

CATHOLIC CHURCH CONFOUNDS NEWSWEEK

To say the Catholic Church confounds *Newsweek* is an understatement: they just don't know what to make of it. The September 10 *Newsweek* article began by praising Pope Francis as a progressive, then went on a lengthy rant against San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, only to finish with a mixed review of the Holy Father. In other words, the good pope was compared to the bad archbishop, but instead of hailing the pope at the end, it closed by noting its uncertainty.

The comparison failed. Cordileone's criticisms of gay marriage and Bruce-Caitlyn-Jenner are actually quite mild when contrasted to what the pope has said. Pope Francis has called gay marriage the work of "the Devil." He has also warned against "gender ideology," and attempts to "cancel out sexual difference." In fact, he holds, "Gender ideology is demonic!"

It is also false to claim that there is a difference between Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis on homosexuality. Both of them have expressed their allegiance to the Church's teaching: the act of homosexuality is an "intrinsic moral evil." Therefore, to rail against Cordileone for expecting Catholic teachers to uphold this teaching made *Newsweek* look plainly stupid. It is just as dumb to say the Bible doesn't condemn homosexuality.

The article said with glee that in 1968 Benedict gave primacy to conscience over papal authority. More homework would have disclosed that in 1991 he explicitly noted that to say "the judgment of conscience" is "always right" would "mean that there is no truth." Indeed, he warned against "the identification of conscience with superficial consciousness," which reduces "man to his subjectivity."

This confused piece ended by commending the pope for being “a superb communicator” but was unsure of who he really is. In point of fact, Francis and Cordileone have more in common than *Newsweek* was willing to acknowledge.