

The serious problems with the “radical inclusion” delusion

The Synod, in a sign of cultural affirmation, has chosen to identify Catholics by sexual orientation and gender identity. To what end?

July 27, 2023 Dan Maher
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Synodal artwork 2021-2023 (Image: Synod.va Instagram); Prelates at 2018 Synod (Image: CNA)

The Synod 2021-24 is, apparently, constructing Fr. James Martin's bridge.

The authors of the **Instrumentum Laboris** (IL) for this fall's Vatican gathering have embedded — rather disingenuously — an acronym that derives from and embraces the sexual revolution: LGBTQ+. Although it claims to serve as a “prophetic witness to a fragmented and polarized world,” the synod collaborates with the prevailing culture.

Because “LGBTQ+ Catholics” are, we are told, among those who do not “feel” accepted or included in the Church, the synod “will create spaces” where “LGBTQ+ people” and others “who feel hurt by the Church” no longer “feel” invisible and unwelcome.

LGBTQ+ refers to the “*limitless* sexual orientations and gender identities used by **members of our community**,” as the political advocacy group, the **Human Rights Campaign**, explains. Incompatible with reason and faith, the acronym signifies the culture's belief that persons — like gods — have complete dominion over their own bodies and sexual faculties.

Accustomed as we are to the separation of Americans into identity groups, that a synod of the Catholic Church refers to baptized human beings in this manner is a big deal.

A designation *without any limiting principle* seeds the synodal path with the instability and self-indulgence of a culture in the invasive grip of queer and gender theories. No one chooses LGBTQ+ to modify Catholics unless ulterior motives are afoot — and they are.

The radical inclusion of LGBTQ+ in Church discourse

“Respect,” says Fr. Martin in **Building a Bridge**, “means calling a group *what it asks* to be called.” **The collective voice heard by Fr. Martin originates in politics and “what it**

asks to be called” is, as Carl Trueman explains, fundamentally incoherent.

To differentiate Catholics by sexual desire and gender identity intentionally positions these features as integral to our nature as persons created in the image and likeness of God. This queering of the *imago Dei* aims, over time, to “enlarge” the boundaries of Church discourse, “making room” in the Catholic tent for the types of nuance that have destabilized norms since Eden.

The IL itself points in this direction when it calls for a “renewal of language” used by the Church so that the “richness” of its tradition becomes more “accessible and attractive to the men and women *of our time*, rather than an obstacle that keeps them at a distance.”

As is all too common today, assertions – in this case, about Catholic tradition and teaching – are treated as facts. In the synod (as in the culture) feelings, rather than virtues, are authoritative. When a **radically inclusive prelate** declares that “the Catholic community contains structures and cultures of exclusion *that alienate all too many from the church or make their journey in the Catholic faith tremendously burdensome,*” he cedes sovereignty to sentiments. [italics mine]

Is the Church actually oppressive for “all too many,” or are “all too many” wanting the Church to accommodate personal behaviors in which they freely choose to engage?

I am a child of God who has been baptized a Catholic. That I am a man sexually attracted to other men neither detracts from nor adds to the truth to which the Church must always bear witness. **To allege that Church discourse is an “obstacle” keeping me at a distance or that its doctrines make my faith journey “tremendously burdensome” is to mimic a culture that nurtures weakness.**

As Christians, we are called to live, however imperfectly, truly radical lives: to deny the self, pick up the cross, and follow

Jesus Christ. As Catholics, we need priests who lovingly and confidently illuminate the Word and thus strengthen our resolve, which the world all too artfully undermines.

I am not a victim, nor a pawn for Catholic priests who want a different church.

Is the next step normalizing disorder?

LGBTQ+ epitomizes objective disorder, its Q+ a **constant** of confusion into which a church thus incorporating it falls.

Accordingly, each time the synod refers to our “brothers and sisters,” it fails to add “*and other siblings* in Christ,” a “compassionate” expansion of the community of the baptized — already used by radically inclusive theologian, **Fr. Dan Horan, OFM** — that acknowledges our non-binary, genderqueer, and pangender Catholics.

The synod’s eagerness to promote the baptismal dignity of women collides with its desire for greater inclusivity of LGBTQ+ people, some of whom believe they are women despite their “sex assigned at birth,” a mendacious phrasing integrated by definition into the acronym modifying Catholics.

Consideration of “women’s inclusion in the diaconate” now encompasses trans women — biological males who identify as women. The priesthood must open itself to biological females who identify as male — trans men.

To do otherwise denies the baptismal dignity of LGBTQ+ Catholics.

A radically inclusive Church can never clearly say what a *man* or a *woman* is lest it offend, and will most certainly *feel* compelled to revamp discourse that “marginalizes” homosexual activity.

Such a Church, like the culture, requires **sensitivity readers**. The language of sections 2357-59 of the Catechism is, I am assured, harmful and a **disservice** to those of us who are

gay. We are perceived as men without chests, too overwhelmed by our desires to grasp rationally the truth that same-sex inclination is “objectively disordered” and homosexual acts *are* “intrinsically disordered” and “contrary to the natural law.”

Any changes in Church discourse here will lead to revisions elsewhere. The subsequent section 2360, for example, concerns the “Love of Husband and Wife,” which declares — exclusively and without apology— that “sexuality is *ordered* to the conjugal love of man and woman.”

As the gnostic queer theology **espoused** and currently **taught** in a few Catholic **institutions** takes root, our conception of “ordered” will broaden. **Sodomy will be discerned within the totality of God’s design.**

Indeed, the Catholic tradition that “all sexual acts outside of marriage constitute objectively grave sin” becomes unreasonable in a radically inclusive Church because it “disproportionately” focuses the Christian moral life on sexual activity. Making *chastity* – self-mastery – more “accessible and attractive to the men and women of our time” hardly seems necessary.

The past decade of **queer transformations** within **mainstream** Protestant **churches provides** clear **proof** that no church embracing the culture remains the same. The worldwide **Anglican communion** has passed the breaking point. From **transgender clergy** to non-binary bishops, in a radically inclusive church, **the center cannot hold.**

What about the real world?

We are six decades into a sexual revolution that has devastated the institutions of marriage and family. The synodal path not only steers clear of the readily apparent social and cultural wreckage but avoids truth — including the prophetic *Humanae Vitae* — in its embrace of objective disorder.

The triumph of the LGBTQ+ agenda has created a pied piper culture, enticingly packaged in rainbow colors, that informs

children that husbands marry husbands, wives marry wives; that affirms the fantasies of kids claiming they were “assigned” the wrong sex; that demands girls share their formerly private spaces with boys; that compels lessons in sexual orientation and gender identity **as early as kindergarten**, and adds “**queerness**” wherever children can be reached.

How does a synod specifically promoting co-responsibility within the Church ignore the crucial social role of the mother and father, who together have society’s only essential co-responsible task: bringing forth new life, protecting their offspring, raising them as Christians?

High percentages of *lay men and women* have been involved in the synod. However, a reading of synodal documents indicates its lay participants have included few parents with recent first-hand experience changing diapers, bandaging cuts and scrapes, reading stories to sleepy heads, readying youngsters for school, and monitoring the culture’s efforts to bypass Mom and Dad through television, internet, and social media.

Instead, **we “hear” the authorial expertise of universities, its academics perceiving the institutional church as a type of secular government, its laws and structures onerous, its catechetical discourse triggering.**

Something is amiss. In the **North American** document, for example, Catholics are encouraged to “imitate Mary.” Why? Because, the authors tell us, Mary “continually said ‘yes’ to the invitation to contribute to the building up of the Kingdom of God.”

Left unstated is Mary’s indispensable contribution, her *Yes* to motherhood.

In that document — where the *leadership* role of women in the church is of paramount concern — the role of *mother* and *wife* in the domestic church is never mentioned. Nor is the role of

father and husband. Likewise, in the Vatican's Instrumentum Laboris.

Within these omissions resides the radical irrelevance of the synodal path in the third decade of the 21st century. Where is the Catholic Church, the defender of marriage and the family, at this moment of social and cultural collapse in the West?

In large part, *that Church will be found in Africa*, where some 20% of the current worldwide Catholic population resides, where churches are filled on Sundays, and where children are brought into the world male and female, as God has created them.

Africa's synod chose to dispense with the Vatican-suggested theme — Isaiah's *Enlarge the Space of Your Tent* — because of the tent's association with the chaos of warfare, flight, and displacement. Instead, the **Church in Africa** selected as its theme *The Family of God*. "The family," says their document, "is an important structure in the promotion of the synodal Church and demands pastoral care that focuses on marriage and family and their challenges in present-day Africa."

At the invitation of Pope Francis, Fr. Martin is participating in this fall's Vatican synod, along with the four American cardinals who contributed affirming blurbs to *Building a Bridge*.

I take heart that the synod will also be hearing many individual voices from Africa, where the family remains treasured, the gravity of its challenges appreciated, and the Catholic Church a sign of contradiction.

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