

The Vatican announced Francis' post-synodal Exhortation, titled *Amoris Laetitia* ("On Love in the Family"), will be released on Friday, April 8.

Vatican spokesman, Fr. Federico Lombardi, said the document will be presented in the Vatican newsroom at 11:30 am by Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, the Synod's secretary, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna and a married couple, Francesco and Giuseppina Miano who participated in the Synod discussions.

Both Baldisseri and Schönborn are very much in line with Pope Francis' thinking.

The *National Catholic Reporter* quoted Australia's progressivist Archbishop Mark Coleridge who rejoiced, "I expect the papal document to be a typical Bergoglio combination of challenge and encouragement." [1]

Cardinal Walter Kasper already announced the text will be revolutionary. "The document," said Kasper, "will mark the start of the greatest revolution experienced by the Church in 1500 years." [2]

I travelled to Rome to cover the October 2015 Synod, along with my friend and colleague Chris Ferrara. Spent 14 days there, the final two weeks of the event. Based on what we saw coming from the Synod, as well as the daily Vatican press briefings, there is good reason to fear the new Exhortation will be every bit as "revolutionary" as Cardinal Kasper pledges.

After some preliminary remarks, we will take a close look at these press briefings, especially some revealing comments of the liberal Archbishop Coleridge. The final week of the Synod was one of revolutionary expectations.

"Resist Not the Spirit"?

From the beginning of his pontificate, Francis made clear his resolve to advance the Conciliar agenda. He sees the modernist updating from John XXIII's Second Vatican Council as a work of the Holy Ghost to be embraced, not resisted. Vatican II ushered us into the evolutionary process of continuous *aggiornamento*, justified by the changing pastoral needs of the time. Francis implies we should be attentive to the alleged call of the spirit to even more revolutionary change, and more razing of Catholic bastions that block the way for renewal.

Thus we better understand Francis' exaltation of Vatican II and his scolding of "hard-headed" Catholics. This oft-quoted speech took place on April 14, 2013, only a month after his election to the papacy.

"The Council was a beautiful work of the Holy Spirit," said Francis. "Consider Pope John. He looked like a good parish priest; he was obedient to the Holy Spirit and he did it. *But after 50 years, have we done everything the Holy Spirit told us in the Council? In the continuity of growth of the Church that was the Council?* No. We celebrate this anniversary; we make a monument, as long as it does not bother us. We do not want to change. *What is more, some people want to go back. This is hard-headedness. This is what we call, trying to tame the Holy Spirit, this is what we call becoming foolish and slow of heart.*"[3]

The Synod is a main engine in furthering this "work of the Spirit". As I've noted in the past, *the Synod has been established in order to advance the implementation of Vatican II throughout the world.* That is how it was defined by Father Kenneth Boyack, a Paulist who had worked with the NCCB.[4]

Likewise, Tad Szulc, in his biography of Pope John Paul II, explained that the Synod is a *"permanent organ to implement the decisions of the Second Vatican Council."*[5]

Thus the purpose of the Synod is to keep the continuous *aggiornamento* alive, to keep the *accomodata renovatio* in motion, in order to implement the Council throughout the world, through the collegial method. The Synod is an ever-present extension of Vatican II into the future.

The tumult leading up to the 2015 Synod is well known: Cardinal Kasper's call in February 2014 to pave the way for divorced and remarried Catholics to receive the Eucharist; Francis' public praise and support for the Kasper proposal; the working document for the 2014 Synod containing an avalanche of perverse proposals such as "new language" to replace natural law, openness towards the homosexual lifestyle, including the tacit nod for homosexuals to be godparents; the tumultuous 2014 Synod; the scandalous pro-homosexual, pro-cohabitation mid-term report; the subsequent Vatican questionnaire in which the bishops were told not to form their responses merely based on doctrine; the 2015 *Instrumentum Laboris* forcefully criticized by the more orthodox prelates, including Archbishop Schneider who warned that it pushes an agenda contrary to Divine Law.

In short, we see a process in which the integrity of Catholic doctrine appears to be the last concern of those steering the events.

The final Francis-offensive in favor of breaking down the Church's moral edifice in the name of "Mercy" was manifest in the final week of Press Briefings.

I had arrived in Rome on October 12, and went to the various press briefings during the second week. These sessions included various lay participants of the Synod who were so

happy, so happy, so happy to be there. I paid little attention to these useless sessions, as I knew the key briefings would take place the third week

Sure enough, this was the case.

Each day of the final week, the most radical prelates were trotted out by the Vatican Press Office to tell the world what the Synod was, and what were the true goals for the future. These prelates included Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Cardinal Reinhard Marx (outspoken supporter of the Kasper Proposal), Cardinal Oswald Gracias (on record calling out to homosexuals, "the Church embraces you, wants you, and the Church needs you"),^[6] Spirit-of-Assisi Cardinal Paul Turkson, and Cardinal Christophe Schonborn (who appears to be of one mind with Cardinal Marx). One had the sense the entire week of press conferences was staged-managed for a pre-determined result.

"No Black or White" Coleridge

Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, Australia kicked off the final week of Synod Press Briefings. Each daily press event of the final week comprised at least three synod prelates (different prelates every day) along with Father Frederico Lombardi, Vatican Press Secretary. Coleridge, by far, was the most colorful. He was also the most helpful, as he gave the game away in clear crystal tones.

I spotlight Coleridge's October 19 comments as he represents to a more or less degree the position of the most radical Synod prelates, including – according to all available evidence – that of Pope Francis himself. His testimony is crucial, as it indicates the *thinking* behind the maneuvering, and the path Francis is most likely to take in the future.

Coleridge insists that doctrine is one thing, and pastoral practice is another. It's all about starting from *human experience* (as we repeatedly warned would be the case in previous issues of *CFN*). In this regard, Cardinal Wuerl and others say, "We must meet people where they are." Coleridge likewise insists the Church "must put down its roots in human experience." This is code for accepting the person's sinful lifestyles as is, and then bend pastoral practice to accommodate it. This is called the "creative" pastoral approach.

Though he claims to respect the Church's traditional teaching regarding divorce and remarried, Coleridge says, "not every case [of adultery] is the same, and that's where the pastoral approach needs to take account ... just to say every second marriage or second union [divorced and remarried] is adulterous is perhaps too sweeping."

In one sense Coleridge says nothing new. The Church always noted there can be different

degrees of culpability regarding such sins – but also insists that these grievous sins remain grievous sins that bar the soul from the Eucharist. The new “discernment” approach, however, favored by modern ecclesial delinquents, looks to pry open a way to grant access to the Eucharist for couples living in adultery who will not correct their lifestyle.

Coleridge derides the “all or nothing” attitude, saying there is “no black or white.” He frowns upon the word “adultery,” claiming that it is a “convenient and apparently clear blanket term” that does not deal with the reality of human *experience* in *this* life or *that* life.

All of this twaddle is camouflage for the old heresy of Situation Ethics: the belief that there is no objective morality, and everything depends on the circumstances of the person.

Coleridge calls for a whole new language – thus further discarding irreplaceable scholastic precision – so that those living in moral turpitude will not feel “excluded” or “alienated.”

When asked what terminology he would like to see changed, Coleridge responded he would do away with the term “indissolubility,” which he says is “negative in form.” He also wants to discard the phrase “intrinsically disordered act” – a term despised by those who embrace situation ethics, and the term used by the 1993 Catechism to describe homosexuality.

Worse, Coleridge goes on to say, “*These are just two examples, there would be many, many other*” traditional Catholic terms he wants to shed.

As a true revolutionary, Coleridge sums up his hope that the synod “would bring the whole Church to a *new* listening, for the sake of a *new* language, that would open *new* doors and *new* possibilities.”

He also rightly explains that the effects of this Synod will not end with the closing of the October event, but will extend far into the future.

“Theology progresses”?

Other prelates from the final Synod week piped a similar tune.

During the October 22 Press Briefing, Cardinal Gracias ladled out his subversion of Catholic truth claiming, “Theology progresses, the doctrine remains the same, and our understanding of Church discipline progresses.” – words that would warm Teilhard’s heart. After spouting the false claim that John Paul II’s *Familiaris Consortio* opened the doors to ‘different circumstances’ that could lead the way for some divorced and remarried to receive the Eucharist, Gracias said, “I don’t think we have seen the solution ... this has got to be tackled, this has got to be studied ... as we deepen our understanding ... I am sure you

will find a way forward.”



Gracias acts as if the solution does not already exist, that those in a second “marriage” must repent of their adultery in order for readmission to the Sacraments, a clear teaching of *Familiaris Consortio* that Gracias does not mention.

Likewise Germany’s rootin’tootin’ Cardinal Marx at the October 21 press briefing noted that German-speaking bishops made their own proposal to deal with divorced and remarried. It comprises an appeal to the internal forum, where the priest “in dialogue” with various couples will judge each situation on a case-by-case basis. This too opens the door to sacrilegious Communion under the rubric of a counterfeit compassion.

Other prelates at the third week’s press conference touted a parallel line. This is what Francis’ Vatican presented to the world by means of the press as the major goals and themes of the Synod.

The Final Thud!

On the evening of October 24, I picked up the final Synod Document from the Vatican press office. The result was every bit as disastrous as we predicted: a mish-mash of imprecision that opens the door – overtly and covertly – to eventual acceptance of various practices always considered gravely sinful. The document has the atmosphere of an insipid humanism with a Christian veneer. Despite its God-talk, it is bereft of the sense of the supernatural.

Cardinal Burke put it mildly when he lamented the final document “lacks clarity on the indissolubility of marriage”. A number of us have [elsewhere](#) listed its numerous deficiencies.

Of course there is the obvious omission: The Synod’s final *Relatio* contains no mention of sin or sinful behavior. Yet the number one incentive for most souls to resist immoral behavior is

the truth that sexual sins are mortal sins that bring eternal damnation if the sins are not confessed – in other words, a realistic dread of mortal sin and fear of hell.

Yet the final document contains no reminder that engagement of the 'marital act' is thoroughly forbidden outside of the marriage. There is no word about "avoiding the occasion of sin" – which was always a *pastoral* admonition. Sin is mentioned only in passing (Christ has saved man from sin, etc.). Regarding homosexuality, cohabitation, adultery, fornication, there is no mention of sin whatsoever.

One would never know Our Lady of Fatima warned, "More souls go to hell for sins of the flesh than for any other reason." All so-called "negative language" and "language of exclusion" is expunged from the text. This omission itself is a grave sin of those who dish out this toxin as if it were genuine Catholic nourishment.

Catholics need to pray, arm themselves with traditional doctrine, teach the truth to those in their sphere of influence, and publicly resist.

The 2015 Synod and its final document represent an attack on the Church's entire moral edifice, and points to institutionalized scandal for the future.

There is every indication that Francis' April 8 Apostolic Exhortation will proceed according to the same revolutionary spirit.[7]

Notes:

1. "Francis' widely anticipated document on family life to be published April 8," *National Catholic Reporter*, March 31, 2016.
- 2 "Post-synodal document to be published after Easter: It will be revolutionary, Kasper says," *Vatican Insider*, March 17, 2016.
- 3 "Papa: 'testardi' coloro che vogliono 'tornare indietro' rispetto al Vaticano II." *Asia News*. The English edition of this speech, from *Asia News*, April 16, 2013, translated "testardi" as 'stubborn' but a friend from Italy tells me, "The translator [of Vatican *Asia News*], has used the word stubborn but I think a closer meaning of 'testardo' is hardheaded as the word has a pejorative context in Italian." [emphasis added].
- 4 While attending an "Evangelizing your Parish" meeting in Western New York in 1997, I asked Father Boyack, CSP what is the purpose of the Synod. This was the answer he gave.
- 5 *Pope John Paul II, The Biography*, Tad Szulc, [Scribner: New York, 1995], p. 257.
- 6 "Key Indian Cardinal Speaks about Catholics with same-sex attractions," *Catholic Culture.org*, Oct. 20, 2015.

7. This posting is an abridged and updated version of my report on the Synod that appeared in *Catholic Family News*, November, 2015: "Synod 2015: A New Phase of Conciliar Destruction - 'Razing the Bastions' of Catholic Morality"