

# Cardinal Burke: Synod's mid-term report "lacks a solid foundation in the Sacred Scriptures and the Magisterium"

CWR Staff, October 14, 2014

## The Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura says that a statement from Pope Francis "is long overdue"

Yesterday's presentation of the mid-term report (*Relatio post disceptationem*) of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Family was met with a remarkable level of interest among both Catholic and non-Catholic media outlets. The Vatican Radio site, in its introduction to the document, stated in part:

In the mid-term report the Synod Fathers speak of how it's the task of the Church to recognize those seeds of the Word that have spread beyond its visible and sacramental boundaries. They appeal to the "law of graduality," as a reflection of the way God reached out to humanity and led His people forward step by step.

Reaction to the report ranged from positive declarations of "a shift in tone toward gays and divorce" (*New York Times*) to more pessimistic assessments. Mary Jo Anderson, reporting for *Catholic World Report* from Rome, **remarked**, "The Extraordinary Synod on the Family is at its midpoint and certain degrees of separation are clear: There is a divorce over divorce, remarriage, and Communion."

Cardinal Raymond Burke, prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura and a contributor with four other cardinals (and four additional scholars) to the new book, *Remaining in the Truth of Christ: Marriage and Communion in the Catholic Church* (Ignatius Press), has expressed concern over several aspects of the Synod, including the push for changes in the handling of Communion for divorced and remarried Catholics and the way that information about the Synod is being, **in his words**, "manipulated."

Cardinal Burke responded late yesterday to questions from Carl E. Olson, editor of *Catholic World Report*, about his concerns, his view of the mid-term report, and why he thinks a statement from Pope Francis is "long overdue."

**CWR:** In what way is information about what is happening in the Synod being either manipulated or only partially reported and made public?

**Cardinal Burke:** The interventions of the individual Synod Fathers are not made available to the public, as has been the case in the past. All of the information regarding the Synod is controlled by the General Secretariat of the Synod which clearly has favored from the beginning the positions expressed in the *Relatio post disceptationem* of yesterday morning.

While the individual interventions of the Synod Fathers are not

published, yesterday's *Relatio*, which is merely a discussion document, was published immediately and, I am told, even broadcast live. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to see the approach at work, which is certainly not of the Church.



U.S. Cardinal Raymond L. Burke, prefect of the Supreme Court of the Apostolic Signatura, walks with Alice and Jeff Heinzen of Menomonie, Wis., as they leave the morning session of the extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family at the Vatican Oct. 9. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

**CWR:** How is that reflected in the Synod's midterm document, released yesterday, which is being criticized by many for its appeal to a so-called "law of graduality"?

**Cardinal Burke:** While the document in question (*Relatio post disceptationem*) purports to report only the discussion which took place among the Synod Fathers, it, in

fact, advances positions which many Synod Fathers do not accept and, I would say, as faithful shepherds of the flock cannot accept. Clearly, the response to the document in the discussion which immediately followed its presentation manifested that a great number of the Synod Fathers found it objectionable.

The document lacks a solid foundation in the Sacred Scriptures and the Magisterium. In a matter on which the Church has a very rich and clear teaching, it gives the impression of inventing a totally new, what one Synod Father called "revolutionary" teaching on marriage and the family. It invokes repeatedly, and in a confused manner, principles which are not defined, for example, the law of graduality.

**CWR:** How important is it, do you think, that Pope Francis make a statement soon in order to address the growing sense—among many in the media and in the pews—that the Church is on the cusp of changing her teaching on various essential points regarding marriage, "remarriage," reception of Communion, and even the place of "unions" among homosexuals?

**Cardinal Burke:** In my judgment, such a statement is long overdue. The debate on these questions has been going forward now for almost nine months, especially in the secular media but also through the speeches and interviews of Cardinal Walter Kasper and others who support his position.

The faithful and their good shepherds are looking to the Vicar of Christ for the confirmation of the Catholic faith and practice regarding marriage which is the first cell of the life of the Church.