

Rescript and Synodality

The winter 2021 edition of CORPUS REPORTS gave me a most practical and comprehensive analysis of current events, especially *The Synod on Synodality*. Charlie Schmitt's article on the imposition of mandatory celibacy impressed me. The fact he ties this to rampart clericalism motivates me to respond in like fashion to concerns and expectations regarding the upcoming Synod.

Austen Invereigh in his analysis and commentary speaks of the "excessive sacralization of the person of the priest versus a church in which ordinary people are heard ... and are equal in dignity."

In other words the foundation of synodality is a relationship in which co-responsibility enables the laity, men and women, to collaborate and cooperate. I share the same concerns regarding the 2023 Synod expressed in the article by the feminist theologian Mary Hunt: "There were high hopes for the Amazon Synod with a Latin American pope. But the well-documented requests for women to be included in ordained ministry and for married men to be ordained as priests all evaporated when votes were taken and the papal document emerged."

Mary McAleese the president of Ireland (1997-2011) hard hitting critique of the upcoming synod resonated and motivated me to respond to her concern and why I can identify with "a false synodality or a gagged synodality."

First of all let me acknowledge that I differ with Leonardo and Madeline Cruoglio's (in the same edition) adherence to canon law regarding laicization. Regrettably I submitted to that humiliating process as delineated in my RESCRIPT. I never felt my daughters were illegitimate for starters.

In 1973 Archbishop James V. Casy of Denver, a pastoral and Vatican II bishop, suggested that I become a communion minister and so I was for 15 years until 1988 when Archbishop J. Francis Stafford of Denver adhering to the strict legal decrees of a Rescript issued an edict that, after 15 years, I must cease and desist. My daughters were teenagers at the time and questioned his decree.

They are "nones" today and as adults are responsible for their decisions. I merely question what effect Stafford's edict had on their adherence to the practice of or their living a Catholic faith. Today we can thank Stafford for the most conservative, anti Pope Francis and Trump supporting archbishops in the country. Thanks to him Archbishops Jose Gomez, Charles Chaput and Samuel Aquila all came through Denver.

My intent in this expose is to relate how legalism and clericalism in my opinion had a profound effect on Mary McAleese as a child. The same is true for me. It is these childhood experiences that have a lasting effect and influence on a person's life as an adult.



Lee Kaspari, age 85, was ordained for the Archdiocese of Denver in 1965. He resigned in 1969 to eventually marry and have a family.

After 58 years in Denver he and his wife Nancy moved to Ellensburg, Washington to be near 2 of their 4 grandchildren.

Our Readers Write

Ms. McAleese states: "I still remember with horror when our parish priest reprimanded my mother in front of her family, for having a hysterectomy without his permission while she was still of childbearing age. She was 39, had eleven pregnancies, nine live children aged from eighteen to newborn, and was in life-threatening danger from hemorrhage. Then it was the case of 'Everything about us - without us' I personally can remember as a young priest, the oil still wet on my hands, going to my Spiritual Director from seminary days. It was the internal forum. I told him I could not tell people that they could or could not use birth control; that was their decision, not mine. He said: "Then, I can't give you absolution." I said OK and never looked back.

I never felt that every act of Intercourse should be open to conception as we were taught in the seminary. In later years I considered such a teaching to be that of celibates totally devoid of any understanding and appreciation of the support and fulfillment such love can be for parents in their journey of raising children. *Consentia Suprema Lex* - Conscience is the Supreme Law has always resonated with me.

So, I share my own experience as a child that has had a never forgotten effect and influence on my disdain for the legalism of many bishops and the influence of some canon lawyers like Cardinal Raymond Burke. My mother at the time she was notified she was pregnant with me was also told she had TB. I was born on August 7, 1936 in Pittsburgh, PA. My mother died on December 17, 1937. Pope Francis turned one on that day. My father was left with three sons under the age of four to raise. He promised my mother that he would not put us in an orphanage, as was common in the 1930s. In 1943 my dad went to the chancery for the Archdiocese of New York. He desired to marry Jane, who was divorced. He was told that they had to wait until Jane's husband died. My father was a gifted engineer, working in later years on the telemetry or tracking sights for Project Mercury, but adhered to all church laws. For 20 years I watched my dad go to mass every Sunday but not go to communion or receive food for the journey.

Wanting from an early age to become a priest I applied on three occasions for entry into the seminary for the Archdiocese of New York. I was refused all three times. Thank God after eighth grade to Cathedral College in NYC. Again, after High School, and the third time after two years of college in Canada to Dunwoodie or St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, New York. Looking back 70 years, I realize how cruel, uncharitable or mean it was for the faculty to never tell me why I was not accepted. I was really depressed thinking I was just too stupid. I have never been a rocket scientist but always felt I had average intelligence.

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has always resonated with me.*

The pastor of my parish in Mt. Vernon, N.Y. was a Doctor O'Reilly, S.T.D. (I still remember having to tell my daughter that S.T.D. did not stand for a sexually transmitted disease!) All I remember from my childhood is that he insisted on being called doctor and not father! My dad and Jane were not married period nor married in the church as Jane's ex husband was still alive. At any rate Dr. O'Reilly informed the Seminary Rector that I was not a fit candidate for the priesthood, even if my parents were not divorced, which was Cardinal Spellman's edict for candidates whose parents were divorced. Go figure.

The rector at the time (1958) was Msgr. Charles O'Connor Sloane. He was the pastor of St. Peter and Paul. Parish in Mt. Vernon, N.Y. the summer of 1964 which was my deacon summer i.e. the last summer before ordination. My father no longer lived in Mt. Vernon.

Our Readers Write

I and another seminarian from Denver, Craig Hart, planned to rent an apartment. Father Sloane invited us to live at the rectory which we did for that summer as we both were employed as Landscape Gardeners in Westchester County. He was a pastor par excellence and just a humble good priest; a priest's priest.

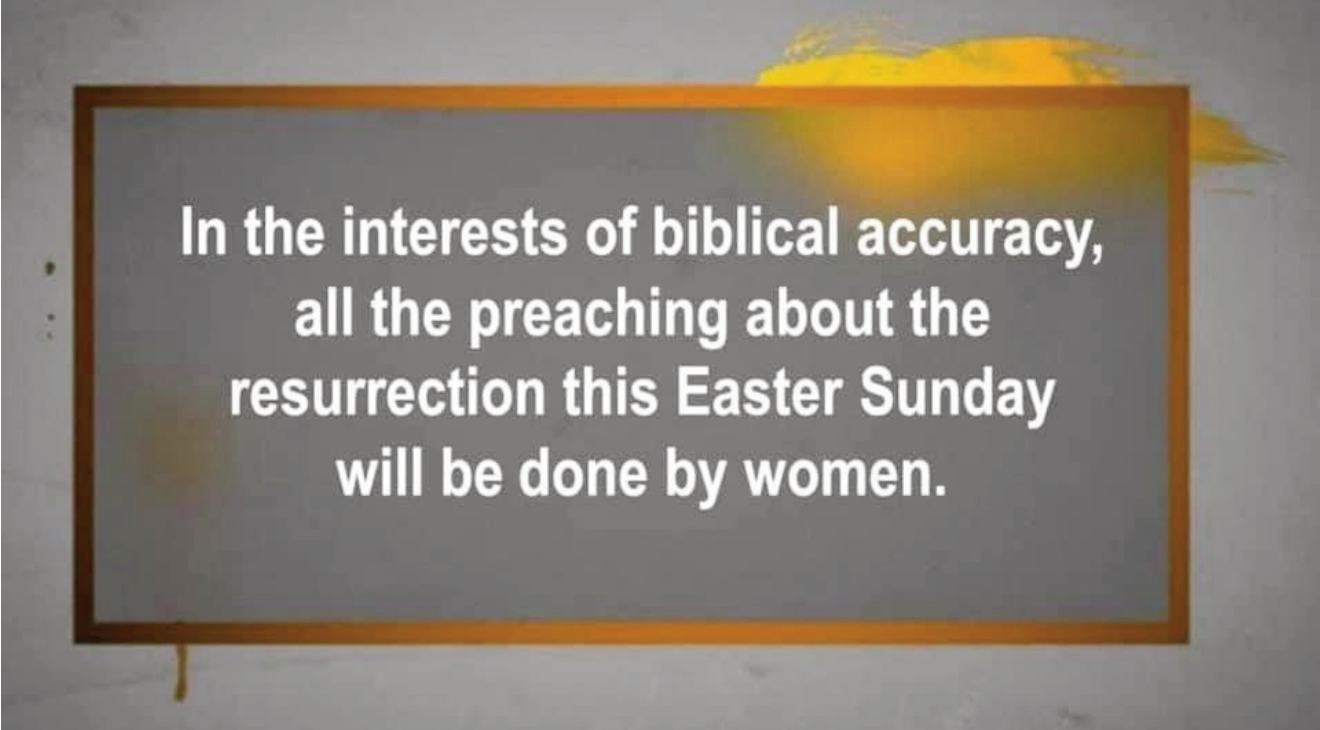
Coming full circle Mary McAleese gives us a stark consideration when she notes: "After laborious consultation the discernment continental phase begins. It involves only the bishops of the episcopal conferences. Having gathered the responses to the questionnaires they will, in private and with complete editorial control, distill them into reports which will be passed on to the Synod office in Rome."

Why is this so sobering for me? I fear history can or will repeat itself.

The Pontifical Commission for the Study of Population, Family and Births from its inception by Pope John XXIII in March 1963 through its final meeting in June 1966 was composed of

some of the best minds world-wide - gynecologists, psychiatrists, theologians, sociologists, economists, scientists, philosophers and demographers. It was agreed at the beginning of the meetings that only the majority report would be given to the pope. The majority report was replaced with the minority curial report in total disregard for the rules of the commission. The ultimate outcome of the Roman System's intervention and Pope Paul VI's acceptance of the minority report was the Encyclical *Humane Vitae*.

For me this was a turning point, a crucial juncture affecting the Catholic Church's credibility as a teacher for sincere, educated and conscientious Catholics. As a young priest over 50 years ago it appeared to me that Catholics agonized over the use of birth control. Back then we lost not only the hour we lost the century. Today 98% of child bearing Catholics follow their conscience. If asked for input, I will submit this as my contribution regarding the 2023 Synod. I am 85 and may not live to see the results. Pope Francis is also 85 so time will tell.



**In the interests of biblical accuracy,
all the preaching about the
resurrection this Easter Sunday
will be done by women.**