

Fr. Perozich comments —

*Former bishop of San Diego, the Most Reverend Leo T. Maher †, was famous for his unique style of speech and his frequent use of the word **sacrifice**.*

*Robert Greving calls attention to lack of **sacrifice** through false pastoring, accompanying the confused away from God, distortion of mercy, and by enabling people to do wrong rather than to accept God and His teachings in order to attain to eternal life*

## What's Missing From the Synod

*The Gospel has nothing to say about enabling, but it says much about **sacrifice**. The upcoming Synod needs to remember that.*



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[Robert B. Greving](#)

**The sincerity of a person is often shown by the **sacrifice** he is willing to make.** For instance, if a student tells a teacher he wants a better grade but won't do the work necessary to get it, he is being insincere. If the teacher says he is willing to help but won't put in some extra time himself, he is being insincere.

If the student still wants a better grade without the work, what he really wants is, in modern parlance, to be enabled. If the teacher gives a better grade without the student showing improvement, he is being, in modern parlance, an enabler. What is missing from both is **sacrifice**.

Such an approach would cut through many of the issues we're having in the Church, especially regarding the Synod.

**Much of Pope Francis' pontificate** has been devoted to being "pastoral." The question the pastoral approach focuses on is, "How do we accompany 'X' in the Church?" Today, that "X" seems to consist mostly of those disagreeing with the Church's sexual teachings, such as the civilly divorced and "remarried," women, and those covered by the LGBTQ+ moniker.

I agree the question needs to be answered, but the question that must be answered before that is, **"Accompany them where?" Unless we know where we're going, we won't be very helpful;** we could cause harm. If you are on a journey, you do have to make choices. You can't take both forks in a road. You can't take both Exit A and Exit B; **you can't go both east and west. In other words, you must sacrifice.**

**Being pastoral is good, and accompanying the person is the right thing to do—if both you and the person you are accompanying are seeking the right "end game."** If the man you are accompanying is an alcoholic and all he wants is money for another binge instead of sobriety, he is being insincere. If you say you

want to help him but accompany him to a bar and buy him a drink, you are being insincere. If you have had any experience with someone dealing with such issues, you know what I mean. **Saying “No” may be the kindest, most “pastoral” thing you can do.**

**The “end game” of the Synod, of any undertaking of the Church, should be to bring others to Christ. The Catholic Church claims to know how. She credits God with revealing the Truth and man with having the capacity to know the Truth. She goes further and claims God has given that Truth to the Church. That is, after all, why many have converted to the Church.**

Sometimes, new issues arise, e.g., in vitro fertilization. Having credited God with giving the Truth to the Church and with man as being able to ascertain it, she looks at any new issue within the context of what she already knows. She doesn't go back and say, “Whoops, we made a mistake.” **None of the issues the Synod is addressing are new. Homosexuality, difficult marriages, “women in the Church”; they've been around since the beginning. Just ask St. Paul. Why, then, are we rehashing them?**

**We can sense the sincerity of the participants by their willingness to **sacrifice**. That, it seems to me, is what is lacking in many of those asking for guidance and many of those giving guidance. They are approaching the Synod with all the sobriety of teenagers who have just been given their parents' credit card. Many want to be enabled, and many**

are enablers. Those who want to be enabled, by definition, can't be helped; and those who want to enable, by definition, should not be doing the helping.

To anyone struggling with any moral issue (that is, all of us), the solution the Church has given since the beginning is prayer, obedience, the sacraments, and, yes, **sacrifice**. With sexual issues, the Church's teaching has been consistent from the beginning: chastity before and during marriage; a sacramental marriage is between a man and a woman, and for life; the sexual act must remain open to life; to take a life once conceived is wrong. Very simple, and very hard; but there you have it.

If you don't agree with it, you have to face the alternative that the Church has been wrong. If you believe that, then why be in it? **That question needs to be asked of anyone holding any office in the Church, and of any layperson: If you don't believe her teachings, why are you here?** There are literally thousands of alternatives; and I, for one, will not fault you if in sincerity you choose one of those. That is what must be kindly but firmly said (again) to those who want to be enabled.

**What about the enablers?** There are several reasons why we enable others. How these apply to anyone in the Church, clergy or lay, can only be answered by each individual.

**We enable because we are too weak to say “No.” It will cause unpleasantness, trouble, and awkward questions. We don’t want the hassle.**

**We enable because we want to be liked.** We fear rejection; we fear bad press; we fear someone getting angry with us or walking away.

**We enable because we are comfortable and want to stay comfortable.** If I don’t go along, I could lose the pleasures, perhaps even the necessities, that I have. He’s my boss, I could get fired.

**We enable because the other person may have something on us that we don’t want known.** If I call him out on his drinking, he’ll bring up my gambling. If I talk to him about his porn problem, he’ll remind me of my weekends at the beach.

**We enable because we don’t really believe that what the other person is doing is wrong.** Yes, that’s what the “rules” say, but, come on, we’re all human. Besides, no one believes *that* anymore.

**We enable others to justify ourselves.** I take my cut on the side; I’m protecting my favorites. No way I’m going to fault him for doing the same thing.

Several of these can be working at the same time. They are all natural human reactions. And they are all wrong. Heaven is not for the faint of heart. We are not here to be liked or to be comfortable.

If you have a problem, admit it, get help, and don’t assume responsibility for others until you are able. The same goes if others have something on you. If you don’t

believe in the teachings of the Church, find one whose teachings you do believe in. If you're letting others harm themselves to justify yourself, you're a fraud. If any of these reasons apply to you, **the only place to which you should accompany someone is the confessional.**

It's been said that the definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and expect different results. That seems to be where we are now.

Another difficult aspect of this is that, to many of us, **we have been allowing enablers and those wanting to be enabled to run the show for a long time; and the longer you postpone the sacrifice, the harder it is.** For a glutton, a healthy diet can be a severe shock to the system. For a Church that walked with the modern world into the swamp, draining the swamp can stink. That, too, seems to be where we are now.

I'm not saying that those who believe and try to follow the Church's teachings are better or holier than thou. Far from it; by the very act of trying to follow the Church's teachings they know how very far from holiness they are. **But they do accept the "end game" the Church has proposed since the beginning, and they do accept how she has guided souls from the beginning to that "end game." And they are willing to sacrifice.**

**At the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis said he wanted a "poor church." In a way, nothing could be better; but it will require sacrifice.**

**Here's the solution: do not tolerate anything other than the Truth. Get rid of any**

**cleric who won't uphold the Truth. Get rid of any cleric, and any candidate for clerical office, who isn't trying his damndest (literally) to live the Truth. Do not allow any institution to call itself Catholic that isn't teaching the Truth. Do not make agreements with those who won't let us proclaim the Truth. And, for Heaven's sake, do not have synods of those who don't believe in the Truth.**

**The Gospel has nothing to say about enabling. It says much about sacrifice.** As St. Pope John Paul II said in his homily canonizing Edith Stein, "Do not accept anything as the truth if it lacks charity, and do not accept anything as charity which lacks truth." **You will know both Truth and Charity by sacrifice. That's what is missing from the Synod.**

**Author**



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