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PRÉSENTATION

In an ever changing world and in a Church constantly in the spotlights, the important informations and the meaning to give them may be buried under a mass of commentaries, opinions and fake news. At a time when it is urgent to restore the magisterium and pontifical authority so that the Church may continue its mission received from Christ, *Res Novae* intends to be an informational and analysis tool at the service of the petrinian power. By subscribing now you will help with the start of *Res Novae* and its development.

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L'ÉDITORIAL

What is the purpose for the Synod of the bishops ?

The assembly of the Synod on the Young People which ended without triggering much interest, shows how weakened a major post-conciliar institution is and maybe even the post-council era itself. Paul VI created the Synod of Bishops in 1965, as a permanent organisation with consecutive assemblies convened by the pope. It is the most significant fruit of collegiality, one of Vatican II council major themes, and a rather quite difficult one to define with precision. The detractors of collegiality saw at the time of its introduction in the constitution of the Church a sort of episcopal parliamentarism that weakened the Petrine charism. This view was to be considered by some as a way of thinking according to overly traditional doctrinal forms. When Paul VI instituted the Synod, he actually was careful to do it of his own initiative as Pontiff, *motu proprio*, and to keep it in a consultative mode.

In reality, the Synod came as an addition to the Constitution of the Church rather than as a straight forward modification. It had the particularity to in no ways resemble the classic councils, synods, and assemblies of bishops which gathered all the bishops of the world, or all the bishops of a particular country, or part of the world or a province. This new type of Synodal assemblies gather both representatives elected by the National Conferences and religious elected by the Union of Superiors General. It also includes members nominated by the pope and the heads of the dicasteries of the Curia. Therefore, they were supposed to represent the bishops of the whole world in an unprecedented way. To this day, in fifty three years, it has gathered twenty eight times as an ordinary, extraordinary, or special assembly. That is a rate of more than one every two years. Because of the frequency, it may be seen rather as a permanent council, or more precisely, as the Council moving towards becoming permanent.

For, the Synod has really nothing of a classic council, deciding on doctrinal issues or settling disciplinary questions – and it would actually not have the competence to do that since it is neither a general council, nor a particular council and furthermore it only has a consultative function – but it matches the atypical character found in the Vatican II council by placing itself, voluntarily, out of definitive « teaching » regarding doctrinal matters, and in an *aggiornamento* mode regarding disciplinary matters. This did not prevent the consequences of the Synod, in doctrinal matters as well as disciplinary, to receive at least as much consideration as the ones from the Council of Trent ; with different intentions and different fruits. With its assemblies ending with the production of a synthetical summary, preparatory document to an apostolic exhortation supposedly interpreting its works, the Synod has perpetuated this conciliar management mode of the Church.

Much like what takes place in modern societies, these regular assemblies go along with the elaboration of a consensus which, for the Church, comes in addition to the traditional obedience of the Faith, foundation of the communion in Christ. Should the Roman approach be conservative, then the consensus is in favour of priestly celibacy (1971 Assembly). Should the Roman approach be liberal, then the consensus gives ways to the sacraments being offered to adulterers (2014 and 2015 Assemblies).

The whole process obtained at the cost of numerous declarations, discussions by language groups, votes, and *modi*, in the end generates a sort of final summary document presented to the pope so that he may deliver a document of his own, an apostolic exhortation. As it is suggested by its title, it is only an exhortation, pontifical wishes crowning episcopal wishes. Although the overall approach is meant to be traditional, as in the 1980 Assembly on christian family, followed by the Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio*, we remain within a doctrinal and disciplinary frame which, for better or worst, has an authority simply incitative. All this gives the impression of a Church no longer anchored on the rock but moving somehow on the quicksands of contrary or contradictory theological positions.

In this respect, the synodal institution represents in its chemically pure state the process of the post-Council : if Vatican II, as a global event, has been a tentative to adapt the message of the Spouse of Christ so that it may become audible to the men of this time, the synodal assemblies continue this momentum. In this frame of things, conservative forces have spent enormous efforts to contain this adaptation (with assemblies on catechesis, consecrated life, priestly formation, etc...). They argued on the basis of the weak « pastoral » nature of the Synod, that is that neither the assembly nor the Papal exhortation defines the Faith.

The forces favouring adaptation on the contrary have an easier task promoting their « open-minded » politics they so desire (assemblies since 2013), although delivering a message already outdated both for progressive christians as well as the lay Society. In many direction and in many ways, we witness a progressive dilapidation of the vigour of the deposit of Faith.

In this context, the last Assembly not only seemed tiredly bothersome but also showed how inadequate the synodal system is in ensuring the deposit of Faith is transmitted faithfully. Most young people no longer receive a religious instruction. They even have ceased to believe, ceased to attend church, and to follow christian moral. To this new phenomena, the only thing the shepherds of the Church have done for the young people is engaging in « inter-generational dialogue » and ensuring them of their attentive ears. Maybe soon, the time comes for some determined shepherds to decide to turn the tables. ◆

Abbé Claude Barthe

► From collegiality to synodality

The second Vatican council focussed on collegiality, that is on the shared responsibility of the bishops regarding the care of the Church, specially by the means of synods. In this last years appeared the notion of « synodality », which extended this care to the whole People of God.

The subject was widely discussed at a seminar of experts organised in 2015 by Father Antonio Spadaro, director of the La Civiltà Cattolica (Dario Vitali, Gregorian University ; Alphonse Borras, Catholic University of Leuven ; Gilles Routhier, University Laval, QB), which led to the publication of a book directed by A. Spadaro and Carlos Maria Galli, Argentine theologian, *La Riforma e le riforme nella Chiesa* (Queriniana, 2016), « Reform of the Church, Reforms in the Church. » Then, in 2016, to echo a speech of the Pope given on October 17th, 2015, Cardinal Baldisseri, General Secretary of the Synod, directed a similar type of seminar at the Maria Bambina Institute, on the theme of synodality (Klaus Schatz, SJ, in *Des chemins de réforme*, direc-

THE ADOPTION OF THE SYNODALITY... WITHOUT SYNODALITY

The outspokenness of Cardinal Oswald Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay, member of the C9 for the reform of the Curia, revealed that the introduction of the theme of synodality met « a certain resistance » in the assembly. Synodality was inserted in the Final Document, although it had not been discussed, eventually giving the impression it was « rigged ». According to the said cardinal, the surreptitious adding could be the doing of Cardinal Baldisseri (*Crux Now*, 25 October 2018).

Pio Pace

ted by A. Spadaro, *Parole et Silence*, 2018).

A summary of the thoughts of these influential groups can be found in a chapter of the final document of the assembly of the Synod on Young People entitled « The Missionary Synodality of the Church » : « [The experience that the shared responsibility lived with the young people] calls the Church to practice the synodality as a way to be and to act, favouring the participation of all who are baptised and people of good will as well, each according to his age, his state of life and his vocation. In this Synod, we experienced that the collegiality,

which unites the bishops cum Petro et sub Petro in the sollicitudo for the People of God, is called to articulate itself and enrich itself by the practice of synodality at all levels » (n.119). The idea of democratisation was incited through number 2 of the apostolic constitution *Episcopalis communio*, of September 15th, 2018, which amplified canon 346 providing that members of a synodal assembly are « mostly bishops ». Henceforth, the pope can also adjoin « certain others who are not bishops », that is to say, logically, even lay people. Adding that *Episcopalis communio* also provides that the pope can decide of the

publication of the Final Document of a Synod Assembly giving it the authority (certainly a rather weak one but symbolically very strong) of the « ordinary Magisterium of the Successor of Peter. »

All in all, on a « road to decision », the intention is to reach an ecclesial « consensus » in a relational process (Klaus Schatz) : « the Church is called to assume a relational face that focuses on listening, welcoming, dialogue, discernment (Final Document, n.122). » **P.P.**

► Catholicism to the test of the media : example of the juvenile cohabitation

In an interview given on October 5th, 2014, to Argentine conservative daily, *La Nación*, Joaquim Morales Solá asked the Holy Father about the Synod Assembly of 2014 : « what conclusion should emerge from the

Synod ? The Pope answered : The family is so valuable, so precious for society and for the Church. [...] A great deal of emphasis was placed on the topic of divorced people. It is an aspect that will, without a doubt, be debated. But, for me, the new customs of today's young people are another important problem. Young people are not getting married. It is the culture of the age. Many young adults prefer to live together without getting married. What should the Church do ? Cast them out ? Or, on the contrary, draw near to them, hold on to them and try to bring God's word to them ? I am in favour of the latter position. [...] The world has changed and the Church cannot enclose itself in supposed interpretations of dogma. We have to engaged with social conflicts, new and old, and try to offer a consoling hand, not to stigmatise and not only to challenge. »

The issue in the past was never to cast concubines out of the Church. As with any other sinners, insistently, there were asked to convert. The Church has always considered them, as long as they keep the faith, as being part of its body until their death. The reference of the interview about divorcees shows they are talking about access sacramental communion without leaving the concubine state.

This is a characteristic slippage of catholic liberalism. Certainly, no more today than in the time of Montalembert, wants to abandon the content of Faith and Moral but, if at all possible, it would like to inform a weaker expression of it, with the good intention to « win back » an audience for catholicism. The only thing is, the system of the media is never totally grateful and only applauds so to push it into more trans-actions. **P.P.**

DOCUMENTS

Pope Francis and the inherited Vatican II « pastorality »

Fr. Serafino M. Lanzetta, a former member of the Franciscan of the Immaculate, teaches dogmatic theology at the Theological Faculty Lugano, Switzerland. He is the author of a fundamental book, *Il Vaticano II, un concilio pastorale : Ermeneutica delle dottrine conciliari, Vatican II : A Pastoral Council, Hermeneutics of Council Teaching* (Cantagalli, 2016). At a symposium organised by Fr. M. Raffray in Courtaulin, France, Fr. Lanzetta gave a talk titled : « The sui generis pastoral nature of the last Council, and its implications for Theology. » This conference will be published with the other proceedings in January 2019, by Via Romana publisher. With kind permission of the organisers, here are a couple of excerpts :

Père Serafino M. Lanzetta

The election of Jorge-Mario Bergoglio to the pontifical throne is of a significant importance from the conciliar and hermeneutical point of view, in strict reference to the last council. Not so much that Pope Francis quotes Vatican II documents or that he offers a magisterial hermeneutic, but rather because of a sort of « symbolic link » between his pontificate and the last council. This « link » was especially highlighted by the different interpreters of the Pope.

The walls of the Church torn down

One of the most important reference Francis made to the Vatican II Council can be found in the Mercy Jubilee bull of indiction, Jubilee which began December 8th, 2015. The date chosen was particularly significant, because it connected the closing of the conciliar gathering, fifty years ago to the day, and the theme of mercy (as it is reminded in the bull, with the pope quoting John XXIII's inaugural speech). Francis speaks in these terms :

« In fact, I will open the Holy Door on the fiftieth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. The Church feels a great need to keep this event alive. With the Council, the Church entered a new phase of her history. The Council Fathers strongly perceived, as a true breath of the Holy Spirit, a need to talk about God to men and women of their time in a more accessible way. The walls which for too long had made the Church a kind of fortress were torn

down and the time had come to proclaim the Gospel in a new way. It was a new phase of the same evangelisation that had existed from the beginning. » (1)

One can only be but surprised by the expressions used by Francis. Nobody expected a pope to make his, the image adopted by certain theologians, of a Church comparable to a « privileged fortress » (or fortified) whose « walls » would have been torn by the « true breath of the Holy Spirit ».

In reality, what Francis does not say, or only says with allusions, some theologians explained it to us, those theologians who see in the Argentine pope the perfect junction (second to the figure of John XXIII) between the conciliar event and its request for reforms. Vatican II would have inaugurated a sort of unfinished agenda, a program never achieved, a perpetual *aggiornamento* which from time to time would be spoken or acted in words and actions by Francis.

It is along these lines that a book recently published by Spadaro and Galli offers a list of propositions for the « reforms of the Church according to the Holy Spirit and the Gospel, in the continuity of the Vatican II council, under the impulsion of Francis' pontificate. » (2)

An other work worth mentioning is an essay of R. Gaillardetz about Vatican II as an *Unfinished Council* : it is the promise of a reform that can't be stopped (3). The author, professor of Systematic Theology at Boston College, is particularly fascinated by pope Francis magisterium, perfect execution of the incomplete agenda of Vatican II. Gaillardetz meets Francis in the following way : 1) It is necessary to rediscover the humility of the Church through a non-competitive ecclesiological theology in which the Church makes a back step (in regards to truth [4]) and finds itself again no longer being a perfect society. 2) This will only be possible by giving back space to the Holy Spirit theology. 3) and thus, the pastoral renewal will be notably facilitated. According to Gaillardetz, Francis is the typical example of this renewal which enlarges the vision of the Council and pursue the project of edification yet to be completed, in particular with *Evangelii Gaudium* which finds itself in the perfect continuity with the missionary vision Vatican II introduced of a centrifugal Church. [...]

The dangers of pastoral care disconnected from faith

It is now undeniable that the « pastoral doing », this very strong emphasis put on the pastorality of the Church, ended up casting a shadow on the doctrine of the faith which is now seen as something static in opposition to life which is a dynamic movement. Doctrine is important but just like a good book ends up on the shelves of a dusty library. Therefore, it is profitable to ask ourselves again what « doctrine » is.

It is the teaching (*didaké*) of Jesus which comes ultimately from the Father who is in heaven (cf. John 7, 16). It is a « new teaching », astonishing for that matter, because it has the authority of the one who teaches it (cf. Mark 1, 27) ; for that reason it is a definitive teaching because it has authority (cf. also 2 John 1, 10). This *didaké* of Jesus is the unique oral testimony that we have of the Son, as told in the gospels, and the definitive revelation of the Mystery of God and of our

salvation. As we know, Jesus did not write the Gospel but he announced it by teaching his *doctrine*. Already here we see an intimate relationship between doctrine and life, between teaching and salvation : the (oral) teaching of our Lord is essentially turned towards the conversion of men by the proclamation of the truth ; and vice-versa, the eternal salvation is attained by listening to this proclamation – « *fides ex auditu* » (Rom 10, 17) – where faith finds its origin, and thus, charity does as well. So, it is in the divine Tradition, this unity of oral proclamation and oral transmission of the faith which later was written, that we have the gathering of the doctrine and of the christian life, of faith and of charity. Without the teaching of Jesus, there is no christian life. So, we can say that a profitable and up-to-date pastoral theology always begins by the pure teaching of the Lord, transmitted without interruption by the Church ; in return, doctrine is necessary for our salvation because, as we said earlier, doctrine awakens the faith. Consequently, doctrine and pastoral theology relate profoundly and both are rooted in truth and love, in a strictly circular way : doctrine serves pastoral action and pastoral action comes from doctrine. Pastoral theology offers precious input so that doctrine can be developed further and so that we are able to find an adequate solution to a specific case which can be of moral nature or strictly dogmatic. As for doctrine, it shines the light of its truth on pastoral decisions.

No one though would think – provided that we think in a catholic way that is in view of the faith – of using pastoral theology to find an adequate moral solution to a specific case in sharp contrast with faith. Yet, it is what happens when one practices « discernment » – as prescribed by *Amoris laetitia* – a way to find an alternative new practice, though in contrast with faith, to admit remarried divorcees to holy communion. The practice will end up changing the faith, if it is not already itself the profession of a new faith. Pastoral care cannot be an alternative to dogma. If it were, it would no longer be a practical science, but it would become a theory of the *praxis*. The danger is that today, put in a place of honour, pastoralism could increasingly become a pure theory of social *praxis*. ♦

1. Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*, bull of indiction of the extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, 11 April 2015, n.4, in AAS 5 (2015) 401.

2. A. Spadaro - C.M. Galli (a cura di), *La riforma e le riforme nella Chiesa*, Biblioteca di Teologia Contemporanea 177, Queriniana, Brescia 2016.

3. R.R. Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council : Vatican II, Pope Francis, and the Renewal of Catholicism*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 2015. The author starts with the followings words : « The Second Vatican Council was an event of unparalleled significance in the history of modern Catholicism. One has to go back to the Protestant Reformation to find an event that matches Vatican II's impact on Roman Catholicism. »

4. In a recent article, Gaillardetz explains that « the doctrine of the Church presents itself as a necessary expression, though not limited, of our faith – sometimes totally erroneous, always imperfect and, in an ultimate analysis, impoverished before the ineffable love of God », in *The Tablet*, 25 February 2017, p. 6. This is how is born the alternative, completely post-modern, between truth and charity. We have dedicated an essay on the issue : S.M. Lanzetta, *La porta della fede. Quando ragione e amore s'incontrano*, Leonardo da Vinci, Rome, 2017.