

Fr. Perozich comments —

I had the privilege of attending a priests only retreat with both Cardinal Raymond Burke and Cardinal Gerhard Müller.

Both men spoke clearly and truthfully.

Burke was measured and gentle.

Müller was frank and pulled no punches.

This synod ignored the competence of bishops in theology.

This synod is geared to the acceptance of women's ordination and of homosexuality, he says.

Worldly images such as pyramids are substituting for biblical images of the church as shepherding God's people.

There was no profound thought at the tables of discussion.

As a priest I believe that this is because there are not profound foundations of theology and faith in the synod organizers, rather they have given over to the ideologies of the world of today.

Cardinal Müller Says Synod on Synodality Is Being Used by Some to Prepare the Church to Accept False Teaching

The prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith assesses the first phase of the synodal gathering at the Vatican.



Cardinal Gerhard Müller at the Synod on Synodality on Oct. 25, 2023. (photo: Edward Pentin / National Catholic Register)

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VATICAN CITY — Cardinal Gerhard Müller, the former prefect for the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, says *the Synod on Synodality is not an episcopal assembly but more like an Anglican synodal meeting, and is being used by some participants as a means to prepare the Catholic Church to accept ideologies that run contrary to Scripture and Tradition.*

In an extensive Oct. 24 interview with the Register, Cardinal Müller also warned that some in the assembly are “abusing the Holy Spirit” in order to introduce “new doctrines” such as an acceptance of

homosexuality, women priests and a change in Church governance.

As one of 52 delegates personally chosen by Pope Francis to attend the Oct. 4-29 meeting, the first of two assemblies which will conclude in 2024, the German cardinal participated in all of this month's session before departing early on Oct. 25 to ordain new priests in Poland.

Cardinal Müller said the synodal meeting was “very controlled” and quite manipulated, with most of the interventions coming from only a few keynote speakers who spoke to them as if they knew no theology. He said that he, himself, was given only three minutes to speak to the whole assembly.

Your Eminence, what has been your overall assessment of the Synod on Synodality?

I was invited by the Pope to participate, as a bishop, as a former prefect of the Congregation [of the Doctrine of the Faith], and just spoke about my theological competence. I was asked what's the difference with the former synods, also in terms of its method. It's very clear that in the former synods, the bishops were the subjects who led it all. Its organization, and its input did not come from above. In the former synods, all the bishops in the plenary could speak about what they wanted. **Now everything is led, it is pre-organized, and it is difficult to speak in the plenary because it's only a short time is given and, according to the rules, you can only speak once, and only for three minutes.**

You just had one opportunity to speak to the plenary, to the full assembly?

Yes.

Would you have liked to speak for more?

Yes, but it wasn't possible. **For the next part of this synod, it will be important to reorganize it — to give more freedom, more opportunity for the bishops to present their ideas. It must become more like a Synod of Bishops, for the bishops to reclaim their role as advisers and as witnesses of the revealed truth.**

There was a great emphasis on the Holy Spirit at this synod. What did you make of that?

Some speakers said we must be open to the Holy Spirit, but **the voices of the Holy Spirit were the persons invited to speak to the assembly. These were the voices of the Holy Spirit, as if we were beginners in the study of theology. It was like seminary or at university, but a synod is not [a] school for beginners — and yet they were speaking to us as if [...] the bishops don't know much theology. Many bishops there understood theology and they couldn't speak [of their knowledge].**

Can you give an example of how the synod organizers understood the Holy Spirit to be working?

Yes. One of the assigned speakers [...] who is influenced by this “LGBT” ideology, spoke of a relative who was bisexual, who committed suicide, and the conclusion was that the Church must be open, not to these persons but to the ideology. The ideology is to blame for this. **But we cannot resolve theological questions and problems through emotion. This is only speaking emotionally about the Holy Spirit and we were told we mustn’t make controversies, that speaking [strongly] against anything isn’t possible or one is stigmatized as an enemy of the Holy Spirit.**

How do they know this is the Holy Spirit?

They don’t speak of the Holy Spirit, only of “the Spirit,” but the First Letter of St. John, the Fourth Chapter, in the beginning, says:

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.”

Some speakers also speak of openness and define what tradition is, [saying] that it “is not static; it’s dynamic.” **But in the end, all of these so-called synodal reflections are aimed at preparing us to accept homosexuality. Only this: What wasn’t spoken about was Jesus Christ [or] divine Revelation, the grace of human persons created according to the image and likeness of God, and of God as the goal of our human existence. All is being turned around so that now we must be open to homosexuality and the ordination of women. If you analyze it, all is about converting us to these two themes.**

And also governance? Do you think it’s also an attempt to overturn the hierarchical governance of the Church?

Yes, some have this image of an “inverted pyramid” of governance, but **at the center of this pyramid is the personal will of the Pope, and of his advisers and collaborators. This can be an image for making clear to children, but a “pyramid” or “polyhedron” is not a biblical image of the Church. These are images coming out of mathematical geometry. Instead, they should be looking towards biblical images of the Church in *Lumen Gentium*: the shepherd and the flock, and all these images of a vineyard and so on.**

Some speakers had a sociological idea of the Church, a naturalistic understanding of the

Church, but they did not have the theological understanding. They're always speaking of the Spirit, but the Spirit is not a fluid. The Spirit in the Church is the Third Person of the Trinity. He is a Person. And we never can speak of the Holy Spirit without the Son and the Father. Always and at all times we speak of the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. Hardly ever mentioned was Jesus Christ — only in a pedagogical way, in ways that transform the parables and their meaning. Jesus didn't condemn the woman in adultery, for instance. Interventions spoke of our relation to Jesus, but not as Jesus as the Word of God, given to us, once and forever.

To what extent were doctrine, faith and morals mentioned?

Only at the tables. We could speak a little bit about them, but only for a few minutes. **They were more a collection of impressions, but it wasn't profound theological thinking.** How is that possible in this context? For the rest, there was only a possibility for some interventions, but **it was all a little bit manipulated, and depended on who was allowed to give the theological interventions — who the spiritual guides were.**

Looking at the delegates, many of them were persons whose theological views Benedict XVI and Pope St. John Paul II disagreed with. What would Benedict have made of this synod?

One theologian chosen to address the assembly spoke all the time of Joseph Ratzinger, but all this was trickery. It was not a true reverence for him, for his theology. **They want to revitalize old modernism by referring to Ratzinger, but Ratzinger had nothing to do with modernism. St. Paul, for example, spoke against homosexuality, but they say, “We have our new insights, revealed by the Holy Spirit,” and so from now on homosexual acts or the blessing of homosexual acts are a good thing. That is their idea. It’s abusing the Holy Spirit in order to introduce doctrines that are openly against Holy Scripture. They will say, “Yes, we are in continuity. We have the right understanding of Tradition and Scripture,” and so on. “All the time we are referring ourselves to Jesus Christ.” It is a selected way, as if Jesus was only a teacher of morals, like Gandhi and so on. They never say or accept that Jesus is the Word of God become flesh, the Incarnation.**

*A German bishop attending the [synod](#) told reporters during the synod that **it’s important to put Christ at the center but at the same time, “we need to set aside apostolic Tradition.” What did he mean by this?***

This is a trick they are making. They are not directly presenting these ideas, but sending these people like this bishop to say these things, and are then saying it’s

just his personal opinion. But in reality, **they are developing an understanding that is not coherent with the Catholic faith.**

A prominent German bishop in the German Synodal Way told this synod that all the themes they raised in Germany should become Germany's example for the world. But in recent years, the Church in Germany has lost a third of [its] members, has few vocations, and Sunday Mass attendance has collapsed. That cannot be the way for the future of the Church. **The Pope called on the German bishops to focus on evangelization but they have done the contrary.**

What do you say to the criticism that this is not a Synod of Bishops, as nearly one-fifth of the participants are laity who, for the first time, have a vote? Do you think there's a problem with the synod's canonical legitimacy?

The synod organizers reaffirmed yesterday it's a Synod of Bishops, but how can it be when lay people have the same voice, they have the same time to speak, and they take away opportunities for the bishops [to have] the possibility to speak? **It's not in reality a Synod of Bishops but more like an Anglican understanding of a synod, with three chambers according to a worldly parliament. This is not the Catholic Church. They must clarify what it is. Is the constitution of this Synod of Bishops based on the**

sacrament of orders or is it like a low-level, seminary seminar?

Several participants have said the synod seems very controlled.

Yes, very controlled. They presented a “Letter to the People of God” and they told us to applaud it for courtesy, saying it was the consensus of everybody. The applause was the vote. They then brought it to every table and said everybody had to sign it. A woman or a man took photos of everybody signing it, and everybody was signing it. Then they said we had until 4 o’clock in the afternoon to send any amendments — but first, we had to sign it.

Did you think of walking out in protest against the synod?

No.

Do you still see it as a “hostile takeover” as you said before the synod?

It’s not clear. They don’t say openly what they mean. They cannot say openly, “We want to contradict the Word of God.” But they are introducing a new hermeneutic with which they want to reconcile the Word of God with these

ideologies — anti-Christian ideologies. But we cannot reconcile Christ and the Antichrist. **This homosexual, “LGBT” ideology is, at its center, an anti-Christian ideology. It’s the spirit of the Antichrist speaking through them. It is absolutely against creation. And their trick is to mix pastoral care for these persons with this anti-Christian ideology.** We, the Church, are the only ones who respect the dignity of everybody, of sinners, of persons with problems in every sphere. But the solution to these problems is the way of Jesus Christ. The Good Doctor must give the best medicine and not say “It’s all okay.”

Often Christ’s words to “go sin no more” are never mentioned and instead, it seems to be mostly all about welcoming.

They’re changing the definition of sins. There are no sins [for some of them]. “They’re only wounded people. They’re not sinners. They’re wounded people, wounded by the Church — by the doctrine of the Church.” They don’t believe in original sin, or sin as an act. They don’t deny it theoretically, but practically. **The Church for them is the aggressor,** and so the Church must do this — the Church is responsible. But what is the Church for them? In reality, they are speaking of themselves. They say, “We are the Church.” But if they are speaking negatively of the Church, they’re speaking of the Church as an object. Article 11 of the Second Vatican Council’s constitution *Lumen Gentium*

says the Church is the holy body of Christ, and we can wound the body of Christ with our sins. But for some of those at the synod, Christ is wounding us. If I am stealing your money and you call me a thief, for them, it's you who are wounding me.

Where do you see all this heading? How is this going to play out in the next year or beyond? What are going to be the consequences of this?

I think the goal is to make the Church conform more with this international [Agenda 2030](#). And we've seen [this] in the politics of who is invited to publicly visit the Pope. They're not normal families with five children — they are never invited. No, they're usually bisexuals, transsexuals, and so on, and this is all a provocation — there's all this propaganda. No orthodox bishops are shown meeting him, but the abortion party, they are always there.

Jesus said to go out to all the world, to everybody, but make them disciples, teach them the faith, and baptize them if they are accepting the faith. That means **going to the whole world — not inviting the world in and letting everyone be what they want to be.**



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Edward is the author of *The Next Pope: The Leading Cardinal Candidates* (Sophia Institute Press, 2020) and *The Rigging of a Vatican Synod? An Investigation into Alleged Manipulation at the Extraordinary Synod on the Family* (Ignatius Press, 2015). Follow him on Twitter at @edwardpentin.