

Of Seeds and Flowers

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FIDUCIA SUPPLICANS

- a simple understanding of the

Pope's teaching on gay marriage

Fiducia Supplicans (Fi-dew-shia sup-lee- kons), translated as "Asking for Trust", is the name of a teaching papal document, prepared by the Office for the Doctrine of the Faith entitled "On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings". This document, approved and promulgated by Pope Francis, is causing so much publicity, concern, confusion, and possibly scandal that entire Bishop's conferences (e.g. Hungary, Africa) and many other church leaders, pastors and laypeople are giving it great pushback. I have carefully read and reread the Declaration and here are some significant points about what Fiducia Supplicans DOES AND DOES NOT DO: All words in italics are directly from the document Fiducia Supplicans.

1. Starting on a positive note Fiducia Supplicans clearly re-affirms what a Christian Marriage is. The exact words are: *"Rites and prayers that could create confusion between what constitutes marriage- which IS THE EXCLUSIVE, STABLE AND INDISSOLUBLE UNION BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN, NATURALLY OPEN TO THE GENERATION OF CHILDREN - AND WHAT CONTRADICTS IT, ("IT" is the reaffirmed definition of a Christian Marriage - my words for clarity) ARE INADMISSABLE. The church has the right and the duty to avoid any rite that might contradict this conviction or lead to confusion. The church does not have the power to impart blessings on UNIONS OF PERSONS OF THE SAME SEX."* To be perfectly clear, the document reaffirms what Jesus, the Church and its Magisterium have always believed and taught about what make a genuine, Christian and Catholic marriage. This reaffirmed definition of a Christian marriage is good for everyone in the Catholic Church and the world who are saying that marriage IS, or CAN be something else. It is good to know that the fundamental truth about what constitutes a marriage has **NOT** been changed by Fiducia Supplicans itself or the teaching authority of the Church.
2. Fiducia Supplicans includes a beautiful - better than I have ever seen - teaching on the importance and value of blessings using scripture, tradition, and solid pastoral experience. This, left alone, Fiducia Supplicans would be a very timely and useful document. CLEARLY HOWEVER, THIS WAS NOT ITS DIRECT OR ONLY INTENDED PURPOSE and so we have all of the confusion, possible scandal and misleading results among laypeople, bishops, pastors and full bishop's conferences.
3. Some will say that Fiducia Supplicans is a **"foot in the door"** for the acceptance of gay-marriage within the Church and in our culture and this Papal document is also a big step in that direction. Truthfully, I think the people in the Church and society who see Fiducia Supplicans as a possible, and maybe, a great, step in the direction of the Catholic Church's possible acceptance (**not going to happen!**) of Gay marriage ARE CORRECT. The declaration CERTAINLY can be seen and interpreted this way. The present gender/sex climate in the church and world are serious reasons why Fiducia Supplicans is a pastoral mistake at this time and should never have been promulgated. The document is causing confusion, fear, and is misleading millions of faithful churchgoers and the pro-gay marriage world at large. This is not the prudent, pastoral time to publish a document like Fiducia Supplicans. It is not just the text, but the **CONTEXT** in which it has been published.

Father James Martin and others in the pro-gay movement within the Church and society will not observe the cautions or restrictions or limits of *Fiducia Supplicans*. They will, **and already have**, used the document as permission to move everybody to the next level, whatever that may be, by willingly avoiding all of the cautions demanded by the document.

Pope Francis, in *Fiducia Supplicans*, is either being a great prophet and teacher or he has made a bad error in judgement. In either case the infallible teaching authority (magisterium) of the Church is not being breached here by Pope Francis. As in Matthew 11:19, "Time will tell where wisdom lies."

4. The declaration, *Fiducia Supplicans* is clearly intended, and VERY, VERY CAREFULLY WORDED, (hairs were split and split again) for blessing people "*in irregular situations and for couples of the same sex*." As mentioned above, I read the declaration over and over, and it's too finely tuned for general consumption. Truly, without any deliberate pride, I share that I was first in my class in Fundamental Moral Theology and in Canon Law, (I am not just a casual Google theologian) so, I am a "hairsplitter" by nature, as were the very careful writers of *Fiducia Supplicans*. I understand their hairsplitting language and method and they were very good at it. Church lawyers and Moral and Dogmatic Theologians can split hairs and then split them again and sometimes again. This is what they do. Their finely tuned minds and service to us can understand the "ins and outs" of *Fiducia Supplicans* but it is not easy, healthy, or recommended for the non-hairsplitting ordinary church going person, or people in the secular press, or the LGBTQ lobby, or the general public.
5. **SIMPLY PUT**, *Fiducia Supplicans* is Pope Francis saying that we are ALL God's children, loved by Him and ALL in need of blessings, even people "*in irregular situations and couples of the same sex*". If the persons asking for a blessing are a gay couple "married" or not, the priest can give a blessing if "*this request shows their sincere openness to transcendence (GOD ABOVE) the confidence of their hearts that they do not trust their own strength alone, their need for God, and their desire to break out of the narrow confines of this world, enclosed in its limitations*" then the blessing can be given. TRULY, how many people will come with these very specific spiritual dispositions to ask for a blessing? NOT MANY! INDEED, VERY FEW.
6. In the same paragraph (# 21) the Pope urges us to contemplate the fact that "*when one asks for a blessing, one is expressing a petition for God's assistance, a plea to live better, and confidence in a Father who can help us live better*." Again, how many gay people will come with this spiritual understanding of what they are requesting or what is about to happen? NOT MANY, IF ANY!

If a gay Cardinal, gay Bishop, gay priest, gay nun, or gay layperson came to me, leading a chaste, very holy and well-prayed life, **LIKE ALL OF OF US ARE REQUIRED TO DO**, having a special gay friend in their lives, and fulfilling ALL of the above requirements of *Fiducia Supplicans*, I would be honored to offer them a blessing.

7. The blessing, must not allow for "*any type of liturgical rite or blessing similar to a liturgical rite that can create confusion.*" Paragraph 39 states: "*the blessing should never be imparted in concurrence with ceremonies of a civil union, and not even in connection with them. Nor "can it be performed with any clothing, gestures, or words that are proper to a wedding. The same applies when the blessing is requested by a same-sex couple."*

Many people, priests, bishops, whole country conferences are saying a blessing given under these conditions is still APPROVING AND CONDONING the person(s) lifestyle which is presently not in a right relationship with God or Church. - AND THUS, ALL THE UPSET AND PUSHBACK.

At the very least, I do believe *Fiducia Supplicans* will be the cause of tension among Catholic priests. Some priests will be seen as not open, tolerant, welcoming, judgmental, hard, harsh, "with it" or, in the present climate, is it unreasonable to be fearful of being charged with a hate crime? One of the tasks of being Pope is to be a sign and cause of UNITY not the cause of tension and division among the flock. For the priests who, in conscience, cannot give a blessing, a gentle pastoral/loving

response would be, **"Sorry, but I cannot offer you a blessing, but I will pray for you and with you."** People following God need to be blessed. People not following God need to be prayed for.

8. One of the sad things about all of this is that the Catholic Church, in the interest of hearing all voices on crucial issues, has recently introduced a SYNODAL PROCESS as a democratic way of trying to listen all ideas and opinions from the whole church, before making certain declarations or changes. Pope Francis didn't get what he wanted from the recent Synod (a synod that he filled with voices that favored his thinking) so he published Fiducia Supplicans to get what he wanted – a real blow to the Synodal Process in the Catholic Church and an insult to the opposition he faced from the bishops of Africa and elsewhere. The Pope's actions put the whole Synodal Process, which is a wonderful step in the right direction and a way to hear from all parts of the church, in jeopardy. Not a good thing!
9. Much of the controversy and misunderstanding, in the Church, newspapers, the LGBTQ and WOKE communities about Fiducia Supplicans is reflected in the conflict between two philosophical ideas. The first being **Classical Philosophy**, beautifully described by Aristotle, and this is the one that informs the American Constitution that human beings are fallen creatures, but still can participate in the divine life. We are born good; however, human passions are strong and the sinful human condition can lead us astray. We are born with an innate knowledge of good and evil. We feel the strong demands of our needs, of pain and pleasure but something outside these pressures *in the human soul* - some call it CONSCIENCE OR NATURAL LAW - makes us ask if our actions are RIGHT OR WRONG, GOOD OR BAD, AGREE WITH THE LAW OR NOT etc.
10. The NEW PHILOSOPHICAL IDEA is a 50-cent word now called "Postmodernism" or what we commonly hear as "Woke" or "My truth". This new philosophy deeply espoused by our modern culture, denies the existence of objective truth, and teaches that everything is changeable. If something doesn't seem good and yet you want to do it, you should do it and call it good. There is no Natural Law, conscience, limits, or boundaries. Everyone is a law unto themselves. If it **FEELS** GOOD do it! If it doesn't feel good don't do it and deny that it exists.
11. The central question in the older philosophical tradition is, **"What is the good, the right thing to do?"** The central question in "new philosophy" is, **"How do you get it done?"** And if you ask, "Get what done?" the answer is, "WHATEVER YOU WANT, WHATEVER MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD." - and we wonder why we are in the mess we are in. Everyone becomes his or her own moral and legal code. VERY DANGEROUS!!!! "OOPS, MY BAD" can turn a serious crime into an act of virtue. We live in confusing, dangerous, serious times!! The consequences, if followed, are catastrophic.
12. In a letter to George Orwell (The Novel, '1984'), Aldous Huxley (Novel, "Brave New World") predicted that 'the world's rulers will discover that conditioning, social fear and narco-hypnosis are more efficient, as instruments of government, than clubs and prisons, and that the lust for power can be just as completely satisfied by suggesting and leading people into LOVING THEIR SERVITUDE as by flogging and kicking them into obedience.' Covid and the Mass Formation Psychosis certainly helped. C. S. Lewis notes that as "there is no objective truth" becomes dominant it will lead to "The Abolition of Man", the name of Lewis' book. And so, we pray for the crisis in the Church and the world that grows with intensity. The ideas and some of the wording in Paragraphs 6,7,8 is from IMPRIMIS, Hillsdale College Nov.'23. Hillsdale, MI.

"Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing and perfect." Romans 12: 2.

After today's prayer time I was so impressed, overjoyed and delighted by the amount of holiness, goodness, love, and good teaching that exists in ALL OF THE Christian churches throughout the world. The Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection, Baptism, Jesus as Lord and Savior, etc.. BEAUTIFUL! Then, I took my walk and began to wonder how in all of these same churches, since their foundation, believe that Scripture ALONE (not also Tradition which is all of divine revelation, including scripture, the living teachings of Christ, passed on from one generation to the next) is the SOLE RULE of faith that their Communion believes and follows, and how they gently but firmly seem

to have ignored or freshly reinterpreted the Scriptures when dealing with all of the LGBTQ agenda that is coming from all directions. The fact is, there were no Gospels (Bible) until they were written between 72 A.D. and 100 A.D. And it seems that many of these churches are comfortably using TRADITION (certainly not using the term TRADITION but using the process) as a clever way of getting around the Bible. My "hairsplitting head" is looking for wisdom. I am perplexed, confused, and unhappy at this, I HOPE, only apparent and temporary contradiction. This is an ESSENTIAL PROBLEM. Seems to me that the inerrant Word of God is at stake here? Are churches changing their beliefs, giving up the inerrant Word of God to fit into the pressures of the world?? Has the church ever gone along to get along? The church and the world are colliding. "Time will tell where wisdom lies!" Mt. 11:19.

"How much I must criticize you, my church and yet how much I love you! You have made me suffer more than anyone and yet I owe more to you than to anyone. I should like to see you destroyed and yet I need your presence. You have given me much scandal and yet you alone have made me understand holiness. Never in this world have I seen anything more compromised, more false, yet never have I touched anything more pure, more generous and more beautiful."
Carlo Cretto It is never a matter of "Love it or leave it." Anything important is worth fighting for.

"I gave them your word, and the world has hated them for it; they do not belong to the world. I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but to guard them from the evil one. They are not of the world, any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them by means of TRUTH- Your WORD IS TRUTH. I consecrate myself for their sakes now, that they may be consecrated in TRUTH." John Chapter 18.

"It is difficult to suffer FOR the Church; impossible to suffer FROM the Church."
- "Diary of a Country Priest" Georges Bernanos



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