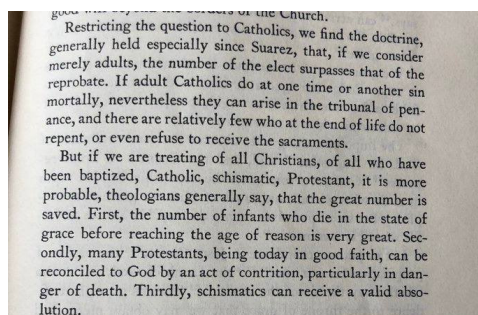


In the aftermath of Bishop Barron's interview with Tucker Carlson, many commentators have already scrutinized nearly every word of this interview, particularly criticizing Bishop Barron's stumbling over the [St. Michael's prayer](#) and not emphasizing the doctrine of hell. Personally, I don't think much can be read into this, and one can criticize the bishop for many things, but having a lacking prayer life is not one of them, and I don't blame the Bishop for not making the entire interview about the *massa damnata*. In many ways, I think Bishop Barron did a good job presenting many aspects of Catholicism to Tucker Carlson in this interview.

However, I do think some of the surrounding conversation about Bishop Barron's ideas on hell in general is especially relevant for the ongoing debate about how to view the Second Vatican Council, especially seen in a [now re-popularized clip](#) from an interview of Bishop Barron with Ben Shapiro.

In the more conservative and traditional circles seeking to harmonize all of the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent post-conciliar magisterium with earlier teachings, you'll often hear that the modern perspectives on salvation and ecumenism simply need a clearer presentation or a freshly designed frame.

This position typically begins with selectively citing Garrigou-Lagrange's more optimistic points on salvation, saying that many non-Catholic Christians are in fact saved, or referencing the First Vatican Council's affirmation of man's ability to know God by natural reason.



Excerpt from Garrigou's "Life Everlasting"

From here, proponents can argue that current ecumenical positions are merely reiterations of these earlier ideas from orthodox thinkers and councils, and that the Council is merely providing exceedingly rare exceptions of salvation found outside of the visible Church. The problem seems to be solved, the Church should be radical in her practical missionary zeal, and the Council is saved!

However, this position inevitably runs into a serious contradiction. To appear traditionally

minded, these advocates insist on emphasizing the necessity of Christ while simultaneously affirming salvation for those outside the visible Church. The people who set the tone for that are the bishops, as they are the visible representatives of the Magisterium. When we look at the clip of Bishop Barron when asked by Ben Shapiro, if he, a Jew, can be saved by merely following his own conscience, Bishop Barron affirmed that he indeed can and that this is the position of the Second Vatican Council.

I think we can see a problem similar to Aristotle's critique in the *Physics*, where he did not condemn his predecessors because their arguments were internally illogical, but because their conclusions contradicted evident reality (Saying that change didn't exist, or that there were not stable essences)

After reviewing Church history and the Gospel itself, no one can walk away from Our Lord's words or the missionary example of our Saints with the conclusion that we should say to non-Christians, particularly Jews, "Follow your conscience and you'll be fine, though Christ is the more perfect way." One might accept that those who die in invincible ignorance are excused from the guilt of heresy or schism, and that God can work outside of the normal bounds of the sacraments to bring them into his grace, but the response of Bishop Barron goes well beyond this and into absurdity. Even if one disagrees with Bishop Barron—believing him overly liberal or unfaithful to Vatican II—it's crucial to note his assertion: "This is what the Second Vatican Council says." And he is right, the post-conciliar Magisterium, clearly seen even in the pontificate of John Paul II, [whose general audience of May 31st, 1995](#), teaches that the Council was getting at exactly what Bishop Barron says. Bishop Barron is not one step out of line from the teaching of John Paul II.

This leaves us with an uncomfortable reality, where if stuck in this paradigm, there seems to be no way out: the so-called conservative "[hermeneutic of continuity](#)" exists only in the minds of its proponents, those who wish desperately to reconcile Vatican II with historical Catholic missionary zeal. Yet, practically, it doesn't exist at all, it's **only** in the mind of laymen and not in the mind of the Church. On the other hand, those who are visible representatives of the Council undermine the point of the hermeneutic of continuity itself and contradict the evident spirit of the pre-conciliar Catholic Church. We are left facing an absurd scenario in which Vatican II's defenders universally proclaim its doctrinal orthodoxy and can therefore feel superior to the traditionalists not in '[full communion](#)', yet these defenders cannot agree on what precisely the Council teaches or its practical application.

But perhaps there is a way out, similar to how Aristotle solved the problem of his day by saying we are in a too-limited paradigm, thereby introducing potency and act. Similarly, today, the only sensible way to solve this problem is to say that we are in a too-limited paradigm today, and there is no need to reconcile the Council with the past higher-weighted

teachings if it is evidently not so. This conversation must be had at some point, but in the meantime, the absurdity will continue, and the “privileged way” will continue to be one path among many.

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"He said to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" (John 21:17)

Habemus Papam Pope Leo XIV

By Murray Rundus

On May 8, 2025, around 6 p.m. in Rome, crowds began gradually leaving St. Peter's Square. We had been expecting white smoke from the Sistine Chapel, if there was to be any, around 30 minutes earlier, as that is when the Vatican Press Office had told us was the latest approximate time for smoke to appear. It would seem that the Conclave was to move into a fifth round of voting, the same number of votes that it took for Pope Francis to be elected. After filming a short video explaining the number of votes it took, and how this could mean we would see a long conclave that everyone was anticipating, there was a roar from the crowd. As I looked behind me, there was white smoke; a new Pope had been elected. Later in the day than anticipated, but after only four rounds of voting, the number it took to swiftly elect Pope Benedict XVI, the Cardinals managed to elect Pope Leo XIV. There was an initial optimism in the air as it was announced that Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost would be Pope. Some saw him as a complete unknown, but we had reported just that week that he was a likely top-three contender. The Pope came out onto the loggia in the red mozzetta, a tradition neglected by Pope Francis, and immediately he proclaimed the words of the Risen Christ, emphasizing the true and historical nature of the Resurrection but also imploring the crowd to take up a more fervent dedication

to Our Lady, all accompanied by his blessing and a plenary indulgence.

What worried me then, and what still worries me, is that the traditional media would fall into what I called at the time a "vibes-based analysis," one based more on emotion than reality itself. This reality showed that the result of this conclave proved that this kind of emotional or instinctual analysis was extremely faulty. Already moving into the Conclave, there were many who were saying they predicted Cardinal Parolin would become Pope because of a feeling of impending doom. Many respectable journalists in Rome only had that much to offer! Those who had been studying the Conclave, in this period of history where we know practically everything about each of the Cardinal electors, knew that Parolin had fallen into disfavor due to the scandals of the China deal, property agreements, and general discontent with his job as Secretary of State. We also knew that the College was relatively more conservative than was being reported, with many of the Cardinals selected by Pope Francis being selected for their identity as being located on the peripheries rather than for their ideological position.¹ This, combined with a number of reports from those who knew the Cardinals well, allowed Vatican analysts, including those of us at *Catholic Family News*, to accurately assess that Cardinal Prevost was indeed a likely contender.



*Leo PP. XIV
8 maggio 2025*

Reading Pope Leo XIV

I believe it to be very important, especially for lay people involved in the traditional movement, to be precise in their reading of the Pontificate of Pope Leo XIV, to avoid emotional responses, and most importantly, to insist on judging our times by clear principles applied with prudence.

The election of Pope Leo XIV has drawn a mix of cautious optimism and vehement criticism from the traditionalist world. While to me it seems the consensus is developing towards optimism, the confusion is somewhat understandable. How is one to react when the predecessor of Pope Leo destroyed many communities and actively

concerned himself with disrupting the spiritual lives of so many? There is also a more practical and principled problem as there is now a mix of perspectives under the umbrella term "traditionalist" of those who recognized Pope Francis as a valid Pope and those who did not in various forms, whether saying Benedict

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