

INTERVIEW

Don Bux: The Church cannot change the Doctrine

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On Friday evening, 24 October, Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, president of the Italian Bishops' Conference (CEI), presided over Solemn Vespers in the ancient rite at the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Lucina, Rome, as part of the 14th 'Summorum Pontificum ad Petri Sedem' jubilee pilgrimage, also known as the 'jubilee of the traditionalists'. On the sidelines of the celebration and the third assembly of the Synodal Way of the Churches in Italy, the *Daily Compass*

interviewed Father Nicola Bux, a theologian and former consultant to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on current ecclesiastical and theological issues.

Some pastors have argued that the Catechism can be modified. Is it theologically and doctrinally possible to change the Church's teaching on matters such as homosexuality?

The Church bases its teaching on the revelation made by God and fulfilled in Christ, as set out in Holy Scripture. It is sufficient to recall Genesis 1:27: 'And God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them', and Matthew 19:4: 'Have you not read that the Creator made them male and female from the beginning?' The Church does not have the authority to change 'not one iota or sign' (Mt 5:18) of these words, but rather to proclaim and protect them, which is the purpose of the Catechism.

Today, the language of the Church is also influenced by many cultural currents. Is there a risk in allowing oneself to be influenced by ideologies that are contrary to Catholic tradition?

St Paul offers a criterion that is always valid: 'Test everything; hold fast to what is good' (1 Thess 5:21). This means examining every proposal, idea, or behaviour, and retaining only what is good and true. For Christians, Christ Himself is the criterion of truth: every thought or theory 'stands or falls' in relation to Him. This is why we speak of an 'anthropology in Christ', rather than simply changing human conceptions.

How does Catholic doctrine distinguish between accepting a person and approving of their behaviour?

The concept of the person, developed at the Council of Chalcedon to express the mystery of Christ, teaches us that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (CCC 362). Being male or female is a good reality willed by God (CCC, 369).

Welcoming a person means recognising this fundamental truth. However, acceptance cannot mean approval of behaviour that deviates from what is good. Just as medicine corrects what is pathological, authentic pastoral care aims to heal, not confirm error. Gender ideology, as Pope Francis has repeatedly reminded us, is a mistake of the human mind; acceptance means guiding towards truth, not justifying falsehoods.

Is the doctrine on sexuality compatible with the pastoral care of mercy invoked by Pope Francis?

True mercy does not consist of leaving a person in sin, but of helping them to repent and find the truth. Where genderist thinking has caused suffering, as with *detransitioners* (people who regret having undergone the so-called 'gender transition'), we see the

damage caused by a lie that has affected both body and soul. The body is not at our disposal, but a gift from God. To go against the reality of the body is to oppose the Creator Himself; it is a deception that takes on the features of the Antichrist when a pastor of the Church endorses it.

How would you respond to those who accuse Catholic doctrine of being 'exclusionary' or 'non-inclusive'?

I would say that, in a sense, it is exclusionary because it follows Jesus Christ, who said that he came 'to bring division' (cf. Lk 12:51). Christ does not seek consensus, but truth; his 'inclusion' is for those who accept salvation in truth. The Church's teaching is not about conforming to fashions or the powers of the world, but about being faithful to the One who said, 'He who is not with me is against me' (Matthew 12:30). Christian freedom consists of following the truth, even when it causes division.

The Catechism calls homosexual acts 'intrinsically disordered': is this an outdated linguistic expression or an irreformable judgement?

God is the Creator of order, and order is the right disposition of persons and things towards an end. The source of all order is Divine Wisdom. Therefore, moral disorder is a denial of God Himself. Here, the Catechism does not use surmountable language, but rather expresses an ontological truth rooted in the nature of things. As Gustave Thibon recalled, 'Freedom is the child of order'. Seneca wrote, 'To be free is to obey God'. Where order is lacking, the lies of the devil reign.

Recently, Monsignor Francesco Savino, vice-president of the Italian Bishops' Conference and bishop in Calabria, celebrated the Mass for a jubilee pilgrimage organised by some LGBT groups. He spoke of the need for a 'Church that changes'. Does tradition allow for the reinterpretation of truths according to the times?

As John XXIII noted when opening the Second Vatican Council, the problem facing the world is always the same: to be with Christ or against him and his church. Progress in doctrine is not a change in substance, but an organic development, like the growth of a body: becoming an adult does not involve adding a new limb, but maturing what already exists. It is not the Church that must change to adapt to the world, but rather every Christian who must convert to the unchanging truth of Christ the Lord.

How does the authority of the Magisterium bind bishops in their teaching of the faith?

Because they exercise their authority in persona Christi. As Pope Leo the Great said, the bishop must "disappear" before Christ. The Magisterium is not above the Word of God;

it serves the Word of God by teaching only what has been transmitted (*Dei Verbum*, 10; CCC, 86). When a pastor proposes an 'accommodating and flexible gospel', he ceases to be a teacher of the faith and becomes an echo of the world. Fidelity to the deposit of faith is true charity towards souls.