

Synod's chief organizer seized books by top cardinals defending Church's marriage teachings: report

Hilary White, Feb 26, 2015

ROME, February 26, 2015 (LifeSiteNews.com) – Allegations have surfaced this week that the lead organizer of the Vatican's controversial Synod on the Family in October personally intervened to block the distribution of a book distributed by high-ranking cardinals, including Cardinal Raymond Burke, that defended the Church's teachings on marriage.

Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, general secretary for the Synod of Bishops, who became the focus of much criticism from bishops at the Synod for allegedly "[manipulating](#)" the process, is reported to have ordered that the books be seized, despite them having been posted through the official Vatican City State postal service.

The [highly respected Vaticanist](#) Edward Pentin, writing for NewsMax [on Wednesday](#), said "reliable and high level sources" had confirmed that the book, "[Remaining in the Truth of Christ](#)," was "intercepted" on the orders of Cardinal Baldisseri on the grounds that it would "interfere with the synod." Baldisseri was also said to have been "furious" at the attempt to distribute them.

Cardinal Baldisseri reportedly claimed the books were confiscated because they had been distributed "improperly." Those entrusted with ensuring the books made it into the hands of the Synod bishops, however, insisted that the books had gone through the regular Vatican postal service, and were therefore legally protected material, Pentin reports.

The book includes a set of essays defending and explaining the Catholic teaching on the indissoluble nature of marriage and was intended by its authors as a means of clarifying the discussion.

The book was organized and authored by a group of the Church's highest-ranking prelates – including Cardinal Raymond Burke, then-head of the Vatican's highest court, and Cardinal Gerhard Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – who were gravely alarmed not only at the "proposal" by Cardinal Walter Kasper but at its positive reception among bishops and Catholic laity.

Cardinal Kasper had shocked the Catholic world at last year's consistory of cardinals by his "suggestion" that the Church change its practice of withholding Communion from people in "irregular unions," and by his claim that the pope had approved the proposal. The so-called "Kasper proposal" has since become the focal point of a nearly open civil war in the Church in which decades-long divisions between the "liberal/progressives" and orthodox prelates has been revealed by the world's press.

[At the Rome launch](#) on October 6 of a different book opposing Kasper's proposal, Cardinal George Pell, a member of Pope Francis' Council of Nine,

said that changing the practice or teaching of the Church would be "disastrous."

Pentin writes, "Those responsible for mailing the books meticulously tried to avoid interception, ensuring the copies were sent through the proper channels within the Italian and Vatican postal systems." Pentin added that his sources had "strongly" refuted the claim by the Synod's secretariat that the books had been distributed "irregularly," saying they had used the normal postal service that is governed according to Vatican state and international law and is known in Rome for its superior service to the Italian postal system.

Throughout the Synod, rumors circulated broadly among the assembled corps of journalists that the highly anticipated books had failed to reach the bishops and had in fact been confiscated on the orders of the Synod's leadership. At the time, although this strange story had spread widely, none of the principal parties involved in the book's publication or distribution were willing to come forward.

That rule of silence appears to still be in place; today none of the book's

authors or editors were willing to speak with LifeSiteNews "on the record" to confirm what had happened, and attempts to reach the Synod office went unanswered. It is public knowledge, however, that only a handful of bishops had been able to obtain a copy during the Synod itself.

Edward Pentin reported yesterday that the story has not stopped circulating in Rome since the Synod, despite having been dismissed at a December press conference by Vatican

spokesman Fr. Federico Lombardi. "Since then the allegations have become more widely known and have been corroborated at the highest levels of the church," Pentin writes, saying that his sources believe the seized books were likely destroyed.

It is notable that the accusation could have a potential of a criminal liability for unlawful seizure of posted materials. The Vatican City State postal service is a member of the Universal Postal Union, a body under the auspices of the UN, which regulates the postal service practice of 192 member states. One Vatican source told LifeSiteNews today that a first attempt had been made to stop the books being sent by the Vatican Post Office, but that the postal workers had refused to cooperate, saying that it would be "unethical" to tamper with the mail.

Baldisseri, appointed as a permanent Secretary of the Synod of Bishops by Pope Francis, has become a public spokesman for the Kasper Proposal and he was heavily criticized during the Synod by many of the bishops themselves, who complained that the process was being strictly controlled to produce a particular outcome.

At a conference in Rome last month, Baldisseri told delegates that "dogma can evolve" and that the purpose of the Synod was not merely to restate Catholic teaching. [He also confirmed](#) that the documents of the Synod, including the highly contested "mid-term Relatio" that had called for the Church to "accept and value" the "homosexual orientation" had been read and approved for publication by Pope Francis.

[Editorial Comment: Even Cardinals lack freedom of speech in Vatican.]

