

What is synodal church in the Catholic sense?"

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"Vatican II is often misinterpreted in neo-gnostic-anti-Catholic hermeneutics as the start of a new era of a church that is compatible with woke-atheistic anthropologies, elegantly disposing of the cross of Christ." By Gerhard Cardinal Müller, Rome

Rome. For the vision of a synodal church, people like to refer to the concluding formula of the seven letters in the Apocalypse: "Listen to what the Lord says to the congregations" (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3, 6, 13, 22). However, it is an invitation to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, "who is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb 13:8). Under no circumstances should Christians "be misled by various foreign doctrines" (Heb 13:9). They can never go beyond the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ in the direction of a "modernist or progressive" church, which supposedly has to catch up with the Enlightenment, but in doing so only succumbs to its naturalism (without the God of revelation) and offers itself as a civil religion to the absolute state (in the sense of Hobbes, Hegel and Marx) without dignity.

Vatican II is often misinterpreted in a neo-gnostic-anti-Catholic hermeneutic as the start of the New Era of a Church that is compatible with woke-atheistic anthropologies and which, like the French salon abbes once did, elegantly gets rid of the cross of Christ. In terms of historical theology, however, the kingdom of the Father and the Son is by no means followed by an inner-worldly kingdom of the Holy Spirit in the sense of Joachim of Fiore or Hegel.

Incarnational Christianity cannot be overcome by a montanistic or enthusiastic spiritual Christianity without dogma, sacrament and apostolic magisterium. Nor can we take the Catholic Church to a higher stage of its historical existence, following the example of the old Gnostics, and disguise this betrayal with the beautiful label of a synodal church.

The catholicity of the Church is one of her essential attributes, which we profess as the truths of revelation. Synodality merely means, by analogy with the collegiality of bishops at ecumenical and regional councils, an instrument and a method of coordination and cooperation between laity, religious and clerics in their own participation in the pastoral, doctrinal and priestly ministry of Christ, the Head of the Church. In fact, the Holy Spirit "prepares and guides the Church through the various hierarchical and charismatic gifts, adorning her with his fruits." (Lumen gentium 4) It is not we who give the church a future

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through an organizational reform of its structures. Rather, it is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son who "by the power of the Gospel always makes the Church rejuvenate herself in order to lead her to perfect union with her Bridegroom". (Lumen gentium 4).

But just as squaring the circle contradicts the principles of geometry, so too in Catholic ecclesiology a combination of the Protestant concept of synodality, based on the negation of the sacramental ordo instituted by Christ in the Church, and of the episcopal constitution of the Church of divine right, with the Catholic concept of synod and synodality is doomed to failure in principle. John Henry Newman proved in his essay "An Essay on Development of Christian Doctrine" (1845) with regard to the Church of the Fathers that Anglicanism has failed as a middle way (*via media*) between Protestant and Catholic conceptions and is not an option for Catholic ecumenism.

The Second Vatican Council points a different way in Lumen Gentium 10. The unity of action and diversity in the mission of the laity on the basis of baptism and of bishops and priests on the basis of the sacrament of Holy Orders is rooted in participation in the one priesthood of Christ. He is the head of the body, which is represented in its members by all the baptized and specifically as head by the bishops and presbyters. The sacramental constitution of the Church is based on its unity of life with Christ and must not be confused or mixed in any way with the constitutions of political communities. The Greek concept of the hierarchical constitution of the Church, which in Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita (*De ecclesiastica hierarchia*) also includes the charisms of the faithful, means in the Latin language of the Church nothing other than the sacramentality of the Church. It has nothing to do with a sociological form of rule "from top to bottom", which could or should be replaced by rule "from the bottom up" in democratic times.

It would be a sin against the Holy Spirit of the unity of the Church in revealed truth to involve the bearers of the Church's overall mission in the lay apostolate, in the consecrated life of religious and in the episcopate in a struggle for power in the political sense, instead of understanding that the Holy Spirit guides their symphonic cooperation so that all may come to unity in Christ. In reality, everyone is to surpass themselves in the service of building up the kingdom of God.

Theological conclusion:

Synodality in the Catholic sense is therefore not the construct of a post-Catholic Church or its transformation into a wokeness-compliant NGO, but refers to the cooperation of all lay people, religious, deacons, priests, bishops, guided by the Holy Spirit, under the guidance of the Successor of Peter (Lumen Gentium 23), so that on the face of the Church of the Triune God Jesus Christ shines as the light of the nations, "by proclaiming the gospel to all creatures." (Lumen gentium 1).