

Most Holy Father,

It is with a certain trepidation that I address myself to Your Holiness, during these days of the Easter season. I do so on behalf of the Most Eminent Cardinals: Walter Brandmüller, Raymond L. Burke, Joachim Meisner, and myself.

We wish to begin by renewing our absolute dedication and our unconditional love for the Chair of Peter and for Your august person, in whom we recognize the Successor of Peter and the Vicar of Jesus: the “sweet Christ on earth,” as Saint Catherine of Siena was fond of saying. We do not share in the slightest the position of those who consider the See of Peter vacant, nor of those who want to attribute to others the indivisible responsibility of the Petrine *munus*. We are moved solely by the awareness of the grave responsibility arising from the *munus* of cardinals: to be advisers of the Successor of Peter in his sovereign ministry. And from the Sacrament of the Episcopate, which “has placed us as bishops to pasture the Church, which He has acquired with his blood” (Acts 20:28).

On September 19, 2016 we delivered to Your Holiness and to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith five *dubia*, asking You to resolve uncertainties and to bring clarity on some points of the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*.

Not having received any response from Your Holiness, we have reached the decision to ask You, respectfully and humbly, for an Audience, together if Your Holiness would like. We attach, as is the practice, an Audience Sheet in which we present the two points we wish to discuss with you.

Most Holy Father,

A year has now gone by since the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*. During this time, interpretations of some objectively ambiguous passages of the post-synodal Exhortation have publicly been given that are not divergent from but contrary to the permanent Magisterium of the Church. Despite the fact that the Prefect of the Doctrine of the Faith has repeatedly declared that the doctrine of the Church has not changed, numerous statements have appeared from individual Bishops, Cardinals, and even Episcopal Conferences, approving what the Magisterium of the Church has never approved. Not only access to the Holy Eucharist for those who objectively and publicly live in a situation of grave sin, and intend to remain in it, but also a conception of moral conscience contrary to the Tradition of the Church. And so it is happening — how painful it is to see this! — that what is sin in Poland is good in Germany, that what is prohibited in the archdiocese of Philadelphia is permitted in Malta. And so on. One is reminded of the bitter observation of B. Pascal: “Justice on this side of the Pyrenees, injustice on the other; justice on the left bank of the river, injustice on the right bank.”

Numerous competent lay faithful, who are deeply in love with the Church and staunchly loyal to the Apostolic See, have turned to their Pastors and to Your Holiness in order to be confirmed in the Holy Doctrine concerning the three sacraments of Marriage, Confession, and the Eucharist.

And in these very days, in Rome, six lay faithful, from every Continent, have presented a very well-attended study seminar with the meaningful title: “Bringing clarity.”

Faced with this grave situation, in which many Christian communities are being divided, we feel the weight of our responsibility, and our conscience impels us to ask humbly and respectfully for an Audience.

May Your Holiness remember us in Your prayers, as we pledge to remember You in ours. And we ask for the gift of Your Apostolic Blessing.

Carlo Card. Caffarra

Rome, April 25, 2017
Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist

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AUDIENCE SHEET

1. Request for clarification of the five points indicated by the *dubia*; reasons for this request.
2. Situation of confusion and disorientation, especially among pastors of souls, *in primis* parish priests.