

Drawing Aside the Purple Curtain

The Papal System Today: an Analysis of the News

The Roman Pope Backtracks on Married Priests and on Priestesses... Or Does He?

Shaun Willcock

In my 2019 article, *The Vatican's Amazon Synod: Blazing a Jungle Trail to World Government*,¹ I showed how the Vatican, through this synod, was preparing Roman Catholics for a future possible relaxation of the Roman Catholic position on priestly celibacy, and on the eventual possible acceptance of deaconesses and then priestesses. Yet in his post-synodal document, entitled *Querida Amazonia*, Francis appeared to backtrack from these possibilities and to re-assert the traditional Romish doctrine.

But did he really?

Before answering this, I will quote two relevant sections from my previous article:

Preparing Roman Catholics for a Future Relaxation of Priestly Celibacy

“Another purpose behind the Amazon Synod was to start the process of preparing Roman Catholics for a future relaxation of the doctrine of priestly celibacy. This will come as a surprise to many. After all, what possible connection could there be between Indian tribes in the Amazon and priestly celibacy?

“Ah, but there is. In the vast Amazon region, there are not enough priests for all the Roman Catholics among the many tribes.... when the Synod was under way, the proposals started flowing – from those within the hierarchy of the ‘Church’ of Rome, be it noted! – to address the scarcity of priests in the Amazon region, including proposals to revise the formation programme for candidates to the priesthood, to start new ministries for ‘lay men and lay women’, to ordain married men of ‘proven virtue’, and to ordain women deacons...²

“When it became known that this was going to be proposed at the Synod it caused a worldwide stir among Roman Catholics, as some believed it meant the first step towards eventually permitting married priests. Francis denied it, but his denials mean nothing. What, then, was going on? It is really quite simple, but also very *Jesuitical* in its craftiness.

“The fact is, it is not only the Amazon which faces this problem. In many parts of the world there are not enough priests, to a large extent because of the obstacle of celibacy. Men do not want to enter the priesthood and remain celibate. Priestly ordinations have been declining drastically in recent times. Something had to be done.

“The answer: to start preparing the Roman Catholic faithful for an eventual relaxation of the requirement for priestly celibacy. But because this would not be popular among traditionalist Roman Catholics, it would have to be introduced *gradually*. And the best way to do it would be to point to some remote part of the world where there are few priests, and begin to initiate changes *there*, where such changes would not affect Roman Catholics elsewhere, but which could later be adopted *everywhere* as the concept gradually became more acceptable. In other words, the Amazon region would become a gigantic field test. Rome could point to the region and say, ‘There are just too few priests there. We have to do something! Let’s grant certain married men some priestly powers.’ Then, as this becomes accepted, it will be extended to other parts of the world...

“Rome plans to maintain its doctrine of priestly celibacy, but is creating various exceptions to the

rule. And all so as to maintain its grip on the people! In a day and age when celibacy is rejected more than ever before, this appears to the Vatican to be the solution.

“Lest any think that the above is merely this author’s interpretation of the Synod, read carefully the following, written by the Romish cardinal, Walter Brandmüller, who saw right through the real Jesuitical intent of the Synod. In his critique he made no bones about it: ‘It is impossible to conceal that the “synod” intends, above all, to help implement two most cherished projects that heretofore have never been implemented: namely, the abolition of priestly celibacy and the introduction of a female priesthood – beginning with female deacons.’³ Well, perhaps not the complete abolition of celibacy – but certainly the introduction of a married priesthood alongside a celibate priesthood.

“After the Synod Peter Turkson, a cardinal from Ghana, said: ‘This issue will probably be made the subject matter of a more detailed study with a view to *the Church taking a consistent position, not only in view of the Amazon, but of the universal Church*’ (italics added).⁴ It becomes very clear that the Amazon Synod was just the beginning, a clever way to introduce the subject to the worldwide Roman Catholic population, to get them used to the idea gradually, by harping on, firstly, about the ‘pastoral needs’ in the vast Amazon region with too few priests, and then secondly, by pushing the point that really what the Amazon needs is what the universal ‘Church’ needs...

“Pedro Barreto, Jesuit cardinal and president delegate of the Synod, said: ‘At no time was celibacy called into question. Let this be very clear: celibacy is a gift of God for the Church and it’s going to be kept. What has been talked about is the possibility that married persons be able to receive Priestly Ordination – they are two different things’...

“And so we see how it will progress: first the Amazon; then places like the Congo; and finally the hierarchy will begin to say, ‘But you know, the same situation really exists even in Europe, and North America! After all, we are short of priests everywhere; it is time to ordain married men under certain conditions, so that we can have enough priests to serve our communities throughout the world’...

“[The Jesuits] have... *always* been prepared... to bend or discard Romish doctrine and practice if it will further their aims among a heathen people.... If priestly celibacy stands in the way of Amazonian Indians or modern westerners receiving the Romish ‘gospel’, then the Jesuits will find a way around it.... they have... accepted that it is time to modify the Romish doctrine of priestly celibacy because for too long it has stood in the way of many people accepting Romanism – especially in the wake of the worldwide priestly sex scandal. They want to gradually get their people used to the idea that celibacy should eventually be optional – and they have chosen the vast Amazon region as the place to begin this change, precisely because they can point to the Indians there and say, ‘See? They need priests, but celibacy stands in the way! We must change the rules on celibacy.’ And eventually the Amazon experiment will be rolled out worldwide.

Roman Catholic Priestesses in the Future?

“In the same way as the Synod was used to test the waters with regards to married men performing certain priestly functions, it was also used to test the waters regarding *women* doing the same. In the modern world this issue has become extremely important to liberal priests and bishops. They know the Papal institution is shedding members, because the equality of the sexes is now a reality throughout the western world, and the prohibition on women priests appears to be a chauvinistic anachronism from a bygone age. The hierarchy has to find a way around this.

“The working document for the Synod called for the bishops to ‘identify the type of official ministry that can be conferred on women, taking into account the central role that they currently play in the Amazonian Church.’⁵ Note two things from this quotation. First, the bishops were to discuss some kind of *official ministry* for women. This was revolutionary. Second, over and over it was repeated that women in the Amazon region *already* play a central role in the life of the Roman Catholic ‘Church’. By repeating this constantly, it was drummed into Roman Catholic heads that since it was already a *fait accompli*, it should now simply be recognised officially.

“The Jesuitical cunning behind this approach is evident. For the fact is that Roman Catholic women in *many* parts of the world play the central role in ‘Church’ life. Therefore, if they can be granted more powers in the Amazon region to begin with, this will inevitably lead to them being granted more powers in other parts of the world, and eventually throughout the Papal institution. Possibly even priestesses!

“This is the Jesuit plan to fundamentally alter the Papal institution so that it conforms even more to the world, so as to be acceptable to it.

“After the Synod the cardinal and president delegate, Pedro Barreto, said regarding women’s ministry: ‘The topic was touched upon, but Pope Francis himself felt that perhaps it wasn’t touched upon in great depth.’⁶ Perhaps so, but the fact that it was raised at all was a good beginning as far as the hierarchy was concerned. The subject was introduced, and now the global Roman Catholic population knows it is something that is going to be considered in the future. The softening-up process has begun.

“And note the following words of his, which are extremely significant: ‘there are women religious, in very remote areas, which a priest cannot reach, and they baptize, they are present in religious marriages, they take part in the liturgy, in Communion, in practice they are already Deaconesses, and people perceive it very well. Now, in regard to the Sunday “para-liturgy,” they do the homily and sometimes, no matter how much they explain to the people that it’s not a Eucharistic Celebration, the simple people say, “We are happy, Monsignor, because these little mothers celebrate a beautiful Mass,” no matter how much one explains to them.... So, in practice, it’s already happening.’

“Think of what this man was saying. It truly shows that the Papacy of Francis I is a *liberal* Papacy, willing to cast aside even the most cherished Roman Catholic doctrines, just so long as this will enable the Papacy to maintain and indeed expand its influence in the world.”

Francis’ Post-Synodal Document Appears to Reject Married Priests, or Priestesses, in the Future

In Francis’ post-Synodal “Exhortation”, *Querida Amazonia*, he appeared to squash any idea of married priests, or priestesses. To many this was an odd and unexpected reaction to the Amazon Synod’s proposals, especially as Francis had supported the Synod so fully. What was going on?

His document was a very lengthy one, in which he addressed various aspects of the Synod’s official document. Most of what he said was about various other matters which arose out of the Synod. But eventually he dealt with the matter at hand. Let us examine what he wrote:⁷

“Efforts need to be made to configure ministry in such a way that it is at the service of a more frequent celebration of the Eucharist even in the remotest and most isolated communities... [I]t is important to determine what is most specific to a priest, what cannot be delegated. The answer lies in the sacrament of Holy Orders, which configures him to Christ the priest. The first conclusion, then, is that the exclusive character received in Holy Orders qualifies the priest alone to preside at the Eucharist. That is his particular, principal and non-delegable function.... The priest is a sign of that head and wellspring of grace above all when he celebrates the Eucharist, the source and summit of the entire Christian life. That is his great power, a power that can only be received in the sacrament of Holy Orders. For this reason, only the priest can say, ‘This is *my* body’. There are other words, too, that he alone can speak: ‘I absolve you from your sins’.... These two sacraments lie at the heart of the priest’s exclusive identity.”

Ignoring at this time the utterly unbiblical nature of everything in the above paragraph, from priests to the mass to the priest supposedly forgiving sins, let us focus solely on what the Roman pope was saying about the Romish priesthood. He was asserting nothing but official Romish doctrine. The priest is, by his ordination, given power (according to Rome) which is not given to any other human being. He has the power to supposedly change bread into the body of Christ (the doctrine of transubstantiation), and the power to supposedly forgive sins. No one else has such power, according

to Rome – and Francis was merely echoing received Romish doctrine.

But what must not be lost sight of is the first sentence in the paragraph above! “*Efforts need to be made to configure ministry in such a way that it is at the service of a more frequent celebration of the Eucharist even in the remotest and most isolated communities*”. This was further emphasised in Francis’ next paragraph: “In the specific circumstances of the Amazon region... a way must be found to ensure this priestly ministry. The laity... need the celebration of the Eucharist because it ‘makes the Church’... every effort should be made to ensure that the Amazonian peoples do not lack this food [the mass] of new life and the sacrament of forgiveness.” Note: not once did he say anything either for or against married priests!

Now there are only two ways in which this “need” for priests can be met. Either far more priests need to be sent into remote places – something which Francis knows will be extremely difficult, in fact impossible, to accomplish, so long as priestly numbers are so low, for priests are spread very thinly worldwide. *Or* – the Romish laws and methods for making priests must be relaxed or changed, for example by dropping the requirement for celibacy or a male-only priesthood!

Which one was Francis advocating?

He certainly *appeared* to be advocating the first. For he went on to say: “This urgent need leads me to urge all bishops, especially those in Latin America, not only to promote prayer for priestly vocations, but also to be more generous in encouraging those who display a missionary vocation to opt for the Amazon region.” And this is what upset so many liberal priests, who want a relaxation of the celibacy laws and for men to be ordained as priests even though they do not meet the strict requirements demanded of priests before now.

But of course Francis would say this, wouldn’t he? After all, this is official Papist doctrine, and he is the pope! A pope would be expected to say such things. And being a Jesuit, he may say one thing – the official line – while possibly plotting quite another. For in the entire lengthy document, although Francis did not affirm the proposal for married priests, he did not close the door to it either!

“Priests are necessary,” he wrote, “but this does not mean that permanent deacons (of whom there should be many more in the Amazon region), religious women and lay persons cannot regularly assume important responsibilities for the growth of communities, and perform those functions ever more effectively with the aid of a suitable accompaniment.”

With these words, Francis held out the likelihood of a time to come when deacons, nuns, and even ordinary Papists would carry out an increasing number of functions at present reserved for priests. But again, he did not actually close the door to married priests at some time in the future.

And what about priestesses?

Francis stated: “This summons us to broaden our vision, lest we restrict our understanding of the Church to her functional structures. Such a reductionism would lead us to believe that women would be granted a greater status and participation in the Church only if they were admitted to Holy Orders. But that approach would in fact narrow our vision, it would lead us to clericalize women, diminish the great value of what they have already accomplished, and subtly make their indispensable contribution less effective.”

Here Francis was being very cunning. Within the Romish system many liberal voices have been raised, calling for priestesses. But Francis proceeds with Jesuitical caution. Rome has firmly maintained, despite the cacophony of voices calling for a change, that only men may be priests. It has maintained this even as, one after another, “Protestant” denominations caved in to the liberal agenda and began to ordain “pastoresses”. For Rome to now change course on this issue, the impression would be given that it was merely following the Protestants, playing catch-up with their supposedly “enlightened”, “progressive” approach. This would not look good, considering that Rome claims to be the only true Church, the “mother Church”, the one possessing the fulness of divine revelation. It would not look good to suddenly change course and say, in effect, “We were wrong, we’ve seen the error of our ways, we will now ordain priestesses.”

By choosing his words very carefully at this point, Francis sought to make Roman Catholic women feel that they are valuable, and that their contributions are great without the need to be ordained as priests. He was saying in effect, “You women have served our Church so well, for so long, without being ordained, bringing your unique gifts to the Church, gifts which no man could bring. To ordain you would be like saying your ministry within the Church cannot be complete unless you are ordained as priestesses as well – and we don’t want you to feel that way.”

This was cunning enough. For doubtless he is hoping that Roman Catholic women will say, “Our pope is right. We don’t need ordination to serve God. We’re doing a great job just as we are!” If they take this approach, all well and good – Rome will not be under pressure to ordain women.

On the other hand, however – Francis’ words do not actually close the door, categorically and forever, to eventual priestesses within the Roman Catholic system! Read his words again: he could have been far stronger, far firmer, categorically stating that never, never, never would Rome ordain women to its priesthood. But did he? No. His language was very mild. Therefore if Roman Catholic women, despite what he has written, continue to clamour for female ordination, and the calls become louder and more insistent, Rome will be able to turn around and say, “Well, Francis did not actually *forbid* it. He merely raised concerns. He didn’t want women to feel that they had to be ordained to be useful to the Church. But if they would still like to be ordained notwithstanding this concern, he didn’t forbid it.”

Do you see the Jesuitical cunning?

And in fact his next words in the document only serve to confirm this:

“Jesus Christ appears as the Spouse of the community that celebrates the Eucharist through the figure of a man who presides as a sign of the one Priest.... The Lord chose to reveal his power and his love through two human faces: the face of his divine Son made man and the face of a creature, a woman, Mary. Women make their contribution to the Church in a way that is properly theirs, by making present the tender strength of Mary, the Mother.... without women, the Church breaks down.... This shows the kind of power that is typically theirs.”

Without going into the sheer unbiblical nature of the Roman pope’s heresy at this point regarding Mary, it is clear that Francis was buttering Roman Catholic women up. He was saying to them, “Look at how powerful you already are in our Church! You don’t need the priesthood as well.” But it still was not an outright prohibition. Doubtless he feels the time is not right, now, for priestesses. But a little further down the line? If that day comes, his words do not forbid it outright.

Reaction to His Document “Disappoints” Francis

Francis told a group of bishops that he was disappointed with the reaction to his post-synodal document. As one bishop put it, “You could see his consternation when he said that for some people it was all about celibacy and not about the Amazon.”⁸ And this was surely one of his reasons for downplaying the issue: the Amazon Synod was about many other issues (as my previous article on the Synod shows), and he wanted these to be emphasised, not the issue of ordination. The ordination issue was deliberately raised at the Synod to test the waters – but that was all. It was never the Vatican’s intention to change Roman Catholic teaching about ordination at that time.

Significantly, Francis’ post-synodal document on the Amazon has been declared to be part of Rome’s “magisterium” – i.e. “officially a kind of Church teaching” – whereas the Amazon Synod document itself is not.⁹ This distinction is very important. “The final document [of the Synod], consisting of proposals made and voted by the Synod Fathers, has the weight of a synodal final document,” a cardinal explained, whereas the pope’s post-synodal document, “reflecting on the whole process and its final document, has the authority of ordinary magisterium of the Successor of Peter.”

When Roman Catholics speak of “the Word of God”, they do not only mean the Bible. They mean the Bibles, *plus* “Church Tradition”, *plus* the “Magisterium”. Thus Roman Catholics are to believe that Francis’ document is now part of what Rome calls “the Word of God”! This is blasphemous, and on its own would be sufficient to reveal that Roman Catholicism is not in any way a Christian church.

But the point right now is this: the suggestions made in the Synod's final document remain in discussion only, "as proposals made by the Synod". This means that Roman Catholics are not required to believe, or even agree with, the proposals, or regard them as teachings of the pope. His post-synodal document, however, they *do* have to believe and agree with!

In other words, it is as I said in my previous article on the Amazon: it was an ideal and opportune time to drop into the mix some important proposals about married priests and about priestesses, to see what the reaction was like from the Roman Catholic faithful. It was a testing of the wind, although not the main purpose of the Amazon Synod. Well, the wind has been tested, and the pope of Rome has spoken. He has made it clear that for now, there will be no married priests, and no priestesses, for the Amazon region; but he has not actually shut the door forever. It is cracked open just enough that, if the need should ever become really urgent, Rome could change its position on both these things. It hopes it will never have to, but it leaves the door open in case the time ever comes when the clamour for change grows too loud, and the choice becomes one of losing many members or changing centuries-old practice. The Jesuits are past masters at doing the latter.

Leaving aside the obvious heretical Romish teaching that abounds in this next quotation, pertaining to the false "Church" of Rome, the following by the editor of *The Southern Cross*, the Roman Catholic weekly of southern Africa, sums it up well: "[Francis] decided to leave all options open by not addressing the issue of *virii probati* [the model of the ordination of married men in particular circumstances] at all. Some have called that a cop-out, others have celebrated the pope's (non)-decision as a victory for the status quo. *It is neither of those things.* On the contrary: the pope issued a clear challenge to the Church's culture of clericalism in which all leadership and all power is tied to priests. By not approving the ordination of *virii probati* and women deacons... *the pope is saying that generally power in the Church needn't and shouldn't be tied to clerical position....* In calling for new models of seeing, thinking and acting in the Church, Pope Francis is inviting the Church to follow the Holy Spirit *into uncharted waters.*"¹⁰

The Biblical Truth

Of course, the New Testament is crystal clear that only *men* are to be pastors (1 Tim. 2:11-14; 1 Tim. 3:1,2,5; Tit. 1:5,6). And the New Testament does not teach that there is a special priestly class! There are pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11; Phil. 1:1), but these men are not priests in any special sense. *All* believers are priests (Rev. 1:6). But these biblical truths are not stated here so as to give any impression that Romanism is somehow a Christian church with some errors, and that it could therefore reform and implement biblical changes! It is a decidedly unchristian religion, in exactly the same boat as Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Buddhism. These biblical truths are stated simply to contrast Bible Christianity with false "christianity".

Conclusion

As I wrote at the conclusion of my article on the Amazon Synod:

If the Papacy continues along its present trajectory in the years to come – in other words, if the seismic shift occurring under the Francis pontificate continues without being stopped by some kind of conservative, traditionalist backlash – the Roman Catholic institution of the near future will be a very different one, in all kinds of ways, from what it was in the past. Rome boastfully claims it never changes. This is a lie. It has changed in the past, and it is changing again now. Only time will tell what it will look like a few years down the line. But of this much we may be certain: in a rapidly-changing world, it must change with the times in order to maintain its hold on its people. It is not opposed to the world, but very much a part of it. And the Jesuits who run it are past masters at "becoming all things to all men", *not* in the true biblical sense, but in the sense of pleasing the worldly with devilish lies to keep them chained to the feet of the Roman pope.

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For further reading:

The Vatican's Amazon Synod: Blazing a Jungle Trail to World Government, by Shaun Willcock. Bible Based Ministries, November 2019. Available here:

<http://www.biblebasedministries.co.uk/2019/11/28/the-vaticans-amazon-synod/>

Shaun Willcock is a minister, author and researcher. He runs Bible Based Ministries. For other articles (which may be downloaded and printed), as well as details about his books, audio messages, pamphlets, etc., please visit the Bible Based Ministries website; or write to the address below. If you would like to be on Bible Based Ministries' email list, to receive all future articles, please send your details.

Bible Based Ministries

info@biblebasedministries.co.uk

www.biblebasedministries.co.uk

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WORLDWIDE CONTACT FOR BIBLE BASED MINISTRIES:

Contending for the Faith Ministries

695 Kentons Run Ave

Henderson, NV 89052

United States of America

BBMUSAorders@gmail.com

ENDNOTES:

1. *The Vatican's Amazon Synod: Blazing a Jungle Trail to World Government*, by Shaun Willcock. Bible Based Ministries, November 2019. Available on our website: www.biblebasedministries.co.uk.
2. *The Southern Cross*, October 16 to 22, 2019. Article: "Synod: Increase Role of Women, Laity in Ministry."
3. *The Moynihan Letters*, September 11, 2019. Article: "The Matter of Schism."
MoynihanReport@gmail.com.
4. *The Southern Cross*, October 30 to November 5, 2019. Article: "Cardinal: Ordination of Married for Further Study."
5. *The Southern Cross*, September 25 to October 1, 2019.
6. *Zenit.org*, October 30, 2019.
7. *Zenit.org*, February 12, 2020. Article: "No Openings for Married Priests Nor Women Deacons in Pope's Post-Synodal Exhortation on the Amazon 'Querida Amazonia'".
8. *The Southern Cross*, February 26 to March 3, 2020. Article: "Why Pope Francis is Disappointed by Reaction to Amazon Document."
9. *The Southern Cross*, February 26 to March 3, 2020. Article: "Exhortation is Part of Church's Magisterium."
10. *The Southern Cross*, February 26 to March 3, 2020. Editorial: "Silence of Pope's Cry."