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Interview with Cardinal Müller

The German Church: «Marx is responsible for the failure»

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“Cardinal Reinhard Marx’s resignation demonstrates that the German synodal path, conducted politically, has failed. Now the pope has the duty to do more to preserve the unity of the universal Church.” On the same day as the the Archbishop of Munich announced his resounding resignation, due to the sexual abuse scandal in Germany, Cardinal Gerhard L. Muller chose to be interviewed on *La Nuova Bussola Quotidiano weekly webcast* to comment on the Church in Germany, battered by the winds of schism and a resignation which leaves a deep gash in the body of the Church.

The Prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), was interviewed by the editor Riccardo Cascioli. He spoke about the situation in his home country Germany and of how Marx’s decision provoked by the abuse scandal has nothing to do with the synodal process.

Referring to the breakaway blessings of gay couples, on May 10, which took place

in numerous German dioceses and marked the culmination of a schism that began with a very ambiguous synodal path, Müller said, “this resignation and the so-called synodal path are two different matters. These two points cannot be confused, but at the same time this “path” has also failed because, as we have seen, it is going in a direction that has nothing to do with the Church, its foundations, the Bible and the apostolic tradition”.

~~Müller according to Müller~~ is the one responsible for the failure of the synod, even if he is placing the blame on a generic failure of the Church (“the Church is at a dead end” in his words, ed.). But this is unacceptable: he wants to delegate to the pope, who is his friend, the task of solving the problems that he himself has side-stepped and in my opinion this is not right”. Nevertheless, “the Church is a divine institution, it won’t fail even if men fail. Judas failed, the apostles on Golgotha also failed, therefore we cannot speak of the Church’s failure which is infallible by nature”.

Riccardo Cascioli questioned Müller on where the German bishops went wrong.

“The big mistake - continued Müller speaking live to *La Nuova Bussola* - was to confuse the Church with being a political institution, when the bishops are the successors of the Apostles.” Whereas, on the subject of sexual abuse the cardinal recalled that “many priests have not been faithful to the sixth commandment, but this is not God's fault, nor must we change His law and His Word. On the other hand, we must say categorically that those who act against the Ten Commandments are the ones who are guilty”.

~~During the interview, the former Prefect of the CDF~~ said that the crisis of the Church in Germany is also linked to the proximity of the Lutheran Protestants who “cannot be considered an example for us given that they are in a worse state: they have ordained women as priests, have married clergy and disrespect the indissolubility of marriage. These were the political reflections that were passed off as the future for the Church”.

Riccardo Cascioli then asked if the German bishops’ behaviour could be considered schismatic. On this matter Müller is lapidary: “These bishops do not want a schism, instead they want to set themselves up as leaders of the Church, they think they are avant-garde, that they are the future, but as Saint Irenaeus of Lyons rightly said in the second century against the Gnostics, ‘the Christian faith is the same all over the world’.” This is why there cannot be a German Church, a Church that is the expression of a nation: “This is an erroneous statement, there are local churches which are called diocese, but we all have only one Spirit. There can be no nationalism in the Church. In Germany there are still many Catholics who want to be Catholics, but are resentful that so many bishops and officials reason influenced by Protestantism and impose an

ideological vision of the Church”.

The press is also contributing to this ideological vision which is influencing the Church. It is controlled by "anti-Catholic billionaires who impose a homosexualist and feminist agenda, that undermines natural anthropology by exploiting people with problems and wounds". Hence, Müller makes a strong appeal to the pope: "Rome has an enormous responsibility to maintain the unity of the universal Church which is entrusted to the successor of Peter and for this reason it has to do more to guarantee the unity of the faith. This is the theme that should be the pope's priority, climate and migrants are without question important issues, but they are secondary to the need for unity in the faith that the Church requires today. This is the reason the pope must be the first witness in the primary mission of preaching the Gospel including admonishing politicians who support abortion".

Müller stressed that this impetus is also necessary in relations with the world. Speaking of the Church during the pandemic, he said that "it was a mistake to obey the state and permit it to dictate the line to take on the Sacraments and the Eucharist. It is the Church that has the exclusive responsibility for the liturgy, the State has no power to prohibit the celebration of the Holy Mass. Of course, its acceptable to collaborate with governments on security issues, but you cannot accept restrictions on religious freedom as we saw happen during the pandemic in many countries, thus transforming the Church into an institution under the authority of the state. An authority that has become authoritarian".

Müller also commented on the rumours about an upcoming Motu Proprio which will limit the celebration of the Tridentine Mass liberalised by Benedict XVI with the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*: "Benedict XVI - said Müller - acted very wisely when he made a good reconciliation of these trends. One cannot act with authoritarianism now, by introducing prohibitions; it takes prudence and respect for groups and people who want to celebrate Holy Mass with the rite adopted until John XXIII, without creating new tensions".