News

A book cover featuring black smoke and the words "The Synodal Process Is a Pandora's Box"

This is the cover of "The Synodal Process is a Pandora's Box," a book with a foreword by U.S. Cardinal Raymond L. Burke. The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property released the book in late August 2023. (CNS photo/Courtesy of the CC)

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The synod process underway around the world and at the Vatican is inflicting "evident and grave harm" on the Catholic Church, retired U.S. Cardinal Raymond L. Burke wrote in a letter published as the foreword to a book.

"Synodality and its adjective, synodal, have become slogans behind which a revolution is at work to change radically the church's self-understanding, in accord with a contemporary ideology which denies much of what the church has always taught and practiced," said the cardinal's letter to José Antonio Ureta and Julio Loredo de Izcue, authors of "The Synodal Process Is a Pandora's Box."

The book is a compilation of 100 questions and answers purporting to show how Pope Francis' reforms of the Synod of Bishops and his vision of a "synodal" church

threaten "to demolish Holy Mother Church."

The general secretariat of the synod at the Vatican had not commented on the book or the cardinal's letter as of Aug. 23.

Francis launched the current process for the Synod of Bishops in 2021 with listening sessions on the local, national and regional levels around the world. The synod assembly will meet at the Vatican in October and again in 2024 to discuss ways to work "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission."

Remarking on how the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches have maintained a synod structure, Francis has said the universal Catholic Church must rediscover synodality and recover it in a way that promotes real participation, effective communion and responsibility for mission by all the baptized.

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Burke's letter, dated June 16, congratulates Ureta and Loredo for the Italian edition of the book. The authors are members of the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property and the English translation of the book with Burke's foreword was released in late August by the American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property.

Catholics have always professed the church to be "one, holy and apostolic," the cardinal said. Now it is "to be defined by synodality, a term which has no history in the doctrine of the church and for which there is no reasonable definition."

Describing the German Catholic Church's "Synodal Path" as a process that sowed confusion, "error" and division, the cardinal said that with the upcoming synod assembly at the Vatican, "it is rightly to be feared that the same confusion and error and division will be visited upon the universal church. In fact, it has already begun to happen through the preparation of the synod at the local level."

"Only the truth of Christ, as it is handed down to us in the unchanging and unchangeable doctrine and discipline of the church, can address effectively the situation by uncovering the ideology at work, by correcting the deadly confusion and error and division it is propagating, and by inspiring the members of the church to undertake the true reform which is daily conversion to Christ alive for us in the

church's teaching, her prayer and worship, and her practice of the virtues and discipline," the cardinal wrote.

Burke served as bishop of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin, from 1995 to 2004, as archbishop of St. Louis from 2004 to 2008, and as prefect of the Apostolic Signature at the Vatican from 2008 to 2014.

Burke is not one of the more than 450 cardinals, bishops, priests, religious and laypeople whose participation at the synod assembly was announced in July.