

FAGGOTRY

Some Italian bishops like gay seminarians

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Monsignor Francesco Savino (*photo above*), bishop of Cassano all'Jonio and vice-president for southern Italy of the Italian Bishops Conference, could not have been clearer: reconstructing the context of Pope Francis' now famous response regarding the excessive 'faggotry' among the clergy, Monsignor Savino explains that the Pope, according to him, 'as a great educator, was speaking about the formation of candidates

for the priesthood. The pope's concern, he says is about the happiness of future priest, whether homosexual or heterosexual' (italics ours). That is according an [interview](#) in yesterday's *Corriere della Sera*, Italy's main daily newspaper.

The bishop of Cassano all'Jonio reiterated the concept in response to a question from Gian Guido Vecchi, who recalled that in reality, for the Catholic Church, a candidate for the priesthood with a 'simple' homosexual tendency is banned from continuing the training period for Holy Orders. "But no. There is no 'no' a priori," Savino urged. His [the Pope's] real concern is everyone's serenity. What the Pope wanted to say was that the candidates, both homo and hetero, must be able to live their promises correctly with respect to obedience, poverty and chastity".

With all due respect to Monsignor Savino, Vecchi's recall is correct: in fact, the [document](#) for reference continues to be the 2005 Instruction of the Congregation for Catholic Education, whose main passages on the subject are found in nos. 199-200 of the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, approved by Pope Francis in 2016. According to these criteria, the Church 'cannot admit to the seminary and to Holy Orders those who practice homosexuality, present deeply rooted homosexual tendencies or support the so-called gay culture'. Moreover, should one be faced with a candidate whose homosexual tendencies 'are only the expression of a transitory problem, such as, for example, that of an adolescence not yet ended, they must in any case be clearly overcome at least three years before diaconal ordination'.

Therefore, even in the case of a transitory tendency, it must still be resolved for a reasonable period of time before admission to the diaconate. Which means for the Church, it is not at all a question of having glad 'homo or hetero candidates', so that there can be glad future homosexual or heterosexual priests. This makes Bishop Savino's error very serious on a point of extreme importance for the formation of future priests. But even more serious appears to be his misinterpretation of the words of the Pope, who, instead, according to *Daily Compass* sources present at the meeting, intended to close the matter definitively, pointing out the impossibility of admission to Holy Orders of a candidate even with homosexual tendencies.

Explaining, among other things, that even those who manage to control themselves could still easily be led to give in to this tendency, finding themselves in difficulty and with the burden of ministry. On these grounds alone, Bishop Savino should be removed from his post as vice-president of the Italian Episcopal Conference.

Moreover, the problem is broader than the misleading interpretation of Pope Francis' words. And during the conversation with Msgr. Savino, Gian Guido Vecchi also

brought up that 'in Assisi, last November, you Italian bishops approved a text in which a distinction was made between "inclination" and "acts", in the sense that it did not close the door to homosexuals as such, but only to a person who could not maintain the commitment to chastity'. The reference is to the *Ratio nationalis formationis sacerdotalis for seminaries in Italy*, approved on 16 November 2023 by the Italian bishops at their 78th General Assembly. The journalist asked whether the Pope's statement was not by chance directed precisely against this distinction, which would clearly go in the direction of being able to bring homosexual candidates to ordination. But Msgr. Savino reassured that never, ever would Francis have made 'a homophobic speech', taking care not to deny what Vecchi had said.

But, again according to *Daily Compass* sources, it seems that the Pope instead wanted to draw a firm line on this distinction. According to the interesting [reconstruction of the facts](#) proposed by the blog *Messa in Latino* (Mass in Latin), the Ratio of the CEI would be 'parked' at the Dicastery headed by Cardinal You Heung-sik, awaiting approval. Approval which, however, would be rendered problematic precisely by the fact that, according to the Italian bishops, candidates with homosexual tendencies that are not rooted, but in any case unresolved, could still be ordained, contrary to the provisions of both the 2005 Instruction and the 2016 Ratio.

The *Daily Compass*, however, has been given to understand that the CEI Assembly last November voted on an amendment, proposed by a bishop, that contained norms for the discernment of candidates with homosexual tendencies, a very important issue, but curiously absent from the main text. The amendment would have been quite balanced and more in line with the Church documents cited, calling for the monitoring of those situations in which this tendency would not be particularly relevant. Exactly the opposite of the interpretation offered by Msgr. Savino, who implied that both homo and hetero can take Holy Orders; it is important that they are chaste.

It is quite clear from these events that within the Italian Bishops Conference there are quite a few working to create a breach in the legislation and trying to bring forward 'moderate' homosexual candidates, since in the main text of the Ratio an attempt was made to gloss over the issue, and now that the amendment has been voted on, even before the approval of the Dicastery of the Clergy, to give it a permissive interpretation. Taking advantage, among other things, in a rather mean-spirited way, of the Pope's vulgar remark, in order to make Francis say the exact opposite of what he intended to say, among other things, in a rather inappropriate way. And thank goodness that Msgr. Savino started the interview by saying that he could not understand 'the misunderstanding, the one-sided and misleading readings'.