

## ***An Open Letter to the Four Cardinals***

Dearest brothers in the Episcopate,

my faith in our God tells me He cannot but love you. With the sincerity that comes from my heart I call you “dearest brothers”.

Even in Greece we have seen the document you sent to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which was published last Monday on the website of *L'Espresso*.

Before publishing it and, even more, before writing it, you should have gone to see our Holy Father Francis and asked to be removed from the list of the College of Cardinals.

Besides, you should not have used the title “Cardinal” to give prestige to what you wrote, to be consistent with your conscience and to lessen the scandal you have given by writing as Cardinals.

You write that you are “deeply concerned about the true good of souls” and, indirectly, accuse our Holy Father Francis of promoting a “form of politics in the Church”. You ask that “nobody should judge you unjustly”. Whoever said anything contrary to what you write explicitly would be judging you unjustly. The words you use make that clear. The fact that you are the proud holders of the title of Cardinal does not change the meaning of your words, which are gravely offensive for the Bishop of Rome.

If you are “deeply concerned for the true good of souls” and moved by “an impassioned concern for the good of the faithful”, I, dearest brothers, am “deeply concerned for the good of your souls”, for your two very serious sins:

- the sin of heresy (and apostasy? This, indeed, is the way schisms begin in the Church). It is clear from your document that, in practice, you do not believe in the Pope’s supreme magisterial authority, backed up by two Synods of Bishops coming from the whole world. Obviously the Holy Spirit inspires only you and not the Vicar of Christ, nor even the Bishops gathered in Synod;
- more serious still, the sin of scandal, given publicly to the Christian people throughout the world. On this point Jesus said: “Woe to the one through whom they [scandals] come” (*Matthew* 18,7). “It would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the sea” (18,6).

Driven by the love of Christ, I pray for you. I ask the Lord to enlighten you to accept with simplicity of heart the magisterial teaching of our Holy Father Francis.

I fear your mental categories will find sophisticated arguments to justify what you are doing, so that you will not even consider it a sin to be dealt with in the sacrament of penance, and you will continue to celebrate Holy Mass each day and receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist sacrilegiously, while you claim you are scandalised if, in specific cases, a divorced person receives the Eucharist and you accuse the Holy Father Francis of heresy.

You should know that I took part in the two Synods of Bishops on the family and listened to your speeches. I also heard the comments one of you made, during the break, about a statement in the speech I gave in the Synod Hall, when I said: “It is

not easy to sin". This brother (one of you four), speaking with others, modified my statements and put into my mouth words I never said. He also gave my declarations an interpretation that could not be linked in any way with what I had said.

Dearest brothers, may the Lord enlighten you to recognise your sin as soon as possible, and to make good the scandal you have given.

With the love of Christ, I greet you fraternally.

+Fragkiskos Papamanolis OFM Cap.,  
Bishop Emeritus of Syros, Santorini and Crete,  
President of the Bishops' Conference of Greece.