

14 December 2022

Transcription of the Q&A with the journalists

1st Question

Asks for clarification on the expression “wounds on one side and the other.” He asks what we are talking about: what kind of abuses and what is the current status of Rupnik (and in Rome?) (homilies made public on the internet and listenable everywhere in the world: what restrictions are we talking about?). Rupnik is a public figure: journalists consider privacy to be all the more restricted the more people have a public role. Some victims may fear coming out of the closet when a person is potent, so talking about these things may be an act of justice for any victims who have not yet come forward.

Fr. General:

The balance is challenging. First, I would like to say that it is one thing to cover up a case, and another thing is how much you communicate or do not communicate. What you don't do, we haven't done, and don't want to do in any case is not to acknowledge the fact. The fact is recognized. The case has been recognized and all the legal procedures have been done here. Rupnik has a restriction on its ministry related to the type of situation reported, which is overstepping the bounds of a relationship between adults. Specifically a relationship between a priest doing sacramental ministry and the person receiving this ministry. It is in this context that these overstepping of relationship boundaries have occurred. The adult relationship between a man and woman is a mixture of different aspects, affective, psychological, and addictions in some cases, which can end up in the manipulation of people. This is the area that has been touched by the complaints. When it is produced in sacramental ministry, all this needs to be analyzed and taken into charge by the DDF. When the complaint came in, precautionary measures were taken. When the procedure was over - when the DDF declared that any offenses were to be considered time-barred - these precautionary measures remained active measures on our part (for now provisional, because we want to go ahead in analyzing this). The measures that Rupnik had received, it still has now. The restrictions are directly related to the content of the complaint, which is about trespassing limits. He cannot hear confessions (i.e., cannot administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation), cannot spiritually accompany people, cannot lead courses or accompany Ignatian spiritual exercises in any way. These are the administrative restrictions. There are no other restrictions. Then, regarding other interventions (conferences, publication of articles or books...) he must have the explicit approval, on a case-by-case basis, of his local superior, that is, the superior of his community. These are the measures so far. For the future, it depends on how the process goes: whether there will be other measures or not...

He is now in Rome and continues his work as an artist and continues his ministerial-presbyteral work in the areas that are not touched by these measures.

2nd Question

A clarification. There was a conviction in 2020 by an ecclesiastical court for the crime of acquitting an accomplice, which in itself carries an excommunication latae sententiae, which was later remitted. I wonder why this was not communicated. It seems to me that there is a connection between both the statute of limitations and the complaints. Only half the story is told.

Fr. General:

No. These are two different cases. The case you mention is about excommunication *latae sententiae*. The expression means that the very moment this act is done, the person who does it is *ipso facto*

excommunicated. How is this excommunication lifted? First, it must be declared that there was a crime. In 2019 case, the prior investigation was done and the criminal administrative process was done at the end of which the CDF declared that there was actually acquittal of the accomplice. So he is excommunicated. To remove the excommunication the person must acknowledge the fact and formally repent. And Rupnik has done so. Rupnik had ministerial restrictions as early as 2020 due to this process.

3rd Question

Is Rupnik's work as an artist considered part of his ministry? Could it be considered as a homily, as something that has theological and spiritual significance?

Fr. General:

No. His artistic work is not a sacramental ministry. No judgment has been made on his theology. It is his behavior as a person in the exercise of his presbyteral ministry that is under question. When a mistake is made, the mistake needs to be repaired. So I tried to emphasize that we want to go beyond the strictly legal issue to go and look at the processes that lead people to make these kinds of mistakes and accompany people who have been hurt by this behavior to heal. If we are believers, men of faith, healing also means forgiveness, and reconciliation. It is a long road, a very long road. We know the complexity of restorative justice processes (not only in cases of abuse but also political, and social) that eventually succeed in restoring the human dimension of relationships. But the starting point is recognising the initial mistake and the wound created.

4th Question

What exactly is this "Loyola group" and what is the Society's control over this group and these sisters? Who founded it, why is it called "Loyola," and what are the consequences on these sisters' lives of Rupnik's actions?

Fr. General:

I must say that I do not know the details of the path and history of the Loyola community. At the time (late 1980s) I knew nothing about this reality that was born in Slovenia. From what I know today, it was founded in connection with some Slovenian Jesuits and among them Rupnik who had a very direct role in the foundation. Also some bishops of Slovenia and a group of young people (men, women, priests...) were involved in the founding of the community, which was, however, a women-only community. They are not really "nuns," but consecrated people in the context of this kind of group born after CV II who do not make public canonical vows, but a type of promise. When the situation between this group and Rupnik became confrontational, he was ousted from the group and responsibilities to the group. Some people at that time left the group completely, some stayed in the group, and some came to Rome with Rupnik and gave birth to the reality present today at the Aletti Center. Some of these women who are in Rome collaborate with different responsibilities in the Gregorian, in the Holy See and are women of the highest intellectual and spiritual level.

The situations reported today are related to the events that happened at that time, 30 years ago.

5th Question

Does the sacramental ministry include the celebration of the Mass or not? Have you spoken with the Pope about this case? Has he directly intervened in the decisions of the Dicastery?

Fr. General:

The restriction does not concern this aspect, and the measures are proportional to the mistake.

I do not have a direct channel with the Pope. Pope Francis has never spoken to me about the case. Dicastery heads talk regularly with the Pope. Before making the decision, I can imagine that the Prefect of the Dicastery spoke with the Pope. That seems normal to me. But I cannot say yes or no.

6th Question (Women's Group in the Apostolic Ministry of the Society)

(omissis)

7th Question

What control over restrictions? To date, it is still possible to book on the website for an exercise course scheduled for February in Loreto. Can you clarify this point?

Fr. General:

Need to clarify. This is not possible. And we will try to make sure that this is not possible.

8th Question

Can Rupnik give sermons if he has permission from his superior then?

Fr. General:

Exactly. It should be clarified that the permission is not general. It must be given each time by his local superior.

9th Question

Are the restrictions that Rupnik has today a continuation of the restrictions given by the CDF, or have you added more?

Fr. General:

The CDF has never issued measures; that is not their job. The only process there has been in CDF is related to the first case. The CDF said: there was an acquittal of the accomplice, so Rupnik is under the situation of excommunication *latae sententiae*. The CDF lifted the excommunication. The measures were issued by us. In that case and this case.

10th Question

When you did the investigation, did only the cases related to Slovenia come up, or did other cases come up as well? Are you planning to look at whether there are other victims? Are you actively looking for other victims?

Fr. General:

Going into a broader process, we will certainly look more broadly. But we are not prosecutors. We are trying to shed light on a problem to find a solution to it. We are not now "looking" for other possible victims, but if it turns out that in moving forward, we need to do so, we will.