

# New Zealand archbishop reveals that he called for Church to drop ‘condemning’ language

Archbishop John Dew , Catholic , Synod On The Family

By Hilary White

ROME – A New Zealand archbishop has said on his blog that he was one of the speakers at the Extraordinary Synod on the Family yesterday to call on the Church to drop traditional language describing sin, such as the term “disordered.”

Archbishop John Dew of Wellington, New Zealand, [wrote today](#) that his intervention “seemed to be well received by most.”

“I basically said that we have to change the language which is used in various Church documents so that people do not see and hear the Church judging or condemning, passing out rules and laws, but rather showing concern and compassion and reaching out to help people discover God in their lives,” he wrote.

“I quoted St John Paul and the Catechism of the Church and two interventions after me another archbishop gave almost exactly the same intervention and used the same quotes. So at least two of us think the same,” he added.

Dew wrote that “there has been a huge variety” of speeches, “some very pastoral and with good suggestions” and “some defensive and saying that this cannot change at any cost.”

“Whenever someone speaks from his heart and from a very real pastoral experience it is almost possible to feel the change as a real life experience is spoken about, the compassion, concern, love and support for those in difficult pastoral situations is easily felt,” the archbishop added.

The call for the Church to cease using traditional language deemed offensive has been repeatedly frequently in recent decades. Cardinal Walter Kasper, whose intervention at February’s Consistory of Cardinals has largely framed the Synod in the public mind, gave an interview last week where he again called for the Church to drop its use of the term “adultery” when describing those who have divorced and entered into a second union, saying they find it “very offensive.”

In the [video interview](#), released last week by Catholic News Service, Kasper said there are “elements” of indissolubility in the second “new situation of marriage.” Kasper, whose ideas were described by Pope Francis at the Consistory as “serene,” rejected the Church’s teaching that within such relationships “every sexual act is sinful,” and added, “There is love, there is commitment, there is exclusivity, it is forever.”



“To tell them that’s adultery, permanent adultery, I think they would feel insulted and offended,” he said.

Although the organizers of the Vatican’s ongoing Synod of Bishops on the Family have decided not to make the bishops’ interventions public, opting instead to summarize the discussions without providing names, they have not placed any restrictions on bishops speaking to the press or writing about their interventions in the Synod hall.