Re-reading the Roman Tea-leaves:

The Francis Effect on the Munus Docendi & Gubernandi of the Church

Presented by James T. Bretzke, S.J.

Last update: May 15, 2015 (added Slide 27-A, augmented script for slide 38)

Slide 2

Introduction

One obvious and incontrovertible “Francis Effect” is the sharply increased journalistic interest in not only the Pope himself, but the Vatican and even the Church on the local levels. Thus, while there is an extensive wealth of material related to my chosen topic, this advantage poses many particular challenges. First it is a bit like trying to score a bulls-eye on a very much moving target. In this brief paper I wish to propose some concepts drawn from cultural anthropology and rhetorical studies that could serve as a framework to analyze and reflect on the significance of the events taken singly and collectively that affect, effect, and illustrate some of the more important ongoing developments in the Munus docendi & gubernandi of the Church in the current pontificate.
In case we run out of time before I can fully develop the various threads of my theme, let me put them out here in the form of bullet points that I think our conclusion would ultimately reach. Each of these merits considerable development, but taken together I think that any decent reading of the Roman tea-leaves would find in the sediment at the bottom of the cup these interpretive indicators as to what is going on, as well as possible “clues” to decipher the more than usual energy and emotion that this papacy has witnessed both among supporters and detractors.

Listed on this slide are the key perspectival divergences in our the first reading of our Roman tea-leaves, which I will not elaborate on further at this moment.

Slide 4
Morto un papa, se ne fa un altro

Pope Benedict XVI shocked not only the cardinals gathered in the consistory aula but the rest of the world by becoming the first pontiff since Pope Celestine V in 1294 to resign on his own initiative.

Slide 5

Shortly after discerning that the smoke pouring out of the little chimney over the Sistine Chapel on the evening of March 13, 2013 was indeed Bianca, the bells in churches around the world began to ring in anticipatory confirmation of the announcement of the senior Cardinal Tauran, Deacon of the College of Cardinals, *Habemus Papam!*.
What came next in the ceremony, though, began for me---and for tens of thousands of others around the world—the first contrast of the “Francis Effect.” Papa Bergoglio appeared\(^4\) and spoke his first public words as Pope: *Fratelli e sorelle, Buona sera*! His accent was far better than his two non-Italian predecessors, though I thought his choice of words a tad too folksy\(^5\)—almost, I initially wondered, as if he were at a loss for words in the vernacular of his new diocese. But as he continued it was clear to me that he was quite fluent in the language I had learned in my own seven years in the Eternal City.

His next words and actions I am sure you too remember as he bowed his head and asked for the prayers of the gathered throng in St. Peter’s Square before imparting his first *Urbi et orbi* pontifical blessing. While many of us were both struck and pleased, as I learned later even on the Loggia some were heard to utter in horror, “*questo é il fine del mondo!*”\(^6\) as the new Pope eschewed the scarlet mozzetta, gold pectoral cross, and red Prada shoes employed by his recent predecessors in their first public appearance as Bishop of Rome, the *Primus inter pares, Servus servorum Dei*, and perhaps most importantly, the new *Vicarius Christi*. 
The Over-arching “Francis Effect” Thesis:

Indeed, it did prove to be a certain type of “fine di’ un mondo” though, not in the opinion of many the eschaton that was supposed to accompany the reign of a Jesuit pope. Clearly a variety of paradigms had begun to shift in this world-changing pontificate.

Slides 8 & 9

The Francis Effect Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popes JPII &amp; Benedict XVI</th>
<th>Pope Francis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church as the best bulwark of “truth” in a modern age severely challenged.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by secularism, relativism, nihilism, gender ideologies, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antidotes: Fides et Ratio, Veritatis Splendor, Evangelium vitae, Dominus Jesus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospel mandate with Church as field hospital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministering to deeply wounded souls, through the ministrations of a Church goes out to them and is not afraid of taking on the smell of the sheep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the central thesis on the so-called “Francis Effect,” I would propose the following: In their pontificates both Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI focused primarily on presenting the Church as the best bulwark of “truth” in a modern age severely disturbed, in their eyes, by the scourge of secularism with its infections of relativism, nihilism, gender ideologies, and so forth. Antidotes to these serious diseases were provided in magisterial documents such as *Fides et Ratio*, *Veritatis Splendor*, *Evangelium vitae*, *Dominus Jesus* to name but a few.

**Slide 9**

![The Francis Ecclesiology](image)

"I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security."

- Pope Francis

By contrast I believe that Pope Francis is trying to focus the attention of the Church on the Gospel itself, and his view of the Church as a missionary field hospital populated by many deeply wounded souls who need the healing of the Gospel through the ministrations of health care workers not afraid to go out to them. While there is obviously a definite overlap between these recent papal perspectives, they are neither mirror images nor copies of one another and I would argue that it is this core perceived difference that accounts for both the strong support and considerable resistance the Jesuit Pope has occasioned. ⁸

**Optic of Fundamental Values and Root Paradigms**
As someone who has had the opportunity to live for well over a decade outside of his native culture both in Asia and Europe, I have become convinced of two important, interconnected truths: one, that culture is one of our core modalities of being human, and two, that cultures vary considerably in shaping not only our basic institutions, art forms, and the like, but more fundamentally how we view the world, moral categories of right and wrong, good and bad, and even nature itself.

For the purposes of this paper I wish here merely to recall two core cultural anthropological concepts, namely “fundamental values” and “root paradigms.”

Fundamental values express deeply-held cultural assumptions about the world as a whole, and in particular about human nature and concomitant appropriate behavior. For most Americans an example of one such “fundamental value” might be our notion of “justice as fairness,” or egalitarianism enshrined in the “one person, one vote” principle.

Root paradigms are the ways in which these fundamental values are organized, modeled, and instantiated, e.g., in our legal systems, electoral processes, checks and balances in our
Fundamental values and root paradigms are easily found in our theological cultures as well, and differing views on these may help to explain not only any number of theological debates, but even the more deeply troubling and perennial issue of the *odium theologicum*.

Slide 11

Only God can *fully* know the whole of created reality exactly as it is, and for the rest of us creatures our own knowledge will be necessarily incomplete and partial. We need to understand complex realities according to models and paradigms, and if this is true, then can we accept—at least in theory—that there might be a legitimate pluralism of such paradigms, and that these paradigms are not destined to be eternal and unchanging?

The Epideictic Genre of Rhetorical Discourse

Slide 12
A considerable amount of the change we have witnessed in this papacy can be tracked to what Church historian John O’Malley has labeled the *epideictic genre* of rhetorical discourse, whose “goal is the winning of internal assent, not the imposition of conformity from outside. It teaches, but not so much by way of magisterial pronouncement as by suggestion, insinuation and example. Its instrument is persuasion, not coercion.”

The documents of Vatican II are for the most part characterized by this epideictic genre in that “[t]hey hold up ideals, then draw conclusions from them and often spell out practical consequences. This is a soft style compared with the hard-hitting style of canons and dialectical discourse. It is rightly described as ‘pastoral’ because it was meant to make Christian ideals appealing.”

*Slide 13*
Knowingly or not, Pope Francis has adopted an epideictic rhetorical genre in the exercise of his papal *munus docendi* and to a lesser extent his *munus gubernandi*. In this Francis has echoed the “medicine of mercy, rather than that of severity” enunciated by John XXIII in the latter’s opening address to Vatican II—a contrast that any number of people have clearly caught. Many of those who have caught the echo have been encouraged and enlivened, and have also noted a contrast with a number of the themes and approaches of the two predecessors. Others also have caught both the echo and the contrast, but without the accompanying optimism and encouragement. A central reason for these widely divergent responses to the same ecclesial events in the Franciscan papacy can be traced to significantly conflicting fundamental values and root paradigms operative in our contrasting ecclesial cultures.

*Slide 14*
Borrowing further from John O’Malley’s typology of the four cultures of the West (prophetic, academic, rhetorical, and performative) I believe that many witnessed the initial papal appearance with either optimistic hope or pessimistic horror depended significantly on how they had been enculturated into differing ecclesial fundamental values and root paradigms. In the treatment of “culture four,” a considerable amount of the pushback and criticism of Pope Francis’ simpler liturgical vestments I believe can be traced back to the fundamental values and root paradigms inherent in differing conceptions of what constitutes legitimate “performative” culture.

Slide 15
As with the other three cultures, one of the most visible icons here too would be Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke. His preference for the Extraordinary Form of the liturgy with its accompanying baroque vestments is not just a matter of personal style ala an ecclesial instantiation of the old philosophical bromide *de gustibus non disputandum est*.

**The Francis Effect on Pope Francis Himself**

While continuing to admire Cardinal Burke’s sartorial splendor, let us back to consider the spiritual wardrobe of Jorge Maria Bergoglio himself that the Francis Effect shows. Before he stepped out onto the loggia of St. Peter’s the newly elected Pope reportedly experienced a profound “consolation.”

**Slide 16**

I suspect that Pope Francis interpreted this grace, not as a validation of his success at coming in first in the conclave balloting, but more in line with the consolation Ignatius received at the little chapel in La Storta before entering Rome in 1537. If we accept being placed with Christ under the Standard of His Cross, God will bless our efforts in the way that Divine Providence (rather than human wisdom) judges to be best.
Trying to focus the attention of the Church on Jesus’ Gospel itself, rather than on the Church as an institution, represents both a significant cultural change and a real paradigm shift in what I believe Francis sees as a necessary return to the priority of what I’m terming the “fundamental values” that the public ministry of Jesus aimed to incarnate.

Slide 17

Mercy, and not sacrifice, would be chief among these fundamental values and here we see that Pope Francis has stayed remarkably on message. The root paradigm he has used repeatedly is the metaphor of the Church as a missionary field hospital that must re-focus on the necessary triage of responding first to the deepest wounds of souls who desperately need the healing ministrations of the Gospel can provide through a Church if it is not afraid to go out to them.¹⁹

The *Munus Docendi* and the *Munus Gubernandi*

Slide 18
Arguably the most pronounced Francis Effect is how the core *munera* or official duties of the Church have been impacted and re-envisioned. In the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* (hereafter *CIC*) the *munus docendi* is treated at length in Book III. This canonical paradigm has not shifted appreciably in terms of who is empowered to exercise these *munera* since Bergoglio has assumed office, so in discerning the Francis Effect we will have to focus instead more on the “what” that is being taught, and the “who” is now doing the governing.

**Slide 19**

In these two areas I believe we can not only outline many and important changes in the various sub-paradigms and fundamental values, but also---and perhaps not surprisingly---in these areas we also see increasing resistance and out-right rebellion. These latter negative dynamics I
believe give further evidence for my basic thesis that what is essentially in play here are tensions akin to what the seminal thinker in regard to paradigm theory, Thomas Kuhn, has termed a “revolution” in operative paradigms.\textsuperscript{21}

Material to be marshalled to support this premise is plentiful and diverse, but the topics listed on this slide can serve as good exemplars:

- The 2014 International Theological Commission document on the *Sensus fidei*, contrasting this with the 2009 document on the natural law
- Ongoing efforts to re-organize and reform the Roman Curia, including the Franciscan consistories creating new cardinals
- Appointment of bishops in key diocesan Sees such as Chicago, San Diego and Santa Fe
- Dealing with the Sex-Abuse Crisis and Episcopal Responsibility
- Follow-through on unfinished business from the Benedictine pontificate, such as the visitation of the American communities of religious women and oversight of the LCWR
- The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy and the Bull of Indiction
- The October 2014 Extraordinary Synod and the forthcoming October 2015 regular triennial Synod on the Family and Evangelization

**Reading the Roman Tea-Leaves**

*Sensus Fidei in the Francis Pontificate*

Roman dicasterial documents can furnish one gauge for measuring change over time. The International Theological Commission (ITC) during the papacy of Benedict XVI published in 2009 a document on that natural law as furnishing a basis for a universal ethic.\textsuperscript{22} A year into Pope Francis’ papacy the ITC released its document on *Sensus Fidei* in the Life of the Church.\textsuperscript{23}
Certainly this document was in the works prior to the resignation of Benedict XVI, but it does indicate some recognition of the new Pope both explicitly and implicitly.\textsuperscript{24} Certainly some things brought forward in the ITC \textit{Sensus fidei} document would not have appeared in the days of the John Paul II/Ratzinger collaboration, but one still is left with the strong impression in the current document of two baby-steps forward and one and a half in reverse, as we see in these excerpts:

\textbf{Slide 20}

\begin{itemize}
\item There are occasions, however, when the reception of magisterial teaching by the faithful meets with difficulty and resistance, and appropriate action on both sides is required in such situations. The faithful must reflect on the teaching that has been given, making every effort to understand and accept it. Resistance, as a matter of principle, to the teaching of the magisterium is incompatible with the authentic \textit{sensus fidei}. The magisterium must likewise reflect on the teaching that has been given and consider whether it needs clarification or reformulation in order to communicate more effectively the essential message. These mutual efforts in times of difficulty themselves express the communion that is essential to the life of the Church, and likewise a yearning for the grace of the Spirit who guides the Church ‘into all the truth’ (Jn 16:13).
\end{itemize}

80. There are occasions, however, when the reception of magisterial teaching by the faithful meets with difficulty and resistance, and appropriate action on both sides is required in such situations. The faithful must reflect on the teaching that has been given, making every effort to understand and accept it. Resistance, as a matter of principle, to the teaching of the magisterium is incompatible with the authentic \textit{sensus fidei}. The magisterium must likewise reflect on the teaching that has been given and consider whether it needs clarification or reformulation in order to communicate more effectively the essential message. These mutual efforts in times of difficulty themselves express the
communion that is essential to the life of the Church, and likewise a yearning for the grace of the Spirit who guides the Church ‘into all the truth’ (Jn 16:13).

Slide 21

77. The magisterium also judges with authority whether opinions which are present among the people of God, and which may seem to be the sensus fidelium, actually correspond to the truth of the Tradition received from the Apostles. As Newman said: ‘the gift of discerning, discriminating, defining, promulgating, and enforcing any portion of that tradition resides solely in the Ecclesia docens’. Thus, judgement regarding the authenticity of the sensus fidelium belongs ultimately not to the faithful themselves nor to theology but to the magisterium. Nevertheless, as already emphasised, the faith which it serves is the faith of the Church, which lives in all of the faithful, so it is always within the communion life of the Church that the magisterium exercises its essential ministry of oversight.

In the past, we would be scrutinizing such passages very carefully to see if we could discern any shifting sands in the official magisterial positions, but one of the key Francis Effects is that reading the Roman tea-leaves has taken on a quite different tack, based on a much larger
variety of “leaves” in the cup, with residue much easier to see (and more difficult to ignore). Originally I had planned to a careful reading of these older tea-leaves, in what O’Malley would probably term “culture two,” the Academic. But now I believe our attention can be more profitably focused on these newer “effects” emerging from this papacy, even if we can only highlight them briefly. Taken together, though, I believe they provide a mosaic of the Francis Effect that more time will flesh out in greater detail.

**Reform of the Roman Curia**

After Vatican II an Italian *barzelletta* went, “granted the bishops and their *periti* may have found the “key” to the Council, but we (the Curia) will change the locks after they leave.” And indeed a strong case could be made that the Church locks had indeed been re-mastered. In the 2013 Conclave run-up it became clear that a significant number of cardinals voiced hopes for “reform,” but I suspect both they and the world were just expecting a little more lubricating oil poured into the locks’ chambers and not a whole-scale conversion.

**Slide 22**

*Reform of the Curia*

- “Gang of 9” Cardinals to Advise Regularly
- Appointment of Cardinal Pell to Economic Czar
- Gradual Re-alignment of the other Curia officers
  - Secretary of State, Parolin
  - Signatura (Buke out, Mamberti in)
  - New Heads for Clergy, Religious, Worship, Saints
  - New consultants for Bishops (Burke & Rigali out; Wuerl in)
  - Keeps Müller at helm of CDF

This time, though, it seemed to more and more bishops and cardinals that the curial lock system needed more than a few squirts of oil, or a largely cosmetic re-arrangement as had
occurred the last time the Curia had been threatened with an overhaul with John Paul II’s 1988 *Pastor Bonus.* If culture is as foundational as I am asserting in any society or organization then it should come as no surprise that when you attempt to confront long-standing and deeply embedded bureaucratic offices, practices and personnel you will have more than a little pushback. When money is involved the difficulties are magnified exponentially. I suspect that historians analyzing the Francis Effect will credit Pope Francis’ initiatives in these areas as being of particular significance.

It was also a strategic stroke of genius to turn over the mandate for the Vatican finances to Cardinal Pell. As the only cardinal from the continent of Australia it was virtually impossible not to include him in another of Francis’ bold initiatives, the so-called “Gang of Nine”—the cardinals who would act as an extra-curial cabinet to assist the Pope. While Pell is probably the most conservative of the group, by giving him this new “day job” the Pope both got him out of Australia and kept him very busy, leaving less time and freedom for the interview circuit ala Cardinal Burke. Changing culture, especially when it is interwoven with finance is particularly challenging and so it should come as no surprise that some of the Old Guard of the Curia have resisted these efforts in a variety of ways.

With the other curial posts the Pope moved cautiously, but deliberately and key changes in the Secretariat of State, Congregation for Religious, and consultors for the Congregation of Bishops are probably the areas that most amplified the Francis Effect on the *munus guberandi* of the Church. Administratively at least Francis is seeking to steer a middle course so that no faction or wing can claim total vindication or lament absolute defeat. Benedict’s last major curial appointment, Cardinal Gerhard Müller, to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, remains firmly in place, and the liberty he has taken to outline repeatedly positions that most
would consider to be at odds with the Pope’s agenda may point to another key Francis Effect—namely the freedom to disagree publically.\textsuperscript{29} It is not, except perhaps for Gammarelli’s\textsuperscript{30} and its preferred customers with a penchant for baroque brocade, the \textit{fine del mondo}.

\textbf{Slide 23}

Creating cardinals eligible to choose one’s successor has always been a most important way in which popes can continue to affect the Church from beyond the grave. In this sense Pope Francis is simply mirroring the strategies of his predecessors, but obviously the “who” of the cardinalatial Who’s Who bear strong witness to the Francis Effect in the \textit{munus gubernandi}. In the February 2015 consistory the Pope selected men from 18 different countries and many diocesan Sees which either had never had a cardinal, or had not had one in centuries (Cape Verde, Tonga, Myanmar [Burma], Michocán [Mexico], etc.) new Ethiopian cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel: to make the hierarchical Church more the “voice of the voiceless” to echo the vocabulary of the new Ethiopian cardinal Berhaneyesus Souraphiel.\textsuperscript{31} Despite the positive dimension of bringing the periphery into closer proximity with the historical center of Roman Catholicism, some honest questions have been voiced about the over-all, long-term effectiveness of this increased geographical and cultural diversity.\textsuperscript{32}
The emergence of what are now being termed “Francis Bishops” was carefully prepared for by Pope Francis himself by first reconfiguring the consultors on the powerful Congregation for Bishops. Vis-à-vis the United States episcopacy, the removal of Cardinals Justin Rigali and Raymond Leo Burke has proved to be of monumental importance, as we now are beginning to see a run of new appointments that differ dramatically from the protégés of these once nearly all-mighty “king makers.” Examples of “Francis bishops” would include recent appointees such as Archbishop Blase Cupich of Chicago, Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego, Bishop John Stowe, OFM of Lexington, KY, Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe. This cultural paradigm shift has been welcomed by many, though conservative blogs such as Pewsitter.org make it clear that the sobriquet is meant only in the pejorative sense, usually adding to their headlines captions such as “Not a word about abortion, contraception, or gay marriage” to nail down the condemnation and dismissal of these new hierarchs. And to be honest, they have a limited point: indeed part of the Francis Effect seems to be picked up in these new promoted bishops’ political agenda which does indeed focus more on the common good, economic issues, resistance to the
death penalty, a more Christian approach to immigration reform and so on.\textsuperscript{35} “Listening,” as Archbishop-elect John Wester put it, is the verb of choice in the exercise of the munus gubernandi.\textsuperscript{36}

\textit{Dealing with the Sex-Abuse Crisis and Episcopal Responsibility}

\textbf{Slide 25 &26}

Dealing with the scourge of the dysfunctional episcopal administration that allowed for cover-up of decades of clerical sexual abuse was a much larger and more complex cultural manifestation of clericalism that neither John Paul II nor Benedict XVI could really even “name,” much less effectively address.\textsuperscript{37} Of course, some of the initiatives undertaken by Pope Francis had been prepared by both the USCCB Dallas Charter and the efforts of then Cardinal Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, to confront better the insidious evil of clerical sex abuse. However, it was only Francis who was finally able to take the “next step” which Benedict and the American bishops frankly were loathe even to contemplate, namely bringing into the consultative process lay men and women who had been abused, and finally to take action against a bishop guilty of a relatively recent effort at business as usual in the cover-up game.

\textbf{Slide 26}
The “De-Finn-istration” of the deeply conservative Kansas City Opus Dei prelate Robert Finn was a pill too bitter to swallow by those who looked first and foremost to preserving the interests of the institutional Church, and like many other similar changes in the munus guberandi this too exhibits a line of action never really possible in the previous two pontificates.

Even after Finn’s belated resignation many conservatives, led most notably by William Donahue of Catholics United for the Faith lamented the forces that had driven this “orthodox” and “traditional” bishop from his office without even the benefit of the usual tried-and-true exit gambit of promoveatur ut amoveatur. Some of the conservative postings noted, not without some justification, that reactions from the left exhibited mixed in with the genuine relief that the Church was finally rid of the meddlesome bishop a certain amount of delectatio morosa as well.

Slide 27-A
We don’t have enough time to develop this important theme, but here are some key Kodak moments, before we turn to our next topic, namely the Francis Effect and Women in the Church.

**Francis Effect and Women in the Church**

*Slide 27-B*

To support my thesis on how the core cultural concepts of fundamental values and root paradigms do mark this papacy I would point positively to the happy, though frankly unanticipated, conclusion of the Apostolic Visitation of communities of American religious
women, and more especially the de facto truce arranged in the Vatican oversight of the LCWR. Neither felicitous end-game would have been in the playbooks of the curial benches in the last two pontificates.

In other areas we probably have a mixed score card, though on the whole clearly more progressive than his predecessors. The Pope has repeated that the women’s ordination issue has been settled, but it no longer seems quite the litmus test it once was for the granting of *nihil obstats* or episcopal promotion (or demotion). He welcomed Lutheran Archbishop Antje Jackelen of Uppsala, the first woman to head the Church of Sweden, to the Apostolic Palace on May 3, 2015.

**Slide 28**

Women have been appointed to more positions of responsibility in the Curia, and Francis has come out recently calling for equal pay for women, based on the Christian concept of radical equality---something Pope John Paul II would have been particularly uncomfortable with since the Polish Pope stated repeatedly that women’s highest vocation was to be exercised as mothers in the home. One of the more prominent “Francis Bishops,” Archbishop Blase Cupich of Chicago recently named a woman as the chief operating officer for the entire Archdiocese.
The Synods on the Family: October 2014 and October 2015

Since a good deal of scholarly reflection has been devoted to these Synods, so I will not attempt even a brief summary here. In terms of my over-arching thesis on the Francis Effect’s primary focus on the Gospel as the healing message which should guide the Church, let me very briefly lift up just a few aspects of the recent and forthcoming October Synods that can further support this thesis.

First, I would underscore the importance of the 2014 Instrumentum laboris’ accent on listening, which was then lifted up in the Relatio post disceptationem (aka Mid-Synod Relatio) to provide the organizing framework of “Listen, Judge, and Act.” This triad was explicitly attacked in the Extraordinary Synod’s 2nd week’s circuli minores discussion in the group chaired by Cardinal Burke which argued that “Listen” should be scrapped and replaced with the “clearer” and more active “See” and then move decisively to “Judge” and “Act.” The October 2015 Synod though has retained the triad beginning with “Listen” and this certainly represents not just a shift in vocabulary but in culture as well.
Another Francis Effect came directly from the Pope himself in his Opening Address in which he explicitly called for openness or “παρρησία (parrhesia)—the Greek term meaning to speak candidly or boldly, and without fear). This also was another cultural change of some significance, allowing for what in Italian might be called a Confronto Americano—literally an “American-style Confrontation.” While Americans see such a “frank discussion” as an important and necessary step towards arriving at consensus on controversial issues, in the ecclesial culture of Italy this Confronto Americano is usually seen as a type brutta figura (literally an “ugly figure”) to be avoided at all costs.

There was obviously plenty of παρρησία (parrhesia) before, during and after the Extraordinary Synod, and I am presuming that most of us are already well-acquainted with the debates over the possibility of admitting divorced and remarried Catholics to Communion, so I will not revisit that well-trodden ground except to observe that even having the discussion represents a profound cultural shift in the Church that would have been utterly unimaginable in virtually any previous pontificate.
While not the central focus of the Synod discussions I believe that perhaps the most revealing example of both paradigm shift and culture clash came not in the discussion over Communion but almost as an aside introduced in the speech given by one of the invited lay participants, the Pirolas from Australia, when they recounted the following:

For example, the Church constantly faces the tension of upholding the truth while expressing compassion and mercy. Families face this tension all the time. Take homosexuality as an example. Friends of ours were planning their Christmas family gathering when their gay son said he wanted to bring his partner home too. They fully believed in the Church’s teachings and they knew their grandchildren would see them welcome the son and his partner into the family. Their response could be summed up in three words, ‘He is our son’. What a model of evangelization for parishes as they respond to similar situations in their neighbourhood! It is a practical example of what the Instrumentum laboris says concerning the Church’s teaching role and its main mission to let the world know of God’s love.  

Strong applause broke out in the Synod aula but at least one person who was sitting on his hands—Raymond Cardinal Burke who quickly took to the TV airwaves, giving an interview in which he
frankly deplored the “aggressive homosexual agenda” present in society today and then addressed the Pirolas’ anecdote in these words:

If homosexual relations are intrinsically disordered, which indeed they are — reason teaches us that and also our faith — then, what would it mean to grandchildren to have present at a family gathering a family member who is living [in] a disordered relationship with another person? We wouldn’t, if it were another kind of relationship — something that was profoundly disordered and harmful — we wouldn't expose our children to that relationship, to the direct experience of it. And neither should we do it in the context of a family member who not only suffers from same-sex attraction, but who has chosen to live out that attraction, to act upon it, committing acts which are always and everywhere wrong, evil.51

Besides grievous scandal, Burke went on, the mis-guided “acceptance” of the gay son and his partner by the family would ultimately harm further the son himself who was engaged in a lifestyle directly repugnant both to the natural law as well as Scripture and constant Church teaching.

Stepping back from both parties I do believe that this encounter highlights a goodly number of fundamental values and root paradigms that lead people to applaud one party and deplore the other, and if time allows in our discussion this might be one example to probe further in terms of how these cultural concepts are played out in the concrete.

Slide 32
Mercy in the Papal Triple Munera: Docendi, Gubernandi, and Santificandi

Saving the best for last, though, I would underline as one of the most important “Francis Effects” the message of mercy. *Lumen gentium* #25 lists “character, frequency and manner” as the three principal criteria in helping the faithful determine the proper *obsequium religiosum* to give to teachings of the ordinary magisterium, i.e., that which is *not* defined as infallible, irreformable, and calling for the assent of belief.52

Theologically “mercy” certainly is a core message of the Gospel and many would argue an essential characteristic of God as well.53 Therefore, it certainly would rank very high in the “character” criterion, and I think it can be plausibly argued much higher than some of the other neuralgic issues in the Church such as the “grave evil” of masturbation, artificial contraception, in-vitro fertilization, and so on.54 While few would directly contest “mercy” in public, it nevertheless seems clear that many would not like to utter a profound “amen” to Jesus’ words that God desires mercy and not sacrifice.55

Slide 33
There is likewise no possible doubt of satisfying the “frequency” criterion, as “mercy” and related themes occupy Pope Francis’ exercise of the munus docendi on virtually a daily basis. He truly lives his episcopal motto, Miserando atque eligendo and has consistently stayed more on the message of mercy than probably any other of the many themes he has covered in his various homilies, allocutions, and writings.

Instituting the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy with its corresponding Papal Bull of Indiction, Misericordiae vultus would be nearly the highest “manner” available in the papal magisterium, and one in which Pope Francis has joined his munus docendi to the munus sanctificandi, which could also be interpreted as an exercise of the munus gubernandi.

Slide 34
The Bull is also the best sustained reflection to date on Pope Francis’ understanding of the critical importance of mercy in the economy of salvation and the mission of the Church, and while it merits a much fuller discussion than is possible here, let me simply cite just one key passage: “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love (MV #10).” Therefore, I would simply conclude this section by re-affirming my belief that Pope Francis’ message of mercy is not only one of the principal effects of his papacy so far, but also clearly satisfies three criteria for calling for a sincere religious respect of both the intellect and will on the part of all Catholics, starting with the ordained members of the Church who have been charged in a special way with this mission of mercy.

**Resistance to the Francis Effect**

**Slide 35**
As Isaac Newton observed, for every action there is an equal opposite reaction and not even a pope is exempt from this law of (human) nature. At least a book could be written outlining the growing resistance and rejection of the Francis Effect in some conservative corners of the Church community. Some, like Bishop Thomas Tobin of Providence, Rhode Island, have been breathtakingly “frank” in their remarks about Pope Francis after the Extraordinary Synod: “Pope Francis is fond of ‘creating a mess’. Mission accomplished.”

Slide 36
Others, like Burke protégé San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, seem not to have gotten the memo yet on priorities and policies that are currently endorsed by the Holy Father, as can be seen from the differing responses to the homeless and a number of policy “priorities” in terms of “Catholic identity.”

Slide 37

The anti-Francis Effect shows in different ways the truth of my governing thesis about how the core dynamics of fundamental values and root paradigms function in contested areas of Church dogma, discipline, mores, and even morality in the exercise of the munus docendi and munus gubernandi. The dust-up over the possible change of discipline concerning admitting the divorced and remarried to the Sacraments may be the most “high profile,” example, but it is hardly a solitary instance. Using O’Malley’s four cultures taxonomy we might analyze resistance to the Francis Effect in terms of a preference for culture 2 (the academic) over culture 3 (the rhetorical). Attractive as this hypothesis may seem at first glance I believe it is insufficient to account for the depth, and breadth, of increasingly vitriolic, polarizing discourse coming from those who used to pride themselves on being in the front lines of the papal shock troops. It really is more profoundly about truth claims contained in these various fundamental values.
In this vein consider Rev. Dwight Longenecker’s recent *National Catholic Register* blog stating “Catholic beliefs are not simply a matter of opinion; they are a matter of fact. Even if we want to, we can’t change the essentials of the sacrament of marriage — not because we can’t change our beliefs, but because we can’t change facts.” What probably discomfits the Father Logneneckers of the Church is the Pope’s unwillingness to employ the term “facts” in speaking of Catholic beliefs. Here we have a key clash of cultural paradigms.
Challenges and Opportunities for the Future

Let me conclude with some brief take-aways of the effect Pope Francis has had on the Church since we last heard some 807 days ago: *Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: Habemus Papam!* As I believe I have at least outlined, a key part of the Francis Effect is that a thousand flowers are beginning to bloom. Voices once quite muted, and moderates long out of power have emerged clearly in both the religious and secular spheres. Taking a cue no doubt from Pope Francis’ most quoted phrase, “Who Am I to Judge?” some hierarchs have begun to express themselves in terms unthinkable in the previous pontificates.

Thus, while indeed many of us would still say “Amen!” to this *gaudium magnum*, it is also now distressingly clear that significant portions of the Catholic community do not, or no longer, share in this great joy. One part of the Francis Effect pulse-taking that remains for me as one of the most disquieting is the level of acrimony that seems to have come to the surface. Not only those perceived to be “too liberal,” such as Cardinal Walter Kasper, but even the Pope himself are increasingly subjected to a level of critique that could only be classified morally as calumny and slander.
Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke is probably the most visible Church figure doing his best to counter what he considers to be the dangerous evils of the Francis Effect. I am presuming that most of us are fairly well acquainted the main thrust of His Eminence’s frequent interviews, homilies and assorted *obiter dicta*. Troubling as these are, I would like to signal at least one possible contribution Cardinal Burke et al. are making to the world of theological discourse, namely a re-casting of the understanding of the primacy of conscience. Until the papacy of Pope Francis many upheld a strong Roma *locuta, causa finita* view of even the “non-infallible” teachings of the so-called Ordinary Magisterium. If Rome seems to have spoken the matter is closed. Period.

Now we see the outlines of at least a theoretical position that allows dissent from Church positions with which they might fundamentally disagree. The forthcoming Synod may lift up again the position that we are required always to follow our conscience presuming of course that we have taken sufficient care both to form and inform it.

Slide 40
The Church remains a very human institution and hopefully the concepts of cultural fundamental values and root paradigms may provide another methodology for analyzing what is going on today. In theory at least I think virtually everyone could admit that human knowledge is always limited, and so it is not only “possible” but indeed probable that our individual and corporate views on any given issue will be culturally conditioned and paradigm-dependent. By acknowledging this epistemological fact we can better build a bridge to cross over the conflicts that impede the spread of the Gospel.

This, I think, is what Pope Francis was trying to do in his Closing Discourse at the October 2014 Synod (see Slide 40 above).

Slide 41
Here both St. Ignatius of Loyola’s “Presupposition” in the *Spiritual Exercises* and St. Augustine’s guidelines for discernment may provide at least partial antidotes to the perennial problem of *odium theologicum* which are worth recalling here: *in fide, unitas; in dubiis, libertas; in omnibus, caritas*.64

**Slide 42**

Finally, echoing Bishop Thomas Tobin of Providence: “Relax, God is still in charge.”65

---

1 As veteran Vaticanista John Allen observed in a recent column for the *Crux*: “Pollsters and sociologists continue to debate whether there’s a discernible “Francis effect” on Catholicism in terms of measures such as Mass attendance and willingness to self-identify as Catholic. One arena in which there’s no doubt that Francis has had an impact, however, is journalism, specifically the willingness of media organizations to invest in Vatican coverage. Recently, for instance, the Wall Street Journal hired veteran Rome correspondent Francis X. Rocca, a friend and colleague.” See http://www.cruxnow.com/church/2015/04/18/beyond-powerlessness-over-anti-christian-
A pope dies, they just make another” is usually generally to downplay the significance of what might be considered to be historical events of grand importance.

For a video of the scene from the first white smoke to the appearance of Pope Francis see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZfAbTLlewjs (accessed April 13, 2015).

For a contrast with the first appearance of Papa Ratzinger see http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/popebenedictxvi.htm (accessed April 13, 2015).

“The end of the world.”

The artistic representation of that vision erected in behind the high altar of the Church of St. Ignatius in Rome gives it in the plural (vobis) and increasingly many Jesuits now interpret this as a promise Christ made not just to Ignatius individually, but to the Society of Jesus as a whole.

The Meditation on the Two Standards (Christ’s and Satan’s) is key in the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises and a necessary propaedeutic to the Election regarding one’s life that the retreatant would make later on in the retreat. The text of the Meditation can be found at http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/twostandards-text.html (accessed April 20, 2015).
While Ignatius was “clear” on receiving the vision of being placed by God under the Cross of His Son, Ignatius himself was confused as to what the “Ego Romae propitious ero” would entail concretely, and initially Ignatius supposed it might signal a forthcoming physical martyrdom.

The locus classicus for Francis’ words in this area is his interview done with Fr. Antonio Spadaro, S.J. of Civitá Cattolica and simultaneously published in a number of Jesuit periodicals. For the English version see “A Big Heart Open To God” in America (23 September 2013).

See Canon 747ff. Its exposition is hierarchically presented from the pope down to the baptized lay person, but it is worth keeping in mind that the CIC does explicitly allow for lay exercise of the munus docendi, as long as this is in cooperation with bishops and priests (cf. CIC 759). In the canonical paradigm the munus docendi is closely linked therefore to the munus gubernandi and for legitimate governance and jurisdiction sacramental ordination is presumed. For an online link to the English translation of this Book of the current Code see http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/__P2H.HTM (accessed April 20, 2015).

Again, see Thomas Kuhn The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, which I have already referenced above.

Pope Francis is referenced directly four times in the document, though the quotes hardly furnish more than a bit of “garnish” to a dish that was clearly already in the oven. At this point in the ITC Sensus fidei document there is place a footnote (#95) which reads as follows: A fundamental disposition required for authentic participation in the sensus fidei is acceptance of the proper role of reason in relation to faith. Faith and reason belong together,[113] Jesus taught that God is to be loved not only ‘with all your heart, and with all your soul, … and with all your strength’, but also ‘with all your mind [nous]’ (Mk 12:30). Because there is only one God, there is only one truth, recognised from different points of view and in different ways by faith and by reason, respectively. Faith purifies reason and widens its scope, and reason purifies faith and clarifies its coherence.[114].

One of the effects, perhaps, of the current papacy is the renewed interest this concept has occasioned. It will be the central theme of the forthcoming convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America meeting in Milwaukee June 11-14, 2015 and also was featured in “Wake Up Lazarus,” a theological list-serve that takes up different themes and invites theologians to post short reflections. For the latter see http://wakeuplazarus.net/2015/sensus.html (accessed April 26, 2015)


There are many instances of this exercise of “freedom” in Cardinal Müller’s various interviews. For one such wide-ranging example see All quotations from this interview are taken from “Cardinal Muller says no to second marriage without annulment” http://www.globalpulsemagazine.com/news/cardinal-muller-says-no-to-second-marriage-without-annulment/1016 (accessed March 31, 2015).

Gammarelli’s, located behind the Pantheon and across from Santa Maria sopra Minerva, is the pre-eminent ecclesial tailor shop that furnishes not only the papal cassock but most other hierarchical sartorial finery. Cardinal Burke would be one of their more important clients.

See http://ncrelsonline.org/news/vatican/new-cardinal-vatican-should-be-voice-voiceless (accessed February 10, 2015). In a follow-up to this latest consistory on April 13, 2015 Pope Francis appointed these new cardinals as consultors to a number of Vatican congregations--where the real work and corresponding influence would take place, and where past prelates such as Cardinals Rigali and Burke excelled. Burke’s replacement on the Apostolic
Signatura, Cardinal Dominique Mamberti, was named to several of the posts formerly occupied by Cardinal Burke, such as Bishops, Divine Worship, Secretariat of State, Saints. The other new cardinals who were among the “surprises” named by the Pope were named consultants to the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples: Cardinals John Atcherley Dew, archbishop of Wellington, New Zealand; Pierre Nguyen Van Nhon, archbishop of Ha Noi, Viet Nam; Francis Xavier Kriengsak Kovithavanij, archbishop of Bangkok, Thailand; Arlindo Gomes Furtado, bishop of Santiago de Cabo Verde, Cape Verde; and Soane Patita Paini Mafi, bishop of Tonga.

32 Despite the positive dimension of bringing the periphery into closer proximity with the “dead center” or Roman Catholicism, some honest questions have been voiced about the over-all, long-term effectiveness of this increased geographical and cultural diversity, e.g., this analysis from veteran religion reporter David Gibson posted in US Catholic on February 17, 2015: “But will diversifying the College of Cardinals make it look more like the church’s global flock of 1.2 billion members? Or will it leave the electors so fragmented by geography, language and viewpoints that they won’t be able to serve as a counterweight to career churchmen in Rome? ‘Prelates who have no Vatican experience, who don’t speak Italian, and who don’t themselves have the experience of running a large and complex ecclesiastical operation, may feel a natural tendency to defer to the old hands’ who have been blamed for Rome’s troubles, veteran Vatican expert John Allen wrote on the Catholic news site Crux. The bottom line is that Francis may run the risk of bolstering the old guard rather than cutting it down to size,” he said. See more at: http://www.uscatholic.org/news/201502/pope-francis-diversifies-his-cardinals-will-they-have-clout-where-it-counts-29819?utm_source=February+17%2C+2015&utm_campaign=ebulletin+Feb.+17%2C+2015&utm_medium=email#sthash.WbkYh003.dpuf. On the other hand, for a contrary conclusion based on the same data set see the lament posted by conservative blogger Deacon Greg Kandra on Patheos http://www.patheos.com/blogs/deaconsbench/2015/02/for-anyone-who-wants-to-go-back-to-the-way-things-were-before-francis-its-game-over/ (accessed February 17, 2015).

33 Examples of episcopal protégés of the Burke/Rigali faction would certainly include Their Excellencies Salvatore Cordileone (San Francisco), Robert Vasa (Baker, OR and now Santa Rosa, CA), Thomas Olmsted (Phoenix), Michael Barber, SJ (Oakland). Another culture warrior who could be counted in this branch of the fraternity (even if not having the same strong personal connection with Rigali and Burke) would be Robert Morlino (Madison, WI) who in an interview with Raymond Arroyo on EWTN asserted that bishops “are chosen by God” and therefore “govern by divine right.” The pope is just the “instrument” of God in this appointment process, and Morlino indicates that it is theologically problematic to judge or remove a bishop since he has been chosen by God. For this interview broadcast on February 12, 2015 see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BVp-0IPh1Q (accessed April 27, 2015) Bishop Morlino’s remarks on episcopal divine right come at 7 minutes into the interview.


35 See example a recent address of Archbishop-Elect John Wester to the Utah League of Women Voters in which he says that real immigration reform has to begin with ourselves, so that we first see undocumented immigrants not as "illegals" but as brothers and sisters. See http://www.sltrib.com/news/politics/2452684-155/bishop-wester-immigration-reform-may-require (accessed May 1, 2015).


37 Consider in this context the case of Auxiliary Emeritus Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit, who was told in 2011 that he had to resign as pastor for violating the communio episcoporum by speaking in favor of extending the statute of limitations in filing reports by victims of clerical sex abuse. Gumbleton had been a thorn in the magisterial side for decades on a number of issues ranging from war and peace to acceptance of homosexuals among the clergy.

38 For a sampling of these reactions see Gloria TV: “Hated For Being Catholic: The true reason why Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City-Saint Joseph was sacked on April 21 is obvious: He was a Catholic” http://www.gloria.tv/media/1e9B8K7yo1Z (accessed April 24, 2015); “Finn Removal: Before It's Over FrancisChurch Will Be So Squeaky Clean There Won't Be a Catholic Left” (Frank Walker of Pewsitter.org on April 21, 2015 at http://www.pewsitter.com/view_news_id_201798.php; “Poor Bishop Robert Finn finally hounded from office” Tantumblogo on https://veneremurcernui.wordpress.com/2015/04/21/poor-bishop-robert-finn-finally-hounded-from-office/ (accessed April 21, 2015). Of all the conservative reactions, though, Donahue’s was the most disingenuous, as it seemed to suggested Finn had been sacked for moving towards greater transparency in removing any semblance of cover-up by episcopal superiors of the misdeeds of their clerical subordinates: “Our prayers are with Bishop Finn, and we thank him for cleaning up the mess he inherited. It will make his successor’s job that
much easier” from http://www.catholicleague.org/bishop-robert-finn-resigns/ (posted and accessed April 21, 2015);


39 “Promoting so as to remove.” E.g., the “promotion” of then Archbishop Raymond Leo Burke from his diocesan see of St. Louis to the Apostolic Signatura in Rome during the papacy of Benedict XVI. Burke had caused something of a bruta figura with some of his less rigid American brother bishops by his intransigent refusal to admit to Communion Democratic Party candidates, most notably 2004 presidential contender John Kerry, who had been explicitly welcomed to Communion by Kerry’s diocesan ordinary, Cardinal William McCarrick of Washington, D.C.


42 Lest there be too much jubilation over the resolution of the LCWR standoff, the editors of the National Catholic Reporter observe that as long as there are no systemic changes to this particular mode of exercising the munus guberandi in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith there would be little to prevent another such scenario from occurring. See their editorial “Hierarchy's flaws persist despite collegial end to LCWR investigation” at http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/editorial-hierarchys-flaws-persist-despite-collegial-end-lcwr-investigation (posted and accessed May 1, 2015).


44 In his General Audience of April 28, 2015 Pope Francis stated “"Why is it expected that women must earn less than men? No! They have the same rights. The disparity is a pure scandal." See http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/francis-firmly-backs-equal-pay-women-citing-christian-radical-equality#.VUDtGaXdfWA.twitter (accessed April 29, 2015).


46 I have presented two public lectures on the Synods that do analyze them in some depth. See “Re-reading the Roman Tea Leaves on the Synods on the Family” at https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/BretzkeSynodOnTheFamilyWadeLecture.pptx with the accompany script at https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/BretzkeSynodOnTheFamilyWadeLectureScript.pdf (uploaded April 5, 2015). An earlier talk which was given very shortly after the conclusion of the October 2014 Extraordinary Synod can be found as “Life Matters: Reflections Extraordinary Synod on the Family” https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/BretzkeSynodOnTheFamilyBCTalk.pptx with the accompanying script at https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/BretzkeSynodOnTheFamilyBCTalkScript.pdf (uploaded October 26, 2014). The video-cast of the October 28, 2014 lecture can be found at http://www.bc.edu/schools/stm/edevnts/CampusEvents/PastLectures/2014/10-28-2014.html

47 For the text see http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20140626_instrumentum-laboris-familia_en.html (accessed 6/26/2014 8:33:30 AM). The working language of the report was in Italian, and there was pushback in the first English translation which seemed to be too positive to gay and lesbian issues. So the first English translation was replaced by what clearly is a “dynamic un-equivalence” translation on the Vatican web-site (e.g., removing from the Italian the term “dei partners” and replacing it with “these persons”). Since this inferior translation though remains the most accessible version I will supply its URL here: http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2014/10/13/0751/03037.html (accessed 10/16/2014)
The various translation issues are treated briefly in my two Synod presentations referenced above, but which time does not allow further treatment here.


51 This interview, given to Life-Site News on October 9, 2014, can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MOlho3wGi4&list=UUYImiD9L0dMycnrfBy2al0OQ (accessed May 1, 2015).

52 “His [the Pope’s] mind and will in the matter [of the teaching] may be known either from the character of the documents, from his frequent repetition of the same doctrine, or from his manner of speaking.” Lumen gentium #25, official Vatican translation found at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed May 1, 2015, emphasis added).


54 The terminology and list comes from Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone’s proposed language for faculty contracts and handbook for teachers in the San Francisco high schools under his direct supervision. There is a considerable amount of conflict in the Archdiocese over the Archbishop’s initiatives. For the original proposed text see http://www.catholic-sf.org/printer_friendly.php?id=63175 (accessed 2/4/2015 1:16:35 PM).

55 For an example of a lament from the lunatic fringe see “Fr. Z’s blog” in which he criticizes the Pope’s failures to expand on the spiritual work of mercy of “admonishing the sinner.” See http://wdtprs.com/blog/2015/04/a-curious-lacuna-in-misericordiae-vultus-the-bull-for-the-holy-year-of-mercy/ (accessed May 2, 2015). Regrettably this is not a solitary voice crying the wilderness; a few of my seminarians likewise have criticized “hyper-mercy” in my Sacrament of Reconciliation course.

56 “Lowly but chosen.” Pope Francis prefers this translation of the Latin, which is a reference taken from the homilies of the Venerable Bede on the call of the tax collector in Matthew’s Gospel, and speaks of God’s mercy in choosing him as bishop and then pope.

57 E.g., see his homily on Monday March 23, 2015 based on the readings of Susanna in the Book of Daniel and the Woman Caught in Adultery in John’s Gospel: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/03/23/pope_%E2%80%9Cwhere_there_is_no_mercy_there_is_no_justice%E2%80%9D/1131468 (accessed March 25, 2015). Some conservative bloggers have acerbically noted, though, that the Pope’s homily falls short, since he omitted Jesus’ final words which they feel must be the central message: “Go and sin no more.”

58 E.g., see his allocution to priests, exhorting them always to treat penitents with mercy, and not to deny the Sacraments to people. See http://cnstopstories.com/2015/04/27/no-boring-homilies-pope-tells-new-priests-at-ordination/ (accessed April 27, 2015).

59 For the Papal Bull establishing the Jubilee Year of Mercy see http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html (accessed April 11, 2015). For an explanation of the significance of this Jubilee of Mercy see Archbishop Rino Fisichella’s March 14, 2015 article in Famiglia Christiana at http://www.famigliaristiana.it/articolo/fisichella.aspx (accessed May 2, 2015). Archbishop Fisichella has been given the task of organizing the practical aspects of the Jubilee Year.


62 As with so many other topics, we could write at least a chapter on these individuals. More “noteworthy” in the Archdiocese of San Francisco would be the contrasting approach to “showers” for the homeless between the Vatican and the Cathedral. In the latter case those unfortunate who sought shelter under the overhang of the St. Mary’s Cathedral portico found themselves doused repeatedly by water for 75 seconds every half-hour as a way to “discourage” them taking up temporary residence there. Much more can be said on Cordileone, and for one assessment see the April 16, 2015 column in the local San Francisco Chronicle by C.W. Nevius, “S.F. Archbishop


64 In matters of faith, unity; in matters of doubt, liberty; in all things, charity.

65 Bishop Thomas Tobin, “From Bishop Tobin: Random Thoughts About the Synod on the Family.”