an undesirable starting point, as it deprives us of the important background context that leads up to Clermont. Today we will focus on understanding the history of Islamic-Christian relations in the East up to the eve of the First Crusade, which will set the stage for further study of the Crusades proper in future installments.

The essential point we should understand at the outset is that the Crusades were primarily defensive wars – they were a Christian response to increasing Islamic aggression in the Middle East. They were also an act of Christian solidarity, witnessing Latin speaking Christians of the West aiding Greek speaking Christians of the East despite the tragic schism that had split the two churches back in 1054. We should keep these points in mind when reviewing the history of this period.



Templar Knights, by Giuseppe Rava

The religion of Islam traces its origin to the year 610

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The Modern Crusade: The Church vs Organized Naturalism

Brian M. McCall

Catholic Family News held its first in person conference since 2019 on March 1 and 2 in Florida. The theme was Christ's Program for Peace v. Satan's Plan for Disorder according to the writings of Father Dennis Fahey. About 100 people attended from around the country. Traditional Latin Mass was offered each morning by our two invited priest speakers, Father Michael McMahon, SSPX and Father Matthew, OSB. We had a public recitation of the Rosary every day after lunch. For those who purchased the meals, there was a great opportunity to visit with the speakers and to get to know new Catholics from around the country.

Saturday opened with Mass being offered by Father McMahon. We knew the devil was not happy at the goal of this conference to expose his plans. During the Post Communion the hotel's speakers started blaring pop music. As a few men scrambled to find a hotel worker to shut it down, I realized all the devil could do is lash out with little annoyances and this mean our goal was worthwhile.

The Six Point Plan

After breakfast the conferences opened with an introduction of the overall theme and the six points of Christ's Plan for order, according to Father Fahey:

- The Church is supernatural and supranatural. All people must acknowledge the nature of Christ's Church as the only means of salvation.
- Nations are obligated to recognize Christ's Church and that the Church has the power to intervene in temporal affairs as guardian of the divine and natural law.
- The Christian family



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