

# Bishop Athanasius Schneider: Synod document pushes agenda contrary to divine law

Fri Aug 14, 2015 - 12:43 pm EST

August 14, 2015 ([VoiceoftheFamily](#)) -- We are pleased to present a new interview, which has been granted to *Catholic Voice* newspaper by Bishop Athanasius Schneider, auxiliary bishop of Astana in Kazakhstan. *Catholic Voice* is one of 24 organisations that form the Voice of the Family coalition. Bishop Athanasius Schneider has risen to prominence because of his clear defence of Catholic teaching. In this interview the Bishop discusses the major threats to the family posed by the [instrumentum laboris](#) of the synod and by the actions of senior prelates who operate from within the official structures of the Church. Voice of the Family has produced an [in-depth analysis](#) of the *instrumentum laboris*.



**Q. Your Excellency, the Instrumentum Laboris for the 2015 Synod states that there is a “common accord” [c’è un comune accordo] in favour of a “penitential way” for the divorced and remarried” under the authority of the Bishop, for the faithful (who have been) divorced and remarried civilly, who find themselves in a situation of irreversible cohabitation.” Is it accurate to suggest there is a “common accord” ?**

*Bishop Schneider: The affirmation that there is a “common accord” on the “penitential way” is not correct. The only one public document that would permit to determine the effective opinion of the bishops on this topic, is the “Relatio Synodi” of 2014. There it is documented that 40% of the members of the Synod rejected such a “penitential way”. When faced with such a result, one can hardly speak of a “common accord”. Furthermore, there is no specification as to a concrete definition of such a “penitential way”.*

**Q. In light of this use of the phrase “c’è un comune accordo” is the credibility of the Instrumentum Laboris threatened? One could even conclude there is an attempt to impose communion for the divorced and remarried at the Synod despite opposition. Do you have any comment on this?**

*Bishop Schneider: In the light of a careful analysis of the facts, one is left with the suspicion that the authors of the Instrumentum Laboris try to push forward the agenda of a certain clerical pressure group in order to change the Divine law of the non-admission the divorced and remarried to Holy Communion.*

**Q. Commenting on the Synod, Archbishop Forte has said one of the priorities should be a discussion of allowing those who have divorced and remarried outside the Church to become “godfathers or godmothers, catechists, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist.” What do you think of this idea?**

*Bishop Schneider: Firstly, it is necessary to remember the significance of godparents according to the constant teaching and practice of the Church: A sponsor (godfather or godmother) must help the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it. To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must be a Catholic who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on (cf. Canons 872 and 874 § 1, 3). Sponsors and those who take the place of parents are obliged to form the children by word and example in faith and in the practice of Christian life (cf. Canon 774, § 2). When a godfather or a godmother or a catechist conducts a lifestyle that publicly contradicts the Sixth*

*Commandment and the indissolubility of the Christian marriage, then he or she surely cannot be an example of a life of faith. The same is valid for extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist. The advocacy for the admission of divorced and remarried to the task of godparents and catechists cannot ultimately be for the true spiritual good of the children, but turns out to be an instrumentalization of a specific ideological agenda. This is a dishonesty and a mockery of the institution of godparents and catechists who by means of a public promise took on the task of educators of the faith. In the case of godparents or catechists who are divorced and remarried, their life however, continuously contradicts their words, and so they have to face the admonition of the Holy Spirit through the mouth of the Apostle Saint James: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1: 22).*

**Q. Excellency, in the ongoing debate over same sex “marriage” some Catholic groups have become open to the notion of recognizing that same sex pairs can have long term loving relationships thus they conclude that it is possible to recognize same sex civil partnerships. It is evident that even a few bishops support this idea but could this ever be an authentic Catholic position?**

*Bishop Schneider: This can never be an authentic Catholic position because it contradicts directly the words of God, which says that homosexual acts and the homosexual lifestyle are a grievous offense of the will of God (cf. Gen 18:20; Lev 18:22; 20:13; Is 3:9; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:10; 1 Tim 1:10; Jud 7). Committing evil in a long-term and even loving relationship cannot transform the same evil into good. Only true repentance that includes contrition and the firm intention to avoid the evil cancels with the grace of God the evil. It would be absurd to affirm that alcoholism will gain a positive recognition because of the long-term and loving relationship of two persons who established this relationship on the base of their propensity to alcohol. The same absurdity contains the above-mentioned affirmation about same sex unions.*

**Q. There also appears to be a push towards a “new language” with some saying that using the phrases “homosexual tendencies” and “intrinsically disordered” should be avoided less offence is caused – what do you make of this drive to use politically correct language?**

*Bishop Schneider: We have to call things by their real names; otherwise, we will deceive the others and ourselves. To call the things by their names does not mean an intention to create discrimination, provided we speak with respect and pedagogical wisdom. There exist some deficiency symptoms of a bodily or spiritual nature such as fear of heights, claustrophobia, seasickness, shortsightedness etc. No person of common sense will be indignant when we name such phenomena as a deficiency. In fact, the homosexual attraction is in itself a sexual-psychological deficiency symptom, which all civilized human history has considered as a deficiency and called by its name. Under pressure from the new gender ideology, which has its roots in the Marxist ideology, in the 1970s homosexuality was excluded from the International Handbook of Psychological diseases. In such a way, persons who suffer with homosexual attraction were taken hostages of a radical ideology, inasmuch as they are denied the opportunity to receive healing or improvement of their psychologically defective situation. To have a deficiency is not a shame, but it is a fact. Those who effectively encourage deficient persons, in our case*

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/bishop-athanasius-schneider-instrumentum-laboris-pushes-agenda-contrary-to>

persons who are feeling a homosexual attraction, to abuse their deficiency in order to become more deficient and to consequently become addicts, commit a grave injustice towards these persons who need and want to receive help in their spiritual and psychological deficiency.

**Q. Your Excellency, since the legalisation of abortion in Ireland in 2013, Catholic hospitals such as the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin, have issued statements indicating that they will comply with the new abortion laws. In these circumstances, what is the duty of an archbishop or bishop in whose jurisdiction these hospitals reside?**

*Bishop Schneider: The duty of a Catholic bishop in such a case is to deprive the hospital the title "Catholic" and remind his faithful that accomplices of the horrible crime of abortion commit a grave sin and are threatened with excommunication. The punishment of excommunication is a medicinal measure in order to prevent the guilty person from committing further crimes and so to ensure his eternal salvation. This was the method of God Himself (the preaching of judgement and punishment through the Prophets), of Our Lord Jesus Christ (the speech of excommunication in Mt 18: 15-18) and of the Apostles (the excommunication realized by Saint Paul, cf. 1 Cor 5: 4-5) and so it has to be also the method of the Church. When the Church desists of this Divine method, she will be no more faithful to God, she will be no more a real mother who punishes her child in order to save it. On the contrary, such a church will be a false mother who disastrously pampers the child to its damage or a stepmother who is indifferent about the child's salvation. The following words of excommunication pronounced by Saint Paul and inspired by the Holy Spirit, remain valid for all periods of the Church's history inclusively for our days: "With the power of our Lord Jesus we deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Cor 5: 4-5).*

**Q. During the same sex "marriage" debate in Ireland, one bishop stated that Catholics could in good conscience vote for this proposal and admonished them not to vote against it out of hate. In addition, many clergy used the media to also encourage voters to redefine marriage. This situation is repeated throughout the western world – what do you think has happened to the clergy in this respect and what should be done to correct matters?**

*Bishop Schneider: Those clerics who encouraged the faithful to vote for same sex marriage revealed themselves by this same fact as false prophets, as those who pervert the Word of God. They revealed themselves as public liars, to whom are fully applicable these words of Holy Scripture: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter" (Is 5:20) and: "Your prophets have seen for you false and deceptive visions; they have not exposed your iniquity to restore your fortunes, but have seen for you oracles that are false and misleading" (Lam 2: 14). To such priests and bishops the Apostle Paul without any doubt would say today these words: "Such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ" (2 Cor 11:13). In order to remedy this situation it is firstly necessary that faithful Bishops teach clearly and unambiguously the truth of Christ and correct explicitly the teaching of these false prophets.*

**Q. Excellency, in a number of interviews you have mentioned attempts to manipulate the proceedings of the 2014 Synod. Many faithful around the world are anxious that attempts are being made to manipulate the 2015 Synod. What can be done to stop such manipulation? What can those not directly involved in the Synod do if evidence emerges of renewed manipulation?**

*Bishop Schneider: In order to stop such manipulations we must first of all, implore fervently Divine and heavenly intervention, so that the following words of God may be realized in our days during the upcoming Synod: "God frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success. He catches the wise in their own craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are brought to a quick end" (Job 5: 12-13).*

*Furthermore, we have to expose and defend the Divine truth about marriage and family in written and oral forms, exercising hereby the service of the truth as an important gesture of our love for our neighbour. When there exists sure elements of proof one should try to unmask the machinations of the false prophets inside the Church. Saint Peter, the first Pope, wrote in his second Encyclical Letter the following words, which are applicable to those priests and bishops who teach in our days the goodness of the homosexual lifestyle and the legitimacy of receiving Holy Communion by those who live publicly in an adulterous partnership: "There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who redeemed them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep." (2 Peter 2: 1-3).*

**Q. Your Excellency, during this time of unprecedented confusion and disorientation in the Church are there any saints or spiritual writings to which you turn for consolation and encouragement? Could you share with our readers any sayings or insights that will encourage us?**

*Bishop Schneider: We have to look on those Saints who shone out as lights in particularly confused periods of the Church History. Among the clergy, I would name Saint Athanasius his sufferings and his writings about the history of the Arians; Saint Gregory VII, who intrepidly defended chastity (against clerical concubinage and sodomy) and liberty (against the interference of the civil power in spiritual affairs) of the Church, the Spouse of Christ; Saint John Fisher, who at the cost of his life was the only one English bishop of his time defended the indissolubility of the marriage and the primacy of the Pope; Saint Pius X who was in his words and his deeds extraordinarily clear and courageous and never bowed to the pressure of political correctness neither inside nor outside the Church.*

*Among the laity one can mention particularly: Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Thomas More, Gabriel Garcia Moreno, the eminently pious and courageous President of Ecuador, who was assassinated in 1875 in "odium fidei" immediately when he came out of the church where he spent one hour in Eucharistic adoration. The servant of God Jerome Lejeune (+ 1994): he was ostracized by the medical, academic and political elite because of his strong position against abortion; he did not receive an increase in salary for nearly 20 years; his research grants were withdrawn and he was forced to close his laboratory.*

*It would be a great spiritual help for us in our days in midst of the persecution from outside the Church and the marginalization from inside the Church to read the biographies and writings of the above-mentioned saints and servants of God and especially the life of the martyrs. I read somewhere once this phrase, which can encourage us: "It is not important what people say about us today, but what they will say about us hundred years after our death".*