The timeline below offers a cursory overview of the current ecclesial crisis as limited to the controversy surrounding Pope Francis’ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia (“The Joy of Love”). Although by no means exhaustive, this timeline tracks certain high-profile events in the controversy that are now public knowledge. As many Cardinals, bishops, priests and theologians maintain, the AL controversy is only symptomatic of an underlying crisis of doctrine, morals, and liturgy. As in the past, the Church must clearly and authoritatively address these deeper issues before any great measure of ecclesial health will return.

Fall 2014: The Extraordinary Synod on the Family
2/20-21: Extraordinary Consistory of the Cardinals on the Family held in Rome.
10/5-19: 3rd Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the Family.
10/7: Five cardinals, others publish Remaining In The Truth of Christ, defending traditional marriage doctrine.

Fall 2015: The Ordinary Synod on the Family
3-9: Filial Appeal launched, .8 million Catholics petition Vatican for clarity, right doctrine on marriage and family.
9/4: Cardinals publish Eleven Cardinals Speak, in defense of traditional marriage doctrine.
10/4-25: 14th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the Family.
11/30: Pope in press conference: Contraceptives are justifiable in some cases.

Winter 2015: Drafting Amoris Laetitia
11-12: AL draft ghostwritten by controversial Jesuit Fr. Fernandez (author of Heal Me With Your Mouth: The Art of Kissing), recycling earlier errors in moral doctrine. Draft shared internally among hierarchy, prompting 30 Cardinals, multiple bishops’ conferences, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to submit pages of concerns to pope: none are acknowledged, and no AL changes are made.
2/18: Pope in interview: Contraceptives are justifiable in some cases.

March 19, 2016: Amoris Laetitia Issued

Spring - Summer 2016: Initial Controversy
4/10: Philippines Bishops guidelines: Yes, Communion for public adulterers. “Mercy cannot wait. Mercy should not wait! …at the table of sinners at which the All-Holy Lord offers himself as food for the wretched, there is always room.”
5/2: Bishop Fellay, SSPX implores AL revision. “We humbly but firmly implore the Holy Father to revise [AL]… As with the documents of Vatican II, what is ambiguous must be interpreted in a clear manner, and what contradicts the constant doctrine and practice of the Church must be retracted, for the glory of God, for the good of the whole Church, and for the salvation of souls, especially those in danger of being deceived by the guise of a false mercy.”
6/16: Pope to pastoral congress: “Great majority of Catholic marriages are invalid.”
6/29: 45 Catholic theologians submit AL censures privately to College of Cardinals, request intervention on errors.
7/27: Pope to Polish Bishops in closed-door session: Communion for public adulterers could be a localized decision.
7/27: 45 Theologians go public with earlier June letter and AL theological censures.
8/15: Pope dubs Archbp. Paglia (commissioner of homoerotic church mural) new head of Pontifical Academy for Life (PAL).
8/30: Beunos Aires Bishops guidelines: Yes, Communion for public adulterers.
9/5: Pope confirms Buenos Aires Bishops: Yes, Communion for public adulterers - there is “no other interpretation.”
9/16: Four Cardinals submit dubia (formal “doubts”) privately to Pope, seeking AL clarification.
9/20: Josef Siefert, prominent Catholic prof in interview: AL may cause total split in the Church.

Fall-Winter 2016: Calling It A Crisis
11/2: Claudio Pierantoni, respected Catholic prof publishes essay: Today looks a lot like the Arian crisis.
11/14: Cardinals go public with dubia. Global controversy erupts around five basic yes/no questions.
11/18: Pope in interview: Moral teaching can’t be “only white or black.”
11/18: Pope dismisses entire PAL staff, issues new statutes removing required declaration of Catholic pro-life commitment.
the reception of the sacraments, and has caused these heretical opinions to laetitia, and by other, related, words, deeds and omissions, effectively upheld 7 heretical positions about marriage, the moral life, and confusion” and fear in the Church: “Many fear if they speak their mind, they will be marginalized or...