

Fr. Perozich comments —

Fr. Luc de Bellescize makes some good points which I highlighted if the reader wishes to get to the meat of Fr. Luc's points.

Synod Open-Letter

Author: 'Answers to New Questions Found by Listening Obediently to the Word of God'

Father Luc de Bellescize, former secretary of Archbishop Michel Aupetit of Paris, says the choice of some clergymen to embrace worldliness to the detriment of divine Revelation has already provoked a form of schism in the Church.



Father Luc de Bellescize (photo: Solène Tadié / NCRegister)

[Solène Tadié](#)

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September 23, 2023

PARIS — The turbulent events of recent years in the Church, particularly in France, have often prompted **Father Luc de Bellescize** to take up his pen to challenge and awaken consciences. He is the author of a number of incisive columns that candidly analyze the crisis facing the Church and the priestly vocation.

“I’d like to confide in you that this year, during the ordinations, I **experienced a feeling of joy mixed with dread as I laid hands on the young priests in the long procession so anemic and floating does**

the Church seem to me,” he wrote in his recent [open letter](#) to the 21 new cardinals [named](#) by Pope Francis, published ahead of the Synod on Synodality to be held in Rome Oct. 4-29. In his view, **today’s Church does not know where she’s going and constantly tries to redefine herself “because she’s forgotten too much about where she came from.”**

With a degree in literature, Father de Bellescize was ordained a priest in 2009 and served as vicar at Notre-Dame-de-Grâce in Passy before becoming private secretary to Archbishop Michel Aupetit in Paris. Today, he is vicar of St. Vincent de Paul parish in Paris. He is also the author of a number of [poetic works](#) of Christian meditation.

In this interview with the Register, he discusses the concerns he has about some orientations of the synodal process, and **the pitfalls he believes must be avoided if we are not to undermine the faith of new generations.**

You wrote a hard-hitting open letter to the new cardinals on the eve of World Youth Day in Lisbon and in the run-up to the Synod on Synodality Assembly in October. What motivated this initiative on your part, taken at the risk of sparking controversy?

My intention is not to start any sterile controversy, but to adopt a “synodal” attitude, if we understand synodality as the possibility for every baptized to be

listened to and to receive answers to the questions they ask.

“Communion, participation, mission” are the three terms used to define the synod process. So, we all have the right to participate, and I’m doing my bit. I don’t directly intend it to be a pebble in the shoe. ... **True communion is not uniformity of thought, but the path to the one truth, revealed in Jesus Christ, that surpasses and grounds us.**

In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas, as the Latin saying goes, meaning unity for what is certain, freedom for what is not, and charity in all things. Having experienced this in my own parish and having read the conclusions of the Archdiocese of Paris, I note that the young faithful under 35 — who are the future of the Church — participated very little in the preparation of the synod, with only 14% of the participants aged **20-35-year-olds. They feel little concern for many of the conclusions of the *instrumentum laboris*, particularly the more “progressive” ones**, although this expression is too simplistic. The same is true of the faithful from working-class neighborhoods, such as the West Indians in Montmartre or the Chaldeans in the Paris suburbs, who are not interested in these kinds of debates. This may be regrettable, but the need for realism is essential, otherwise **we drift towards ideology**. This does not invalidate the synod’s questions, but **it does call for a nuance in the claim that the *Instrumentum* represents the entire people of God.**

What is your view of the Synod's working document [the Instrumentum laboris] and what paths should the Synod Fathers take to respond to the identity crisis facing the Church?

Basically, things are simple. **Does the truth about faith and morals, the fundamental structure of the Church, the sacramental life, the final ends, emanate from the “grassroots,” through a democratic dialogue that eventually achieves consensus? Or is it to be received “on our knees” by the Revelation of a demanding love that surpasses us, transmitted in fullness by Christ and borne by the living tradition of the Church, by those who have borne witness to the faith at the price of their own blood?**

The Church is not the creator of itself, and we don't have to define our own moral criteria, but listen to the Lord's command. “Be holy, because I am holy” says the Lord (1 Peter 1:16). Baptism is a mystery of election, engaging us in a great struggle to advance in the freedom of God's children. The Second Vatican Council also recalled the universal call to holiness of all the baptized.

New questions constantly arise. **The poor transmission of the faith in Western society and the forgetfulness of its Christian roots, concubinage lived as a massive evidence, access to the sacraments claimed as a right and not as a**

grace, the increasing number of baptized who are divorced and “remarried,” the greater and sometimes demanding visibility of LGBTQI+ people that the *instrumentum laboris* mentions twice.

We must be concerned for all the sheep, and above all for those who are – or feel – estranged from the Church, in the image of the Good Shepherd. But answers to new questions can only be found by listening obediently to the Word of God, not against it, nor against the teaching of the long tradition of wisdom handed down to us by those who have formed us in the faith over the centuries.

The indissolubility of marriage, for example, is not a debatable option, and the path of mercy presupposes knowledge of what is right and wrong, and the desire to reform one’s life. I don’t feel like I’m better than anyone else, but I don’t want a Church that accommodates my sin, let alone justifies it. We don’t need excuses, we need forgiveness. And forgiveness implies a love that exposes my fault in the infinite patience of God’s tenderness, which saves me and lifts me up.

And in this process, who knows the sheep of the flock better than a parish priest or vicar? A good parish priest is better placed to walk with his sheep than a Roman prelate in his Vatican office, or a secretary on an episcopal commission, even if many are devoted servants.

*It seems that **popular fervor at WYD** transcended the atmosphere of tension and scandal that has prevailed in the Church for several years. What reflections did this event inspire in you, particularly as regards the pastoral care to be developed for the future?*

For us priests, WYD was a spiritual joy and a consolation. We must acknowledge the courage of the Holy Father who, despite the fatigue of age, was determined to honor this commitment.

For so many young people, WYD remains a foundation stone in the experience of faith. The faithful of my generation were very attached to St. John Paul II — and, to a different but very real extent, to Benedict XVI — attracted by their personal charisma and the power of their words.

I have seen young people who are joyful and yet more profound, more thoughtful than we were, who live the experience of a creative minority, tested like gold through fire, attached to Christ beyond the scandals and sorrows the Church is going through. **They are eager to receive a demanding and solid teaching. They are attached to sacramental practice and fervent in prayer**, a far cry from the fake excitement of straw fires followed by ashes. They are the ones who, despite everything, continue to enter our seminaries and form the Christian families of tomorrow.



Solène Tadié Solène Tadié is the Europe Correspondent for the National Catholic Register. She is French-Swiss and grew up in Paris. After graduating from Roma III University with a degree in journalism, she began reporting on Rome and the Vatican for Aleteia. She joined L'Osservatore Romano in 2015, where she successively worked for the French section and the Cultural pages of the Italian

daily newspaper. She has also collaborated with several French-speaking Catholic media organizations. Solène has a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, and recently translated in French (for Editions Salvator) *Defending the Free Market: The Moral Case for a Free Economy* by the Acton Institute's Fr. Robert Sirico.