

(Image: While young people [dance](#) for Pope Francis and the Synod Fathers, Catholics in Nigeria and elsewhere face [real persecution](#) for holding fast to the Faith.)

Reading through the [Instrumentum Laboris](#) (*IL*)—the working document for the Youth Synod—one gets the impression that the biggest challenge young people face in life is discovering their sexuality. Fortunately, the Synod Fathers stand ready to “accompany” youth on their journey of self-discovery wherever it may lead. The bishops have particular solicitude for LGBT youth who “face inequality and discrimination” because of “sexual orientation” (48).

Meanwhile, quite a few young Christians in Africa and elsewhere have other things to worry about than their sexual orientation. Not only do they face “inequality and discrimination,” they also face machetes and AK-47s. The day before the Synod opened, [17 Christians in Jos](#), Nigeria were slaughtered by Muslim jihadists. A week before that, [14 Christians](#), mostly women, were hacked to death by Islamic militants in the Central African Republic.

They were killed not because of their sexual orientation, but because of their faith—the faith that many of the synod bishops seem eager to water down to make it more palatable to youth. One suspects they also hope to make it more palatable to themselves. The language of the *IL* suggests that the framers of the working document favor “dialogue” over doctrine and non-judgmental flexibility over “unbending” judgment. It’s not surprising that the synod organizers would prefer a less judgmental Church since, as Julia Meloni documents in a [recent Crisis piece](#), many of the key players at the Youth Synod are named in Archbishop Viganò’s testimony as being complicit in sex-abuse cover-ups.

The question is, is the watered-down form of faith that is proposed in the *IL* worth dying for when the man with the machete shows up at your door? As a number of [others](#) have observed, the *IL* document suggests that the role of the Church is to listen and accompany, but not to teach. What the document authors envision is the “emergence of a new paradigm of religiosity” which is “not too institutionalized” but “increasingly liquid” (63).

“Increasingly liquid”? Isn’t this just another way of saying “watered-down”? It’s a characteristic of youth—especially of the male variety—that they don’t want to be tied down. And that’s the appeal of this ever-changing liquid faith. It leaves you free to float around. The synod organizers understand this adolescent predisposition and in the *IL* document they cater to it shamelessly.

One can’t help but wonder if they share the same predisposition. In an intervention critiquing the *IL*, [Archbishop Chaput](#) characterized “developed” societies as being “frozen in a kind of moral adolescence; an adolescence which they’ve chosen for themselves and now

seek to impose on others.” Much the same could be said of some of the prominent prelates at the Youth Synod. They seem over-concerned with adolescent wants, and they seem eager to legitimize whatever it is that young people (from whom we have so much to learn) want to be or do.

But religion is not a free-flowing, New Age, follow-your-bliss affair. The word “religion” is derived from the Latin “religare”—meaning “to bind fast.” At some point, youth needs to grow up. And growing up in the faith means binding yourself to a set of beliefs and behaviors and, above all, to Christ.

Even a good many non-religious people understand that growing up means tying yourself down—to your spouse, to your children, and, often, to a 30-year mortgage. It’s not entirely clear, however, that the synod organizers understand this. A main focus of the synod is “vocational discernment,” yet, as [Thomas Ascik](#) points out in a review of *IL*, “the document has nothing to say, recommend, or advocate whatsoever about the prospects, possibilities, or ‘vocational discernment’ of young Catholic women concerning motherhood.”

## The Challenge of Islamic Birth Rates

Which brings us back in a roundabout way to the challenge of Islam. One of the ways Islam spreads is through high birth rates. This is well understood by Muslim leaders, and some of them are calling for even higher rates. For example, President Erdogan of Turkey has called for Turkish families living in Germany to have at least five children apiece. If you need to ask why, you should google “Ottoman Empire” to get a better idea of Erdogan’s intentions.

The obvious response to Islam’s population explosion is for Church leaders to encourage Catholics to get married and bring more children into the world. But back at the synod, the bishops seem more concerned with wants and feelings than with reproduction. As Ascik observes, the working document of a synod devoted in large part to vocational discernment has nothing to say about motherhood. In Vienna, Birmingham, and other European cities there are already more Muslim than Christian schoolchildren. In some German daycare centers, the ratio of Muslim children to Christian children is 12 to 1. As Church leaders drift further and further toward the anti-fertility LGBT camp, the birth ratio will increasingly favor Muslims.

While Catholic youth (defined as ages 16 to 29) are encouraged to search for personal self-fulfillment in ways that will allow them to remain “liquid,” Muslim youth are being taught to find meaning by aggressively spreading the message of Allah—a message that spells submission and subjugation for future generations of Christians.

In an age of Islamic resurgence, what the world needs is not more youngsters searching 1960s-style from among a variety of lifestyles and identities in order to find personal meaning. This was proven to be a dead-end in the post-1960s years, and the fact that a bunch of aging bishops are willing to prescribe it again shows how out of touch they are. Someone should remind them that the most self-actualizing and meaningful thing that most human beings do in life is to get married and have children.

It also happens to be the primary way that societies ensure their continued survival, especially when confronted with an aggressive foe. On the other hand, societies that are pro-personal fulfillment and anti-child can't expect much in the way of life-expectancy. But, as youth are wont to say, "whatever." If you're the last in your family line, what difference does it make what happens after you're gone?

That, from a purely sociological viewpoint, is the main problem with the LGBT lifestyle. By its very nature the LGBT relationship is not heavily invested in the future. Consequently, synod participants should be cautious about drawing a moral equivalence between same-sex unions and marriage. The odds are that many won't. As [Julia Meloni](#) points out, many of Pope Francis's handpicked delegates to the synod are in sympathy with much of the LGBT agenda.

## Enablers of Abuse and Enablers of Islam

There's another angle to consider. Reading through [Viganò's indictment](#), I was struck by how many on his list are also in sympathy with Islam. As it turns out, the enablers of abuse are often enablers of Islam.

Take Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. At a 2015 gathering of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), [Cardinal McCarrick](#) told the audience "who you are and what you believe are very beautiful things." In the face of atrocities by terrorists, ISNA must tell the world, he said, "that's not what the Quran says, that's not what the Prophet, peace be upon him, is teaching." In an article for the *Center for Security Policy*, [Elizabeth Yore reports](#):

In December 2015, Democrats Dick Durbin, Pat Leahy, Tim Kaine and Ted McCarrick collaborated with other faith leaders on a joint press release in response to the terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino. They warned against hateful and xenophobic speech... [and] cautioned that U.S. refugee policy must not be restricted or halted because of Islamic terrorist attacks.

In addition, McCarrick was one of the chief proponents of the Iran nuclear deal. He traveled to Iran on several occasions and wrote an op-ed in the *Washington Post* in which he extolled the deal and reassured his readers that they could trust the Iranians. “McCarrick,” notes Yore, “could be relied upon to employ the power of the Catholic Church to minimize growing concern over Islamic radicalism.”

The others cited in Viganò’s letter seem almost as pro-Islam as they are pro-LGBT. In January 2017, Cardinal Blase Cupich began his tenure as the first Catholic co-chair of a new National Catholic-Muslim Dialogue. “Christians and Muslims,” [said Cupich](#), should try “to replace narratives of hate and distrust with love and affection.” As with so many other progressive prelates, Cupich seems to think that simply changing the narrative solves the problem. The implication is that there is no real problem with Islamic teaching or sharia law; the problem lies with hateful and distrustful people who say bad things about Islam.

Bishop Robert McElroy, who is also mentioned in the Viganò statement as being aware of McCarrick’s abuses, seems to be of the same mind as Cupich about hateful narratives. Speaking at the launch of the dialogue, [he challenged U.S. Catholics](#) to take an active role in combating “the scourge of anti-Islamic prejudice.” After the terrorist attack on a gay nightclub in Orlando, McElroy used similar language as he [called on Catholics](#) to “combat” the “anti-gay prejudice that exists in our Catholic community and in our country.” Considering that the perpetrator of the massacre was a Muslim, it was a bit odd that McElroy had nothing to say about anti-gay prejudice in the Muslim community.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, who Viganò names as one of those who covered up for McCarrick, also seems willing to cover up for Islam’s aggressive side. When Robert Spencer, America’s leading expert on jihad terror, was invited to speak at a parish in the Diocese of Dallas, [Farrell cancelled the invitation](#).

Also mentioned in the Viganò letter is Cardinal Joseph Tobin, the Archbishop of Newark. Viganò says that the appointments of Cupich to Chicago and Tobin to Newark “[were orchestrated by McCarrick, Maradiaga and Wuerl...](#)” [A New Jersey Monthly article on Tobin](#) congratulates him for “flinging open the doors of Newark’s Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart to the LGBT community.” Tobin also wants to fling open the borders to Muslim refugees. As Archbishop of Indianapolis, he famously defied Governor Mike Pence’s ban on resettling Syrian refugees in Indiana until adequate vetting could be assured.

Of course, Tobin is not alone in this. An open-borders approach to Muslim migration now seems to be settled policy in the Church. [Cardinal Parolin](#), the Vatican’s Secretary of State, who is also mentioned in the Viganò letter, has frequently criticized critics of immigration, especially “populist leaders and movements” which “declare one’s national sovereignty in

terms of cultural supremacy, racial identity and ethnic nationalism...”

When it comes to promoting Muslim migration, however, no one can hold a candle to the one man who figures most prominently in Viganò’s accusatory statement. Indeed, Pope Francis has defended Islam and Muslim migration more frequently and more forcefully than any other Catholic leader. One could fill a book with his many defenses of Islam’s peaceful nature and his harsh criticism of those who resist mass migration from Muslim lands.

While the pope and the bishops may be listening intently to youth, they seem to have no interest in listening to the concerns of ordinary people who fear the consequences of increased Muslim migration. Instead the pope favors the “listen-to-me” approach. He accuses opponents of immigration of being selfish, fearful, and hardhearted. They are guilty, he says, of “sowing violence, racial discrimination, and xenophobia.”

Pope Francis and numerous bishops claim that by welcoming the migrant they are welcoming Christ. That’s one way of looking at it. Another way of viewing the matter is this: while Rome burns with the fire of scandal, the prelates most responsible for enabling the abuse are demanding that a whole new bunch of abusers be admitted to the Continent (disclaimer for the benefit of the literal-minded: obviously, not all Muslim migrants are abusers).

In the meantime, while the Muslim population is increasing both through immigration and high birth rates, the compilers of the synod document seem to be steering youth toward a life of perpetual adolescence rather than toward the vocation of marriage and parenthood.

## Psychology in Seminaries

How did it happen that the bishops became so infatuated with the subject of personal self-growth that they couldn’t read the Arabic writing on the wall? Possibly, because this was the way they were trained. Beginning in the 1960s, an obsession with humanistic psychology swept through the seminaries. The emphasis was mainly on the self: self-esteem, self-actualization, and self-exploration. Other key themes were subjectivism, non-judgmentalism, and fluidity (the ’60s version of “liquidity.”)

The 1960s are long gone, but the fascination with psychology lingers. In this context, it’s interesting to note that Pope Francis once taught psychology. One assumes it was of the humanistic variety because he still uses the language of the non-directive therapist: “encounter,” “listening,” and “accompaniment.” The basic philosophy underlying Humanistic Psychology is a Rousseauian belief in the goodness and trustworthiness of human nature. The self, say the humanists, can always be trusted to find the right path.

Thus one can afford to experiment with different lifestyles. One can even afford, in the pope's words, "to make a mess" without fear of any permanent damage.

Well, the mess has been made, and no amount of non-directive listening is going to repair the damage that has been done. Moreover, a larger "mess" is developing which could result in the submission of the Church and much of the world to Islam.

Undaunted by their failure to protect, the same cast of characters who allowed the sex-abuse crisis to metastasize are asking you to believe that they know how to handle the challenge of Islam. Still more alarming, they apparently plan to employ the same failed tactics—encounter, dialogue, listening, and trusting—in their dealings with Islam. For example, on numerous occasions, Pope Francis has expressed his belief that "encounters" between cultures will somehow magically solve the problems brought on by mass Muslim migration into the West.

The pope, along with his like-minded advisors, has professed an amazing faith in human nature. But the cost of this newfound faith in humanity is a diminished sense of man's fallen nature. Too often our bishops' sense of sin is limited to what the world considers sinful: plastics in the ocean, border walls, homophobia, and Islamophobia. Not surprisingly, in their eagerness to condemn the sin *du jour*, they have failed to notice the approach of other, greater evils. It's no coincidence that bishops who saw no danger in the growth of a homosexual culture within the Church also see no danger in the advance of Islamic sharia across the globe.

Encounters are surely coming, but unless Church authorities wake up to man's sinful nature, they will not be like the encounters the pope envisions.

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