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Against Pharisees

“The Church and the world urgently need intrepid and candid witnesses of the whole truth of the commandment and of the will of God, of the whole truth of Christ’s words on marriage. Modern clerical Pharisees and Scribes, those bishops and cardinals who throw grains of incense to the neo-pagan idols of gender ideology and concubinage, will not convince anyone to either believe in Christ or

to be ready to offer their lives for Christ”, said + Athanasius Schneider Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Mary in Astana, Kazakhstan in interview with Izabella Parowicz:

Izabella Parowicz: Your Excellency, what is Your Excellency’s opinion about the Synod? What is its message to families?

Bishop Schneider: “During the Synod there had been moments of obvious manipulation on the part of some clerics who held key positions in the editorial and governing structure of the Synod. The interim report (*Relatio post disceptationem*) 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.

Thanks be to God and to the prayers of the faithful all over the world that a consistent number of Synod fathers resolutely rejected such an agenda; **this agenda reflects the corrupt and pagan main stream morality of our time, which is being imposed globally by means of political pressure and through the almost all-powerful official mass media, which are loyal to the principles of the world gender ideology party.**

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.**

Fortunately the Message of the Synod Fathers is a real Catholic document which outlines the Divine truth on family without being silent about the deeper roots of the problems, i.e. about the reality of sin. It gives real courage and consolation to Catholic families. Some quotations: “We think of the burden imposed by life in the suffering that can arise with a child with special needs, with grave illness, in deterioration of old age, or in the death of a loved one. We admire the fidelity of so many families who endure these trials with courage, faith, and love. They see them not as a burden inflicted on them, but as something in which they themselves give, seeing the suffering Christ in the weakness of the flesh. ... Conjugal love, which is unique and indissoluble, endures despite many difficulties. It is one of the most beautiful of all miracles and the most common. This love spreads through fertility and generativity, which involves not only the procreation of children but also the gift of divine life in baptism, their catechesis, and their education. ... The presence of the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in their modest home hovers over you”.

Izabella Parowicz: Those groups of people who had been expecting a change in the Church’s teaching with regard to the moral issues (e.g. allowing divorced and remarried people to receive Holy Communion or granting any form of approval for homosexual unions) were probably disappointed by the content of the final Relatio. Isn’t there, however, a danger that questioning and discussing

issues that are fundamental for the Church's teaching may itself open doors for serious abuses and for similar attempts to revise this teaching in the future?

Bishop Schneider: “In fact a Divine commandment, in our case the sixth commandment, the absolute indissolubility of the sacramental marriage, a Divinely established rule, means those in a state of grave sin cannot be admitted to Holy Communion. This is taught by Saint Paul in his letter inspired by the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 11, 27-30, *this cannot be put to the vote, just as the Divinity of Christ would never be put to a vote.* A person who still has the indissoluble sacramental marriage bond and who in spite of this lives in a stable marital cohabitation with another person, by Divine law cannot be admitted to Holy Communion. To do so would be a public statement by the Church nefariously legitimizing a denial of the indissolubility of the Christian marriage and at the same time repealing the sixth commandment of God: “*Thou shalt not commit adultery*”. **No human institution not even the Pope or an Ecumenical Council has the authority and the competency to invalidate even in the slightest or indirect manner one of the ten Divine commandments or the Divine words of Christ: “What therefore God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Mat. 19:6).**

Regardless of this lucid truth which was taught constantly and unchangingly — because unchangeable — through all the ages by the Magisterium of the Church up to our days as for instance in “*Familiaris consortio*” of Saint John Paul II, in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and by Pope Benedict XVI, the issue of the admissibility to Holy Communion of the so called “divorced and remarried” has been put to the vote in the Synod. **This fact is in itself grievous and represents an attitude of clerical arrogance towards the Divine truth of the Word of God.**

The attempt to put the Divine truth and the Divine Word to a vote is unworthy of those who as representatives of the Magisterium have to hand over zealously as good and faithful rules (cf. Math 24, 45) the Divine deposit.

By admitting the “divorced and remarried” to Holy Communion those bishops establish a new tradition on their own volition and *transgressing thereby the commandment of God*, as Christ once rebuked the Pharisees and Scribes (cf. Math 15: 3). And what is still aggravating, is the fact that 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 labeling 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.

During the great Arian crisis in the IV century the defenders of the Divinity of the Son of God were labeled “intransigent” and “traditionalist” as well. Saint Athanasius was even excommunicated by Pope Liberius and the Pope justified this with the argument that Athanasius was not in communion with the Oriental bishops who were mostly heretics or semi-heretics. Saint Basil the Great stated in that situation the following: “Only one sin is nowadays severely punished: the attentive observance of the traditions of our Fathers. For that reason the good ones are thrown out of their places and brought to the desert” (Ep. 243).

In fact the bishops who support Holy Communion for “divorced remarried” are the new Pharisees and Scribes because they neglect the commandment of God, contributing to the fact that out of the body and of the heart of the “divorced

remarried” continue to “proceed adulteries” (Math 15: 19), because they want an exteriorly “clean” solution and to appear “clean” as well in the eyes of those who have power (the social media, public opinion). However **when they eventually appear at the tribunal of Christ, they will surely hear to their dismay these words of Christ: “Why are you declaring my statutes and taking my covenant in your mouth? Seeing you hate instruction, and cast my words behind you, ... when you have been partaker with adulterers” (Ps 50 (49): 16-18).**

The final *Relatio* of the Synod also unfortunately contains the paragraph with the vote on the issue of Holy Communion for “divorced remarried”. **Even though it has not achieved the required two third of the votes, there remains nevertheless the worrying and astonishing fact that the absolute majority of the present bishops voted in favor of Holy Communion for the “divorced and remarried”, a sad reflection on the spiritual quality of the Catholic episcopacy in our days.**

It is moreover sad, that this paragraph which hasn’t got the required approval of the qualitative majority, remains nevertheless in the final text of the *Relatio* and will be sent to all dioceses for further discussion. It will surely only increase the doctrinal confusion among the priests and the faithful, being in the air, that Divine commandments and Divine words of Christ and those of the apostle Paul are put at the disposal of human decision making groups. **One Cardinal who openly and strongly supported the issue of Holy Communion for “divorced and remarried” and even the shameful statements on homosexual “couples” in the preliminary *Relatio*, was dissatisfied with the final *Relatio*, and declared impudently: “The glass is half-full”, and analogously he said that one has to work that next year at the Synod it will be full. We must believe firmly that God**

will dissipate the plans of dishonesty, infidelity and betrayal. Christ holds infallibly the rudder of the boat of His Church in midst of such a big storm. We believe and trust in the very ruler of the Church, in Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the truth.

Izabella Parowicz: We are currently experiencing a culmination of aggression against the family; this aggression is accompanied by a tremendous confusion in the area of science about human and human identity. Unfortunately, there are certain members of Church hierarchy who, while discussing these matters, express opinions that contradict the teaching of Our Lord. How should we talk with those people who become victims of this confusion in order to strengthen their faith and to help them towards salvation?

Bishop Schneider: “In this extraordinarily difficult time **Christ is purifying our Catholic faith so that through this trial the Church will shine brighter and be really light and salt for the insipid neo-pagan world thanks to the fidelity and the pure and simple faith firstly of the faithful, of the little ones in the Church, of the “ecclesia docta” (the learning church), which in our days will strengthen the “ecclesia docens” (the teaching Church, i.e. the Magisterium),** in a similar way as it was in the great crisis of the faith in the IV century as Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman stated: “This is a very remarkable fact: but there is a moral in it. Perhaps it was permitted, in order to impress upon the Church at that very time passing out of her state of persecution the great evangelical lesson, that, not the wise and powerful, but the obscure, the unlearned, and the weak constitute her real strength. It was mainly by the faithful people that Paganism was overthrown; it was by the faithful people, under the lead of Athanasius and the Egyptian bishops, and in some places supported by their Bishops or priests, that the worst of heresies was withstood and stamped out of the sacred territory. ... In that

time of immense confusion the divine dogma of our Lord's divinity was proclaimed, enforced, maintained, and (humanly speaking) preserved, far more by the "Ecclesia docta" than by the "Ecclesia docens"; that **the body of the Episcopate was unfaithful to its commission, while the body of the laity was faithful to its baptism; that at one time the pope, at other times a patriarchal, metropolitan, or other great see, at other times general councils, said what they should not have said, or did what obscured and compromised revealed truth; while, on the other hand, it was the Christian people, who, under Providence, were the ecclesiastical strength of Athanasius, Hilary, Eusebius of Vercellæ, and other great solitary confessors, who would have failed without them**" (Arians of the Fourth Century, pp. 446, 466

We have to encourage ordinary Catholics to be faithful to the Catechism they have learned, to be faithful to the clear words of Christ in the Gospel, to be faithful to the faith their fathers and forefathers handed over to them. We have to organize circles of studies and conferences about the perennial teaching of the Church on the issue of marriage and chastity, inviting especially young people and married couples.

We have to show the very beauty of a life in chastity, the very beauty of the Christian marriage and family, the great value of the Cross and of the sacrifice in our lives. We have to present ever more the examples of the Saints and of exemplary persons who demonstrated that in spite of the fact that they suffered the same temptations of the flesh, the same hostility and derision of the pagan world, they nevertheless with the grace of Christ led a happy life in chastity, in a Christian marriage and in family. The faith, **the pure and integral Catholic and Apostolic faith will overcome the world (cf. 1 John 5: 4).**

We have to found and promote youth groups of pure hearts, family groups, groups of Catholic spouses, who will be committed to the fidelity of their marriage vows. We have to organize groups which will help morally and materially broken families, single mothers, groups who will assist with prayer and with good counsel separated couples, groups and persons who will help “divorced and remarried” people to start a process of serious conversion, i.e. recognizing with humility their sinful situation and abandoning with the grace of God the sins which violate the commandment of God and the sanctity of the sacrament of marriage.

We have to create groups who will carefully help persons with homosexual tendencies to enter the path of Christian conversion, the happy and beautiful path of a chaste life and to offer them eventually in a discrete manner a psychological cure. We have to show and preach to our contemporaries in the neo-pagan world the liberating Good News of the teaching of Christ: that the commandment of God, and even the sixth commandment is wise, is beauty: *“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes”* (Ps 19(18): 7-8).

Izabella Parowicz: During the Synod, Archbishop Gądecki from Poznań and some other distinguished prelates were publicly expressing their disagreement with the fact that the results of the discussions departed from the perennial teaching of the Church. Is there a hope that, amid this confusion, there will be an awakening of members of clergy and those faithful who were so far unaware of the fact that, in the very Church’s bosom, there are people who undermine the teaching of Our Lord?

Bishop Schneider: “It is certainly an honor for Polish Catholicism that the President of the Catholic episcopate, His Excellency Archbishop Gądecki, defended with clarity and courage the truth of Christ about marriage and human sexuality, thus revealing himself to be a true spiritual son of Saint John Paul II.

Cardinal George Pell characterized the liberal sexual agenda and the alleged merciful and pastoral support of Holy Communion for “divorced remarried” during the Synod very aptly, saying that this is only the tip of the iceberg and a kind of a Trojan horse in the Church. That in the very bosom of the Church, there are people who undermine the teaching of Our Lord became an obvious fact and one for the whole world to see thanks to the internet and the work of some Catholic journalists who were not indifferent to what was happening to the Catholic faith which they consider to be the treasure of Christ.

I was pleased to see that some Catholic journalists and internet bloggers behaved as good soldiers of Christ and drew attention to this clerical agenda of undermining the perennial teaching of Our Lord. Cardinals, bishops, priests, Catholic families, 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.**

The witnesses will convince the world, not the teachers, said Blessed Paul VI in “*Evangelii nuntiandi*”. The Church and the world do urgently need intrepid and candid witnesses of the whole truth of the commandment and of the will of God, of the whole truth of Christ’s words on marriage. **Modern clerical Pharisees and Scribes, those bishops and cardinals who throw grains of incense to the neo-pagan idols of gender ideology and concubinage, will not convince anyone to either believe in Christ or to be ready to offer their lives for Christ.** Indeed “*veritas Domini manet in aeternum*” (Ps 116: the truth of the Lord remains forever) and “Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb. 13: 8) and “*the truth will set you free*” (John 8: 32). This last phrase was one of the favorite biblical phrases of Saint John Paul II, the pope of the family. We can add: the revealed and unchangeably transmitted Divine truth about human sexuality and marriage will bring true freedom to the souls inside and outside the Church. In midst of the crisis of the Church and the bad moral and doctrinal example of some bishops of his time Saint Augustine comforted the simple faithful with these words: “Whatsoever we bishops may be, you are safe, who have God for your Father and His Church for your mother” (Contra litteras Petiliani III, 9, 10).

+ Athanasius Schneider, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Saint Mary in Astana, Kazakhstan.

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Note: All emphases in the way of bold text have been added.

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