



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 24, 2023

Published in the November 13, 2023 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 39, No. 21

Pope Francis' Revolution: The Synod on Synodality

Polygamy? Blessing homosexual unions? "Radical inclusion" of LGBT people? Holy Communion for those living in adulterous relationships? Ordination of women? Is the Roman Catholic Church really about to flip on these and related issues? Are Pope Francis and his "Synod on Synodality" bent (many faithful Catholics say "hell-bent") on thoroughly overturning two millennia of the Catholic Church's teaching on moral doctrine? Indeed, virtually everything associated with the synod — the delegates appointed to it, the topics under discussion, and the revolutionary context of Francis' pontificate — points to an end goal of bringing about a subversive and seismic upheaval in fundamental Catholic beliefs.



AP Images

Synodal revolution: In addition to alarming positions on homosexuality, marriage, feminism, divorce, migration, and enviro-Marxism, Pope Francis' Synodal Way points toward a new structure of governance.

While the hot-button moral issues have taken center stage, there are other far-reaching concerns as well. Pope Francis, the "Climate Change Pope," has made sure that this pet obsession of his is also prominently injected into the synodal proceedings (along with the directly related United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainability), which are conspicuously timed to gin up support for the UN's COP28 Climate Summit to be held in Dubai in November and December. Still another contentious issue is the matter of migration, particularly the mass migration of Muslims into Europe and North America. Pope Francis has staked out a very extreme position on this topic, repeatedly calling for what amounts to the complete abandonment of borders, national sovereignty, and orderly immigration.

However, what may prove to be far more problematic and destructive in the long run than the adoption of heretical or heterodox positions on any of these controversial issues is the novel "synodal process" that is being established. The synod documents are replete with references to "the synodal church," reinforcing the public statements of many of its radical participants that the Catholic Church will tailor doctrine according to parish polling and diocesan plebiscite rather than biblical direction and apostolic tradition. The obvious end product would be a political-ideological "Church of Democracy," with ever-changing doctrine to agree with the hostile demands of the anti-Christian world powers.

The Synod on Synodality (officially known as the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops) is a multi-year affair that began with a preparatory process in September 2021 and will conclude in October 2024. The first formal session of the synod began this year in Rome on October 4 and concluded on October 29.

Shepherds Warn of "Toxic," "Hostile," "Suicidal" Synod

In the lead-up to this year's opening session, the Synod on Synodality came under fire from important Catholic clergy, as well as prominent lay Catholic theologians, Catholic thought leaders, and Catholic



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 24, 2023

Published in the November 13, 2023 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 39, No. 21

organizations.

Shortly before his death last January, Australian Cardinal George Pell, the former prefect of the Vatican's Secretariat for the Economy, wrote a blistering piece for the British newspaper *The Spectator* in which he described Francis' pontificate as "a disaster in many or most respects; a catastrophe," and called the synod "a toxic nightmare." He referred to it as "this potpourri, this outpouring of New Age goodwill."



"Toxic nightmare": The late Cardinal George Pell, a former top-level Vatican official, warned before his death in 2022 that the Synod on Synodality is a "toxic nightmare," a "disaster," and a "catastrophe" for the faith. (AP Images)

"It is not a summary of Catholic faith or New Testament teaching," Pell warned. "It is incomplete, hostile in significant ways to the apostolic tradition and nowhere acknowledges the New Testament as the Word of God, normative for all teaching on faith and morals. The Old Testament is ignored, patriarchy rejected and the Mosaic Law, including the Ten Commandments, is not acknowledged."

The Australian prelate noted that in Germany, where a majority of the German bishops have gone flagrantly heretical, especially on sexual matters, "some faithful German Catholics are already talking, not of the synodal way, but the suicidal way." The German synodal Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller has similarly described the synod as "a hostile takeover of the Church" that must be resisted. Cardinal Müller, who is the former prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF, now renamed the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, DDF), has become one of the most outspoken critics of the synod and its revolutionized "synodal process."

Additional cardinals and bishops who have challenged the dangerous path of Pope Francis' "Synodal Way" include Cardinals Joseph Zen of Hong Kong, Robert Sarah of Guinea, Raymond Burke of the United States, Dominik Duka of Prague, Kurt Koch of Switzerland, and Juan Sandoval Íñiguez of Mexico, and Bishops Héctor Aguer of Buenos Aires, Robert Mutsaerts of the Netherlands, Athanasius Schneider of Kazakhstan, Carlo Maria Viganò (former apostolic nuncio), and Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas.



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 24, 2023

Published in the November 13, 2023 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 39, No. 21

Stacking the Synod Deck

The alarming proceedings of the Synod on Synodality might come as a shock to many Catholics and non-Catholics alike, but there really is no excuse for surprise. Voices of Catholic orthodoxy have been warning for years that we should expect nothing less than all-out revolution from the misbegotten enterprise. The clues were anything but subtle. Pope Francis' latest synod follows the pattern of deception, duplicity, and manipulation that typified his earlier gatherings. In an article titled "How the Family Synods Prepared the Ground for the Synod on Synodality" for the *National Catholic Register*, veteran Vatican correspondent and author Edward Pentin recounts the deceitful machinations that characterized the 2014 and 2015 Extraordinary and Ordinary Synods on the Family. Those intrigues were more fully detailed in Pentin's 2015 book *The Rigging of a Vatican Synod? An Investigation into Alleged Manipulation at the Extraordinary Synod on the Family*.

That the Synod on Synodality would clearly be following the same devious path as the earlier Francis synods was clear from the very start due to two key elements: personnel and process. First, regarding personnel, the selection of voting participants was heavily tilted in the "progressive" direction. The more notorious examples, ranging from heterodox to heretical, among the synod delegates are:

Father James Martin, S.J. — Arguably the most infamous promoter of same-sex civil unions and all things pro-LGBT, Fr. Martin is a writer and editor-at-large for the leftist Jesuit magazine *America*. He has been given additional status by Pope Francis, who appointed him a member of the Vatican Dicastery for Communications.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, S.J. — Relator general of the synod and a prominent pro-LGBT cardinal. Pope Francis has appointed him as a member of his Council of Cardinals.

Cardinal Blase Cupich — The Chicago archbishop whom John-Henry Westen of LifeSiteNews has placed in the Number 1 spot on his list of "America's top 10 homosexuality-promoting Catholic bishops."

Cardinal Wilton Gregory — Archbishop of Washington, D.C., raised to the cardinalate by Francis in 2020, is Number 2 on the same list of "America's top 10 homosexuality-promoting Catholic bishops."

Cardinal Joseph Tobin — Archbishop of Newark, New Jersey, is Number 3 on the list of "America's top 10 homosexuality-promoting Catholic bishops."

Cardinal Robert McElroy — Notorious pro-LGBT Bishop of San Diego. Pope Francis elevated him to the cardinalate in 2022 despite his promotion of heretical beliefs. He's Number 6 on the list of "America's top 10 homosexuality-promoting Catholic bishops."

Blessing sin? One of the most contentious issues confronting the synod is the obstinate advocacy by many key participants for the blessing of homosexual civil unions. But Cardinal Raymond Burke responds that "It's not possible to bless these unions in any way." (Orbon Alija/Getty Images Plus)



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 24, 2023

Published in the November 13, 2023 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 39, No. 21



There are many more “synodalists” of similar ilk among the 370 voting participants in this ongoing “toxic nightmare” (in the words of Cardinal Pell). Also, for the first time in the history of the Catholic Church, lay men and women and women religious are participating in this “Synod of Bishops” as voting members. As Cardinal Raymond Burke and other cardinals, bishops, and theologians have pointed out, a synod of bishops is supposed to be just that: a gathering of successors of the apostles, who have been trained and ordained to carry out their apostolic duties. “If the laity participate in it with the right to vote,” noted Cardinal Müller, “then it is no longer a synod of bishops or an ecclesiastical conference [and] does not have the apostolic teaching authority of the episcopal college.” The inclusion of 70 voting non-bishops — all personally selected by Pope Francis — is a guarantee that the synodal process will be tilted leftward.

The Synod on Synodality’s obsession with LGBT issues was highlighted by the pope’s scandalous choice of the radically pro-homosexual British theologian Fr. Timothy Radcliffe to lead the three-day retreat that kicked off the synod session in Rome. Then there are the 30 non-voting “experts,” “facilitators,” and “sherpas” who will be guiding the synodal process, collecting “input.” And writing up the synod’s final report are well-known ultra-heterodox dissenters from the Christian faith. Among them is Pope Francis’ adoring biographer, Austen Ivereigh, a prolific writer and ardent propagandist for heterodox and heretical causes. Critics of the synod’s “process” or “methodology” point out that the entire affair, like the Amazon Synod and the Synods on the Family and Youth, is highly controlled, scripted, and manipulated to achieve a preordained outcome, an outcome that is in complete contradiction to biblical and apostolic tradition, as well as Catholic doctrine.

The new “synodal process” is indeed a revolution, a “hostile takeover,” camouflaged under honeyed words claiming it is a “reform” effort to build a “listening Church,” a “welcoming Church,” a Church of “inclusivity,” a Church of “accompaniment.” The synodal process is chock full of gag-worthy word salads of pop-psychology clichés about “dialogue,” “discerning,” “mercy,” “journeying together,” and “radical inclusion” of the “marginalized,” “excluded,” and “oppressed.” Every heterodox or heretical proposition is credited to the “movement of the Holy Spirit” or inspiration from “the God of Surprises” (a trademark expression of Pope Francis).

However, contrary to all the talk about “listening,” “welcoming,” “inclusion,” and “accompaniment,” Pope Francis and the orchestrators of the synod are unambiguously hostile toward the Catholic faithful who adhere to the eternal verities, unchangeable doctrines, and ancient liturgies of the Church. Pope



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 24, 2023

Published in the November 13, 2023 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 39, No. 21

Francis harbors a particular animosity toward Catholics devoted to the traditional Latin Mass, calling them “rigid,” “ideological,” “sick,” and “dangerous.” He and his like-minded ecclesiastical allies seem to share the moonbat lunacy of President Joe Biden (a pro-abortion, pro-LGBT “pious Catholic”), who thinks Catholics who attend the Latin Mass are dangerous extremists that must be followed and monitored, and their churches infiltrated. Despite all the synod’s fuzzy, feel-good buzzwords and spin, the Synodal Way is indeed shaping up to be, in the words of the late Cardinal Pell, “a catastrophe.”

Expressions of Alarm by Orthodox Prelates

We are told that the Church which we profess, in communion with our ancestors in the faith from the time of the Apostles, to be One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic is now to be defined by synodality, a term which has no history in the doctrine of the Church and for which there is no reasonable definition. Synodality and its adjective, synodal, have become slogans behind which a revolution is at work to change radically the Church’s self-understanding, in accord with a contemporary ideology which denies much of what the Church has always taught and practiced. It is not a purely theoretical matter, for the ideology has already, for some years, been put into practice in the Church in Germany, spreading widely confusion and error and their fruit, division — indeed schism — to the grave harm of many souls.

— Cardinal Raymond Burke, foreword to *The Synodal Process Is a Pandora’s Box*

You cannot bless a relationship which, in itself, is involved with intrinsically evil acts, and therefore, it’s not possible to bless these unions in any way. Yes, we are judges. We have to judge between what is right and what is wrong, and we know on the authority of divine revelation that genital acts between people of the same sex are intrinsically evil.

— Cardinal Raymond Burke, on EWTN’s *The World Over*



Gerhard Müller

This [synodal agenda] is a system of self-revelation. This occupation of the Catholic Church is a hostile takeover of the Church of Jesus Christ.... It has nothing to do with Jesus Christ ... and [in this agenda] they think that doctrine is only like a program of a political party, who can change it according to their votes.... If they succeed, it will be the end of the Catholic Church. And we must resist it like the old heretics of the Arianism.



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 24, 2023

Published in the November 13, 2023 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 39, No. 21

— Cardinal Gerhard Müller on EWTN's *The World Over*, October 6, 2022

The false prophets who present themselves as progressives have announced that they will turn the Catholic Church into an aid organization for Agenda 2030.... Apparently, there are even bishops who no longer believe in God as the origin and end of man and savior of the world, but who, in a pan-natural or pantheistic way, they consider the supposed mother earth to be the beginning of existence and climate neutrality the goal of planet earth.

— Cardinal Gerhard Müller, interview with InfoVaticana, September 12, 2023

The mantra of the process is: listening. To whom? To everybody. The working document contains quite a few quotes.... The contours of the synodal process are becoming increasingly clear. It offers one megaphone for non-church views.... One thing is clear to me. God is out of the picture in this disgraced synodal process. The Holy Spirit has absolutely nothing to do with it. You keep people away from salvation. I'm now dropped out of the synodal process.

— Bishop Robert Mutsaerts of the Netherlands, in his blog of November 4, 2022

The Synod on Synodality is leading souls from the truth of Christ and His Church. Worryingly, there are some signs of Rome's benevolence towards the U.N.'s Agenda 2030. On the contrary, the Church should prophetically announce the opposition of this programme to Christian anthropology and the natural order. I dwell on this issue, which is of the utmost importance. The 2030 Agenda is a globalist project of the United Nations and associated agencies, which pressures states to adopt abortion policies and "comprehensive sex education."... The progressivism of the present pontificate reappears in the midst of the ruins it has produced....

It is appropriate to recall the discernment that Paul VI unexpectedly reached in the midst of the chaos of the 1970s: "Through some crack the smoke of Satan has seeped into the Church of today."

— Archbishop Emeritus Héctor Aguer of Buenos Aires, Argentina, September 21, 2023

The synodal process is being manipulated in the hands of high-ranking Vatican officials to push their ideological agenda. Many bishops are concerned that there is a pre-established agenda in Rome. This process is a tool to coverup a pre-established agenda and we have to be very concerned.

— Bishop Athanasius Schneider of Astana, Kazakhstan, on EWTN's *The World Over* October 22, 2022

The issue that many people are propagating today is that men should marry men, that women should marry women and are asking the Church to validate this. Dear brothers and sisters, the position of the Catholic Church and your pastors (bishops) is that this is a forbidden zone.

— Bishop Hieronymus Joya of Kenya, homily of October 6, 2023



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on October 24, 2023

Published in the November 13, 2023 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 39, No. 21

Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



[Subscribe](#)

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.