

The Messages of Fr. Rodrigue: A Theological Evaluation

After numerous requests from international Catholic bishops, clergy, lay leaders and faithful for a theological evaluation of the alleged messages of Fr. Michel Rodrigue, a priest within the Diocese of Amos, Quebec, Canada, whose messages have largely been promulgated through the website, Countdown to the Kingdom, <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/>, I hereby provide the following initial theological analysis.

I do so with the following two important disclaimers: First, I am not providing this theological analysis in any official capacity on behalf of any Church authority, but only as a private theologian. Secondly, *I make absolutely no judgment regarding the personal intentions nor culpability of Fr. Rodrigue, nor of anyone presently promulgating his alleged message.* I seek only, as requested, to provide a brief and objective theological evaluation of the contents and concurring phenomena of the alleged message according to the authoritative teachings of the Church's Magisterium, the norms provide by the Magisterium for evaluating reported private revelation (cf., *Norms Regarding the Manner of Proceeding in the Discernment of Presumed Apparitions or Revelations, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Feb 25, 1978*)¹, and in light of the perennial precedent for authentic private revelation as witnessed within the Church's Mystical Tradition.

After examining Fr. Rodrigue's general teachings and prophecies as contained in his "Virtual Retreats,"² I offer the following 10 specific elements as only a sampling of theological assertions, factual assertions, and prophetic assertions which, in my opinion, logically and prudently lead to grave theological and pastoral concerns regarding the authenticity and, consequently, the potentially dangerous pastoral ramifications of Fr. Rodrigue's alleged messages.

1. Negative discernment and decision of Fr. Rodrigue's local bishop regarding the supernatural authenticity of his alleged messages

According to Fr. Rodrigue, on April 23, 2020, his local bishop, Most Rev. Gilles Lemay of the Diocese of Amos, Quebec, Canada, notified Fr. Rodrigue in writing that he "does not support" his alleged messages.³ Unfortunately, at this time, there is not public access to the actual letter from Bishop Lemay to Fr. Rodrigue in order to access its full content and context.

Notwithstanding, the expressed negative discernment of Fr. Rodrigue's alleged messages by Bishop Lemay, who as the local bishop the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith recognizes as the first juridical level of authoritative Church discernment regarding reported

¹Francis Cardinal Seper, Prefect, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine the Faith, "Norms Regarding the Manner of Proceeding in the Discernment of Presumed Apparitions or Revelations," The Holy See, Feb. 25, 1978, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19780225_norme-apparizioni_en.html.

² Christine Watkins, Countdown to the Kingdom, Accessed July 9, 2020, <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/>.

³ Fr. Michel Rodrigue, "Fr. Michel Rodrigue: An Apostle of the End Times," Countdown to the Kingdom, Accessed July 9, 2020, <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/why-fr-michel-rod>

private revelation within his diocese, should in itself lead to a serious initial caution for any faithful Catholic discerning these alleged messages on an individual level.

2. Abnormal Diabolical Exposure and Interaction during Childhood

According to Fr. Rodrigue's discussion of his childhood, his autobiographical testimony reveals an unusual exposure to diabolical activity, juxtaposed with highly questionable responses to these reported diabolical experiences on the part of Fr. Rodrigue himself.

Fr. Rodrigue reports that his father and mother, as well as himself, believed that their house was possessed by Satan for many years. He alleges that both a priest and bishop respectively came to his childhood home to attempt some form of exorcism, but both were each met with a roaring demon and "ran away" with the bishop, allegedly "Yelping, I can't do it! I can't do it!"⁴ After the death of his father, the young Michel, with the consent of his mother, set fire to his family home, causing his house to burn to the ground.⁵ Regarding the burning down of his family home as a child, Fr. Rodrigue currently comments, "This was one of the best decisions we made as a family..."⁶

Fr. Rodrigue goes on to state that the devil nonetheless remained present with him during his childhood in other manifestations, e.g., an internal presence near his heart which he described as "something within me... like a large spider."⁷ Fr. Rodrigue asserts that the only way to relieve himself of the pain of this internal diabolical presence was to lay his body upon a hot wood burning stove:

But the devil found another way to stay with me...I felt that something was in me, like a large spider, and the only time I felt relief was when I lay my body on top of our wood burning stove. When I did this, I could feel near my heart that this 'something' was dead, and at the same time, my body wouldn't feel the heat of the stove. It was all very strange, and my mom was confused, and I as well.⁸

Although the mystical and hagiographical tradition of the Church include some testimonies of saints and mystics experiencing occasional diabolical experiences during their youth, the unusual nature and degree of these alleged diabolical attacks, i.e., something "within" the alleged visionary and "close to his heart," as well as the young Michel's response to these alleged Satanic attacks appear problematic. For example, the burning down of his family house due to its suggested Satanic possession would not represent a traditionally prudent nor a balanced response. Moreover, the climbing upon a hot wood burning stove for relief from diabolically induced pain certainly falls outside of the Church's spiritual Tradition for combatting forms of diabolical attack, obsession, or possession, and could even beg the question, if accurate, of what type of preternatural force would allow him to climb upon a hot wood burning stove without causing physical harm to his body. Both responses merit theological and psychological concern.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

3. Theological Assertion: The Heavenly Father and Fr. Rodrigue are “One”

In an alleged message from God the Father, the Heavenly Father directs people to do everything they can to help Fr. Rodrigue construct a monastery for his new order, reportedly ending his directive with the statement: “I refuse nothing of what he [Fr. Rodrigue] asks of me. He and I are one.”⁹

To state that Fr. Rodrigue is “one” with God the Father, and that God the Father refuses Rodrigue “nothing” has extremely dangerous theological ramifications. The former theological formulation that God the Father and Fr. Rodrigue are “one” is typically understood and reserved as a profession of divinity, i.e., when Jesus states in Scripture, “The Father and I are one (Jn. 10:30).” Even if the words are meant only figuratively, it nonetheless manifests a theological and pastoral concern that a priest with theological training would convey this alleged message with the ambiguity it contains.

The latter statement, “I refuse nothing of what he [Fr. Rodrigue] asks of me,” likewise connotes the sense that Fr. Rodrigue, as a human being on earth in possession of a free will, would be incapable of asking for the “wrong” thing, and would be theologically troubling to be predicated of any fallen human being.

4. Theological Assertion: “The Anti-christ is in the Hierarchy of the Church Right Now.”

Fr. Rodrigue proposes that the “Anti-christ is in the hierarchy of the Church right now, and he has always wanted to be in the Chair of St. Peter.”¹⁰ Although highly speculative in nature, the patristic, mystical and prophetic traditions of the Church generally pose the historic person of the “Anti-christ” not as a cleric within the Church, but rather as a secular political figure outside of the Church¹¹ who in turn, would work in conjunction with a false or “anti-pope” at a time of great ecclesial and global persecution.

Based on historical fact, the only major Christian writers who proximately associated the Anti-christ in any way with the papacy were Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and their followers.¹²

5. Theological Prophecy: Pope Francis will be martyred and Pope Benedict XVI Emeritus will “convene a new council”

⁹ Fr. Michel Rodrigue, “Mary Has Already Called the Apostles of the Last Times,” Countdown to the Kingdom, Accessed July 9, 2020.

<https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/fr-michel-rodrigue-mary-has-already-calle-the-apostle-of-the-last-times/>.

¹⁰ Fr. Michel Rodrigue, “The Warning, the Tribulation, and the Church Entering the Tomb,” Countdown To The Kingdom, Accessed July 9, 2020, <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/fr-michel-rodrigue-the-warning-the-tribulation-and-the-church-entering-the-tomb/>.

¹¹ Cf. “Antichrist,” Catholic Encyclopedia Online, Accessed July 13, 2020, <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01559a.htm>.

¹² Ibid.

Fr. Rodrigue prophesies that Pope Francis will be martyred, and that Pope Benedict XVI Emeritus, “who still wears the papal ring” will subsequently convene a new council:

Pope Francis will be like Peter, the apostle. He will realize his errors and try to gather the Church back under the authority of Christ, but he will not be able to do so. He will be martyred. Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, who still wears his papal ring, will step in to convene a council, attempting to save the Church. I saw him, weak and frail, held up on either side by two Swiss guards, fleeing Rome with devastation all around. He went into hiding, but then was found. I saw his martyrdom.¹³

This alleged prophecy contains the substantial theological error that Pope Benedict XVI Emeritus, “who still wears the papal ring” has the canonical or ecclesiastical jurisdiction “to convene a new council.” Pope Benedict XVI Emeritus is no longer pope and has absolutely no canonical or juridical power to convene a council. The fact that he “still wears his papal ring” in no sense grants him the ability to invoke any council, present or future. In point of fact, if our present Holy Father, Pope Francis, were to be martyred, it would be the task of the cardinal delegated *camerlengo* (presently Cardinal Kevin Farrell) to convoke a new conclave for the election of a new pope before any convening of any Church council could take place.

Beside the explicit theological error contained in this alleged prophecy, it furthermore presupposes the following historic events: A) Pope Francis will be martyred; B) Pope Benedict XVI Emeritus will outlive Pope Francis, and thereupon C) Pope Benedict XVI Emeritus will be martyred. If any of these prophesied historical events do not in fact take place, it should, coupled with the other theological and factual errors, pose an obvious concrete indication of the lack of authenticity of this alleged message for all honest and informed discerners.

6. Theological Assertion: The Existence of Demons in Purgatory

Fr. Rodrigue alleged that Padre Pio took him to Purgatory, where he witnessed that the bottom level of Purgatory consists of souls “beaten by the Devil as their purification”:

After that, Padre Pio brought me to purgatory. I discovered that there are seven levels in purgatory. At the bottom level, I could see souls beaten by the devil as their purification.¹⁴

The concept that devils exist permanently in Purgatory and are carrying out a purifying function in Purgatory as part of the providence of God is substantially incompatible with the authentic Catholic doctrine on the nature of Purgatory.

¹³ Fr. Michel Rodrigue, “The Warning, the Tribulation, and the Church Entering the Tomb,” Countdown to the Kingdom, Accessed July 9, 2020, <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/fr-michel-rodrigue-the-warning-the-tribulation-and-the-church-entering-the-tomb/>.

¹⁴ Fr. Michel Rodrigue, “The Holy Family: Protection from Fire Falling From the Sky,” Countdown to the Kingdom, Accessed July 9, 2020, <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/fr-michel-rodrigue-the-holy-family-protection-from-fire-falling-from-the-sky/>.

Such an assertion, moreover, runs contrary to the overall tone and tenor of the Church's Mystical Tradition on the purifying experience of Purgatory, where souls, regardless of the degree of purgation required, are nonetheless sustained in Christian faith, hope, and love as they complete their final purification before their entrance into heavenly glory.

7. Factual Assertion: Surprise Meeting with Pope St. John Paul II at his Desk in St. Peter's Basilica

Fr. Rodrigue asserts that while in St. Peter's Basilica searching for St. Peter's tomb, he climbed a staircase and surprisingly discovered Pope John Paul II in his undershirt at his desk. The text is quoted here to provide a fuller context of the assertion (as summarized in his Virtual Retreat¹⁵):

Fr. Michel made a trip to Rome and one day there, began looking for St. Peter's tomb in St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. He found himself at the foot of a staircase and decided to climb it. At the top of a staircase was an open door. He stepped through it to see Pope John Paul II sitting at his desk in an undershirt and his papal garments, clearly not expecting company.

The pope turned to face Fr. Michel and smiled.

"Can I help you?" He asked in French, though he had no way of knowing what language Fr. Michel spoke.

"Oh, Holy Father!" gasped Fr. Michel, who dropped to his knees. "No! No. I'm fine!"

"Is there anything you need?"

"No, nothing!"

"Feel free to stand up. Who sent you here?"

"The Blessed Mother."

"Yes, she sometimes does that. Read 1st and 2nd Peter, and the 1st letter of John. They speak of these times."

"Yes, Holy Father."

And then the pope gave Fr. Michel his blessing.

Fr. Michel then asked timidly, "How do I leave?"

"The same way you came," he said with smiling eyes. "If you wouldn't mind, please shut the door after you."¹⁶

¹⁵ Fr. Michel Rodrigue, "Fr. Michel Rodrigue vs. The Devil," Countdown to the Kingdom, Accessed July 9, 2020. <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/fr-michel-rodrigue-vs-the-devil/>.

Those familiar with the daily Vatican protocol of Pope St. John Paul II during his papacy can easily attest to the concrete errors proposed in this event, and likewise confirm the following true historical facts during the papacy of Pope St. John Paul II:

- 1) Pope St. John Paul never had an office in St. Peter's Basilica;
- 2) Pope St. John Paul II was constantly attended throughout the day by his private secretary, Monsignor (now Cardinal) Stanislaw Dziwisz, or one of his two substitute private secretaries;
- 3) St. John Pope John II experienced the perpetual surveillance and protection of the Swiss guards, which would make the surprise visit of Fr. Rodrigue to any office in which Pope St. John Paul II was occupying absolutely impossible.

Thereby, Fr. Rodrigue's alleged event with Pope St. John Paul, which could not have been based in reality, points either to A) issues of integrity and veracity; or B) issues of emotional/psychological stability.

8. Factual Assertion: Pope John Paul II used a "Fake Pope" to enable him to leave the Vatican

Fr. Rodrigue asserts that Pope John Paul II used a "fake pope" to allow Pope John Paul II to "sneak in through the back" of the Vatican. Once again, the text is provided for context:

Fr. Michel was in St. Peter's Square, too small to see the pope give his papal address, with the crowds towering above him. Feeling like Zacchaeus, he decided to walk to the outskirts of the square, instead of climbing a tree, just before the pope was to arrive. He was standing beside the road praying the Rosary when a black car pulled up alongside him. The backseat passenger window rolled down, and Pope John Paul II who had caught sight of FR. Michel said, "Hello!" in French. "I see you are praying your Rosary!"

"Yes, I am here because I'm too short to get close to see you. But how is it you're here when your pope vehicle is pulling up right now where all the crowds are?"

"Oh, that's the fake pope," he said. "No one knows that the real pope sneaks in through the back." Fr. Michel let out his hearty contagious laugh and the pope joined him with a chuckle.¹⁷

The irrationality of this claim, i.e., that Pope St. John Paul II used another person as an imposter to impersonate him during public audiences, whereby the papal imposter went undiscovered or unrecognized by all Vatican observers so as to enable the real Pope St. John Paul II to leave to and from the Vatican, requires no commentary. Once again, this false historical claim logically points to legitimate concerns of either moral integrity or emotional-psychological balance.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

9. Theological Assertion: “After the Warning, no one left on earth will be able to say that “God does not exist” and “Everyone will recognize Christ “ and “Want to serve the Lord”

Fr. Rodrigue maintains that God the Father instructed him that after the Warning, i.e., a global illumination of conscience, that everyone will recognize Christ and will want to serve the Lord:

After the Warning, no one left on Earth will be able to say that God does not exist. When the Warning comes, everyone will recognize Christ, and they will also recognize His Body, and the body of Christ is the Catholic Church. They will know that they have to come back to Him in the way that you will show them. Priests will also be there to welcome them. We will not be there to judge them. At that point, everyone will want to serve the Lord.¹⁸

This assertion seems to deny the possibility of a free act of the free will by over seven billion people, whereby some of whom (even after an extraordinary event such as an illumination of conscience) could immediately deny the proposed grace of such an illumination as hallucinatory, imaginary, etc., and as a result reject the reality from its initiation.

This could in turn lead to the immediate consequent rejection of the revelation and reality of Jesus Christ, his Church, and His Eucharistic Presence.

10. Prophetic Assertion: Six and a half weeks after the Warning, Individuals will be led to a Refuge, where, leaving cars, properties, and cell phones behind, they will spend Three and One Half Years in Complete Confinement

Fr. Rodrigue asserts that God the Father has instructed that six and one half weeks after the Warning, individuals will be directed by their guardian angels to a specified refuge, at which time they should abandon their properties, cars, and cell phones, and immediately enter a designated refuge (in some cases their own home), where for a period of three and one half years, they are to remain in total confinement:

After the six and one half weeks following the Warning, when the devil’s influence returns, you will see a little flame in front of you, if you are called to go to a refuge. This will be your guardian angel who shows this flame to you...He will conduct you to a refuge from the Father. If your home is a refuge, he will guide you by this flame to your home. If you must move to another place, he will guide you along the road that leads there...

You will not bring a cell phone. You will leave the car far from you and your property. You will not use the Internet and will throw out your computer, your television, any kind of electronic device because the devil has already worked on these products before you obtained them...

¹⁸ Fr. Michel Rodrigue, “After the Warning and World War III,” Countdown to the Kingdom, Accessed July 10, 2020, <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/fr-michel-rodrigue-after-the-warning-and-world-war-iii/>.

...For three and a half years, you will be in your refuge or in your home...¹⁹

The over specificity of this alleged message, i.e., precisely “six and one half weeks” after the Warning, is unusual within the Church’s mystical Tradition. Moreover, the alleged directive for families to immediately leave their homes, properties, possessions, etc. after the Illumination of Conscience *has absolutely no precedent within Church approved private revelation.*

Furthermore, such an extraordinary directive could, under certain circumstances, lead to grave domestic and parental irresponsibility, substantial societal harm, and even communal manipulation.

This unusual and unprecedented alleged directive should therefore be evaluated in light of an accurate assessment of the overall veracity and reliability, or lack thereof, of the general body of Fr. Rodrigue’s alleged messages.

Conclusion

In summation, the alleged messages of Fr. Rodrigue contain significant and repeated examples of theological and factor error, coupled with legitimate concerns regarding his emotional and psychological stability—all of which, according to the norms issued by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and confirmed by the Papal Magisterium, essentially ***lead to the theological conclusion that the alleged messages of Fr. Rodrigue and his concurring mystical experiences are not authentic (constat de non supernaturalitate).***

The fact that there remain elements contained within Fr. Rodrigue’s messages which do in fact correspond to the authentic private revelation of Jesus and his Mother to contemporary humanity, i.e., references to devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary; the power of the Rosary, the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Eucharistic Adoration, Illumination of Conscience,²⁰ etc., *do not in themselves lead to an overall conclusion of supernatural authenticity of this particular alleged seer and his asserted messages.*

Fr. Rodrigue repeatedly refers to the large quantity of other private revelations with which he is familiar, i.e., Fatima, Garabandal, Akita, Medjugorje, Divine Mercy, Maria Valtorta, etc. which allows for the possibility that true elements contained in these messages could have been consciously or unconsciously added to his own human reflections.

In fact, it is precisely the dubious mixing of supernatural messages from true sources with messages of a human, psychological or preternatural origin which can cause the greatest possible

¹⁹ Fr. Michel Rodrigue, “The Time of the Refuges,” Countdown to the Kingdom, Accessed July 10, 2020, <https://www.countdowntothekingdom.com/fr-michel-rodrigue-the-time-of-the-refuges/>.

²⁰ On a related note, my theological comment regard the book, *The Warning: Testimonies and Prophecies of the Illumination of Conscience* by Christine Watkins, a more detailed and nuanced statement which did not appear on the cover of the book in its full content or context with which it was originally submitted to the author, called for a serious discernment and wide reading concerning the possibility of an upcoming Illumination of Conscience, which constitutes the major theme of the text. However, ***my supportive comment regarding the possibility of an upcoming Warning should in no sense be interpreted as a positive theological approval of all of the alleged visionaries cited in this book, which includes those of Fr. Rodrigue.***

damage of confusion and panic among the People of God. Alleged messages such as these can lead to a grave and even diabolical distraction from the truly supernatural and critically important messages of private revelation from God the Father, Jesus, and Our Lady to contemporary humanity, which are always accompanied by the great spiritual fruits of Christian peace, joy, and hope, rather than fear, anxiety, and panic.

Once repeated theological and factual error have been determined in an alleged message, the prudence and wisdom of the Church and her respective norms for evaluating reported private revelation call for an immediate distancing from that alleged source, and appropriately lead to the conclusion that the individual cannot be considered a valid and dependable human instrument of authentic supernatural private revelation. To continue to entertain alleged messages from a source determined to be unreliable could be considered to be highly imprudent and spiritually dangerous.

For these reasons, it is my personal theological opinion that the alleged messages of Fr. Rodrigue should not be considered an authentic source of private revelation, but, on the contrary, represents a potentially dangerous mixture of falsity and truth, of darkness and light, which can cause untold confusion, anxiety, panic for the Christian faithful, as well constitute a substantial distraction from the authentic and quintessentially important prophetic messages of Jesus and his Mother for the Church and the world today.

Finally, it is my most sincere hope that this negative theological judgement on this one particular alleged message in no way discourages the People of God from granting their faithful and generous “fiat” to the authentic heavenly messages generously granted to contemporary humanity which, for example, at Fatima one hundred and three years ago on this day, granted a supernatural plan and promise of assured victory as a true Marian remedy for our troubled times: “In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph...and a period of peace will be granted to the world.”²¹

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(Permission is granted for the open distribution of this statement)

²¹ Cf. Message of the Lady of the Rosary, Fatima, Portugal, July 13, 1917.