

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*Pope Leo needs to be his own pope. He owes nothing to the Francis papacy, rather he is to proclaim Jesus and salvation in the church's scripture and tradition for 2000 years. It is time to be your own man, Pope Leo, and teach us faith. When Leo is quoted for his war statements, receiving James Martin, etc, it does nothing for my faith. Then I see protestant Christian Franklin Graham on TV telling people to accept Jesus into their hearts and to call a phone number where someone will pray with them. Why do I have to get Jesus from a non Catholic Christian? Leo, stop listening to those advisors like Cupich, McElroy, Tobin, Hollerich, Grech, Roach and be your own man for Jesus. Tell us about Jesus and how to follow Him toward eternal life in word, sacrament, and charity. And do it starting right now.*

## **The Scandalous Synod Report: A Betrayal of Trust**

The scope of this new synodal “paradigm” is breathtaking; under its erroneous approach, any sexual sin (and most other sins) can be reframed as “good.”

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*Cardinal Mario Grech, who has been Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Synod in the Vatican since 2020, with Pope Francis at the conclusion of the Synod on Synodality on Oct. 28, 2023. (Credit: National Catholic Register / Vatican Media)*

*Note: All quotes are from the Report and annexed testimonies, unless otherwise indicated.*

A Synod Study Group **Report** (“Report”) published in early May has drawn searing **criticism** and predictable **plaudits** for its “paradigm shift” towards same-sex sexual relationships. New **reports** that Fr. James Martin, SJ, the founder of **Outreach**, an “LGBTQ Catholic Ministry,” likely secured publication of the two controversial testimonies in the Vatican Report are no surprise, if true.

Although the Report is a “**working document**” with no authority, it is likely to be widely disseminated and **influence** pastoral practice globally—a terrible prospect.

Mainstream and “LGBTQ” media have hyped the Vatican’s “**new signals**” towards “LGBTQ Catholics,” citing the Report’s positive response to “the testimony of two gay, married Catholics who spoke openly about their sexuality, faith and how the Catholic Church’s negative teaching on homosexuality had hurt them.” (Nicole Winfield, “Vatican sending new signals of openness but limitations in outreach to LGBTQ+ Catholics,” **Associated Press**, May 9, 2026).

The Report’s appalling effort to normalize same-sex sexual relationships within Church communities is just the tip of the iceberg. A deeper look reveals rot on a greater scale, and corrosive downstream effects. Cardinal Willem Eijk has **criticized** the Report for “effectively normaliz[ing] homosexual relationships within a Church context.” He notes the problems with the Report’s “entire methodological framework” which, despite its “pastoral” language, “conceals a radical departure from Catholic moral theology.” We agree.

### **New Paradigm: Doctrine Out, “Experiences” In.**

The Report’s jargon-laden prose conceals a defective framework that rejects the “very foundations of moral theology” (Veritatis Splendor 5). The “new paradigm” for pastoral care

elevates slippery, mercurial claims of “synodal discernment” and “lived experience” over divine revelation, objective moral reasoning and Church teaching—by design. “What is at stake,” the Report declares, is the “overcoming of the theoretical model that derives praxis from a ‘pre-packaged’ doctrine, ‘applying’ general and abstract principles to the concrete and personal situations of life.” Rejecting doctrine, the Report envisions “a process of continuous theorization and implementation,” where theology’s role is to “set the table,” “structure the space,” and offer “language” for listening, sharing, and dialogue on “emerging issues” such as “homosexuality.”

**To what end? Well, not to find answers or moral clarity.**

In the “new paradigm,” honoring personal narratives and relationships matters a lot. The Report describes the testimonies of two men who journeyed through ambivalence and doubt before embracing their same-sex attractions and entering sexual partnerships (styled as “marriage”) with same-sex partners. Characterizing these developments as “experiences of goodness” pleasing to God, the Report implies the Church needs to rethink “sin” (and centuries of teaching). The Report recounts one man’s “discovery” that “sin, at its root, does not consist in the (same-sex) couple relationship, but in a lack of faith in a God who desires our fulfilment.”

The erroneous claim (uncontested by the Report) is that same-sex sexual relationships are not merely to be tolerated, or even accepted, within the Christian community, but that they are good and given by God for human fulfillment. Spiritual guidance under the “new paradigm” apparently includes encouragement towards sin and pseudo-marriage. In “Testimony 2,” one man reveals that “p]riests encouraged me to follow the Spirit’s lead in my life as I discerned God’s call to

[same-sex] partnership. Trusting my conscience was key and I came to see my sexuality as a blessing, not a burden.”

The testimonies are valuable, in one sense, as concrete examples of the infinite human capacity for self-deception. In *Veritatis Splendor* (1), Pope St. John Paul II cautioned that,

at the prompting of Satan, the one who is ‘a liar and the father of lies,’ man is constantly tempted to turn his gaze away from the living and true God in order to direct it towards idols, exchanging ‘the truth about God for a lie.’ Man’s capacity to know the truth is also darkened, and his will to submit to it is weakened. Thus, giving himself over to relativism and scepticism, he goes off in search of an illusory freedom apart from truth itself (internal citations omitted).

The Report, however, seems quite taken in by the testimonies’ claims that their choices have brought happiness, and laments the “arduous” nature of attempting to “reconcile ‘doctrinal firmness’ with ‘pastoral welcome.’” The new path forward is reassuringly simple, the Report notes. Through “synodal “listening,” “shared experience,” and “discernment,” “the Christian community may be called to reach a new consensus or commitment.”

Displacing moral precepts with a new “consensus” is one way to overcome doubt and “doctrinal firmness,” but it is not the Catholic way. The Church cannot forge a “new consensus” on the Christian understanding of the human person, nor can it ever “discern” that same-sex sexual relationships are morally good. The Church receives the truth and is entrusted with “authentically interpreting the word of God, whether in its written form or in that of Tradition,” exercising that authority “in the name of Jesus Christ” (*Veritatis Splendor* 27). Theology’s role, contra the Report, is not to “set the table” for a “new consensus,” but to illuminate

the truth. “Theology must look to the ultimate truth which Revelation entrusts to it, never content to stop short of that goal” (Fides et Ratio 92).

A “new consensus” is another way of saying “we’ll decide for ourselves.” Doctrine is out, experiences are in. The scope of this new synodal “paradigm” is breathtaking; under its erroneous approach, any sexual sin (and most other sins) can be reframed as “good.”

**It turns out that the “new paradigm” is an old one: moral relativism.**

### **Genuflecting to Gender Ideology**

Notwithstanding its use of the term “same-sex attraction,” the Report betrays the extent to which gender ideology is corrupting pastoral care within the Church. The presumptions and beliefs of gender ideology, woven throughout the testimonies and reflected in the Report’s commentary as if unquestionably true, are embedded within the “new paradigm.”

**Gender ideology is a false anthropology that rejects both God’s authority and the truth about the human person, which can be known by reason.** It asserts (among other things) that human identity is self-determined by feelings and desires, regardless of human nature and the reality of the body. It recasts all (legal) sexual desires and sexual activities as natural aspects of human diversity and treats the body—and other human beings—as things to be used for pleasure. Denying the significance of sexual difference, gender ideology redefines “marriage” as an arrangement between any adults, regardless of sex, for adult benefit. Similarly, families are “chosen,” giving adults the consumer “right” to acquire or “create” children who, by design, will never know their mothers and fathers.

**Gender ideology is a dehumanizing, destructive, and diabolical force irreconcilable with Catholic teaching.** But

it has gotten past the gates. In some quarters, as the Report demonstrates, gender ideology is not an intruder, but an invited guest.

Whether in ignorance or by intention, the Report fails from the outset to acknowledge that gender ideology “lived out” is not an expression of human “diversity,” but a commitment to a competing anthropology irreconcilable with the truth of the human person.

The Report early on employs a “biblical image” in a misleading fashion to suggest that discernment about “emerging” issues of homosexuality is akin to the discernment required of the early Church over another “emerging” question: how to harmonize the diverse experiences of “the Christian community from the Gentile world” with those of “the Christian community from Israel.” The relevant question, according to the Report, is how to “value the positive aspects of anthropological and cultural diversity, without inhibiting or even betraying the newness of the Gospel, but rather allowing it to flourish through the exchange of gifts received and cultivated?”

The Report is awash in appeals to “diversity”: “relat[ing] to people in their diverse situations and life experiences,” “diversity of contexts and experiences,” “diverse situations of life and the many cultural contexts,” “diverse life situations,” “diverse logics,” “coexistence in diversity,” “diverse forms of knowledge,” “diverse exegetical readings,” “diversity of ministries, charisms, and roles,” *ad nauseum*.). In a “diverse” setting, the Church’s role is “setting the discernment process in motion, and accompanying it to reach the expression of a consensus – even one that is differentiated – when this contributes to furthering the common good.”

The testimonies allude to same-sex attraction and same-sex sexual experiences as functions of “difference” and “diversity,” rather than “disorder,” a linguistic sleight of hand that departs

from Catholic teaching and masks gender ideology's incompatibility with Christian anthropology.

Implicit in the Report's framing is the claim that issues related to "believers experiencing same-sex attraction" are, like early Church issues, questions of "anthropological and cultural diversity" to be solved through a "creative process of inculturation of the faith in diverse contexts." This suggests that embracing gender ideology and centering experiences of same-sex sexual relationships reflects "anthropological and cultural diversity." Like other "diversity" questions, then, potential conflicts can be resolved with better communication, stronger relationships, and integrating such "diversity" within the larger community.

This is a serious misreading of the situation. Gender ideology is not a "diversity" question—it presents existential conflicts over human nature, sexual difference, marriage, and good and evil, not "diversity."

For all the puffery about "discernment," the Report's glosses over the faulty anthropology and prideful self-esteem that pervade the chosen testimonies on "homosexuality." Both testimonies involve men in same-sex legal partnerships they describe as "marriages" (without the quotation marks), presenting their respective sexual partners as "husbands" (with no comment from the Report's authors).

The testimonies frame same-sex sexual desire as an innate identity ("an intrinsic part of me" and "the truest expression of myself," Testimony 1; "My sexuality isn't a perversion, disorder, or cross; it's a gift from God," Testimony 2). The Report characterizes one man's early experiences of same-sex attraction as his "discovery" of his "difference," and juxtaposes this experience with the reassurance that Christ "loves us all in our totality and integrity" (emphasis in original)—language that implies the experience of same-sex attraction is integral to personal identity.

Despite biblical injunctions against sodomy and the Church's clear teaching that "homosexual acts" are "acts of grave depravity," "intrinsically disordered," and "contrary to natural law" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2357), the testimonies portray same-sex desires and relationships as natural and healthy—a stance consistent with gender ideology.

But that's not all. The testimonies go even further, representing same-sex sexual relationships as "God's call," and His "gift" and "blessing." ("Although living a gay relationship, I truly believe the sign of God in my life was the gifts He gave me of fidelity and courage, required to build a life of shared faith and service with my husband" Testimony 1; "Priests encouraged me to follow the Spirit's lead in my life as I discerned God's call to partnership...I came to see my sexuality as a blessing, not a burden..." and "I have a happy, healthy marriage and am flourishing as an openly gay Catholic." – Testimony 2).

The Report also recounts one man's "discovery that sin, at its root, does not consist in the (same-sex) couple relationship, but in a lack of faith in a God who desires our fulfillment." The implication here is that God intends the same-sex sexual relationship for the men's fulfillment, a claim that contradicts the truth. Relatedly, the Report describes the men's secret, "double lives" as linked to the "solitude, anguish, and stigma" they experienced in society and the Church. The implications are unclear: Does the Report mean to suggest that living openly in a same-sex sexual relationship, rather than abstaining from immoral sexual activity, would have been the better way to avoid such anguish? Conscience formation and the virtue of chastity are conspicuously absent from the Report's analysis.

Similarly, the Report fails to acknowledge, even briefly, the Church's beautiful vision for marriage, sexuality, and family. The Report does "question" whether "marriage" applies to same-sex partners, given the "impossibility of procreation per se linked to sexual difference" and the "difficulties" posed by "medically

assisted procreation.” But, elsewhere, it praises the “stability of a healthy affective [same-sex] relationship” and the “importance of sexuality.” Taken together, the statements project a deficient anthropology—as if same-sex sexual relationships are natural to the human person and on par with marriage, “but for” the “impossibility of procreation.”

The Report never acknowledges the injustice inflicted upon children who are bought, adopted, or otherwise acquired to fulfill same-sex “family building” goals. Testimony 2 implies such goals (“We’re proud to build our family together.”) and more broadly, “same-sex marriage” has spawned a burgeoning market for “family-building” through artificial reproductive technologies and surrogacy. These practices instrumentalize women, intentionally deprive children of either mothers or fathers, and have led to **horrific** cases of child exploitation. **Pope Leo XIV** recently emphasized that children have a “right to receive love from a mother and a father; both are necessary for a child’s integral and harmonious development.” In contrast, the Report considers the impact of same-sex relationships on children only when it suggests that the “Christian community” owes “educational commitments” to the children of such “de facto unions between believers of the same sex.”

The testimonies show little originality, splicing factual details with familiar tropes, “LGBTQ” language, and talking points characteristic of “LGBTQ” activism. Whether gullibly or purposefully, the Report incorporates these ideological claims without question. It contrasts the experience of “belonging” in the “LGBTQ community” with the “attitudes of rejection or fear” in religious families and Christian communities. It attributes the failure of churches and families to validate same-sex identification and sexual relationships not to concerns for the well-being of individuals or fidelity to Catholic teachings, but to “misunderstandings within the Christian community, rooted in attitudes of homophobia and transphobia.”

The Report's synodal "discernment" has yet another blind spot. Nowhere does it identify or scrutinize the faulty anthropology of the LGBTQ movement, which views sexual desire as an immutable, infallible guide to identity and which elevates fulfillment of sexual desire as a nearly unqualified good. It seems curiously detached from the spiritual and moral harm to individuals involved in same-sex sexual relationships, the harms experienced by those who love them, and the wider societal harms resulting from marriage redefinition.

The Report is willing to charge Christians with "transphobia," but expresses no concern for the vulnerable individuals (many of them children) who have been duped by gender ideology into rejecting their sex, believing their feelings determine reality, and disfiguring their bodies in pursuit of the impossible: a change of sex. The failure of many within the Church to speak with "parrhesia," "conviction," and "radicality" about the truth of the human person and God's plan for sexuality and marriage has left a generation confused and wounded (in spirit and body).

**Detaching love from truth is impossible, and the attempt creates a pastoral disaster.**

### **Calculated Calumny**

The Report's claimed concern for those who experience sexual identity issues is belied by its decision to ignore the "lived experience" of an entire group: faithful Catholics who experience same-sex attractions but commit to living chaste lives, in friendship with God and others. Many live holy, exemplary lives, offering profound witness to God's love and mercy.

Where were their testimonies? Where were the testimonies of steadfast parents, siblings, and grandparents who unconditionally love and pray for those pursuing same-sex lifestyles? Or the

testimonies of clergy, catechists, and teachers who persist in sharing the truth with love, despite social opprobrium?

The Report did mention Courage, the Church's approved ministry to persons experiencing same-sex attractions and their loved ones. But it mentioned Courage only to disparage the ministry, falsely portray its work, and then amplify those calumnies to the world—all based on a single “testimony” from a known “LGBTQ” activist. These actions were manifestly unjust. The Courage apostolate has spent over 40 years serving the Church, and its thousands of members have found healing, hope, and holiness through its programs. The Report's statements and the underlying testimony's public, one-sided criticism of Courage, by name, should be retracted.

But a question remains: When a Synodal committee so recklessly harms a good work of the Church, it raises the question: Who commissioned the “hit job”?

The silver lining? The entire Report functions as an unintended case study demonstrating why the “primacy of experience” paradigm fails as a model for pastoral care. **Publication of such a Report by the Secretariat of the Synod is indefensible. And **claiming**, as the Secretariat has done, that it only passes along what its various Study Groups produce, is a pitiful attempt to avoid responsibility for this sorry exercise in deconstructing the truth and pastoral care under the false flags of inclusion and compassion.**

The Secretariat ought to retract the Report, make amends to Courage, and apologize to the faithful.