NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Disturbing YouTube video calls Pope Francis 'anti-pope,' 'heretic'

Pat Perriello | Sep. 4, 2013 NCR Today

I ran across a disturbing YouTube page [1] some of you may or may not be aware of. I'm sure there are probably a number of other websites of a similar nature.

The page identifies Pope Francis as the anti-pope and a heretic. Apparently, it all goes back to the "heretical" Second Vatican Council, after which the church became illegitimate. What we know as the Catholic church they view as the "Vatican II sect." That, of course, is the view of some traditionalists but is simply a fancy way of saying they disagree with what the pope is saying. If liberals challenge what the pope says, they are heretics, but if traditionalists question the pope, they are being true to real Catholicism.

The video goes on to question statement after statement of Pope Francis and labels them heretical. It quotes Francis' words from his book *On Heaven and Earth.* It is an especially anti-Jewish page and condemns his ecumenical outreach to Jews in Argentina. The fact that Pope Francis has prayed in a Jewish synagogue proves he has denied his faith, the owners of the site say. One of the videos says offering any form of respect to other religions is apostasy from the Catholic faith.

It is sad that such a limited and distorted view of Catholicism could have any credence. It is unfortunate this group finds the condemnations of popes from centuries ago more compelling than Jesus' words of love and compassion in the Gospels. It is striking that they are more wedded to a rigid and narrow view of Catholicism than to an embrace of Christianity. I was unaware that being Catholic meant strict adherence to every statement of medieval popes. Should we initiate a new crusade to the Holy Land?

The question is: What should be the approach to such organizations? Should they simply be ignored? Should they be allowed to call themselves Catholic any more than liberal groups who have been hounded for years by officials in Rome? Can they be reconciled with Rome and be allowed to continue to hold on to such hateful and un-Christian views? It does demonstrate that dissent in the church comes not only from the left but also from the right.

I can only say I did appreciate the video [2] because I learned many things about Pope Francis that made me like him even more than before. His efforts to promote positive relationships with Jews and Muslims are truly admirable. The owner of the YouTube channel's criticism of these efforts is so shortsighted and un-Christian that it defies comment.

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[1] http://www.youtube.com/user/mhfm1?v=EOJo310ASsc&gclid=CJfsqJW3qrkCFQyZ4Aod80UAWw
[2] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOJo310ASsc