

Vatican

F-ggotry? For the Pope the problem is image, not moral

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All we hear about at the moment is the Pope used the offensive homophobic term 'f-ggotry'. On the occasion of the 79th General Assembly of the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI), held last 20 May, Pope Francis had something to say about too much 'f-

ggotry going on' among priests.

Only two days have passed since the press broke the news of the homophobic pope, and yesterday in a notable Italian daily, *La Stampa*, journalist Vito Mancuso protested against the pope's apology, ranting about an oneiric parallel between Francis and Pius IX, both of whom started with a reforming pontificate to end up with intransigent choices!

And so, in the afternoon, the director of the Vatican Press Office, Matteo Bruni, issued the Pontiff's apology: 'The Pope never intended to offend or express himself in homophobic terms, and he addresses his apologies to those who felt offended by the use of a term, referred to by others'. Which means, as has happened in the past, with the Pope now feeling obliged to show the world how open he is to homosexuality, anything can be expected.

It goes without saying that the Pope expressed himself in such scrupulous and pertinent language due to the fact that, as is customary, he does not even attempt to read a line of the speeches that are prepared for him, but prefers to speak off the cuff, in order to give ample space to the solicitations of the 'spirit'. And since the word of God is not chained (cf. 2 Tim 2:9), that of the pope, who, for some time now, has suffered from verbal incontinence, is decidedly unrestrained. Did the pope accidentally go too far? Or did he use the term deliberately? That hasn't been clarified.

But, beyond the decidedly out-of-line expression and the various conjectures, it is important to try to understand what Francis' real concern was. To explain the meaning of the improvised externalisation the Pope told this anecdote; an anecdote that he was keen to point out over and over again to be absolutely true. Francis told of two cohabiting priests who were so chatted about that, on the occasion of the death of the mother of one of them, condolences were extended to the other for the loss of the 'mother-in-law'.

The short story indicates not only how much Bergoglio himself is accustomed to the sorts of gossip for which he stigmatises others, but also shows with great clarity his real concern about the gay phenomenon: to avoid offering a flank to criticism from 'today's culture of homosexuality', according to his expression, with which he has no intention of coming into conflict. On the contrary. What really interests him, therefore, is not the moral behaviour of priests and the repercussions of such behaviour on the life of grace and their mission in the Church, but the chatter that such behaviour, if not properly concealed, could trigger, and the trouble that could ensue.

To interpret the Pope's externalisation as expressing, somewhat off-key, his desire to oppose the infiltration of the gay lobby among the clergy is unrealistic. If only because it is from the beginning of his pontificate that the Pope has done nothing but appoint and protect homosexually active prelates, including ephebophiles. From Monsignor Battista Ricca to Cardinal Mc Carrick, via Monsignor Gustavo Zanchetta, from Father James Martin to Sister Jeannine Gramick and 'his' New Way Ministry, to the blessings of gay couples with Fiducia supplicans, the present pontificate has had as its main focus precisely the promotion of people with highly problematic sexual behaviour, as well as the reduction of sodomy to a matter of personal orientation, with no moral value. These priests who he first appoints to prestigious posts and then are foolish enough to get caught in the act are not a problem because they endanger their own eternal salvation and that of others, nor even because they tarnish the image of the Bride of Christ, the Church, but because they have inflicted an irremediable wound on the image of Pope Francis.

The pope, therefore, is not bothered that certain moral problems exist among the clergy, but that they are coming out into the open. Just as he is annoyed not so much by his own offensive and misplaced words, but that some bishops have leaked his 'confidential' words to the outside world. Matteo Bruni's statements are quite eloquent; not only the underlining, as reported above, that the term in question was 'reported by others', but also the accentuation that that conversation was held 'behind closed doors, with the bishops of the CEI'. A manhunt is to be expected in the coming weeks, with a related clean-up operation conducted by the Pope of mercy.

To everyone's credit, that 'who am I to judge?' from back in 2013, which expresses the pope's indifference to the moral problem of sodomy, unfortunately remains intact; a dimension that, in the conversation with the Italian bishops, was not even touched upon. That a priest can root himself in gravely sinful behaviour, and then also celebrate Mass, thus adding sacrilege, does not seem to be a pastoral priority of this pontificate, as long as he does not slip up and does not get caught.

Speaking of excusatio, one of the items in the programme for the Pope's requested World Children's Day was the performance of the transformist Carmine De Rosa, with costume changes that were equivocal to say the least as explained in an [article by Michael Haynes for Lifesitenews](#). Who knows whether Matteo Bruni will issue an apology for that too.