

RC “YEAR OF FAITH” UNFAITHFUL TO CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL

By Richard Bennett and Timothy F. Kauffman

At a Synod of Bishops in Rome in October, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI inaugurated the “Year of Faith” that he had announced in his Apostolic Letter called “*Motu Proprio Data*.” The Year of Faith commencement date of October 11, 2012, was chosen because it is both the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the 20th anniversary of the publication of the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.¹ In the *Motu Proprio Data*, Pope Benedict affirmed John Paul II’s conviction that Vatican II remained “the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century,” and is “a sure compass by which to take our bearings in the century now beginning.” The teachings of Vatican Council II on ecumenism are indeed “a sure compass” by which to read the Papacy’s current actions – for the “new” outreach of the Catholic Church, as outlined there, is nothing short of a grand design to ensnare the true church of our Lord Jesus Christ. At its center, the goal is to lure unsuspecting believers away from biblical Christianity, to remove any and all “obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion,” and bring them all under the yoke of Roman Catholicism.² To summarize the Synod of Bishops and the inaugurated Year of Faith, there is no better statement than that offered by C. H. Spurgeon when he wrote, “Essence of lies, and quintessence of blasphemy, as the religion of Rome is, it nevertheless fascinates a certain order of Protestants...”³ As we shall see, “fascinating a certain order of Protestants” is precisely what this Year of Faith is intended to do.

The 50th Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council

The main reason for commemorating the Second Vatican Council during the Year of Faith is because its ecumenical overtures have been so successful. Formally, the Council moved from a position of separation from other religions to a new two-pronged strategy of acceptance to win the world back to Rome. First, the pagan religions of the world such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism were formally designated as acceptable to the Papacy.⁴ Second, the Council addressed Evangelicals in particular. “Separated brethren” was the new term the Council coined for those who before were always considered heretics. In the Council’s Document No. 42, the methods of ecumenism were carefully prescribed, the most important of which was to use “dialogue” to make incremental advances into Evangelical and Bible-believing churches. The purpose of dialogue, clearly stated by the Roman Catholic Church, is to “transform modes of thought” and “little by little” gather all professing Christians together “in a common celebration of the Eucharist” under the Pope:

“... [ecumenical dialogue] serves to transform modes of thought and behavior and the daily life of those [non-Catholic] Communities. In this way, it aims at preparing the way for their unity of faith in the bosom of a Church one and visible: thus ‘little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesial communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist, into that unity of the one and only Church which Christ

¹ www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20111011_porta-fidei_en.html

² Vatican Council II Document No. 32, “Decree on Ecumenism,” 1964, Para. 4

³ Spurgeon, C.H., “The Religion of Rome,” from the January 1873 *Sword and Trowel*

⁴ Vatican Council II Document No. 56, *Nostra Aetate*, 1965

bestowed on His Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, dwells in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose...”⁵

One thing made clear at the October 2012 Synod of Bishops is that this program of ecumenical dialogue, now fifty years in the works, has proved to be tremendously successful. One can see this by a change in the use of language by the Catholic Church in the documents that are intended for consumption by non-Catholics, particularly Evangelicals. Although much more Scripture is used and serious attempts are made to imitate Evangelical patterns of thought and speech, the intent is simply to provide cover for the traditional, unbiblical, and uncompromised Roman Catholic doctrine. Behind the curtain of this new showpiece from Rome is merely a reiteration of the same old dogmas that have been ruthlessly imposed upon Catholic people for centuries. Fifty years of “ecumenical dialogue” makes visible a tremendous Catholic infrastructure devoted to the success of their Trojan horse – which some leading Evangelicals in particular have been so willing to haul into their churches.

Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

The main reason for commemorating the 20th anniversary of the 1992 *Catechism* during the Year of Faith is to highlight the fact that it also “includes the ecumenical dimension as part of the basic teaching for all the faithful of the Church.”⁶ Pope Benedict XVI (then Cardinal Ratzinger), under the authority of the then Pope John Paul II, was responsible for the publication of the 1992 *Catechism*. This was the first universal Catholic catechism in nearly 500 years. Even in that ecumenically focused catechism, Benedict affirmed that the Pope has universal power over the Church, and is the pastor of all:

“... the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered.”⁷

Baiting the Snare with an Alleged Gospel

It is clear then, that the Year of Faith is nothing else than an effort to continue the marketing and repackaging of Roman dogmas that was started at the Second Vatican Council. This is explicitly stated in *Instrumentum Laboris*, the document from the October 2012 Synod describing “The New Evangelization” techniques. Thus, it is stated,

“The Church feels the responsibility to devise new tools and new expressions to ensure that the word of faith, which has begotten the true life of God in us, be heard more and be better understood, even in the new deserts of this world.”⁸

In other words, they have devised “new tools” and “new expressions” to convey the same old errors. Yet we note that the Year of Faith is attended with all the typical trappings of Roman bondage: Papal indulgences to reduce the Purgatorial pains of the dead, Mariolatry, and the abomination and idolatry of the Eucharistic sacrifice. For example, Pope Benedict has declared a Plenary Indulgence for the Year of Faith stating that,

⁵ Vatican Council II Document No. 42, Sect. II “The Nature and Aim of Ecumenical Dialogue”

⁶ *Pontificium Consilium Ad Christianorum Unitatem Fovendam*, Directory For The Application Of Principles And Norms On Ecumenism, Paragraph 2 http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/general-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19930325_directory_en.html 11/09/2012

⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), Para. 882. Hereafter referred to as *Catechism*.

⁸ The New Evangelization For The Transmission Of The Christian Faith, *Instrumentum Laboris*, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20120619_instrumentum-xiii_en.html Para. 8. 11/09/2012

“During the Year of Faith ... Plenary Indulgence for the temporal punishment of sins, imparted by the mercy of God and applicable also to the souls of deceased faithful, may be obtained by all ...”⁹

The Papal indulgence is purportedly granted to all who attend lessons or meditate on the declarations of Vatican Council II or the *Catechism* and those who embark on pilgrimages to sacred sites, including “minor basilicas and shrines dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary,” or those who make a “pious visit to the baptistery, or other place in which they received the Sacrament of Baptism.”¹⁰

Additionally, at the Mass for the claimed canonization of new saints at the Synod, Pope Benedict invited participants “to turn to the ‘Virgin Mary, the One who is Queen of all Saints,’ ... then turned his thoughts to Lourdes and the Grotto of the Apparitions of Our Lady ... [and] entrusted to the Virgin ‘the missionaries — men and women, priests, religious and lay people — who sow the good seed of the Gospel in every part of the world’”¹¹ Further, October 13th in the Year of Faith “will focus on the presence of Mary in the Church,” and June 2nd will be set aside for a day of global Eucharistic Adoration, the idolatrous practice of worshipping the communion bread of the Roman Mass. Thus, Papal Rome decrees that, “On 2 June, [the feast of] Corpus Christi, the Blessed Sacrament will be adored at the same time all over the world.”¹² Clearly the dogmas of *The Council of Trent* (1545-1563) together with the superstitious medieval Mariolatry and the idolatrous practice of Eucharistic adoration yet persist in Papal Rome today, and the Year of Faith is simply intended to make it more palatable to Bible Christians.

Examples of the Roman Catholic “new expression” of Rome’s Supposed Gospel

In Section 18 of *Instrumentum Laboris* to inaugurate the Year of Faith, the RC Synod stated,

“The Christian faith is not simply teachings, wise sayings, a code of morality or a tradition. The Christian faith is a true encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ. Transmitting the faith means to create in every place and time the conditions which lead to this encounter between the person and Jesus Christ. The goal of all evangelization is to create the possibility for this encounter, which is, at one and the same time, intimate, personal, public and communal.”

As Monsignor Paul McPartlan, of American Catholic University acknowledged, this subtle shift in language allows for the use of the Eucharist as an ecumenical tool, thus he stated,

“... ecumenical agreement on the Eucharist is being found by acknowledging that the Eucharist is not just my personal encounter with Christ in a re-enactment of the Last Supper, it is also a celebration of the *Church*, empowered by the *Holy Spirit*, in a foretaste of the *future* heavenly banquet. Now, these complementary emphases are very prominent in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and we can therefore immediately note the ecumenical value of this new resource.”¹³ (Emphasis in original)

We notice immediately that in this polished ecumenical language, Rome claims that this “personal encounter with Christ” takes place through the Eucharist, as the *Catechism* teaches,

⁹ Plenary Indulgence for the Year of Faith, , <http://www.annusfidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en/news/indulgentia.html>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ How to Be Evangelizers, www.annusfidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en/news/23-10-2012.html, 10/23/2012

¹² Year of Faith Presentation, www.annusfidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en/news/21-06-2012.html, 6/21/2012

¹³ McPartlan, Paul, *The Spirit, the Catechism and Primacy* (London Ecclesiology Forum, 1995)

“The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease.”¹⁴

Recasting the Eucharist as a “personal encounter with Christ” is a way of cloaking the fundamental error of Roman Catholic dogma of salvation. That is to say that Papal Rome has interposed herself between the Savior and the sinner, arguing that saving grace comes through the sacraments, and therefore, through the Church. Thus, the *Catechism* teaches this explicitly,

“Forming ‘as it were, one mystical person’ with Christ the head, the Church acts in the sacraments ... [which] are necessary for salvation.”¹⁵

“Without the liturgy and the sacraments, the profession of faith *would lack efficacy*, because it would lack the grace which supports Christian witness.”¹⁶

Thus, the Roman Church attempts to rob God, namely, the Holy Spirit, of His distinctive work as the Sanctifier by attributing His work to Rome’s sacramental rituals. This official teaching is a straightforward denial of Person of Christ and His Gospel of grace! Therefore, we reiterate what the Apostle Paul declared, “*As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*”¹⁷ On the authority of Scripture alone, salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Therefore, on the authority of Scripture alone, the claimed Papal gospel of faith plus “the liturgy and the sacraments” is accursed. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church teaches and performs such unfaithfulness to the Gospel of Christ.

An Evil Effect Becomes Evident

That Rome’s ecumenism has indeed “fascinated a certain order of Protestants” is evidenced by the fact that the Baptist World Alliance sent a representative to the Papal Synod. Thus, the Associated Baptist Press news on October 3, 2012 announced the following under the title “Baptist present at Catholic synod”:

“Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School, will represent the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) at the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops Oct. 7-28 in Rome. Timothy George, dean and professor of divinity, history and doctrine at Beeson Divinity School on the campus of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., will represent the Baptist World Alliance at the conference themed The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith... ‘The BWA is pleased that eminent Baptist theologian, Dr. Timothy George, has agreed to represent the worldwide Baptist family at the synod...’”¹⁸

Back on February 20, 2007, Timothy George addressing his Baptist denomination, admonished them with a question “[I]s Jesus a Baptist? Some people in our tradition have thought so, pointing out that Jesus was not baptized by John the Methodist, or John the Presbyterian, and certainly not by John the Episcopalian, but by John the Baptist. But surely, as they say in French, this is *un question mal posée*. The question is not: Is Jesus a Baptist?

¹⁴ *Catechism*, Para. 1119, 1380

¹⁵ *Catechism*, Para 1129

¹⁶ *Catechism*, Para 97. Emphasis not in the original document.

¹⁷ Galatians 1:7-9

¹⁸ www.abpnews.com/ministry/people/item/7857-baptist-present-at-catholic-synod 10/17/2012

but rather: Are Baptists Christian?”¹⁹ When speaking at the Synod in Rome, however, he did not dare to ask, “Are *Catholics* Christian?” In fact, while he attended the Synod, he presupposed that indeed they are, addressing the Pope as “Holy Father,”²⁰ and addressing bishops, priests and Catholic laity as “brothers and sisters in the Lord.” Thus, Timothy George swallowed Rome’s New Evangelization lie as he went on to state,

“Dear Holy Father, Venerable Fathers of the Synod, brothers and sisters in the Lord ...The first paragraph of the *Instrumentum laboris* reminds us that the Christian faith is ‘not simply teachings, wise sayings, a code of morality or a tradition.’ Rather, it is ‘a true encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ, the Good News and great gift of God to humanity.’”²¹

His acceptance of Roman Catholic bishops, priests, and nuns as brothers and sisters in Christ can mean only one of two things. Either Timothy George thinks the Pope and his followers do not believe their own teachings, or he thinks salvation can be by faith plus works. The latter, we hasten to add, would constitute a material denial of the Gospel of Christ. Well might we ask Timothy George the scriptural question: “*Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.*”²²

The Year of Faith’s New Evangelization Moves into New Media

Encouraged by the advances seen from fifty years of ecumenical dialogue, and no doubt strengthened by Timothy George’s compromise, the Year of Faith website informs us that now we can expect to see a “tsunami of new media evangelizers.”²³ These “New Evangelizers” responded quickly with a Website that aggregates six Roman Catholic ministries under a logo that lauds their worship of the Eucharist and total consecration to Mary. This is the same old darkness masquerading as light in the new media. As it further goes on to explain,

“Greg Willits and his wife Jennifer, Catholic parents of five children, have been responsible for the distribution of over 2.5 million hand-made rosaries all over the world through their non-profit ‘Rosary Army.’”²⁴

The Rosary is not new in fact, its disturbing origin goes back to those dark Middle Ages. The Rosary concludes with the prayer, “Hail Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy! Our life, our sweetness and our hope!” referring to Mary as “our most gracious advocate.” The origins of this sacrilegious incantation stretch back to *the ancient sacrilege of placing one’s life and hope in “the queen of heaven.”*²⁵ The New Evangelizers web page continues,

“Greg Willits recently built a stylish, user-friendly new website that keeps it all organized under one virtual roof, and adds several new, exciting elements. ‘New Evangelizers’ invites readers to ‘Know Your Faith, Live Your Faith, Share Your Faith’ and offers ‘Tools and Resources for the New Evangelization.’ ... ‘It was always our intention that our site would be The Resource for finding out what’s happening with New Evangelization.... I’m actually looking for someone to do this – to cull through everything being published and printed

¹⁹ George, Timothy, Plenary address at the conference on ‘Baptist Identity: Convention, Cooperation, and Controversy,’ Union University, Jackson, Tennessee, February 20, 2007 (<http://beesondivinity.com/isjesusabaptist>)

²⁰ To use such a title blatantly breaks Jesus Christ’s command “*call no man your [spiritual] father upon the earth: for One is your Father, which is in heaven.*” Matthew 23:9

²¹ Remarks by Timothy George to the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith” Vatican City, October 16, 2012, (<http://www.beesondivinity.com/fromthedeans>)

²² James 3:12

²³ <http://catholic-year-of-faith.com/?p=597>, “Evangelisers,” European spelling has been changed except in quotes.

²⁴ <http://catholic-year-of-faith.com/?p=597>

²⁵ Jeremiah 7:18

about New Evangelization, and let people know what is being said at the Vatican and throughout the Catholic world.”²⁶

Christians, in actual fact, are **not** called to spread “what is being said at the Vatican,” or to send out millions of Rosaries to teach people to call upon Mary. Rather, true believers are to look “*unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...*”²⁷ The true Jesus Christ is found in the Scriptures, not in Rome’s sacraments. Rather than evangelizing with “what is being said at the Vatican,” Scripture proclaims that “*the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,*” each one “*being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*”²⁸ Thus, that which is called the “tsunami of new media evangelizers” is, in fact, just the ancient and persistent Roman denial of biblical Christian faith.

Conclusion

The Year of Faith is claiming to focus on faith, but instead it draws people ever deeper into Rome’s works based salvation. Spurgeon’s warning is as timely today as it was 139 years ago. To his concern that Rome “fascinates a certain order of Protestants,” he added this:

“Dignitaries of the papal confederacy are just now very prominent in benevolent movements, and we may be sure that they have ends to serve other than those which strike the public eye. A priest lives only for his church; he may profess to have other objects, but this is a mere blind...The sooner we let certain Archbishops and Cardinals know that we are aware of their designs, and will in nothing co-operate with them, the better for us and our country. Of course, we shall be howled at as bigots, but we can afford to smile at that cry, when it comes from the church which invented the Inquisition. ‘No peace with Rome’ is the motto of reason as well as of religion.”²⁹

Spurgeon could well have written that in October 2012 as last century. The “Year of Faith” not only is unfaithful to the Lord and His Gospel, but it also intends to seduce Christians into being unfaithful to Jesus Christ. Christians can fall prey to Rome’s seductive power simply because they do not recognize what is happening. The power greater than the Pope and the Papacy is the power of the written Word of Jesus Christ! Once Evangelicals go down the ecumenical path into Rome and its rituals, it is difficult to resist her deceptions, except by the Word of God. The Year of Faith proposes a mystical Eucharist instead of a communion table. Traditions are taught in place of scriptural doctrine. Sacraments are upheld instead of saving grace. This is not a church based on God’s revelation but rather an institution based on the rule of the Pope. Therefore, we voice the Lord’s own exhortation, “*Hearken unto me now therefore, o ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.*”³⁰ Christians and Evangelicals must not succumb to this latest innovation from Rome. Only in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is found truth and eternal life! Believe on Him and Him alone “*and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*”³¹ May our exalted Lord Jesus Christ through His Gospel of grace expose the craftiness of the pernicious papal Year of Faith and bring it to naught. We rejoice over the Lord God’s

²⁶ <http://catholic-year-of-faith.com/?p=597> 8/25/2012

²⁷ Hebrews 12:2

²⁸ Romans 1:16; Romans 3:24

²⁹ Spurgeon, C.H., “The Religion of Rome,” from the January 1873 *Sword and Trowel*

³⁰ Proverbs 7:24-27

³¹ Ephesians 5:11

everlasting love, eternal redemption, and the everlasting life that is found in His Gospel of grace. Such grace and love engages our hearts in an ever-deepening gratitude so that we proclaim with our whole heart, "*Blessed be his glorious name for ever. and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.*"³²

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³² Psalm 72:19