



Final Transcript

CARMEL COMMUNICATIONS: Preparing for the Synod Telepress Conference Call

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SPEAKERS

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US Cardinal Raymond L. Burke
Father Robert Dodaro
Dr. Stephen Kampowski
Dr. James Hitchcock
Helen Hull Hitchcock
Father Joseph Fessio

PRESENTATION

Moderator Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by. Just a quick announcement; if you are a panelist on today's call and—

M Hello?

Moderator Yes. Hold on just a moment here. We're going to be starting shortly.

Just a quick announcement; if you are a panelist on today's call, we need

you to disconnect from the general conference room and dial back in with the new code, which was e-mailed to you a few minutes ago. So again, if you are a panelist on today's call, please refer to your e-mail and dial in with the speaker conference code. Thank you. The call will begin in a few minutes.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by and welcome to the Preparing for the Synod Telepress conference sponsored by Ignatius Press.

At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. Later, there will be an opportunity for questions and comments. Instructions will be given at that time. As a reminder, this conference call is being recorded. I would now like to turn the call over to our host, Lisa Wheel from Carmel Communications who will introduction your speakers and the parameters for this press conference. Lisa, please go ahead.

Lisa

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for joining us. We're sorry for the delay. We had a little bit of technical difficulties in getting everyone onto the line for our panelists. So, we want to just apologize a little bit there for our delay, but we're ready to get started.

I wanted to introduce to you each of our panelists and also to remind you about the context of the call today. This call is primarily about a discussion on the Synod that is beginning to take place this Sunday, which will begin this Sunday. Ignatius Press, as most of you are already aware, has prepared four volumes of books that are going to be released in connection with/timed appropriately for the Synod. Those book titles are *Remaining in the Truth of Christ*, *On Human Life*, *The Gospel of the Family*, and *The Hope of the Family*. Our participants today are here to discuss the topics that are associated in connection with those titles and with the Synod in general.

Our participants are US Cardinal Raymond L. Burke who is the prefect of the Supreme Court of the Apostolic Signature and the former archbishop of St. Louis. He contributed an essay to *Remaining in the Truth of Christ*, one of the books that I mentioned.

Also joining him is Father Robert Dodaro, the Editor of *Remaining in the Truth of Christ* and the President of the Patristic Institute in Rome where he is also a professor. In addition, he is professor of patristic theology in the Pontifical Lateran University. He is author of *Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine* and coedited *Augustine: Political*

Writings and also *Augustine and his Critics*. He also serves as the coeditor and chief of the Augustinus-Lexicon.

Dr. Stephen Kampowski is the co-author of *The Gospel of the Family* and an associate professor of philosophical anthropology at the Pontifical Jean Paul III Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family in Rome. He is the coordinator of the master's in bioethics information, organized in conjunction with the Bioethics Institute of the University of the Sacred Heart in Rome. His two other books in English are *Arendt, Augustine, and the New Beginning*, and *A Greater Freedom: Biotechnology, Love and Human Destiny*.

Dr. James Hitchcock is professor emeritus of history at St. Louis University, which he attended as an undergraduate. He received his master's and doctorate degrees from Princeton University and he wrote the new afterword on *On Human Life: Humanae Vitae* and has authored several books, including *The Supreme Court and Religion in American Life; Recovery of the Sacred; What is Secular Humanism, and Catholicism and Modernity: Confrontation or Capitulation?*

And joining him is his wife Helen Hull Hitchcock who is the founding director of Women for Faith & Family and editor of its quarterly journal,

Voices. She is also editor of the *Adoremus Bulletin*, a monthly publication of Adoremus - Society for the Renewal of the Sacred Liturgy, of which she is the cofounder.

And last but not least, Father Joseph Fessio who is the founder and editor of Ignatius Press, the primary English language publisher of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's writings and the publisher of *Catholic World Report*. Father Fessio wrote his dissertation under the direction of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

That is our panel for discussion today. With that, we will begin with our first question. Rachel?

Moderator (Operator instructions.) I will pause for a moment while questions come in. (Operator instructions.) One moment here while we gather the questions.

Lisa We'll take the first question.

Moderator We'll go ahead and take our first question. Caller, please go ahead.

Peter Is this me?

Moderator Yes.

Peter This is Peter Jesserer Smith with the National Catholic Register. I question I had is there's been a lot of discussion about the Kasper proposal, but my question is, is there discussion about, I mean real, concrete, authentic proposals on the table as to what to do about integrating the divorce and civilly remarried into the life of the church, but also are there proposals to address the pastoral problems that we have with families? It almost seems as if the discussion about the Kasper proposal, pro and con, has sucked out a lot of oxygen for other ideas. Do any of the panelists have a response to that?

James Well, who knows what's on the agenda for Synod. I do not. Maybe someone else does.

Cardinal Burke This is Cardinal Burke. We have the working document for the Synod and in the working document, there are mentioned various pastoral concerns and approaches to them. As a member of the Synod, I have received a number of packets of information from various groups within the church who assist those who in some way or another have experienced a tragedy in their marriage.

So, I believe; I hope that these very positive pastoral approaches will be discussed and will be underlying. I expect it, but I have not seen yet a program for the discussion. But, I agree with the caller that this is really the fruitful line because the Kasper petition has been discussed already some decades ago, at the time of the writing of the Pope John Paul II's exhortation on the family, *Familiaris Consortio*, and were thoroughly discussed and the church gave the response in accord with their tradition.

So, I think the correct approach now it how to help those who either have had [indiscernible] marriage or those who are not preparing properly for marriage or who are living together without marriage and all of those pastoral questions, which really are very major in the church and in the society in general.

Helen

This is Helen Hitchcock. I agree with Cardinal Burke that this is a very basic thing. The pastoral plan for families that was issued by Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, is a key document, but it has been too much ignored over the last decade. I would like to see that, for the needs of families, ordinary families, that this should be implemented in a way—catechized, like the Catechism is used only in this case for family and for marriage. I think that would be a helpful thing to do.

Father Fessio

This is Father Fessio. I think that a negative consequence of Cardinal Kasper's intervention at the consistory in February was this excessive focus on a very important, but very small issue in respect to the problems of the family worldwide. However, there's been tremendous positive consequences too.

First of all, these books, which, by the way, we did not at Ignatius Press plan. They came to us from those who had asked us to cooperate with them, but they really do more than simply address this question of whether civilly remarried divorced Catholics should be admitted to communion. They set a much larger context.

But in addition to that, I believe that kind of worldwide attention has been drawn to this in a way that would not have been drawn otherwise. And now, there's a tremendous opportunity for the Synod to do precisely what the question here is talked about, namely address the tremendous practical and pastoral problems that the family is facing in our society.

So, I see so much good coming out of this I'd even suspect as a fellow Jesuit that maybe the Holy Father shrewdly tried to strip a hornet's nest in order to get some attention.

James The Jesuits are shrewd?

Father Fessio Some.

James The trouble here, as with a lot of things, go back to birth control issue and others, is what I call bottom line theology; people who skip very quickly past all the complicated theological, doctrinal, philosophical issues. They want to know “How’s it going to come out? Can I get remarried? Can I use birth control?” That, I think, has had a devastating effect on Catholic moral theology in the last 50 years and hopefully, we can transcend that in the coming Synod.

Lisa All right. Our next question.

Moderator We’ll go ahead and take our next question. Caller, please go ahead.

Rachel Hello. This is Rachel Zoll calling from the—I’m sorry, the religion writer for Associated Press. This is a question for Cardinal Burke. You’ve talked about Cardinal Kasper and some of the focus on what he said in February. In general, do you feel like the direction that the conversation is going and then the conversation that the Pope has put in place is going in

the wrong direction? Are things moving into a direction that you see that is dangerous or risky for the church?

Cardinal Burke

Well, I certainly have serious difficulties with what Cardinal Kasper was proposing. In proposing it, he was urging a direction, which in the whole history of the church has never taken, a direction which would in some way involve either a disobedience to or at least a non-full adherence to the words of our Lord Himself and no one questions the words of our Lord in chapter 19 of the Gospel According to Matthew.

Cardinal Kasper asked for a dialogue on his proposal and I can speak with regard to the book, *Remaining in the Truth of Christ*. Nine of us decided to respond to his request, and we addressed the various aspects of the question with regard to marriage as he proposed it in his presentation in the Extraordinary Consistory on February 20th and 21st.

Without referring to my contribution, but I must say having read all of the other contributions, they are an effective response, which illumines, holds up the beauty of the church's teaching with regard to marriage down the centuries. It also shows how that teaching, the fidelity of that teaching has not been easy in every age. Even now, there are those who want to challenge it.

But, the firm conviction of the authors and really the firm conviction of the church is that only by attending to the truth about marriage and how that truth is lived in practice can the church make the contribution which she is called to make to the happiness not only in this life, but the eternal happiness of the individual members of society, but also to the society as a whole. If the family is not strong, if marriage is not stable and strong, society itself is in great danger, and we see that in our own experience.

And so, we, the authors, believe very strongly that we needed to do our best to illustrate, make clear the church's teaching and her discipline with regard to marriage for the sake of this dialogue. We came to the conclusion that the direction proposed by Cardinal Kasper fundamentally is flawed. He heard, and so, I believe the book is a very positive contribution to get the discussion back on the right track.

Father Fessio

This is Father Fessio, again. I want to add a little footnote here that Cardinal Burke was here to hear Cardinal Kasper's address. I was not [indiscernible] published this book, but it was a very dramatic address of two hours length and what I read of it, it was quite good for most of it, the first hour and 45 minutes. And so, we shouldn't pit this as Cardinal Kasper on one side and Cardinal Burke and his cause on the other. It's

just there's total disagreement. There's a lot of varied agreement here on fundamental questions about the family and the sacrament of marriage and so on.

And so, yes, it's been sharpened to what Jim called the bottom line, but above that line, there is a great amount of agreement among these Catholic cardinals and other Catholics as well who have taken a position in this debate. So, we shouldn't forget that.

Lisa Rachel, do you have a follow-up question?

Rachel Yes. Do you mind if I ask on?

Lisa No, go right ahead.

Rachel There have been some statements from other Catholics, other religious leaders; Thomas Farr had a letter that he coordinated that he sent yesterday or posted yesterday publicly that I believe was sent directly to Pope Francis, Head of the Synod. But, it's about upholding the truth of the church, very much along the lines of what you're taking about, but one of the comments that I heard about this approach is that this is a great for people who haven't—this focus is great for people who haven't been

married yet, who are preparing for marriage. It's sort of prescriptive for people who are going into the institution, but what do you do with the thousands of people who already have been married and are in complex situations because of, as Cardinal Burke said, the tragedies of what had happened in their own marriages? How do you deal with those people and help them become integrated in or active in the church?

Cardinal Burke This is Cardinal Burke again. Having been a parish priest and also having been a bishop, the situations are various of people whose marriages have failed in some way or another. The only approach is an approach of one-on-one or one couple at a time and try to understand the truth about the situation of the marriage in question, always keeping them close to the church, encouraging them in their life of prayer and participation in the sacred liturgy and so forth to the degree that they are able.

Some have not remarried and therefore, they're able to receive the sacraments. Those who have attempted another marriage without having a declaration of nullity obviously can't receive the sacraments, but the bottom line is to respect the truth of the situation. Some marriages break up because there was a fundamentally defect [indiscernible] in one of the parties. One of the parties, for example, never intended, intended positively not to have children or not to remain faithful or whatever, one

of the essential elements of marriage was excluded positively by one of the parties. And so, you have to get to the bottom of it. Other marriages fail because of sin, that one of the parties simply began to commit adultery or in some other way to no longer participate in the marriage as a spouse should.

So, I think that's the solution is, and many priests are doing this all the time, working with couples to try to understand their situation and, for instance, if it is clearly a case of someone who entered the marriage in good faith, but one of the parties did not give true marriage consent, then to help them to come before the church and to petition of declaration of nullity. If not, to help them in other ways, to live in fidelity to their marriage, even though one of the partners has gone away and has abandoned the marriage.

James

This is James Hitchcock. A very small group, but I think one that should not be overlooked is there are people in situations like this who have, if you want to say, heroically lived by the teaching of the church and they have not received communion because they are in an irregular marriage. They respect the teaching of the church.

We ought to bear these people in mind. They can't be brushed aside as though, "Oh, that was just a mistake." It kind of makes meaningless if you want to call it the sacrifices that they have made to continue to be loyal Catholics.

Cardinal Burke [Indiscernible] faithful to their marriage even though they're divorced.

M Even more heroically I would say are those couples who are in a difficult situation who then realize that in order to receive communion, because of the irregularity of the situation, they must remain brother and sister, and there are many cases like that. One of the common objections that you hear in kind of [indiscernible] is what are these celibate males doing telling these married people they can't have sex.

Well, I actually think it's a tremendous witness. Every Catholic who has been a practicing Catholic for any length of time knows some very good priests, good, holy, decent, well-formed human priests who are celibate, who are witness to the fact that your sexual intimacy is not something which is necessary for human happiness and therefore, there can be true love between a man and a woman and they can abstain as difficult as it may be. It's a very difficult situation, but it's one that can be done with a

view of the Kingdom; that is, this life isn't all there is. There's the witness we give to the life beyond, eternal life.

And so, I think that actually, celibate males are precisely the people who are needed to uphold this teaching, to help give courage and encouragement to those who are in a difficult situation.

M I think that's an excellent point. I've often thought of that and especially, again, with regard to birth control, that the if you want to call it the natural family planning people who say, "Well, abstaining for a certain period of time; how can I do that?" Well, if you're a free human being, yes, you can do it and the witness of celibacy of course does obviously point to that.

Stephan This is Stephan Kampowski. May I intervene on the issue of accompanying those who are separated to pay off and it is proposed that the new union is a solution. Also in Cardinal Kasper's presentation, he suggested that no union is sought, for instance, for the good of the children. It is sought for the good of each individual, but that is the question one has to raise or even an affirmation one can challenge. Is the new union that is being sought really a solution?

A separation and a divorce causes a great wound in everyone involved and a new union doesn't necessarily heal that wound. It covers it makes it even more infectious and also for the children. It's not clear that it is good for children, for instance, to have stepparents. We all know fairy tales, but we also know statistics and sociological data that confirms these situations we read about in *Cinderella* and what not.

Children living with their stepparents are more likely to be abused by their stepparents than children who are living with their biological parents. So, the idea that an abandoned spouse, for the good of his or her children needs to remarry, that needs to be challenged also.

James

This is James Hitchcock. Again, we've seen cases where a mother has either abandoned or in even in very rare cases, killed a child because her new husband or boyfriend is very resentful. Now, of course, we can recognize that they are wonderful stepparents who do care for the good of the children, but it's by no means a certainty, that a remarriage is going to benefit the children.

Lisa

All right. We're ready for our next question. I just want to remind our panelists that not all of your voices are familiar to our journalists. So, if you could just when you're speaking or responding to a question, just

identify who you are so that they have that in their notes. So, our next question will come from David Gibson from Religion News Services.

David

Thank you very much for this call and the chance to ask a question. I have a couple of questions if I can, but I'm willing to wait in line depending on the length of the line.

First off, I just wanted to pick up again on a point that Father Fessio made kind of at the top. That was just about the controversy I think it's fair to call it about the Synod and about some of these issues; most notably communion for divorced and remarried Catholics. The question is, I'll start with Cardinal Burke, but I'd be interested if any others want to weigh in, is this healthy for the church? This seems like kind of a dialogue and a clash of opinions and some pretty conflictual back and forth among very high ranking people in the church. Is this healthy for the church, or will it introduce a note of doubt? Are people going to say, "Well, the Synod decided this, but Cardinal Kasper over here says XYZ"?

James

Well, it's what happened at the time of Vatican II for sure, this is James Hitchcock again, where the media were absolutely flooded with detailed accounts of debates and there were the good cardinals and the bad cardinals and the different factions at the Council. Had there been mass

media Trent, had there been mass media at Nicaea, they would have done the same thing. So, I supposed whether you want to say it's healthy or not, it seems to me it's kind of inevitable.

Cardinal Burke This is Cardinal Burke. In the whole history of the church, in the early centuries, the church had to fight to honor the truth that our Lord Jesus Christ is God and man and there was a tremendous battle within the church with a group called the Arians. And so, there are discussions and disagreements. This is nothing new in the church and also among prelates.

The important thing is to honor the truth, and that's what we have to get to the bottom of, to study the question, and that's one of the benefits of the book, *Remaining in the Truth of Christ*. It gets to the depth of the truth of Christ's teachings in the Gospel According to Matthew and then that teaching as it's reflected in the whole of Scriptures, in the Fathers of the Church, in the best theological thinking and so forth.

And so, that there's a debate is, to me, quite understandable, but it has to be an honest debate and in which the best research is done and that everyone is—the ultimate commitment is to the truth because if we don't serve the truth, then we're not serving the church. For everyone to simply be silent while they see things that are being said that are not true, how can

this be construed as being charitable or being good to the church? So, I don't see it as a harmful thing at all, and I think it would be very harmful if those who are responding to the situation in a respectful way and a honest way and in a way that really pursues the truth should be viewed negatively. I think that that's very strange to me and not at all helpful for the good of anyone.

Helen This is Helen Hitchcock. I think if we—

Father Fessio This is Father Fessio. Go ahead, Helen. I'll always defer to you, Helen.
No, you go.

Helen I was just going to mention that if we look at the title of the Synod itself, it talks about the family and the evangelization. I think one of the needs for evangelization is when there is massive confusion and a defection from the church's teaching and how do we get that across.

I think one of the ways of getting attention, as several people have pointed out—the questioner asked about the conflict of the high-ranking people. That does create tension and this gives us a key into real evangelization; that is telling the truth.

Father Fessio

This is Father Fessio. In today's Gospel, we have the apostles wanted to call down thunder and Jesus rebuking them. So, we had a dispute of some of the high-ranking people then and the apostle among themselves disputed things. St. Paul challenged Peter about Judaization of Christianity and St. Paul and St. Barnabas parted ways.

So, all through the history of the church, we've had disputes and sometimes ones which were negative disputes I mean caused by our sinfulness. But at the same time, there's also an aspect of trying to find the truth. In the Middle Ages, we had the famous quaestio disputata, the disputed question. It was a method of trying to arrive at the truth by listening to different sides of the story. One thing I think is characteristic of Pope Francis is that he does listen and is willing to allow different sides to express themselves in the hope that the truth will come out.

So, I don't think that it's a bad thing that these disputes are known. In fact, I think it's a good thing. I think transparency is important, that if there are disagreements, it should be discussed openly and respectfully. I believe in the books that we published here that's been done.

James I think on contrast to both Trent and Nicaea, we can be sure that at this Synod, no bishop will pull another bishop's beard, which did go on in earlier debates.

David Do bishops still have beards? I hadn't noticed. A quick follow-up—I know Cardinal Burke is always clean shaven. A quick follow-up; there's what seems to be a distinction, and I don't know if it's a proper distinction between doctrine and discipline. Some are saying, "Look, we're not changing the indissolubility of marriage by talking and not focusing on the issue of people who remarried, divorced and [indiscernible] Catholic. We're not going to change Jesus' teaching on marriage. We're just changing a church discipline" whereas some others see that as, I don't know, a distinction without a difference. One is so interconnected to—being able to receive the Eucharist is so intimately connected with marriage. Is there daylight between these two things, or are these two camps talking past each other?

Cardinal Burke There can't be in the church a discipline which is not at the service of doctrine. The whole purpose of Canon Law, the whole purpose of Canons and other legislation of the church is to assist in—either to protect sacred truths, sacred theologies, or to assist people in living those truths in their daily lives.

And so, the Canonical discipline is always driving to be ever more faithful to that truth. This is, I think, a every deceptive line of argument, which I've been hearing more now in this whole debate is, "Oh, we're not questioning the indissolubility of marriage at all. We're just going to make it easy for people to receive a declaration of nullity of marriage so that they can receive the sacraments."

But, if the process, and this is the subject of my little essay in the book, *Remaining in the Truth of Christ*; if the process does not reflect the truth and get at the truth of whether there was indeed a marriage or not and if there was a marriage, then no human power can dissolve it, what happens is that people are not stupid. They see that the church readily declares marriages null. They will come to the conclusion, "Well, the church teaches that marriage is indissoluble, but it's hypocritical because in practice, it doesn't have a serious process for determining whether there was a marriage or not."

And so, to tamper with the discipline is not a light matter and it's something that we need to be very attentive about. Down the centuries, the process for the declaration of nullity of marriage has evolved very carefully, but always in trying to [indiscernible] way to arrive at the truth.

And so, in the Catholic Church, to say that the doctrine can be one thing and the discipline can be another, that simply doesn't work.

Father Fessio

This is Father Fessio again. There's an ambiguity between the word "discipline." Abstaining from meat on Friday was a church discipline. Thou shalt not kill is also a church discipline. In fact, all The Commandments are disciplinary because they are rules about moral behavior.

So, that can cloud the issue when people simply say, "Oh, well you've got doctrine on one side and discipline on the other." In this case, as Cardinal Burke says, the real question is, is there a valid marriage or not which is indissoluble? If that's true, then of course there's no such thing as a second marriage and there's no such moral behavior as having intercourse outside that real marriage.

So, the discipline in this case is connected so closely to the doctrine that I would put it in the level of a commandment and not of whether we celebrate Ash Wednesday on a Wednesday or Holy Thursday on a Thursday.

James

This is Jim Hitchcock again. As Cardinal Burke's comment that people are not stupid, some are I think, but people pick up—they may not get deeply involved in doctrinal issues, but they're influenced very much by what they see. And so, if they see people divorced and remarried and being admitted to the sacraments, they're not going to involve themselves in some complicated doctrinal question. They're going to say, "See, the church now finally recognizes this." The actions speak louder than the words.

Father Dodaro

This is Father Dodaro. I'm the Editor of *Remaining in the Truth of Christ*. I haven't said anything so far, but I want to echo what Cardinal Burke and Dr. Hitchcock have just said. I can't imagine how we're going to prepare young people for marriage in the future should the proposal that Cardinal Kasper has made be approved.

Imagine two young people going to see their parish priest or whoever is designated to prepare them for marriage, and we all admit we need more and better marriage preparation in the Catholic Church. But, you go through your session and the priest or the lay leader or whomever says, "Remember, marriage is forever. When you say "Until death do us part," that's what you really must mean because there can be no separation."

You two become one flesh and you become one flesh in Christ. So, that bond is indissoluble.”

Then they leave that session and as the couple is walking home, the young man says to the young woman, “Damn, my parents are divorced, remarried and they go to communion. So, what’s the big deal?” Now, if teenagers can figure this out, why can’t 70-year-old cardinals?

Stephan

Or 80. This is Stephan Kampowski. If I may, I think your question is really getting to the core of the debate. Also reading Cardinal Kasper’s responses to the publication of the book, *Remaining in the Truth of Christ* and also first responses to our book that has a forward by Cardinal Pell, he insisted “I don’t want to change, I’m not proposing a change of doctrine. I just want to propose a change in pastoral practice.” I think this is what we really need to make clear in the argument.

What we need to focus on is to show, to say, underline it’s impossible to separate what people do, separate life from what people believe. What kind of belief is it if it doesn’t have any practical relevance? I think we need to focus on this and also show that ultimately, the proposal to give, to admit the divorced and civilly remarried to communion amounts to condoning extramarital sexual relations as Father Fessio just said.

To put it very clearly on the table, can the church condone extramarital sexual relations, and of course she cannot. I think if one does just a little bit of thinking, it will be clear that Cardinal Kasper's proposal ultimately amounts to this, to condoning extramarital sexual relations, condoning them to supporting them in the church.

Cardinal Burke This is Cardinal Burke again. In Cardinal Kasper's presentation, he makes the point that the individual elements of the Canonical process for the declaration of marriage is not divine law. In other words, they're not revealed truths. My response to that is the individual elements are not, but that the church has a process which is properly designed to arrive at the truth about a claim of nullity of marriage is required by divine law and to do anything would be to betray the church in its very foundation.

And so, to make these remarks, disparaging remarks about the Canonical process for the declaration of marriage is to fail to respect the fact that the church developed this whole process in response to the divine law; in other words, to have a process which was adequate to arrive at the truth with moral certitude regarding a claim by one or another party that his or her marriage was null.

that in the Synod, we'll devote our attention to helping to get that teaching, put it into practice pastorally in our care for the divorced and remarried so that when someone comes who's divorced and has attempted another marriage that our immediate response is not, "Well, we'll take you right away to the Church Tribunal for a declaration of nullity," but rather that spend the time as priests do to understand deeply what is the situation of the person and then to use the appropriate pastoral means.

When I was growing up within a rural community in Wisconsin, we were dairy farmers. One of the neighbors belonged to the Catholic Church. The husband and wife came to mass every Sunday and they never received communion and I remember asking my father about it and he explained it to me in a very understandable way. We wasn't bothered by it, and I have to say I understood it and it made sense and I admired that couple because they were faithful to Christ being present for Sunday mass, but they knew because they were living in an irregular union that they couldn't receive communion.

We ought to help people to live their faith in this kind of—with integrity and even with heroism as others have mentioned, and not proposing ideas and practical practices which only further encourage a very defective view of marriage and the family.

And so, in an institution like the Synod of Bishops, there is a certain uncertainty about how actually the discussion will go. But, I have to say there's also a certainty with regard to the reaching that the Synod is called to uphold or is held to uphold and to teach. And so, I have to think that the members of the Synod will understand that and direct themselves in that way.

The church's teaching is handed down to us from the apostles. The Synod is not meeting to create some new teaching in the church or to break with that tradition, but rather to hold true to it and to underline its importance for our present time. I hope that's what's going to happen.

Father Fessio

Father Fessio here. Legally, there's a principle of stare decisis, that you stand with the previous decisions. That, of course, can be overturned by a bare majority in our Supreme Court.

But in the Catholic Church, there won't be, there can't be any real major change in something fundamental unless there is real consensus. So, if there's consensus for a development in church's teaching or even a modification in the church's discipline, which can be permissible, it won't happen I don't believe unless there is a large majority, more than a

majority, almost a super majority who wants to do. That was seen at the Council too.

There was a lot of debate and discussion at the Council. But when all was said and done, those documents that were issued by the Vatican Council were voted upon and it was a vast, 2,500 to 3 or something like that on some of these documents. So, I think that that will be the same case in the Synod.

By the way, there's two Synods of course. This first Synod, the Extraordinary one, is in preparation for the second Ordinary Synod a year later. So, I don't think any decision will be taken at this Synod. That's reserved for the Ordinary Synod. Cardinal Burke, am I right in that? Is that what we were expecting?

Cardinal Burke

Yes, that is correct. The Holy Father has asked that this Extraordinary session be held in preparation for the Ordinary session, which will be in 2015. And so, while I think what people are saying is that this Extraordinary session will give the direction, or set the direction for the Ordinary session. And so in that point of view, I think it has to be taken very seriously, and you can't have silliness going on in the Extraordinary

session because it will impact negatively on the Ordinary meeting of the Synod, but you are correct.

Stephan This is Stephan Kampowski. Hello? Hello? Can I still say something about the pastoral issues?

Lisa Yes, go ahead.

Stephan Will there be disappointment? The topic of the Synod will be pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization and one could understand those pastoral challenges in terms of a couple of rules or norms that may be uncomfortable. Maybe if we relax those rules then people will be more happy to become Catholics.

But, I don't think at all that this is what Pope Francis meant from what he has said, from his motivation. I don't think that was his motivation. I think Cardinal Kasper has done very well to call his intervention at the Consistory, to call it the *Gospel of the Family*. I think also from what Pope Francis will want that part of what the Synod is supposed to do is to recovery, to rethink and to understand in a new way what does it mean for the family to be a Gospel.

The family is not simply one big box of problems, but the family is a resource for evangelization. How can the family become a subject of evangelization? And here, it is really—the family is a high road to evangelization. We just need to become aware of that again, especially of the *Theology of the Body* by Pope John Paul II. When I'm speaking about it to young people; that is when I'm speaking about Catholic sexual morality to young people the way John Paul II presented it, they are amazed. They tell me, "How come no one told us before?"

I think that the good news of the family, it's far from being an obstacle to evangelization, but it is a resource. People will listen. People will return to the church precisely for the beauty of her teaching on marriage and the family. I think the Synod will be—one aim of the Synod will be to recover and to deeper understand this truth.

James

This is Jim Hitchcock. I think we should repeat from time-to-time a fact which is well-known, but which is so often ignored. Loosening up your rules and doctrine does not attract more people to join your church.

The history of Liberal Protestantism proves that conclusively. The Liberal Protestant denominations have been declining for years and for them, divorce, birth control, abortion, homosexuality, none of those things are

issues. I often say to dissatisfied Catholics, “There’s a place where you can go. It’s called Episcopal Church.”

We’re losing members too, but I think not as much as the Liberal Churches are and the explanation is quite simple. As a sociologist said years ago, people looking for meaning in religion and if you don’t have clear deep doctrine, it’s pretty clear that you aren’t able to guide people in terms of how they should live their lives, what is true and what is false. So, why should they belong to the church? They may be happy that you allow divorce, or you allow birth control, but that in itself is not enough to make you want to belong. I think that’s something we often quickly forget.

Helen This is Helen Hitchcock. I think it is also true what—go ahead. Your turn.

Father Fessio No. No. You’re the lady. I’m a chauvinist.

Helen Thank you. Well, I would like to emphasize, reemphasize, I think it’s really necessary, both the points that was made about the evangelization role of the family and also that my husband made about it’s not you untie all the knots and then everybody has a great time and becomes a believer.

What we're confronting in our society is a radical relativism of individual freedom to do anything I can and nobody, no institution, no church, nobody, not even my parents and my family can tell me what to do, can restrict anything. This is pervasive in our society and I think that the point that both previous speakers made are relevant to that, that the family is the source of evangelization. The family is the future of the church as Pope John Paul famously said.

Father Fessio

Father Fessio again. I want to get briefly to a specific part of that question, namely what about the problem of disappointment if expectations are not fulfilled? In his forward to the *Gospel of the Family* book we published, Cardinal Pell, who's very articulate and straightforward and by saying—this is the last sentence he has in the book; he says, “We should speak clearly because the sooner the wounded, the lukewarm and the outsiders realize that substantial doctrinal and pastoral changes are impossible, the more the hostile disappointment (which must follow the reassertion of doctrine) will be anticipated and dissipated.”

So, Cardinal Pell's solution to this problem is to make it clear that there will not be a change and therefore to dissipate and anticipate any disappointment.

Lisa Okay. So, let's move onto the next question. We'll take our next question from Phil Pullella with Reuters.

Phil Yes. Can you hear me?

Lisa We can. Go ahead.

Phil Yes, I'm sorry. You can hear me. A couple of questions; Phil Pullella, Reuters here in Rome. Cardinal Burke, [indiscernible] dialogue coming up next week, you said earlier, and I'd like to ask you this, how difficult will it be for you and others there to dialogue with someone who you, just at the beginning of your conversation today, said is fundamentally flawed according to Cardinal Kasper and you said, "He heard. So, the book is a very positive contribution."

Also to Cardinal Burke, I'd like to ask; Cardinal Kasper said that he's being criticized not for himself, but people are criticizing him to get to the Pope. He said that to a couple of Italian newspapers. He was given an opportunity to clarify that in the [indiscernible] of America and he did not withdraw that. He said, "It may have been imprudent on one's part," but he said, "[Indiscernible]" and I quote, "That there are people who are not

in full agreement with the present Pope.” So, he obviously still thinks that some people are criticizing him to get to the Pope. Could you comment on that?

And the last thing; is this Synod becoming like a national Democratic or Republican convention, all the spin doctors that are coming here? Has it been, will it be hijacked by the media and the specialists? [Indiscernible] you said in an interview. Thank you.

Cardinal Burke

Yes. Well, in response to the first question, we just have to speak truthfully to one another as is always the case in order to arrive at what is best and what is true and good for the church. That can be difficult. To the degree that Cardinal Kasper is standing by the position he took and to the degree in which he basis himself upon the misunderstanding of the Fathers of the Church, a misunderstanding of the true nature of the approach of the Orthodox Church to divorce and remarriage that has to be confronted. At the same time, we have to confront the theological reality of the very teaching of Christ on divorce and remarriage.

So, the discussion won't be easy; that's for sure, and it hasn't been helped by statements which have been made hypifying [ph] those of us who contributed, for instance, to the book, *Remaining in the Truth of Christ* as

trying to contradict the Pope. That was the farthest thing from our minds, in our minds, and our intention was to assist the Holy Father in the Synod by providing a book in which the truth about marriage is illustrated in a very clear way.

To the second point, I have to say that I find it amazing that the Cardinal claims to speak for the Pope. The Pope doesn't have laryngitis. The Pope is not mute. He can speak for himself and if this is what he wants, he will say so. But for me as a cardinal, to say that what I'm saying are the words of Pope Francis, I mean that to me is outrageous and I must say I can't imagine that the Holy Father views that as a positive help to him and carrying out his work. So, when the Holy Father states these things, then you can make the claim that they're criticizing the Holy Father.

I think that also the point has to be made that for all of us, beginning with the Holy Father and for every one of us, we're held to obedience to the truth. It's not because I said it, or someone said it that that has to be respected, can't be criticized. But to the degree that what is said is true, then it commands respect and so forth. But, this claim of Cardinal Kasper, I don't really know how to understand it.

And then lastly, I believe there has been already, it won't happen just as Synod takes place, but I mean I've been reading in the media for months now and especially was heightened after Cardinal Kasper's intervention statements that the church is going to change its teaching, the church is going to change its discipline. Priests and bishops have told me that this has created a difficulty for them because people present themselves who are in irregular unions and say that they understand now that they can receive the sacraments. That could only come from what's reported in the media, and the church bears a certain responsibility for what's in the media and to make things clear.

So, there's already been created, this has been mentioned already, an expectation that is simply unrealistic. The church is not trying to change its teaching on the indissoluble of marriage because she cannot. It's received directly from Christ Himself.

And so, I think to the last point, we have to deal with that. I'm not an expert in these matters, but I don't think that we have dealt effectively with the media presentation that's already gone on for several months, building up an expectation of some tremendous changes that are going to take place which simply cannot take place.

James This is Jim Hitchcock. Yes, I think the great example here, again, is Vatican II. What I've often said about Vatican II, and it seems to be to some extent true now; what matters is not so much what has happened, but what people think has happened.

So, the way the Second Vatican Council was being reported was, "Well, they're doing away with Friday abstinence. What are they going to do away with next?" Very, very few people, Catholics or others, ever carefully read the Councilor documents to find out what they really said, but there was this kind of overall impression the church is changing, the church is changing. I think that's a continuation of that at the present time.

Lisa Okay. Our next question is going to come from Pia Desaleni [ph]. She is a moral theologian and a writer for *Paseos* [ph]. Pia, go ahead.

Pia Here I am. Can you hear me?

Lisa We can.

Pia Hello. My question is—I think both Cardinal Kasper and the authors of *Remaining in the Truth of Christ* agree on a pastoral need. My question is,

how do we—I mean in the pursuit of truth and in wanting to help couples that are in need, the pastoral part really has to be provided by the pastors, by the clergy, and so many of them are misguided in the notion of what it means to be Pastoral, including the more recent [indiscernible] clergy or the John Paul II clergy. I mean is there going to be some type of program implementation to better inform pastors and priests to be able to work with couples in difficult marital situations?

Father Dodaro

This is Father Dodaro, and I'll take a shot at that one. I don't know if there's going to be a better program to prepare priests and other lay ministers to work more effectively with people in marriage situations that required ministerial assistance. I don't know. I would hope so. This is the great wakeup call that one of our speakers was mentioning earlier, that the Synod actually could be for the whole church a time to focus again on marriage and family and again, look at what we're doing pastorally in this area.

I think that the authors of our book, *Remaining in the Truth of Christ*, stand united behind the program that was presented already in *Sacramentum Caritatis*. That was Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 document at the end of the Synod on the Eucharist. Number 28, he calls on pastors to seek out the divorced and civilly remarried, to go get them, bring them in,

make them feel welcomed in the parishes. They ought to be involved in the Liturgy of the Word, in the Eucharist, although not at the point of receiving communion; in charitable works, works of mercy, parish activities in other words. They ought to have counseling provided for them. These are measures that are already in our church's documents.

Cardinal Muller in his article, in his chapter in our book focuses in on this a little bit and tries to remind pastors, this would be bishops, dioceses, as well as parish priests and all pastoral workers that this is their obligation. This is the church's teaching. Now, how it's being implemented—here or there, it may be implemented well. But, where it's not being well implemented, it needs to be.

Pope Francis in April of this year addressing the bishops of South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland charged them with carrying out the pastoral program to marriage and families that is found in St. John Paul II's document *Familiaris Consortio* of 1981. So, Pope Francis himself made reference speaking to African bishops about the importance of implementing what is already the church's teaching concerning not only the indissolubility of marriage, but its outreach to those who are in marital difficulties.

So, we've had the teaching. The question really is finding pastoral strategies to implementing it more effectively.

Pia And that's precisely my question, how do we do that and how—

Stephan This is Stephan Kampowski. Hello.

Pia This is precisely my question. Hello. Yes.

Stephan What I wanted to say one way of not doing it at least is changing the rules; that is the idea—am I on? Sorry. The idea of [indiscernible], they are changing the rules. If we say, well, let's not have marriage to be indissoluble any more or if we recognize in a certain way a state of life that is having say practicing sexual intimacy outside of marriage. So, pastoral care as a change of rules is what at times we the authors of the *Gospel of Life* saw Cardinal Kasper to be advocating in his own intervention.

Father Fessio Father Fessio again. Father Dodaro's mentioning of Swaziland and so on reminds me something we should keep in mind, namely this is a Synod of the entire Catholic Church, not just the West or the United States. We have these thoughts that we think are critical and central and so on, but

they may not be the problems of the rest of the church. I mean the United States has - what - 7% of the population of the Catholic Church worldwide and we have to guard ourselves against a kind of ecclesiastical colonization here where we try and impose our problems on the rest of the world.

Second point, you mentioned, Pia, about how a priest can be prepared for taking care of these things pastorally in their parishes. Having lived through the confusion after the Vatican Council and especially confusion in the seminaries, I have to say in the last 15 years or so, the change for the better in the seminaries has been completely almost universal across the United States. I mean so many seminaries now have very fine programs for the Pastoral Year and for the pastoral theology and they're deeply rooted in doctrine. The seminarians generally are much more traditional.

So, there's always room for improvement I'm sure, but I would say right now that our seminaries in the United States at least are doing a magnificent job rearing priests.

James

Jim Hitchcock; I'd like to follow-up on what you had said earlier about American imposing its agenda on—am I on? Hello?

Lisa Yes, you are.

Father Fessio You're on the line.

James Oh, okay; America imposing its agenda. Cardinal Pell makes the point about how this is a Western European concern as well and again, I think that in many ways, the public view of the Council's, Second Vatican Council was distorted by disproportionate attention being paid to Western Europe, which is where it seemed like most of the interesting and exciting ideas come from. We often hear it said that the church was reaching out to the whole world. There was very little Third World participation in Vatican II and it didn't track much notice.

I would think that one issue that could arise in the Synod in that respect is what about polygamy. It's a tremendous issue in Africa and in some other places. It's going to be an issue in the United States before too long, but I mean you don't see any discussion of that even though to Africans, it's a bigger program than the problem of divorce.

Helen Again, in a way, I think the question—what Father said earlier, that the way that the—the sacramental program that the church has in place and

disobedience to *Humanae Vitae* and I'm interested in how that harmed the diocesan priesthood as Cardinal Stafford suggested in a very moving piece that he wrote years ago for L'Osservatore Romano.

But, my main question is this: Although a number of specific and detailed programs are on the table for improving marriage preparation, improving ministry to those who are in irregular relationships, it seems to me that the situation is broader and graver than these specific programs might address. As we learned in *Evangelium Vitae*, the modern world has suffered and eclipse of the sense of the God, which entails also the loss of the sense of what it means to be human. This loss of the transcendent that is so clear in American society, obviously affects sexual relations premaritally and within marriage. I wonder if there's any proposal out there about how we can address this loss of the transcendent.

Cardinal Burke

This is Cardinal Burke; just two observations. First, I trust that it will be evident in the discussions of the Synod that the church and her teaching on marriage is countercultural. At least in the Western World, we are speaking to a totally secularized society, which no longer recognizes the existence of God or His law, which is written in creation and on the human heart, and that's a big challenge and it needs to be recognized so that we direct our message appropriately.

And secondly, we have to admit that precisely in this context of a totally secularized society, we have had a catechus, a teaching of the faith in the church for some 50 years, which has been radically defective and we haven't prepared—this kind of teaching on marriage and so forth, we've prepared people to understand these things from childhood through the early catechus with regard to all the truth of the faith. And so, we have to address this question as an effective catechus to [indiscernible] marriage in the family at different levels in the church.

I think the combination of these two things, the radical secularization of society I've seen in my own life and I've lived it, and at the same time, a sad defect with regard to catechus, especially in the period at Second Vatican Council.

Lisa Okay. We'll take our next question, and this will be from Elizabeth Scalia, a blogger at the Anchoress and with Patheos.

Elizabeth Hello. Thank you all for this possibility of speaking. I wanted to ask two questions if I can because they are connected. One has to do with this marriage and divorce issue that we've been talking about and the second has to do with pastoral care of the homosexual person and how their

understanding of celibacy when they're obedient to the church can help form the first issues, which is what to do about these married couples.

So, if you bear with me for a moment; we know from the work you document, from the surveys that were put out by Rome that Catholics do not know the faith, that the catechus of the past 40 years or so has been catastrophic failure. Faithfuls don't know what they don't know and we see this when we see people who become divorced and then say, "Well, I can't receive communion anymore because I'm divorced" and obviously they don't know that they can, or people who say, "Well, my daughter just came out as gay, so the church doesn't want her and therefore, I don't want the church;" again, a lot of misinformation out there.

So, how much do you think poor catechus has been responsible for the terrible divorce rate, the fact that so many poorly catechized Catholics are entering into marriage without really understanding what they're doing, which Pope Francis suggests there may be many, many thousands of marriages that are not valid for that reason, and what role can the laity play in giving witness to the possibility of life without remarriage, or the healing power of the annulment process, which we never hear discussed, or possible suggestions by the laity of what sort of reforms we must see

within the annulment process itself. For example, something really simple like allowing the annulment process to begin during the divorce process.

So, that's first part of my question, and I really do have an important follow-up to that.

Cardinal Burke

I think the question on catechus is very important, but I would like to make a caution. The catechus has been very defective and it may in fact influence a certain number of people to have a false notion with regard to marriage for instance, to misunderstand its indissolubility or its fidelity or its procreativity. On the other hand, we cannot forget that the nature of marriage is part of the law that God has written on every human heart, but this known also by reason. And so, we can't—immediately, some people jump to the conclusion because we live, for instance, in a society where the divorce is mentality. Therefore, all young people enter marriage intending divorce if the marriage is not happy. But, that's not the case because nature itself teaches them something else about marriage.

Now I forgot the second part of your question. Oh, dear.

Elizabeth

The second part of the question was is there a possibility of bringing the laity in both to advise on possibilities of annulment reform where it's

needed, and also to give witness to what it's like to live within an obedient either celibate sort of life or a life where as you—

Cardinal Burke

Well, I think while this is happening in the auditors at the Synod, there are a number of the auditors who are going to participate and they will speak. At the same time, there are a number of very well-known movements/groups within the church directed specifically to helping people live their sexuality with integrity, to understand what it truly means to be a man, to be a woman, and then to live chastely for instance.

There's a wonderful movement for people who suffer from same sex attraction called Courage, which helps and I've known individuals who take part in this association and they find so much happiness which they didn't have before when they were actively engaged in same sex relations. But being helped to be chaste, they found true happiness in their lives and real progress in dealing with the suffering that they have because of the attraction. But, there also are groups of Catholics who are divorced who are thoroughly convinced that their marriage is valid and a true marriage and they help one another spiritually to lead a chaste live, honoring that marriage and growing deeply spiritually and actually, they become really and grow heroically in their virtue.

So, we need to underline those individuals and groups and to encourage them; those who are heroically struggling also to save a marriage. For instance, the Retrouvaille Movement and other, Marriage Encounter and so forth; all of those instruments which can be very helpful to people to remain faithful in marriage, or to deal with a marriage that's in trouble.

James

This is Jim Hitchcock. Let me mention a category of people, maybe not very large, but should be taken into account.

A marriage breaks up because let us say the infidelity of the husband. He subsequently marries the woman that he fell in love with. His wife believes she's still married to him. She still believes in that marriage. What effect does it have if she finds out that the church has in effect, by admitting him to communion, regularizing his second relationship, has told her she's not married anymore to her husband even though she think she is? I think that's something that we need to take into account also.

Elizabeth

Can I follow-up my first question? I wanted to bring this up because they really kind of work together. Care of the homosexual person; we're seeing a lot of younger Catholics who identify as homosexual who are affirming the church's teachings, saying, "I completely agree with the church's teachings and I am living my life in conformity to the teachings

and yet, I feel that I have something to say, something to contribute as a gay identifying person.”

Now, what I’m seeing in a lot of their writings is the beginnings of an exploration of the whole concept of agape, which is something that we don’t discuss very often at church and this deep mystery to agape. I’m wondering if by the most ironic of twists are gay Catholics who are celibate and who are promoting this kind of depth of agape way of living can’t say something to the married Catholics who believe that there is no living without sex and “I must remarry” or “I must have sex” or whatever. It just seems to me that there is something here between the gay Catholics and the married Catholics that can come together beautifully in the hands of the laity with proper direction, and I’d like your thoughts on that and your thoughts on our teaching on agape and whether we are not doing enough to teach that a relationship of deep friendship doesn’t have to become a sexual relationship.

No? Not interested?

Cardinal Burke No, I can make some comment. I was just leaving the brothers to comment, but I think in this, what you’re speaking, we have this masterful and cyclical of Pope Benedict XVI *Deus Caritas* and on this whole notion

of agape and the meaning of true human love. I think we would do very well to let that be our guide, but people find themselves in all kinds of situations which have to do with tendencies they may have, with experiences that they've had that have not been for them, whatever else. None of us was born or grew up in a bell jar.

We have to deal with our life situation as it is, but we find that the way to deal with it that is good and brings us happiness is in accord with the church's teaching. And so, I agree with you and I think this and the catechism to underline the true meaning of human love, which is essentially sacrificial and it embodies an emptying of ourselves for another, for the good of another.

That's a little answer on my part and I'm going to have to get your pardon, but I have another appointment and I'm going to have to leave this conversation, but I have enjoyed it very much and thanks to all, those who organized it.

Lisa

Thank you, Cardinal Burke. We did arrange for the conference to, we got started a little bit late, to conclude at 1:30 and I don't know how the rest of our panelists are doing with time. I was going to get ready to take one

more question. Obviously, His Eminence is going to have to leave. How are other panelists doing on time?

Father Dodaro I'm Father Dodaro. I have another 15 minutes.

Lisa Okay. Anyone else have to leave at this time?

James How long are you proposing to go?

Lisa I'm just going to take maybe one or two more questions.

James Okay.

Lisa Thank you very much, Your Eminence, if you've already left. Thank you for participating.

Cardinal Burke Yes, I have to go now, but you're most welcome and let's all pray for the Synod, that God bless is very much.

Lisa We will do that.

James Amen.

Lisa Amen. All right. Our next question will come from Ed Morrissey who is with hotair.com.

Ed Thank you very much and I appreciate being part of this conversation. I think it was Father Fessio earlier mentioned the fact that something that I think we have lost perspective on is not a Synod for [indiscernible] and the United States. What do you see as the emerging issues from Africa, from Asia that are going to be addressed or that should be addressed in the Synod that perhaps the rest of us may not be quite as familiar with because of our own focus on our own issues here?

Father Fessio Well, this is Father Fessio. I'm not familiar with it either. I just know it's different from us.

James This is Jim Hitchcock. I don't either. I mentioned polygamy, which seems to me to be perfectly obvious. Now, there's no push in the Western Church to justify polygamy. I think it's possible that some of the Third World prelates might think that any seeming weakening of the church's stance for one marriage lifelong commitment to one spouse, if there were a weakening of that, it might tend to lead into polygamy. We know, of course, that the rejection of birth control prepared the way directly for the

justification of homosexuality. There were always these possibly unintended consequences.

Also, we must remember—I was going to say in response to an earlier question about agape; I think that even many devote Catholics, younger ones especially in the West have an almost totally romantic view of marriage. It's a matter of strong personal attraction. You experience tremendous joy in the relationship, all of which is fine of course, but what happens if it begins to wane.

We should recognize that that romantic concept of marriage probably doesn't prevail in most of the Third World where you still have arranged marriages, you still have complex family relationships. It could be an entirely different way of looking at things from the way we look at it.

Father Fessio This is Father Fessio. I can imagine one issue might come up with the Synod is the erosion of family life by the Western media, which projects immoral principles and ways of life and causes them to be seen as something desirable in other places. But, I'm just guessing.

Father Dodaro I'm Father Dodaro. I'll just add briefly to that, and this has been mentioned both in the *Instrumentum Laboris* and in the questionnaire. I

think Southern Hemisphere bishops will be bringing up poverty and economic issues and their impact on the family. We haven't talked at all about that today, but that's a concern in Asia, Africa and South America.

James And indeed it is in this country too because there's a pretty close correlation between poverty and marital breakup now, or not bothering to get married at all. For a while, it looked like that was more of an upper class thing, but it's now very much down to the level of the blue collar workers or the unemployed. There's a large illegitimate children. So, it's not even just a problem for the Third World.

Lisa All right. We'll take one more question and we'll take this question from Peter Jesserer Smith with the National Catholic Register and EWTN.

Peter Yes, thank you so much for taking my call. I will express to you that part of my frustration as a reporter is that I see the Kasper proposal mentioned so many times either for or even against. But the problem is is that as long as nobody puts forward a systematic program or counterproposals or talks positively about alternatives, the conversation is going to get dominated by the Kasper proposal, and it's deeply frustrating.

What I would like to say is—I mean are the panelists here going to invest efforts into trying to come up concrete proposals for social problems and breakdowns in the family that we have had analyzed to death really? I mean we have issues of married couples, cohabitating couples, single parents, divorce and divorced parents. I mean our parish life in many places tends to be one hour on Sunday. We neglect to have a 24/7 aspect of it where we could be inviting people.

I mean do the panelists see that there's a need to actually present a cogent program of how parishes can be on the front lines of addressing these pastoral problems for married people and the family?

Father Fessio

This is Father Fessio. I believe that many, if not most parishes already have a cogent program and the church has a wonderful program and a pastoral program that's been in place for centuries. I think the idea of trying to change it on a doctrine level as Kasper proposed is a red herring and it's a problem. Let the journalists propose things I mean if you want to propose something. Why should the panelists have to do it?

James

Well, as I understand what Cardinal Burke said earlier, practical proposals are more likely to come out of the Synod of 2015, but this one is more of a preliminary to discuss general principles. Is that a correct understanding?

Helen That's my understanding. Also, I agree with the questioner, that there needs to be something concrete proposed that will change things. I think we all understand the need for that.

Now, you're saying that we've got one hour on Sunday and that's really it. That's true for most people and that's one reason why the actual teaching, even though the teaching has been on the books—several of us have mentioned *Familiaris Consortio*, *Sacramentum Caritas*. Those things are there. We have them. The church has them, but we have not been effective in transmitting that for various reasons.

I'm not sure that even a Synod can come up with a proposal that's going to overcome a widespread and deep seeded cultural rejection of fundamental church teachings.

James I think that for various reasons the parish is no longer the center of most people's lives, which at one time it might have been. Some reasons are understandable; others are not. So, for example, I don't think most parishes have a flourishing youth group, or they don't have a group for unmarried, or they don't have a group for older people. We're not organized around the parish anymore.

People who have those particular concerns will go out and find a group somewhere else. Is it practical to try to rev up the parish again? Maybe it is. I don't know.

Stephan

If I may say something about in our book, we have tried to address the issue in this way, to say, well, our pastoral programs have this problem, that is the problem that they trying simply to respond to problems. If you look at our pastoral programs as ways of responding to problems, we're always one step behind. So, we shouldn't allow the problems to dictate us what we're going to do because then we're just not up to speed.

I think the pastoral programs if we want need to begin not with the problems, but with the beauty that we can propose, with the *Gospel of the Family*, that is attractive to show people, to tell people what is beautiful about marriage and the family and then an approach that is accompanying people, how exactly that can be carried out in each parish, that needs to be seen. But today, we are talking much about accompanying the divorced and remarried and that's important. I don't want to negate the importance of that.

If we speak of accompanying the divorce and remarried, we also need to speak about accompanying the engaged, accompanying especially the newly married because they are the ones who have most difficulties. The first years of marriage are the most crucial ones, and often people feel abandoned at this time. They don't even know they can go to the church, they can go to the parish. If people have financial problems, they go to the parish priest and ask him help. If they have relationship problems, they're not even aware that they could go to the priest and ask him for help.

An approach that is accompanying people and especially before the problems lead to a divorce. What would it mean to accompany the divorced and remarried if you didn't accompany the couples in crisis before they got divorced?

Peter

Thank you. I know from my own personal experience that is a problem I would like to see us proactively address because we've been focusing so much on the divorced and remarried issue, but what about people before they get into these problems. I will say I go to a parish that is doctrinal, very orthodox, but it offers nothing for young people.

I just got married. There's no marriage continuing education programs.

There's no mentor couples. There are a lots of people who have ideas out

there, but we need Catholic thinkers taking the point on this, or putting these proposals out there in a concrete form that people can get behind. It just seems that way from my vantage point, but thank you for addressing these issues.

Lisa

Okay. I think that with that question, we have concluded our time today. I thank all of you for participating.

I wanted to address some just housekeeping items for all of the participants. We did have, unfortunately, several participants that we couldn't get to, but we needed to respect the time of our panelists for being on this call today. So, if you do have some follow-up questions that you would like to ask any of the panelists, please e-mail that to us. You should have our contact information here at Carmel, and we will be happy to facilitate communication between you and any panelist to try to get those questions addressed.

Additionally, there will be an audio transcript of the entire call available shortly after this call is completed, and then within 24 hours, around this time tomorrow, we'll have a full written transcript of the entire call available as well that we will e-mail to all of the participants. So, I wanted

to make all of the journalists and folks that have been part of the call aware about availability and that we will be making that available to you.

I want to thank all the panelists for being with us. His Eminence who already left the call, but to Father Dodaro, Dr. Kampowski, Dr. Hitchcock, Helen Hitchcock and Father Fessio, thank you for being part of this press conference today.

Please make sure that all of our participants, that you visit synodresources.com. That is the website that is hosted by Ignatius Press, where information on the Synod is available, as well as all of the availability of the books is accessible. We will have information posted there very soon as to when the eBooks will be released because they will likely be released first before the physical copies of the books will be available to the public. We will make you aware of that as well so that you can make your readers and other audience participants available of that in your various publics.

With that, I'll turn it back over to Rachel for any concluding housekeeping questions.

