

Topic: The Synod on Synodality —

Is Christ Being Served First?

Statement:

The Synod on Synodality is a dangerous endeavor that seeks truth in all the wrong places and in all the wrong ways. It will have disastrous results, causing erroneous opinions to supplant truth. *Sensus fidelium* is not found in those who merely dabble in the Faith. Rather, it can only be found in those who actively live and are deeply rooted in the Faith. Even here, the *sensus fidelium* must be scrutinized and held to Scripture, Tradition and magisterial teachings. Opinions, preferences and biases do not save souls. Only truth can do that, and it is found in Jesus Christ. As a Church, this must be our focus.

Justification:

The “document” or “vad” referenced below is the Vatican document published by the Synod of Bishops, called *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality*.

Jesus says that He is the truth: “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6). As a Church, this must be our focus, not each other (Ecclesiasticus 24:25). The Synodal Way seeks to find truth through “dialogue with people from the worlds of economics and science, politics and culture, arts and sports, the media and social initiatives.” (Vad §2.4, # 5). It further seeks truth by listening to “people who have left the practice of the Faith, people of other faith traditions, people of no religious belief, etc.” (Vad §2.1). Are these sources people who are deeply rooted in the Faith and who have a love for God and for truth? No, these sources are of the world and will give only erroneous opinions, heresy and lies. What little truth they may provide is already part of the fullness of truth contained in the Catholic Church (CDF, *Dominus Iesus* §4).

There is but one true Church established by Jesus Christ, and it subsists in the Catholic Church (CCC §§823–827, 830–831, 834–837; CDF, *Dominus Iesus* §§16–19; CDF, *Placuit Deo* §§12–14; CDF, *Responses to Some Questions Regarding Some Aspects of the Doctrine of the Church*, Q. 1–3). Yet the document states, “Fostering participation leads us out of ourselves to involve others who hold different views than we do” (Vad §2.2). True, but the sources enumerated lead to a secular understanding of God and the world. Our views must conform to the truth, mind and will of God, and the Deposit of Faith.

The document continues, “Listening to those who have the same views as we do bears no fruit” (Vad §2.2). By “the same views,” does the author mean Catholic views? Is it then true that two Catholics who adhere to the Faith can have nothing of value to say to each other, that their conversation will bear no fruit?

In the same section (Vad §2.2), they say that “discernment is the art of interpreting in what direction the desires of the heart lead us, without letting ourselves be seduced by what leads us to where we never wanted to go.” We must understand the nature of concupiscence (CCC §§376, 400, 405), that all people, including the baptized, are still under the yoke of our unruly passions and desires, a condition inherited from the Fall. Few people ever actually conquer and rise above these passions. This is the root of sin. No part of concupiscence wants us to go the difficult and narrow way that God directs (Matthew 7:13–14; Luke 13:24). Even if people find the will of God, they twist and distort it, ignore it, rationalize it — whatever it takes to make it easy and comfortable to their passions (CDF, Dominus Iesus §4). This is part of our human nature due to the Fall, and it must be entered into the equation of synodality to determine if the results are meaningful or not (International Theological Commission, Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church §§60–65, 88–105).

The true *sensus fidelium* is found in people who have, to a great degree, conquered concupiscence and desire the narrow way; in those who will embrace truth even if it is difficult (ITC, Sensus Fidei §§74–80, 120–126). The International Theological Commission also has stated the following in relation to the *sensus fidei* of the faithful (*sensus fidei fidelium*), when our pastors, no matter what rank they may enjoy, seek to push an ideology that is contrary and foreign to the constant teaching of the Church:

Alerted by their *sensus fidei*, individual believers may deny assent even to the teaching of legitimate pastors if they do not recognize in that teaching the voice of Christ, the Good Shepherd. “The sheep follow [the Good Shepherd] because they know His voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run away from him because they do not know the voice of strangers (John 10:4–5). For St. Thomas [Aquinas], a believer, even without theological competence, can and even must resist, by virtue of the *sensus fidei*, his or her bishop if the latter preaches heterodoxy. In such a case, the believer does not treat himself or herself as the ultimate criterion of the truth of faith, but rather, faced with materially “authorized” preaching which he or she finds troubling, without being able to explain

exactly why, defers assent and appeals interiorly to the superior authority of the universal Church. (ITC, Sensus Fidei §63)

Are people who support abortion, (CCC §§2271–2272, 2322), sodomy (CCC §§2357–2359, 2396), contraception (CCC §§2370, 2399), heresy (CCC §2089), female priests and deacons (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*) and who just simply take a laissez-faire approach to the Catholic faith to have a voice numbered among the voices of the faithful, who sacrifice and work hard to adhere to the proper teaching of the Church? And what if the faithful are outnumbered? Recall, we had this problem with the Arians until St. Nicholas punched their strongman in the face. What people believe does not necessarily coincide with truth, and if they have the Faith wrong, they will have all the social and political issues wrong as well.

Summary:

The “sensus fidelium,” as synodality seeks it, is anything but *sensus fidelium*. The Faith is not a matter of a vote or mob rule. Nor is God subject to a vote under the false notion of what we hold bound on earth is held bound in Heaven and what we hold loosed on earth is held loosed in Heaven (Matthew 16:19), as if this meant that God does what we say. While listening to the people is a good and necessary thing, they are not a good measure of what is true. Non-Catholics and, in particular, non-religious people, are poor sources for ascertaining the mind and will of God.

Is the synodal process truly seeking to look at the revelation of Jesus Christ and to present it to engage people productively with regard to its applications to challenges in the contemporary world? The Synodal Way has not worked well with the synod of bishops and will be even more disastrous if the pool of participants is expanded. Therefore, the Synod on Synodality should be canceled until a better plan is devised. We should simply keep doing what has worked for the last 2,000 years, where the Church grew and thrived, notwithstanding the post-Vatican II era, wherein the Church seemingly has been collapsing in on itself. The pastors of the Church owe this unto God and the faithful, lest they seek to follow the path of Pilate (John 18:33–37) and lose their souls and the souls of those under their care to confusion and to the power of the evil one for the sake of gaining temporary worldly acclaim (Mark 8:36).

*In Christ,
Patres Fidelium Christi (PFC)*