

# Pope Francis, Confusing and Confused

by Hugh Fitzgerald



Pope Francis is a strange man. He has seemed, at times, to grasp the nature of the threat to Europe of what he once had no hesitation in describing as an “Arab invasion.” Here is what he said in 2014 in an interview with *La Vie*:

*“The only continent that can bring about a certain unity to the world is Europe,” the Pope adds. “China has perhaps a more ancient, deeper, culture. But only Europe has a vocation towards universality and service.” ... “If Europe wants to rejuvenate, it is necessary for it to find anew its cultural roots. Of all Western countries, the European roots are the strongest and deepest. By the way of colonization, these roots even reached the New World. But, by forgetting its history, Europe weakens itself. It is then that it risks becoming an empty place.”*

*La Vie: "Europe, an empty place? The expression is strong. ... Because in the history of civilizations, emptiness always calls fullness to itself. Incidentally, the Pope becomes clinical [in his diagnosis]:*

*"We can speak today of an Arab invasion. It is a social fact." ... "How many invasions Europe has known throughout its history! It has always known how to overcome itself, moving forward to find itself as if made greater by the exchange between cultures."*

Clearly the Pope is torn between recognition of the parlous state Europe is now in ("we can speak today of an Arab invasion"), and faith in its amazing powers of recuperation, as he sees it in his pollyannish fashion, for this "Europe..has always known how to overcome itself, moving forward to find itself as if made greater by the exchange between cultures."

So which is it? Is it a Europe that will "find anew its [own] cultural roots" to withstand "an Arab invasion," or is it, rather, a Europe that ought not to fear that "Arab invasion" since it can only be "made greater by the exchange between cultures"? The Pope seems to be suggesting that both are true.

But what if this time Europe will not be "made greater" by some fructifying "exchange between cultures"? The tens of millions of Muslims who have been allowed to settle in Europe, behind what their own faith teaches them to regard as enemy lines, are not there for some kind of cultural exchange but, rather, to take what they can get, in welfare benefits and through crime, from the Unbelievers, and through inexorable demographic conquest, by degrees to subjugate the Unbelievers, until Islam everywhere dominates, and Muslims rule, everywhere.

The Muslims now in Europe are far more numerous than any previous "invasion" of immigrants, with 44 million of them now

present (if we include those in European Russia), with millions more attempting, however they can, to get to Europe. These are economic migrants. They come intent on finding the most generous of welfare states; hence the desire of these migrants to make it to Sweden and Germany instead of remaining in Italy or Spain. But everywhere in Europe, albeit to different degrees, these Muslims can batten on free or highly subsidized housing, free education, free (and advanced) medical care, family allowances, subsidized or free food, and unemployment benefits (though almost no Muslims have paid into the unemployment system).

With all that on offer, Muslim migrants are in no apparent hurry to learn the skills, or the local language, that might make them employable. Why have a job when the Infidel state provides you with so much? Is it any wonder that in Sweden, one of the most generous of welfare states, of the 163,000 “asylum seekers” who arrived in 2015, by mid-2016 only 494 had jobs? Pope Francis appears to believe that when two or more groups jostle one another, this automatically leads to a welcome “exchange between cultures.” But where, in what part of the world, have those who have endured a Muslim invasion, slow or quick, having experienced this “exchange” emerged the better for it? What happened to the Christians all over the Middle East and North Africa, after the Arabs arrived to islamize and then arabize lands? The Christians were greatly reduced in numbers – some killed by their Muslim conquerors, while many others, over time, converted to Islam in order to spare themselves the payment of the Jizyah and the other onerous conditions imposed on them as dhimmis.

Where in Europe can one say that the indigenous non-Muslims are better off, socially, economically, politically, or even culturally, because of Muslim migrants? Isn't it truer to say that the large-scale presence of Muslims in Europe has created a situation that is far more unpleasant, expensive, and physically dangerous for those indigenes, and for other, non-

Muslim immigrants, than would be case without that large-scale presence?

The Pope may be thinking of other, more fructifying encounters among peoples in the distant past. He may be thinking of the Roman and the Celt in Western Europe, of the Angles and the Saxons and the Normans in England, of Basques, Catalans, and Castilians in Spain, or of the many different peoples who made America America, perhaps the most successful example of the mixing of peoples in history. He may be thinking of his own country, Argentina, with the engrafting of later arrivals – Italians, Germans, Jews – onto the Spanish tree.

When the Muslims conquered non-Muslim lands, they did not mix as equals with those they conquered and subjugated. The ancestors of the several hundred million Muslims now in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, for example, were once Hindus and Buddhists, who in the past converted to Islam in order to avoid living as dhimmis. In Kashmir, the Muslims have driven 200,000 Hindu Pandits out of the area into India proper. There has been no splendid cultural synthesis between Hindu and Muslim, or Buddhist and Muslim, anywhere on the subcontinent.

In many islamized and arabized countries, the non-Muslim – usually Christian – population was greatly diminished. There was no apparent benefit, no “exchange between cultures.” Even where non-Muslims have remained a significant part of the population, as the Copts are in Egypt, even though payment of the Jizyah is no longer demanded, they live lives of great physical insecurity and are subject to attack from Muslims. Possibly the grimmest result of the Iraq War was that when the Americans removed Saddam Hussein, who for his own reasons had protected the Christians, the Christian population plummeted from 1,400,000 in 2003 to 250,000 today. Apparently the Christians – both Assyrians and Chaldeans – who had lived with the Muslims for centuries, realized that without a protector, even one as ruthless and cruel as Saddam Hussein, their own lives were at permanent risk.

The Pope derives his apparently unshakeable belief that only good can arise when cultures collide from an insufficient understanding of Islam. He appears to complacently believe that all faiths resemble one another, and that all Believers desire the same things. None of this is true. For Muslims, humans are uncompromisingly divided between Muslims ("the best of peoples") and Unbelievers ("the most vile of creatures"), and the world itself is similarly divided between Dar al-Islam, the lands where Muslims rule, and Dar al-Harb, the lands where Unbelievers still rule.

The Pope has in the past defended Islam so stoutly that he was once thanked by Ahmed al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Cairo's Al-Azhar, for his "defense of Islam against the accusation of violence and terrorism." It's not praise for which he should be proud.

Pope Francis has even seemed to defend, albeit obliquely, the killing of the Charlie Hebdo cartoonists, by saying that "it is true that you must not react violently, but even if we are good friends, if [an aide] says a curse word against my mother, he can expect a punch, it's normal. You can't make a toy out of the religions of others. These people provoke and then (something can happen). In freedom of expression there are limits." Let's look that over: Pope Francis is comparing his landing a "punch" on someone who maligns his mother to the cold-blooded premeditated murder of a dozen people because they dared to draw Muhammad. And since he's Pope, no one in his entourage will dare attempt to morally set him straight.

Last February, Pope Francis insisted that all religions are equally innocent of the charge of terrorism: "Christian terrorism does not exist, Jewish terrorism does not exist, and Muslim terrorism does not exist. They do not exist. There are fundamentalist and violent individuals in all peoples and religions—and with intolerant generalizations they become stronger because they feed on hate and xenophobia." Does the Pope not know of the verses in the Qur'an that explicitly

command Believers to “strike terror” in the hearts of Unbelievers? Apparently not. He could start with 8:12: “I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them.” Or 8:60: “Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know. Whatever ye shall spend in the cause of Allah, shall be repaid unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly.”

Has Pope Francis not seen on television the killers of Drummer Lee Rigby holding up the Qur'an? Has he never heard the many terrorists, from ISIS, from Al-Qaeda, from Boko Haram, who recite verses from the Qur'an that justify their acts? Is he deliberately keeping himself in the dark about this? Muslim terrorism is not a product of lone madmen, but of those Muslims who have become especially devout, and take to heart the Qur'anic commands to wage Jihad, and to strike terror in the hearts of the enemies of Allah. They feed on the Islamic texts themselves; they have no need to “feed on hate and xenophobia” from Unbelievers.

What “hate and xenophobia” had Osama Bin Laden or Ayman al-Zawahiri experienced? Or the two killers of Drummer Rigby? Or the Muslim who mowed down pedestrians on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, or the Muslim who plowed through crowds on Las Ramblas in Barcelona? Had Major Nidal Malik Hassan, who had his complete medical education paid for by the U.S. army, and was earning a salary of \$90,000 a year, been treated at all badly by anyone with whom he worked, or was he merely fulfilling Qur'anic commandments when he slaughtered twelve fellow servicemen? What grievances did Mohamed Atta and his 18 co-terrorists have against Americans, other than that they felt murderous hate for all Infidels, precisely for being Infidels? What grievances, what experience of “hate and

xenophobia,” explain the behavior of the couple who killed their fellow co-workers at a Christmas party in San Bernardino? What “hate and xenophobia” did Aafia Siddiqui, who received scholarships to Brandeis as an undergraduate, and to MIT for graduate study, have to endure, she who led a charmed academic life as a cosseted student, until she threw in her lot with Al-Qaeda?

The Pope claims that he finds unacceptable the very phrase “Islamic violence,” because, of course, there are non-Muslims who commit violence:

*“I don’t like to talk about Islamic violence, because every day, when I read the newspaper, I see violence.” He said, according to Crux, that “when he reads the newspaper, he reads about an Italian who kills his fiancé or his mother in law.” The pontiff added: “They are baptized Catholics. They are violent Catholics.” He said that if he spoke about “Islamic violence,” then he would have to speak about “Catholic violence” as well.*

The obvious response to this is simple: Italian Catholics, or Swedish Protestants, who kill their wives, or fiancés, or mothers-in-law, are not following the teachings of their religions. But Muslims find, in more than a hundred verses of the Qur’an, calls to commit violence against Infidels. The Pope’s inability to make that simple distinction is deeply disturbing.

Pope Francis can hardly be unaware that all over the Muslim lands, Christians, whether they are converts or born into the faith, have been persecuted, attacked, killed by Muslims through the centuries, and in our own time. Such killings have taken place in Iraq, in Syria, in Egypt, in Pakistan, in Libya, in Somalia, in Yemen, in Iran, in Sudan, in Eritrea, in Afghanistan, in Indonesia. Even Angela Merkel, so tireless in her efforts to increase the Muslim population of Germany, has

admitted schizophrenically that "Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world." She knows perfectly well who is doing the persecuting. The Pope appears not to recognize this, leaving his flock to fend for itself. He has certainly never wanted to believe that the Muslim persecution of Christians arises naturally from the texts and teachings of Islam. He avoids all mention of what is in the Qur'an. Instead, the Pope exculpates Islam at every turn. He insists there's no specifically "Muslim terrorism," but only the terrorism of disturbed individuals, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish. He finds it perfectly understandable why Muslims would take violent offense at someone dissing their Prophet. But while Muslim violence would in such a case be perfectly understandable, he has made it clear, back in 2013, that he believes that "authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence."

It's impressive that Pope Francis is such an expert on Islam and the "proper reading" of the Qur'an, and knows so much more about the matter than Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb, and the Ayatollah Khomeini, and dozens of senior Muslim clerics, all of whom seem to think that the proper reading of the Qur'an requires violence against the Infidels. "I spit on those who say that Islam is a religion of peace," said Khomeini. What does Pope Francis think of his remark? Anything? Nothing? That the learned Shi'a cleric who has been studying Islam all of his life – he's an Ayatollah, for god's sake – is badly misinformed about the peaceful essence of his faith?

Pope Francis's recent lecture to the peoples and governments of Europe is cause for real alarm. In the midst of Muslim terror attacks from Spain to Finland, and the return to Europe of thousands of ISIS supporters, and the inability of European governments to halt the flow of Muslim migrants, the Pope chose that moment to tell Europeans that they must care less about national security and more about admitting all those who



want entry. It's an extraordinary demand. The first duty of any government is to protect its citizens. The danger of Islamic terrorism is real, and increasing: we have had more than 31,700 such attacks since 9/11 alone.

The Pope has never addressed this menace forthrightly. Instead of assuming he's an expert on Islam, he might practice the humility he preaches and take tuition on Islam from a real Muslim, Yahya Cholil Staquf, general secretary of the Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia, a group with about 50 million members, making it the country's biggest Muslim organization. And Yahya Staquf berates Western leaders who "should stop pretending that extremism and terrorism have nothing to do with Islam. There is a clear relationship between fundamentalism, terrorism, and the basic assumptions of Islamic orthodoxy. So long as we lack consensus regarding this matter, we cannot gain victory over fundamentalist violence within Islam."

The Pope's latest message makes no mention of the continuing existence, and increase, of Islamic terrorism. Instead, the Pope urges countries in Europe to make still greater efforts than those they have for so long been making on behalf of Muslims. The Pope demands that governments not merely allow in as many millions of "refugees" as manage to arrive – apparently there is to be no limit – but that they "welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants."

Let's stop right there. Why should Europe "welcome" those who, as Muslims, are taught to despise (Qur'an 98:6) them, commanded by their holy book to "strike terror" in the hearts of Unbelievers (8:12, 8:60), to "smite at their necks" and "cut off their fingertips," and in more than a hundred Qur'anic verses, commanded as well to wage Jihad against them (e.g., 2:191-193, 9:5, 9:29, 47.4)? It is the Europeans who for several decades now have allowed in many millions of Muslims, so that there are now 44 million Muslims in Europe (including European Russia). They have welcomed them,

protected them, promoted and tried to integrate migrants. What has been the result?

Pope Francis may not have been paying proper attention, but the result of this influx has not been some welcome convivencia, to use the word favored by Muslim apologists, when they offer as a model for the present day a sanitized version of Islamic Spain where, they want us to believe, Muslims, Christians, and Jews got along splendidly. Instead, Muslim terrorists have struck everywhere in Europe: in London and Manchester, in Nice and Toulouse, in Madrid and Barcelona, in Brussels and Amsterdam, in Berlin and Munich and Wurzburg, in Copenhagen and Stockholm and Turku, in Moscow and St. Petersburg and Beslan. And outside of Europe, there are all those attacks by Muslim terrorists in Asia (Mumbai, Kashmir, New Delhi, Jakarta, Beijing, Urumqi).

None of this appears to have made an impression on Pope Francis. He insists on repeating religious bromides, as that "Jesus' message of love is rooted in welcoming the 'rejected strangers of every age.'" He fails to recognize that the Muslim "strangers" were not rejected, but initially were welcomed, and it is only in a very belated response to what they have done, and are doing, in Europe that this welcome has evanesced, and both the attitudes and behavior of Muslims and greater familiarity with the Qur'an, has led Europeans to regard the Muslims in their midst not with baseless prejudice but with well-justified suspicion and fear. Or does the Pope believe that nothing any "strangers" do ought to dis-entitle them to the welcome, protection, promotion, and integration that he thinks they automatically deserve and that, equally without foundation, he thinks they will requite? How much contempt or hatred from Muslim migrants should non-Muslims be expected to endure?

What "protection" for Muslim migrants does he have in mind? This sounds as if he thinks the Muslim immigrants will will require "protection." But where are the news items about

attacks on such immigrants? All the attacking has been done by, and not to, Muslim immigrants, and the victims have been the Unbelievers, including Catholics whom Pope Francis is supposed to protect. As for "integration," can the Pope be unaware of all the efforts made, all the expenses incurred, by European governments, to provide free housing, medical care, education, family allowances, to the immigrants, as well as tutors in the local language, and even interpreters for their children in school, and classes in the customs and laws of the country, in order to "integrate" Muslim migrants?

It's difficult to see what more could be done to attempt to integrate Muslim migrants. What the Pope fails to recognize is that Muslim migrants do not want to "integrate" into the society of despised Infidels; they want, instead, to be faithful to the ideology of Islam, as for example in its misogynistic treatment of women, and not to adopt the customs and laws of the Unbelievers. The Pope might ask himself why it is that Muslims are the only immigrants who have enormous trouble in integrating into Western societies. The efforts to integrate Chinese, Hindus, or black African Christians have been much more successful. Shouldn't the Pope ask himself why all these other "strangers" have managed to integrate, while Muslims have not? The Pope wants you to believe, as he does, that if there is a problem with "integration," it is never the fault of the migrants and their ideology, but of the rich white West that has failed to make the efforts necessary for immigrants to truly succeed. Isn't the real barrier to integration by Muslims their own insistence on the superiority of Muslims, as the "best of peoples," and their belief that non-Muslims are the "most vile of creatures," and that they need to show love to fellow Muslims and hatred to Unbelievers, following the doctrine of al wala wal bara with which, one has the uneasy feeling, the Pope is unfamiliar, and even more disturbing is the thought that were it brought to his attention, he would simply refuse to believe it?

The Pope has spoken of the need for “a simplified process of granting humanitarian and temporary visas,” and rejected arbitrary and collective expulsions as “unsuitable.” He said the principle of ensuring each person’s dignity “obliges us to always prioritize personal safety over national security.”

The Pope is saying here that we must always put first the “personal safety” of migrants/refugees/asylum seekers, even if in so doing we are compromising our own national security. Why? The “simplified process” the Pope calls for means that migrants would be allowed in before they have been properly vetted, on “humanitarian” grounds. A “temporary visa” ends up being permanent, as those granted them so often refuse to leave, and when an individual who has overstayed his visa is finally caught, it takes forever to obtain, and then to enforce, a judgment of expulsion against him. Collective expulsions are not only not “unsuitable,” as Pope Francis seems to think, but the only way to deal effectively with tens or hundreds of thousands of people. No country in Europe can devote the kind of attention to individual cases that the Pope seems to think is desirable; half the government would be tied down studying those “individual cases.” No government has the manpower or the money to entertain such a policy. And keep in mind, as the Pope never does, that immigration is not a right, but a privilege. Surely, any European state that refuses to admit as immigrants people whose consuming ideology teaches them to hate, and wage war against, those they regard as Unbelievers (which is what those Europeans are), is fully justified. Pope Francis, secure in his Vatican apartments, does not grasp the need, in deciding whom to admit and whom to keep out, for administrative efficiency, and following the dictates of common sense, to judge groups rather than individuals. Is it wrong to treat a group of Muslims claiming to be “refugees” from Somalia and a group of Christians fleeing Iraq differently, privileging the latter and being deeply suspicious of the former?

The Pope thinks Europeans owe migrants a great deal. But which migrants? And for what? For the Pope, all immigrants are equal, and their presence an unalloyed benefit. It's total nonsense. This is what the late Oriana Fallaci deplored in some Catholic clerics: *il buonismo*, or goody-goodness, particularly in regard to Islam. She would be horrified to see what Pope Francis is now suggesting. Border guards, he claims, must be trained to protect not borders from illegal migrants, but those illegal migrants themselves, presumably to lend them succor and a helping hand as they come across. They should, Pope Francis says, be guaranteed access to "basic services beyond health care." Again, one must plaintively ask: why? Because they are there? Because they are breaking the law? Why do they even deserve "health care"? He lists as "basic services" such things as "access to consulates, the justice system, the ability to open a bank account" – that last presumably with money provided by generous Infidel taxpayers. Migrants should be given the ability "to survive financially."

So if, say, an Iraqi family, with six children, and not one speaking a word of Italian, manages to make it to the Italian island of Lampedusa, instead of sending them back to Libya, where they would share the same religion and language as its inhabitants, they should all be admitted, according to the Pope, to Italy, where they have nothing in common, religiously, linguistically, culturally, with the Catholic Italians, and instead, bring in their mental luggage, undeclared, an inculcated enmity toward Italians as Infidels (see the Qur'an, see the Hadith). They should immediately be provided with basic needs, says the Pope. This of course includes housing, big enough for a family of eight, medical care, and education – all free. No matter that the father speaks no Italian, and has no skills (according to reports, Muslim men in Europe are in no hurry to acquire the training that might make them employable, for why not help oneself to the Jizyah, and stay on the dole for as long as those foolish Infidels will allow?), no matter that unemployment benefits

will have to be paid to support the family, no matter that in addition the government will supply a family allowance that is determined by the size of the family (and Muslims have much larger families than non-Muslims, and not only in the Middle East). No matter that, because the father married his first cousin – a very common practice in Muslim lands (in Pakistan, consanguineous marriages are 50-60% of the total) – one of the six children may have congenital defects that are colossally expensive to treat, over a lifetime, and for which the Italian taxpayers will be paying. No matter that, when the children go to school, they will have to be provided both with interpreters and with special Italian-language classes. All of this – the housing, the education, the medical care, the family allowances, the unemployment benefits that may become permanent, the interpreters, the language classes, the extra security guards in schools, hospitals, and in other places where Muslims have behaved badly, and of course the huge anti-terrorism apparatus, consisting of police, military men, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, prison guards – adds up to huge sums.

The Pope is indifferent to economic reality. He talks as if the Italian state, and its taxpayers, have endless resources. He may be confusing Italy with Saudi Arabia, or the U.A.E., or Kuwait, or Qatar, Muslim Arab countries which could far more easily “welcome” and “integrate” fellow Muslim and Arab immigrants, and that possess the hundreds of billions of dollars to pay for them, unlike Italy or the other economically struggling nations of Europe, struggling precisely because of the tens of billions of dollars these Muslim migrants cost their host countries, in welfare benefits, and in crimes of both property and sexual assault.

Leaving aside crime, and just taking the difference between the taxes paid and the welfare benefits received, in the U.K. alone the cost of these Muslims migrants, for one year, is about 24 billion dollars, and that annual amount will only

increase as their numbers increase, both through a high birth rate and immigration. If we attempt to add up the amount spent on these mostly Muslim migrants (immigrants from Eastern Europe, in fact, pay more into the system than they receive in benefits, so including them in our calculations actually helps to hide the real cost of Muslim immigrants), the cost to all the European countries comes to more than \$200 billion dollars a year – a colossal sum. Does the Pope care about such things, and what that expense does to the ability of European governments to take care of their own poor? Why doesn't the Pope publicly address the deep-pocketed rulers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and ask why they are not taking in these migrants who share their language and religion, people who could be far more easily integrated in Arab lands than in Europe, rather than insisting that the burden be borne by the long-suffering European Infidels?

At any time, such naivete and heedlessness as Pope Francis exhibits would be difficult to take. At this moment in world history, when the leader of the Catholic Church appears determined not to understand the meaning, and menace, of Islam, while Christians are everywhere under assault by Muslims, and Muslims are knocking at Europe's gates and demanding to be let in without delay, to enjoy every benefit offered by those generous welfare states, even as the Muslim recipients continue to despise the Infidel providers of such benefits, his complacent *buonismo* is intolerable.

Pope Francis is 81. He still has plenty of time to do even more damage. In early September, he sent his secretary for relations with states, Paul Richard Gallagher, to Tehran to meet with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Minister, Mohamed Javid Zarif, where they discussed the "plight" of the Rohingya in Myanmar, and together no doubt deplored how the Buddhists were treating the innocent, because Muslim, Rohingya. Not a scintilla of sympathy from the Vatican for the Buddhists in Myanmar, not a word about how over the centuries

Muslims have treated Buddhists wherever they conquered, nor about how Muslim invaders had brought about the virtual disappearance of Buddhism from India. Nor, of course, did the Pope raise the one issue that he ought to have always on his mind and on his lips: the horrific persecution of, and attacks on, Christians by Muslims, in the Middle East, in Africa, in South Asia, and now – thanks to this migration he has done nothing to halt or slow down – in Europe too.

The Pope tells us that there is no such thing as “Muslim terrorism.” He knows that “authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence.” He knows that, despite the 31,700 violent attacks by Muslims since 9/11/200, many of them designed to “strike terror in the hearts of the Infidels,” Islam has nothing to do with terrorism. Despite this impressive record of fatuity, perhaps common sense will break through, somehow, and the amiable but misguided Pope Francis will begin to be mindful of the most important of today’s P’s and Q’s, the P of Islamic Practice, and the Q of the Qur’an. It could happen. But don’t hold your breath.

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