



MARIAN CATECHIST APOSTOLATE
INTERNATIONAL OFFICE
MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL MEMBERS

FROM: RAYMOND LEO CARDINAL BURKE
INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: DIRECTIVE TO MARIAN CATECHISTS REGARDING A PLAN FOR LAY
CATHOLICS IN THESE PERILOUS TIMES

DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2018

What is the plan for Catholic lay faithful in these perilous times?

The Catholic lay faithful should follow a plan of holiness of life, striving to:

- know more fully the Catholic faith, informing themselves as deeply as possible about what the Church has always taught and practiced;
- nourish the Faith through the Sacraments, prayer and devotion;
- give witness to it in daily living, giving an account of their Faith to others. It is important in conversations with family members, with fellow parishioners, with co-workers, and with all whom we meet to be prepared to defend the Catholic Faith.

It is the plan of the English Martyrs, many of whom were devout lay faithful. The difference between their situation and ours is that today the attack on the Faith is coming from within the Church, not from without. The apostasy from the Faith within the Church, even within its hierarchy, is a source of deepest suffering for the devout Catholic and for the whole Body of Christ. It is important to pray for the grace of martyrdom.

In this regard, special prayers should be offered for the Church in China, which has been grievously betrayed by a recent accord between the Holy See and the government of China. So many faithful Catholics in China over the years of the Communist regime have suffered imprisonment and martyrdom, and now the Holy See wants to negotiate with the very government which has so cruelly persecuted the flock.

How do we proceed if the Pope should approve of women priests, same-sex unions, etc., or speak out against any of the perennial teachings of the Church?

First of all, it is important to distinguish between the *man who is the Roman Pontiff* and the *Roman Pontiff*, in other words, to distinguish between what the Pope says as a man – his personal ideas, opinions and agenda – and what the Pope says as the Vicar of Christ on earth – the official teaching of the Church. The faithful are not held to believe and follow the personal ideas, opinions and agenda of the Pope. In fact, in the past, in order not to confuse the faithful and others regarding the truths of the Faith, Roman Pontiffs did not express their personal thinking about serious matters. The faithful are held to believe what the Pope proclaims as the Vicar of Christ on earth, unless, in exercising his office, he should defect from the Catholic faith. Obedience is not blind. It is obedience to Christ, to His truth and His love.

I attach two writings which may be of help to the faithful in understanding the nature of the Petrine Office and of the obedience owed to the Pope as the Vicar of Christ on earth. I have not had time to do the final editing of the second writing, but it may be of some help, even in its present form.

If the Pope declares something contrary to the Catholic faith, then the faithful are obliged to continue to give witness to what the Church has always taught and to call the Pope to conversion and repentance. This will mean great suffering for them, but it is a suffering which is a share in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of His Bride, the Church (*Colossians* 1:24-26).

Apart from personal witness, it is important to support those organs of the social media which are faithful to the constant teaching and practice of the Church. Also, if one has the gift to write and to speak, it is important to use the gift to announce the truths of the Faith for love of the Church in this time when she is being lacerated by so much confusion and error. Often enough today, it is a great service simply to enunciate the constant teaching and discipline of the Church, because so many Catholics have been poorly catechized and can even be illiterate when it comes to the Catholic faith. It is important to find good priests who understand the gravity of the actual situation in the Church and will give sound guidance regarding the doctrine and practice which is under attack from within the Church.

In all matters, we must never lose faith in Our Lord, the Bridegroom of the Church, Who has promised to remain with us always until the Day of His Final Coming (*Matthew* 28:20) and Who has promised that the gates of Hell will not prevail against His Church (*Matthew* 16:18).

Will the Cardinals do something?

The silence of so many Cardinals and Bishops in this time is a source of great discouragement and even scandal. The lay faithful should pray fervently that the Cardinals will respond to the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit, in order to carry out their mission to be the principal counselors of the Pope, even to the shedding of their blood, so that the Pope fulfills his mission as “the lasting and visible source and foundation of the unity both of faith and of communion” (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 18). They should also communicate to the Cardinals their concerns for the good of the Church.

I hope that the above is of assistance to you.

Please continue to pray for me.

May God bless you, your family and all your labors, especially on behalf of the Marian Catechist Apostolate, and may Our Lady of Guadalupe, Saint Michael the Archangel, Saints Joseph and Francis of Assisi, and Saints Peter and Paul intercede for your intentions.

Yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the Purest Heart of Saint Joseph,
Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke

Additional writings:

Developing Lives of Peace after the Heart of Mary

32nd Annual Church Teaches Forum, 22 July 2017

Louisville, Kentucky

The Plenitudo Potestatis of the Roman Pontiff in Service of the Unity of the Church

Speculum Iustitiae Conference for Canon and Civil Lawyers, 8 August 2017

Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, La Crosse, Wisconsin