



SECOND WOUND:

The Abu Dhabi Declaration

The Risen Lord left His disciples with the mandate to take the Gospel to the whole world, to offer salvation in Christ Jesus to all people (Mt 28:19). This missionary mandate remains valid today.

The Church is fruitful to the extent that she fulfills this mission. It is the Holy Spirit who admonishes, strengthens, enlightens and constantly reminds her of the mission entrusted to her by the Redeemer. If the Church were to neglect this mission, it would be an unmistakable sign that the Holy Spirit is no longer so vividly present in her. Mere human reasoning would take His place. But human thinking can very easily become clouded, because human intentions, however good they may be, can fall under the influence of darkness and be put at its service.

We find a clear example of this in the apostle Peter: he wanted to prevent Jesus from going up to Jerusalem, knowing that suffering would await Him there. But Jesus vehemently rebuked him: *“Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men”* (Mt 16:23).

This Gospel passage shows us that the devil can hide behind even a good human intention. If the discernment of spirits is not sufficiently applied, the devil can use these intentions for his evil plans.

In our reflection on *Amoris Laetitia*, we had already discovered this way of proceeding. And we can see something similar in the area of interreligious dialogue. The latter can only be fruitful on a spiritual level if it serves to prepare the ground for the proclamation of the Gospel. Knowledge of another religion can help us to recognize the good that God has sown in it and serve as a starting point for the proclamation of the Good News. Interreligious dialogue can also contribute to a better and less tense coexistence between people of different religions, and can serve to soften a fruitless hardening of hearts.

But this dialogue must never become an instrument for relativizing the importance of the Gospel and putting it on the same level as other religions. This, unfortunately, is what happened in a joint declaration signed by Pope Francis and Grand Imam Ahmed Al-Tayyeb in Abu Dhabi on February 4, 2019. In a passage of this “Document on Human Fraternity” one can read the following statement: *“The pluralism and the*

*diversity of religions, colours, sex, race and language are willed by God in His wisdom, through which He created human beings.”*¹

Although Pope Francis later clarified - at the request of Monsignor Athanasius Schneider (Auxiliary Bishop of St. Mary's in Astana, Kazakhstan) - that this statement refers to God's permissive will, the official texts remained unchanged and are used as a point of reference for the encounter with other religions². On the basis of this statement, it should be taught that God wills the diversity of religions.

Many other statements of the current Pontiff also suggest that he has abandoned the mission understood in its original sense, namely, to proclaim the Gospel with authority to move people to conversion and entry into the Catholic Church.

A clear indication of this trend was the lecture given by Archbishop Bruno Forte on April 4, 2022, at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (“Angelicum”) in Rome on the perspective of the Catholic Church in relation to Judaism.

Among other things, Archbishop Forte suggested that in order to promote Jewish-Christian relations purified “of every form of anti-Semitism,” Christians should stop affirming and preaching that faith in Christ is necessary for the salvation of Jews as well.

Archbishop Forte echoed a statement issued by Jews in 2016 (“Between Jerusalem and Rome”), quoting the following passage from that document: *“We call upon all Christian denominations that have not yet done so to follow the example of the Catholic Church and excise anti-Semitism from their liturgy and doctrines, to end the active mission to the Jews, and to work toward a better world hand-in-hand with us, the Jewish people.”*³

Underlying these statements by Bruno Forte is the view that God has provided the Jews with their own way to Himself through the Old Covenant, and therefore they do not need the Gospel to be proclaimed to them. The following words of Jesus clearly contradict this tendency: *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me”* (Jn 14:6). It is also worth remembering the words of St. Augustine: *“[The Christian religion is the one] which possesses the universal way for delivering the soul; for, except by this way, none can be delivered”* (De Civitate Dei, 10, 32.1).

¹ https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html

² <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/bp.-schneider-pope-must-formally-correct-statement-that-god-wills-false-religions/>

³ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/italian-archbishop-contradicts-church-teaching-says-jews-dont-need-to-accept-christ-to-be-saved/>

As long as we do not close our eyes to reality, we can immediately see the seriousness of the Abu Dhabi Declaration and the statements of Bishop Bruno Forte. If interreligious dialogue takes this course, it will change from being a good instrument for the proclamation of the Gospel to being a weapon of relativization and destruction of the unique and indispensable character of the Gospel message. The tragedy is that the current hierarchy of the Church and the actual Pope represent this position in public. Obviously, in this matter too, one can see a blind obedience to the hierarchy, without realizing that here the missionary mandate of the Lord to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples is being falsified.

It would not be fair to place the blame for all this solely on Pope Francis and his pontificate. After the Second Vatican Council, some of whose documents, in my opinion, contained imprecise formulations on the relationship between the Church and other religions, the current that valued interreligious dialogue for its own sake, rather than as an instrument at the service of evangelization, gained strength.

The then Cardinal Ratzinger, as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, clearly defined the uniqueness of Christ in the document “Dominus Iesus” of August 6, 2000, implicitly pointing out the limits of interreligious dialogue: *“It would be contrary to the faith to consider the Church as one way of salvation alongside those constituted by the other religions, seen as complementary to the Church or substantially equivalent to her, even if these are said to be converging with the Church toward the eschatological kingdom of God.”*⁴

The current pontificate, on the other hand, is a vivid example of the fact that the current of equating religions has largely taken hold in the Church. This tendency found its official expression, so to speak, in the Abu Dhabi Declaration.

The renowned philosopher Josef Seifert called this declaration the “heresy of all heresies” and asks in his article of February 8, 2019: *“How can God will religions that deny Christ's divinity and resurrection?”*⁵ He therefore concludes that Francis' declaration embraces all heresies.

To this grave error, the doors of the Catholic Church have now been thrown wide open, and her appearance has changed accordingly. Instead of Catholics proclaiming salvation

⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration “Dominus Iesus” (August 6, 2000), Art. 21: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html

⁵ <https://www.corrispondenzaromana.it/international-news/grave-concerns-about-pope-francis-abu-dhabi-document-by-professor-josef-seifert/>

to all people in all ways the Holy Spirit shows them, their thinking is confused by this erroneous tendency. If this course is continued, it is to be feared that the uniqueness of Christ's message of salvation will be abandoned for the sake of promoting peace among religions.

Pope Leo XIII had already clearly pointed out this danger: *“The great error of this age [is] that a regard for religion should be held as an indifferent matter, and that all religions are alike. This manner of reasoning is calculated to bring about the ruin of all forms of religion, and especially of the Catholic religion, which, as it is the only one that is true, cannot, without great injustice, be regarded as merely equal to other religions”*.⁶

What a great deception is revealed here, worked by that “other spirit” (cf. 2 Cor 11:4) which fears nothing more than the proclamation of the Gospel and the sincere conversion of men to God! The voice of the serpent in Paradise seems to be heard here once again, but now disguised in religious garb in order to deceive more effectively. It is as if he were saying, “Did God say that only one religion is the right way? Did He not will all religions equally?”

But how could this flagrant change be introduced into our holy Church?

Obviously, the fire of the Holy Spirit no longer burns in her with the same intensity, for this distortion of the missionary mandate cannot be inspired by the same Spirit that drove so many missionaries to carry the Gospel to the farthest corners of the earth, even at the risk of their own lives and unimaginable fatigue. A spirit of deception must have infiltrated the highest echelons of the Church, clouding its spirit of discernment.

How is it possible that Jesus' unequivocal command to evangelize all peoples - beginning with the Jews - has been neglected to the extent that Church leaders are even in danger of becoming instruments for the promotion of a universal religion?

Something similar is happening in ecumenism. Instead of emphasizing the catholicity of the Holy Church and thus inviting the various Christian confessions to embrace the fullness of the faith contained therein, one's own identity is increasingly being concealed under the illusion that greater unity can be achieved in this way.

But what do people really need? They are called to repent and turn to God, to keep His commandments and to accept the grace that the Father offers us in His Son. If they accept and cooperate with this grace, they will be able to shape political realities and the

⁶ Leo XIII, Encyclical "Humanum genus" (April 20, 1884), n. 16:
<https://catholic.net/op/articles/2208/cat/1198/humanum-genus.html>

life of nations in the light of God. But this will not be possible as long as governments and international institutions confuse and coerce people with their anti-Christian policies.

It cannot be emphasized enough that the Abu Dhabi Declaration is a deception that seeks a unity that is not based on God, because at the same time it implies a renunciation of the missionary mandate that the Lord has entrusted to the Church. People are deprived of the proclamation of the Gospel. The representatives of Islam are left in their ignorance of Jesus as the Son of God, so that they do not find the way of salvation. The Jews - God's "first love" - are deprived of the light of the Gospel, which alone can show them the way to God in all its fullness.

Moreover, this attitude also affects those of other religions and all people throughout the world. The Gospel is no longer authentically proclaimed to them, and they are therefore deceived, for the Name of Jesus is the only "name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Behind such developments can only be the influence of Lucifer himself, who deceives human beings.

Msgr. Athanasius Schneider is right when he says:

"No authority on earth – not even the supreme authority of the Church – has the right to dispense people from other religions from the explicit Faith in Jesus Christ as the Incarnated Son of God and the only Savior of mankind with the assurance that the different religions as such are willed by God Himself".⁷

In the next wound, in which we will deal with the idolatrous Pachamama ritual in the Vatican, we will see how far one can go - even within the Catholic Church - when this erroneous direction is taken and the discernment of spirits is no longer sufficiently applied.

⁷ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/bishop-athanasius-schneider-issues-statement-on-controversial-document/>