

Latest news from a Catholic Bishop, a Vicar General and a Catholic Theologian on Alleged Messages of Fr. Michel Rodrigue

As a member of the International Marian Association (<https://internationalmarian.com/>), I am happy to provide you with the following information on the Church's present-day position on the alleged messages that have been circulated in Canada and elsewhere.

Below are three communications from a Catholic Bishop, the Vicar General and my interview with a Catholic priest and theologian who has obtained several advanced degrees from the Pontifical Universities of Rome.

Sharon Freeman, President House of Loreto,
International Marian Association Member

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The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin
Mary

Overview

1 - Catholic Bishop addresses a website and book that promotes Fr. Michel Rodrigue's alleged messages

2 - Catholic Bishop's Vicar General addresses Fr. Rodrigue and exorcisms

3 - Interview with a Catholic Priest and Theologian on Dr. Mark Miravalle's Theological Evaluation of the alleged messages

1 - Communication from The Most Reverend Bishop Gilles Lemay

Peace be with you,

I thank you for your e-mail requesting some information about the teaching and the standing of Father Michel Rodrigue, a priest incardinated in the diocese of Hearst-Moosonee, Ontario, and working in this diocese of Amos, Québec, for a few years. He is the founder of the Fraternité Saint-Benoît-Joseph-Labre, a lay association of the faithful which is not a religious institute.

As you probably did too, I read on the Countdown to the Kingdom website related to Fr. Michel and also in the book of Christine Watkins, 'The Warning. Testimonies and Prophecies the Illumination of Conscience' (Note 84, p. 278 and p. 280), that: "Michel Rodrigue receives the full support of his bishop, and all of his locutions and visions are submitted to his local ordinary for approval." This quotation was removed these days from the website after a request I sent to Fr. Michel. No mention is made of the reason for the removal, that is to say, because it was untrue. However, the quotation remains in the book mentioned above.

*I have to tell you that Fr. Michel never submitted to me any of his locutions and visions for discernment or approval. Accordingly, **I could not have supported the content of his talks which are not presented in my diocese nor elsewhere in the Province of Québec as far as I now, but mostly in the United States. Moreover, I learnt about his teaching while reading some reports on the website mentioned. I did not and do not approve of his teaching with regard to his locutions and visions. Consequently, it is untrue that he "receives the full support of his bishop" as it is written in the Countdown to the Kingdom website and in the quoted book (The Warning. Testimonies and Prophecies the Illumination of Conscience).***

I thank you for your request. If you wish any further information, I will be pleased to respond as much as possible.

Truly yours in Christ,

*+ Gilles Lemay,
Bishop of Amos, Québec*

2 – Communications of July 23 2020 from Bishop G. Lemay’s Vicar General Fr. Raymond Martel

Thank you for your email. Being in the Diocese of Amos since August 2011, Father Michel Rodrigue has never received from Bishop Gilles Lemay the faculties of exorcist for our diocese.

Blessings and communion in prayer.

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Those who assert that Fr. Rodrigue “is an official exorcist in the Church,” are incorrect. They are reminded by the Vicar General of the Diocese of Amos in which he has resided for the past nine years that he was not vested with the “special and express permission of his local bishop”, which the Church’s Code of Canon Law requires to perform major exorcisms and/or to enjoy the title of official exorcist: *“No one can perform exorcisms legitimately upon the possessed unless he has obtained special and express permission from the local ordinary”* (can. 1172,1). The title, ‘official exorcist in the Church’ is not conferred on those who recite deliverance prayers or perform minor exorcisms.

The US Catholic Conference of Bishops states that exorcisms are divided into two forms, 1) Simple or minor forms of exorcism, and 2) *Solemn or “Major Exorcism.”* The simple or minor forms are for simply those preparing for Baptism - children and/or adults in the RCIA program. The second form is the Solemn or “Major Exorcism,” which is a rite that can *only be performed by a bishop or by a priest, with the special and express permission of his Local Bishop (can. 1172)*. This Major Exorcism form is directed “at the expulsion of demons or to the liberation [of a person] from demonic possession” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1673).

3 – Interview with Catholic Theologian Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi, S.T.L., S.Th.D.

Point 1 - Communication from The Most Reverend Bishop Gilles Lemay on the non-supernatural nature of Fr. Michel Rodrigue's alleged messages

Loreto Pres.: Fr. Joseph, after repeated requests from the people of God, members of the International Marian Association and members of the clergy are seeking your valuable insights on the alleged messages of Fr. Michel Rodrigue. Your extensive background in mystical and dogmatic theology and demonology would be of service to the people of God. As a *peritus* theologian of several causes for beatification, and one who has performed exorcisms with written permission, may I ask your theological insights into the 10 points of negative critique by Dr. Mark Miravalle concerning the alleged messages of Fr. Michel Rodrigue? Can you respond to his first point?

Father: In point 1 Dr. Miravalle did well to share with the Christian faithful the position of the Most Reverend Bishop G. Lemay of the Diocese of Amos. I wish to emphasize that Canon Law vests the bishop as an individual (can. 823, 2) with the authority to express his own discernment and decision concerning teachings either in writing or spoken via social media; this is especially so when they may have an ill effect on the faith morals of the faithful, even without and/or before a formal judgment is rendered through a formal commission. The Catholic Church's Code of Canon law states,

"In order to safeguard the integrity of faith and morals, pastors of the Church have the duty and the right to ensure that in writings or in the use of the means of social communication there should be no ill effect on the faith and morals of Christ's faithful... they have the duty and the right to condemn writings which harm true faith or good morals" (Canon 823 §1).

Should one nurture a desire to contest a bishop's decision, he/she ought to have well-founded theological, canonical or pastoral reasons for doing so. When one contests a teaching of the Magisterium, one must "avoid turning to the 'mass media', but have recourse to the responsible authority, for it is not by seeking to exert the pressure of public opinion that one contributes to the clarification of doctrinal issues and renders service to the truth" (Instruction from the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Donum Veritatis*, 30).

Point 2 - Abnormal Diabolical Interaction

Loreto Pres.: Fr. Joseph, you received permission to assist Fr. Gabriel Amorth, the exorcist of Rome, in performing exorcisms. As a priest theologian who has performed both major and minor exorcisms, can you comment on Dr. Miravalle's second point? He considers the young Michel Rodrigue's burning down of the family home in order to free himself and the family from evil spirits a negative indication of proper balance. Many people have found this episode very odd.

Here in Canada, the fire department and the police attend the scene of a fire, and an investigation is conducted to determine the cause of fire, i.e., electrical, arson, etc. In the case of arson or negligence, charges are laid. In the outskirts of the small city of Rimouski, Quebec, where Fr. Michel Rodrigue lived, there would be a fire department and a police department in charge of this community.

Father: Allow me first to say that to a young man whose conscience is maturing and being formed and who believes that his house was visited by evil or is infested, the Church encourages prayers of deliverance or simple or major exorcisms, even if this may take repeated efforts and much time to achieve. When confronting places where evil actions are believed to have occurred, the Church offers ritual prayers and acts of deliverance and consecration to undo the desecration and, at times, converts them into places of Christian worship. I have personally known of families that have left houses that they believed were visited by demons, only to be revisited by them in their new locations, even hundreds of miles away. Tertullian wrote in *De Spectaculis*, "The places themselves do not contaminate, but what is done in them," and there are eleven pagan temples that the Catholic Church had converted into what are now Church sites in Rome. Additionally there are three Roman sanctuaries to the pagan god Mithras that were converted and built over with Churches.

Point 3 - Ambiguous Theological Assertion

Loreto Pres.: Dr. Miravalle shares concern for an alleged message of Fr. Rodrigue whom he cites as follows,

“My dear sons and daughters... Together, I ask you to do everything you can to help My son, Michel (Rodrigue), to build the monastery that will form the priests aware of the end times and responding to the call of My daughter, Mary. The cohort of the saints now comes to earth with My daughter, Mary, and your grandma, Anna, to help you ask for My Son’s intercession. I refuse nothing of what He asks of me. He and I are One.”

Father: Among the various elements that determine the veracity of a given private revelation, the theologian examines its doctrine (substance) and grammar (form). Grammatically, this statement is ambiguous, for, on the one hand, it refers to the good priest as God’s “son” (‘son’ in the lower case), and, on the other hand, it refers to “He” (in the upper case). Had this statement made reference to the divine persons of Jesus Christ or of the Holy Spirit, one may then happily affirm that ‘He’ refers to Jesus or the Holy Spirit, but they are not mentioned.

Also, if taken as an expression from God the Father to God the Son, the expression, *“I refuse nothing of what He asks of me,”* appears extraneously misplaced and unnecessary, as all three divine Persons are immutably united in what they desire; they are of one divine nature and therefore of one divine will. The meaning behind this expression would be relevant, for example, if it were coming from either Mary to her son Jesus, or from Jesus to his immaculate mother Mary.

I concur with Dr. Miravalle’s concerns when he states, “Even if the words are meant only figuratively, it nonetheless manifests a theological and pastoral concern that a priest with theological training would convey this alleged message with the ambiguity it contains.”

Loreto Pres.: Fr. Joseph, what are your theological thoughts on Fr. Rodrigue’s alleged message where he makes the assertion that people must *“do everything they can to help Fr. Rodrigue construct a monastery,”* and that *“the priests who are prepared by the Monastery of St. Benedict Joseph Labre will be those who serve the survivors”*? Bishop Gilles Lemay states in his letter that Fr. Michel established a “lay association” which is not a religious institute.

Father: First, canonically a “lay association” cannot incardinate and/or form/prepare priests for incardination. So the concept that in this lay

association “priests,” and not laymen, “are” prepared is perplexing and not canonically possible.

Second, one ought to exercise much caution here, as the Church has witnessed many who have claimed to receive messages on physical refuges, but in the end were declared false. Among these, worthy of mention are those messages of various alleged seers that I was asked to review from America, Europe and Asia, and that nurture fear of an impending calamity with financial advantage closely connected with the messages – they exhort others to spare no effort or expense in building physical refuges. If the Church encourages the prospect of individuals gathering together for prayer, meals and simple living, it does not advocate doing so for the purpose of establishing physical refuges.

In the New Testament and in the Church’s prophetic tradition one will not find exhortations from God or Mary requesting that the faithful do all they can to help in the construction of physical protection sites. Rather, the Church and its saints have consistently taught that the only refuge is not to be found in a physical structure, but in consecrating oneself with trust to the Sacred and Immaculate Hearts of Jesus and Mary who will see to it that one is provided for and as God intends.

Loreto Pres.: I wish to share here an excerpt of the testimony of July 21, 2020 of Mr. Theodore Saggezza, one of several Catholics who visited and were then dismayed by the refuges.

“This personal testimony is concerning how, providentially, I wound up visiting one of several so-called places of ‘refuge’ founded by and under the watch of Fr. Michel Rodrigue...I will share some of the impressions with everyone, for their own good, that they may not set their hopes on delusional or imaginative expectations, and do not run into any surprises (like some of us did). I share this experience for the sanity and wellbeing of their families, especially of their children and youth.

As we nodded yes and agreed, the gentleman proceeded to express his true thoughts and feelings about the place. First, *he apologized for the strong stench of rotten beans that was coming from a warehouse cabin where they had stored dry foods like beans, rice, grains, nuts, which they had purchased only a few months ago, and explained that, unfortunately, this has been the case for the last ten years. Ever since they began working*

on the refuge, because none of the prophecies of Fr. Michel ever come to pass, they've had to throw out so much food which rots time and time again, either because of the weather or because rodents and bugs make their way into the warehouse stockpile.

He began venting a bit, seemingly frustrated, that they have also had to tear down most of the cabins and rebuild them because of corrosion, water damage and throw out such expensive materials i.e. wood, sheet metal, carpet (because they rot or corrode over time). The gentleman said this was all because *Fr. Michel's prophecies and especially the dates that he forewarns about regarding when events are supposed to come down, never come to fruition.* So, in the meantime, *money, materials and goods keep coming,* but time and effort from volunteers really gets wasted. The workers (like him) are simply told to keep working because the next set of warnings and dates are on the horizon.

He actually sighed and lowered his head as he said that he was somewhat overwhelmed that *Fr. Michel just had a habit of simply pushing the dates down further every time. He said Fr. Michel will scrap the past prophecies and never go back to them, never gets questioned, so he thrives on updating and coming up with new versions every time.* What that does is get new people attracted into the movement, get them excited, and keeps the pipeline coming.

He gave us examples of how *Fr. Michel had prophesied some events that would come upon the world in December of 2019 which never came and prophesied something for June 2020 (which we now know also never came).* Unfortunately, he did not specify what those precise prophecies were, but we were so struck by what he was saying, that we none of us had the nerve to ask. We really felt for the man and could relate to him as we were pretty discouraged ourselves. You can see how even me sharing this experience does a favor for the poor gentleman.

He explained so much of the work they had done to install a water system for the compound, electricity, gutting, plumbing, but unfortunately, *as time went by, equipment wore out, materials rotted, food spoiled, pipes broke, and so on.* One interesting detail is that there was an old playground system for children with lots of old toys that had been sitting there for years. We asked if those toys were because anyone lived here and had children who played with the toys, or if they were simply put there in case

someone could use them in the future? He said there were people actually living there now, and that *many who had moved in—in the past, had left discouraged (since the prophecies never came)* and ended up leaving their toys and belongings there as well. Can you imagine!? And where are these people now!? Anyway, finally, he welcomed us to stay there for a few more minutes, perhaps pray inside the chapel, and check out the hill above where a second indoor chapel had been built, and so we did.

As we knelt at the outdoor chapel, praying in silence, asking Jesus to give us grace, light, discernment, understanding, while also feeling a sense of consolation that perhaps this place was not in His Will that we pursue after all... As we're praying, all of a sudden... we were interrupted by a tall slender man who walked out of what was clearly his cabin which was right next to the benches of the chapel where we were knelt in prayer. The man was clearly someone from the other band (if you know what I mean)...

Then, as if neither we nor the chapel were there, he began scanning his cell phone's radio app which was very loud and disturbing, until he reached a very inappropriate song... As we're knelt in prayer, the man begins playing the song out loud, and you could imagine, we are in total shock, but as if that was not enough, the man begins dancing... singing along very loudly... *We were absolutely shocked that in such a place like a chapel, that belonged to the 'refuge of the saints', founded by St. Michael the Archangel, overseen by Fr. Michel Rodrigue, the saintly prophet, priest, abbot and (alleged) exorcist who is making the rounds, here we were knelt in prayer, and a man like this is able to get away just like that!* Question: would you like your wife and children to have to live in a refuge with crazies like him? How safe or in God's presence would you feel if you had to share a kitchen with that man?

Realizing that there was obviously something very wrong with the man, that he could have been under the influence of some kind of substance, we immediately sped walked to the car, and *one woman was so terrified and scandalized (like we were), but she began saying, 'Please. We need to get out of here. Please, we need to get out of here'*. I calmed her down, and told her 'Yes, we will leave, don't worry, but since we're already here, we should probably check out what is up on the hill. We will make sure to not go back near the outdoor chapel.' I thought since we were there, we should take advantage of the time to really see what the place was all about. So, they all agreed.

We walked up through a Via Crucis pathway which led up to the indoor chapel that was up on the hill. We noticed that there were a few old and faded statues of more saints which were probably handmade, so they were not the nicest looking statues. One of the women pointed out the bamboo curtains that hung down in front of each of the niches that covered each of the statues and said they were very similar to how pagan oriental deities are kept in their home altars. The bamboo curtains, she said, were also a very common symbol used in new age groups to represent divinity. The reason the woman brought that up was because the gentleman that had greeted us had said that the main donor to this project was a Chinese woman.

Lastly, having reached the indoor chapel at the top of the hill, although it was closed, we were able to look inside and noticed the nice decoration, benches, altar, saint statues, frames, Tabernacle, but what really stood out to everyone was that *there was a big framed portrait of Fr. Michel Rodrigue on the wall inside the chapel. That was also very strange. I had never seen a large portrait of a priest inside a chapel where that priest presides.*”

Point 4 – Assertion that “Anti-christ is in the hierarchy of the Church right now”

Loreto Pres.: Fr. Joseph, can you address Dr. Miravalle’s response to the teaching of Fr. Rodrigue who proposes that the *“Anti-christ is in the hierarchy of the Church right now, and he has always wanted to be in the Chair of St. Peter”*?

Father: Theologically there is nothing in the Catholic Church’s patristic or hagiographical tradition that identifies the Antichrist with a pope or antipope. Dr. Miravalle does well to highlight this truth. Rather, the Catholic Church teaches that Antichrist may be understood as a supreme religious deception by which man glorifies himself in place of God (CCC, 675) or as several Anti-Christian individuals (2 Jn. 7) that may include an evil male individual such as the biblical “false prophet” (St. Irenaeus).

Those who are not conversant in prophetic` and dogmatic theology are apt to ignore the distinction between:

a) a male individual Antichrist figure who may seek to *suppress and replace* the exercise of all Petrine legitimate power – though, by virtue of the inerrant words of Christ and his Church (Mt. 16:17-18; CCC 895), he cannot actually replace the Vicar of Christ’s supreme, full and immediate authority over the Church;

b) an antipope (the Church has witnessed approx. 40 antipopes) who is invalidly elected and, in not seeking to ‘suppress and replace’ the Petrine power, seeks to *illegitimately exercise* it.

Since not one of the antipopes possessed any of the legitimate Petrine power that Christ confers only upon a legitimately elected Roman Pontiff, they could not seize, suppress or replace it, nor could they lead the Church in any legitimate capacity. Nowhere in the Church’s patristic and hagiographical tradition is there mention of an “Antichrist” individual who assumes or is elevated to power through an invalid papal election – an antipope – and *illegitimately exercises* Petrine power. Rather, in biblical, patristic and prophetic literature one discovers mention of an atheistic male tyrant whose fame is founded on deception and the usurpation of power, who despises God’s Church, who enjoys excessive material wealth, and who seeks to *suppress and replace* Petrine power. I elaborate on these traits in the publication, *Antichrist and the End Times* (<https://www.amazon.com/Antichrist-End-Times-Joseph-Iannuzzi/dp/1891903349>).

Loreto Pres.: Dr. Miravalle cites the Catholic Encyclopedia on Antichrist which states that Antichrist is not associated with the Papacy. The encyclopedia also cites St. Bernard to support this teaching. Can you expound on this?

Father: Although I have not met nor spoken with Dr. Miravalle, I have read this passage from the Catholic Encyclopedia that addresses Ss. Pope Gregory, Bernard and others who are falsely labeled as having identified Antichrist with the Papacy. During St. Bernard’s lifetime he experienced the schism caused by Peter Leonis that gave rise to Anacletus – one of approximately 40 antipopes. Also St. Bernard expressed in his letter to Bishop Geoffrey that he did not believe that Antichrist would be a reality in his lifetime. St. Bernard alluded to Anacletus and those who oppose the true Pope Innocence *metaphorically* as being either of Antichrist or Antichrist himself. However, it was not until 20 years after Bernard’s death that the excommunicated Waldensians and other sectarian groups identified the Pope with the Antichrist *literally*, and not

metaphorically. It is in this context that the Catholic Encyclopedia exposes the false connection between the Antichrist and the Papacy.

Point 5 – Predictions Incompatible with the Church Teaching

Loreto Pres.: May I ask your thoughts on the alleged prediction of Fr. Rodrigue that Dr. Miravalle finds unusual? In addition to identifying the Antichrist with an anti-Pope, Fr. Michel asserts that *“Pope Francis will be martyred, and that Pope Benedict XVI Emeritus, ‘who still wears the papal ring’ will subsequently convene a new council.”*

Father.: The Vatican’s 1978 document on alleged apparitions and revelations indicates that one of the signs of deception is unfulfilled prophecies. Recently the Vatican issued a statement that the pious but frail 93-year old Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI is quite ill. By all practical standards, he is and will not be in any condition to convene any council, nor can he do so legitimately as a Pope Emeritus.

Loreto Pres.: Can you elaborate on Dr. Miravalle’s response when he states, *“Pope Benedict XVI Emeritus is no longer pope and has absolutely no canonical or juridical power to convene a council”?*

Father: The Vatican II Council and the Catholic Catechism teach that "there never is an ecumenical council which is not confirmed or at least recognized as such by Peter's successor" (CCC, 884; *Lumen Gentium*, 22). The expression, "Peter’s successor" does not include a Pope Emeritus who is no longer the Roman Pontiff, but is restricted only to a validly elected and reigning Roman Pontiff. The idea of a Pope emeritus convening a council by virtue of donning a papal ring is canonically amiss, as it displaces legitimate with illegitimate power in the convocation of a council.

To assert that God can ignore Church law and bring about a council anyway he wants in these end times or without the recognition of the reigning Pontiff, is to excuse oneself of lawful obedience to ecclesiastical authorities upon whom God has bestowed the authority to establish a body of laws to regulate its organization and government and to order and direct the activities of Catholics toward the supernatural end and mission of the Church. The Church’s canon law includes divine law and human law in conformity with

divine law. For this reason the Church's canon law is sometimes referred to as pontifical law (*jus pontificium*) or sacred law (*jus sacrum*) or even divine law (*jus divinum*).

Loreto President: One of the more alarming predictions of Fr. Michel is his assertion that Pope Francis will realize his errors. Fr. Rodrigue makes the following statement, "*Pope Francis... will realize his errors and try to gather the Church back under the authority of Christ, but he will not be able to do so.*"

Father: This statement is not to be given any credence, as it suggests that Pope Francis has either taught or is teaching doctrinal errors – a dangerous and potentially schismatic assertion and precedent that contradicts the position of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, and the great majority of Catholic bishops and theologians who concur that Pope Francis has not taught or preached anything contrary to the Catholic faith. For the Church teaches that "schism is the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him" (CCC, 2089; cf. CIC, can. 751), and "the religious assent of the will and intellect is to be given in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Pontiff even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra*" (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 25).

The CDF Instruction *Donum Veritatis* 23 emphasizes the "religious assent of the will and intellect" that all must render to the Pope even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra* is not simply external, but it is also internal:

"When the Magisterium, not intending to act 'definitively', teaches a doctrine to aid a better understanding of Revelation and make explicit its contents, or to recall how some teaching is in conformity with the truths of faith, or finally to guard against ideas that are incompatible with these truths, the response called for is that of the *religious submission of will and intellect*. *This kind of response cannot be simply exterior or disciplinary but must be understood within the logic of faith and under the impulse of obedience to the faith.*"

Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles teaching in communion with the successor of Peter, and in a particular way, to the Roman Pontiff as Pastor of the whole Church, when exercising their ordinary Magisterium, even should this not issue in an infallible definition or in a 'definitive' pronouncement but in the proposal of some teaching which leads to

a better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals and to moral directives derived from such teaching.

One must therefore take into account the proper character of every exercise of the Magisterium, considering the extent to which its authority is engaged. It is also to be borne in mind that *all acts of the Magisterium derive from the same source, that is, from Christ who desires that His People walk in the entire truth.*

For this same reason, *magisterial decisions in matters of discipline, even if they are not guaranteed by the charism of infallibility, are not without divine assistance and call for the adherence of the faithful*” (*Donum Veritatis*, 17).

“To him (the Roman Pontiff), in blessed Peter, full power has been given by our Lord Jesus Christ to tend, to rule and govern the universal Church... Both *clergy and faithful*, of whatever rite and dignity, both singly and collective, *are bound to submit to this power by the duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, and this not only in matters concerning faith and morals, but also in those which regard the discipline and government of the Church* throughout the world... he is the supreme judge of the faithful...” (Vatican I, Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, 3).

The theologian Francisco de Suarez (1548-1617), a contemporary of R. Bellarmine, was sure that God’s “sweet providence” would not allow the Pope to fall into teaching error, and that this was guaranteed by the promise, “I have prayed for you (Simon) that your faith may not fail...” (Luke 22: 32). Much like Bellarmine and Suarez, Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787) did not believe that God would ever permit a Roman Pontiff to become a heretic, not even as a private person. He affirms:

“We ought rightly to presume as Cardinal Bellarmine declares, that God will never let it happen that a Roman Pontiff, even as a private person, becomes a public heretic or an occult heretic” (Dogmatic Works of St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, Turin, 1848, vol. VIII, p. 720).

To those who argue that there were past heretical popes, I prepared a theological response entitled, “Can a Pope Become a Heretic,” which is available gratis on the website, LTDW.org.

Loreto Pres.: Fr. Joseph, may I ask you to comment on the following prediction of Fr. Rodrigue who asserts, “A document by Pope Francis, *Magnum Principium*... which gave authority to national bishops’ conferences... If the pope doesn’t sign their proposals, which means rejecting what he has already given them the power to do, what will happen?... Rome will just sign the paper because they will feel that all the authority has been given to the bishops to make those changes in their own country. This doesn’t mean it will be the pope who accepts the document... The Church is now entering into the tomb.”

Father: The above statement of “the Pope rejecting what he has given them (the Catholic bishops) the power to do” is incompatible with the Church’s Code of Canon Law, as it suggests either a) that the Pope made an error in conferring upon the bishops the power with which canon law vests the Pope and, through him, the bishops (CIC, 447-459; CCC, 375, 886; LG 27), or b) that the Pope has regretted upholding the biblically inspired (Ex. 18:14-26) and canonically legitimate action of the conferral of said power.

It is odd that no mention is made of the teaching found in the same Apostolic Exhortation *Magnum Principium* that Pope Francis is doing nothing other than, “more clearly reaffirming” and “putting into practice” the “principles handed on since the time of the Council,” and “to define better the roles of the Apostolic See and the Conferences of Bishops in respect to their proper competencies which are different yet remain complementary. They are called to work in a spirit of dialogue regarding the translation of the typical Latin books as well as for any eventual adaptations that could touch on rites and texts.”

As for the second part of the above alleged prediction, namely, that “Rome will just sign the paper because they (sic) will feel that all authority has been given to the bishops”, this is flawed. For it suggests that Rome (the Vatican) has somehow acknowledged that the Catholic bishops have been illicitly given “all the authority,” which includes papal authority. Jesus Christ (Mt. 16.17-18) and the Magisterium teach that no matter what any one individual or group may do to try and seize papal power, they will fail. The Catholic Catechism, 895 states,

“Their authority (that of the bishops) must be exercised in communion with the whole Church under the guidance of the Pope”; *Lumen Gentium*, 22: ‘The college of bishops has... no authority unless united with the Roman Pontiff... Together with their head, the Supreme Pontiff, and never apart from

him, they have supreme and full authority over the universal Church; but *this power cannot be exercised without the agreement of the Roman Pontiff*.”

As indicated earlier (in Point 4), by virtue of the words of Christ and his Church, no one will be able to seize, suppress or replace the Vicar of Christ’s legitimately exercised supreme, full and immediate authority, and no one can be given this authority other than a validly elected and reigning Roman Pontiff.

Lastly, the assertion, “*The Church is now entering into the tomb*” is in need of clarification. This cannot signify that all the members of the Church are now about to die or enter the tomb. Sacred Scripture, the Catechism and the Church’s prophetic literature reveal that the Church will undergo a great trial before it experiences a figurative “final Passover” (CCC 677) at the end of time. This “final Passover of the Church” (CCC 1340), which was preceded by the “Jewish Passover” and by Jesus’ “new Passover” that gave definitive meaning to the Jewish Passover, follows the typology of both.

Inasmuch as the Jewish Passover led the Old Testament ecclesia from slavery to freedom, and Jesus’ new Passover perfected it with his death and Resurrection, the final Passover of the Church will experience, in and through its members, a final defection of the faith and the Particular Judgment of its remaining members (that occurs at the moment of the death), a resurrection (of all the dead) and a General Judgment (that occurs at the end of time and with the final coming of Christ). Only after these realities have transpired shall the Church, in all of its members, “enter the glory of the kingdom” (CCC, 677). It is in this context that one appreciates the affirmation, “The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection” (CCC 677).

Also insofar as the above expression, ‘the Church is now entering into the tomb’ appears related and subsequent to an imminent persecution of believers, and not immediately related or subsequent to the Church’s final Passover at the end of time, it appears misplaced. The place of the Church in times of persecution is biblically portrayed as the “desert” (Rev.12:6; 11:2) according to the typology of Exodus and Elijah. If approved prophetic Christian literature reveals that the Church will undergo an intensified period of persecution and the elements a fiery purification, these are ordered toward its renewal and sanctification under the impulse of the Holy Spirit in order that Christ “might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

Although the Church is still under attack by evil powers, Christ has definitively defeated them (CCC 671, 1 Pt. 3:18-20; Col. 2:15) and guaranteed the Church's victory over them (Mt. 16:18).

Loreto Pres.: Many people have reported that Fr. Michel tells them that by 2021 the entire world will be in turmoil, so according to his prophecy, they are left on their own to determine his credibility because they say the Vatican takes years to investigate these things. Also, people are posting over a dozen claims that Fr. Michel has made, but without any evidence that these things actually happened: <https://www.catholicbridge.com/catholic/fr-michel-rodrique.php>.

Father: This assertion that God has chosen to reveal himself at a time when it is too late for the Church to investigate or review such revelations, or, at the very least, for the local ordinary to express his approval or disapproval is erroneous. The history of Christian prophecy reveals that whenever God reveals himself with a message for the Church, he always does so after having conceived in his mind and preordained from eternity all times and seasons; he has preordained the persons, the places and the timing of his self-revelation in such a way that the people of God and the church may have the opportunity to welcome or reject his appeal.

Ordinarily the decision of the local Bishop is final on the authenticity of a revelation. If the bishop gives a negative judgment, such as not to go to the place of an alleged revelation or believe in the messages of the so-called seer, in obeying, we do not lose any graces. Christ saved the world by obedience (Rom. 5:19). Jesus revealed as much to Ss. Margaret Mary and Faustina. Again, if one wishes to contest the bishop's position, I already mentioned the Church's teaching on how to go about it (see point 3). If the bishop is in favor of the alleged revelation, he may offer an "approved for faith expression;" if the local bishop is against of it, he may then express his negative decision in writing, as it may have an ill effect on the faith and morals of the faithful, even without and/or before a formal judgment is rendered through a formal commission (see point 1).

One must always adhere to the Church's "criteria" for determining the authenticity of an alleged revelation. I articulate these criteria in the article entitled, "Alleged Revelations," which is available gratis on the website LTDW.org.

Point 6 - False Theological Assertion of Souls Beaten by Demons in Purgatory

Loreto Pres.: Can you elaborate on Dr. Miravalle's critique of Fr. Michel Rodrigue's claim on the souls in the lowest stage of purgatory? Fr. Michel states that these souls in purgatory are "*beaten by the devil as their purification.*"

Father: In his *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas Aquinas is confronted with the following erroneous objection, "It would seem that the souls in Purgatory are punished by the demons..." To this Aquinas replies, "even so now the elect (in purgatory) are cleansed after this life *by the Divine justice alone, and neither by the ministry of the demons* whom they have vanquished, nor by the ministry of the angels who would not inflict such tortures on their fellow-citizens."

Not one of the Church's saints who had been endowed with visitations and visions of souls in purgatory ever taught of the devil or demons beating souls in any level of purgatory. On the contrary, they speak of varying levels in purgatory of souls who suffer in proportion to their unexpiated sins. This is particularly evident in the writings of Ss. Bridgette, Francis of Rome and in *An Unpublished Manuscript on Purgatory* that bear the Church's *Imprimatur*, and which describe three main levels of purgatory: In the highest level one experiences only the deprivation of the sight of God and not the suffering that accompanies the lower levels. In the lowest level, marked by the most suffering, are those who have committed terrible crimes during life and whose death surprised them, but were saved as if by a miracle.

It is to this lowest level that some saints describe demons as taking on symbolic forms and 'standing by,' 'accompanying' or 'being among' certain souls. The purpose of God permitting these demons to appear in symbolic forms among certain souls of the lowest level is not to 'beat' them, as Aquinas indicates, but to manifest the divine justice's purging, cleansing and liberating action upon the soul's faculties of the memory, intellect and will. The manifestation of demonic images is part of the liberating action of exorcisms where, in being freed of demonic influence, the afflicted or the exorcist may intermittently perceive demonic images. Therefore, Aquinas states of some souls in (the lowest level of) purgatory, "even the demons, who rejoice in the punishment of man, accompany them and stand by while they are being cleansed, both that they may be sated with their pains, and that when these

leave their bodies, they may find something of their own in them” (*Summa Theologica, supplementum partis III, q. 2, a. 3*).

Unlike the souls in hell who experience perpetual despair as well as the fear of demons and the pains of hell, the souls in purgatory experience no despair, no fear of demons and no fear of the pains of purgatory; their wills are perfectly united with and compliant to the will of God, even in their state of desire and/or suffering. Rather, they experience profound hope (greater than any saint on earth) while they are being cleansed, as they possess with absolute certitude the knowledge that they will be perpetually united with God and the communion of saints and angels in the beatific vision. For this reason St. Francis de Sales states, “Their bitterest anguish is soothed by a certain profound peace. It is a kind of Hell as regards the suffering; it is a Paradise as regards the delight infused into their hearts by charity.” And St. Catherine of Genoa adds, “There is no peace to be compared with that of the souls in purgatory, except that of the saints in paradise, and this peace is ever increased by the inflowing of God into these souls, which increases in proportion as the impediments to it are removed.”

Point 7 - Alleged Meeting with Pope St. John Paul II

Loreto Pres.: What are your thoughts on the historical and concrete anomalies contained in Fr. Michel’s strange recount of alleged spontaneous meetings the Pope, and Dr. Miravalle’s identification of the errors surrounding this recount? Many find odd the coincidental similarities of this alleged meeting with Pope John Paul II and his alleged meeting with Fr. Slavko (neither of whom corroborated these alleged events). For instance, with the first event, Fr. Michel asserts that he found himself in Rome, climbed a staircase and surprisingly discovered Pope John Paul II at his desk. With the second event he asserts that he found himself in Medjugorje, descended a flight of stairs and surprisingly discovered Fr. Slavko on the side of the road and they went to a room.

Father: The anomalies proposed in the recount of the Pope are well addressed by Dr. Miravalle, which you may reference in point 7 of the footnote link.¹

¹ <https://www.motherofallpeoples.com/post/the-messages-of-father-rodrique-a-theological-evaluation>

Point 8 – Assertion that Pope John Paul II used a “Fake Pope”

Loreto Pres.: Would you care to expound on Fr. Michel Rodrigue’s assertion that Pope John Paul II used a “*fake Pope*” to allow him to “*sneak in through the back*” of the Vatican? Dr. Miravalle identifies the incongruity.

Father: Although he does not claim that Pope John Paul II had been replaced by another pope, as do the condemned messages of Veronica Lueken who purported that an “*imposter Pope*” governed the Catholic Church in place of Paul VI, the expression “fake Pope” and the idea of a Roman Pontiff sneaking away in a time of peace and not of war or invasion appears impractical and unfounded. St. Pope John Paul II was a man of the highest integrity, transparency and willingness to sacrifice himself. I speak as one who met him at the Vatican and abroad numerous times both privately and publicly, escorted people to greet him, and assisted in his papal ceremonies and Masses.

Point 9 – Unorthodox Theological Speculations

Loreto Pres.: Dr. Miravalle calls into question Fr. Rodrigue’s claim that God the Father instructed him that after the warning, everyone will recognize Christ and will want to serve the Lord, and that “*a period of repentance lasting about six and a half weeks when the devil will not have the power to act.*” Can you share your thoughts on this?

Father: This assertion is foreign to the Catholic Church’s biblical, patristic and prophetic traditions.

Loreto Pres.: Can you reply to the concerns surrounding Fr. Michel Rodrigue’s assertion that the era of peace will last only “*three generations?*”² You are an expert in this field, and the first theologian to present to the Catholic world a systematic teaching of the Magisterium’s position on the Era of Peace and its antithesis Millenarianism.

Father: Much like the previous assertion, the assertion of the era of peace lasting three generations is foreign to the Catholic Church’s biblical, patristic

² “*Jesus...will purify this world... But Satan will come back. [Fr. Michel said that this would happen after three generations.]*” (<https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/fr-michel-rodrigue-the-warning-the-tribulation-and-the-church-entering-the-tomb/>).

and prophetic traditions. From a practical angle, three generations is speculative in nature. Several Church Fathers, Doctors and early ecclesiastical writers allude to a prolonged period of triumphant Christianity symbolized by the expression 1,000 years. Among the early-century writers that teach of a period of Christian peace and holiness before the final coming of Christ, noteworthy are the Apostolic Church Fathers: Ss. Papias, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus of Lyons; the Early Ecclesiastical Writers: the author of the Epistle of Barnabas, Tertullian, St. Hippolytus of Rome, Origen, St. Methodius of Olympus and C.L. Lactantius; the Church Fathers and Doctors: St. Augustine and St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Bernard of Clairvaux; the Roman Pontiffs: Ss. John XXIII and John Paul II. The teachings of these learned and holy men on a period or era of universal peace before the final coming of Christ are presented in my publication bearing the preface of two Catholic bishops entitled, *The Splendor of Creation*.³

More pointedly, the Apostolic Father Saint Justin Martyr affirms, “A man among us named John, one of Christ’s Apostles, received and foretold that the followers of Christ would dwell in Jerusalem for *a thousand years*, and that afterwards the universal and, in short, everlasting resurrection and judgment would take place.”⁴

Tertullian writes, “We do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the [first] resurrection for *a thousand years* in the divinely built city of Jerusalem...”⁵

Lactantius relates, “...God labored during those six days in creating such great works... since God, having finished His works, rested on the seventh day and blessed it, at the end of the six thousandth year all wickedness must be abolished from the earth, and *righteousness reign for a thousand years*; and there must be tranquility and rest from the labors which the world now long has endured.”⁶

St. Augustine states, “...there should follow on the completion of six thousand years, as of six days, a kind of seventh-day Sabbath *in the succeeding*

³ The Splendor of Creation, Rev. J.L. Iannuzzi, St. Andrews Productions, McKees Rocks, 2004.

⁴ St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, in *The Fathers of the Church*, CIMA Publishing Co., NY, 1947, pp. 277-278.

⁵ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcion*, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody, MA: Henrickson Pub., 1995), Vol. 3, pp. 342-343.

⁶ Lactantius, “The Divine Institutes”, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody, MA: Henrickson Pub., 1995), Vol. 7, p. 211.

thousand years... This opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints, in that Sabbath, shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God.”⁷

In commenting on Pope John Paul II’s 1994 encyclical dedicated to the third Christian millennium that foresees a “new springtime” of Christianity that brings with it “a rediscovery of the Church’s holiness”⁸ and “a new era in the life of the Church,”⁹ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger acknowledged that the pontiff’s words concerning a new millennium allude to St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans, “Creation groans with eager longing for the revelation of the sons of God... Creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption and obtain the glorious freedom of the sons of God.”¹⁰ Cardinal J. Ratzinger commented, “And we hear today the groaning as no one has ever heard it before... The Pope does indeed cherish a great expectation that the millennium of divisions *will be* followed by *a millennium of unifications*.”¹¹

Point 10 – Perplexing Prophetic Assertions and Refuges

Loreto Pres.: Dr. Miravalle expresses concerns regarding Fr. Rodrigue’s specific instructions in relation to physical refuges. Fr. Rodrigue exhorts families to immediately leave their homes, properties and possessions after the warning. Fr. Michel Rodrigue states,

“...following the Warning... You will not bring a cell phone. You will leave the car far from you and your property. You will not use the Internet and will throw out your computer, your television, any kind of electronic device because the devil has already worked on these products before you obtained them...”

Dr. Miravalle stated that this “extraordinary directive could, under certain circumstances, lead to grave domestic and parental irresponsibility, substantial societal harm, and even communal manipulation.”

⁷ Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 3rd Printing, 1977), Bk. XX, Ch. 7.

⁸ Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Inuente* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta’ del Vaticano, 1994) 1, 16, 23, 30.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁰ Rom 8:19-21: *Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1992), translated by Fr. Joseph Iannuzzi from the original Greek text.

¹¹ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), translated by Adrian Walker.

Father: As noted, the Church encourages the prospect of individuals gathering together for prayer, meals and simple living, but it does not advocate doing so for the purpose of establishing physical refuges. While the Church and Sacred Scripture foretell of a time when the Church will be openly persecuted through an antichristian rebellion, and Christians martyred and forced to flee, as in times past (Gn. 19:17-19, 1 Kgs. 22:17, Hos. 10:8, Na. 3:18, Ez. 34:6, Heb. 11:38, etc.) to the desert or mountains (Mk. 13:14, Mt. 24:16-18, Lk. 21:21; 23:30), it does not exhort the faithful to prepare physical refuges. Apart from the untimely nature of the persecution and the authority that will be granted to “the beast... over every tribe, people, tongue, and nation” (Rev. 13:7), what control the faithful may yield over external circumstances and places will be largely compromised. Prayer that can move mountains, avert war and suspend natural laws will be the most formidable weapon and means of protection at the disposal of the Christian faithful.

In the ecclesiastically approved *Hours of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta, Jesus reveals that meditation of these Hours obtains protection for one’s soul and of the places wherever this soul resides: “Oh, how I would love that even one single soul for each town did these Hours of My Passion! I would hear Myself in each town, and My Justice, greatly indignant during these times, would be placated in part” (October 1914). Jesus also reveals in the Diary of Luisa, the subject of my doctoral dissertation, “The divine justice imposes chastisements, but neither these nor [God’s] enemies get close to those souls who live in the Divine Will... Know that *I will have regard for the souls who live in My Will, and for the places where these souls reside... Therefore, live in My Will and fear nothing*” (Volume 11, May 18, 1915).

Also St. Hannibal di Francia writes, “If on account of only one soul doing these Hours (of the Passion), Jesus would spare a city of chastisements and would give grace to as many souls as there are words of these sorrowful hours [one meditates], how many graces might a community [or any group of individuals] expect to receive?” (Letter of October 29, 1926). For those interested in obtaining a copy of these blessed Hours of the Passion, it is available on the website: LTDW.org.

In the Church’s approved prophetic literature over the span of 2000 years, God has never directed a prophet to inform families to flee to a constructed physical refuge after they have abandoned their jobs, properties

and cars. He has neither instructed them to throw out their phones, computers and electronic devices because all of the electronic “products” of these families had been “worked on by the devil.” Rather God directs the prophet to exhort the faithful through love to attune their ears to his voice, to discern his will in light of his Church’s teachings and to freely embrace it. The Church teaches that when one is called to change their ways, reform, abandon or detach him/herself from family, friends, home or certain personal effects, one is to do so ordinally and in compliance with one’s personal vocation. When a decision of this nature impacts other members of the family it is to be approached with yet greater care, and follow the counsels and mutual respect St. Paul offers in his epistles.

Though under certain circumstances a priest may, through a process of scrutiny, discernment and prayers, determine if a given object, i.e., “the aforesaid ‘electronic product,’ is truly infested and proceed to dispose of it in the proper manner, the Church does not encourage one to consider all of their electronic devices as diabolically infested products that must be discarded. Rather the Church offers prayers along with its sacramentals that are specifically ordered to the deliverance of persons and the removal from objects of possible infestation. I refer you to the Church’s teaching on the use of modern technology in these end times from the Pontifical Council for Social Communications entitled, “The Church and the Internet” (see the footnote link).¹²

Pope Francis alerted the faithful to the potential misuse of modern technology when he said that the Internet, “is an opportunity to promote encounter with others, but it can also increase our self-isolation, like a web that can entrap us.” But he emphasized that “young people are the ones most exposed to the illusion that the social web can completely satisfy them on a relational level. There is the dangerous phenomenon of young people becoming ‘social hermits’ who risk alienating themselves completely from society. This dramatic situation reveals a serious rupture in the relational fabric of society, one we cannot ignore.” He added that “while governments seek legal ways to regulate the web and to protect the original vision of a free, open and secure network, *we all have the possibility and the responsibility to promote its positive use.*”

¹² http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-internet_en.html.

Therefore I share Dr. Miravalle's concern in his response to the citation you quote above, namely, that such an "extraordinary directive could, under certain circumstances, lead to grave domestic and parental irresponsibility, substantial societal harm, and even communal manipulation."

Loreto Pres.: In these end times many Catholics are confused on which visionaries are fake and which are the actually true ones. As a group in need of proper theological guidance, would you have any advice to offer us?

Father: A few months ago I made available a short article that will help guide all Christians on effectively discerning true from false visionaries entitled, "Alleged Revelations," which is available on the website LTDW.org. Over the course of my 32 years of experience in religious life I have observed on the part of lay Catholics an increased reliance on the internet, websites, blogs and other forms of social media to promote seers, many of whose messages are unapproved and theologically erroneous.

The most prudent path for the lay faithful who promote unapproved seers to follow is that of respecting the local bishop's decision and of consulting with theologians qualified by the Catholic Church in dogmatic and spiritual theology. This is the Church's praxis.

Because we are living in the end times, it is natural that individuals express an interest in alleged messages pertaining to the end times. And yet one must be mindful not to fall prey to deception, which happens *more often than not* when following unapproved seers. Therefore, it is healthy to be cautious while always looking to the Church, that is, the expressed theological position of the local bishop along with the Church's theologians.

In many cases, unapproved end-time messages mix "approved" end-time messages with "unapproved" alleged messages that are oftentimes the byproduct of human reflections. This causes more harm than good. God does not mix truth with falsehoods, nor does the Church. For this reason the Church refuses to admit to its canonical books of the inspired Word of God, the Bible, the Apocryphal books, as they contain the admixture of true with false revelations.

It may also occur that an alleged seer possesses a good memory of previously prophesied end-times events (e.g., the warning, the great miracle,

the sign in the sky, the chastisement, the darkness, the era of peace and so forth) either because he/she was well versed in private revelations, well catechized or was an instructor of the faith. This does not necessarily mean the message comes from God; it may mean that the alleged seer knows his/her catechism or approved prophetic literature.

There are also alleged seers that have claimed that they were sent from above to continue the mission or messages of this or that saint: They wish one to believe that God is now speaking through him/her in order to continue where the saint left off, or with continuing instructions and insights, with new prayers or forms of consecration, and the list goes on. God does not operate in this way.

Loreto Pres.: I thank you Fr. Joseph on behalf of the people of God, the members of the International Marian Conference and the many members of the clergy who have sought your valuable insights. Your vast experience and knowledge in theology will be of tremendous spiritual aid for many years to come.