On September 1st, 2025, Pope Leo XIV met with Father James Martin, the priest spearheading the movement to make the Catholic Church more open to the LGBT community and lifestyle. There has been a lot of talk due to this meeting, mainly about whether or not Pope Leo has been exposed as being a liberal, but also rehashed conversations about the late Pope Francis being "based." These conversations typically have the same trend: they see the interior forum as being more important in leaders than exterior actions.

We see this firstly in the group often called 'Popesplainers' who downplay the negative factors of the Francis pontificate. They still tell us that it doesn't matter if Francis undermined Church teaching through exploited language in documents like Fiduccia Supplicans (Allowing for blessing Same-Sex Couples) or Amoris Laetitia (Allowing for communion for the divorced and remarried) or by direct action in Traditionis Custodes, effectively exterminating the diocesan Traditional Latin Mass community. Many defenders of Pope Francis ignore these factors because we are to believe that Pope Francis was really a hardliner or a right-winger behind closed doors, see for example the controversy surrounding his use of 'froggiacine' behind closed doors or the endless and desperate attempt to try to say that Pope Francis didn't really know or understand what Fr. Martin was doing.


Fr. Martin blesses a gay couple

These two points, of course, have very little to do with each other. The fact of what Pope

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Francis *really* thought, has little bearing on what he actually *did* and the impact it has on the members of the Church who have felt the aftershocks from his actions. The fact that Pope Francis used certain slurs in private did not stop Fr. Martin from blessing same-sex couples, nor did his supposed naivety regarding one of the most notorious priests in the world do anything to change the fact that Fr. Martin was and is still in 'full-communion' while traditional Catholic priests get the boot.

I see a very similar pattern within the current discourse surrounding Pope Leo where there seems to be two sides of the same mistake. One error is to take this recent meeting with Fr. James Martin and ignore the scandalous implications of it. How, in the age of mass media, is it so difficult for the Holy See to be clear about the intentions of these audiences? Indeed, Pope Leo also met with Cardinal Burke recently, but this doesn't change the fact that because of this event, Fr. Martin has photographic evidence of Papal support that will remain undisputed until the Holy See says otherwise, which, in all likelihood, they will say nothing. It does not matter if we can fantasize that Pope Leo *thinks* poorly of Fr. Martin; the damage has been done. Going a step further, even if he were to *say* something against Fr. Martin, actions speak louder than words, and Fr. Martin remains uncensored and a priest in good standing with the Vatican. The duplicitous nature of these meetings, no matter the intention behind them, creates a High-Church, Low-Church divide within Catholicism reminiscent of Anglicanism.

> There is a worrisome trend within the Catholic Church to split similar to the "High-Church" and "Low-Church" of the Anglicans.
>
> It's divided not just on ritual, but divided on the faith. The Fr. Martin meeting juxtaposed with the +Burke meeting is a kind of emblem of this. pic.twitter.com/efxJdjjwor
>
> — Murray Rundus (@MurrayRundus) September 3, 2025

The opposite tendency, but the same error, puts too much weight on these events. Just as it would be absurd if one were to think that Pope Leo XIV agrees with Cardinal Burke on absolutely everything just from the fact that he met him, so too would it be absurd to believe that this is anything other than what we should have been expecting from a Pope in a postconciliar age. Humanly speaking, the current state of the office and the politics surrounding it calls for a man to be desperate to maintain some sort of continuity with his immediate predecessors, appeal to the modern world, and maintain his convictions at the same time; a vague and ambiguous meeting with Fr. Martin seems to fit well into this plan.

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But this doesn't mean that it is impossible that positive things won't come from this papacy, just as positive things even came from the last pontificate, such as the faculties given to the SSPX. The real judgment moment for Pope Leo will come when we see what his major *actions* are, because, following the Thomistic principle *agere sequitur esse* (action follows being), we can only truly know what something *is* when we see its effects, its operations, its behavior. Until then, the reaction of the Catholic should remain the same; we must return to principle. There is a crisis in the Church; we must avail ourselves of the means to remain in the state of grace, support good priests, foster healthy communities, and continue to partake in Catholic Action to restore the Kingship of Christ in whatever way we can.

