

Synod: Pope Francis calls for “silence” and “a pause”



Antoine Mekary | ALETEIA

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At the opening of the Synod, the Pope emphasized the importance of listening to the Holy Spirit and avoiding gossip, worldliness, and public pressure.

“If the Holy Spirit is not among us, the Synod will not bear good results,” warned Pope Francis at the first General Assembly of the Synod on the Future of the Church, this October 4, 2023. As the Synod opened, he issued a warning to journalists, **lamenting that previous synods had been polluted by debates from public**

opinion. He expressed the hope that silence and listening would prevail during this month of work.

In the Vatican's Paul VI Hall, the 365 members of the Synod took part in their first General Congregation this afternoon. In an impromptu address, Pope Francis emphasized that **the “Synod is not a parliament,”** repeating a phrase already used on various occasions. Most recently, he had used the expression a few hours earlier at the Synod's opening mass in St Peter's Square.

Round tables have been set up in the Paul VI Hall to facilitate conversation and listening during the Synod.

Rejecting worldliness, gossip, and public pressure

Giving some advice to this assembly of bishops, religious, and lay men and women, he invited them to **reject “voices that do not come from the Spirit”, “worldliness” and “gossip.”**

“If you don't agree with what that bishop, that sister, or that layman is saying, tell him to his face. Because this is a synod,” the Pope insisted.

In a message addressed directly to journalists and communicators, he denounced the way in which previous synods had, in his view, been **the object of media pressure**. As an example, he referred to the issue of divorced and remarried people, which became the focus of attention at the Synod on the Family in 2014-2015. He also mentioned the Special Synod Assembly on the Pan-Amazon Region, during which the theme of the ordination of married men had come to the fore. “We entered the Synod under that pressure,” he said sadly.

On the subject of the current Synod, he noted that “hypotheses” had again arisen from the outside, such as “the priesthood for women.”



“The Church needs to take a pause”

Faced with all these divisive debates, the Pope called for a “pause.”

“The Church has come to a halt, just as the apostles halted after Good Friday. (...) They did it out of fear, but that’s not our case,” the Pope said wryly. Peter’s Successor insisted on **the importance of this “pause of the whole Church to listen,” which in itself constitutes “the most important message.”**

He called for “asceticism,” a “fast” from public speaking during the Synod. These words follow on from his statements at the ecumenical vigil on September 30. After a long period of silence observed by the crowd gathered in St. Peter’s Square, **Francis pleaded for a climate of “silence” so as not to be influenced by “ideologies” and “polarization.”**

“Truth does not need loud cries to reach people’s hearts,” he said, surrounded by the heads of other Christian Churches.

Strict rules for communication

The Pope's insistence on a **climate of silence and listening** is reflected in the regulations sent out by the Holy See Press Office a few minutes after the 86-year-old Pontiff took the floor.

“In order to guarantee the freedom of expression of each person's thoughts, and to ensure the serenity of discernment in common — the principal task entrusted to the Assembly — each participant is bound to confidentiality and discretion regarding both his own interventions and those of the other participants. This duty remains in force after the end of the Synodal Assembly,” it states. “All participants are forbidden to record, film or divulge their interventions in the general congregations and working groups,” it goes on to say.

A few days before the opening of the synod, the prefect of the dicastery for Communication, Paolo Ruffini, had **denied any desire to impose “secrecy” for this synod, preferring to use the word “confidentiality.”**

For nearly a month, most general assemblies and sharing groups will be held behind closed doors. Synod proceedings will not be broadcast, in order to **preserve “a sacred space” for exchanges between members.** There will, however, be regular official briefings on the progress of the work, as well as press conferences.

Persistent requests for clarification

This call for silence comes just hours after the turmoil caused by the publication on Monday of 5 *dubia* — Latin for “doubts” — issued in July by cardinals concerned about the possible direction of the Synod. As the Holy See's response did not reassure them, these five

cardinals have reformulated their questions, which concern in particular the blessing of homosexual couples and the ordination of women.

This simple prayer of St. Teresa of Avila can calm your nerves

[Philip Kosloski](#) - published on 06/05/18



Her poetic words can soothe the heart when it is troubled.

Fear is a common feeling that we all encounter on a daily basis. It might be the fear of giving a presentation at work or school, or the fear of losing your loved one during a severe illness. Whatever fear or anxiety you might feel, God is here to help lift that burden.

Jesus himself said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:29-30).

God desires peace in your life and one of the most effective ways of finding that peace is invoking his aid. He wants to help you, but our hearts must be open to that divine assistance.

St. Teresa of Avila wrote a beautiful poem during her lifetime that has been used as a prayer throughout the centuries. It is simple in its format, which is why many turn to it in times of distress. If you are feeling afraid or anxious right now, consider praying this prayer, opening your heart to God and adding your own words, invoking God's help in your hour of need.

Let nothing disturb you, Let nothing frighten you, All things are passing away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things, Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices.

Fathers of the Church clarify Guardian Angels



[Tom Hoopes](#) - published on 10/02/23

Way more than "friendly spirits," guardian angels are well explained by 2,000 years of Church teaching.

Our belief in Guardian Angels is one of the greatest treasures of the Catholic faith but also one of our big stumbling blocks.

Guardian Angels are a great treasure because everybody loves the idea of angels looking out for us — and people of all times and places, from ancient times to today, have intuited that friendly spirits are aiding them. They are also one of our greatest stumbling blocks, because they are easy to disbelieve, since you can't see them and their actions rarely rise to the level of miraculous.

But the greatest thinkers in the Church and the great figures of the Old Testament, along with the Psalms and the teaching of the Church, all agree with Jesus that we each have a guardian angel.

After reading the late Cardinal Jean Danielou's book The Angels and their Mission, I think both our delight in the angels and our disbelief in them need to be corrected a little bit. Danielou surveys what the Fathers of the Church teach about angels, and their answers are eye-opening.

First, the names the Fathers of the Church give the guardian angels clarify them.

The Fathers call them by Greek names meaning "watchers," "guards," "sentinels," "guardians," "keepers," and "protectors." They also call them both "superintendents" who organize and direct our lives, and "assistants" or "helpers" who contribute to our plans.

Right away, these are an answer to the best reason to disbelieve in guardian angels: Overdetermination.

Scientists, philosophers, and literary critics alike all warn against giving multiple causes where one is needed, and our disbelief in angels often comes down to overdetermination: If you survive a multi-vehicle accident on the Interstate, there are a dozen causes you can point to before needing to bring in angels, starting with your brake and seatbelt.

But when a military unit defends itself from a surprise attack, they can attribute its safety to watchers, guards, leaders and helpers, all at once; and it may not be entirely clear which made the decisive difference. Same with the angels and us.

Second, the Fathers clarify just what it is our angels guard us from.

Our “overdetermination” objection is also the result of us thinking of the guardian angels primarily as saving us from physical peril — but the Fathers thought of their main job as saving us from spiritual peril.

“To remain strong against the evil powers,” said St. Hilary, “the angels are our helpers.” In fact, he says, “If the guardian angels had not been given to us, we could not resist the many and powerful attacks of the evil spirits.”

When we think of warfare with demonic powers, we imagine something like invisible bats from hell dive-bombing us, while angels knock them out of the sky. Instead, though, the Fathers picture demons that agitate our souls while angels bring gentle refreshment. In St. Athanasius’s *Life of Anthony*, the saint is in

torment and agony at the wild and frenzied attacks of demons, but “The vision of the angels works softly and peacefully, awakening joy and exultation.”

This is the kind of protection we most need from angels today, because our bored and distracted culture tends to seek out the kinds of wild and frenzied excitement that is the very opposite of the calm of the angels.

Besides, the Fathers of the Church — and the baptismal liturgy — remind us: Satan has rights to the race of Adam, and baptism is our renunciation of him. The guardian angels are “angels of peace” that help us live out that renunciation.

Third, the Fathers say the guardian angels encourage penance in us.

How does that renunciation of the devil happen? Penance.

The devil coaxes your appetites to give in to temptation and be a slave to sin. Your guardian angel inspires you to resist, precisely by mortification and self-denial that train your appetites. The ancient Christian work the *Shepherd of Hermas* sees the guardian angel as “an angel of penance” who “holds the devil in his power.”

The Fathers again and again stress that the angels encourage us to embrace penance — something that we see powerfully in the third secret of Fatima.

So, are guardian angels not sweet, friendly spirits after all?

Yes, they are. They are angels of peace even as they call for penance. Jesus' burden is easy and his yoke is light in part because joyful angels help us carry it.

Which brings up one last title the Fathers give to the guardian angels: angels of prayer. St. Clement of Alexandria says never to forget that even when we are praying alone, we are joined to the choirs of angels — truly, our invisible friends.

Franciscan priest says “nones” won't return without help

Breaking in the Habit | Fair Use via YouTube

[J-P Mauro](#) - published on 09/24/23



"They're going to get married outside the church, have kids and not introduce them to the faith of Jesus Christ, and not think twice about it."

The rise of the “nones,” people who claim no religious affiliation, has pervaded just about every demographic in America, leaving many religious groups in a crisis situation where the future of their worship attendance is in question. A report from Pew Research Center, based on data from 2020, **estimated that “nones” currently account for 30% of the US population**, leaving religious leaders to determine what has led to this exodus from the faith and what can be done about it.

For the Catholic Church, which is already dealing with dwindling rates of religious vocations, the rise of the “nones” has become a threat. As the older generations pass on, there will be fewer young people left, **which will lead to more church closures, parish mergers, and an overall shrinking of the Catholic Church in the US.**

Father Casey Cole, OFM, is tackling these troubles, and he warns that things will not change without help from the faithful. Fr. Casey is a Franciscan priest who was ordained in 2019. His body of work belies his budding tenure as a priest, with three published books and two YouTube channels under his belt. This includes his very successful channel *Breaking in the Habit*, boasting over 300k followers, from which he released the video we are examining today.

Fr. Casey begins by recognizing that young adults drifting away from the faith is nothing new. **For years it has been generally accepted that young people will tend to go their own way**

when they are first out on their own, returning to Church to find a stable foundation from which to build their families.

“More times than not they would return to the faith of their youth, leading some in our Church today to repeat the line ‘Don’t worry, they’ll come back. There’s nothing to worry about, this is the way things go.’ I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but this is simply not the case anymore. They’re not coming back and the sooner we accept this, the sooner we can do something about it.”

He noted that a third of Generation Z now consider themselves religiously unaffiliated, far more than any other generation. **Considering that only 40% of Gen-Z reported attending church services as children and just 42% attended religious education**, Fr. Casey does not see this a temporary lapse, but the norm for a large swath of the youngest generation with adult members.

“For this generation, they’re not coming back, because they were never here to begin with. Unlike previous generations that could fall back on their childhood faith when they needed a strong foundation, there’s nothing for youth today, meaning that young people will not show up at our door ... They’re going to get married outside the Church, have kids and not introduce them to the faith of Jesus Christ, and not think twice about it. They don’t know what they’re missing.”

The Franciscan firmly believes that “waiting for them to show up is not going to work.” God may quell the storm to help the faithful through, but when “we’ve got a major hole in the bottom of the ship and the water is pouring in,” it is up to the passengers to plug the rupture and put in the work bailing the water.

Fr. Casey points to the parables of Jesus Christ in Luke 15: The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son. These parables relate the message that “God’s loves us so much that when we get lost, He will seek us out, come after us, and bring us home.” **Fr. Casey, however, says there is another lesson to be learned through the guidance of Christ.**

“Look at how the parable opens. The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying ‘this man welcomes sinners and eats with them,’ so to *them*, he addressed this parable. Who is the *them* that he’s talking to? Seems to me it’s the Pharisees and scribes, the religious leaders who were responsible for the faith of the tax collectors and sinners but are instead caught complaining about them.”

Fr. Casey notes that directing Christ’s teachings to the Pharisees and scribes changes the interpretation of the parables. Just as a sheep cannot be blamed for going astray of the flock, those who have not been properly reached by the Church cannot be completely at fault for wandering from their faith. “It is the shepherd’s responsibility to go after them.”

The young man in the parable of the Prodigal Son ran from home and squandered his wealth. While he had free will, he was also a young inexperienced man, prone to making choices based on his immediate desires. We as a society, however, recognize that young people don’t always make the best choices and even if the fault were solely on him, **he is still deserving of help to rise out of his dire circumstances.**

“You’re not going to completely blame a teenager for the stupid stuff they get into, are you? At the very least, you are not going to expect them to get out of it themselves. Where’s the parent? How was he raised? I say that the father goes after him not out of mercy, but out of obligation. It is his responsibility.

“Jesus is looking directly at the scribes and Pharisees and asking ‘Why are these tax collectors and sinners lost in the first place? Wasn’t it your responsibility to shepherd them, to teach them, to care for them?’”

The priest explains that this is the same responsibility that adults of the Church bear for the younger generations. **That we must ask ourselves how we lost our kids in the first place and what we will do to get them back.** Fr. Casey instructs that the first step to getting the younger generation back into the parish is to “accept that it was we who lost them and so it’s up to us to go find them.”

“My brothers and sisters, what we’re dealing with here is not a matter of being more welcoming to those who find their way to the Church, or creating programs that are more fun. It’s a desperate need for each and every one of us to take seriously our role as missionary disciples, to go out to the lost and to bring them back.

“If we do not devote our lives to this mission, yes this *mission*, if we are not willing to step outside the walls of the Church risking rejection and humiliation, how are we any better than the Pharisees and the scribes who looked on the tax collectors and the sinners with disgust?” **[Visit Father Casey Cole’s YouTube channel *Breaking in the Habit*](#)** to hear more of his reflections on the faith and the Church.



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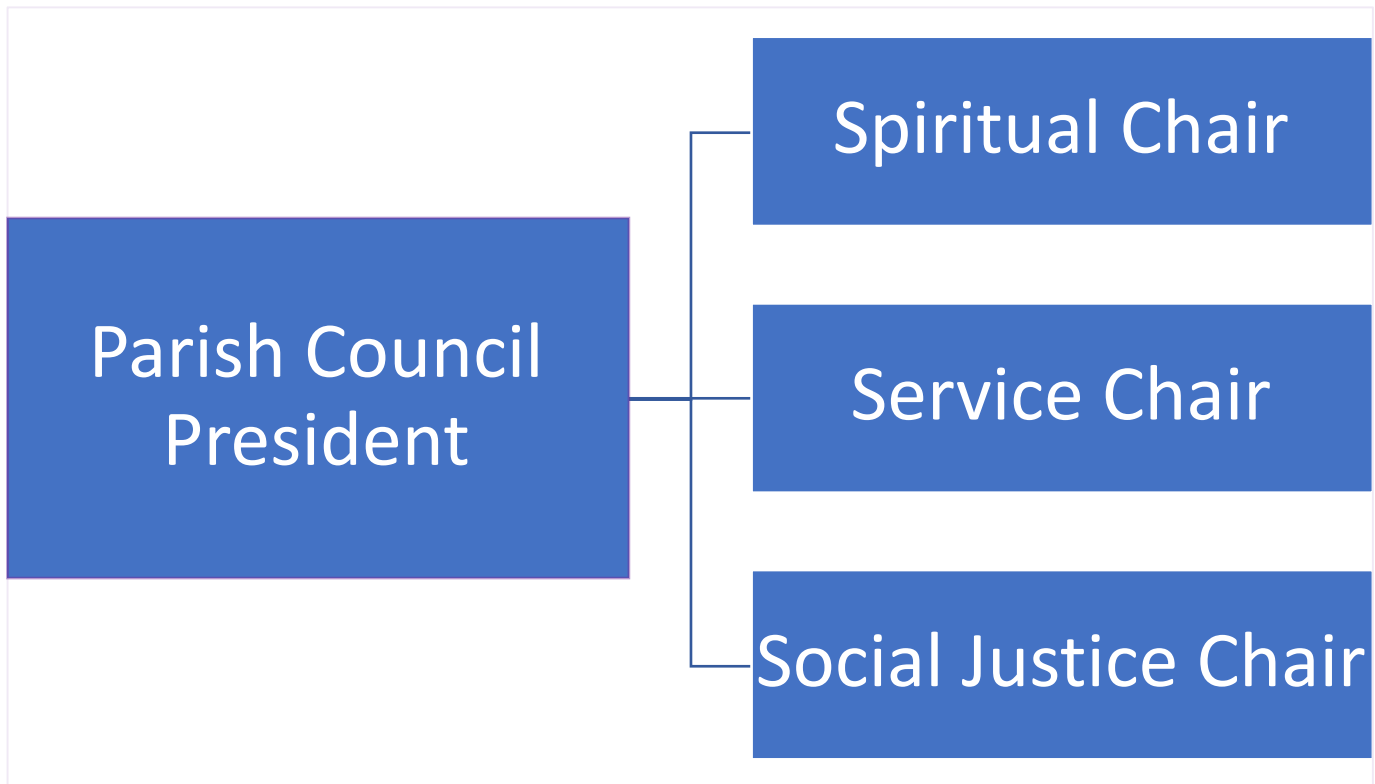
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--Videos--

Matthew Leonard: The Terrible Sin of Telling the Truth

https://www.scienceofsainthood.com/blog/the-terrible-sin-of-telling-the-truth?utm_source=email-terribletruthblogpost-toblogpost-nonmembers&utm_medium=email-terribletruthblogpost-toblogpost-nonmembers&utm_campaign=email-terribletruthblogpost-toblogpost-nonmembers



Passed Away:

Grant eternal rest unto the soul of each woman, O Lord. And let your perpetual light shine upon her.

a) Joann Bin—September 6, 2023; St. Michael's—24 years of service

b) Betty McAleese: September 18, 2023; St. Thomas Aquinas—32 years of service

c) Elizabeth Longo: September 19, 2023; Our Lady of the Holy Rosary—34 years of service

d) Jane Oschypko: September 22, 2023; St. Julia Parish--30 years of service

The Church lists the corporal works of mercy as follows:

1. **Feeding the hungry**
2. **Giving drink to the thirsty**
3. **Sheltering the homeless**
4. **Clothing the naked**
5. **Visiting the sick**
6. **Visiting the imprisoned** (sometimes listed as “ransoming the captive”)
7. **Burying the dead**

The Church lists the spiritual works of mercy as follows:

1. **To instruct the ignorant**
2. **To counsel the doubtful**
3. **To admonish sinners**
4. **To bear wrongs patiently**
5. **To forgive offenses willingly**
6. **To comfort the afflicted**
7. **To pray for the living and the dead**

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