THE INEVITABLE PATH TOWARD THE DESERT

This text complements the writings I have previously published on this subject[1]*. Given the grave emergency in which, in my view, the Church finds itself, it is inevitable that this topic be addressed time and again—accompanied by an insistent plea to the Lord of the Church to guide the faithful along the right path.*

To whom is this text addressed?

It is directed primarily to Catholics who wish to remain faithful to the traditional faith of the Church—in particular, to those who have already perceived that much has gone astray within the current ecclesiastical hierarchy and who desire to distance themselves from this new direction, or who have already done so. These faithful find themselves in a very difficult situation—especially if they are priests or religious who have taken a vow of obedience, yet now face the reality that their superiors support a trend within the Church that they cannot reconcile with their own Catholic convictions.

But the lay faithful also face a similar dilemma. On one hand, obedience to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him is part of a sound Catholic life; on the other, one can only obey someone who does not stray from the path of the Lord and His Church. Thus, when serious and concrete deviations are observed without any corresponding correction, a painful, objective state of emergency arises.

Like others, I have written and spoken extensively about the lamentable situation in which the Church currently finds itself—particularly since Francis, and subsequently Leo XIV, assumed the Petrine ministry. My blog contains various posts addressing this subject[2]; I would especially point to the series on the "Five wounds of the Church.[3]" It should be added that the declaration *Fiducia supplicans* has inflicted yet another very

[1] The Church in the Desert: https://en.elijamission.net/blog-post/the-church-in-the-desert/
[2] https://en.elijamission.net/blog/
[3] Series on the "Five Wounds of the Church": https://en.elijamission.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/The-5-Wounds-of-the-Church.pdf

serious wound upon the body of the Church[4]. Having already discussed these matters in detail, I shall only touch upon them briefly here.

False hopes regarding the pontificate following Francis

Some of the faithful within the Church's more traditional circles held out hope that, with Leo XIV, there would be a shift back toward the authentic Catholic faith. These, however, were mere illusions and false hopes, for from the very beginning, Leo made it clear that he would follow the path of his predecessor[5]—and that is precisely what he is doing!

If the necessary conclusions are not drawn, and if false hopes continue to be nurtured, the gravity of the ongoing deviations will inevitably be downplayed time and again. One might console oneself—and perhaps other members of the faithful as well—with the notion that things will improve under the pontificate of Leo XIV, pointing to certain examples or statements that seem to promise a change for the better. If this is the case, one has fallen into a form of self-deception and no longer sees things clearly. Unintentionally and without realizing it, this lends support to the new pontificate—which, in reality, is poised to poison the life of the Church even further by institutionalizing the errors of the previous pontificate, so that, little by little, we might grow accustomed to them.

But how has it come to pass that the Catholic Church has reached this situation—a state in which those very individuals called to steer the barque of the Church toward safe waters and to protect the flock from wolves have themselves become a major threat to the traditional Catholic faith? Why is there so little discussion within the Church regarding this existential crisis—if, indeed, it is even recognized as such? Why are those who propagate doctrines and practices that contradict the Church's established path

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[4] "Fiducia Supplicans: The Flagellation of the Lord": https://en.elijamission.net/blog-post/fiducia-supplicans-the-flagellation-of-the-lord/

[5] In his address to the College of Cardinals on May 10, 2025—just two days after his election—Leo XIV stated: *"I would like us to renew together today our complete commitment to the path that the universal Church has now followed for decades in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. Pope Francis masterfully and concretely set it forth"*
https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/may/documents/20250510-collegio-cardinalizio.html

able to exert their influence almost entirely unchecked—and why, instead of being urged to return to the right path, are they actually promoted?

A different spirit: the influence of modernism

A careful observer will note that a "different spirit" (cf. 2 Cor 11:4) has, in the meantime, taken the helm across broad sectors of the Church's life. It is the same spirit that, through modernism and other philosophical currents, has long sought to diminish the reign of Christ in the world.

This spirit has gained significant influence within the Church. Previous popes, especially Saint Pius X, clearly identified this danger and warned against it. Pope Pius X was fully aware that this spirit—alien to the traditional faith—sought to undermine the sovereignty of God and, consequently, jeopardized the authentic Catholic faith. For this reason, beginning in 1910, he required bishops, priests, and theology professors to take an anti-modernist oath in order to counter the havoc being wreaked by this spirit[6]. Undoubtedly, this necessary protective measure proved effective for a time. However, this spirit—hostile to the Church—was not banished forever; instead, it continued to operate in the shadows.

In 1967, Pope Paul VI abolished the anti-modernist oath. This, in turn, allowed that spirit to spread with increasing intensity, as it was no longer—or at least not sufficiently—opposed by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Today, it has even managed to establish itself as the dominant force.

In the modern world, we tend to exalt our own capabilities without giving thanks to God, from whom every perfect gift comes (cf. Jas 1:17). Yet, if the sovereignty of God recedes into the background of our thinking and acting—and if we no longer perceive our lives as a gift and a task entrusted to us by Him—then man takes center stage. Consequently, the humanitarian aspect gains increasing importance, while the focus on the divine gradually fades away. A shift in perspective has occurred, and with it, the

[6] In his Motu Proprio "Sacrorum Antistitum" (September 1, 1910), Pope Pius X established certain guidelines to counter the danger of modernism, among which the "Oath Against the Errors of Modernism" stands out: https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/la/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-x_motu-proprio_19100901_sacrorum-antistitum.html

doors have been thrown wide open to a grave error. Although it may appear harmless at first glance—and might not even be recognized as a danger—it is, in reality, a corrosive poison slowly seeping into the veins of the Church. The longer the gravity of this situation goes unrecognized, the more potent this poison becomes.

The weakening of morality

There is another opening through which this "different spirit" can infiltrate: when the moral teaching of the Church is no longer upheld without reservation. In an era marked by growing confusion surrounding human sexuality, the Church, too, has been affected by the tide of the "sexual revolution." When sins are relativized—and, as a result, there is no longer a serious effort to avoid or overcome them—they eventually become a habit. In this way, the doors are opened for demonic spirits to exert a lasting influence.

It is to be feared that the Church has suffered, and continues to suffer, great harm in this area. When false doctrines and sin spread within it, the consequences are devastating. When they act in tandem, they lead to a spiritual catastrophe.

Where does this lead us?

Whoever perceives this grave crisis and brings it into their prayers will realize that—especially with regard to the current pontificate and the one that preceded it—we are not dealing merely with isolated errors or an unfortunate succession of misguided decisions and statements, but rather with the manifestation of a spirit foreign to the Church. This spirit has penetrated the highest circles of the hierarchy, and even the Petrine ministry itself, to a significant extent!

Adapting to the mindset of the world and the influence of currents of thought alien to the faith lead to distortions in both doctrine and practice. Regrettably, one must assume that, hidden from view, sinful lifestyles persist within the Church. All of this obscures the supernatural light of the Church and results in a loss of the discernment of spirits.

One of the most devastating consequences is that—contrary to what is stated in the Holy Scriptures (*"No one comes to the Father except through me,"* Jn 14:6) and the perennial doctrine of the Church— Jesus Christ is no longer widely proclaimed as *the* (exclusive) and authentic path to the Father. It is possible that these erroneous conceptions began to spread in the wake of the Second Vatican Council; however, during the pontificate of Francis, they have effectively become a kind of official doctrine and practice—one that his successor, Leo XIV, allows to persist uncorrected. One of the most flagrant and inconceivable examples was the set of statements made by Pope Francis in Singapore[7], which laid bare the extent of the confusion.

Was there an outcry of indignation from the ecclesiastical hierarchy regarding these fatal deviations? Only a few raised their voices[8]. It seems the fog of deception has spread so widely that bishops remain silent, even in the face of such glaring lapses. Some may even regard these instances as an illumination from the Holy Spirit.

A brief reminder: The veneration of Pachamama, *Fiducia Supplicans*, *Amoris Laetitia*, *Traditionis Custodes*, and the measures taken during the coronavirus crisis.

On October 4, 2019, a public act of idolatry took place at the headquarters of our Catholic Church—something previously unimaginable[9]. Even if it is claimed that the veneration of the figure of Pachamama was not intended as idolatry, but rather as a form of inculturation, the scandal remains undiminished. For the spirits present in this

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[7] In September 2024, during an interfaith meeting with young people at a Catholic institution in Singapore, Pope Francis stated: *"All religions are paths to God. I will use an analogy, they are like different languages that express the divine. But God is for everyone (…). This is very important because if you start arguing, "My religion is more important than yours...," or "Mine is the true one, yours is not true...," where does this lead? There is only one God, and religions are like languages, paths to reach God. Some Sikh, some Muslim, some Hindu, some Christian."*
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2024/september/documents/20240913-singapore-giovani.html

[8] Bishop Athanasius Schneider stated that these remarks by the Pope contradict divine revelation and the foundations of the Catholic faith. Other church leaders who spoke out included Charles Chaput, archbishop emeritus of Philadelphia in the United States, and Marian Eleganti, former auxiliary bishop of Chur.

[9] It was on the eve of the Amazon Synod (2019) that a religious ceremony was held in the Vatican Gardens, in the presence of Pope Francis and several bishops and cardinals. The ceremony was led in part by shamans, and a wooden sculpture representing Pachamama was venerated. In the days that followed, these figures were also venerated in St. Peter's Basilica in front of St. Peter's Tomb and in the Church of Santa Maria in Traspontina.

pagan cult—to whom human sacrifices were once offered, and which some attest still occur today in isolated, hidden instances—such a justification is of no consequence. These spirits will accept the invitation and continue to spread darkness within the Church. Experienced exorcists should have publicly warned the Pope and the ecclesiastical hierarchy that this constituted a violation of the First Commandment, and that when idolatry is practiced, demons gain the right to "occupy the house." Officially, there is no record of any act of reparation by those responsible. Consequently, the repercussions of this public act against the First Commandment continue to manifest at various levels.

The same applies to the declaration *Fiducia Supplicans*, which permits the blessing of homosexual couples[10]. Although attempts have been made to downplay the gravity of the situation through various explanations—claiming it is merely a blessing of individuals—it is, in reality, a grave deception for those directly involved and for the faithful at large. Cardinal Müller, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has described these blessings as blasphemy[11]. A devastating document!

As for *Amoris Laetitia*—another document from the pontificate of Francis that has led, and continues to lead, to numerous sacrileges—I shall, in this context, simply refer the reader to my own publications, in which I have analyzed it in greater detail[12].

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[10] On December 18, 2023, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith published the Declaration "Fiducia Supplicans," which presents a "new pastoral way": while a liturgical blessing cannot be imparted to a couple living in an "irregular situation" (referring in particular to same-sex couples), a pastoral and spontaneous blessing may be given.

[11] "Blessing a reality that is contrary to creation is not only impossible, it is blasphemy" –Cardinal Müller stated in his "Note on the Declaration Fiducia Supplicans"
https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/cardinal-muller-tells-pope-francis-blessing-homosexual-couples-is-impossible-and-blasphemy/

[12] Article 350 of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) states that *"it is possible that in an objective situation of sin (...) a person can be living in God's grace, (…) while receiving the Church's help to this end."* Footnote 351 explicitly mentions that this assistance *"... can include the help of the sacraments"* thereby opening the possibility that people living in a second union while still bound by a valid sacramental marriage may receive Holy Communion.
I have addressed this topic in three successive posts:
Part 1: https://en.elijamission.net/blog-post/amoris-laetitia-a-difficult-issue-part-i/
Part 2: https://en.elijamission.net/blog-post/amoris-laetitia-a-difficult-issue-part-ii/
Part 3: https://en.elijamission.net/blog-post/amoris-laetitia-a-difficult-issue-part-iii/

Nor can I remain silent regarding the disastrous alliance between Church and State in their approach to the coronavirus crisis—an approach that revealed a clear lack of discernment. The Church promoted, in a completely uncritical manner, a vaccine that is not only highly questionable from a moral standpoint but has also been shown, from a medical perspective, to be harmful—with effects that persist to this day[13].

In this brief reflection, I must also mention that the venerable traditional rite of the Holy Mass—celebrated for many centuries and a source of nourishment for the faithful—has been marginalized, as have the many believers who cherish this rite[14].

While I briefly outline these deviations, I am well aware that others have already addressed these issues with great precision and expertise. It is worth reading some of those writings to gain a more accurate understanding[15].

Conclusions

Clearly, a different spirit has gained significant influence over the Church. To be more precise, this spirit has even secured control over leadership positions. It can be none other than Lucifer, who influences the human intellect and leads it into error. Certainly, it cannot be the Holy Spirit who inspires doctrines and practices that contradict the testimony of Holy Scripture and the authentic teaching of the Church.

Anyone who has reached this conclusion—perhaps also sensing the deceptive spiritual flavor of Lucifer—must make a choice; for who would wish to serve such a spirit?

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[13] The reaction of the Church hierarchy to the coronavirus crisis since early 2020 has been to comply unquestioningly—and at times even to take the lead—with the measures imposed by governments and international institutions: from the closure of churches to the active promotion of the vaccine. I have written previously about the great deception that took place: https://en.elijamission.net/blog-post/the-coronavirus-crisis-in-the-anti-christian-context/

[14] With the Motu Proprio "Traditionis Custodes" (July 16, 2021), Pope Francis imposed severe and specific restrictions on the celebration of the Traditional Mass, undoing the work of reconciliation that Benedict XVI had accomplished through "Summorum Pontificum" (2010), which allowed all priests to celebrate Holy Mass in its traditional form.

[15] In particular, I recommend the news site "Life Site News" (https://www.lifesitenews.com), which publishes articles by various reliable authors on topics related to both the situation in the world and in the Church.

By failing to proclaim the Gospel in its full scope to today's world—under the illusion that all people can be integrated into the Church, even when they are unwilling to order their lives according to God's commandments—one deceives both oneself and others. Some even speak of a 'different Church' that is emerging before our eyes, in reference to the 'synodal process' that the Church has embarked on under the leadership of Francis and Leo XIV.

Yet, anyone who embarks upon erroneous paths—without correcting them—while simultaneously holding a position of great responsibility (such as the Petrine ministry), effectively becomes a false prophet. Such a person no longer serves as the voice that conveys the ways of the Lord to us; consequently, any obligation for the faithful to offer obedience ceases to exist.

It is necessary to distance oneself clearly and firmly from these misguided paths and to avoid cooperating with them in any way, lest we become accomplices—whether knowingly or unknowingly.

It is difficult to imagine an emergency more serious than the current one! Therefore, in my view, it is necessary to draw the appropriate conclusions. As I see it, this entails retreating into the spiritual desert.

What is the "Church in the desert"?

The "Church in the desert"—which could also be termed the "underground Church" or the "Church in the catacombs"—is by no means a new or different Church. Nor is it a specific community or organization. Rather, it consists of those faithful of the Catholic Church who find it necessary to withdraw into the desert for a time, in order to preserve the treasures of the Bride of Christ and the holy faith. Those who belong to this "Church in the desert" are the ones who have observed and concluded that the current ecclesiastical hierarchy has set itself on a path toward apostasy. They have recognized that this crisis constitutes an emergency.

This brief definition should suffice for the present text; I refer the reader to two other publications in which I have explained the full implications of this in greater detail[16]. Since there is nothing further to add on this subject for the time being, I simply and strongly recommend reading those works.

Brother Elijah
8 November 2026, on the eve of the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

[16] "Life in a Lions' Cage or the Road to the Desert?" (July 2025): https://en.elijamission.net/blog-post/life-in-a-lions-cage-or-the-road-to-the-desert/
Update: The Church in the Desert after Francis (May 2026): https://en.elijamission.net/blog-post/update-the-church-in-the-desert-after-francis/