

# Cardinal Müller criticises Vatican penitential ceremony over its ‘checklist of woke and gender ideology’

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A prominent German cardinal has severely criticised plans for a “penitential celebration” at the Vatican, alleging that the service will promote “un-Catholic ideologies” by equating offences against “woke and gender ideology” as being the same as sins.

Cardinal Gerhard Müller has spoken out over concerns that the event scheduled for 1 October, to coincide just before the start of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, lists a tranche of “sins newly invented by humans” instead of those universally recognised by the Church.

Cardinal Müller, who served as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith between 2012 and 2017, said the service promoted “un-Catholic ideologies”.

Among the sins God will be asked to forgive during the “penitential celebration” are “sin against creation”, “sin against migrants”, “sin of using doctrine as stones to be hurled” and what is described as “sin against synodality – the lack of listening, communion and participation against all”.

The service will take place in St Peter's Basilica and will be presided over by Pope Francis.

In an [article](#) for *Kath.net*, a German Catholic website, Cardinal Müller said the list of sins “reads like a checklist of woke and gender ideology, somewhat laboriously disguised as Christian”.

The cardinal explained: “To deceive the gullible, there are also misdeeds that every Christian should take for granted. Those who are naive may be blinded by the arbitrary compilation of real sins against one's neighbour and the justified criticism of theologically absurd inventions of those involved in the synod.”

He added: “The teaching of the Church is not, as some anti-intellectuals in the episcopate, who like to invoke their pastoral gifts because of their lack of theological education, believe, an academic theory about faith, but the rational presentation of the revealed word of God who wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth through the one mediator between God and men: the man Christ Jesus, the Word of God his Father made flesh.

“There is also no sin against a form of synodality that is used as a brainwashing tool to discredit so-called conservatives as yesterday's men and disguised pharisees, and to make us believe that the progressive ideologies that led to the decline of the Churches in the West in the 1970s are the completion of the reforms of Vatican II that were supposedly stopped by John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

“The cooperation of all believers in the service of building the Kingdom of God is in the nature of the Church as the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

“But one cannot relativise the episcopal office by basing participation in the Synod of Bishops on the common priesthood of all believers

and a papal appointment, thereby implicitly pushing aside the sacramentality of the ordained ministry – the order of bishop, priest, deacon – and ultimately relativising the hierarchical-sacramental constitution of the Church of divine right which Luther had denied in principle.”

Cardinal Müller continued: “Overall, the great agitators of the synodal paths and the rampant synodalism are more concerned with acquiring influential positions and implementing their un-Catholic ideologues than with renewing faith in Christ in people’s hearts.

“The fact that Church institutions in formerly entirely Christian countries are crumbling – empty seminaries, dying religious orders, breaking up of marriages and families, mass resignations from the Church, [including] several million Catholics in Germany – does not shake them to the core.

“They stubbornly continue to pursue their agenda, which amounts to the destruction of Christian anthropology, until the last person turns off the lights and the church coffers are empty.”

The cardinal concludes: “A renewal of the Church in the Holy Spirit can only happen if the Pope, in the name of all Christians, courageously and loudly confesses his faith in Jesus and says to him: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God’.”

The “penitential celebration” marks the end of a two-day spiritual retreat for all of the participants who will go on to take part in the concluding session of the three-year Synod.

The retreat will include testimonies from three people who have suffered the sin of war, the sin of abuse and, in the words of its organisers, the sin of “indifference to the drama present in the growing phenomenon of migrations all over the world”.

The penitential ceremony will also lament the sins of poverty and against women, family, youth, peace and indigenous populations. At the end of the confession of sins, the Pope will request the forgiveness of God and of all humanity.

The event has been jointly organised by the Diocese of Rome, the General Secretariat of the Synod and the Union of Superiors General. In a joint [announcement](#), they said the liturgy “directs the Church’s inner gaze to the faces of new generations”.

“Indeed it will be the young people present in the Basilica who will receive the sign that the future of the Church is theirs, and that the request for forgiveness is the first step of a faith-filled and missionary credibility that must be established,” the organisers said.

Cardinal Müller is one of a number of senior Church figures who have been openly critical about the Synod.

In 2022, he said in an interview on *EWTN* that the Synod was an “occupation of the Catholic Church” and a “hostile takeover of the Church of Jesus Christ”.

The cardinal said the supporters of the Synod sought the “destruction of the Catholic Church” and invited other Catholics to reject and oppose it.

*Photo: Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller is met by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI after being elevated to the rank of cardinal by Pope Francis in 2014 (Getty Images).*

<https://catholicherald.co.uk/cardinal-muller-criticises-vatican-penitential-ceremony-over-its-check-list-of-woke-and-gender-ideology/>