

Selling Radical ‘Synodality’ as ‘Social Prophecy’

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The recent annual Assembly of the *Leadership Conference of Women Religious* received a video message ^[1] from Pope Leo XIV, in which he said:

All Christians are called to be builders of Christ’s communion, formed in a synodal Church in which everyone cooperates in the same mission according to their own charism and ministry. In a special way, those in religious life are called to become experts in synodality due to the opportunities afforded by community life to practice it, as well as the very way that your congregations are organized.

What, though, is “a synodal Church” in which women religious are “called to become experts in synodality”?

An answer ^[2] to this question was given by Sister Nathalie Becquart, XMCJ Undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops, who addressed the Assembly in person:

Synodality is not a programme to be implemented, not a project with a 2028 deadline, not one more meeting. It is about our deep identity as Church, rooted in the mystery of the Trinity. It is not about being another Church but about being the Church in a different way. . .to move from one culture to another: from a culture of clericalism, hierarchicalism and institutional self-

sufficiency to a culture of listening, co-responsibility, discernment and genuine exchange.

She went on to describe synodality as a “social prophecy” and a “grammar of peace.” She also said, “What I have learned in these years accompanying the synodal process of the Universal Church is this: the Holy Spirit is not waiting for us to be ready. The Spirit is already at work.”

Sister Becquart’s comments are opaquely revelatory: synodality is presented as a necessary innovation, a different culture, a much-needed reform effort to reclaim the Church’s true identity and vitality. Synodality means the birth of a new style of “being Church,” but it is not “another Church” at odds with the pre-synodal Church. Incoherent reassurances such as these are a smokescreen hiding what is obvious: the synodal project is an attempt to remake the Catholic Church into a new entity akin to various Protestant churches.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart [Vatican News]

A close look at Sister Becquart’s remarks reveals them to be an exercise in sloganeering. Slogans are useful in advertising. Synodality is a new, unknown product on the market. Wary customers need to be convinced to buy into it.

But a number of questions arise:

- **If synodality is “not a programme needing to be implemented” why does the Synod Secretariat’s website present it as a programme needing to be implemented?**
- **In 2028 the Synod Secretariat will host an Ecclesial Assembly. If Synodality is “not a project with a 2028 deadline,” does that mean that the Ecclesial Assembly is simply the first of an endless series of Ecclesial Assemblies?**

- If synodality is “not one more meeting”, why are any more meetings being scheduled?
- What is the “deep identity of the Church”? Was this identity unknown until synodality was invented by Pope Francis? Who identified this deep identity and how did they do so?
- What is the difference between being “another Church” and “being a Church in a different way”? What does “being the Church in a different way” mean? Different from what?
- What do “clericalism, hierarchicalism and institutional self-sufficiency” mean? What is clericalism and who are the clericalists? What in the world is hierarchicalism? Isn’t the Catholic Church hierarchical by nature, which means that it is governed by ordained hierarchs? Does God not give to the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, what is sufficient to carry out her mission to preach the Gospel, to sanctify mankind through the administration of the sacraments and to provide shepherds for the wise governance of the flock of Christ? What is the Church lacking and who can supply that need?
- Why is it posited that the Church at present lacks “a culture of listening, co-responsibility, discernment and genuine exchange”? What does co-responsibility mean? Does it mean that decision making by the hierarchy alone must be put aside in favor of co-decision making in which the hierarchy and the laity together govern the Church?
- What is social prophecy? Who engages in such prophecy? Who decides that it is true prophecy and not false prophecy, namely someone’s opinion wrongly put forth as God’s will?

- **What is the grammar of peace? Does peace have a grammar?**

The Holy Spirit is always at work within God's Church. How does Sister Becquart know that He is now at work calling us to embrace the emergence of a synodal "Church in a different way"?

Sister Becquart's remarks are confirmation that synodality is a largely meaningless word that is used by those in charge of the synodal process to promote a set of ideas that are shockingly revolutionary in nature – and thus in need of semantic camouflage.

The people in charge of the Synod have created a semantic shield for their project. They attempt to hide the plain truth that **they want to create a new Church with a new doctrine in which the hierarchy will share governing authority with lay people and in which heterodox impositions will be characterized as the community's discernment of where the Holy Spirit is leading the Church.**

They present themselves as reformers, not revolutionaries. They simply want to do away with an outdated clericalist and "hierarchicalist" culture, lingering from a lamentable past, that diverted the Church from her true synodal nature which will now be restored by the common effort of all the faithful, guided by the Holy Spirit (and the Synod Secretariat) to throw off that outdated culture.

The synodality steamroller is a danger to the Church. It needs to be seen for what it is, and stopped before it wreaks any more havoc upon the Church.

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URLs in this post:

[1] video message: <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2026/documents/20260812-videomessaggio-lcwr.html>

[2] answer: <https://www.facebook.com/synod.va>