

Fr. Perozich comments —

When change is desired, one way of implementing it is by calling a meeting, carefully constructing the topics, incorporating selective input, and then declaring that the conclusions of the meeting confirm the desired change which then becomes irrevocable law, never again to be subject to a future meeting which might overturn these desired changes.

Sexual license, women's ordination, change in governance style, and so forth are proposed.

These have nothing to do with the gospel or with salvation.

They have everything to do with the mindset of the proponents of the changes.

As a former pastor I complied with the diocesan directive to send representatives to the first synod in San Diego.

Their feedback to me was that the comments from their group were not allowed to be incorporated into the final submission of information because "it was too late."

They felt dismissed and resolved never again to attend synods.

I contend that the conclusions were decided before the meeting.

While these meetings were wasting time, parishes continued worshiping God at Mass, participating in the sacramental life of the church, outreach to the poor, those in error, and the unchurched, studies of the faith for the faithful and for those inquiring about God, and on.

Stick with Jesus and the gospels.

On “synodality”—and why the Hydra doesn’t run the Church

By Dr. Jeff Mirus | Mar 20, 2025

The Vatican’s announcement of a [three-year extension of the synodal process](#), after so much energy already expended on such an ill-defined goal, is cause for either lamentation or derision, depending on one’s mood. In either case, this is an ongoing program which I hope we can all be spared. Why? Because I am

convinced that this ongoing Vatican craze is not only just another form of bureaucratic inefficiency, but also a very real danger to the the proclamation of the Gospel. It is very like putting the multi-headed Hydra of Greek mythology in charge of the Church.

I'm not without sympathy for the problems that bureaucracy is designed to solve; those problems exist in any organization when it grows to a size which makes it **ungovernable in the absence of a strong collective sense of personal responsibility**. The result is a machinery of governance which is constantly clogged, and **the only way to beat the system is to abandon it in favor of a restoration of personal responsibility**. Unfortunately, it seems that the tendency of the **emphasis on synodality over the past several years has been to reduce the sense of personal responsibility among Catholic leadership in an ongoing effort to include a never-ending stream of what we might call "managed input"**. This is surprisingly similar to the bureaucratic mode of government, in which everyone must continuously check in with the bureaucrats to ensure that no "i" remains undotted and no "T" remains uncrossed. A dazzling array of micromanagement controls is substituted for the happy blend of personal responsibility, personal training, and personal vision without which nobody can govern well.

Synodality as it is currently developing within the Catholic Church has become a method of substituting endless consultation and "input" for effective action. It elevates the concepts of formal consultation and time-consuming procedures over the vision of those who are rightly called by their office to provide leadership. This formal process of incessant consultation and "input" necessarily **tends strongly toward both the dilution of effective leadership and a consequent governmental paralysis**. Why would anyone want to apply such a model to the Church—a top-down spiritual authority which starts with Almighty God!

Spiritual mediocrity

The Church in the West today has also absorbed a democratic myth which suggests that universal input improves the results of governance. Sadly, Pope Francis seems to have largely embraced this myth at every level short of his own. But anybody with any experience of governance from the human family right up to the entire world should already know that **democratic control is as unnecessary as it is mythical.** A good leader has to be close enough to those he leads to have a working understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, challenges, needs, and desires; but **a good leader draws a line when it comes to collecting input and embracing “collaborative” decision-making.** He doesn't want to hear from everybody. He wants to surround himself with those who have superior knowledge of particular problems, strategic talent in critical areas of concern, and extraordinarily good sense—**which, in the Church, includes an effective measure of holiness.** If you suspect that this reality ought also to undermine our confidence in democracy as a superior form of political governance, you are on to something—and that something increases exponentially in the Church with her Divinely-guaranteed constitution.

A governor of any kind, if he is to rule well, must be far above the overall level of the demos (the people) when it comes to goodness, knowledge and ability. While a governor must be aware of the needs of those he governs, and of the obstacles to meeting those needs, he can normally make sound judgments in these matters only if he rejects what “most people” are saying about them. Whether one is consulting the man in the street or the man in the media, the likelihood is very small that either one understands the nature of the material or the spiritual problems which afflict us. And of course, this is

especially true in the Church, which must assess everything from a vantage point of Christian maturity. It is the reason that future priests are thoroughly screened, highly trained, and then put through a long apprenticeship before being elevated as pastors or bishops. Yet even then there is no perfect record; and **errors must be corrected by both hierarchical controls and a God-given Magisterium.**

After all, if most people in the Church really understood their spiritual problems, then most people who identify as Catholics would already be well on the way to solving them. Often this is true of our material problems as well, which not infrequently have at least some spiritual roots. This is why I am convinced that the intensely democratic and bureaucratic “**synodality**” as currently conceived within the Catholic Church is a prescription for paralysis—the paralysis of the lowest common denominator or, to put it both more briefly and more clearly, **the paralysis of spiritual mediocrity.** The state of the world, after all, is one of spiritual disaster, and just as no material disaster can be averted or overcome by any sort of practical mediocrity, **no spiritual disaster has ever been averted by a mediocre spiritual response.**

Either people turn to Christ and commit themselves to Him, or they don't. St. Paul refers to this turning and commitment as putting on Christ, a life-long process which is supposed to be initiated at baptism (Gal 3:27).

Wasting time, squandering opportunities

In the Church especially, the substitution of continuous consultation for effective ministry will always be disastrous. Certainly one can never deny the benefit to a bishop, priest or religious of getting to know the problems of the people assigned to his care, but **if he seeks to give them primarily what they think they want, in the vast majority of cases he will not**

be giving them what they need. It is, after all, **only those who are already deeply committed to Christ and the Church—indeed, those committed without exception—who even know with any certainty what they need, and have already acquired the spiritual strength to desire it.** In most other cases, people need to be deflected from what they think they want and toward what they actually need. **This deflection begins with the proclamation of the Gospel.**

The problem with the endless consultation involved in the present (very strange and amorphous) vision of Catholic synodality is that it is so likely to encourage those who are supposed to be preaching the Gospel to refashion and belabor their ministry with goals that are either spiritually irrelevant or spiritually damaging. It ought to be obvious that one of the most dangerous of these goals is what we call “inclusion”. After all, **spiritual inclusion, for Christians, must always be dependent on a willingness to “repent and believe the gospel”** (Mk 1:15). Without that, the Catholic missionary (whether an established pastor in a major parish or a street preacher among the unchurched or any lay person **who meets with rejection when attempting to draw others to Christ**) has little choice but to “shake the dust off his feet as a testimony against them” (Lk 9:5).

This is not mere cant; it is simply Christianity. **There is no substitute for repentance—for a dramatic change of heart—when it comes to being included in the Body of Christ.** It is a lie and a cheat to pretend otherwise. And one way we pretend otherwise is to listen to the “churchy” desires of those who, having rejected the teachings of Christ and His Church, simply want a new Gospel that makes them feel welcome in their self-identification with sin. Nothing is more destructive of Catholic mission. And yet in a

great many cases, this is precisely the “sensitivity of synodality” as things stand today.

Synodality vs. mission

I do not mean that nothing can ever come out of engaging people in discussion; that would be an absurd point of view. **But it is equally absurd to think we need an institutionalized, formal and continuous feedback loop from everybody in order to identify what needs to be done.** This is not just a question of inefficiency but of **reducing Christ to a ministry of consensus—that is, a ministry of the lowest common denominator, or inclusion without conversion. Christ never sent His disciples out to host meetings with the purpose of making others feel included; He sent His disciples out to preach the Gospel so fully and effectively as to prompt repentance—to change hearts.** How endlessly confusing it must seem to those who might be drawn to Christ in the Church when they observe (or even participate in) **constant discussions involving every interest group and every point of view without seeing a clear exclusion of what is contrary to Christ Himself, or even a clear emphasis on the existence of a teaching authority which alone can settle all of these claims and counter-claims.**

I am compelled to observe that all of this endless emphasis on meetings and discussions, on the cataloguing of desires and recommendations, on the inclusion of everything under the sun in the deliberations of the very custodians of the Gospel itself—yes, **all of this endless interpersonal blather—has created an ecclesial atmosphere in which the Gospel of Christ appears to be in flux, and the mission of Christ’s Church appears to be in doubt.** The Church puts herself in grave danger when she substitutes inclusion for conversion. **The**

Church atrophies when she substitutes consensus for Truth.

Or put it this way: For the multi-headed Hydra of Greek mythology, the number of heads varies, for the simple reason that **whenever a warrior cuts off one of the Hydra's heads, two more appear in its place. If that doesn't sound like the discussions in contemporary synodality, I'm not sure what does. The more you engage with errors on their own terms, the more they multiply. There is a very good reason why the Church is not ruled by the Hydra, and why the Body of Christ has only one Head.**



Jeffrey Mirus holds a Ph.D. in intellectual history from Princeton University. A co-founder of Christendom College, he also pioneered Catholic Internet services. He is the founder of Trinity Communications and CatholicCulture.org. [See full bio.](#)