



# THE EXTRAORDINARY SYNOD ON THE FAMILY

A NARRATIVE ACCOUNT



EVENTS PRIOR TO THE SYNOD: MARCH 2013 – OCTOBER 2014

13th March 2013	Election of Pope Francis
17th March 2013	<p>During his first Angelus address Pope Francis praises Walter Cardinal Kasper:</p> <p><i>“In these days, I have been able to read a book by a cardinal—Cardinal Kasper, a talented theologian, a good theologian—on mercy. And it did me such good, that book, but don’t think that I’m publicizing the books of my cardinals. That is not the case! But it did me such good, so much good... Cardinal Kasper said that hearing the word mercy changes everything.”</i><sup>1</sup></p>
8th October 2013	<p>Pope Francis announces that two synods will be held to discuss “The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization.” The Extraordinary Synod will be held from 5-19 October 2014.</p>
23rd October 2013	<p>Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, publishes an article in <i>L’Osservatore Romano</i> explaining why it is impossible for there to be any change in the teaching of the Church on the admission of the divorced and “remarried” to Holy Communion.<sup>2</sup></p>
26th October 2013	<p>Cardinal Baldisseri, head of the Synod Secretariat, sends a questionnaire to all bishops’ conferences inviting responses to questions relating to marriage, the family and human sexuality.</p>
7th November 2013	<p>After a meeting of German bishops Reinhard Cardinal Marx, Archbishop of Munich and Freising and a member of Pope Francis’s council of eight cardinals, asserts that Cardinal Müller can’t “stop the debate” and that “at the Synod everything will be discussed” and that “at the moment it is not possible to say what the results of the debate will be.”<sup>3</sup></p>
20th February 2014	<p>Walter Cardinal Kasper delivers an address to the consistory of cardinals gathered to discuss the upcoming Extraordinary Synod on the Family, proposing the admission of the divorced and “remarried” to Holy Communion without amendment of life. He is the only Cardinal permitted to give such an address. He “does not rule out that the last word will be given at the Synod, in agreement with the Pope.”</p> <p>In added notes to the published version he concludes “the hope of very many people is justified that the forthcoming Synod, guided by God’s Spirit and after consideration of all points of view, can point out a good path that all can endorse.”<sup>4</sup></p> <p>During the debate which follows numerous cardinals express their opposition. Marco Tossati gave the following names in <i>La Stampa</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Angelo Cardinal Bagnasco, Archbishop of Genoa and President of the Italian Bishops’ Conference</li></ul>

• Walter Cardinal Brandmüller, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Commission for Historical Sciences
• Carlo Cardinal Caffarra, Archbishop of Bologna
• Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
• Mauro Cardinal Piacenza, Prefect of the Major Penitentiary
• Giovanni Battista Cardinal Re, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for Bishops
• Camillo Cardinal Ruini, Vicar Emeritus of Rome
• Robert Cardinal Sarah, President of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum
• Angelo Cardinal Scola, Archbishop of Milan
Cardinal Ruini claims that 85% of the Cardinals spoke against Kasper’s proposals. <sup>5</sup>
Kasper concludes the discussions by asserting that he is acting for Pope Francis:
<i>“In particular, I thank the Holy Father for his friendly words and for his confidence in having entrusted me with this report.”</i> <sup>6</sup>
Fr Federico Lombardi, the Pope’s press officer, tells the press that the Pope called on the Cardinals to deal with the problems facing the family without “casuistry” and that Kasper’s speech is “in great harmony” with the words of the Pope. <sup>7</sup>
Pope Francis praises Kasper’s speech during his opening address of the second day of the consistory:
<i>“Yesterday, before falling asleep, though not to fall asleep, I read, or re-read, Cardinal Kasper’s remarks. I would like to thank him, because I found a deep theology; and serene thoughts in theology. It is nice to read serene theology. It did me well and I had an idea, and excuse me if I embarrass your Eminence, but the idea is: this is called doing theology while kneeling. Thank you. Thank you.”</i> <sup>8</sup>
Pope Francis preaches against “casuistry” in the context of marriage and divorce:
<i>“And this is the trap: behind casuistry, behind the casuistic way of thinking, there is always a trap. Always! Against people, against us, and against God, always! ‘But is it lawful to do this? To put aside one’s wife?’ And Jesus responded asking them what the law said and explaining why Moses had instituted that law in that way... when a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to a woman, when he makes himself one flesh with her and goes forward and when this love fails, because it fails so many times, we have to feel the pain of the failure, we have to accompany those persons who have experienced this</i>



	<p>failure of their own love. Not to condemn them! To walk with them! And to not take a casuistic attitude towards their situation.”<sup>9</sup></p>				<p>and here I must mention that I do not just sit back in comfort and ease to flirt with public opinion. It is quite fine when you have the wind on your back and are then inflated perhaps excessively. But I believe that this temptation must be resisted by every bishop and by every priest, whether one wants to hear it or not.”<sup>14</sup></p>
3rd March 2014	<p>Cormac Cardinal Murphy-O’Connor, reputed to be a close advisor of Pope Francis, tells Vatican Insider:</p> <p>“...when the cardinals elected Bergoglio they did not know what a Pandora’s box they were opening, they did not know what a steely character he was, they did not know that he was a Jesuit in very deep ways, they did not know who they were electing.”</p> <p>Asked if he foresees a change in the Church’s teaching on the divorced and “remarried” he replies:</p> <p>“The doctrine of the Church develops by going out in a different direction. That is to say, it changes in an indirect way. And it could develop in the question of the divorced and remarried.”<sup>10</sup></p>				
			31st March 2014		<p>Pope Francis publishes a collection of extracts from his sermons under the title <i>The Church of Mercy</i>. The foreword is written by Vincent Cardinal Nichols. The preface is written by Giuliano Vigni, Professor of the Sociology of Contemporary Publishing in Milan who tells us that the Pope’s words are “most of all” about “the new way of ‘being Church’.”<sup>15</sup></p>
			5th May 2014		<p>Cardinal Kasper gives a public interview, followed by questions and answers, at Fordham University.<sup>16</sup> He uses the occasion to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassert his proposals relating to Holy Communion for divorced persons who have contracted civil marriages not recognised by the Catholic Church</li> <li>• Express his “esteem” for Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, a feminist theologian who, among other dissenting positions has called for the Church to change her teaching on abortion</li> <li>• Express his “esteem” for Elizabeth Johnson, a theologian whose book <i>Quest for the Living God</i> has been condemned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. A few days earlier Cardinal Müller had criticised the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) for giving an Outstanding Leadership award to Johnson. Kasper said her condemnation “is not a tragedy and we will overcome.”<sup>17</sup></li> <li>• Share an important anecdote with his audience; after Francis publicly praised Cardinal Kasper’s work, a cardinal came to the pope and insisted: “Holy Father, you should not recommend this book! There are many heresies in it!” The pope smiled as he told Kasper the story, and reassured him: “It goes in one ear and out the other.”<sup>18</sup></li> </ul>
10th March 2014	<p>Cardinal Kasper’s speech is published under the title <i>The Gospel of the Family</i> with an endorsement by the Pope (the above words of 21st February) on the back cover.</p>				
14th March 2014	<p>Carlo Cardinal Caffarra, Archbishop of Bologna, refutes Cardinal Kasper’s proposals in a lengthy interview in <i>Il Foglio</i>.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>[Cardinals Caffarra, Burke, Müller, de Paolis and Brandmüller will go on to co-author, with four other scholars, a book entitled <i>Remaining in the Truth of Christ: Marriage and Communion in the Catholic Church</i>, which will be published shortly before the synod.]</p>				
15th March 2014	<p>Antonio Cardinal Tagle, Archbishop of Manila, expresses “openness” to Kasper’s proposal.<sup>12</sup> He is one of the three Presidents of the synod appointed by Pope Francis.</p>				
23rd March 2014	<p>Archbishop George Gänswein, Private Secretary to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, tells Domradio that the German hierarchy is putting pressure on Rome and that they think that “Germany is the most important country in the world for the Vatican.”<sup>13</sup></p>				
24th March 2014	<p>Cardinal Müller expresses strong opposition to Cardinal Kasper:</p> <p>“I am not involved as a private theologian, but in the function of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which is indeed the only one of the Roman Congregations which has the duty to inform, without mediation, the Magisterium of the Pope, while others who take part, even if they have the cardinalatial rank, speak personally, only for themselves, and do not make official statements.</p> <p>...</p> <p>“The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has a clear mandate to promote the Catholic faith, but also to protect it. But that includes no other task than the one the Pope himself received from Jesus Christ,</p>				<p>On the same day Kasper is introduced as “the Pope’s theologian” on the Brian Lehrer show and tells the audience that “the Church is not against birth control at all” and that everyone must make a decision about methods according to their personal conscience.<sup>19</sup></p> <p><i>Commonweal</i> publishes a major interview with Cardinal Kasper in which he reasserts his proposals at great length.<sup>20</sup></p> <p>Pope Francis makes the following comments to journalists on his way back from the Holy Land:</p> <p>“It did not please me that so many people, including in the Church, priests, etc, spoke of communion for the divorced as if it were all</p>
			7th May 2014		
			27th May 2014		

30th May 2014

*reduced to casuistry. We know that there is a crisis of the family. Young people do not want to get married, or do not get married, live together... I do not wish that we get into casuistry: what can be done or cannot be done...*"<sup>21</sup>

Bishop Athanasius Schneider, Auxiliary Bishop of Astana, speaks of an "interior split", and of Catholics being persecuted within the Church:

*"I think this issue of the reception of Holy Communion by the remarried will blow up and show the real crisis in the Church. The real crisis of the Church is anthropocentrism, forgetting the Christocentrism. Indeed, this is the deepest evil, when man or the clergy are putting themselves in the centre when they are celebrating liturgy and when they are changing the revealed truth of God, e.g. concerning the Sixth Commandment and human sexuality.*

...

*"Unfortunately, for some decades some clergy have accepted these ideas of the world. Now however they are following them publicly. When these things continue, I think, there will be an interior split in the Church of those who are faithful to the faith of their baptism and of the integrity of the Catholic faith. There will be a split with those who are assuming the spirit of this world and there will be a clear split, I think. One can imagine that Catholics, who remain faithful to the unchangeable Catholic truth may, for a time, be persecuted or discriminated even on behalf of those who have power in the exterior structures of the Church.*

...

*"I can presume that such a separation will affect each level of the Catholics: lay people and even not excluding the high clergy. Those clergy who accept today the spirit of the pagan world on morality and family declare themselves Catholics and even faithful to the Pope."*<sup>22</sup>

24th June 2014

The *Instrumentum Laboris* for the Extraordinary Synod is published and includes the "Kasper proposal" in paragraph 92. The preface prepares the way for the discussion of such proposals at the synod:

*"From the beginning of his pontificate, Pope Francis has emphasized that 'the Lord never tires of forgiving: never! It is we who tire of asking his forgiveness.' (Angelus, March 17 [see above]) This accent on mercy has had a great impact even in matters relating to marriage and the family, in that, far removed from every kind of moralism, it confirms the Christian outlook on life and opens new possibilities for the future, no matter what the personal limitations or the sins committed. God's mercy is an opening to an ongoing conversion and a continuous rebirth."*<sup>23</sup>

July 2014

The journal *Nova et Vetera* publishes a comprehensive rebuttal of Kasper's arguments written by eight American theologians.<sup>24</sup>

27th August 2014

September 2014

17th September 2014

18th September 2014

20th September 2014

Pope Francis creates a commission "*to prepare a proposal of reform of the matrimonial process, with the objective of simplifying its procedure.*"<sup>25</sup>

The summer edition of the theological journal *Communio* contains a number of articles opposing the "Kasper proposal", including contributions from Marc Cardinal Ouellet, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, and Angelo Cardinal Scola, Archbishop of Milan.<sup>26</sup>

At a roundtable discussion in Madgeburg, Cardinal Marx reveals that he will present to the synod a document containing the signatures of the majority of German bishops, which will follow similar lines to the "Kasper proposal".<sup>27</sup>

French Catholic daily *La Croix* reports that Pope Francis is said to be "displeased" at those Cardinals, Burke, Müller, Caffara, de Paolis and Brandmüller, who made contributions to *Remaining in the Truth of Christ: Marriage and Communion in the Catholic Church*. It also reported that he "demanded" that Cardinal Müller not take part in promoting the book.<sup>28</sup>

Cardinal Kasper, in an interview with the Italian daily *Il Mattino* asserts:

*"I agreed upon everything with him. He was in agreement. What can a cardinal do, except be with the Pope? I am not the target, the target is another one.*

...

*"They know that I have not done these things by myself. I agreed with the Pope, I spoke twice with him. He showed himself content. Now, they create this controversy. A Cardinal must be close to the Pope, by his side. The Cardinals are the Pope's co-operators."*<sup>29</sup>

Marco Tossati of *La Stampa* reveals that a Cardinal was heard explaining how the Extraordinary Synod was going to be manipulated in order to achieve the desired result:

*"The Synod on the Family will discuss many things, but the mass-media will probably focus on one thing only, i.e. the possibility of people married in church, divorced (with no recognition of annulment from the previous union) and re-married being able to receive Communion. There is a plan to manipulate it...*

*"The first point consists in asking that the written presentations be handed in well in advance. Which has been done. Anyone who wanted to present a statement at the Synod had to have it delivered by the 8th of September.*

*"Second: read all of the presentations carefully, and if some of them seem perhaps particularly peppery, before the problematic speech itself*

	<p>is delivered, allow a speaker to attempt to respond, to all, or part of the problems raised by the prepared statement itself.</p> <p>“Third: if some presentations appear to be problematic, say that unfortunately there isn’t enough time to allow everyone to speak, but nonetheless the text has been received, and remains in the records, and is sure to be taken into account in the final report.</p> <p>“A modest observation from a poor reporter: if one has such an elaborate and shrewd plan, why speak of it in front of perfect strangers at a sumptuous dinner?”<sup>30</sup></p>
26th September 2014	<p>Cardinal Kasper gives an interview to <i>La Nacion</i> and <i>America</i>.<sup>31</sup> He says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Pope supports him and shares his views on the question of Holy Communion for divorced persons living in invalid civil unions.</li> <li>• Cardinals Burke, Müller, de Paolis, Caffara, and Brandmüller are opposing the Pope and engaging in “politics” for making contributions to <i>Remaining in the Truth of Christ: Marriage and Communion in the Catholic Church</i>.</li> <li>• Annulments are “an abstract canonical construction. It’s divorce in a Catholic way, in a dishonest way.”</li> </ul>
1st October 2014	<p>Cardinal Kasper is interviewed by Vatican Radio. He says he is “convinced there will come out a large agreement on a solution of the burning problems.” He once again seeks to undermine the teaching of the Church on contraception:</p> <p>“[Paul VI] was concerned to remain in the truth and not give up something, but I think it’s also a question of the interpretation of this encyclical <i>Humanae Vitae</i> because he was the first pope who spoke in ‘personalistic’ terminology about marriage – it was new! So in the light of this general approach we have to interpret what he said about contraception and so on, and I think what he said is true, but it’s not a casuistic we can deduce from it [sic], it’s an ideal and we have to tell people, but then we have also to respect the conscience of the couples.”<sup>32</sup></p>
2nd October 2014	<p>Cardinal Burke gives an interview to the <i>Catholic News Service</i> in which he says that Kasper’s proposal “needs to be clarified and off the table.” He hopes that the synod will “recommend to the Holy Father that the discussion now go in a fruitful way for fostering married life and the family.”<sup>33</sup></p>
3rd October 2014	<p>At a pre-synod press conference Cardinal Baldisseri loses his temper as journalists question him about the decision to keep the interventions secret, in contrast to previous synods.<sup>34</sup></p>

## THE SYNOD: 5TH OCTOBER TO 19TH OCTOBER

A few of the most important events for each day are given here. This should not be taken as a thoroughly comprehensive overview.

Sunday 5th October 2014

In his opening sermon Pope Francis condemns: “evil pastors [who] lay intolerable burdens on the shoulders of others, which they themselves do not lift a finger to move... Synod Assemblies are not meant to discuss beautiful and clever ideas, or to see who is more intelligent.”<sup>35</sup>

The pope gives an interview to *La Nacion* newspaper and is asked if he is “worried” about *Remaining in the Truth of Christ: Marriage and Communion in the Catholic Church*. The interviewer says to the Pope that the book was “critical of your positions.”

The Pope “doesn’t answer” the question directly, says the journalist, but replies, “Everyone has something to contribute. I even enjoy debating with the very conservative, but intellectually well-formed bishops.”<sup>36</sup>

Francis also says: “The world has changed and the Church cannot lock itself into alleged interpretations of dogma.”

Monday 6th October 2014

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers begin to deliver their interventions. A married couple speak of the importance of welcoming homosexual couples into the family. The text of their intervention is immediately released, unlike those of the bishops which are kept secret.

**In the press office:** A press conference is held at 1pm. It will become clear over the next couple of days that the summaries of the contributions of the bishops follow a clear “progressive” agenda and do not accurately represent the actual interventions.<sup>37</sup>

Tuesday 7th October 2014

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers continue to deliver their interventions.

**In the press office:** A press briefing is held at 1:00pm. The main English-speaking spokesman, Fr Thomas Rosica, stresses the need for the Church to abandon language such as “*intrinsically disordered*” and “*living in sin*”. He also speaks of the “*law of graduality*”, which will become one of the key points stressed by the ‘progressives’ during the synod.

Vincent Cardinal Nichols is present and speaks of the “*law of graduality*”, telling the journalists that it refers to “a *law of pastoral moral theology, which permits and encourages all of us to take one step at a time in the search for holiness in our lives.*”

Wednesday 8th October 2014

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers continue to deliver their interventions.

**In the press office:** Press briefing held at 1:00pm.

In an interview with the *Catholic News Service*, Wilfred Cardinal Napier, Archbishop of Durban, adds his voice to those prelates who are publicly opposing the “Kasper proposal” which, he calls “*successive polygamy*”. He says:

*“Jesus didn’t say he wanted the easiest cross to carry, he took what was coming, and I think that in many instances married people find themselves in impossible situations, second married people, [and] are called to do just that, to carry the cross with Christ. And do we say that you don’t have to carry the cross because the world said, no, no, the soft option is always the easier one but, ultimately, is it the easier one?”*<sup>38</sup>

John Thavis, a veteran Vatican reporter, gives his impressions of the media operation being conducted by the Vatican press office:

*“Getting a read on any Synod of Bishops is not easy, at least from the outside. This synod is proving especially difficult for reporters because of the lack of raw material provided to the media.*

...

*“already, more than 100 short speeches have been given on the synod floor. No texts or summaries have been published, unlike previous years, except for the opening working document and a few talks delivered by lay couples who are attending as auditors.”*

Thavis goes on to say that “*a few themes seem to be emerging as important ones*”. His list is instructive, because it reveals that those in control of the synod have certain key points that they are determined to present as the views of the synod fathers, even if in fact only a small number of fathers, or even just one, had actually raised the points. Among the key themes Thavis identifies are “*the law of graduality*”, the need to make the Church’s language “*welcoming and invitational, not absolute and off-putting*” and the simplification of the annulment procedures.

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers continue to deliver their interventions.

**In the press office:** Press briefing at 1:00pm.

In widely reported comments Cardinal Müller speaks out publicly against the censorship that the bishops are subject to: “*All Christians have the right to be informed about the intervention of their bishops.*”<sup>39</sup>

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers continue to deliver their interventions. They elect moderators and relators for the small groups. Those elected include leading upholders of orthodox Catholic moral teaching, such as Cardinal Burke, Cardinal Sarah, Cardinal Napier, Archbishop André-Joséph Leonard and Cardinal Bagnasco. They also include those sympathetic to the so-called “progressive” positions, including Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, Archbishop John Dew, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella.

Monday 13th October 2014

Pope Francis appoints six new members of the commission which will write the final report. They are all widely considered to be “liberals”.

**In the press office:** Press briefing at 1:00pm.

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers are presented with a document, the *relatio post disceptationem*, that purports to represent their views.

**In the press office:** Press briefing held at 1:00pm. Cardinal Erdo, the Relator General, and Archbishop Forte, the Special Secretary, are present. The *relatio* is presented to the media as if it were the views of the synod fathers.

When asked about the meaning of the passages relating to homosexuality Erdo points at Forte and says “*he who wrote the text must know what it is talking about*”. It seems generally accepted that the document was largely written by Forte, a dissenting theologian, who was a disciple of the late Cardinal Martini, Archbishop of Milan.

The *relatio* is immediately reported around the world as a ‘revolution’ in the Church.

The document contains many gravely scandalous passages, particularly as relating to homosexuality, cohabitation, contraception, and reception of Holy Communion by divorced persons living in invalid civil unions.

On the same day *Il Foglio* publishes an interview with Cardinal Burke in which he speaks bluntly about the manipulation of the synod. Key quotes:

*“...it seems to me that something is not working well if the information is manipulated in a way so as to stress only one position instead of reporting faithfully the various positions that were expressed. This worries me very much, because a consistent number of bishops do not accept the idea of a break with traditional Church teaching, but few know this.*

...

*“The Pope named Cardinal Kasper to the Synod and has let the debate go along this track.... I am awaiting [the Pope’s] pronouncement, which is able to be only in continuity with the teaching given by the Church through her whole history, a teaching that has never changed because it cannot change.”*<sup>40</sup>

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers work in *circuli minores* (small groups) to revise the interim report.

**In the press office:** A press briefing is held at 1:00pm. Cardinal Napier tells journalists that the mid-way *relatio* puts the Church in a position that is “*virtually irredeemable*”. The content of the *relatio* is “*not what we’re saying at all*”.<sup>41</sup>

Tuesday 14th October 2014

Thursday 9th October 2014

Friday 10th October 2014

*La Repubblica* reports that Cardinal Müller criticised the *relatio* for failing to take into account the large number of contributions which defended the teaching of the Church. The newspaper continued:

*“...in his intervention at the circuli minores,[Müller] severely criticized in particular the chapters of the relatio dedicated to openings in the issue of homosexual couples, cohabitation, sacraments to the remarried divorcees, expressing all his ‘disappointment for an undignified and shameful report.’”*<sup>42</sup>

Cardinal Kasper gives an interview to Edward Pentin, which is published on Zenit.

**“Do you know how the Holy Father is viewing the synod and how it’s going so far?”**

*He has not said – he’s been silent, he has listened very carefully but it’s clearly what he wants and that’s evident. He wants a major part of the episcopacy with him and he needs it. He cannot do it against the majority of the episcopacy.*

...

**“It has been said that he added five special rapporteurs on Friday to help the general rapporteur, Cardinal Peter Erdö. Is that because he’s trying to push things through according to his wishes?”**

*I do not see this going on in the Pope’s head. But I think the majority of these five people are open people who want to go on with this. The problem, as well, is that there are different problems of different continents and different cultures. Africa is totally different from the West. Also Asian and Muslim countries, they’re very different, especially about gays. You can’t speak about this with Africans and people of Muslim countries. It’s not possible. It’s a taboo. For us, we say we ought not to discriminate, we don’t want to discriminate in certain respects.*

**“But are African participants listened to in this regard?”**

*No, the majority of them [who hold these views won’t speak about them].*

**“They’re not listened to?”**

*In Africa of course [their views are listened to], where it’s a taboo.*

**“What has changed for you, regarding the methodology of this synod? [question from French journalist]”**

*I think in the end there must be a general line in the Church, general criteria, but then the questions of Africa we cannot solve. There must be space also for the local bishops’ conferences to solve their problems but I’d say with Africa it’s impossible [for us to solve]. But they should not tell us too much what we have to do.”*<sup>43</sup>

Wednesday 15th October 2014

Thursday 16th October 2014

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers continue to meet in the *circuli minores* to revise the interim report. Reports indicate that the Major Archbishop of Kiev, Sviatoslav Shevchuk, spoke directly of the need of “sending a clear message to the faithful and to the Pope” on the fact that “the family is the stable, faithful, and sacramental union between a man and a woman.”<sup>44</sup>

**In the press office:** Archbishop Rino Fisichella speaks of the importance of recognising the “positive” aspects of irregular unions.<sup>45</sup>

Cardinal Kasper denies giving the interview above: “I am appalled. I have never spoken this way about Africans and I never would.” Edward Pentin publishes an audio recording of the interview proving that the interview published on Zenit was accurate.<sup>46</sup>

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers present the reports of the *circuli minores* to the Synod Secretariat. Cardinal Baldisseri announces that they will not be made public, contrary to the established practice at synods. It is reported that numerous synod fathers, led by Cardinal Pell and including Cardinal Napier, Cardinal Parolin and Archbishop Leonard of Brussels, protested vigorously and demanded publication. It is also reported that the synod secretariat was booed and jeered for about fifteen minutes. During this time Cardinal Baldisseri and other members of the secretariat sat in silence. Pope Francis eventually nodded his head to indicate that the reports could be published.<sup>47</sup>

**In the press office:** Press briefing at 1:00pm. No mention is made of the day’s dramatic events, rather journalists are simply told that the synod fathers decided unanimously that the reports of the *circuli minores* should be published.

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna, says that people should see positive elements in irregular unions. He praises a homosexual couple he knew, referring to them as “marvellous” and says the care they took of each was “saintly”. He says the Church “shouldn’t look into the bedroom, but the living room of a family.” He also calls for the Church to move beyond the language of the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which he himself edited.<sup>48</sup>

Marco Tossati reports that synod fathers are being subjected to “a strong pressure effort” to try to force them to support the unacceptable passages in the interim document. Cardinal Reinhard Marx was heard saying that for “him it is incomprehensible how the Synod Fathers are more bound to Tradition than to the Pope.”

Tossati also records that many bishops “are conscious of a governing style that punishes implacably those who have not been able to, or have not been fast or credible enough, to align themselves to the new style.”<sup>49</sup>

Pope Francis adds Cardinal Napier and Denis Hart, Archbishop of Melbourne, to the committee which will draft the final report. This is widely interpreted as a “damage control” measure following Kasper’s

Friday 17th October 2014

notorious interview and accusations that he had “packed” the committee with “liberals” in order to ensure the result that he wanted.

**In the synod hall:** The synod fathers did not meet today as the commission was working on the final report.

**In the press office:** Cardinal Marx assures journalists that they will continue on exactly the same course of action despite resistance. He asserts that the position of the Church on this issue can certainly be changed; he says it is necessary for the Church to change her teaching on reception of Holy Communion by the divorced and “remarried” because she has to regain her credibility after the sex-abuse scandals.<sup>50</sup>

On the same day Cardinal Burke, in an interview with *Catholic World Report*, confirms his impending removal from the Apostolic Signatura. He supports comments made by Cardinal Pell and Cardinal Napier about the manipulation of the Synod:

*“I wholeheartedly agree with what Cardinal George Pell and Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier have stated regarding the manipulation of the Synod Fathers by means of the Relatio post disceptationem. It is clear that whoever wrote the Relatio has an agenda and simply used the authority of a solemn meeting of Cardinals and Bishops to advance his agenda without respect for the discussion which took place during the first week of the Synod.”*

He also states:

*“There was an attempt not to publish the reports and to have Father Lombardi once again filter their contents, but the Synod Fathers, who up to that point were not given any direct means of communication with the public, insisted that the reports be published. It was critical that the public know, through the publication of the reports, that the Relatio is a gravely flawed document and does not express adequately the teaching and discipline of the Church and, in some aspects, propagates doctrinal error and a false pastoral approach.*

*“I consider the publication of the reports of the ten small groups of critical importance, for they demonstrate that the Synod Fathers do not accept at all the contents of the Relatio.”<sup>51</sup>*

Matteo Matzuzzi reports the following important revelation in *Il Foglio*:

*“The most controversial and delicate points, from the question of the approaching of remarried divorcees to the Eucharist to the overture to homosexual unions, were dismantled almost unanimously. That also because, as more than one Synod Father said, very little had been said of the unions between persons of the same sex – not more than three interventions in the assembly – and yet Monday’s Relatio spoke about it ad abundantiam.”<sup>52</sup>*

**In the synod hall:** The final document is presented to the synod fathers but paragraphs 52, 53 and 55 fail to achieve a 2/3 majority.

Saturday 18th October 2014

However despite the vote of the synod fathers they are published in the final document.

In his closing address to the synod fathers Pope Francis attacks “traditionalists” and “intellectuals”. He speaks of:

*“...a temptation to hostile inflexibility, that is, wanting to close oneself within the written word, (the letter) and not allowing oneself to be surprised by God, by the God of surprises, (the spirit); within the law, within the certitude of what we know and not of what we still need to learn and to achieve. From the time of Christ, it is the temptation of the zealous, of the scrupulous, of the solicitous and of the so-called – today – “traditionalists” and also of the intellectuals.”*

He then briefly criticises “so-called ‘progressives and liberals’” before condemning those who, he says:

*“transform the bread into a stone and cast it against the sinners, the weak, and the sick, that is, to transform it into unbearable burdens.”*

He concludes:

*“now we still have one year to mature, with true spiritual discernment, the proposed ideas and to find concrete solutions to so many difficulties and innumerable challenges that families must confront; to give answers to the many discouragements that surround and suffocate families.”<sup>53</sup>*

**In the press office:** Press briefing at 1:00pm. The “message” of the synod is presented by Cardinal Ravasi.

A second press briefing is held in the evening at which journalists are informed of the vote, and of the fact that the paragraphs rejected by the synod fathers are not going to be removed from the document.

The Synod closes with the beatification of Pope Paul VI.

In an interview with *Die Zeit* Cardinal Marx declares that Pope Francis is ready to move the Church ahead in a radical direction.

*“The doors are open -- wider than they have ever been since the Second Vatican Council. The synod debates were just a starting point. Francis wants to get things moving, to push processes forward. The real work is about to begin.*

*“The fact that the two hot-button issues -- Communion for divorced and remarried Catholics and a more positive, open approach to homosexuality -- that were discussed at the Oct. 5-19 Synod of Bishops on the family failed to get a two-thirds majority should not be seen as a setback, he said.*

*“Anyone who comes to that conclusion has not had their eye on what has been going on in our church over the past one and a half years.*

...



Thursday 30th October 2014

*“No, this pope has pushed the doors open and the voting results at the end of the synod will not change that.”<sup>54</sup>*

Lorenzo Cardinal Baldisseri addresses a delegation of British parliamentarians on the subject of the synod. In it he continues the party line that there was no real tension or division at the synod.<sup>55</sup>

Edward Pentin publicly questions the reasons for the delay in publishing the final version of the *relatio*.<sup>56</sup> Many have expressed surprise at the delay considering that the mid-term report was available immediately in a variety of languages, as were the final message of the synod and the Pope’s closing sermon.

The English translation of the final *relatio* is finally published on the Vatican website a very short time later.<sup>57</sup>

Friday 31st October 2014

In his morning sermon Pope Francis said:

*“They followed the laws and they neglected love. They were the models. And for these people Jesus had only one word: hypocrites. On one hand, you travel across the world looking for proselytes: you’re looking for them. And then? You close the door. Closed-minded men, men who are so attached to the laws, to the letter of the law that they were always closing the doorway to hope, love and salvation... Men who only knew how to close.”*

In an interview with a Polish news agency Cardinal Müller spoke of the confusion afflicting the Church:

*“We have Christ and the Gospel. This is our point of reference, the foundation for the proper and only teachings of the Church...”*

*“... unfortunately, there are representatives of the Church, and even bishops who have allowed themselves to be somehow blinded by a secularized society in which they have been so influenced that it has drawn them away from the main topic or from the teachings of the Church based on revelation.”<sup>58</sup>*

Cardinal Burke gives one of his strongest interviews to date to the Catholic News Service:

*“...in a short period of time, how much we have descended and gone away from the truth of our faith and the truth of the moral law in society in general. But the fact that these kinds of questions are being seriously discussed in the church should shock us all and awaken us to the need today to give an heroic witness to the truth of the indissolubility of marriage from attacks from within the church herself.*

*“...the very fact that these matters were being discussed and questioned by the presidents of the conferences of bishops, by the heads of the dicasteries of the Roman Curia, and by other special appointees of the Holy Father to the synod caused a tremendous confusion and could even induce the faithful into error with regard to the teaching about marriage and other teachings.*

5th November 2014

...

*“To in any way contribute to the confusion... is grossly irresponsible and it’s a betrayal of the pastoral office.”<sup>59</sup>*

Bishop Athanasius Schneider gives a groundbreaking interview to Polonia Christiana.

Speaking of the interim reports he says:

*“The interim report was clearly a prefabricated text with no reference to the actual statements of the Synod fathers. In the sections on homosexuality, sexuality and ‘divorced and remarried’ with their admittance to the sacraments the text represents a radical neo-pagan ideology. This is the first time in Church history that such a heterodox text was actually published as a document of an official meeting of Catholic bishops under the guidance of a pope, even though the text only had a preliminary character.*

...

*“Such a synod document, even if only preliminary, is a real shame and an indication to the extent the spirit of the anti-Christian world has already penetrated such important levels of the life of the Church. This document will remain for the future generations and for the historians a black mark which has stained the honour of the Apostolic See.”*

He continues:

*“...such bishops try to legitimize their infidelity to Christ’s word by means of arguments such as ‘pastoral need’, ‘mercy’, ‘openness to the Holy Spirit’. Moreover they have no fear and no scruples to pervert in a Gnostic manner the real meaning of these words labelling at the same time those who oppose them and defend the immutable Divine commandment and the true non-human tradition as rigid, scrupulous or traditionalist.*

...

*“Catholic young people have to say to themselves: I refuse to conform to the neo-pagan spirit of this world, even when this spirit is spread by some bishops and cardinals; I will not accept their fallacious and perverse use of holy Divine mercy and of ‘new Pentecost’; I refuse to throw grains of incense before the statue of the idol of the gender ideology, before the idol of second marriages, of concubinage, even if my bishop would do so, I will not do so; with the grace of God I will choose to suffer rather than betray the whole truth of Christ on human sexuality and on marriage.”<sup>60</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Full Text: Pope Francis’ Angelus Address, 17 March 2014, *The Catholic World Report*, [Accessed 27 November 2014], [http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/2091/full\\_text\\_pope\\_francis\\_first\\_angelus\\_address.aspx](http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/2091/full_text_pope_francis_first_angelus_address.aspx).

<sup>2</sup> Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller, *Testimony to the Power of Grace: On the Indissolubility of Marriage and the Debate Concerning Civilly Remarried and the Sacrament*, [Accessed 27 November 2014] [http://www.doctrinafidei.va/muller/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_20131023\\_divorziati-risposati-sacramenti\\_en.html](http://www.doctrinafidei.va/muller/rc_con_cfaith_20131023_divorziati-risposati-sacramenti_en.html).

<sup>3</sup> “The Synod on the Family, Kasper and the Call for Mercy”, 26 February 2014, *Rorate Caeli* [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/02/the-synod-on-family-kasper-and-rebels.html>.

<sup>4</sup> The full text of Kasper’s address and his response was published as Walter Cardinal Kasper, *The Gospel of the Family*, (New York, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> “Very Relevant: Exclusive for La Stampa: – What exactly happened in the February Consistory, anyway? Majority of Cardinals against Kasper Doctrine – And Müller’s strong words on ‘public opinion’”, 26 March 2014, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November], <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/03/very-relevant-exclusive-for-la-stampa.html>. Includes translation of an article by Marco Tossati from *La Stampa*.

<sup>6</sup> Kasper, *The Gospel of the Family*, p43.

<sup>7</sup> Junno Arocho Esteves, “Fr Lombardi: Consistory Focused on Pastoral Vision of the Family”, 20 February 2014, *Zenit*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/fr-lombardi-consistory-focused-on-pastoral-vision-for-the-family>.

<sup>8</sup> “Pope Francis expresses support for Cardinal Kasper’s ‘serene theology’ on the family”, 21 February 2014, *Rome Reports*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://www.romereports.com/pg155863-pope-francis-expresses-support-for-cardinal-kasper-s-serene-theology-on-the-family-en>.

<sup>9</sup> “The Pope’s homily of February 28, 2014 and communion for ‘remarried’ divorcees: A Trial Balloon, Multiple Ironies, Unanswered Questions”, 28 February 2014, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/02/the-popes-homily-of-february-28-2014.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Gerard O’Connell, “Murphy-O’Connor: Francis is open, honest and made people feel free”, *Vatican Insider*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/inquiries-and-interviews/detail/articolo/murphy-oconnor-32696/>.

<sup>11</sup> “Cardinal Caffarra Expresses Serious Concerns About Family Synod Debates”, 24 March 2014, *Zenit*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/cardinal-caffarra-expresses-serious-concerns-about-family-synod-debates>.

<sup>12</sup> John L. Allen Jr., “Meet the Phillippine Pope Francis”, 15 March 2014, *Boston Globe*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/world/2014/03/15/conversation-with-asian-pope-francis/tYuecMO8hOG2gW8mZE5r0O/story.html>.

<sup>13</sup> “Very Relevant: Exclusive for La Stampa: – What exactly happened in the February Consistory, anyway? Majority of Cardinals against Kasper Doctrine – And Müller’s strong words on ‘public opinion’”, 26 March 2014, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November], <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/03/very-relevant-exclusive-for-la-stampa.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*, p xv.

<sup>16</sup> “Cardinal Kasper in NYC: The Ghost of Vatican II goes on a rampage”, 7 May 2015, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November 2014] <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/05/cardinal-kasper-in-nyc-ghost-of-vatican.html>.

<sup>17</sup> David Gibson, “Cardinal Kasper, the ‘pope’s theologian,’ downplays Vatican blast at U.S. nuns”, 6 May 2014, *Religion News Service*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://www.religionnews.com/2014/05/06/cardinal-kasper-popes-theologian-downplays-vatican-blast-u-s-nuns/>.

<sup>18</sup> David Gibson, “Cardinal Kasper is the ‘pope’s theologian’”, *National Catholic Reporter*, 3 June 2014, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/cardinal-kasper-popes-theologian>.

<sup>19</sup> “Cardinal Kasper in NYC: The Ghost of Vatican II goes on a rampage”, 7 May 2015, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November 2014] <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/05/cardinal-kasper-in-nyc-ghost-of-vatican.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Matthew Boudway and Grant Gallicho, “Merciful God, Merciful Church: An Interview with Cardinal Walter Kasper”, 7 May 2014, Commonweal, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/merciful-god-merciful-church>.

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<sup>23</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris*, 24 June 2014, Vatican, [Accessed 25 November], [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20140626\\_instrumentum-laboris-familia\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20140626_instrumentum-laboris-familia_en.html).

<sup>24</sup> *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2014): 601-630.

<sup>25</sup> “Pope Francis establishes Commission to reform marriage annulment process”, 20 September 2014, *Vatican Radio*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], [http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/09/20/pope\\_francis\\_establishes\\_commission\\_to\\_reform\\_annulments/1106955](http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/09/20/pope_francis_establishes_commission_to_reform_annulments/1106955).

<sup>26</sup> “Marriage: Theological and Pastoral Considerations”, *Communio*, Vol 41.2 (Summer 2014).

<sup>27</sup> “ACHTUNG! As in Vatican II, the Germans seem to be Preparing a Coup for the Synod”, 26 September 2014, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November], <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/09/achtung-as-in-vatican-ii-germans-seem.html>.

<sup>28</sup> “Cinq cardinaux rappellent leur ferme position doctrinale avant le Synode sur la famille”, 17 September 2014, *La Croix*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://www.la-croix.com/Religion/Actualite/Cinq-cardinaux-rappellent-leur-ferme-position-doctrinale-avant-le-Synode-sur-la-famille-2014-09-17-1207711>.

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<sup>30</sup> “EXPLOSIVE – The Pianist: ‘How I Plan to Manipulate the Synod At Will’ One of our most important translations”, 22 September 2014, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 27 November 2014], <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/09/synod.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Gerard O’Connell, “Cardinal Kasper: Some Fear a Domino Effect at the Synod on the Family”, 29 September 2014, *America*,

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<sup>32</sup> “Card Kasper: Synod to model Pope’s ‘listening magisterium’”, 1 October 2014, *Vatican Radio*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], [http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/01/card\\_kasper\\_synod\\_to\\_model\\_popes\\_listening\\_magisterium/1107667](http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/01/card_kasper_synod_to_model_popes_listening_magisterium/1107667).

<sup>33</sup> “Cardinal Burke: Stop Communion debate now”, 2 October 2014, *Catholic News Service*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo2YaU\\_u1Y0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo2YaU_u1Y0).

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<sup>36</sup> “Pope Francis distances himself from ‘very conservative’ bishops”, 8th October 2014, *Lifesitenews*, [Accessed 27 November 2011], <https://www.lifesitenews.com/all/date/2014/10/08#article-pope-francis-distances-himself-from-very-conservative-critics-of-kaspers-co>.

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<sup>38</sup> “Cardinal Napier: Communion and Polygamy”, 8 October 2014, *Catholic News Service*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U12-JT\\_pwKI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U12-JT_pwKI).

<sup>39</sup> “Top Vatican cardinal wants family speeches public”, 9 October 2014, *Daily Mail*, [Accessed 25 November 2014] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2786440/Top-Vatican-cardinal-wants-family-speeches-public.html>.

<sup>40</sup> “Full Text of Cardinal Burke’s Major Interview to Il Foglio on the Synod”, 16 October 2014, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/10/full-text-of-cardinal-burkes-major.html>.

<sup>41</sup> *Voice of the Family* were present at the press conference.

<sup>42</sup> “The Great Division – Müller rips the Synod Report: ‘Undignified, Shameful, Completely Wrong!’”, 14 October 2014, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/10/the-great-division-muller-rips-synod.html>.

<sup>43</sup> Edward Pentin, “Statement on Cardinal Kasper Interview”, 16 October 2014, *Edward Pentin*, [Accessed 26 November 2011], <http://edwardpentin.co.uk/statement-on-cardinal-kasper-interview/>.

<sup>44</sup> Matteo Matzuzzi, *Il Foglio*, 17th October 2014 Translated: <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/10/blue-thursday-orthodox-counter.html#more>.

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<sup>46</sup> Edward Pentin, “Statement on Cardinal Kasper Interview”, 16 October 2014, *Edward Pentin*, [Accessed 26 November 2011], <http://edwardpentin.co.uk/statement-on-cardinal-kasper-interview/>.

<sup>47</sup> The information here is taken from the reports by Tossati and Mattuzzi elsewhere cited and from *Voice of the Family* sources.

<sup>48</sup> *Voice of the Family* was present at the press conference.

<sup>49</sup> “Synod Fathers under intense pressure from the Kasper Front to modify their views – or else”, 16 October 2014, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/10/synod-fathers-under-intense-pressure.html#more>.

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<sup>53</sup> “Pope Francis speech at the conclusion of the Synod”, 18 October 2014, *Vatican Radio*, [Accessed 25 November 2014] [http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/18/pope\\_francis\\_speech\\_at\\_the\\_conclusion\\_of\\_the\\_synod/1108944](http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/18/pope_francis_speech_at_the_conclusion_of_the_synod/1108944).

<sup>54</sup> Christa Pongratz-Lippit, “Cardinal Marx: Pope Francis has pushed open the doors of the church”, 28 October 2014, *National Catholic Reporter*, [Accessed 25 November 2014], <http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/cardinal-marx-pope-francis-has-pushed-open-doors-church>.

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<sup>60</sup> “Bp. Athanasius Schneider on the Synod, ‘manipulation’, and the ‘neo-pagan’ and heterodox midterm relatio – Midterm relatio a stain on the honor of the Apostolic See”, 5 November 2014, *Rorate Caeli*, [Accessed 25 November 2014] <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/11/bp-athanasius-schneider-on-synod.html#more>.

Cover photo: *Opening Mass of the Extraordinary Synod on the Family, October 2014*

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**VOICE OF THE FAMILY** IS AN INITIATIVE OF CATHOLIC LAITY FROM TWENTY-THREE MAJOR PRO-LIFE AND PRO-FAMILY ORGANISATIONS FORMED IN SUPPORT OF THE SYNOD ON THE FAMILY 2014~2015.

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**THE SEPARATION** OF THE UNITIVE AND PROCREATIVE ENDS OF THE SEXUAL ACT, WHICH IS INTRINSIC TO THE USE OF CONTRACEPTION, HAS ACTED AS A MAJOR CATALYST OF THE CULTURE OF DEATH.

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