

Fr. Perozich comments —

Recently one of you who had previously requested to receive these emails from me asked to be removed from the list. She said that the tensions in the church were too much for her; so she just decided to follow “Papa Francis”.

I wish I could be like her. I know that God is in charge of His church. I believe that the men in authority are there with His permissive will.

My life is one of faith in Jesus, a faith that leads me deeper into the mystery of God because all truth cannot be grasped fully in this life, but unfolds more and more to those to whom He has revealed Himself and called into this life of faith in prayer, worship, and charity.

I was formed to be a priest at an American seminary in order to pastor souls, “domestically trained” as some of the Roman trained priests say, those who had hoped or still hope to become bishops or to go off for further studies in order to have positions of authority in the church.

Still, like you, I am not stupid. While I wish to be in perfect communion, harmony and obedience with popes and bishops, I live now more than ever in tension not only for what they say, but for what they do not say.

True faith brings me answers which satisfy my soul, and questions which direct me back to Him in prayer.

Unclear statements from church leaders these days leave me only with more questions and emptiness in my soul.

My soul wants answers from religious leaders, not more questions.

Euphemisms, slogans, studied ambiguities, what they say, and what they do not express clearly put my mind on alert that something is amiss, and that if some teaching cannot be clearly stated as is done in classic Thomistic language, then the teaching may be saying something else which I cannot accept so easily.

Change agents like to use the word progress which to me means a teaching or practice is developing into what it is intended to be. Failure to speak clearly, succinctly, and fully disturbs my soul because I feel that I am being drawn not into a development of doctrine which would be true progress, rather into a metamorphosis, a change in teaching that comes from the soul of man to hold me captive in the world rather than being uplifted toward God and heaven by the redemptive power of Jesus.

George Neumayr’s good explanation points out not only what WAS said, but what was NOT said in Querida Amazonia. Neumayr as a layman, is more critical than I as a priest would be of the person and style of the pope and bishops. Still I offer his article because it makes more sense to me than does Querida Amazonia of how changes are being made in the Catholic Church to make her something she never has been.



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SUNDAY REPORT

The Pope's Slippery 'Synodal' Way

His exhortation about the Amazon synod raises
more questions than it answers.

by GEORGE NEUMAYR

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“Typical of a Jesuit,” said Archbishop Bruno Forte in 2016, as he reflected on the deviously indirect style of Pope Francis. Forte, a close aide to Pope Francis, recalled that the pope didn’t want to spell out his support for Communion for the divorced and remarried in his exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, lest it cause too much backlash. Forte quoted the pope saying, “If we speak explicitly about Communion for the divorced and remarried, you do not know what a terrible mess we will make. So we won’t speak plainly, do it in a way that the premises are there, then I will draw out the conclusions.”

In his latest exhortation, *Querida Amazonia*, the pope adopts a similarly opaque style. After having engineered a synod in which he had chosen all the fathers — a synod that he knew would reach conclusions in favor of married priests and female deacons — he decided to write an exhortation silent on those questions. The exhortation amounts to a papal punt. The question now is: Who will pick it up?

The exhortation, after all, urges people to “apply” the work of the synod. Were the exhortation a definitive rejection of married priests and female deacons, why would the pope say that?

The pope speaks of the final document of the synod with nothing if not respect and goes to great pains to say that his work does not displace it:

I would like to officially present the Final Document, which sets forth the conclusions of the Synod, which profited from the participation of many people who know better than myself or the Roman Curia the problems and issues of the Amazon region, since they live there, they experience its suffering and they love it passionately. I have preferred not to cite the Final Document in this Exhortation, because I would encourage everyone to read it in full.

Does that sound like someone displeased with the conclusions of the synod? It would appear that the pope is using “synodality” as a cover for positions he is not yet ready to take himself but ones that he could certainly tolerate if advocated by others.

Michael Sean Winters of the National Catholic Reporter [argues](#) that the exhortation is less an exercise of papal power than a renunciation of it, in deference to a synodality from which liberalizing changes will ultimately come:

His emphasis on synodality has become one of the most dominant themes of his pontificate and holds the potential to help the church step away from the Ultramontane excesses of the 19th and 20th centuries. Synods are consultative bodies, and they usually leave the difficult decisions to the pope. But Francis wants us to move away from that monarchical model and engage the whole church in the process of discernment on issues like bringing back the female diaconate.

You can't achieve synodality if you continually look to the pope to make the tough calls.... Instead of the synod being a consultative body that helps the pope form his own judgment, here he is giving the outcome of the synod's deliberations its own standing and status. The line about the synod fathers knowing more about the region than the pope and the Curia is not something one would find in, say, the teachings of Pope Pius X. I had not anticipated this and, so far as I can tell, neither did anyone else.

Contrary to the headlines that the pope “rejected” the synod's liberalizing proposals, the pope simply sidestepped them

for the moment. His closest aides have said that those proposals remain on the table. The pope selected Cardinal Michael Czerny to participate in the press conference rolling his exhortation out. Czerny let the cat out of the bag by saying that the “synodal” process will keep the issues of married priests and female deacons alive: “We are at a very important point in the synodal process. There are long roads ahead, as well as roads already traveled.... If there are questions you feel are open or that the Church feels are open thanks to the exhortation, they will continue to be debated, discussed, discerned, prayed over and, when mature, presented to the appropriate authority for a decision.”

In other words, the issues of this synod will play out like the issues at the last one. The pope will wait for some liberal national conference to ask him for an exemption and he will grant it. The Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes, whom the pope named to run the synod, is confident that the cause of married priests continues. As Edward Pentin [reports](#):

One of the leading figures behind last year’s Pan-Amazon Synod, Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes, has said the synod’s proposal to ordain married men in remote Amazonian areas is not dead but will now be taken up by the Vatican.

After Pope Francis decided not to endorse the change in Querida Amazonia, his apostolic exhortation on the October meeting, the Brazilian publication Estadão reported Feb. 12 that Cardinal Hummes told Brazilian media that “the question must now be worked out with the Pope and the offices of the Holy See.”

“It will be taken up again,” the cardinal insisted. “This matter will have to be developed and completed.”

Jesus Christ told his disciples to let their yes mean yes and their no mean no. Pope Francis prefers to let his no mean maybe. His Peronista style is to leave people guessing. Expectations for him have fallen so low that this exhortation has been greeted with relief. But it is hard to imagine any other pope writing an exhortation so junky. It is full of the usual left-wing politics, syncretistic blather, and wild environmentalist claims. The pope told a visiting delegation of U.S. bishops recently that he primarily intended for the document to promote environmentalism. So much for it as a work of evangelization. This pope is not zealous for the salvation of souls but for “saving the planet.” He goes around telling people, “I don’t want to convert you.” So who cares if priests don’t reach the Amazon? Moreover, why would they need a religion that supposedly lacks the enlightenment of their own culture? The whole point of the pope’s Amazon synod was not to convert Amazonians but to learn from them. The pope respects their strange gods.

In his exhortation, he breezily writes:

Let us not be quick to describe as superstition or paganism certain religious practices that arise spontaneously from the life of peoples. Rather, we ought to know how to distinguish the wheat growing alongside the tares, for “popular piety can enable us to see how the faith, once received, becomes embodied in a culture and is constantly passed on.” It is possible to take up an indigenous symbol in some way, without necessarily considering it as idolatry. A myth charged with spiritual meaning can be used to advantage and not always considered a pagan error. Some religious festivals have a sacred meaning and are occasions for gathering and fraternity, albeit in need of a gradual process of purification or maturation. A missionary of souls will try to discover the legitimate needs and

concerns that seek an outlet in at times imperfect, partial or mistaken religious expressions, and will attempt to respond to them with an inculturated spirituality.

The popes of the past would have found such talk to be dangerous nonsense. But for this pope, it has become habitual. Both his style and substance are “typical of a Jesuit.” We are witnessing a revolution that moves in fits and starts, under a pope who gushes about every religion except his own.



George Neumayr

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George Neumayr, a senior editor at The American Spectator, is co-author of No Higher Power: Obama's War on Religious Freedom.