

DICASTERY FOR THE DEMOLITION OF THE FAITH

## Cardinal Fernandez overturns Church teaching to baptise gays and trans

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ECCLESIA

11\_11\_2023



**Luisella  
Scrosati**



In substance, the replies (downloadable [here](#)) of the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith to certain questions raised on 14 July this year by the Bishop of Santo Amaro (Brazil), Monsignor José Negri, is yet more proof of his desire to go his own

way, which notably does not coincide with that of the Catholic Church. Basically, for Cardinal Fernández, and with the Pope's approval, there would be no problem baptising either trans people or cohabiting homosexuals, nor allowing them to be godparents or wedding witnesses. The only caution would be not to "generate public scandal or disorientation in the faithful".

**The reply, signed by the Pope on 31 October 2023**, written black on white sheets of paper without letterheads (when will they be written on recycled blotting paper?) and without quoting Msgr Negri's text, strikes out the most obvious answers that one would have to give if the doctrine of the Church and Canon Law were taken into account. Namely, that Baptism can only be conferred on an adult if duly disposed in the profession of faith and moral life. This is called the 'catechumenate', which is not a training course that confers a diploma if two-thirds of the lessons are attended, but a serious journey in which the person is accompanied so that he or she may attain the dispositions to cooperate with the grace he or she is to receive. It is therefore a given that where there is no will to break with a life of sin, Baptism must be postponed.

**The other question concerns the role of godfather or godmother.** Canon 874 - §1 clearly explains the requirements that he or she must meet: "be a Catholic, have already received confirmation and the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, and lead a life in conformity with the faith and with the task he or she assumes". There is no need for further comment. The wedding witness, on the other hand, is a different matter: they may not even be a Catholic: their duty is in fact simply to bear witness to the exchange of marriage vows between the bride and groom.

**Then there is the ambiguous answer to the fourth question.** Msgr Negri asked whether "two homosexual persons can be considered the parents of a child, who is to be baptised, and in the case if it was adopted or obtained by other methods such as surrogacy". The answer seems to miss the point: "For the child to be baptised there must be a well-founded hope that he or she will be brought up in the Catholic religion". But, the point is not whether the child entrusted to two cohabiting homosexual persons can be baptised or not, but whether those who are not parents can figure as such. The answer can only be negative, because reality is reality: only an actual parent can count as a parent; but it is evident that at least one of the two, if not both, are not parents of the child they are asking to have baptised.

**The latest response from the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith raises more than one doubt about his intellectual honesty.** In fact, there is a watermark in this response that makes it clear why the bishops should rise up and

demand Fernández's immediate removal for manifest inadequacy to carry out the office of Prefect of the DDF: there is not a single one of the *extra Franciscum* citations that has not been twisted in its content and bent to support a pre-constituted erroneous thesis.

**First of all, the reply opens as follows:** "The following replies substantially repeat the fundamental contents of what has already been affirmed in the past on this matter by this Dicastery". One would expect a reference to any notes, replies, notifications, norms, letters or instructions from the Congregation on the subject. But instead? Instead, Fernández refers to a Confidential Note on certain canonical matters relating to transsexualism dated 21 December 2018, *sub secreto pontificio*. This is therefore a confidential note, the contents of which are unknown and with which Fernández states that he agrees "substantially", but without bothering to quote it. This is supposed to be proof of a presumed continuity.

**But then to remain silent about a response, this time public, that the CDF itself gave in 2015**, untraceable on its website, but quoted in a 1 September 2015 *communiqué* by the Bishop of Cádiz and Ceuta, Msgr Rafael Zornoza Boy, happily brought to memory by *LifeSiteNews*. The bishop exposed the case of a transgender woman who asked to be the 'godfather' of her grandson. The CDF had given a diametrically opposed answer to Fernández's: "On this matter I inform you of the impossibility of being admitted. The same transsexual behaviour publicly reveals an attitude opposed to the moral requirement to solve one's sexual identity problem according to the truth of one's sex. Therefore, it is evident that this person does not have the requirement to lead a life according to faith and the position of godparent (*CIC, can 874 §1.3*), therefore not being able to be admitted to the position of godparent".

**Let us return to the Confidential Note.** According to our sources, it actually dealt with the possibility for a child with same-sex 'parents' to receive Baptism. And it referred to obvious principles, namely the need to verify that there is "the guarantee that, once baptised, the child will receive the Catholic upbringing required by the sacrament" and "the well-founded hope that baptism will bear fruit", as explained in the 1980 *Instruction on Infant Baptism*, at No. 30. The same criteria are also found in the *Responsio* of 13 July 1970 by Cardinal Franjo Seper (cf. *Notitiæ*, February 1971 (61), pp. 64-73). Other texts of the CDF forgotten by Tucho.

**Tucho's amnesias do not stop there.** To argue that Baptism can be received even when there is no repentance of sins, he takes as his pretext the *Summa Theologiæ* (III, q. 69, a. 9), which is completely out of place; in the article St Thomas does not in fact ask whether Baptism can be administered to an unrepentant sinner, but only whether

pretence (lack of faith, disregard for the sacrament, disregard for the rite, lack of devotion, i.e. detachment from sin) prevents Baptism from taking effect. Instead, the Prefect forgets to quote the only relevant text, Art. 4 of *Quæstio* 68, in which Thomas explains that if by sinner is meant someone who has "the will to sin" and "the intention to persist in sin (...) the sacrament of Baptism is not to be conferred". Thomas also pointed out that "a person should never be disposed to grace by the impression of baptismal character as long as he manifests the will to sin" (ad. 3).

**But St Thomas is not the only one who has been misrepresented.** St Augustine has also suffered the same fate. The quoted text (*Discourse to the Faithful of the Church of Caesarea*, 2, see [here](#)) simply states that the character imprinted by Baptism remains that of the Holy Trinity, even if those who received it adhere to the Donatist schism. In no way does it claim that Baptism should be conferred on those who do not wish to follow the teaching of Christ and the Church.

**The latest blatant and glaring violence is done to one of St John Paul II's teachings.** Tucho excerpts six words from a [Letter](#) of 22 March 1996, addressed to Cardinal William Baum and the participants in the annual course on the internal forum organised by the Apostolic Penitentiary. According to Fernández, in that letter the Pope exhorts that a "purpose of amendment" should be accepted even if it "does not appear in a fully manifest way in the penitent". Instead, the text says exactly the opposite: it requires a "serious *intention* not to commit any more [sins] in the future", without which "in reality there would be no repentance"; he speaks of a "solid and generous *intention* of amendment"; and only then does it specify that "in the loyalty of the intention not to sin any more" there may nevertheless emerge "the fear of new falls", which, however, "does not prejudice the authenticity of the intention, when that fear is united with the will, supported by prayer, to do what is possible to avoid the sin". Exactly the opposite of what Fernández maintains.

**He has no qualms** about taking texts out of context and using them to overturn Catholic doctrine. It's disgraceful.